Issue No. 8 - Spring and Summer 2025

A Journal of the World Anti-Corruption Initiatives and Innovation

Experiences Of Nations

General Inspection Organization

- World Day for Judicial Integrity: A Global Call to Action
- Palermo Convention: Consequences of Iran's Accession to the Palermo Convention
- General Inspection Organization: The National Anti-Corruption Authority and an Effective International Actor
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In the name of God

Editor's Note

❖ The Fourth Assembly of Ombudsman Institutions of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, held under the theme "Inclusive Accountability, Just Governance, and Unity of the Islamic Ummah," took place in Tehran on May 12–13, 2025. After two days of intensive discussions and specialized panels, the summit concluded with the issuance of the Tehran Declaration. The Tehran Declaration included significant resolutions and recommendations whose implementation could represent a major step forward in improving administrative integrity and strengthening ombudsman institutions in member countries. Among the key points highlighted in the declaration were:

- Strengthening transnational ombudsman cooperation
- Sharing experiences in the field of modern technologies
- Establishing a joint permanent educational and research center and secretariat
- Reinforcing human rights collaboration and support for vulnerable groups

These points make it clear that the Tehran Declaration was not merely a ceremonial announcement; rather, it is a practical roadmap for cooperation and innovation in the field of ombudsman work and administrative health. It is now the responsibility of the honorable members of the Assembly of Ombudsman Institutions of OIC Member States to follow up on and implement the provisions of this declaration.

According to the statute of the Association of Ombudsman Institutions of Islamic Countries, all members are committed to making their utmost efforts toward advancing the association's objectives. Therefore, it is fitting that each member institution incorporate the implementation of the Tehran summit's recommendations into its work agenda, and that the Assembly's Secretariat establish the necessary mechanisms to monitor and report on the progress of these resolutions.

Another key pillar of the Tehran Declaration was the development of the Assembly and the increase in its membership. Currently, only a portion of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have joined this important ombudsman body, while some countries still remain deprived of this significant capacity. The Tehran Declaration highlighted efforts to encourage other Islamic countries to join the Assembly of Ombudsman Institutions. In fact, since the establishment of this body in 2014, there has been a recognized need for all OIC member states to have an ombudsman institution and to collaborate within a cohesive network.

We invite all Islamic countries that have not yet joined this Assembly to do so as soon as possible by establishing or strengthening their inspection and ombudsman institutions, so that greater convergence can help lay the foundation for good governance and administrative integrity throughout the Islamic world. Undoubtedly, the broader this cooperation becomes, the richer the exchange of experiences and synergies in combating administrative corruption will be.

Scientific and Specialized Interaction: A Necessity for Administrative Integrity

One of the emphasized issues at the Tehran Summit was the need for special attention to scientific and specialized activities in the field of ombudsman work and the fight against corruption. This emphasis is rooted in an undeniable fact: without the support of specialized knowledge and the exchange of scientific information among countries, efforts to combat corruption and promote administrative integrity will not achieve the desired results.

Fortunately, this issue has been addressed both in international documents and in regional organizations' frameworks. For example, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), in its Chapter VI, emphasizes the need for professional training, exchange of experiences and technical knowledge, and scientific cooperation among governments.

Article 60 of the Convention encourages member states to engage in maximum technical cooperation in the fight against corruption and to strengthen their capacities through the exchange of experience and specialized knowledge. Furthermore, Article 61 explicitly recommends the collection, exchange, and analysis of information about corruption, and the sharing of statistics and experiences among countries, as well as through international and regional organizations.

These emphases in the highest-level international anti-corruption instrument highlight the importance of science and knowledge in combating corruption. Undoubtedly, the activities of the Assembly of Ombudsman Institutions of OIC Member States can serve as a practical implementation of these very recommendations.

On the other hand, the statute of the Assembly of Ombudsman Institutions of Islamic Countries and its founding documents have also emphasized the scientific dimension of this cooperation. The Islamabad Declaration, adopted at the first meeting of the Ombudsman Institutions of OIC Member States in 2014, explicitly states that strengthening ombudsman institutions in Islamic countries must be pursued through the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and ideas. The declaration also stresses the organization of information exchange related to all aspects of ombudsman performance.

This means that from the very inception of the Assembly of Ombudsman Institutions of OIC Member States, the systematic transfer of knowledge and experience has been among its core objectives. Fortunately, valuable steps have been taken in this regard over recent years - ranging from the organization of international training courses to expert and trainee exchange programs among member countries. It is expected that with the establishment of a permanent center and secretariat for international ombudsman studies and anti-corruption research, as mentioned in the Tehran Declaration, these efforts will become more coordinated. Through this, each member state will be able to benefit from the latest scientific findings and best practices in these fields.

> "Tehran Declaration was not merely a ceremonial announcement; rather, it is a practical roadmap for cooperation and innovation in the field of ombudsman work and administrative health"

Call for Scholarly Participation from Domestic and International Researchers and Experts

The *Nations' Experiences Journal* has always sought to be a platform for presenting scholarly perspectives and sharing practical experiences in the fields of administrative integrity, transparency, and anti-corruption.

Accordingly, we invite all researchers, university professors, and domestic experts to submit their scholarly articles, research reports, and practical experiences for publication in the Persian and English editions of the journal.

We also call upon international researchers and foreign specialists - particularly the esteemed members of the Assembly of Ombudsman Institutions of Islamic Countries - to submit their latest articles, achievements, and innovations in the areas of ombudsman institutions, enhancement of administrative integrity, and anti-corruption measures for publication in the journal.

Undoubtedly, the continuous exchange of ideas and new findings between domestic and international academic communities will enrich the literature on anti-corruption and lead to improved performance of oversight institutions.

Now, on the eve of publishing the eighth issue of the *Nations' Experiences Journal*, we extend our gratitude to all colleagues and experts who contributed to the preparation and compilation of this edition with its renewed approach. The key content of this issue, categorized thematically, is presented as follows:

Applied Research: This issue features *Poland – Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process*.

Society: An analysis of the effects of financial corruption and the rule of law on environmental pollution is provided.

Index: Given the importance of familiarizing with anti-corruption indicators, this issue presents the impact of corruption on the *Legatum Prosperity Index*.

Public Education: This section covers *Youth Against Corruption: The National Essay Competition (Georgia)*.

Special Report: A legal and statutory analysis is presented on the role of ombudsman institutions in the international condemnation of the crimes committed by the Zionist regime.

> "Without the support of specialized knowledge and the exchange of scientific information among countries, efforts to combat corruption and promote administrative integrity will not achieve the desired results"

Convention: This section examines the *implications of Iran's accession to the Palermo Convention* and *Southeast Asian countries' actions in implementing the Merida Convention*.

Legal Knowledge: The article *General Inspection Organization – National Anti-Corruption Authority and an Active Actor in the International Arena* is featured, along with another article analyzing *the comparative position and development of asset confiscation in strengthening legal anti-corruption strategies*.

Upcoming Events: This section introduces upcoming international academic conferences and congresses in the weeks ahead, offering a useful reference for planning scientific exchanges.

Terminology: Recognizing the importance of enhancing specialized language skills among colleagues as a gateway to international scientific exchange and sharing the Islamic Republic of Iran's successful anti-corruption experiences globally, a dedicated permanent page has been included in this issue.

Commentary: In an article titled *Planning Systems and Anti-Corruption*, the importance of strategic planning for optimal organizational performance is explained.

Model: Singapore is introduced as a successful model in combating administrative corruption.

International Training: This section provides new insights into international training programs for professionals, academics, and inspectors.

In conclusion, we sincerely thank our esteemed readers for their continued support and hope that the content of this issue serves as a modest contribution to the advancement of administrative integrity in our beloved country and the Islamic world. We look forward to receiving your valuable articles and are confident that, with the active participation of the academic and executive communities, new horizons can be opened in the fight against corruption and the realization of good governance.

Wishing you continued success,

Dr. Mohammad-Amin Kaykhaie Farzaneh

News and Developments

▶ 20-Year Prison Sentence for Former China National Football Team Coach Li Tie Upheld

A Chinese court announced that Li Tie, the former head coach of China's national football team, has lost his appeal against a 20-year prison sentence for corruption charges.

Li, who previously played in the English Premier League for Everton, was convicted in December 2023 for giving and receiving bribes amounting to approximately 120 million yuan (equivalent to $16.5 million) during his coaching tenure at Hebei China Fortune and the Chinese national team between 2015 and 2021.

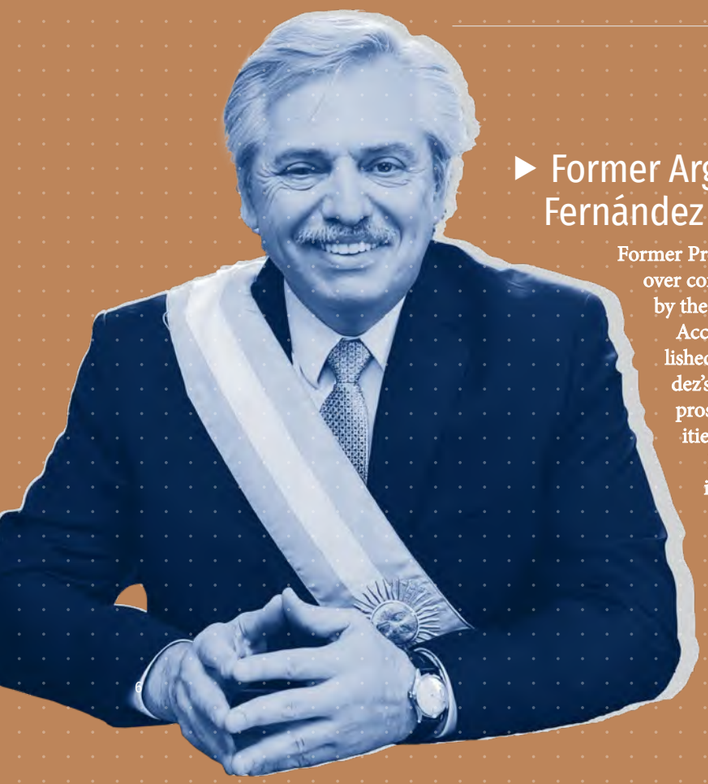
He appealed the ruling; however, the Hubei High People's Court upheld the original sentence. Li still has the option to refer his case to the Supreme People's Court of China, the country's highest judicial authority, if he wishes.

China has spent decades trying to combat corruption and match-fixing in football. In 2024, Li was one of several prominent figures in Chinese football prosecuted during a wave of anti-corruption cases. As part of this effort, Chen Xuyuan, the former president of the Chinese Football Association (CFA), was sentenced to life imprisonment for accepting bribes.

Other senior figures, including former CFA vice president Yu Hongchen, former general secretary Chen Yongliang, and Dong Zheng, former manager of the Chinese Super League, also received lengthy prison sentences.

Source:

- https://apnews.com/hub/soccer



▶ Former Argentine President Alberto Fernández to Stand Trial for Corruption

Former President of Argentina, Alberto Fernández, will face trial over corruption charges related to insurance policies obtained by the government during his presidency (2019–2023).

According to a ruling by Judge Sebastián Casanello - published Thursday in Argentine media and confirmed by Fernández's lawyer, Mariana Barbita - the former president is being prosecuted for "activities incompatible with the responsibilities of a public official."

Fernández is accused of using an insurance broker, who is married to his personal secretary, to facilitate the issuance of government insurance policies during his term in office.

Source:

- https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/11/argentinas-ex-president-fernandez-to-stand-trial-for-corruption

▶ Former Spanish Prime Minister's Aide Arrested

Santos Cerdán, a former aide to the Prime Minister of Spain, has been arrested without bail as part of an ongoing financial corruption investigation. This case is the latest - and potentially the most serious - in a series of scandals that have forced Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez to publicly apologize and agree to calls from political opponents for early elections.

