

Finland top again as UK drops to 20th in world happiness rankings

By Caolan Magee

The world's happiest country has been revealed, with Finland taking the top spot for the seventh consecutive year.

Afghanistan again finished last, while the UK dropped one spot to 20th and the US plunged eight places to 23rd.

Released every year in honour of the International Day of Happiness on 20 March, the World Happiness Report analyses statistics from 146 countries and is based on self-reported data from people surveyed in each country, with participants asked to rate their lives out of 10.

The average score for each country is tallied up according to six indicators: social support, gross domestic product (GDP), health, freedom, generosity and perceptions of corruption.

According to the study, the decline in happiness in the UK and US is symptomatic of a wider trend across the Western world – that happiness is falling among people under 30.

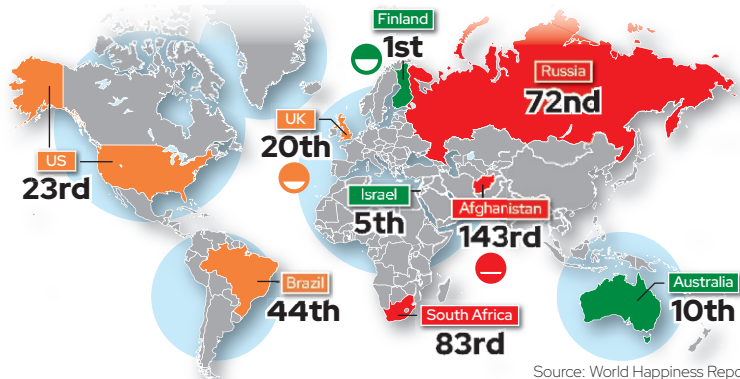
Professor Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, director of Oxford's Wellbeing Research Centre and an editor of the World Happiness Report, said: "Piecing together the available data on the wellbeing of children and adolescents around the world, we documented disconcerting drops especially in North America and western Europe.

"To think that, in some parts of the world, children are already



While Finland maintained its place at the top of the World Happiness Report rankings, many western countries reported disconcerting drops GETTY

Countries ranked by happiness



Source: World Happiness Report

experiencing the equivalent of a mid-life crisis demands immediate policy action."

Experts claim the deterioration of happiness among younger adults is driven largely by growing wealth inequality between young and old.

The Intergenerational Foundation charity said in response to the findings: "Young adults are being hit from all sides by a toxic combination of government policy, a housing affordability crisis, stagnating wages and a high cost of living.

"No wonder their generation is experiencing unprecedented levels of mental ill-health as their futures look so bleak"

The US ranked 62nd in terms of happiness among younger people but 10th among the oldest age category, while the UK ranked 32nd among young people and 20th among older people.

Similarly to previous years, Europe topped the ranking with eight out of 10 of the world's happiest nations coming from the continent, including Denmark in second and Sweden in third. Despite the war in Gaza, Israel has maintained fifth place as the world's happiest nation.

{i} Countries embroiled in conflict finished at the bottom with **Afghanistan and Lebanon** remaining the two unhappiest countries.

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