



FRAGILE STATES INDEX  
ANNUAL REPORT 2019



FRAGILE  
STATES  
INDEX 

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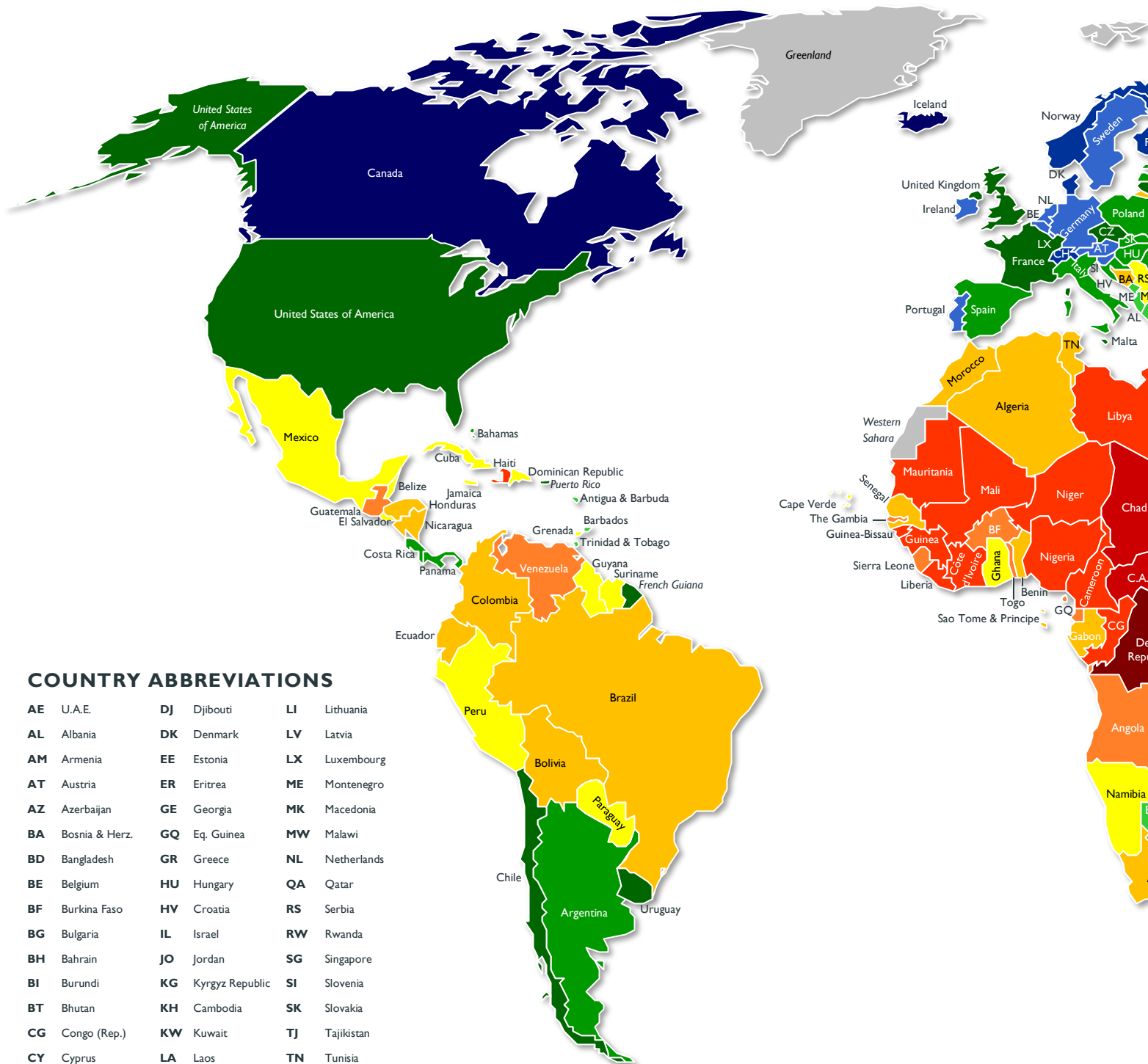
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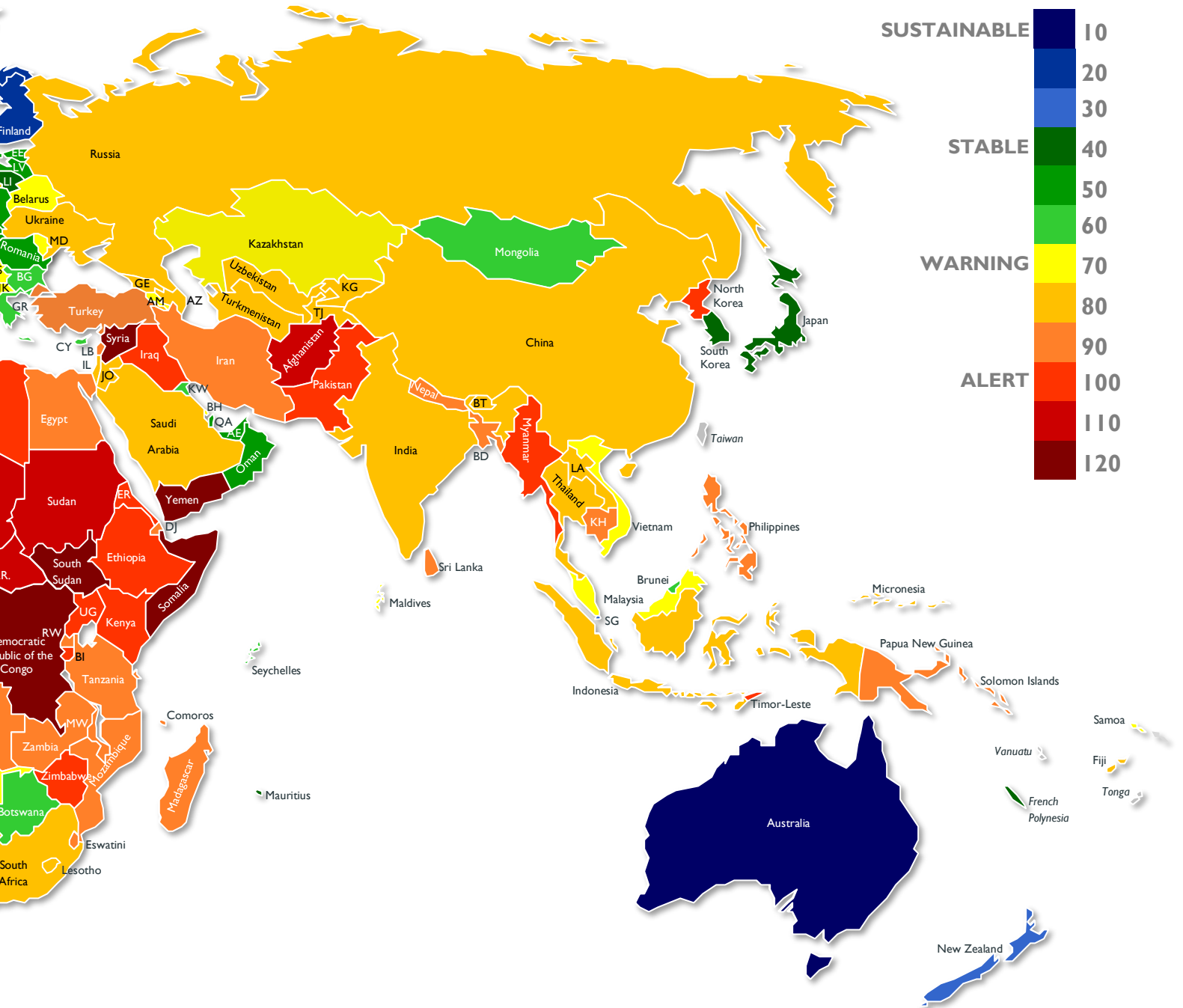
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## COUNTRY ABBREVIATIONS

|    |                |    |                 |    |             |
|----|----------------|----|-----------------|----|-------------|
| AE | U.A.E.         | DJ | Djibouti        | LI | Lithuania   |
| AL | Albania        | DK | Denmark         | LV | Latvia      |
| AM | Armenia        | EE | Estonia         | LX | Luxembourg  |
| AT | Austria        | ER | Eritrea         | ME | Montenegro  |
| AZ | Azerbaijan     | GE | Georgia         | MK | Macedonia   |
| BA | Bosnia & Herz. | GQ | Eq. Guinea      | MW | Malawi      |
| BD | Bangladesh     | GR | Greece          | NL | Netherlands |
| BE | Belgium        | HU | Hungary         | QA | Qatar       |
| BF | Burkina Faso   | HV | Croatia         | RS | Serbia      |
| BG | Bulgaria       | IL | Israel          | RW | Rwanda      |
| BH | Bahrain        | JO | Jordan          | SG | Singapore   |
| BI | Burundi        | KG | Kyrgyz Republic | SI | Slovenia    |
| BT | Bhutan         | KH | Cambodia        | SK | Slovakia    |
| CG | Congo (Rep.)   | KW | Kuwait          | TJ | Tajikistan  |
| CY | Cyprus         | LA | Laos            | TN | Tunisia     |
| CZ | Czechia        | LB | Lebanon         | UG | Uganda      |

# THE WORLD IN 2019





# FRAGILE STATES INDEX

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## VERY SUSTAINABLE

- 16.9 Finland (178) ▲
- 18.0 Norway (177) ▲
- 18.7 Switzerland (176) ▲
- 19.5 Denmark (175) ▲
- 19.7 Australia (174) ▲
- 19.8 Iceland (173) ▲
- 20.0 Canada (172) ▲

## SUSTAINABLE

- 20.1 New Zealand (171) ▲
- 20.3 Sweden (170) ▲
- 20.4 Luxembourg (169) ▲
- 20.6 Ireland (168) △
- 24.7 Germany (167) ▲
- 24.8 Netherlands (166) ▲
- 25.0 Austria (165) ▲
- 25.3 Portugal (164) ▲
- 28.0 Slovenia (163) ▲
- 28.1 Singapore (162) ▲
- 28.6 Belgium (161) ▲

## VERY STABLE

- 32.0 France (160) ▲
- 33.7 South Korea (159) ▲
- 34.0 Uruguay (158) ▲
- 34.3 Japan (157) △
- 34.5 Malta (156) ▲
- 36.7 United Kingdom (155) ▼
- 37.6 Czechia (154) ▲
- 38.0 United States (153) ▼
- 38.1 Lithuania (152) ▲
- 38.9 Mauritius (=150) ▲
- 38.9 Chile (=150) ▲

## MORE STABLE

- 40.1 United Arab Emirates (149) ▲
- 40.5 Slovak Republic (148) ▲
- 40.7 Spain (147) ▲
- 40.8 Estonia (146) ▲
- 42.0 Costa Rica (145) ▲
- 42.8 Poland (144) ▼
- 43.8 Italy (143) =
- 43.9 Latvia (142) ▲
- 45.4 Qatar (141) ▲
- 46.0 Argentina (140) =
- 47.0 Panama (139) ▲
- 47.5 Croatia (138) ▲
- 47.8 Romania (137) ▲
- 48.0 Barbados (136) △
- 48.8 Bahamas (135) ▲
- 49.6 Hungary (134) ▲
- 50.0 Oman (133) ▲

## MORE STABLE

- 50.6 Bulgaria (132) ▲
- 53.0 Trinidad & Tobago (131) ▲
- 53.2 Kuwait (130) ▲
- 53.9 Greece (129) ▲
- 54.1 Mongolia (128) ▲
- 54.4 Antigua & Barbuda (127) ▲
- 55.2 Seychelles (126) ▲
- 55.3 Montenegro (125) △
- 57.5 Brunei Darussalam (124) ▲
- 57.6 Grenada (123) ▲
- 57.8 Cyprus (122) ▲
- 58.9 Albania (121) ▲
- 59.5 Botswana (120) ▲

## WARNING






























- 60.5 Malaysia (119) ▲
- 60.8 Cuba (118) ▲
- 61.2 Jamaica (117) ▲
- 61.6 Kazakhstan (116) ▲
- 61.9 Suriname (115) ▲
- 62.5 Belize (114) ▲
- 63.8 Bahrain (113) ▲
- 64.2 Samoa (112) ▲
- 64.6 Macedonia (111) △
- 65.9 Ghana (110) ▲
- 66.1 Vietnam (109) ▲
- 66.2 Dominican Republic (108) ▲
- 66.4 Namibia (107) ▲
- 66.6 Cape Verde (106) ▲
- 66.7 Armenia (105) ▲
- 67.0 Paraguay (104) ▲
- 67.1 Moldova (103) ▲
- 68.0 Serbia (102) △
- 68.2 Peru (=99) ▲
- 68.2 Guyana (=99) ▲
- 68.2 Belarus (=99) ▲
- 69.7 Mexico (98) ▲
- 69.8 Maldives (=96) ▲
- 69.8 El Salvador (=96) ▲

# 2019 SCORES























## ELEVATED WARNING

|      |   |                              |
|------|---|------------------------------|
| 70.1 |    | Tunisia (95) ▲               |
| 70.4 |    | Saudi Arabia (=93) ▼         |
| 70.4 |    | Indonesia (=93) ▲            |
| 70.5 |    | Gabon (92) ▲                 |
| 71.0 |    | Ukraine (91) ▲               |
| 71.1 |    | South Africa (=88) ▲         |
| 71.1 |    | Sao Tome & Principe. (=88) ▲ |
| 71.1 |    | China (=88) ▲                |
| 71.2 |    | Ecuador (87) ▲               |
| 71.3 |  | Bosnia & Herzegovina (86) =  |
| 71.4 |  | Turkmenistan (85) ▲          |
| 71.7 |  | Fiji (84) ▲                  |
| 71.8 |  | Brazil (83) ▼                |
| 72.0 |  | Georgia (=81) ▲              |
| 72.0 |  | Bhutan (=81) ▲               |
| 72.9 |  | Bolivia (80) ▲               |
| 73.0 |  | Morocco (=78) ▲              |
| 73.0 |  | Micronesia (=78) ▲           |
| 73.1 |  | Thailand (77) ▲              |
| 73.2 |  | Azerbaijan (76) ▲            |
| 73.6 |  | Benin (75) ▲                 |
| 74.4 |  | India (74) ▲                 |
| 74.7 |  | Russia (73) ▲                |
| 75.4 |  | Algeria (72) ▲               |
| 75.7 |  | Uzbekistan (=70) ▲           |
| 75.7 |  | Colombia (=70) ▲             |
| 75.9 |  | Jordan (69) ▲                |
| 76.2 |  | Kyrgyz Rep. (68) ▲           |
| 76.5 |  | Israel / West Bank (67) ▲    |
| 77.2 |  | Senegal (66) ▲               |
| 77.7 |  | Tajikistan (65) ▲            |
| 77.8 |  | Honduras (64) ▼              |
| 78.1 |  | Nicaragua (63) ▼             |
| 78.7 |  | Laos (62) ▲                  |
| 79.7 |  | Lesotho (61) ▲               |