On Monday, an investigative judge of Spain's Supreme Court ordered that the senior former official of the ruling Socialist Party be held in pretrial detention as part of the corruption probe - a case that could threaten the stability of Sánchez's minority government.

Judge Leopoldo Ponte is examining allegations against Cerdán, former Transport Minister José Luis Ábalos, and his aide Koldo García. They are accused of accepting bribes in exchange for awarding public contracts.

Cerdán resigned from his position earlier this month but has denied the charges. Both Ábalos and García also maintain their innocence. Cerdán stepped down after Judge Ponte cited "strong evidence" suggesting his potential involvement in the "improper awarding of contracts."

In documents submitted to the court, the judge stated that Cerdán may face charges including membership in a criminal organization, abuse of influence, and bribery.

The judge denied Cerdán's request for release on bail, citing concerns that he might destroy or hide evidence - as his home has yet to be searched - and that he could potentially flee the country.

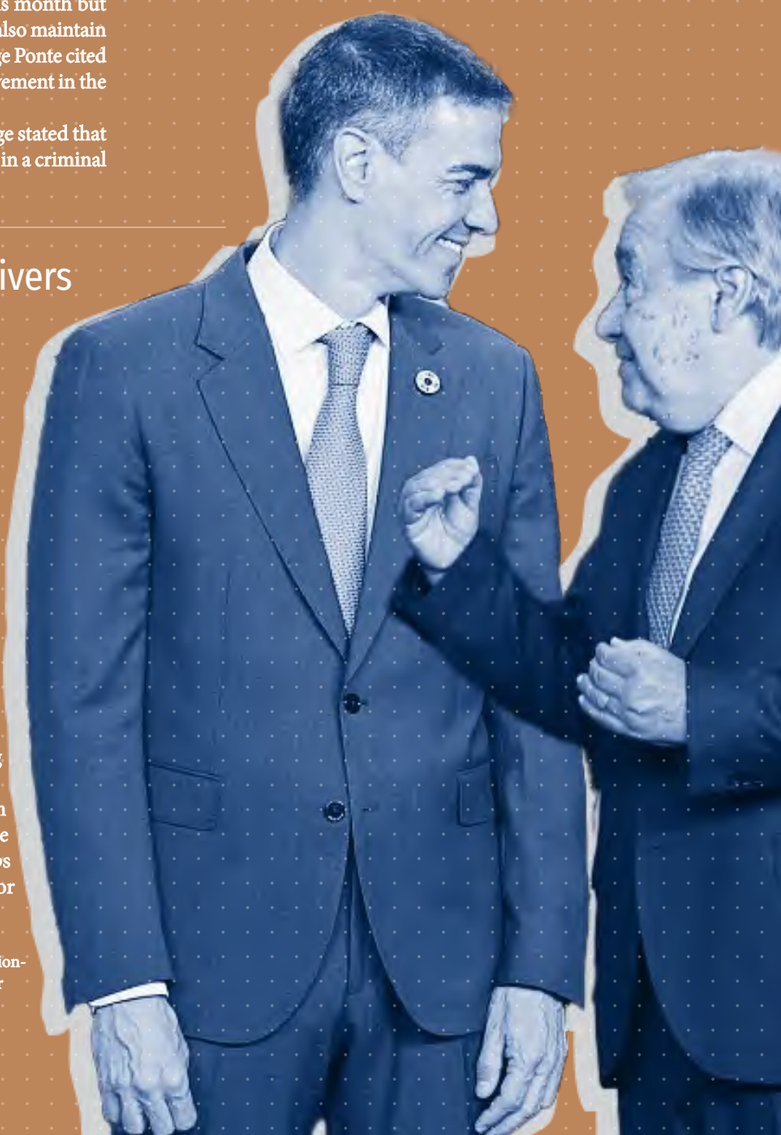
The case is built on audio recordings made over several years at García's residence. Despite claims by the accused that the recordings were manipulated, Judge Ponte has stated that the files appear credible. According to the judge, Cerdán may have been the ringleader of the group.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on Monday defended the Socialist Party's handling of the corruption allegations, saying the party acted decisively by demanding Cerdán's resignation.

Speaking to reporters during a United Nations summit in Seville, Sánchez stated: "The justice system must determine the responsibilities that Santos Cerdán may have."

Source:

- https://www.euronews.com/tag/corruption



▶ Corruption Scandal Delivers Major Blow to Spanish Prime Minister

Pedro Sánchez rose to power in 2018 after successfully leading a no-confidence vote against then-Conservative Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy. That move came after a court accused the center-right People's Party (PP) of "organized corruption." At the time, Sánchez promised a "democratic renewal."

Now, he and his Socialist Party have nearly returned to square one. Following the release of a police report by a court, which included shocking evidence of systemic corruption involving two of Sánchez's closest party allies, the Prime Minister appeared visibly burdened during a June 12 press conference - apologizing eight times.

He promised to make leadership changes within the party and conduct an independent audit of the party's finances. However, it appears these steps may not be enough to restore his authority - or even to preserve his political position.

Source:

- https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/06/19/corruption-at-the-heart-of-his-party-wounds-spains-prime-minister

▶ AU Commission Chairperson Calls for Focus on Human Dignity in 2025 Africa Anti-Corruption Day

On the occasion of Africa Anti-Corruption Day 2025, His Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, urged all AU member states to place human dignity at the center of their anti-corruption strategies.

Africa Anti-Corruption Day is observed annually on July 11. This year's theme is *"Promoting Human Dignity in the Fight Against Corruption"*, aligning with the African Union's overarching 2025 theme: *"Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations."*

The Chairperson emphasized that corruption is not merely an economic crime - it is a direct assault on human dignity and security. It deprives countries of their growth potential and strips individuals of their inherent worth. Corruption erodes public trust in institutions, diverts development resources, and perpetuates inequality and poverty.

He further noted that corruption disproportionately affects women, youth, children, and vulnerable populations, depriving them of basic rights, freedoms, and growth opportunities. This can result in catastrophic outcomes such as increased maternal mortality due to diverted healthcare resources or the denial of access to primary education for children.

The Chairperson highlighted the strong link between fighting corruption and achieving justice and reparations for historical injustices. As Africa works to correct the wrongs of the past, equal attention must be paid to dismantling modern corrupt systems that violate dignity and justice.

This year's theme calls on the African people to reflect on their history and shape a shared future rooted in human dignity.

He emphasized that fighting corruption is one of the core pillars of the African Union's Agenda 2063, which envisions a future built on integrity, accountability, and transparency. He reaffirmed the continued relevance of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC), adopted 22 years ago, as the continent's guiding framework in this regard.

The Chairperson called on member states to align their national laws and strategies with the principles of the convention - especially Paragraph 4 of Article 2, which mandates governments to remove obstacles to socio-economic development and ensure conditions for the enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights.

In conclusion, the AU Commission Chairperson urged member states to take immediate action in fulfilling their commitments to effectively combat corruption. He stressed that such action must be rooted in a human rights–based approach to prevention and law enforcement. He also called for unity and solidarity in dismantling corrupt structures and building a continent where human dignity is protected and upheld.

Source:

- https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20250711/auc-chairperson-urges-focus-human-dignity-anti-corruption-fight

Applied Research

Poland: Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process

* By: Dr. Ali Seifzadeh[1]

❖ Poland's online governmental legislative portal is an example of an IT-based mechanism that enhances both transparency and citizen engagement in the decision-making process. The aim of this portal is to improve the legislative process through three key means: increasing transparency, enabling oversight of lobbying activities, and encouraging broader public consultation.

Influence-peddling and corruption in the legislative process are particularly challenging for several reasons:

First, due to weak legal frameworks, pursuing and criminalizing such acts is difficult. Second, improving these laws is also a challenge, as political parties often favor ambiguous legislation and are only willing to reform under external pressure.

Corruption at the input stage of policy-making can have particularly damaging effects, leading to the adoption of laws that serve private interests rather than the public good - or even laws that harm society at large.

Improving transparency in the legislative process is a necessary step toward optimizing legislation in the public interest - but it is not sufficient on its own. Various forms of citizen participation - such as public hearings, consultations, petitions, and more - pave the way for legislative oversight and responsiveness to public preferences during elections.

The COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to complicating coordination efforts, also disrupted traditional forms of individual participation. Nevertheless, ever-evolving technology has not only enhanced transparency but has also opened up new opportunities for online coordination and simpler public participation in activities like public consultations.

Poland's online legislative portal serves as a model for how IT-driven mechanisms can both increase transparency and elevate citizen input at the policymaking stage. Obstacles to its full effectiveness - especially regarding lobbying oversight - are often tied to broader legislative gaps. However, a combination of three factors seen in other EU countries is noteworthy: publication of draft laws, facilitation of public consultations, and disclosure of lobbying positions held by interest groups.

1. Deputy for Research, Center for Training and Research on Administrative Integrity and Anti-Corruption.

Mechanism

The Government Legislative Process Portal is an information technology system that displays the government's legislative activities. Launched in 2011, this portal was designed to consolidate previously scattered information regarding the government's legislative process.

The portal aims to improve the legislative process in three main ways: increasing transparency, enabling oversight of lobbying, and enhancing citizen participation.

First, to improve transparency, the portal:

- Provides access to the content of draft legislation, including legal and regulatory impact assessments;
- Offers information about the stage of the legislative process, along with documents collected during these stages (e.g., opinions from institutions and bodies involved in the process);

- Enables tracking of changes made to draft texts;
- Covers information on new draft regulations and directives issued by ministers, the Council of Ministers, prime ministers, and the Chairperson of the Public Interest Committee;
- Publishes post-implementation impact assessments;
- Uses an advanced search engine;
- Contains categorized data such as draft type, legislative process stage, draft status, creation date, draft title, keywords, the name of the responsible institution, or the name of the legal act being amended by the draft;
- Provides a notification system for registered users, allowing them to subscribe to a newsletter focused on specific legislative processes or thematic areas.

Each draft has its own dedicated webpage, accessible via the portal's main site or through a specialized search engine.

These pages contain links to:

- The legislative and working schedule of the Council of Ministers or individual ministers, including basic descriptive information about the government's finalized legislative program and its members;
- The *Sejm* (lower house of Parliament) website, where users can follow the draft's progress through the legislative process;
- Legal journals of the Republic of Poland, should the draft become enforceable law.

Documents are publicly accessible without registration. Drafts, their impact assessments, and justifications are usually available in electronic formats such as PDF, DOC, or DOCX. Submissions from public consultations or institutional feedback may appear as scanned documents.

Second, the portal serves as a primary tool for institutions seeking to monitor legislative processes or track specific bills. It discloses documents submitted by professional lobbyists representing stakeholder groups.

Third, to boost citizen engagement in lawmaking, the portal informs stakeholders about ongoing consultations. When a consultation is open, a notice appears on the draft's webpage with details on how stakeholders can submit their views. This information includes a deadline, a form (if the consulting body chooses to use one), and an email address for submissions.

The portal publishes both stakeholder opinions and the government's responses. It also allows users to directly submit their comments on the project webpage and publishes consultation reports, which the consulting body is required to prepare.

When a draft law receives considerable attention and multiple institutions actively participate in the drafting phase by submitting numerous amendments, a consultation meeting is organized. During this meeting, one of the ministers usually presents the consultation results and attempts to align the draft law with the expectations raised by stakeholders.

Since 2020, consultation meetings have also been held online to ensure continuity even during the COVID-19 pandemic and to maintain stakeholder access to

legislative processes. These meetings aim to provide clear and definitive responses to the feedback raised during consultations and to transparently explain the outcomes of those consultations.

During the preparation phase for online public consultations, invitations are sent directly to all stakeholders who participated in the consultation drafting stage. Alternatively, the invitation may be published on the Government Legislative Process Portal. The invitation includes details about the online format of the meeting and an email address for registration. A participation link is sent out prior to the start of the session. In all other respects, the online meetings follow the same procedures as traditional offline sessions.

Input

Learning from Experience

The institution responsible for managing the portal is the Government Legislative Center, which also ensures the coordination of legal activities of the Council of Ministers, the Prime Minister, and other executive bodies of the government, and provides legal services to the Council of Ministers.

Financial and Human Resources

Launching and managing the online portal requires:

- Intergovernmental cooperation involving several institutions,
- A coordinator responsible for the technical aspects of the legislative portal, including both front-end and back-end,
- User support (including stakeholders and representatives of institutions responsible for uploading documents),
- IT support and security.

In Poland, this role is undertaken by the Government Legislative Center.

The implementers are representatives of other governmental bodies who oversee specific legislative processes, manage the draft legislation webpages, and carry out public consultations.

Technical Support

This includes experienced and skilled staff, a functional website with appropriate server facilities, security mechanisms, and the ability to generate backup versions.

Effects and Impacts

Some of the positive outcomes of the online portal include:

Transparency: Before the portal was introduced, information about the government's legislative processes was scattered across dozens of websites. There were no shared standards for publication, file formats, or conducting public consultations, and it was unclear at what stage a process stood.

Currently, the portal contains information on over 18,600 draft laws and serves as a primary source of information for stakeholders and the media. It has improved the transparency of legislative processes and made access to public information about certain drafts easier. It has also increased equality in access to such information.

Public Oversight: The portal allows legal tracking, and if all procedures are properly followed, it enables users to easily trace the influence of stakeholders on the implementation of legislation. Numerous watchdog organizations and media outlets use the portal.

It is one of the main tools of the Civic Legislative Forum, which includes a group of experts and civil society representatives who monitor the transparency and quality of legislative processes. The forum also oversees the alignment of published documents on the portal with the actual implementation of laws.

Citizen Participation: Online public consultations have demonstrated that even during a pandemic, it is still possible to conduct consultation meetings. Moreover, online consultations (compared to organizing traditional in-person meetings) accelerate the process, reduce participation costs, and allow more stakeholders to take part - especially those based outside Warsaw.

Implementation Framework

Legal Framework

Active cooperation between the institutions responsible for coordinating the portal's operations and those primarily responsible for specific legislative processes is essential.

Institutions

Organizational Requirements:

The portal operates based on the internal regulations of the Council of Ministers, which clearly specify who is responsible for publishing official documents at each stage of the legislative process. The portal also adheres to the government's obligations outlined in the lobbying law related to the legislative process.

Effective implementation requires appropriate legal reforms to ensure that no part of the publication flow of the legislative process or its associated documents on the portal is compromised. Such a guarantee can be established through legislation that stipulates legislative processes may not proceed or be valid unless documents are disclosed on the portal according to established procedures.

The adoption of digital mechanisms and new technologies by public offices, citizens, and lawmakers is one of the most crucial elements of this model. It begins with informalizing the legal process-especially public consultations-and enabling it to function in digital format. Successful implementation cannot occur without proper training for officials.

Technological Requirements:

These include ensuring IT security of the portal, support systems, user-friendliness of the interface, and formatting documents in machine-readable formats-all of which simplify access for stakeholders and representatives of the institutions responsible for uploading documents.

The following are essential for conducting effective online public consultations:

- Properly informing a group of stakeholders who are engaged in the legislative process about the session;
- Recording the session;
- Publishing the session minutes and video online;
- Publishing the outcome of the session online, including its impact on the implementation framework of the legal act and the scope of that impact.

The Footprint of Corruption on the Prosperity Index

*By: Dr. Asghar Mobarak

Why are some countries wealthy while others remain poor? Is there a connection between poverty, underdevelopment, and corruption? These are long-standing questions that have preoccupied experts for decades. The search for answers has laid the foundation for the development of economic growth models and strategies to combat corruption. Each successive model has aimed to better understand the factors behind differences in per capita income among countries, with increasing depth and precision.

Today, achieving a certain level of development is a key goal of most economic and social programs across societies. This is because when a society reaches a stage of development, it typically enjoys several advantages-among them are reduced poverty and inequality, greater prosperity, and lower levels of corruption.

Introduction

The Legatum Prosperity Index and the Corruption Perceptions Index are two distinct indicators, both used to evaluate the status of countries. However, each measures different aspects of prosperity and governance. The Legatum Index assesses a country's overall prosperity, encompassing various dimensions such as economy, education, health, and the level of corruption. In contrast, the Corruption Perceptions Index focuses specifically on the level of administrative and governmental corruption within a country.

The Legatum Prosperity Index is an annual ranking published by the Legatum Institute, aimed at comprehensively measuring national prosperity. It goes beyond material wealth, such as GDP per capita, and includes social well-being factors. As a broad indicator for measuring national flourishing, it incorporates both economic and social dimensions.

The index is built upon 12 main pillars including economic quality, business environment, governance, education, health, personal freedom, social capital, and the natural environment. It draws from more than 300 individual indicators and 70 different data sources. This multidimensional approach makes it a powerful tool for understanding overall human progress and the dynamics of prosperity.

The design of the Legatum Prosperity Index deliberately moves beyond purely economic indicators to include social well-being and governance. This reflects the idea that true national prosperity is holistic and deeply tied to institutional quality. Within the framework of the Legatum Index, this internal logic establishes a direct connection to factors such as corruption, since corruption fundamentally undermines social and institutional foundations.

Corruption is one of the factors that affects a country's overall prosperity. It can hinder economic growth, investment, and social development. Therefore, the Corruption Perceptions Index can be considered one of the influencing components of the Legatum Index. In other words, countries that rank higher on the Corruption Perceptions Index-indicating lower levels of corruption-tend to also score better on the Legatum Index[1].

Thus, the Legatum Index generally provides an overall picture of prosperity, encompassing various dimensions, including the state of corruption within countries. While the Corruption Perceptions Index specifically focuses on the level of corruption within a country, the two indices are nonetheless interconnected, as corruption is one of the key factors influencing a country's overall prosperity.

Every year, data on the world's most prosperous countries is published, measuring a range of indicators. The key indicators evaluated in these assessments include levels of wealth, economic growth, equality of living standards, health, education, and individual attributes. The Legatum Institute recently released the tenth edition of its annual Global Prosperity Index, ranking the world's most prosperous nations. This institute has introduced the Legatum Index as a tool to measure countries' levels of prosperity. In addition to GDP, the index takes into account other factors such as social capital, the level of administrative corruption, health, political freedom, and overall quality of life (Al-Marhubi, 2023).

What sets the Legatum Prosperity Index apart from other global prosperity assessments is its consideration of both income and social well-being. In 2018, the Legatum Index assessed more than 147 countries across five regions (the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Africa) using 9 sub-indices and 89 micro-level indicators.

The *Economy* sub-index evaluates countries in four areas: macroeconomic policies, economic satisfaction and outlook, foundations for growth, and financial sector efficiency. The *Entre-*

1. The Legatum Prosperity Index 2023

preneurship and Opportunity sub-index measures the entrepreneurial environment, innovation activity, and equality of opportunity within countries. The *Governance* sub-index assesses performance in three areas: accountable and efficient government, free elections and political participation, and rule of law. The *Education* sub-index evaluates countries in terms of access to education, quality of education, and human capital.

Ultimately, the Legatum Prosperity Index measures quality of life and overall well-being across nine key domains: economy, business opportunities, governance, education, health, safety and security, environment, personal freedoms, and social capital.

The *Health* sub-index evaluates countries in three areas: health outcomes, healthcare infrastructure, and preventive care. The *Safety and Security* sub-index assesses national security and personal safety. The *Personal Freedom* sub-index examines a country's performance and progress in protecting individual liberties and promoting civic and social rights. The *Social Capital* sub-index evaluates social cohesion and civic engagement, as well as local and family-based social networks.

To calculate a country's overall Legatum Prosperity Index score, equal weight is assigned to all sub-indices. Each country receives scores in the various sub-indices based on a combination of its performance across different variables and the relative importance of those variables. These sub-index scores are then averaged to produce a final overall score, which determines each country's rank in the index (Legatum Institute, 2023).

In the latest ranking, three new sub-indices have been added: investment environment, access and infrastructure, and living conditions. In previous years, the institute's reports assessed countries' prosperity based on the original nine foundational pillars.

Introduction to the Legatum Index

In the Legatum report, prosperity is defined as a level of well-being and the extent to which individuals in a society have access to both material and non-material resources. Prosperity, therefore, from both economic and sociological perspectives, encompasses various dimensions-biological, legal, political, social, and economic. For this reason, prosperity is a matter of focus at both international and national levels today.

To better understand this concept and the methodology for measuring the components of prosperity, the Legatum Institute introduces a set of macro-level indicators that deserve careful attention.

> "In general, societies that are well-governed tend to enjoy higher levels of economic growth and citizen well-being. The nature of a country's governance has a direct material impact on its prosperity"

Economic Quality

This refers to having a healthy and stable economic foundation that contributes to increased per capita income and a higher overall level of well-being. It is one of the core variables in social development and reflects how well a country has generated wealth and how that wealth has been distributed among its citizens.

A strong economy depends on high labor force participation, business competitiveness, and access to trade. In addition, it's not only the amount of wealth produced that matters, but also how effectively that wealth improves the standard of living for the population.

Business Environment

In any country, the strength of the business environment is a critical and decisive factor in determining its prosperity. A robust business environment fosters creativity and entrepreneurship. It generates new ideas and opportunities for innovation, which in turn lead to social well-being and increased wealth.

Governance

In general, societies that are well-governed tend to enjoy higher levels of economic growth and citizen well-being. The nature of a country's governance has a direct material impact on its prosperity.

The rule of law, strong institutions, and the quality of regulations significantly contribute to economic development. Effective, fair, and accountable governments build public trust, which ultimately leads to higher levels of life satisfaction among citizens.

Personal Freedom

In countries where citizens enjoy freedom of speech, belief, and association, higher levels of income and prosperity are generally observed. Societies that respect civil rights and personal and

social freedoms-and actively establish and protect those rights-tend to report higher levels of satisfaction among their populations. Moreover, nations that secure high levels of natural income are often those where individual freedoms are protected, citizens are supported, and social diversity is welcomed, thereby fostering innovation.

This category of freedom encompasses civil rights and personal liberties within society.

Social Capital

Social networks in a society are cohesive and enduring when people trust and respect one another. These characteristics have a direct effect on a society's overall prosperity. An individual's well-being is more likely to be secured in a community where people trust each other and provide support to their friends and families. Generally, societies with lower levels of social capital experience slower economic growth. As such, social networks are considered a form of asset-referred to as "social capital"-which not only contributes to economic income but also enhances well-being and happiness. In summary, social capital refers to personal relationships, social networks, societal norms, and civic engagement.

Safety and Security

Both are closely aligned with the achievement of prosperity. A secure and stable environment is essential for attracting investment and sustaining economic growth. People's well-being depends on safe living conditions and personal security. In other words, a nation can only attain prosperity if its citizens live in a safe and secure environment. This is why the Legatum Prosperity Index considers both national security and personal safety simultaneously.

When national and personal security are threatened, levels of income and well-being are put at risk.

According to the 2023 Legatum Institute report, Denmark ranked first in the global prosperity index. Its top position was attributed to favorable living conditions, high levels of personal freedom, strong social capital, and an efficient government. Denmark is also listed as the world's second-happiest country and the fifth most peaceful country globally.

Norway and Switzerland ranked second and third, respectively. Norway earned its place due to strong personal freedoms, an effective government, and high public trust. Sweden ranked fourth among the world's most prosperous countries, recognized for its high social indicators, including social security, economic equality, life satisfaction, public support, and political participation-making it a stable and progressive nation.

Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Germany, and Luxembourg followed in fifth through ninth place, respectively.

In 2019, Norway held the top position in the ranking of the world's ten most prosperous countries. Norway excelled in terms of effective governance and social capital. Like Denmark, Norway places great importance on the well-being of its citizens.

In 2023, Iran ranked 118th on the Legatum Prosperity Index, compared to 123rd in 2013. The lowest-ranking country in that year was South Sudan. The most notable improvement between 2013 and 2023 was recorded by Kenya (ranked 108), while the sharpest decline was seen in Myanmar (ranked 143).

Norway had held the top position in this index for seven consecutive years; however, in 2024, a new country was recognized as the most prosperous in the world.

Iran ranked 118th in the 2024 Global Prosperity Index, dropping several places compared to its 2023 position of 106 out of 142 countries.

Among Iran's neighboring countries included in the 2024 prosperity ranking, Pakistan ranked 139th, Iraq 143rd, and Afghanistan 148th-placing them below Iran. In contrast, Oman (70), Turkey (78), Tajikistan (100), and the Republic of Azerbaijan (103) were ranked higher than Iran in the 2024 Global Prosperity Index.

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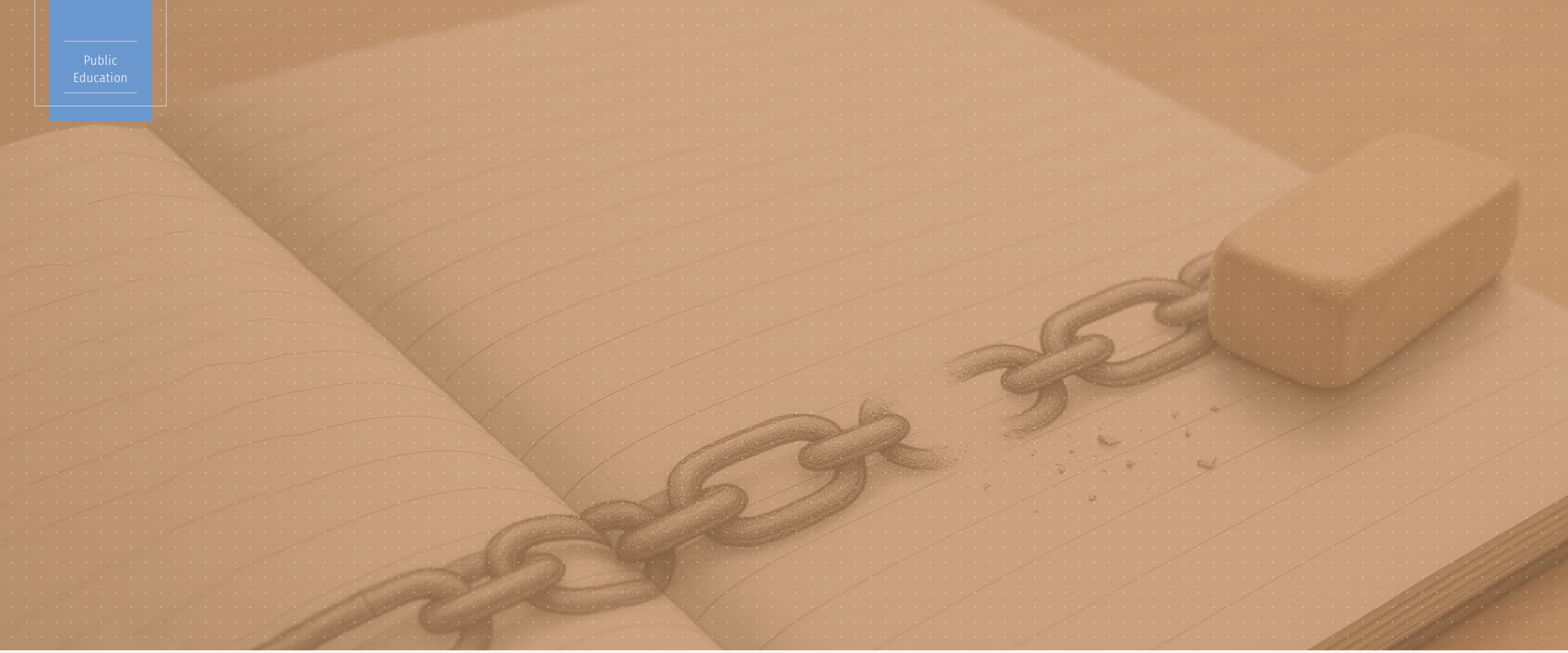


Youth Against Corruption:

Georgia's National Essay Competition

By: Mahmoud Mahdavi-Far[1]

Summary

The *Youth Against Corruption* project consisted of a series of academic discussions and dialogues that culminated in a school essay competition for students aged 14 to 15. The initiative encouraged students to develop and express their views on corruption and the rule of law, while simultaneously deepening their understanding of these topics through interactions with guest speakers and the writing of creative essays.

By providing a platform for students' voices to be heard at the national level-and by inviting public figures to participate in school discussions-the project successfully captured students' interest and engagement.

This empowerment-focused initiative was implemented by Transparency International Georgia between September 2003 and February 2004 across 19 schools in six regions of the country. Transparency International Georgia worked closely with the Ministry of Education's *Culture of Lawfulness* project in carrying out this program.

1. Researcher at the Center for Training and Research on Administrative Integrity and Anti-Corruption

Background

Recent research leaves little doubt that Georgia's difficult economic and political conditions over the past decades can be largely attributed to high levels of corruption. Citizens' attitudes toward corruption have also been problematic. While the negative impact of large-scale corruption is widely acknowledged, its effects on daily life often remain unclear. In cases where corruption is recognized, people are generally pessimistic about the possibility of successfully combating it.

As a result, there is a pressing need for awareness campaigns that highlight the everyday consequences of corruption and promote effective tools for curbing it. Raising public awareness is vital to Georgia's progress, and mobilizing young people in particular has been especially important in this effort.

In 2002, the Georgian Ministry of Education introduced a course titled *Culture of Lawfulness*, focusing on legal principles and corruption. The course was piloted in 19 schools and funded by the U.S. National Strategic Information Center. The ministry deemed the pilot project successful and incorporated the course into the 9th-grade curriculum (for 14–15-year-olds) for the 2003–2004 academic year.

The course was made mandatory in all 147 schools in Tbilisi, the capital, as well as in the regional schools where the pilot had been implemented. The ministry also announced its intention to expand the course to all schools across Georgia within the next two years.

At the same time as the new educational course was introduced, Transparency International Georgia launched a youth-focused awareness campaign that included a series of discussions and ultimately culminated in an essay-writing competition. The goal of the project was to raise youth awareness about issues of corruption and legitimacy, and to strengthen the impact of existing anti-corruption programs already being implemented in schools.

The essay component specifically gave students the opportunity to express their ideas and apply the knowledge they had gained from the discussions. The competition also demonstrated that society was interested in hearing the voices of young people. Following a selection process, the top nine essays were published in one of Georgia's major newspapers and featured on the website of Transparency International Georgia.

To introduce the campaign in schools, Transparency International Georgia worked closely with the *Culture of Lawfulness* program, the Ministry of Education, the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, and the Georgia Anti-Corruption Council. Together, these organizations provided special awards for the winners. In addition, distinguished speakers from the discussion panels distributed their books to students free of charge.

The project coincided with the pre-revolutionary protests in Georgia, which had an impact on its implementation. It began in September and October, just before the November 2003 elections. Public attention was heavily focused on the upcoming elections, which led to frequent absences of both students and teachers from school.

Planning and Organization

The Youth Against Corruption campaign was implemented over a six-month period. The first month was dedicated to preparation and logistics, during which a detailed project booklet outlining the campaign was published. The project's working group held a meeting with teachers from participating schools and representatives from the Ministry of Education.

This working group included a Transparency International coordinator, a professional linguist, a representative from the Ministry of Education, a poet, a writer, a lawyer, and a journalist. In the initial session, the group discussed the following questions:

- What topics and questions would most effectively engage students?
- Who are the most suitable guest speakers for 14–15-year-old students?
- How should the discussions and essay competition be structured according to the age and knowledge level of the students?

Four working sessions were held over two months to finalize the structure of the competition and define a framework for evaluating the essays. A list of potential guest speakers was created, the format of their talks was developed, essay competition topics were selected, and the project's follow-up activities were outlined.

Students were asked to choose which guests they wanted to meet. Their choices included many media representatives. Thanks to Transparency International Georgia's extensive network, arrangements were made for these high-profile figures to speak to the students.

Teachers who had taught the *Culture of Lawfulness* course were hired as local coordinators for each school. They helped organize project events and participated in the initial evaluation of the essays.

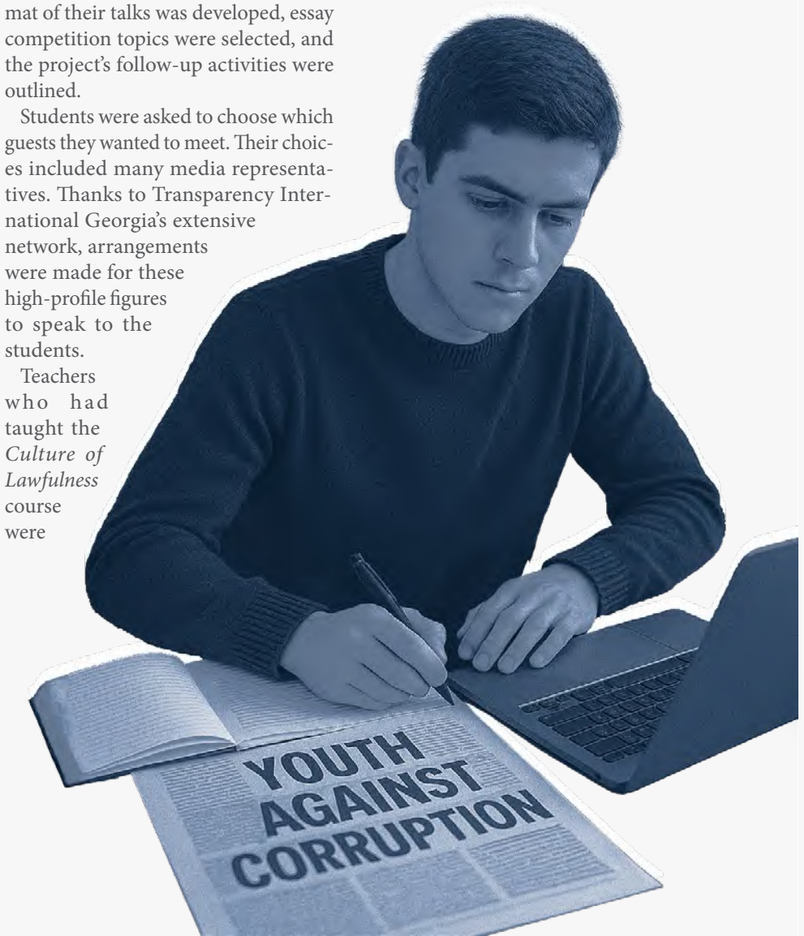
Informational booklets and posters were distributed in schools where discussion sessions were held.

The following topics were selected for the essay competition:

- Is injustice the root of corruption, or is corruption the root of injustice?
- Describe a corrupt person (appearance, lifestyle) and how they differ from others.
- Imagine you work in an organization that ignores corruption-what would you do?

Discussion Forums

The discussion forums were organized as a preliminary phase to the essay-writing competition. For each forum, a guest speaker was assigned to a participating school. In some cases, the speaker was a poet; in others, a well-known journalist or lawyer. These events were filled with excitement. Students-especially those from regional areas-were enthusiastic about the opportunity to meet Georgian public figures they had previously only seen in the media. Parents were also eager to support the initiative and provided valuable feedback.