## HIGH WARNING

|      |   |                          |
|------|---|--------------------------|
| 80.1 |    | Tanzania (60) ▼          |
| 80.3 |    | Turkey (59) ▲            |
| 80.9 |    | Madagascar (58) ▲        |
| 81.4 |    | Guatemala (57) ▲         |
| 81.7 |    | Comoros (56) ▲           |
| 81.9 |    | Solomon Islands (55) ▲   |
| 82.5 |    | Cambodia (54) ▲          |
| 82.6 |    | Equatorial Guinea (53) ▲ |
| 83.0 |    | Iran (52) ▲              |
| 83.1 |  | Philippines (=50) ▲      |
| 83.1 |  | Papua New Guinea (=50) ▲ |
| 83.3 |  | Malawi (49) ▲            |
| 83.9 |  | The Gambia (=47) ▲       |
| 83.9 |  | Burkina Faso (=47) ▲     |
| 84.0 |  | Sri Lanka (46) ▲         |
| 84.7 |  | Nepal (45) ▲             |
| 85.0 |  | Lebanon (44) ▲           |
| 85.1 |  | Djibouti (43) ▲          |
| 85.3 |  | Eswatini (42) ▲          |
| 85.5 |  | Timor-Leste (41) ▲       |
| 85.7 |  | Zambia (40) ▲            |
| 86.8 |  | Sierra Leone (39) ▲      |
| 87.4 |  | Togo (38) ▲              |
| 87.5 |  | Rwanda (37) ▲            |
| 87.7 |  | Bangladesh (36) ▲        |
| 87.8 |  | Angola (35) ▲            |
| 88.4 |  | Egypt (34) ▲             |
| 88.7 |  | Mozambique (33) =        |
| 89.3 |  | Venezuela (32) ▼         |






## ALERT

|      |   |                         |
|------|---|-------------------------|
| 90.1 |    | Mauritania (31) ▲       |
| 90.2 |    | Liberia (30) ▲          |
| 92.1 |    | Côte d'Ivoire (29) ▲    |
| 92.2 |    | Libya (28) ▲            |
| 92.5 |    | Congo (Republic) (27) ▲ |
| 92.7 |    | North Korea (26) ▲      |
| 93.5 |    | Kenya (25) ▲            |
| 94.2 |    | Pakistan (=23) ▲        |
| 94.2 |    | Ethiopia (=23) ▲        |
| 94.3 |  | Myanmar (22) ▲          |
| 94.5 |  | Mali (21) ▼             |
| 95.3 |  | Uganda (20) ▼           |
| 95.5 |  | Guinea Bissau (19) ▲    |
| 96.2 |  | Niger (18) △            |
| 96.4 |  | Eritrea (17) ▲          |
| 97.0 |  | Cameroon (16) ▼         |
| 98.2 |  | Burundi (15) ▼          |
| 98.5 |  | Nigeria (14) ▲          |
| 99.1 |  | Iraq (13) ▲             |
| 99.3 |  | Haiti (12) ▲            |
| 99.4 |  | Guinea (11) ▲           |
| 99.5 |  | Zimbabwe (10) ▲         |

## HIGH ALERT

|       |   |                                |
|-------|---|--------------------------------|
| 105.0 |  | Afghanistan (9) ▲              |
| 108.0 |  | Sudan (8) ▲                    |
| 108.5 |  | Chad (7) ▼                     |
| 108.9 |  | Central African Republic (6) ▲ |

## VERY HIGH ALERT

|       |   |                                   |
|-------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 110.2 |  | Congo (Democratic Republic) (5) ▲ |
| 111.5 |  | Syria (4) ▼                       |
| 112.2 |  | South Sudan (3) ▲                 |
| 112.3 |  | Somalia (2) ▲                     |
| 113.5 |  | Yemen (1) ▼                       |

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# ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

## J.J. MESSNER

According to the famed philosopher, Eric Idle, one should always look on the bright side of life. “If life seems jolly rotten,” Mr. Idle would have us know, “There’s something you’ve forgotten.”<sup>1</sup> From the perspective of the Fragile States Index (FSI), when the constant stream of the 24-hour news cycle peddles continual doom and gloom about the state and future of the world, that ‘something we’ve forgotten’ tends to be the long-term arc of development and increasing resilience. Countries move at different paces, for sure. Naturally, there will always be setbacks, shocks, and pressures. Of course, around the world there is still widespread fragility and vulnerability, plenty of poverty and inequality, and conflict and illiberalism. But broadly speaking, over the long-term, the world is becoming steadily less fragile. It often takes cold, hard data — like that produced by the FSI — to demonstrate that for all the negative press, there is significant progress occurring in the background.

## MOST WORSENEED COUNTRIES

Despite the constant incremental progress demonstrated by the majority of countries on the 2019 FSI, several countries have nevertheless stood out for increases in fragility and instability. Perhaps more interestingly is a growing division between the majority of the world that is slowly progressing, versus a handful of countries that are following a solid trend in the opposite direction. Of the 20 most worsened countries in the 2019 FSI, nine of those countries were also among the 20 most worsened countries in the 2018 FSI. Three of those countries — namely, **Brazil**, the **United States**, and **Venezuela** — have been among the 20 most worsened countries for each of the three most recent FSIs.

Two countries tied for most-worsened over the past 12 months.

## MOST WORSENEED COUNTRIES 2019

|                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| +3.1 ↗  Venezuela (89.3) | +1.4 ↗  Poland (42.8)   |
| +3.1 ↗  Brazil (71.8)    | +1.0 ↗  Mali (94.5)     |
| +2.8 ↗  Nicaragua (78.1) | +0.8 ↗  Yemen (113.5)   |
| +2.4 ↗  U.K. (36.7)      | +0.8 ↗  Tanzania (80.1) |
| +2.3 ↗  Togo (87.4)      | +0.8 ↗  Honduras (77.8) |
| +1.7 ↗  Cameroon (97.0)  | +0.6 ↗  U.S.A. (38.0)   |

## MOST IMPROVED COUNTRIES 2019

|                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| -5.3 ↘  Ethiopia (94.2)   | -3.0 ↘  Dom. Rep. (66.2)   |
| -3.8 ↘  Kenya (93.5)      | -3.0 ↘  Malaysia (60.5)    |
| -3.4 ↘  Uzbekistan (75.7) | -2.8 ↘  Zimbabwe (99.5)    |
| -3.2 ↘  Nepal (84.7)      | -2.8 ↘  Timor-Leste (85.5) |
| -3.2 ↘  The Gambia (83.9) | -2.8 ↘  Fiji (71.7)        |
| -3.1 ↘  Iraq (99.1)       | -2.8 ↘  Armenia (66.7)     |
| -3.1 ↘  Ecuador (71.2)    |                            |

**Venezuela** has been beset by enormous turmoil, and in the wake of a contested and deeply flawed election in 2018, now finds itself with two leaders — the incumbent, Nicolas Maduro, and Juan Guaidó, the President of the National Assembly who declared himself president of the country after the position of president was declared constitutionally vacant (and was subsequently recognized as such by

dozens of countries including most of Venezuela's regional neighbors). Much of the political turmoil in Venezuela has taken place in the first few months of 2019, and was thus not included in the 2019 FSI. Undoubtedly, had those events occurred during the 2019 FSI sample period, Venezuela's score would have likely been even worse. However, the 2019 FSI detected much of the underlying pressure on Venezuela, from widespread human flight, to a public health catastrophe, economic collapse, and significant crime and violence.

Though **Brazil** tied with Venezuela for most-worsened country in 2019, arguably its proximity to the growing instability in neighboring Venezuela was likely — and somewhat ironically — enough to see its score increase even further beyond that which reflects its own internal challenges. Nevertheless, Brazil's internal challenges remain significant, with tumultuous politics and a new president, Jair Bolsonaro, who came to power through a campaign fueled by harsh right-wing rhetoric that included sympathy with the country's former dictatorship, threats of retribution (and even death) against his political opponents, and intolerant views on a vast spectrum of society from women to homosexuals to indigenous Brazilians. Though the fractious election campaign and the divisive rhetoric of Mr. Bolsonaro no doubt pushed Brazil's score higher than it might otherwise have been, the country's poor performance is far more deeply-rooted in a general economic malaise, rampant corruption, and crumbling public services that have seen Brazil's FSI score worsen for six straight years. Just as with previous observations that the rise of President Donald Trump was more clearly a symptom of a long-term trend of growing pressure on the United States' in areas such as Group Grievance and Factionalized Elites rather than a cause, it is possible to see Brazil's scores in the same light — that as divisive as Mr. Bolsonaro may be, and as much as his administration may have the potential to contribute to a worsening in Brazil's performance, Brazil's negative trend significantly pre-dates the 2018 election.

**Nicaragua** has ranked as the third-most worsened country for 2019 after the country's sharp turn for the worst after years of relative stability. After a collapse of support from key stakeholders, unpopular policy initiatives, and a naked attempt to retain power within the family of President Daniel Ortega, hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans took to the streets in protest, met by a severe and brutal response by the government. As the previous Ortega regime demonstrated remarkable resilience, it is unclear as to how long the crisis will endure. Regardless, even for a country otherwise demonstrating relative stability, it demonstrates how rapidly a

country's fortunes can change, and just how important a country's resilience is in proportion to the level of fragility it confronts.

After scoring among the top 10 most worsened countries in the 2018 FSI, the **United Kingdom** is this year the fourth-most worsened country. The United Kingdom has again seen increases in its indicator scores for Group Grievance, Factionalized Elites, and State Legitimacy, among the same indicators that have been driving the country's spiral over the past decade — indeed, more long-term, the United Kingdom is now ranked as the 15th most worsened country on the FSI since 2009. Much of the current turmoil can be attributed to the country's farcical efforts to make good on the 2016 referendum where, after a highly divisive — and arguably, disingenuous and even dishonest — campaign, a slim majority of Britons voted in favor of leaving the European Union. Given that the government's efforts to execute “Brexit” have gone from bad to worse in the early months of 2019, it is likely that the United Kingdom's score could easily have been much worse — and may well be in the 2020 FSI. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that Brexit is still a relatively new phenomenon, and much of the long-term worsening for the United Kingdom was in-train well before the Brexit referendum. Indeed, even before the Brexit referendum took place, the United Kingdom had the seventh-worst trend for the three indicators mentioned above. This suggests that the country's ills are much more deeply-rooted and unlikely to be solved in the near-term, regardless of Brexit.

Just as the FSI was able to chart a remarkably aligned descent of both the United Kingdom and the **United States** over the past few years on select indicators, so the trend continues of both countries following a similar trajectory. Though, this year, the United States' descent has been slowed somewhat by improving economic indicators as the economy has continued to defy gravity. This economic success has to a degree masked increases on indicators such as State Legitimacy, as well as the administration's reaction to the refugee “crisis” that has seen a worsening of the United States' Human Rights and Rule of Law indicator.

Over the long-term, **Libya** continued to rank as the most-worsened country of the past decade, closely followed by **Syria**, **Mali**, and **Yemen**, as all four countries find themselves embroiled in ongoing civil conflict. Notably, the ranking of **Venezuela** as the fifth-most worsened country since 2009 demonstrates how the country's current woes are the result of a severe long-term worsening trend. Indeed, more recently, Venezuela ranks as the most-worsened

country of the past five years, making clear its rapid rate-of-change. Though many of the countries among the top 20 most-worsened seem to have “peaked” and have begun trends in a more positive direction — **Greece**, for example, despite being ranked seventh-worsened over the past decade has more recently seen a three-year improving trend — there are still some concerning trends. **Mozambique**, for example, worsened significantly from 2006-2016 and has remained at that elevated level as conflict has threatened to renew in the north of the country.

### MOST IMPROVED COUNTRIES

After having ranked as the most-worsened country in the 2017 FSI, **Ethiopia** has staged a remarkable turn-around this year, ranking as the most-improved country in the wake of the ambitious reform agenda of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed that has led to more political and social inclusiveness, breaking down the previous ethno-centric system that the country endured for decades. Ethiopia has also benefited from — and contributed to — a decrease in regional tension, marked by a détente with neighboring Eritrea, with whom Ethiopia fought a war only two decades ago.

Over the long-term, former Soviet states continue to dominate the list of most-improved countries, with **Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan,** and **Uzbekistan** all ranking among the Top 20. Of course, it is important to recognize that among the most improved countries are some that continue to be restrictive, autocratic, and subject to closed civic space. Herein lies an important distinction in reducing fragility over time — when countries begin from a poor starting point, significant gains are much easier to detect and measure and even relatively simple reforms can greatly reduce a country’s fragility. The same can be said for others among the Top 20 that are post-conflict countries, such as **Colombia** and **Sri Lanka** — in recovering from conflict, simply not being at war is pretty obviously a significant improvement. It is therefore likely no accident that former Soviet states as well as post-conflict countries are among the most improved since their rate-of-change has been faster. However, whether this trend can continue without more fundamental political, economic, or social change is unclear.

Though the rate-of-change may not be sufficiently fast to rate among any “Top” lists, one quiet improvement in FSI 2019 is truly remarkable. Throughout the life of the FSI, there has been considerable interest in the number of African countries that are

### LONG-TERM MOST WORSENERD 2009-2019

|  |   |
|--|---|
| +22.8 ↗  Libya     | +4.5 ↗  Djibouti       |
| +21.7 ↗  Syria     | +4.0 ↗  United States  |
| +15.8 ↗  Mali      | +3.7 ↗  South Africa   |
| +15.4 ↗  Yemen     | +3.5 ↗  C.A.R.         |
| +9.8 ↗  Venezuela  | +3.1 ↗  United Kingdom |
| +8.0 ↗  Mozambique | +3.1 ↗  Japan          |
| +7.8 ↗  Greece     | +3.0 ↗  Senegal        |
| +6.1 ↗  Eritrea    | +2.9 ↗  Eswatini       |
| +4.9 ↗  The Gambia | +2.8 ↗  Angola         |
| +4.8 ↗  Bahrain    | +2.8 ↗  Oman           |

### LONG-TERM MOST IMPROVED 2009-2019

|  |   |
|--|---|
| -19.8 ↘  Georgia         | -13.5 ↘  Romania         |
| -19.8 ↘  Cuba            | -13.5 ↘  Colombia        |
| -18.0 ↘  Moldova         | -13.5 ↘  China           |
| -17.1 ↘  Uzbekistan      | -13.4 ↘  Bolivia         |
| -15.3 ↘  Bhutan          | -12.9 ↘  Turkmenistan    |
| -14.5 ↘  Zimbabwe        | -12.9 ↘  Kyrgyz Republic |
| -14.3 ↘  Malta           | -12.7 ↘  Sri Lanka       |
| -14.1 ↘  Belarus         | -12.7 ↘  Panama          |
| -13.7 ↘  Trinidad & Tob. | -12.6 ↘  Croatia         |
| -13.7 ↘  Indonesia       | -12.6 ↘  Tajikistan      |

ranked as highly fragile. Indeed, among the 30 most fragile countries in the 2019 FSI, 21 of them are to be found in Africa. So much so that in previous years, the FSI has even been accused of having an “anti-Africa

bias.” And yet, in 2019, an African nation has, for the first time, ranked in the “Very Stable” category, with **Mauritius** ascending to join the likes of the United Kingdom and United States. Indeed, if the year-on-year changes of 2019 are repeated in 2020, Mauritius — a member of both the African Union and the Southern African Development Community — could easily rank better than both the United Kingdom and United States in the 2020 FSI. And by no means is Mauritius alone — both **Botswana** and the **Seychelles** now rank in the Stable Category, demonstrating the increasing level of stability in many parts of Africa.

Just as Mauritius this year became the first African country to break through to the Very Stable category, it is also important to recognize that **Singapore** became the first Asian nation to move into the Sustainable category. Often, Mauritius has been referred to at the ‘Singapore of Africa’ — both countries’ leading positions within their regions may suggest that it is actually a meaningful comparison.

## A WORD ABOUT RANKINGS

Fifteen years ago, when the first Failed States Index was published in *Foreign Policy* magazine, much of the emphasis and attention was focused on the rankings. The question was invariably, ‘who is the world’s most failed state?’ However, a decade-and-a-half later, now armed with 15 years of trend data, the discourse is fortunately far more nuanced and now the focus is much more on trends and rate-of-change — and, more importantly, measuring a country’s performance over time against itself rather than against its peers.

Nevertheless, the temptation to rank countries — particularly wherever quantitative data is involved — is nearly inescapable. To that extent, it is worth mentioning that the 2019 FSI saw a new country claim the unfortunate distinction of top position, a position held by only three other countries in the history of the FSI — Cote d’Ivoire ranked number one in the very first FSI in 2005, before Somalia held the position for some years until it began trading places with South

Sudan upon that country’s independence and its initial entry into the 2012 FSI. This year, **Yemen** claimed the top position for the first time as a result of its civil war and humanitarian catastrophe. Although Yemen’s top ranking may provide cause for idle chatter, really the most attention should be given to its rapid worsening over the past decade, and the regional instability and power plays for which its population are unspeakably suffering. Equally, as much as they are neither the most fragile state in the 2019 FSI, there is still much to be concerned about in both Somalia and South Sudan as they continue to be wracked by conflict and deeply entrenched poverty and suffering. A ranking, in the end, is pretty meaningless — it is the underlying scores, and as far as they can be determined, the specific root causes and drivers of instability that must be recognized and addressed.

\* \* \*

With civil conflict continuing to rage in Libya, Mali, Syria and Yemen, Venezuela on the brink of collapse, worsening divisions in Brazil and the United States, and one own-goal after another in British governance, it is easy to feel that the world is falling apart at the seams. And, for many, that is the day-to-day reality. However, the 2019 FSI suggests that, for much of the world, reality is improving, at least incrementally. For 146 of the 178 countries analyzed by the FSI, 2019 is at least slightly better than 2018; a similar number of countries have meaningfully improved over the past decade, suggesting that the results of 2019 are not an outlier. Certainly, there is still much conflict, poverty, and inequality in the world; there is still significant fragility, risk, and vulnerability. But the arc of development is long, and slow. The data of the FSI suggests that the majority of countries are slowly, but surely, making their way along that arc and providing a more hopeful future for their people — the data makes clear that there is enough reason to “always look on the bright side.”<sup>2</sup>

### Endnotes

1. Idle, Eric. *Monty Python’s Life of Brian*.
2. Ibid.



# THE SICK MAN OF SOUTH AMERICA



## CHARLES FIERTZ

When the famed Chilean author, Isabel Allende, had to leave her native country in the wake of the military coup against leftist president Salvador Allende in 1973, she and her family fled to the safety and stability of Venezuela, then a beacon among the tumult of Latin America. In a recent interview, Ms. Allende recounted,

*“I went to Venezuela, because Venezuela was one of the very few democratic countries left in Latin America where you could go. ... The country has all the resources. At the time when I went there in the ‘70s it was one of the richest countries in the world because of the oil boom. The problem, at that time, everything looked very abundant and there was a lot of corruption, but there was enough corruption for everybody.”<sup>1</sup>*

The contrast between Venezuela of the 1960s and 1970s – when it had a per capita GDP six times higher than Spain and was the first country in the world to be declared malaria-free – and today is a sober reminder that stability can be ephemeral.

Venezuela is tied for the most worsened country in the 2019 Fragile States Index (FSI), its sixth consecutive year of decline. Though it is easy to point to the country’s current political turmoil and economic disaster, there is a deeper and more insidious worsening at play. Beyond metaphors, Venezuela is literally getting sick, with the resurgence of diseases from AIDS to Zika reflected in the sharp deterioration in the Public Services and Demographic Pressures indicators. The former encompasses the breakdown in health services

(as well as other essential services like policing and electricity) while the latter also includes the decrease in food security and nutrition and an increase in mortality that have occurred in recent years.

Venezuela was once the envy of the region. The country was declared malaria-free nearly a decade before the United States. Today, Venezuela is estimated to have over 1.2 million cases, a figure which has increased by as much as 400 percent in the last ten years due to shortages of medicine and the proliferation of illegal mining in response to the country’s economic crisis. Actions taken over the last five years by the administration of President Nicolas Maduro have exacerbated the crisis; the Ministry of Popular Power for Health stopped publishing its weekly bulletin of epidemiological statistics in 2015 after 77 years of almost continuous publication. In 2016 the Venezuelan Center for Classification of Diseases was eliminated. Health researchers have reported being attacked by pro-government paramilitary *colectivos* and sick citizens have taken to blockading roads for days to receive even half doses of treatment.

Malaria is not the only infectious disease that Venezuelans are battling – in 2017 Health Minister Antonieta Caporale was fired after her department published a warning concerning a rise in malaria, diphtheria, and Zika cases – one unpublished study estimated that up to 80 percent of pregnant women in Venezuela may be infected with Zika – as well as rising infant and maternal mortality rates. Measles also returned to the country in 2017 and has now spread to neighboring countries, with confirmed reports in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Other diseases, including

tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, are also reportedly on the rise.

Hunger and undernourishment have undoubtedly increased, particularly over the past five years, though the extent of the problem is somewhat unclear. Widespread reports from 2017 of 90% of Venezuelans being unable to afford enough food and losing an average of 19 pounds originated from a 2016 study of 6,400 participants. However, the same study reported that only one-quarter of respondents reported their nutrition to be deficient and three-quarters reported eating three meals per day, though the latter figure had fallen by 20 percentage points in a year. The 2018 UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report on food insecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean found that the prevalence of hunger tripled from 2010-2012 to 2015-2017, from 3.6% to 11.7%, representing an increase of 3.7 million people. While this rate is still below that in countries such as Guatemala and Honduras, no other country in the region has recently experienced even a remotely similar increase. Taken together, these figures suggest a deeply concerning substantial increase in hunger and undernourishment, but the most widely reported figures are on the extreme end of the available data.

As a result of the increasing hunger and disease along with the broader economic collapse – GDP has fallen by more than 15% each of the last three years and inflation has surpassed a million percent, with prices on average doubling every 19 days – and breakdown of public services, millions of Venezuelans have fled the country, reflected in the sharp worsening in the Refugees & IDPs indicator in the 2019 FSI. According to the UNHCR, the number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela reached 3 million in November 2018. The UN has estimated that 2 million more could be added to that total in 2019. The region has a history of receptivity towards migrants and refugees and the response to the Venezuelan crisis – one of the largest population movements in Latin American history – has thus far been largely marked by a continuation of this openness, with several countries creating temporary programs to offer legal status and work permits to Venezuelans. Additionally, a coordinated regional strategy was introduced with the signing of the Quito Declaration in September and the launch of an action plan emphasizing regularization and integration of migrants two months later. However, some signs of backlash and restrictions have also started appearing in 2018, including anti-Venezuelan riots in Brazil and Chile's shift to requiring Venezuelans to acquire a visa in Caracas rather than upon arrival.

Despite economic collapse, increasing hunger, the return of previously eradicated diseases, the departure of about around 10% of his country's population, and the crumbling legitimacy of his regime (reflected in the FSI's State Legitimacy indicator), Mr. Maduro has so far managed to hold on to power. The military is Mr. Maduro's primary support structure, their loyalty secured by control of government institutions and state-owned companies. They also maintain lucrative links to organized crime, with many high-ranking officials holding simultaneous positions in the *Cartel de los Soles*, or Cartel of the Suns. While small numbers of low-level members of the military have mutinied and joined the opposition, the upper ranks are unlikely to risk their privileged positions. The armed forces are supported by the *Fuerza de Acción Especial de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana* (FAES), an elite unit created by Mr. Maduro during the protests in 2017 which has largely become an extrajudicial execution squad, and the *colectivos*, armed groups originally created by former President Hugo Chávez that have evolved into a cross of criminal gang and paramilitary shock troops, often with close links to Colombian guerrilla groups such as the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) and dissidents of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC). Those groups have established a strong presence in Venezuela – the ELN has a presence in 13 of Venezuela's 24 states – and have even assumed various state functions in some areas of the country, vowing to defend the Maduro regime in the event of an armed confrontation. Finally, Mr. Maduro has received foreign economic and military support from Cuba and Russia. While the extent of that support is debated, the Cubans particularly play at least a key advisory role in the Venezuelan intelligence and military sectors, including helping to foil a coup plot in March 2018. Maduro's hold on power has also been facilitated by the splintering of the opposition after the 2017 protests into seemingly irreconcilable factions split on questions of both strategy and tactics. The emergence of Juan Guaidó as self-declared acting President supported by much of the international community in the first days of 2019 has closed that rift, but it may re-emerge in the future.

The sixth consecutive year of worsening FSI scores for Venezuela reflect a crisis that is deepening and broadening, reversing decades of progress amid the breakdown in the provision of basic goods and public services. A multi-day blackout in March 2019 affected 70% of the country and plunged its major cities into darkness, showing that

*Continued on page 18*



# BRAZIL'S SLIDE CONTINUES AND TAKES A LURCH TO THE RIGHT



## CHARLES FIERTZ

As Brazil continues its 5-year slide of worsening on the Fragile States Index (FSI), this year marks the country's sharpest year-on-year decline yet, seeing it tie for most-worsened country. Dashing tentative hopes for reversal and recovery that had emerged at the end of 2017, 2018 saw the collapse of the first shoots of economic recovery, continued sky-high crime rates, anti-immigrant riots targeting Venezuelan refugees, and an election marked by an assassination attempt on one candidate and the imprisonment of another.

Despite hopeful signs in the early parts of the year, a robust recovery from Brazil's worst-ever recession failed to materialize. Some of the most commonly cited causes include the failure in February of the government to reform the pension system, an economic crisis in neighboring Argentina that spooked foreign investors, and a week-long truck drivers' strike that paralyzed the country in June. Growth forecasts were slashed; inflation – a historically persistent concern – began to rise; the fiscal situation rapidly deteriorated. These challenges, reflected in the Economy indicator score, combined with the recession of the past several years, led many of Brazil's 30-million-strong 'new middle class', which had been lifted out of poverty under the leadership of former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT), to abandon the party they had previously backed and turn to far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro.

This disillusionment with the PT was also fed by perceptions of seemingly limitless corruption amongst the political elite and increasing crime rates over the past several years. The *lava jato* (or "car wash") investigations – which were explicitly modeled on the

mani pulite investigations that brought down the political ruling class in Italy in the 1980s and paved the way for the rise of Berlusconi – had uncovered an extensive web of corruption implicating numerous leading political figures, including Lula himself. Initially very popular, these investigations over time had eroded Brazilians' faith in democracy and the legitimacy of the three major political parties. At the same time, the crime rate had been spiraling upwards, and though the homicide rate in 2018 was slightly below the record-high rate in 2017, urban residents in particular were often threatened by turf wars between rival gangs, extrajudicial killings by the police, and frequent armed robberies.

Underinvestment in public services, reflected in a significant increase in the Public Services score, was another source of frustration and anger amongst Brazilians. Increases in bus and metro fares in 2013 had sparked massive protests directed against Mr. da Silva's successor Dilma Rousseff, and a survey one month before the elections found that 35% of voters named either the crisis-wracked healthcare system or the education system as the most important problem. In the poor and isolated northwestern state of Roraima, this underinvestment is exacerbated by the influx of nearly 200,000 Venezuelans since the start of 2017,<sup>1</sup> reflected in the Refugees & IDPs score. Attempts to move some to other parts of the country have been resisted by local authorities, and as a result most remain in Roraima. In August, more than a thousand were forced to flee back across the border after protesters trashed their possessions and set fire to camps.