> "Additionally, teachers came to recognize the value of discussing corruption with their students and saw the benefits of integrating such conversations into the curriculum"

The discussions focused on students' personal experiences with corruption and what actions they had taken or might take in such situations. The forums were designed to be interactive. At the start of each session, the guest would introduce themselves, present a topic for discussion, or invite questions from the students. Transparency International Georgia documented all the questions and later used them to help shape essay topics that were genuinely relevant and interesting to students.

Students from rural regions tended to be more active in the discussions than those from major cities and later demonstrated greater independence in their essays. Urban youth were generally less optimistic but more informed. In particular, students in the capital were less engaged during discussions and often responded to the issues with noticeable pessimism. In contrast, in more remote areas, the forums with guest speakers turned into major events.

Although originally intended as a preparatory step for the essay competition, it became clear that the discussion forums were equally significant. Essays were requested specifically from schools that had participated in the forums. The forums were held during the first months of the project, while the essay competition was held during the final months.

In total, 19 sessions were conducted in 19 different schools. Each session included one guest speaker and 30 to 35 students, meaning approximately 600 students participated overall.

Essay writing Competition

Since the Georgian school curriculum does not include specific courses on essay writing, Transparency International Georgia arranged writing workshops at all participating schools before the competition. The essay competition itself took place on December 15 and 16, 2003. Students were given the three preselected topics to choose from and had two hours to complete their essays. They were encouraged to use different writing styles to express their views on corruption.

Essay evaluation was carried out in two stages. To ensure impartiality, the essays were first assessed by teachers from other participating schools. The top ten percent from this initial evaluation were forwarded to an independent jury formed by Transparency International Georgia.

The jury consisted of a writer, an education official, lawyers, a linguist, and a representative from Transparency International. Essays were scored on a 10-point scale based on four criteria: analytical skill, creativity, personal expression, and command of the Georgian language.

Out of more than 500 submissions, three winners and eight runners-up were selected. As previously mentioned, the winning essays were published in a national newspaper and on Transparency International Georgia's website.

The award ceremony was held on December 24, 2003, at the conference hall of the Open Society Georgia Foundation. Transparency International Georgia presented certificates and special prizes to the winners. All teachers, jury members, nominated students, partner organizations, guest speakers, and sponsors were invited to the event.

Results

An evaluation questionnaire was designed to identify changes in students' perceptions of corruption before and after the program. This questionnaire was distributed following the essay competition. In addition to assessing attitude shifts, the surveys also collected students' feedback on features they believed could be added to or improved in the program. Students were also asked to compile a list of potential guest speakers for future iterations of the project.

Student Empowerment

The initiative significantly contributed to student empowerment by providing a platform for young voices to be heard and respected on a national level. Through open discussions, interaction with

public figures, and the opportunity to express their own ideas creatively, students were encouraged to think critically about corruption and their role in addressing it. Many participants reported feeling more confident in their ability to identify, understand, and speak out against corruption, signaling a meaningful shift toward active citizenship among Georgia's youth.

One of the most important achievements of this campaign was the large number of participants and the clear shift in students' attitudes. The young people who took part in the project came to understand that their opinions and ideas were both valuable and relevant to society.

Interviews revealed that while students had strong views about corruption, they often felt that no one was interested in what they had to say on the subject. This project was meaningful to them because it provided a platform where their voices were not only heard but taken seriously.

Additionally, teachers came to recognize the value of discussing corruption with their students and saw the benefits of integrating such conversations into the curriculum.

Challenges

Although the project was largely successful, Transparency International Georgia encountered several challenges along the way. For example, the Ministry of Education attempted to exert control over the process and sought to influence the selection of guest speakers and discussion topics. Transparency International Georgia addressed this issue by rallying support from other NGOs and applying collective pressure on the ministry, successfully defending its independence in the project's implementation.

The ministry requested that political figures not be invited as guest speakers and, at one point, even called for the cancellation of the entire project. Additionally, it asked to be informed of the essay topics prior to the competition. Fortunately, Transparency International Georgia did not concede to these demands, as it had the support of most school administrators. A change in government leadership following the Rose Revolution allowed the organization to continue the second phase of the project without interference.

> "students had strong views about corruption, they often felt that no one was interested in what they had to say on the subject. This project was meaningful to them because it provided a platform where their voices were not only heard but taken seriously"

Engaging youth in the project proved to be a major challenge. To attract their interest, Transparency International Georgia employed several motivational tools, including the competition and awards, the opportunity to have their essays published and seen by the public, and the chance to meet well-known Georgian figures. Competitions are not common in Georgian schools, so the prospect of a contest with prizes and public recognition was exciting and motivating for students.

The most difficult and time-consuming part of the project was coordinating with guest speakers and organizing their school visits. As mentioned earlier, the project coincided with Georgia's Rose Revolution, which created significant planning difficulties, as many of the scheduled speakers were actively involved in the political events. Despite these obstacles, Transparency International Georgia successfully conducted 19 discussion sessions with students across six regions of the country.

Recommendations

Most participants stated that the essay competition was an engaging way to share their opinions; however, some students still expressed doubt about whether their ideas would be taken seriously by adults. Therefore, it is recommended that the distribution of the winning essays be expanded-not only through newspapers and websites but also via television stations, radio, and other schools.

These essays could also be formally presented to senior government officials, who would then respond directly to the students. Such steps would reinforce the value of youth voices and promote greater civic engagement.

There are also plans to expand future projects, particularly by extending the program to more schools and including first-year university students.

Source:

- http://www.transparency.org/en/publication/teaching-integrity-to-youth-examples-from-11-countries

World Day for Judicial Integrity: A Global Call to Action

*By: Rangajiva Wimalasena[1]

❖ July 23, 2025, has been designated as World Day for Judicial Integrity. Success in the fair administration of justice depends on the ability of key actors within the judiciary to perform at the highest level.

Unlike in the past, today's judges face increasing challenges-from rapid technological advancements and the pervasive influence of social media to the emergence of artificial intelligence. Alongside these developments, judicial systems around the world continue to grapple with social, economic, political, religious, and situational pressures such as natural disasters, armed conflict, and financial constraints.

Despite all these difficulties, judges are expected to maintain independence, impartiality, integrity, and composure in the eyes of the public. Yet the psychological and emotional toll of fulfilling these expectations remains an often overlooked issue in many parts of the world.

The Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct were developed several decades ago to address these challenges and in alignment with Article 11 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. These principles set out global standards for judicial behavior across six core values: independence, impartiality, integrity, equality, competence, and diligence.

A detailed commentary was later prepared to elaborate on these principles. Notably, paragraph 194 of the commentary explicitly recognizes the mental and physical well-being of judges as a key factor in strengthening judicial diligence and competence.

However, the issue of judicial health-both mental and physical-has remained largely overlooked in many judicial circles around the world.

1. Judge Rangajiva Wimalasena is the President of the Court of Appeal of Nauru and was responsible for drafting the "Nauru Declaration." He has also served as a judge in Sri Lanka and Fiji.

Over the past decade, countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and several Caribbean nations have gradually begun to examine the psychological pressures faced by judges. These studies have shed new light on the issue. One such study revealed that the rate of medication use among judges in a particular jurisdiction was higher than the average within the general population.

In 2021, Global Judicial Integrity Network conducted a worldwide survey on the relationship between health and judicial integrity. The results were striking:

- 69% of respondents said that discussing mental health or stress remains a taboo topic for judges.
- 83% believed that the level of support provided within their judicial system was inadequate.
- 89% reported knowing colleagues who had experienced stress, sadness, or anxiety.

These findings point to a systemic issue-one that, if left unaddressed, could seriously affect the quality of justice delivery.

Since 2014, I have been advocating for what I call a "Balanced Mind" approach for judges. At the time, this idea was not widely welcomed. Judicial leaders were concerned that openly acknowledging judicial stress might undermine public confidence in the judiciary. Meanwhile, judges themselves were reluctant to speak out, fearing it could harm their professional reputation.

Recognizing the global importance of this issue, the Nauru Declaration on Judicial Well-Being was developed to raise awareness, acknowledge the problem, and outline specific steps to address it. Unlike many legal topics that vary significantly between common law and civil law systems, the issue of judicial well-being is a shared global concern-one that transcends legal traditions and national borders.

Approximately 18 senior judicial leaders and experts from around the world-representing various continents, regions, and judicial institutions-came together to draft the Nauru Declaration, which outlines seven core principles to promote judicial well-being. This declaration is not merely about the personal health of individual judges; it is fundamentally a matter of justice delivery.

> "A detailed commentary was later prepared to elaborate on these principles. Notably, paragraph 194 of the commentary explicitly recognizes the mental and physical well-being of judges as a key factor in strengthening judicial diligence and competence"

If judicial stress is ignored, if judges are forced to work under adverse conditions, face harassment, or are denied their rights, the consequences extend beyond the individual. Judicial burnout can lead to poor decision-making, delays in case resolution, and erosion of trust in judicial institutions. Ultimately, this harms society, the economy, and social stability.

In this context, the Republic of Nauru submitted a resolution to the United Nations General Assembly to officially recognize a day dedicated to judicial well-being. On 4 March 2025, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution with the support of 71 member states, proclaiming 25 July as the World Day for Judicial Well-Being-a date that commemorates the adoption of the Nauru Declaration.

The time has now come for judiciaries, judicial leaders, policymakers, and other stakeholders to commit to ensuring that judges receive the support they need. At the same time, as emphasized in the Nauru Declaration, judges themselves carry a responsibility to care for their own well-being.

The adoption of this resolution is a global call to action-a call to recognize and implement strategies that safeguard judicial health and, in doing so, strengthen the integrity, independence, and effectiveness of justice systems worldwide.

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Society

The Impact of Financial Corruption on Environmental Governance

* By: Dr. Asghar Mobarak[1]

Introduction:

One of the most critical challenges facing countries in the 21st century is climate change and global warming, which, in addition to having devastating effects on the environment, also inflict serious harm on human health. Global warming is closely linked to economic activities and the consumption of fossil fuels. In recent decades, as countries have experienced accelerated economic growth, the use of fossil energy has intensified, leading to excessive emissions of greenhouse gases into the Earth's atmosphere.

Energy is a fundamental factor in achieving economic development and is considered one of the key inputs in the progress of nations. Numerous studies have examined the effects of variables such as economic growth, energy consumption, foreign trade, and population growth on pollutant emissions resulting from fossil fuel combustion, especially carbon dioxide. Environmental pollution is one of the most pressing issues currently facing many developing countries. In addition to its environmental implications, it also causes negative economic and social consequences.

Studies show that the shadow economy and institutional factors can significantly influence environmental quality in developing countries. However, there has been limited research on the simultaneous impact of these variables on environmental pollution. On the other hand, corruption is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon with multiple causes and effects. Its scope ranges from individual acts (such as bribery) to widespread misconduct that affects all pillars of

1. Researcher at the Center for Training and Research on Administrative Integrity and Anti-Corruption

a political and economic system.

Despite the complexity, difficulty, and sensitivity of addressing this issue, in recent years, extensive research has been conducted to measure corruption, identify the causes of such criminal activity, and propose deterrent strategies by international institutions.

Environmental Consequences of Structural Corruption

Although theoretical discussions on corruption emerged seriously in the 1950s, it was not until the 1970s that the first theoretical frameworks and empirical studies on corruption and its causes were developed. Since then, corruption has become

one of the central issues in the fields of governance, state-building, and development.

Research findings show that corruption is most prevalent in poor, developing countries and poses a significant barrier to their development. Moreover, these studies indicate that unless adequate anti-corruption measures are implemented, the conditions for the spread of corruption in these countries will intensify, making it a major factor behind the failure of economic development policies. This highlights the need for comprehensive research on corruption in Iran, particularly as the country is currently striving for development, with most development plans focusing on economic growth.