When campaigning in the 2018 presidential election commenced, conventional wisdom held that the presumptive frontrunner would be Geraldo Alckmin. Mr. Alckmin had lost to Lula in 2006 but was

backed by the business community and the *centrão*, the large number of intermediate-sized, nonideological parties that exist primarily to extract public funds and favors for their leaders. Though this support entitled him to half of all political ad time on television, Mr. Alckmin never rose above fourth place in the polls and finished with under 5% of the votes in the first round. The only candidate to ever actually lead Mr. Bolsonaro in the polls was Mr. da Silva, despite his arrest in 2017 on corruption and money laundering charges which made him ineligible to run. Mr. da Silva appealed twice; the second appeal, to the Supreme Court, was denied a few days after the head of the Army warned that granting the appeal would threaten the stability of the country which it was the duty of the armed forces to defend.

Mr. Bolsonaro, forced to retire from the military at age 33 after plotting a series of grenade attacks in military garrisons around Rio as part of a campaign to increase pay, was later elected to the Rio de Janeiro city council. Within two years, he had moved on to Congress in a district that included the *Vila Militar*, an area that contained the largest concentration of troops in Latin America. Re-elected six times, Mr. Bolsonaro's congressional career included praise for the military dictatorship; calls for reinstating the death penalty, lowering the age of criminal responsibility, and easing access to guns; and attacks on leftists, homosexuals and other 'enemies' of society. Despite his lengthy tenure, Mr. Bolsonaro was never popular in Congress, receiving just 4 votes out of 513 when he ran for speaker in 2016.

Many factors have been cited to explain Mr. Bolsonaro's surprising victory by nearly 17 percentage points in the first round and over 10 points in the second. Some of the most frequently cited include his embrace of alternative media, his support from evangelicals, the assassination attempt which kept him out of the debates in which he had struggled early on, and the late start of Fernando Haddad, the PT's last-minute replacement for Mr. da Silva. Also important was the disillusionment of the electorate -- voter turnout was the lowest in 20 years and 72% of voters reported being 'despondent' a few days before the election. The voters that did turn out to support Mr. Bolsonaro came largely from Brazil's cities -- he won every major city in the country -- and especially from the poor urban outskirts most hard hit by the crime wave and economic collapse.<sup>2</sup>

Between the first and second rounds of the election, police and electoral justice officials conducted raids -- sometimes without warrants -- in public universities in several states, an echo of similar actions during Brazil's military dictatorship. The raids were allegedly to stop illegal electoral advertising, but much of the confiscated

material did not mention any candidates or parties. While these raids, which the Supreme Court voted unanimously to suspend three days after the second round of voting, likely did not have a major impact on the final result, they represent a concern for the future.

Unlike many previous Brazilian regimes, Mr. Bolsonaro has not used ministerial jobs to buy the support of the many small and intermediate-sized parties that comprise much of Congress. Mr. Bolsonaro's new cabinet is instead principally composed of military men (including the largest number of military officers since the end of the military dictatorship), libertarian technocrats led by former banker Paulo Guedes, and Christian conservative ideologues. Outside these factions is Sérgio Moro, the former chief justice who presided over *lava jato*, who has joined the cabinet as Minister of Justice. Since accepting the position, Mr. Moro has suggested that his Ten Measures Against Corruption -- which for years he has insisted were needed to cleanse the country -- need 'rethinking', and the approach he takes to corruption as part of the government will merit close attention.

On one issue -- Mr. Bolsonaro's promise to unleash the police -- results are already visible. Killings by police in Rio de Janeiro doubled in January 2019 compared to December and efforts to clamp down on gang-controlled prisons in Ceará state have resulted in a gang truce that was followed by hundreds of attacks on infrastructure in dozens of municipalities. This represents a doubling-down on a militarized response to crime that has consistently worsened human rights and rarely improved -- and sometimes worsened -- crime and violence.<sup>3</sup>

Now that Mr. Bolsonaro has taken power, he will need to balance the competing factions in his cabinet and translate his sometimes-vague campaign pronouncements into concrete policy measures. With the institutional constraints on Bolsonaro's power along with his fractious coalition, it is far from clear how things will unfold in the next few years. Mr. Bolsonaro is frequently compared to U.S. President Donald Trump, or lumped together with the populist nationalists that have been rising in Europe. Neither of these analogues, however, fully captures the unique pressures and context that have given rise to Mr. Bolsonaro, and neither will provide an adequate guide going forward.

#### Endnotes

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# YEMEN TAKES TOP POSITION AS MOST FRAGILE STATE



## CHRISTINA MURPHY

As much as we try to focus on the performance of individual countries on their own terms, there is an unavoidable curiosity and interest attached to the rankings of the Fragile States Index (FSI), and specifically to the country that ranks “top.” In the history of the FSI, only three countries had ever held the ignominious distinction of number one spot – Somalia and South Sudan, who have traded places for most of the duration of the FSI, as well as Cote d’Ivoire, who was ranked top of the very first FSI in 2005. This year, a fourth country has taken top position: Yemen.

With a total score of 113.5, Yemen’s ascension up the FSI probably comes as little surprise to many, as the result of a prolonged civil war and humanitarian catastrophe. Yemen receives maximum scores of 10.0 in the areas of Security Apparatus, Factionalized Elites, and External Intervention, and has scores of 9.0 or above in all but two indicators (Human Flight and Uneven Development). Yemen is also the fourth-most worsened country over the last decade, behind only Libya, Syria, and Mali. At the indicator level, the country saw the greatest worsening in External Intervention (+2.7 points), Human Rights and Rule of Law (+2.2 points), Group Grievance (+1.9 points), and Refugees and IDPs (+1.7 points) during this period.

Now entering its fifth year, the country’s civil war continued to intensify throughout 2018, with seemingly little hope of resolution. In June 2018, the launch of the Saudi and Emirati coalition-led “Operation Golden Victory” focused global attention on the Houthi-controlled city of Hodeidah. Located on the coast of the Red Sea in

western Yemen, Hodeidah serves as a critical port for the delivery of food, fuel, and aid to the country. Humanitarian and human rights groups warned that attacks on Hodeidah could have massive impacts on the Yemeni population, affecting more than 300,000 children and sparking famine throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> Although the worst-case scenarios did not ultimately come to pass, data collected by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) showed that civilian deaths increased by 164% in the four months following the launch of the offensive.<sup>2</sup> After months of negotiations, the United Nations brokered a fragile ceasefire deal between Houthi forces in Hodeidah and the internationally recognized government in December 2018. However, as of the time of publication, troop withdrawals had stalled and the city suffered a major outbreak of violence in mid-March.

As reflected in Yemen’s extremely high FSI scores of 9.7 in Demographic Pressures, 9.6 in Refugees and IDPs, and 9.8 in Public Services, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is dire. By the end of 2018, 75 percent of the population was in need of humanitarian assistance<sup>3</sup> and more than 3.5 million people were displaced.<sup>4</sup> Some 14 million Yemenis face starvation.<sup>5</sup> Schools, hospitals, and critical infrastructure such as water treatment facilities have been damaged or destroyed in the fighting. Since 2016 the country has experienced the worst epidemic of cholera in recorded history, causing more than 1 million suspected cases.<sup>6</sup>

Given the current crisis, it may be tempting to attribute Yemen’s fragility solely to the civil war, or even to the 2011 Arab Spring protests that led to the end of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh’s

rule. However, the roots of fragility in Yemen run much deeper. Looking back at the FSI from 2007 – a full five years before the Arab Spring – Yemen was still ranked among the top 25 most fragile states in the world. In the 2007 FSI, Yemen's highest indicator scores were Factionalized Elites (9.0), Uneven Development (8.7), Public Services (8.1), Economy (8.0), and Demographic Pressures (8.0). These scores point to characteristics of the Yemeni state which would later undermine the country's ability to adapt to and absorb pressures on the state, eventually facilitating the descent into civil war.

For example, the administration of President Saleh, who ruled Yemen for more than 30 years, was notorious for widespread corruption and mismanagement. One UN report estimates that Saleh may have amassed up to \$60 billion in assets through corruption after taking power.<sup>7</sup> As reflected in the country's high Uneven Development, Public Services, and Demographic Pressures scores, the wealth of Saleh and the political elite failed to translate into benefits for the wider Yemeni population. Yemen remains one of the poorest countries in the region and more than 34% of the population was living below the poverty line in 2005.<sup>8</sup> As in many other countries in the region, these conditions fueled grievances around unemployment, economic conditions and corruption that led directly to the 2011 protests which resulted in Saleh's departure. Furthermore, the country's powerful tribes and lingering north-south divide have historically placed great pressure on the state in the areas of Factionalized Elites and State Legitimacy. During his tenure Saleh was able to maneuver the country's fractious tribal politics and juggle alliances to stay in power. However, this came at the expense of

building strong state institutions, and the country's various tribal and political factions fractured after his departure.

Looking ahead, it is hoped that the ceasefire negotiated in December 2018 can be the first step on the road toward a larger peace process in 2019 and beyond. Negotiating a political and military solution to end the conflict and provide protection and aid to Yemeni civilians is essential in the short term. But as Yemen and its partners eventually seek to rebuild and imagine a post-conflict future, it is equally critical to consider the historical roots and drivers of fragility. Addressing these longer term needs highlighted by the country's FSI scores – from encouraging sustainable and inclusive economic growth, to building strong and transparent state institutions - must be an integral part of any recovery framework in order to build and sustain peace in Yemen.

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## THE SICK MAN OF SOUTH AMERICA

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the situation may deteriorate yet further. With two people now claiming the mantle of presidential legitimacy and millions more refugees and migrants expected to leave the country over the next year, 2019 is likely to see countries outside Venezuela increasingly affected by, and involved in, the crisis.

Hopefully these regional and international stakeholders can coordinate to find a solution that helps the Venezuelans currently suffering inside and outside their country, rather than using the country and its people as a stage on which to pursue their own interests. However, irrespective of any improvement in the short-term, Venezuela demonstrates how even once-prosperous nations can spiral into fragility.

#### Endnotes



# SECOND TIME UNLUCKY FOR NICARAGUA



## CHARLES FIERTZ

In a sharp reversal from nearly a decade of almost continuous improvement, Nicaragua has taken a sharp turn to rank as the third most-worsened country on the 2019 Fragile States Index (FSI). The eruption of mass protests (quelled only after months of violent crackdowns) has shaken the image of Nicaragua as an island of recent, relative stability and tourist destination in a tumultuous region.

Despite the bloodshed involved in crushing and dispersing the protests, President Daniel Ortega reportedly continues to enjoy the support of nearly one-third of Nicaraguans and has shown no signs of relinquishing power before elections in 2021, when it is widely feared that he will rig the vote to ensure his wife, Rosario Murillo, succeeds him.

Mr. Ortega ruled Nicaragua throughout the 1980s as leader of the Sandanista regime. After returning to the presidency in 2007, Mr. Ortega established important alliances with the business community and the Catholic Church. To secure that support, he guaranteed a high level of private sector input into government economic policy and co-opted the support of the church by supporting a blanket ban on abortion days before the 2006 election. Mr. Ortega began frequently referring to a “Christian, socialist, and caring Nicaragua” and secured the support even of some of the harshest critics of the 1980s Sandinista regime. Mr. Ortega also spent freely on programs like “Zero Hunger” and the distribution of food and housing to ensure a solid base of support in a country with the second-highest poverty rate in the Western Hemisphere. Abroad, he mirrored the broad

coalition he had built at home, receiving hundreds of millions of dollars every year from both Venezuela and from international financial institutions (IFIs) like the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Under Mr. Ortega’s second presidency, Nicaragua had enjoyed strong and sustained economic growth of between 4-5% annually and inflation was eventually brought below 4% for three straight years from 2015 to 2017.<sup>1</sup> This success was reflected in the steady improvement in the FSI Economy indicator, which went from 7.8 the year before Mr. Ortega took office to 5.6 in last year’s FSI. Nicaragua’s economic performance was similarly and repeatedly praised by both the World Bank and IMF. Mr. Ortega also managed to protect Nicaragua from the violence occurring in its northern neighbors – the homicide rate fell by 44% from 2006 to 2016 while in El Salvador and Honduras it grew by 28% and 37%, to 11.5 and 7.5 times higher than in Nicaragua, respectively.<sup>2</sup> Nicaragua’s Demographic Pressures indicator score also improved substantially, improving from 7.5 the first year Mr. Ortega took office to 5.4 in last year’s FSI, reflecting improvements in population and health pressures.

As the economy grew and crime fell, Ortega and the Sandinistas were eroding democratic checks and balances, reflected in a worsening in the State Legitimacy indicator score from 6.3 in FSI 2008 to 7.9 in FSI 2017. This backsliding of democracy began even before his election, when Ortega made a wide-ranging pact with the leader of the Liberal Party, Arnoldo Alemán. Alemán received protection from corruption charges, and in exchange facilitated Mr. Ortega’s election and permitted the installation of Sandinista loyalists throughout key oversight institutions, including the Supreme Electoral Council and the

Supreme Court. The Sandinistas leveraged this control to widen their margin of victory in municipal elections in 2008 through electoral fraud and open the door for Mr. Ortega to run for re-election in 2011 and 2016. Mr. Ortega further consolidated his power by gaining greater control over the media and using state institutions to harass and disqualify opponent parties and politicians as well as many non-governmental organizations.

In the 2016 elections, Mr. Ortega barred international observers and named his wife, Ms. Murillo, as the vice-presidential candidate, in a clear move towards establishing a familial dynasty reminiscent of the Somoza regime that he himself had fought against in the 1960s and 1970s. This was followed by concentrating increasing power in Ms. Murillo's hands, including by replacing traditional Sandinistas with her supporters. By this time, however, internal and external support had begun falling away. Aid from the Venezuelan government declined precipitously, dropping by 10% in 2014 and falling to only 5% of the 2013 level by 2017. Although the IFIs did not immediately follow suit, the United States blocked a loan to Nicaragua from the Inter-American Development Bank after the 2016 elections and in early 2017 a bill requiring the U.S. to block all IFI loans to the Nicaraguan government was introduced. Later that year, the U.S. used its new powers under the Magnitsky Act to sanction the President of Nicaragua's Supreme Electoral Council. At home, the loss of Venezuelan funds forced the Ortega administration to cut back on social spending which, combined with increasingly brazen corruption, undermined their popular support. The business community had also begun to back away from their alliance with the president and the leadership of the Catholic Church passed to a new generation of bishops uncomfortable with the Sandinista regime.

The spark that escalated the building tension came in April 2018. On the 16th, on the day of the IMF Spring Session, the government announced a series of cuts to social security programs. No warning was given to either the public or the private sector, prompting the final dissolution of the alliance with the business community, which came out in open opposition to the announcement. The next day, there was a protest by senior citizens against the announced cuts to pensions. The protesters were roughed up by government forces, provoking student protests over the next few days. The government responded by opening fire, killing several protestors. Hundreds of thousands across the country responded by taking to the streets where they were met with a bloody crackdown by the security services and paramilitary forces. Hundreds were killed and thousands

more disappeared, and former First Police Commissioner Francisco Díaz confirmed to a Norwegian newspaper that vigilante groups, which the government had claimed were composed of pro-government civilians, were an organized and centrally directed force of undercover police officers. Another former police officer reported that Mr. Ortega ordered criminal investigators within the police to hunt down and eliminate opposition leaders. One particularly brutal incident occurred on May 30 – Mother's Day – when a march led by mothers of victims killed during the protests ended with 15 dead.

By the end of August, the protesters had largely been defeated and scattered, and on October 13 the police announced that protests without prior approval were banned. Mass arrests forced anti-government leaders into hiding or exile, many to neighboring Costa Rica. A report by the Organization of American States found that the Ortega administration committed crimes against humanity, including extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detentions, criminalization of protest, and failure to investigate the deaths of citizens. Since the end of the protests, the government has increasingly cracked down on the remaining free media and in January 2019, re-introduced the same reforms that triggered the protests.

The brutal repression of protesters – captured in the unprecedented 2.4-point increase in the Human Rights and Rule of Law indicator – has reflected a shattering of the government's legitimacy both at home and abroad. However, the regime appears to be solidly in control, without danger of imminent collapse, regardless of the claims of some opposition figures. The fragmentation of the opposition makes future dialogue difficult and the re-introduction of the same reforms that touched off the protests suggests an unwillingness on the part of the government to back down in any meaningful way.




However, Sandinista political history has been marked by the granting of concessions to ensure its survival, even to its erstwhile enemies. Mr. Ortega even opened the door to talks with the United States at the height of the protest movement, offering a some hope that the events of 2018 need not repeat themselves in the near future. Nevertheless, Nicaragua provides a lesson on how a country's relative stability and be both fragile and temporary, and how quickly the fortunes of a country, lacking sufficient resilience, can rapidly change.

#### Endnotes

1. According to World Bank statistics
2. Ibid.



# RUMBLINGS OF ARAB SPRING 2.0

|  | TOTAL SCORE<br>FSI SCORE 2019 | RANK<br>OVERALL 2019                         | CHANGE<br>YEAR-ON-YEAR           | MEDIUM-TERM<br>TREND             | LONG-TERM<br>TREND               |
|--|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|  <b>ALGERIA</b>   | <b>75.4</b><br>(MAXIMUM 120)  | <b>72<sup>nd</sup></b><br>(OF 178 COUNTRIES) | <b>-0.4</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2018 | <b>-3.4</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2014 | <b>-5.2</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2009 |
|  <b>MOROCCO</b>   | <b>73.0</b><br>(MAXIMUM 120)  | <b>78<sup>th</sup></b><br>(OF 178 COUNTRIES) | <b>-1.0</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2018 | <b>-1.4</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2014 | <b>-4.1</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2009 |
|  <b>TUNISIA</b> | <b>70.1</b><br>(MAXIMUM 120)  | <b>95<sup>th</sup></b><br>(OF 178 COUNTRIES) | <b>-2.0</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2018 | <b>-7.4</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2014 | <b>+2.5</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2009 |

## PATRICIA TAFT

In late 2010, in a city in central Tunisia, a young street vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself ablaze in a final act of defiance and frustration after police confiscated his wares on the street. While his protest may have been localized, the sentiment was not. After nearly three decades of falling standards of living, a growing rural-urban divide, high unemployment, government corruption, and a lack of political and personal freedoms, Tunisians had had enough. Within a month, the president had resigned and fled to Saudi Arabia, and other countries in the region had also ignited with revolutionary fervor. Following Tunisia, protests and civil unrest erupted across the Arab world, in some cases bringing down regimes, in other cases bringing down entire countries.

While Syria, Yemen and Tunisia's next-door neighbor, Libya, continued to burn in 2018, other countries in the region -- and specifically the North African Maghreb countries of Algeria, Morocco

and Tunisia -- seemed to have stalled out in their revolutionary zeal. But surface appearances can be deceiving, as 2019 opened with Algerians taking to the streets en masse to protest a fifth run by their aged and ailing president. Meanwhile, in Tunisia, medium and large-scale protests continued unabated throughout 2018. Algeria and Tunisia, which have an octogenarian and a nonagenarian at their respective helms, are presiding over populations of mostly young, educated, and increasingly frustrated citizens desirous of more open societies and greater access to jobs and the global market. Over the past eight years, however, ideals and reality have not always aligned. For example, in the cafes that line the streets of the Tunisian capital it is not at all unusual to overhear both old and young nostalgically harkening back to the days of the former dictator, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. When asked about this now favorable, revisionist view of the very ruler they ousted for corruption not even a decade ago, the answer is simple: "We can't feed and clothe our children in democracy when democracy has not brought us any jobs."

To that end, it also seems a daily occurrence here that a neighbor or friend has lost yet another child or relative to the traffickers who make nightly runs across the Mediterranean in small speedboats destined for Italy, and wider Europe beyond. This sort of economic migration continues unabated, with North Africans from Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco giving their futures, and their most economically productive years, to countries other than their own. This trend, also known as “brain drain,” and reflected in the Human Flight/Brain Drain indicator on the FSI, can be slow to change, but the effects are no less devastating, particularly to countries aspiring to democratic transitions. Internally, as more rural residents flock to urban centers seeking jobs, urban residents, many of them part of the professional class, flee to Europe, where driving a taxi or even selling counterfeit perfume on the streets can earn them more in a month than their salary as a doctor or lawyer back home. In Algeria, with an economy largely reliant on the extractive sector, a failure to diversify has also led to a slowdown in economic production and growth, with the indicator that measures overall economic health on the FSI worsening steadily when looking at five and ten-year trends. While economic inequality appears to have improved, it is likely that more people, across wider swaths of the economy, are sinking, rather than everyone rising. The same is true for Tunisia.

Morocco, a country that also managed to stave off the spiraling violence that gripped much of the Arab world in the days following the 2011 revolutionary uprisings, also faces its own challenges. A constitutional monarchy, Morocco has also experienced a steady worsening on the FSI when looking at five- and ten-year trends in the general economic and Human Flight/Brain Drain indicators. It has also worsened by nearly two points in the Group Grievance indicator, over the same time period. In 2016, in a situation reminiscent of the one that ignited the Tunisian Revolution, Moroccans took to the streets en masse after a local fisherman was killed by police attempting to confiscate his wares. This was followed by the arrest and imprisonment of a popular protest leader in mid-2017, bringing thousands to the streets again demanding economic and political reforms. Protestors and opposition figures say that while the Moroccan government had given great lip service to improving livelihoods through ambitious economic growth and investment plans in the years following the regional uprisings, the general population has seen little or no benefits. Rather, protestors have accused the government of using these initiatives to enrich themselves, giving lucrative contracts and granting access to those allied with the ruling family, sidelining local populations.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, despite these setbacks, there is still much to celebrate. Whether a result of violence and bloodshed in the not-too-distant past in Algeria, thus far, protests have remained largely peaceful and students and opposition leaders open to dialogue. In Tunisia, despite popular unrest, the country has passed some of the most progressive laws in the region on women’s rights, and its post-Revolution constitution remains a model for other fledgling democracies. Morocco, for its rising levels of group grievance, still appears willing to tolerate, and occasionally give into, popular protests and demands for reforms. The tourism industries of both Morocco and Tunisia, although impacted by acts of domestic terrorism in the recent past, are thriving and, in the case of Tunisia, rebounding after a slump. Algeria, whose ancient ruins and breathtaking scenery rival those of its Maghreb neighbors, also appears to be opening to tourism, sending Algerians abroad to train in the hospitality industry. This may have the effect of not only diversifying its economy, but also opening the country more broadly to the outside world, after years of a partial, self-imposed exile following decades of foreign and domestic conflict.

A note of caution remains, however, for watchers of the North Africa region – and the Maghreb countries of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia in particular – in coming years. The very conditions that sparked the mass popular uprisings that later became the Arab Spring, have not gone away. In fact, many of the economic, social and political indicators that began deteriorating on the FSI in the years preceding the Arab Spring are worsening again. What may be missing this time, according to some experts, is the regional sense of unity and purpose that seemed to be a hallmark of the uprisings in North African countries.<sup>2</sup> Less driven by ideals this time around, and more by the stark reality that those ideals have not translated to improved livelihoods for many citizens, the rumblings of revolution are being heard again.

#### Endnotes

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# UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE: THE CASE OF SOMALIA



## NATE HAKEN

Global efforts at poverty reduction through infrastructure and institution-building have been an overwhelming international success, with poverty rates having dropped precipitously in the last twenty years. However, there is a glaring exception. In fragile states, with protracted or recurrent crisis, international and multilateral development efforts have not worked. In this “last mile”, poverty is unremitting, and in some cases the vicious cycle of poverty and crisis has grown even more entrenched. Further complicating matters are rising global pressures linked to water scarcity, natural disasters, and forced migration, which only seem to be getting worse, especially in certain regions like the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. In response to this challenge, multilateral Development Financial Institutions and humanitarian and development agencies are proactively developing new policies, guidelines, and financing facilities to address the unique challenges of development in situations of fragility.

In this context, Somalia stands out. On the one hand, it is emblematic, illustrative of the dynamic where states at the top of the FSI tend to be stuck there. Somalia has remained stubbornly among the top three most fragile states for 13 years. This remains the case today, where it stands at number two. The overall score of 112.3 on the 2019 FSI is virtually unchanged since 2007, when it scored 111.1. However, despite the relentless violence of the al-Shabaab terrorist group, coupled with devastating cycles of deadly drought, and mass displacement, the resilience of the Somali people is remarkable, and rightly a point of pride. Perhaps a better indicator of Somali resilience

is not the overall FSI score taken in isolation, but rather to dig beneath the numbers and compare where Somalia is now with where it was before the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012.

In 2011, al-Shabaab controlled most of southern Somalia, including the port city of Mogadishu. Meanwhile, a drought and famine killed over 200,000 people, a condition made inexorably worse by the devastation that decades of war had wrought on irrigation and water supply infrastructure, boreholes, catchments, and neglect of riverbanks and dredging. Since then, al-Shabaab has been driven out of Mogadishu and a new Federal Government has been established, including cabinet level ministries focusing on strategic coordination around issues related to agriculture, livestock, water, and humanitarian affairs. Beyond the federal level, there are also state-level governments for a more effective local response. So, when drought struck again in 2017, though comparable environmentally in terms of average precipitation, it was astounding how much lighter the humanitarian impact was this time around (thousands killed – instead of hundreds of thousands).

This relative success is perhaps not exclusively attributable to the Federal Government. Al-Shabaab still controls much of the rural areas in southern Somalia and the level of violence remains as high as ever. The state governments recently suspended ties with the Federal Government, citing frustration with failures of performance and effectiveness. The rivers have still not been dredged. The river banks and the irrigation infrastructure have still not been rehabilitated. But as an entry point for partnership and coordination, the mere

existence of a Federal Government has enabled the humanitarian response to be more effective. After pulling out of Somalia in 2010, the World Food Program reopened its Mogadishu office in 2015. When the crisis struck, hundreds of IDP sites were set up, logistics were delivered by air, and hundreds of thousands received shelter kits, temporary access to safe water, and cash-based interventions.

When you interview community elders, religious leaders, and government officials in Mogadishu, they will speak glowingly of resilience. Some of the often-repeated anecdotes and illustrations may seem like bravado – and brave they truly are. It is not unknown for a bomb to explode in the morning before people return to line up for aid distribution in the afternoon. But more often, they speak about a new landscape that did not exist ten years ago. For example, in 2010, despite the complete lack of regulation in the telecom industry, Hormuud Telecom had just launched a new mobile money service for their customers. Now, the vast majority of Somalis conduct most of their transactions on their phone. This is true in both rural and urban settings. Even beggars on the street of Mogadishu display their Electronic Voucher number so that people can transfer funds directly to their account. In a country with high levels of insecurity and very little in the way of banking services, mobile money has been a game changer, which has also allowed for quicker humanitarian response.

Second, the combination of having a large Diaspora community and a new social media landscape allows for advocacy and remittances on a level that was impossible ten years ago. If a community urgently needs a school or a hospital, a standing network is quickly activated, including community elders, clan leaders, religious charities, business owners, and the Diaspora for philanthropy, zakat, hawala, and crowd funding. Even in the most remote village of Somalia, no one is as isolated as before.

Mogadishu is still a city under siege. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and humanitarian agencies still hunker down in the airport complex, rarely to venture into the city lined with blast walls,

check points, every pickup truck with armed security straddling the tailgate. Every week or so another explosion. But somehow the Somali people remain fearless, hanging out at Lido Beach, going shopping, to the mosque, to class, back and forth to work every single day. The government agencies are busily writing proposals for the funding of projects. The Mogadishu port is bustling with containers being shipped all over the world.