Financial development is a broad concept encompassing six dimensions: the development of the banking sector, the development of non-banking financial institutions, the monetary sector and monetary policy, banking regulation and supervision, financial openness, and the institutional environment. Evidence suggests an inverse relationship between the abundance of natural resources and financial development.

Corporate environmental sustainability and related disclosures are essential for long-term corporate continuity. Since companies are deeply intertwined with society, the sustainability of corporate activities relies on societal support. Society benefits from corporate behavior and activities; therefore, expanding corporate social responsibility (CSR) indicates that corporate duties go beyond the traditional notion of "maximizing shareholder value." Companies must also be accountable to a broader set of stakeholders, including shareholders, customers, employees, suppliers, banks, regulators, the environment, and the community at large.

Thus, in addition to their economic responsibilities, companies must also show responsibility toward environmental issues. Given the significance of corporate environmental responsibility and its related disclosures, sufficient attention must be given to these matters in financial reporting. Effective oversight and compliance in this area may require robust corporate governance mechanisms, ensuring that companies act transparently and are held accountable for their environmental impacts.

corruption is often perceived as a consequence of an inadequate institutional environment, and its effects on economic activities are of particular concern. Economic corruption creates economic insecurity, leads to capital flight, increases the costs of formal transactions, expands the scope of the underground economy, wastes resources, and impedes the growth of fair competition.

corruption typically arises from the interplay between the state and the market economy, especially when the state itself plays an endogenous and active role in economic affairs. The manifestations of financial corruption are complex, multifaceted, and take on various forms-from a simple act of bribing a government employee to the systemic dysfunction of an entire political or economic system.

Corruption, therefore, must be examined both as a structural political or economic issue and as an individual moral or ethical failure.

Accordingly, the core issue addressed in the present study is the impact of financial corruption on corporate environmental sustainability.

The industrialization of modern societies has led to intensified exploitation of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas. The combustion of these fuels results in a significant increase in the emission of toxic and hazardous pollutants, particularly carbon dioxide (CO_2) into the atmosphere. Global challenges such as global warming and climate change are among the inevitable consequences of this process.

A major contributing factor to the transboundary spread of pollution from developed to developing countries is the relocation of polluting industries through the expansion of international trade. As developed nations increasingly outsource industrial production to lower-income countries, these recipient nations often bear the brunt of environmental degradation-frequently without the infrastructure, regulation, or capacity to manage the associated ecological risks.

Ganda (2020) examined the impact of financial corruption on corporate environmental sustainability. The results of the study indicated that financial corruption significantly affects the environmental sustainability of companies.

Tran et al. (2020) investigated the effect of financial development on the relationship between financial corruption and company growth. Their findings revealed a significant relationship between financial corruption and company growth, with financial development influencing this relationship.

Czelik and Gazg (2018) explored the impact of financial corruption on the relationship between foreign investment and economic growth. The results showed that foreign investment in companies contributes to increased economic growth; however, rising financial corruption leads to a decline in foreign investment and consequently reduces economic growth.

Data et al. (2017) analyzed the effect

of financial corruption on the relationship between human capital and foreign direct investment. Their findings indicated a significant relationship between human capital and foreign direct investment, with financial corruption influencing this relationship.

Ali Haider et al. (2017) studied the effects of corporate governance, financial constraints, and financial corruption on firms' financial performance. Their results suggested that both corporate governance and financial corruption act as moderating factors in the relationship between financial constraints and financial performance.

Fala and Syed (2018), in a study titled *"Financial Corruption and the Value of Held Cash"*, examined the impact of financial corruption on the value of cash holdings in companies. Based on panel data regression analysis, the results showed a negative and inverse relationship between financial corruption and the value of held cash.

The studies mentioned in this section have examined various factors related to financial corruption and its effects on key variables within companies. These include financial corruption and corporate governance, cash holdings, investment, financial performance, and other aspects. The findings highlight the significance of financial corruption and the need for its thorough examination and oversight.

The innovation of the present research lies in its focus on corporate social responsibility and the critical environmental dimension-an area that has gained increasing attention in recent years. This study explores whether financial corruption can contribute to the neglect of environmental priorities and the emergence of environmental challenges.

Conclusion:

The results of the first hypothesis test in the study by Tran et al. (2021) indicated that financial corruption affects corporate environmental sustainability. In line with this, their research examined the relationship between corporate governance and environmental responsibility. According to their findings, companies with strong governance systems pay special attention to environmental activities. Therefore, a positive and significant relationship exists between corporate governance and environmental responsibility.

Ganda (2020) investigated the impact of financial corruption on corporate environmental sustainability. The findings showed that financial corruption negatively influences environmental sustainability in companies.

Tran et al. (2020) also studied the effect of financial development on the relationship between financial corruption and corporate growth. Their findings revealed a significant relationship between financial corruption and company growth. Financial development was shown to impact this relationship as well.

In recent years, managers have disclosed corporate social information for various reasons, including seeking organizational legitimacy and responding to stakeholder pressure. Research findings demonstrated a significant inverse relationship between the level of corporate social responsibility disclosure and the absolute value of earnings per share forecast errors. Likewise, a significant negative relationship was observed between the level of environmental and social performance disclosure and the absolute forecast error of earnings per share.

The second hypothesis test by Tran et al. (2021) showed that the effect of financial corruption on environmental sustainability differs between large and small companies. Some scholars in the social sciences have described financial corruption as a "necessary evil" or "the grease that keeps the economic wheels turning," arguing that it can improve weak institutions and thus promote economic growth. Others have strongly opposed this view, labeling corruption as "sand in the wheels of the economy," and arguing that it slows down and increases the cost and inefficiency of administrative processes while diverting scarce resources to unproductive activities, ultimately eroding economic growth.

The third hypothesis test by Tran et al. (2021) found that the effect of financial corruption on environmental sustainability also varies between companies with high and low financial performance.

Celik and Gazg (2018) examined the impact of financial corruption on the relationship between foreign investment and economic growth. Their findings indicated that foreign investment contributes to economic growth, but with increasing financial corruption, foreign investment declines, which subsequently reduces economic growth.

Data et al. (2017) studied the impact of financial corruption on the relationship between human capital and foreign direct investment (FDI). Their findings showed a significant relationship between human capital and FDI, and that financial corruption affects this relationship.

Since the statistical population of this research consisted of listed companies, financial data were directly available through published financial statements. The only limitation was the exclusion of non-listed companies, as they are not subject to the specific conditions and regulations of the stock exchange.

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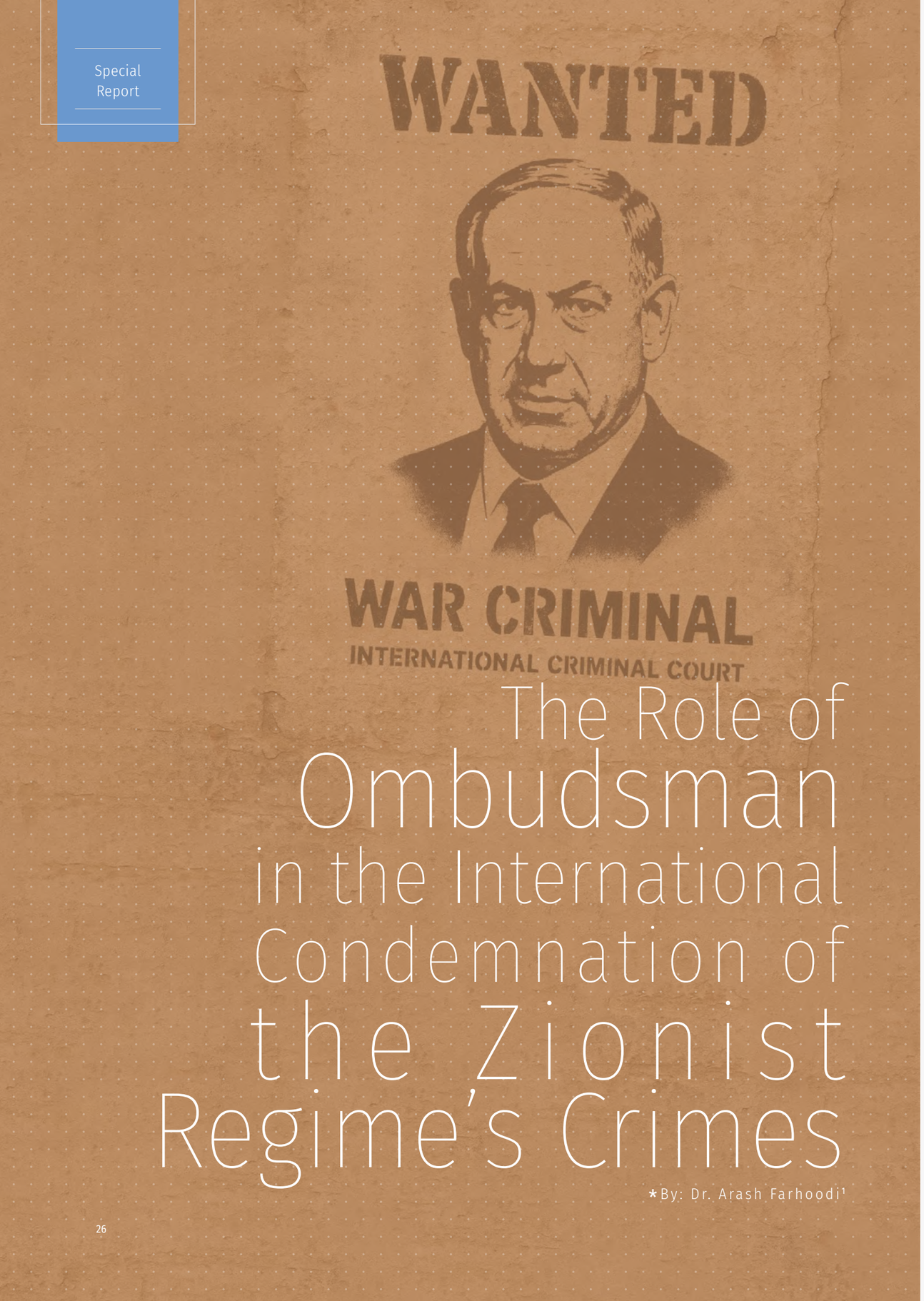


The Role of Ombudsman in the International Condemnation of the Zionist Regime's Crimes

*By: Dr. Arash Farhoodi[1]

Introduction:

❖ The recent 12-day military aggression by the Zionist regime against the Islamic Republic of Iran, from June 13 to June 24, 2025, began with full-scale hostilities. Immediately after the start of the attacks, major international bodies, including the International Commission of Jurists, explicitly condemned these assaults as a "grave violation of the UN Charter and international law and a serious threat to international peace and security."

Simultaneously, the ongoing military aggression of the Zionist regime in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly in Gaza, and in Lebanon has continued in recent months. In Gaza, these aggressions have resulted in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis characterized by widespread civilian casualties, mass displacement, and severe food insecurity. Amnesty International has concluded that the Zionist regime is committing genocide against Palestinians. In Lebanon, the Zionist regime has violated the ceasefire, leading to the deaths of a significant number of civilians and the displacement of large populations. Amnesty International has documented the regime's unlawful airstrikes, which warrant investigation as war crimes.

The geographic expansion of the conflict beyond previous areas such as Gaza and Lebanon into direct interstate conflict with the Islamic Republic of Iran indicates a dangerous escalation of regional aggression that demands a broader and stronger international response.

A) Examination of the Legal Foundations and the Role of Ombudsman Institutions in International Law Governing Aggression

1. Prohibition of the Use of Force and the Right to Self-Defense

Paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, adopted on 26 June 1945, is the cornerstone of contemporary international law, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. This principle is fundamental to maintaining international peace and security.