The 2019 FSI tells a story of Factionalized Elites and Demographic Pressures being as high as they can be (10.0), due to separatism, insurgency and drought. Group Grievance and Economy have both slightly improved over the last few years to reach 8.9 and 8.8 respectively. All the other indicators remain in the nines. Just looking at the scores alone, tells you something about the enormous challenges that families and communities face. But the FSI does not tell you about resilience.

For poverty reduction to take place in this “last mile” it will be through a better understanding of resilience that the game will be won. What formal and informal systems and mechanisms exist that account for a country’s ability to bounce back from disaster, or to adapt to a new reality? How can these be leveraged and amplified?

Of course, geopolitics is an unavoidable as a factor in this equation. Important questions must be asked and answered. Can AMISOM be sufficiently perceived as impartial by Somali communities given a fraught history of conflicting interests with Kenya and Ethiopia? Now, with the recent peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, is there a window of opportunity to resolve the conflict between al-Shabaab and the Federal Government of Somalia?

But beyond those political considerations, there remains the more pressing matter of survival in the day-to-day. And in a country with such bravado, entrepreneurship, social capital, and the innovative embrace of technology, for Somalia there may be hope.





# ETHIOPIA ON THE RISE



## HANNAH BLYTH AND DANIET MOGES

Ethiopia experienced a momentous year of political transformation in 2018. Despite a steadily worsening trend over the decade to 2017, Ethiopia is the most-improved country on the 2019 Fragile States Index (FSI). Improving by 5.3 points to a score of 94.2 in this year’s FSI, the country’s performance could potentially herald a success story of building resilience through political reform. Significant political changes, which have seen a peaceful transition of power and a new Prime Minister who implemented bold reforms to boost economic and social inclusiveness, would appear to be the main drivers behind this dramatic shift.

The culmination of civil unrest in 2016-2017, that included widespread violent protests in the most populous regions of Oromia and Amhara, led to the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in February 2018. The peaceful transition of power to successor Abiy Ahmad, the 41-year old head of the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) Secretariat, was praised widely as the change Ethiopia needed to enact political reforms. The son of an Oromian Muslim and an Amharan Orthodox Christian, with a military service background, Prime Minister Ahmad represents for many a shift away from the center of power held by members of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) since the end of the civil war in 1991.

Since taking office in April 2018, Mr. Ahmed has instituted various reforms that aim to set the foundation for the country’s peace, security, democracy and economic growth. These have included

boosting political inclusiveness, appointing women to 50 percent of his cabinet positions, freeing thousands of political prisoners, and inviting opposition parties into dialogue.<sup>1</sup> An emphasis on increasing civic space and accountability for human rights abuses has also proved a key theme. He has lifted restrictions on websites and media, and appointed a former jailed dissident as head of the national electoral board.<sup>2</sup> These reforms have been reflected in the significant improvement in Ethiopia’s FSI indicator scores for State Legitimacy, Human Rights and Rule of Law, and Factionalized Elites. The Human Flight and Brain Drain indicators also dramatically improved, propelled by reports of Ethiopian diaspora returning home amid the political change, including exiled opposition figures.<sup>3</sup>

While political reforms have dominated headlines in 2018, there remain vast structural level governance issues that will take much longer to address. While Ethiopia’s scores for the Uneven Economic Development and Economy indicators incrementally improved in this year’s FSI, urban and rural disparities remain. While the economy continues to grow, according to the African Development Bank’s African Economic Outlook, almost a quarter of Ethiopia’s population of over 100 million continue to live in extreme poverty.<sup>4</sup> As noted in FFP’s 2017 FSI analysis on Ethiopia, the centralized development agenda has also had an impact on social cohesion, particularly perceptions of economic exclusion of group-based identities.<sup>5</sup> While greater social and political reforms may give regional constituencies more of a voice in inclusive development and job creation efforts at the national level, the current federalist system still poses barriers. Under the 1994 Ethiopian Constitution, constituent rights – such as representation in government jobs and local or federal bodies – are

determined based on being considered ethnically indigenous.<sup>6</sup> As Dr Bekalu Atnafu Taye from the University Addis Ababa describes, Ethiopia's federalist structure is "highly ethnocentric," which can exacerbate communal conflict risk.<sup>7</sup> While the 2019 FSI score shows improvements under both Security Apparatus and Group Grievance indicators, the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019 have indicated risks of rising violence along group-based lines that will need to be carefully monitored.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the warning signs of communal violence domestically, on the international stage Ethiopia made historic strides on peace and security. In July 2018, Prime Minister Ahmed signed an historic peace agreement with neighboring Eritrea, formally ending the 20-year war between the two countries.<sup>9</sup> This peace treaty helps to address long standing grievances between the two countries and will usher a new era of economic growth for both Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Ethiopia's 2018 FSI scores reflect the inherent complexities that all countries face in managing both pressures and capacities. The historic political reforms ushered in by Mr. Ahmad in 2018 have already begun to create important new space for economic and social inclusion in

Africa's second most populous nation. The need for continued focus on closing the divide among provision of services between regions, focusing on job creation for a young population, and reforming governance structures to mitigate the polarization of populations along group-based lines are essential to building resilience. Given the dramatic shift achieved in 2018 alone, Ethiopia has shown it is well on the way to a stronger future.

### Endnotes

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# AFRICA'S ISLANDS OF STABILITY



**MAURITIUS**

TOTAL SCORE  
FSI SCORE 2019

**38.9**

(MAXIMUM 120)

RANK  
OVERALL 2019

**150<sup>th</sup>**

(OF 178 COUNTRIES)

CHANGE  
YEAR-ON-YEAR

**-1.6**

POINTS SINCE 2018

MEDIUM-TERM  
TREND

**-7.2**

POINTS SINCE 2014

LONG-TERM  
TREND

**-5.8**

POINTS SINCE 2009

## J.J. MESSNER

“Mauritius was made first and then heaven ... and heaven was copied after Mauritius.” So said Mark Twain in 1896 at a time when the small Indian Ocean island nation was under British rule (after having previously changed hands from the Portuguese, to the Dutch, and then to the French). At a time when Mauritius was largely a remote agrarian backwater, Twain’s observation of course referred its spectacular natural beauty, that to this day continues to attract tourists in their hundreds of thousands. But no longer is Mauritius defined by its beaches and climate — the country has become the first African nation to break through to the Very Stable category of the Fragile States Index (FSI), a reflection of its political stability, economic development, and social cohesion between its myriad cultures.

For many years, there has been a wide perception of a strong association between African nations and fragility. To be fair, this perception is not unfounded — indeed, in the 2019 Fragile States Index (FSI), 21 of the 30 most fragile countries are to be found on the African continent. However, Mauritius is a clear example that Africa is also home to some of the world’s more stable countries — indeed, in the 2019 FSI, Mauritius scored within less than one point of the United States. And by no means is Mauritius alone — regional neighbors Seychelles and Botswana have also ranked in the Stable category.

Mauritius has frequently been referred to as the ‘Singapore of Africa’ for its relative stability and ability to attract international capital. (Quite a compliment really, since this year Singapore became the first

Asian nation to move into the Sustainable category of the FSI.) In the 2019 World Bank Ease of Doing Business assessment, Mauritius ranked 20th out of 190 countries, making it the best-ranked African country ahead of the next-closest country, Rwanda, ranked 29th; Kenya was the next-best, at 61st. Mauritius’ GDP per capita (based on purchasing power parity) is US\$22,279, making it the third-wealthiest African country. Although it may be easy to deride Mauritius’ economic model as perhaps being little different to Caribbean tax havens by virtue of its low taxes and flexible regulatory regimes, it is worth recognizing that this economic success is buttressed by a critical element often in short supply in much of the rest of its neighborhood that transcends simple economics — namely, stable democratic governance and rule of law.

The Seychelles (120th) and Botswana (126th) — which moved into the Stable category for the first time this year — both share some similar characteristics with Mauritius. In particular, both countries have demonstrated strong political stability. Both countries have also seen strong improvement over the past decade in the FSI: Botswana has improved by 9.3 points and meanwhile the Seychelles has improved by 12.5 points.

Africa’s leading countries in the FSI - Mauritius, Botswana and the Seychelles - are joined only by Ghana (110th), Namibia (107th), Cape Verde (106th), Tunisia (95th) and Gabon (92nd). For long-term trends, of the 100 most improved countries over the past decade of the FSI, only 12 are to be found in Africa.

But even at the most serious end of the FSI, there are pockets of

resilience. Even though Zimbabwe continues to rank in the top 10 most fragile countries (a distinction it has held for 10 of the 14 most recent iterations of the FSI), its positive rate of change actually belies its current ranking. Despite years of undemocratic rule under Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe has managed to recover from its crises of the early 2000s to the point of being the sixth-most improved country on the FSI over the past decade. Of course, some caution should be taken in assessing that progress given Zimbabwe's comparatively weak starting point. But it also reinforces the maxim that progress and development is inexorably a slow process.




Take Sierra Leone, a country wracked by civil war only two decades ago. In the first FSI in 2005, Sierra Leone ranked in the top 10. Fast forward 15 years, and the country now ranks 39th and is now well-removed from the 'Alert' category. Similarly, Cote d'Ivoire, which ranked as the most fragile country in the first FSI in 2005 by virtue of civil conflict — the country now ranks 29th and, if current trends continue, could follow Sierra Leone out of the 'Alert' category in the

next year or two. Even for those countries that are fortunate enough to begin their escape from the vicious cycle of fragility, progress can be remarkably slow and non-linear.

Certainly, significant fragility exists throughout many parts of Africa, as it does in many other parts of the world. Conflict and endemic poverty will ensure that fragility in the region remains a reality for many populations in the years to come. However, Mauritius — as well as the Seychelles and Botswana — demonstrates that, as concepts, 'Africa' and 'unstable' are far from synonymous. And although progress might be slow, the importance of these regional 'beachheads' of relative stability throughout the region cannot be understated. Even as countries at the more fragile end of the FSI slowly move along a path of development, the example and leadership of Mauritius, the Seychelles, and Botswana will provide critical leadership for the continent and will demonstrate the bright future for which Africa is capable.



# THE CAUCASUS GIVE CAUSE FOR CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

|   | TOTAL SCORE<br>FSI SCORE 2019 | RANK<br>OVERALL 2019                          | CHANGE<br>YEAR-ON-YEAR           | MEDIUM-TERM<br>TREND              | LONG-TERM<br>TREND                |
|---|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|  <b>ARMENIA</b>    | <b>66.7</b><br>(MAXIMUM 120)  | <b>105<sup>th</sup></b><br>(OF 178 COUNTRIES) | <b>-2.8</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2018 | <b>-4.6</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2014  | <b>-7.6</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2009  |
|  <b>AZERBAIJAN</b> | <b>73.2</b><br>(MAXIMUM 120)  | <b>76<sup>th</sup></b><br>(OF 178 COUNTRIES)  | <b>-1.4</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2018 | <b>-4.6</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2014  | <b>-11.4</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2009 |
|  <b>GEORGIA</b>  | <b>72.0</b><br>(MAXIMUM 120)  | <b>81<sup>st</sup></b><br>(OF 178 COUNTRIES)  | <b>-2.0</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2018 | <b>-10.7</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2014 | <b>-19.8</b><br>POINTS SINCE 2009 |

## PATRICIA TAFT

Straddling Europe and Asia, the South Caucasus has long been considered a region of strategic importance for past empires and modern-day superpowers. It is also a land where the echoes of the Cold War continue to play out decades after the collapse of the Former Soviet Union and the realignment of the global world order. In addition to being a pivotal region for the economic and security interests of the West and Russia, the South Caucasus has had its own regional and internal challenges over the past two decades. In Georgia, two breakaway regions remain under Russia’s sphere of influence, and firmly outside of Tbilisi’s control. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, a long simmering conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh continues to periodically erupt in violence, and keeps the two countries locked in a semi-permanent war posture. This has had deleterious effects not only on any attempts to unify the region, but is also a constant strain on the economy, more so in Armenia than oil-rich Azerbaijan. These so-called “frozen conflicts”

have further created wide swaths of no-go zones in the South Caucasus, making travel and trade between and among the countries costly and complicated.

In 2018, however, there was cause for cautious optimism in a region where the ghosts of superpowers past and present continue to exert outsized influence. This is most apparent in two countries in particular: Georgia and Armenia. Georgia, sixteen years after the Rose Revolution, and almost 11 years after a Russian invasion that nearly drew in NATO allies and plunged the region into war, continues to make slow but steady progress. Following an expected worsening across most FSI indicators in 2009, after the Russian incursion into Georgian territory, the country has managed to cut the infant mortality rate by half since 2008, decreased poverty rates by nearly 40% between 2008 and 2016, while homicide rates, once one of the highest in the region, have fallen by 90% over the past decade. On the democracy front, Georgia has also made steady progress, holding successive presidential and parliamentary elections over the years that

have been declared mostly free and fair by international observers. In late 2018, despite concerns over harassment of civil society organizations and corruption related to the use of administrative resources, Georgia elected the first female president in the region. It also has steadily worked to improve its legal and regulatory frameworks, encouraging more foreign direct investment in the country and opening its economy to businesses outside of the region. Overall, looking at across-the-board improvements over five- and ten-year FSI trends, Georgia has emerged as the top performer, a testament to how very far it has come since the bleak days of 2008-2009.

One of the biggest surprises on this year's FSI, however, was Armenia, which improved by nearly three points overall. Perhaps more so than any other country in the region, Armenia has had to perform a delicate balancing act between Russia and the West, which for years has kept the country hamstrung both economically and politically. Russia maintains a military base in Armenia and has been the main supplier of Armenian defense equipment, particularly for the standoff with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia also maintains a cooperative defense agreement with Moscow that has, in the past, appeared to grant Russia outsized influence on Armenian defense and foreign policy. At the same time, Armenia has attempted to counter this narrative of Russian control by entering into a variety of cooperative economic and foreign policy agreements with the EU and NATO. However, in comparison to its neighbor Georgia, Armenia appeared to be slowly stumbling along in fits and starts, taking one step forward that was often countered by several steps back. Last year, however, that seemed to change. Ignited by student protests early in the year and building upon a popular groundswell of disillusionment and anger with corrupt and entrenched political practices and poor standards of living, Armenia underwent its own "velvet revolution" in May, electing the reformist Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan. Although still very much in the early days, the country's new leadership seems determined to bring it into the future by implementing a similar scale of reforms and anti-corruption measures that brought Georgia out of the dark days of its past. Moreover, it has pledged to restore popular confidence in government and purge many of the people and practices that have kept Armenia stalled and its potential unrealized.

It would be impossible to mention the progress in Georgia and Armenia without briefly looking at Azerbaijan, a country whose oil wealth has allowed it to make economic leaps and gains over its neighbors, although these economic improvements have not necessarily translated into broader social or political reforms. Largely as a result of its booming oil sector, Azerbaijan has made notable gains in improving its FSI score in the areas of demographic pressures and economic inequality, with infant mortality rates falling by half between 2007 and 2017, and poverty rates (as measured by the national poverty line) falling by two-thirds between 2012 and 2017.

Azerbaijan has also taken strides to improve its investment climate, as reflected by the capital city of Baku, whose glittering skyline and main boulevards are lined with the names of European and American companies and investment firms. Outside of the capital, however, progress has proceeded at a much slower pace, with rural areas still struggling to catch up to the capital. Azerbaijan is also a tightly controlled country which finds itself having to balance its own national interests with outside pressures from Turkey, Iran and Russia. Like Armenia, however, Azerbaijan in many ways remains locked in the past due to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, which both allies and adversaries in the region (and further afield) have used to promote their own interests and influence over the years. Although the pro-democracy movements in Georgia and Armenia have only been mirrored by the slightest of rumblings in Azerbaijan, 2019 began with thousands protesting in Baku demanding the release of political prisoners and a popular anticorruption blogger, potentially signaling that change is on the horizon.

Finally, while both Georgia and Armenia's democratic trajectories are worthy of commendation and support, cautious optimism is still warranted. The shadow of Russia looms large in the region, and the United States and the European Union are beset by their own challenges that, in many ways, have resulted in a turn inwards. Additionally, there remains vested interests in both Georgia and Armenia in maintaining a cautious alliance with Russia, while simultaneously pursuing their own paths towards greater national and regional autonomy. Only time will tell whether these two countries will maintain the momentum of the pro-democracy forces sweeping the region, or whether the ghosts of the past will rise up once again, trying win the future.



# THE METHODOLOGY BEHIND THE FRAGILE STATES INDEX

In a highly interconnected world, pressures on one fragile state can have serious repercussions not only for that state and its people, but also for its neighbors and other states halfway across the globe. Since the end of the Cold War, a number of states have erupted into mass violence stemming from internal conflict. Some of these crises emerge from ethnic tensions; some are civil wars; others take on the form of revolutions; and many result in complex humanitarian emergencies.

Fault lines can emerge between identity groups, defined by language, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, caste, clan or area of origin. Tensions can deteriorate into conflict through a variety of circumstances, such as competition over resources, predatory or fractured leadership, corruption, or unresolved group grievances. The reasons for state fragility are complex but not unpredictable. It is critically important that the international community understand and closely monitor the conditions that contribute to fragility — and be prepared to take the necessary actions to deal with the underlying issues or otherwise mitigate the negative effects.

To have meaningful early warning, and effective policy responses, assessments must go beyond specialized area knowledge, narrative case studies and anecdotal evidence to identify and grasp broad social trends. A mixed approach integrating qualitative and quantitative data sources is needed to establish patterns and trends. With the right data and analysis it is possible to identify problems that may be simmering below the surface. Decision makers need access to this kind of information to implement effective policies.

The Fragile States Index (FSI) produced by The Fund for Peace (FFP) is a critical tool in highlighting not only the normal pressures that all states experience, but also in identifying when those pressures are outweighing a states' capacity to manage those pressures. By highlighting pertinent vulnerabilities which contribute to the risk of state fragility, the Index — and the social science framework and data

analysis tools upon which it is built — makes political risk assessment and early warning of conflict accessible to policy-makers and the public at large.

The strength of the FSI is its ability to distill millions of pieces of information into a form that is relevant as well as easily digestible and informative. Daily, FFP collects thousands of reports and information from around the world, detailing the existing social, economic and political pressures faced by each of the 178 countries that we analyze.

## ORIGINS OF THE FSI: THE CAST FRAMEWORK

The genesis of most indices is to begin with a concept of what needs to be measured, followed by the development of a methodology that hopes to perform that measurement. The FSI followed a very different trajectory, whereby the idea for the Index occurred subsequently to the development of its own methodology.

The FSI traces its origins to the creation of FFP's Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST), which was developed in the 1990s as a framework for policymakers and field practitioners to be able to better understand and measure conflict drivers and dynamics in complex environments. The CAST framework has been widely peer reviewed, and the continued usage of the framework by many of those same professionals, as well as now by local civil society and community groups in conflict-affected areas, is testament to the framework's enduring relevance. In 2004, the CAST framework was used as the basis for the FSI, as researchers wished to determine whether state fragility could be assessed and ranked at a national level using the existing framework.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION: THE FSI ANALYTICAL PROCESS

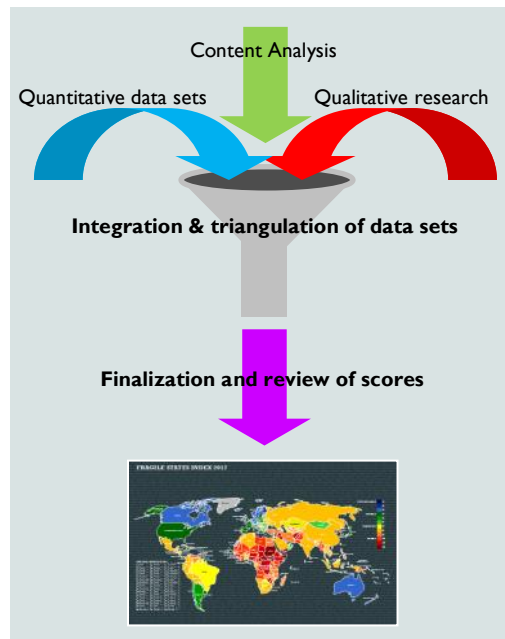
Though at the ground level the CAST framework is applied using various practices such as individual incident reporting and observation by field monitors, the sheer volume of data to be analyzed at an international level required a different approach. To that end, technology was employed to enable researchers to process large volumes of data to perform the national level assessments that feed into the FSI.

Based on CAST's comprehensive social science approach, data from three main streams — pre-existing quantitative data sets, content analysis, and qualitative expert analysis — is triangulated and subjected to critical review to obtain final scores for the Index.

1. **Content Analysis:** Each of the twelve indicators of the CAST framework are broken down into sub-indicators, and for each of these, hundreds of Boolean search phrases are applied to global media data to determine the level of saliency of issues for each of those sub-indicators in each country. The raw data, provided by a commercial content aggregator, includes media articles, research reports, and other qualitative data points collected from over 10,000 different English-language sources around the world. Every year, the number of articles and reports analyzed is between 45-50 million. Based on the assessed saliency for each of the sub-indicators, provisional scores are apportioned for each country.
2. **Quantitative Data:** Pre-existing quantitative data sets, generally from international and multilateral statistical agencies (such as the United Nations, World Bank, and World Health Organization) are identified for their ability to statistically represent key aspects of the indicators. The raw data sets are normalized and scaled for comparative analysis. The trends identified in the quantitative analysis for each country are then compared with the provisional scores from the Content Analysis phase. Depending on the degree to which the Content Analysis

and the Quantitative Data agree, the provisional scores are confirmed, or where they disagree, are reconciled based on a set of rules that dictate allowable movements in score in the event of disagreement between the two data streams.

3. **Qualitative Review:** Separately, a team of social science researchers independently reviews each of the 178 countries, providing assessments based on key events from that year, compared to the previous one. Recognizing that every data set and approach has different strengths and weaknesses, this step helps to ensure that dynamic year-on-year trends across different indicators are picked up – which may not be evident in lagging quantitative data sets that measure longer term structural factors. It also helps to mitigate any potential false positives or negative that may emerge from noisy content analysis data.



These three data streams are then triangulated, applying a set of rules to ensure the data sets are integrated in a way that leverages the strengths of the different approaches. This approach also helps to ensure that inherent weaknesses, gaps, or biases in one source are checked by the others. Though the basic data underpinning of the Index is already freely and widely available electronically, the strength of the analysis is in the methodological rigor and the systematic integration of a wide range of data sources. Final indicator scores for each country are then produced from this process. A panel review is then conducted

by the research team of the final Index to ensure all scores are proportionate across the country spectrum.

The final FSI Index product is intended as an entry point into deeper interpretive analysis for the user. Though an index inherently ranks different countries – making some more fragile than others – ultimately the goal of the FSI is to measure trends in pressures within each individual state. By identifying the most salient pressures within a country, it creates the opportunity for deeper analysis and planning by policy makers and practitioners alike to strengthen each state's resiliency. To that end, the following section outlines what each indicator seeks to measure in the Index – as well as providing guiding questions for deeper levels of analysis and inquiry by the user.





# UNDERSTANDING THE FRAGILE STATES INDEX

The Fragile States Index (FSI) is an annual ranking of 178 countries based on the different pressures they face that impact their levels of fragility. The Index is based on The Fund for Peace's proprietary Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) analytical approach. Based on comprehensive social science methodology, three primary streams of data — quantitative, qualitative, and expert validation — are triangulated and subjected to critical review to obtain final scores for the FSI. Millions of documents are analyzed every year, and by applying highly specialized search parameters, scores are apportioned for every country based on twelve key political, social and economic indicators and over 100 sub-indicators that are the result of years of expert social science research.

## INTERPRETING THE FSI SCORES

The 2019 FSI, the 15th edition of the annual Index, comprises data collected between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018 — thus, certain well-publicized events that have occurred since January 1, 2019 are not covered by the 2019 Index. The FSI scores should be interpreted with the understanding that the lower the score, the better. Therefore, a reduced score indicates an improvement and greater relative stability, just as a higher score indicates greater instability. FFP attempts as much as possible to de-emphasize rankings, as it is our firm belief that a country's overall score (and indeed, its indicator scores) are a far more important and accurate barometer of a country's performance, and that as much as countries should be compared against other countries, it is more useful to compare a country against itself, over time. Hence, our analysis focuses more on specific indicator scores or trend lines over time rather than just rankings. Ultimately, the FSI is an entry point into deeper interpretive analysis by civil society, government, businesses and practitioners alike — to understand more about a state's capacities and pressures which contribute to levels of fragility and resilience.

### COHESION INDICATORS



Security Apparatus



Factionalized Elites



Group Grievance

### ECONOMIC INDICATORS



Economic Decline



Uneven Development



Human Flight & Brain Drain

### POLITICAL INDICATORS



State Legitimacy



Public Services



Human Rights & Rule of Law

### SOCIAL + CROSS-CUTTING INDICATORS



Demographic Pressures



Refugees & IDPs



External Intervention

# THE INDICATORS: COHESION

## SECURITY APPARATUS



The Security Apparatus indicator considers the security threats to a state, such as bombings, attacks and battle-related deaths, rebel movements, mutinies, coups, or terrorism. The Security Apparatus indicator also takes into account serious criminal factors, such as organized crime and homicides, and perceived trust of citizens in domestic security. In some instances, the security apparatus may extend beyond traditional military or police forces to include state-sponsored or state-supported private militias that terrorize political opponents, suspected “enemies,” or civilians seen to be sympathetic to the opposition. In other instances, the security apparatus of a state can include a “deep state”, that may consist of secret intelligence units, or other irregular security forces, that serve the interests of a political leader or clique. As a counter example, the indicator will also take into account armed resistance to a governing authority, particularly the manifestation of violent uprisings and insurgencies, proliferation of independent militias, vigilantes, or mercenary groups that challenge the state’s monopoly on the use of force.

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Monopoly on the Use of Force

- Is the military under civilian control?
- Do private militias exist against the state?
- Is there paramilitary activity?
- Do private armies exist to protect assets?
- Are there guerilla forces operating in the state? Do they control territory?

### Relationship Between Security and Citizenry

- Are the police considered to be professional?
- Is violence often state-sponsored and politically motivated?
- Is the government dealing well with any insurgency or security situation?

### Force

- Does the military and police maintain proper use of force?
- Are there accusations of police brutality?

### Arms

- Is there a high availability of weapons?
- If in reconstruction, is there an adequate plan for demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of former combatants?

## FACTIONALIZED ELITES



The Factionalized Elites indicator considers the fragmentation of state institutions along ethnic, class, clan, racial or religious lines, as well as brinkmanship and gridlock between ruling elites. It also factors in the use of nationalistic political rhetoric by ruling elites, often in terms of nationalism, xenophobia, communal irredentism (e.g., a “greater Serbia”) or of communal solidarity (e.g., “ethnic cleansing” or “defending the faith”). In extreme cases, it can be representative of the absence of legitimate leadership widely accepted as representing the entire citizenry. The Factionalized Elites indicator measures power struggles, political competition, political transitions and, where elections occur, will factor in the credibility of electoral processes (or in their absence, the perceived legitimacy of the ruling class).

\* Indicator descriptions are not exhaustive, and are intended only as an entry point for further interpretive analysis by the user.

## GROUP GRIEVANCE

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Representative Leadership

- Is leadership fairly elected? Is leadership representative of the population?
- Are there factionalized elites, tribal elites and/or fringe groups? How powerful are they?
- Is there a political reconciliation process?
- Is the military representative of the population?

### Identity

- Is there a sense of national identity? Are there strong feelings of nationalism? Or are there calls for separatism?
- Does hate speech via radio and media exist?
- Is religious, ethnic, or other stereotyping prevalent and is there scape-goating?
- Does cross-cultural respect exist?

### Resource Distribution

- Is wealth concentrated in hands of a few?
- Is there a burgeoning middle class?
- Does any one group control the majority of resources?
- Are resources fairly distributed? Does the government adequately distribute wealth through taxes?

### Equality and Equity

- Are the laws democratic or reasonable?
- Is the system representative of the population?