The only exception to this general prohibition-apart from enforcement measures authorized by the UN Security Council under Chapter VII-is the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense recognized in Article 51 of the UN Charter.

The tests of "necessity" and "proportionality" serve as critical legal barriers to the actions of the Zionist regime. The International Commission of Jurists has explicitly stated that "no justification can be given for the actions of the Zionist regime and the deliberate targeting of civilians" during the June 2025 attacks on Iran by the Zionist regime, which serves as the foundation for its condemnation in the recent events.

2. International Humanitarian Law (IHL): Protection of Civilians and Human Rights

International humanitarian law, commonly referred to as the laws of armed conflict, is a body of international rules that regulate the conduct of parties in conflicts and seek to limit their harmful effects on civilians. Its primary goal is to protect those not participating in the conflict, including civilians, medical personnel, humanitarian workers, and those who can no longer fight, such as the wounded, the sick, and prisoners of war.

The four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which have been universally accepted by all states, along with their Additional Protocols of 1977 and the Third Additional Protocol of 2005, form the foundation of modern international humanitarian law.

3. Principles of Distinction, Proportionality and Precaution:

A fundamental principle of international humanitarian law is the principle of distinction: parties to a conflict must always distinguish between civilian populations and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives. Attacks must only be directed against military objectives; accordingly, civilians are protected from attack unless they directly participate in hostilities. However, the deliberate targeting of civilians is strictly prohibited.

The use of inherently inaccurate weapons in or near civilian areas constitutes indiscriminate attacks, which violate the principles of international humanitarian law. Parties to a conflict must also take all feasible precautions to avoid, or at least minimize, incidental civilian casualties, injuries to civilians, and damage to civilian objects.

The systematic nature of harm to civilians may indicate possible intent or recklessness. Numerous reports consistently document high civilian casualties-including women and children-and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure in Iran, Gaza, and Lebanon. This pattern goes beyond mere "collateral damage" and points to possible intentional targeting of civilians or disregard for civilian life, which could amount to war crimes or, in more severe cases, crimes against humanity.

4. Prohibited Acts and Grave Breaches of International Standards:

International humanitarian law includes strict rules for addressing "grave breaches," which are serious violations of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. These include willful killing, torture or inhumane treatment, causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, and extensive destruction and appropriation of property not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly.

Those who commit grave breaches carry universal responsibility; this means they "must be prosecuted and brought to trial or extradited, regardless of their nationality."

5. War crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law and international criminal law:

The deliberate targeting of civilians, such as nuclear scientists by the Zionist regime, is a clear violation of international humanitarian law and is strictly prohibited. The airstrike on Evin Prison, which led to the martyrdom of a number of civilians, constitutes a serious breach of the rules concerning

1. Researcher at the Center for Training and Research on Administrative integrity and Anti-Corruption

the targeting of civilian objects and the commission of war crimes.

Attacks on nuclear facilities, as emphasized by the International Atomic Energy Agency, have "serious implications for nuclear safety, security, and safeguards, as well as for regional and international peace," and may result in the release of radioactive materials that harm people and the environment. Such actions, causing harm to civilians or severe long-term damage to the environment, violate international humanitarian law.

> "The scale of destruction in Gaza is unprecedented: 63% of all buildings and 87% of schools have been destroyed or damaged"

The dual impact of such aggressions on critical infrastructure and the challenge of accountability in this context are significant. Aggressions against Iran's nuclear infrastructure not only raise concerns about the violation of the principle of distinction but also pose the risk of a long-term environmental catastrophe. This introduces a complex layer of legal accountability, as the long-term environmental and health consequences of such acts may not be immediately apparent, yet constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and crimes against humanity.

This situation also underscores the need for the development of clearer guidelines and enforcement mechanisms by international institutions for addressing attacks on sensitive civilian or dual-use infrastructure that carry broad and long-lasting risks.

6. Destruction of Vital Civilian Infrastructure:

In Gaza, the scale of destruction is unprecedented. Sixty-three percent of all buildings have been destroyed or damaged, rendering much of the Gaza Strip uninhabitable. More than 87 percent of schools and all universities have been damaged or destroyed. Approximately 84 percent of healthcare centers have been damaged or destroyed, including 70 percent of critical water infrastructure in unlawful attacks.

The collapse of the healthcare system has led to a 300 percent increase in miscarriages and has had a severe impact on pregnant women and children. Hospitals and mosques have been bombed. Since October 7, more than 10,000 students and 441 educational staff in Gaza have been martyred.

B) International Criminal Law: Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes, and Genocide

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is the international treaty that established the Court and defines its jurisdiction over the most serious crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.

Crimes against humanity include acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population-such as murder, extermination, deportation or forcible transfer of population, imprisonment, torture, persecution, and enforced disappearance-whether committed in times of war or peace. Based on this, the displacement of the people of Gaza constitutes a crime against humanity.

The jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court becomes active when the country in which the crime occurred or the country of nationality of the perpetrator is a party to the Rome Statute. Palestine joined the Rome Statute in 2015 and granted the Court jurisdiction over crimes committed on its territory, including Gaza and the West Bank, from June 13, 2014 onwards. The ICC Prosecutor is actively investigating the situation in Palestine and has issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of the Zionist regime, and Gallant, the then Minister of Defense of the criminal regime, for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

C) Interaction of International Law and Islamic Human Rights

The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, often referred to simply as the Cairo Declaration, is the third document adopted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) concerning human rights in Islam, and is considered the most recent and formal declaration of Islamic human rights. It was adopted in 1990 at the 19th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC member states in Cairo. The Cairo Declaration affirms universal human rights principles within an Islamic framework and emphasizes human dignity, equality, and the right to life, prohibiting torture, arbitrary detention, and forced displacement.

Article 2(a) of the Cairo Declaration explicitly states that in armed conflict, "killing civilians such as elderly men, women, and children is not permissible," which directly aligns with the principles of international humanitarian law.

The reinforcing nature of parallel legal frameworks enhances the importance of these documents. While rooted in Islam, the Cairo Declaration reiterates many of the universal principles of human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly regarding the protection of civilians during armed conflict. The explicit mention of "civilians such as elderly men, women, and children" provides a powerful religious and moral basis for condemning the aggressive Zionist regime. For OICOA member states, invoking the Cairo Declaration alongside international law creates a stronger ethical and legal obligation to act against the Zionist regime's aggressions in Gaza, Lebanon, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, emphasizing a shared normative commitment to human dignity and protection in conflict. This dual base can enhance the legitimacy and persuasive power of statements and recommendations issued by OICOA ombudsmen.

D) The Status of International Criminal Court Investigations and Issuance of Arrest Warrants:

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has affirmed its jurisdiction over crimes committed "on the territory of the State of Palestine, including Gaza and the West Bank, from June 13, 2014 onward."

The ICC Prosecutor officially opened an investigation into Palestine on March 3, 2021, and is actively examining "ongoing allegations and emerging evidence of international crimes in the Zionist regime, Gaza, and the West Bank." On May 20, 2024, the Prosecutor submitted applications for arrest warrants against the Prime Minister of the Zionist regime, Netanyahu, and Defense Minister Gallant, among others, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. These warrants were subsequently issued on November 21, 2024, and the United Nations Human Rights Council has called for their enforcement.

The issuance of ICC arrest warrants for heads of state and former defense ministers of the Zionist regime is a rare and highly significant event in international criminal law. It indicates that the ICC Prosecutor believes there are

"Table of Violations of International Law by the Zionist Regime"

Incident/Location	Violation	Violated Legal Principles and Protocols
Zionist regime's aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran (June 13–24, 2025)	Unlawful use of force against the sovereignty of Iran	UN Charter, Article 2(4) and Article 51
Zionist regime's aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran (June 13–24, 2025)	Deliberate targeting of civilians including nuclear scientists, martyrs, and Evin Prison inmates	Geneva Conventions, Article 51 of Additional Protocol I; Article 8 of the Rome Statute; war crimes
Zionist regime's aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran (June 13–24, 2025)	Attacks on sensitive facilities (nuclear installations) posing widespread risk	Violation of International Humanitarian Law; Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocol I
Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza	Genocide; Imposition of inhumane conditions causing physical destruction	Article 6 of the Rome Statute
Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza	Forced displacement of population; crimes against humanity	Article 7 of the Rome Statute
Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza	Missile and artillery attacks; deliberate targeting of civilians and infrastructure; war crimes	Geneva Conventions, Article 51 and Additional Protocol I, Article 8 of the Rome Statute
Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza	Use of starvation as a method of warfare; violation of International Humanitarian Law	Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocol I; Article 8 of the Rome Statute
Zionist regime's crimes in Lebanon	Aerial attacks on residential buildings; war crimes	Geneva Conventions, Article 51 and Additional Protocol I; Article 8 of the Rome Statute
Zionist regime's crimes in Lebanon	Forced evacuation warnings; violation of international humanitarian law	Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocol I
Zionist regime's crimes against the Islamic Republic of Iran, Gaza, and Lebanon	Mass killing of civilians including women and children; violation of human rights	Article 2(a) of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, adopted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

reasonable grounds for prosecution due to the commission of multiple crimes and that domestic accountability mechanisms are considered insufficient.

These warrants carry profound legal and political consequences. Legally, member states of the Rome Statute are obligated to arrest and surrender the named individuals if they enter their territory. Politically, the warrants challenge the immunity often enjoyed by high-ranking officials, potentially isolating them on the international stage and provoking diplomatic tensions. This action underscores the ICC's commitment to holding individuals accountable regardless of their position and reinforces the principle that no one is above the law.

E) The Role and Mission of Ombudsman Institutions in International Law

> "The independence and impartiality of ombudsman institutions give them significant moral authority to influence international accountability"

Ombudsman offices are characterized by the fundamental principles of independence, impartiality, and a commitment to fairness. The independence of ombudsman institutions ensures that they are clearly distinguished from other similar bodies and that they pursue impartiality, fairness, and objectivity in dealing with individuals and examining issues.

The primary role of ombudsmen is to protect individuals against violations of rights, abuse of power, error, negligence, unfair decisions, and mismanagement in public administration. They typically review public complaints but may also initiate investigations on their own initiative.

Ombudsmen generally offer recommendations for reform supported by thorough investigations of complaints, rather than issuing binding decisions on governments. This non-binding nature allows them to maintain greater neutrality and credibility.

The "moral authority" of ombudsmen stems from their structural independence and impartiality. Multiple documents consistently emphasize the independence and impartiality of ombudsman offices. This structural and operational independence is precisely what gives them significant moral authority. Their findings and recommendations, free from political or institutional bias, carry substantial weight in public discourse and can exert persuasive pressure on governments and international institutions. This means that the influence of ombudsman institutions in international crises heavily depends on their ability to produce credible and objective reports that can inform and mobilize public opinion, diplomatic efforts, and actions by other international actors with executive or judicial authority. Their value lies in providing independent assessments that fill gaps in accountability where political will or traditional legal mechanisms may be limited.

The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), established in 1978, is a global organization that functions as a network for ombudsman offices around the world. Its overall goal is to promote the concept and institution of the ombudsman and to encourage its development worldwide.

The IOI's main objectives include promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, adherence to the rule of law, effective democracy, administrative justice, and fairness in public organizations.

The IOI acts as a global platform for standardization and collective action in the field of human rights. Its stated goals go beyond addressing individual complaints and actively promote "the concept and institution of the ombudsman" globally and "the development and implementation of programs for the exchange of information and experience." This reflects a systematic role in strengthening a shared understanding of ombudsman principles and practices worldwide. It positions the IOI as a vital platform for harmonizing best practices among various ombudsman offices, including in Islamic countries, to collectively address global human rights challenges. By facilitating knowledge exchange and promoting a common standard of independence and commitment to human rights, the IOI can amplify the collective voice of ombudsmen on international issues and contribute to strengthening global human rights infrastructures.