The Group Grievance indicator focuses on divisions and schisms between different groups in society – particularly divisions based on social or political characteristics – and their role in access to services or resources, and inclusion in the political process. Group Grievance may also have a historical component, where aggrieved communal groups cite injustices of the past, sometimes going back centuries, that influence and shape that group’s role in society and relationships with other groups. This history may in turn be shaped by patterns of real or perceived atrocities or “crimes” committed with apparent impunity against communal groups. Groups may also feel aggrieved because they are denied autonomy, self-determination or political independence to which they believe they are entitled. The indicator also considers where specific groups are singled out by state authorities, or by dominant groups, for persecution or repression, or where there is public scapegoating of groups believed to have acquired wealth, status or power “illegitimately,” which may manifest itself in the emergence of fiery rhetoric, such as through “hate” radio, pamphleteering, and stereotypical or nationalistic political speech.

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Post-Conflict Response

- Does a Truth & Reconciliation process exist or is one needed?
- Have groups been reintegrated?
- Is there a plan for reconstruction and development?
- Are victims of past atrocities compensated (or is there a plan to)?
- Are war criminals apprehended and prosecuted?
- Has amnesty been granted?

### Equality

- Is there an equitable and efficient distribution of resources?

### Divisions

- Are there feelings/reports of ethnic and/or religious intolerance and/or violence?
- Are groups oppressed or do they feel oppressed?
- Is there history of violence against a group or group grievance?
- How are intertribal and/or interethnic relations?
- Is there freedom of religion according to laws and practiced by society? Are there reports of religiously motivated violence?

### Communal Violence

- Is vigilante justice reported?
- Are there reports of mass violence and/or killings?

# THE INDICATORS: ECONOMIC

## ECONOMIC DECLINE



Economic Decline indicator considers factors related to economic decline within a country. For example, the indicator looks at patterns of progressive economic decline of the society as a whole as measured by per capita income, Gross National Product, unemployment rates, inflation, productivity, debt, poverty levels, or business failures. It also takes into account sudden drops in commodity prices, trade revenue, or foreign investment, and any collapse or devaluation of the national currency. The Economic Decline indicator further considers the responses to economic conditions and their consequences, such as extreme social hardship imposed by economic austerity programs, or perceived increasing group inequalities. The Economic Decline indicator is focused on the formal economy as well as illicit trade, including the drug and human trafficking, and capital flight, or levels of corruption and illicit transactions such as money laundering or embezzlement.

*Questions to consider may include\*:*

### Public Finances

- What level is the government debt?

### Economic Conditions

- How are the interest rates – actual and projected?
- How is the inflation rate – actual and projected?
- What is the level of productivity?
- What is the GDP – actual and projected?
- How is the unemployment – current and rate of unemployment?

### Economic Climate

- Consumer Confidence: How do people view the economy?
- How do experts view the economy?
- Is the business climate attractive to Foreign Direct Investment?
- Do the laws and access to capital allow for internal entrepreneurship?

### Economic Diversification

- Economic Focus: Does one product make up the majority of the economy?

## UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT



The Uneven Economic Development indicator considers inequality within the economy, irrespective of the actual performance of an economy. For example, the Indicator looks at structural inequality that is based on group (such as racial, ethnic, religious, or other identity group) or based on education, economic status, or region (such as urban-rural divide). The Indicator considers not only actual inequality, but also perceptions of inequality, recognizing that perceptions of economic inequality can fuel grievance as much as real inequality, and can reinforce communal tensions or nationalistic rhetoric. Further to measuring economic inequality, the Indicator also takes into account the opportunities for groups to improve their economic status, such as through access to employment, education, or job training such that, even if there is economic inequality present, to what degree it is structural and reinforcing?

*\* Indicator descriptions are not exhaustive, and are intended only as an entry point for further interpretive analysis by the user.*

## HUMAN FLIGHT AND BRAIN DRAIN

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Economic Equality

- Economic Equality: Is there a large economic gap?
- Is the economic system discriminatory?
- Does economic justice exist?
- Are hiring practices generally fair – legally and perceived?
- Do equal rights exist in the society?
- Are there laws protecting equal rights?

### Economic Opportunity

- Does free education exist and if so, to which grade?
- Is the education provided relatively equal?
- Fair Housing: Is there a housing system for the poor?
- Do programs for job training exist?
- Do people know about the job training and is it available based on qualification and need?

### Socio-Economic Dynamics

- Do ghettos and slums exist?



The Human Flight and Brain Drain Indicator considers the economic impact of human displacement (for economic or political reasons) and the consequences this may have on a country's development. On the one hand, this may involve the voluntary emigration of the middle class – particularly economically productive segments of the population, such as entrepreneurs, or skilled workers such as physicians – due to economic deterioration in their home country and the hope of better opportunities farther afield. On the other hand, it may involve the forced displacement of professionals or intellectuals who are fleeing their country due to actual or feared persecution or repression. The indicator specifically measures the economic impact that displacement may wreak on an economy through the loss of productive, skilled professional labor.

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Retention of Technical and Intellectual Capital

- Are professionals leaving the country?
- Are politicians or political elites leaving the country?
- Is there a relatively high proportion of higher educated people leaving the country?
- Is the middle class beginning to return to the country?

### Economics

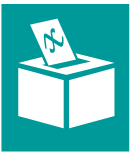
- Are there a large amount of remittances coming to families from relatives overseas?

### Diaspora

- Is there growth of a country's exiled communities or diasporas abroad?
- Does the diaspora have an impact on the home state economy, or on politics in the home state?

# THE INDICATORS: POLITICAL

## STATE LEGITIMACY



The State Legitimacy Indicator considers the representativeness and openness of government and its relationship with its citizenry. The Indicator looks at the population's level of confidence in state institutions and processes, and assesses the effects where that confidence is absent, manifested through mass public demonstrations, sustained civil disobedience, or the rise of armed insurgencies. Though the State Legitimacy indicator does not necessarily make a judgment on democratic governance, it does consider the integrity of elections where they take place (such as flawed or boycotted elections), the nature of political transitions and, where there is an absence of democratic elections, the degree to which the government is representative of the population which it governs. The Indicator takes into account openness of government, specifically the openness of ruling elites to transparency, accountability and political representation, or conversely the levels of corruption, profiteering, and marginalizing, persecuting, or otherwise excluding opposition groups. The Indicator also considers the ability of a state to exercise basic functions that infer a population's confidence in its government and institutions, such as through the ability to collect taxes.

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Confidence in the Political Process

- Does the government have the confidence of the people?

### Political Opposition

- Have demonstrations occurred?
- Have riots or uprisings occurred?

### Transparency

- Is there evidence of corruption on the part of government officials?
- Are national and/or local officials considered to be corrupt?

### Openness and Fairness of the Political Process

- Do all parties enjoy political rights?
- Is the government representative of the population?
- Have there been recent peaceful transitions of power?
- What is the longer term history of power transitions?
- Are elections perceived free and fair?
- Have elections been monitored and reported as free and fair?

### Political Violence

- Are there reports of politically motivated attacks, assassinations?
- Are there reports of armed insurgents and attacks?
- Have there been terrorist attacks and how likely are they?

## PUBLIC SERVICES



The Public Services Indicator refers to the presence of basic state functions that serve the people. On the one hand, this may include the provision of essential services, such as health, education, water and sanitation, transport infrastructure, electricity and power, and internet and connectivity. On the other hand, it may include the state's ability to protect its citizens, such as from terrorism and violence, through perceived effective policing. Further, even where basic state functions and services are provided, the Indicator further considers to whom – whether the state narrowly serves the ruling elites, such as security agencies, presidential staff, the central bank, or the diplomatic service, while failing to provide comparable levels of service to the general populace – such as rural versus urban populations. The Indicator also considers the level and maintenance of general infrastructure to the extent that its absence would negatively affect the country's actual or potential development.

*\* Indicator descriptions are not exhaustive, and are intended only as an entry point for further interpretive analysis by the user.*

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW

Questions to consider may include\*:

### General Provision of Public Services

- Is there equal access to public services?
- What are the general conditions of public services?

### Health

- Is there adequate access to medicines?
- Are there an adequate number of medical facilities for all people?
- Are there an adequate number of medical professionals for the population?
- What is the infant mortality rate – actual and projected?
- Is there access to an adequate potable water supply?
- Is sanitation system adequate?

### Education

- What is the level of school enrollment? Is it different by gender?
- What are the literacy rates? Is it different by gender?

### Shelter

- Do the poor have access to housing?
- Are housing costs in line with economy?

### Infrastructure

- Are roads adequate and safe?
- Are there adequate airports for sustainable development?
- Are there adequate railroads for sustainable development?
- Is there an adequate supply of fuel?



The Human Rights and Rule of Law Indicator considers the relationship between the state and its population insofar as fundamental human rights are protected and freedoms are observed and respected. The Indicator looks at whether there is widespread abuse of legal, political and social rights, including those of individuals, groups and institutions (e.g. harassment of the press, politicization of the judiciary, internal use of military for political

ends, repression of political opponents). The Indicator also considers outbreaks of politically inspired (as opposed to criminal) violence perpetrated against civilians. It also looks at factors such as denial of due process consistent with international norms and practices for political prisoners or dissidents, and whether there is current or emerging authoritarian, dictatorial or military rule in which constitutional and democratic institutions and processes are suspended or manipulated.

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Civil and Political Rights and Freedoms

- Do communal, labor, political, and/or minority rights exist and are they protected?
- Are there civil rights laws and are civil rights protected?
- Is the right to life protected for all?
- Is freedom of speech protected?
- Is there freedom of movement?
- Does religious freedom exist?

### Violation of Rights

- Is there a history of systemic violation of rights by the government or others?
- Are there reports of state- or group-sponsored torture?
- Are there labor laws or reports of forced labor or child labor?
- Are groups forced to relocate? Is there proper compensation?

### Openness

- Does independent media exist?
- Do reporters feel free to publish accusations against those in power?
- Is there equal access to information?

### Justice

- If rights aren't protected, is there a legal system in which they can be addressed?
- Do accused receive a fair and timely trial? Is this equal for all?
- Are there accusations or reports of arbitrary arrests? Are these state-sponsored?
- Are there accusations or reports of illegal detention?
- How are the prison conditions?

### Equality

- Is there a process and system that encourages political power sharing?

# THE INDICATORS: SOCIAL AND CROSS-CUTTING

## DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURES



The Demographic Pressures Indicator considers pressures upon the state deriving from the population itself or the environment around it. For example, the Indicator measures population pressures related to food supply, access to safe water, and other life-sustaining resources, or health, such as prevalence of disease and epidemics. The Indicator considers demographic characteristics, such as pressures from high population growth

rates or skewed population distributions, such as a “youth or age bulge,” or sharply divergent rates of population growth among competing communal groups, recognizing that such effects can have profound social, economic, and political effects. Beyond the population, the Indicator also takes into account pressures stemming from natural disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes, floods or drought), and pressures upon the population from environmental hazards.

## REFUGEES AND IDPS



The Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons Indicator measures the pressure upon states caused by the forced displacement of large communities as a result of social, political, environmental or other causes, measuring displacement within countries, as well as refugee flows into others. The indicator measures refugees by country of asylum, recognizing that population inflows can put additional pressure on public services, and can sometimes create broader humanitarian and security challenges for the receiving state if that state does not have the absorption capacity and adequate resources. The Indicator also measures the internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugees by country of origin, which signifies internal state pressures as a result of violence, environmental or other factors such as health epidemics. These measures are considered within the context of the state’s population (per capita) and human development trajectory, and over time (year on year spikes), recognizing that some IDPs or refugees, may have been displaced for long periods of time.

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Population

- Is the population growth rate sustainable? Is the current and projected distribution reasonable?
- Is population density putting pressure on areas of the state?
- What is the infant mortality rate – actual and projected?
- Is there a high orphan population?

### Public Health

- Is there a system for controlling spreading of diseases, pandemics?
- Is there a high likelihood or existence of diseases or epidemics?

### Food and Nutrition

- Is the food supply adequate to deal with potential interruption?
- Is there are likelihood of droughts?

- Is there a short-term food shortage or longer-term starvation?
- Are there long-term food shortages affecting health?

### Environment

- Do sound environmental policies exist and are current practices sustainable?
- Is natural disaster likely, recurring?
- If a natural disaster occurs, is there an adequate response plan?
- Has deforestation taken place or are there laws to protect forests?

### Resources

- Does resource competition exist?
- Does land competition exist and are there laws to arbitrate disputes?
- Is there access to an adequate potable water supply?

\* Indicator descriptions are not exhaustive, and are intended only as an entry point for further interpretive analysis by the user.



## EXTERNAL INTERVENTION

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Refugees

- Are refugees likely to come from neighboring countries?
- Are there resources to provide for projected and actual refugees?
- Are there sufficient refugee camps or are refugees integrated into communities?
- Are there reports of violence against refugees?
- Are conditions safe in refugee camps?

### Internally Displaced Persons

- How many IDPs are there in relation to population?
- Are IDPs likely to increase in the near future?
- Are there resources to provide for projected and actual IDPs?

### Response to Displacement

- Is there access to additional resources from international community for refugees and/or IDPs?
- Are there plans for relocation and settlement of current IDPs and/or refugees?



The External Intervention Indicator considers the influence and impact of external actors in the functioning – particularly security and economic – of a state. On the one hand, External Intervention focuses on security aspects of engagement from external actors, both covert and overt, in the internal affairs of a state by governments, armies, intelligence services, identity groups, or other entities that may affect the balance of power (or resolution of a conflict) within a state. On the other hand, External Intervention also focuses on economic engagement by outside actors, including multilateral organizations, through large-scale loans, development projects, or foreign aid, such as ongoing budget support, control of finances, or management of the state's economic policy, creating economic dependency. External Intervention also takes into account humanitarian intervention, such as the deployment of an international peacekeeping mission.

Questions to consider may include\*:

### Political Intervention

- Is there external support for factions opposed to the government?

### Force Intervention

- Are foreign troops present?
- Are military attacks from other countries occurring?
- Is there external military assistance?
- Are there military training exercises with other nations or support of military training from other states?
- Is there a peacekeeping operation on the ground?
- Is there external support for police training?
- Are covert operations taking place?

### Economic Intervention

- Is the country receiving economic intervention or aid?
- Is the country dependent on economic aid?







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