The OICOA: Safeguarding Human Rights in the Islamic World

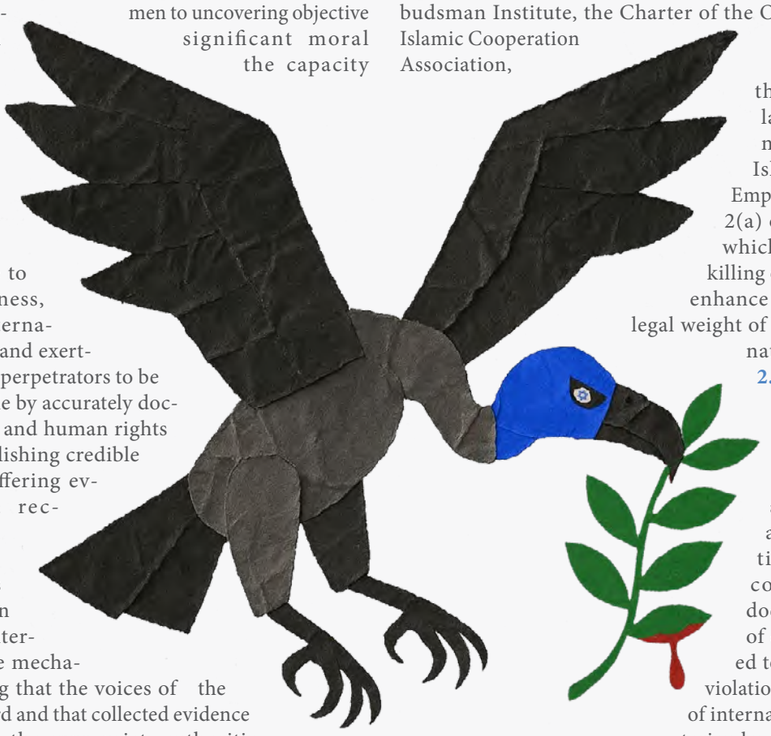
The mission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation ombudsman association is to empower a network of ombudsman institutions from OIC member countries to safeguard human rights, support good governance, and promote excellence in public administration across the Islamic world.

This association is rooted in the Islamic principle of Hisbah, which traditionally refers to accountability and the preservation of public morality, and its objectives include strengthening public trust in governmental institutions.

While ombudsman institutions have traditionally focused on domestic administrative justice and complaints against public officials, their core mandate to uphold human rights and promote the rule of law inherently extends to protection against gross violations of human rights, including those committed by state authorities at the international level.

The powers of ombudsmen are generally limited to investigating, reporting findings, and making non-binding recommendations, and thus they lack direct enforcement authority, judicial competence, or the ability to set policy for international actors.

However, the independence, impartiality, and commitment of ombudsmen to uncovering objective facts grant them significant moral authority and the capacity to influence public opinion, international institutions, and governments. As such, they can contribute to raising awareness, mobilizing international support, and exerting pressure on perpetrators to be held accountable by accurately documenting legal and human rights violations, publishing credible reports, and offering evidence-based recommendations. Ombudsmen can also serve as a bridge between victims and international justice mechanisms, ensuring that the voices of the affected are heard and that collected evidence is submitted to the appropriate authorities.



F) Recommended Actions for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA)

In light of the grave violations of international law and human rights committed by the Zionist regime in Iran, Gaza, and Lebanon, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA) can undertake the following actions based on its legal and humanitarian mandate:

1. **Issuing Strong and Diplomatic Statements:**
The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA) should immediately release official and strongly worded statements condemning the Zionist regime's military attacks on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a blatant violation of the UN Charter and international law, and its ongoing aggressions in Gaza and Lebanon as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide. These statements must explicitly refer to the killing of innocent civilians, including women and children, as clear examples of war crimes, and emphasize the necessity of holding perpetrators accountable in accordance with the principles of international criminal law.

Such statements and reports should reference relevant legal provisions in the Statute of the International Ombudsman Institute, the Charter of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association, and especially the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI). Emphasizing Article 2(a) of the CDHRI, which prohibits the killing of civilians, can enhance the moral and legal weight of these condemnations.

2. **Collection and Documentation of Evidence:**
The Association should actively participate in the collection and documentation of evidence related to human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law in the affected areas. This includes witness testimonies, medical reports, satellite imagery, and other verifiable information. Such evidence can be used to support future international investigations and legal prosecutions.

3. **Call for the enforcement of International Criminal Court arrest warrants:**
The OICOA must urge the international community, especially the States Parties to the Rome Statute, to fulfill their obligations and enforce the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court against officials of the Zionist regime.

4. **Support for independent investigations:**
The OICOA must support independent investigations by bodies such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the United Nations Human Rights Council, and call for full access for these bodies to affected areas in order to carry out fact-finding missions.

5. **Emphasis on state and individual accountability:**

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA) should emphasize the accountability of the Zionist regime as a state for international violations, as well as the individual criminal responsibility of the perpetrators of these crimes.

6. Call for immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access:

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA) should call for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire in all conflict areas and emphasize the necessity of full, safe, and unimpeded humanitarian access to affected populations.

7. Comparison with previous crises:

The Ombudsman Association of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (OICOA) can strengthen the legal and customary aspects of its statements by referring to precedents and similar declarations issued in response to serious human rights violations in past crises, such as the crimes committed by the Zionist regime against the defenseless Palestinian people. These comparisons can highlight the recurring patterns of violations and the need for a unified and coherent international response.

8. Recommendation for sanctions and preventive measures:

The Ombudsman Association of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (OICOA) can call on OIC member states and the international community to consider taking preventive measures, including targeted sanctions and an arms embargo against the Zionist regime.

9. Promoting dialogue and sustainable solutions:

In the long term, the Ombudsman Association of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States should emphasize the importance of constructive and comprehensive dialogues to achieve sustainable political solutions that address the root causes of conflicts. It should support the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, the establishment of an independent country, and the expulsion of occupying aggressors from the occupied territories.

10. Cooperation with the International Ombudsman Institute and other organizations:

The Ombudsman Association of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States should strengthen its cooperation with the International Ombudsman Institute and other international human rights institutions to benefit from the exchange of knowledge and experiences and to amplify the collective voice of ombudsmen on a global level.

By adopting these measures, the Ombudsman Association of the OIC Member States can fulfill its vital role in upholding international law and human rights and contribute to strengthening justice and accountability in the face of international crimes.

Resources:

- https://ccrjustice.org/home/what-we-do/our-cases/accountability-international-crimes-palestine
- https://ccrjustice.org/home/what-we-do/our-cases/accountability-international-crimes-palestine
- https://lieber. westpoint.edu/attacking-scientists-law-armed-conflict/
- https://resourcecentre. savethechildren.net/document/summary-geneva-conventions-1949-and-their-additional-protocols-international-humanitarian
- https://via. library. depaul.edu/cgi/viewcontent. cgi?params=/context/law-review/article/3359/&path_info=08_13DePaulLRev43_281963_1964_29. pdf
- https://www.government. nl/topics/international-peace-and-security/international-legal-order/the-international-criminal-court-icc
- https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/israel-and-palestine
- https://www.icj.org/israel-iran-israels-attack-on-iran-violates-international-law-threatening-peace-and-security/
- https://www.oic-oci.org/upload/pages/conventions/en/CDHRI_2021_ENG.pdf
- https://www.ombudsmanassociation.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/OA%20Terms%20and%20Rules%20-%20July%202019. pdf
- International Ombudsman Institute (Ioi) by-Laws Adopted by The General Assembly in Dublin, Ireland on 25 May 2021

UNITED NATIONS

The Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Palermo Convention: Consequences of Iran's Accession to the Palermo Convention

* by: Dr. Mohammadreza Mohammadi Keshkooli[1]

1. The Palermo Convention, officially known as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, was adopted by the United Nations in 2000 and came into force in 2003. This international convention is regarded as one of the most important legal instruments in combating organized crime, with the primary objective of strengthening international cooperation for the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of such crimes. The Palermo Convention includes four supplementary protocols, each addressing specific aspects of organized crime, such as human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms.

The convention provides a clear definition of organized crime under the term "organized criminal group" and offers a framework for judicial and law enforcement cooperation between countries, aiming to structure and systematize efforts to combat this phenomenon.

According to paragraph (a) of Article 2 of the Convention, "an organized criminal group" refers to a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offenses established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit." The definition of "head of an organized criminal group" found in Article 130 of Iran's 2013 Islamic Penal Code could perhaps be considered inspired by this clause of the Convention.

2. One of the key features of the Palermo Convention is its emphasis on the transnational aspects of organized crime. The Convention covers crimes such as money laundering, financial corruption, and others, provided they are committed by organized groups and involve more than one country. Additionally, the Convention obliges member states to harmonize their domestic legislation with international standards and to establish mechanisms for the confiscation of assets derived from criminal activities. This is particularly important in relation to assets obtained through illegal activities such as drug trafficking or human trafficking, as it allows authorities to directly target the financial resources of criminal groups.

It is evident that the supplementary protocols to the Palermo Convention also play a significant role in completing its legal framework. For instance, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children - commonly referred to as the Palermo Protocol - specifically addresses the issue of human trafficking and obligates countries to adopt preventive and protective measures.

3. In this regard, the Palermo Convention has established mechanisms to monitor the implementation of member states' obligations.

The Conference of the Parties, which convenes periodically, is responsible for reviewing progress and identifying existing challenges in the implementation of the Convention. In addition, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) plays a central role in providing technical assistance and coordinating international activities. This mechanism helps countries implement their obligations more effectively and benefit from each other's experiences in combating organized crime.

The Convention also provides for the suspension or expulsion of countries that fail to fulfill their obligations.

From a legal standpoint, the Palermo Convention represents a significant development in the international approach to organized crime. This key international instrument, through precise definitions and the establishment of specific and effective frameworks for international cooperation, assists countries in confronting the complex challenges posed by transnational criminal groups.

Moreover, the Convention emphasizes the crucial principle of "extradite or prosecute," under which countries are required to either prosecute individuals accused of organized crimes or extradite them to another country with jurisdiction. This principle is particularly important in cases where the perpetrators of organized crimes operate across multiple countries.

4. Iran's accession to the Palermo Convention could have wide-ranging implications in legal, security, economic, and international dimensions. Joining the Palermo Convention requires aligning domestic laws with international standards. This necessitates reforms in criminal, commercial, and financial laws related to money laundering, economic corruption, and organized crime. For instance, Iran would need to enact new legislation to clearly define transnational crimes, establish criminal liability for legal entities, and provide protection for witnesses. Moreover, Iran's judiciary must enhance its capacity for cooperation with international bodies such as Interpol and anti-money laundering organizations. These changes may face challenges, including resistance from traditional institutions or potential conflicts with Islamic legal principles.

> "One of the key features of the Palermo Convention is its emphasis on the transnational aspects of organized crime. The Convention covers crimes such as money laundering, financial corruption, and others, provided they are committed by organized groups and involve more than one country"

From a security perspective, joining the Palermo Convention could help Iran's legal and political system more effectively combat transnational criminal networks involved in crimes such as drug and weapons trafficking. The Convention enables information exchange, extradition of offenders, and operational cooperation with member states. Nevertheless, concerns remain, such as the potential misuse of the Convention's mechanisms by some countries to politically pressure Iran under the guise of fighting organized crime. Additionally, the financial and banking transparency required by the Convention may conflict with some of Iran's security and economic practices.

From an economic and financial standpoint, integrating Iran's economy into the Palermo Convention could improve the business environment and increase foreign investor confidence, as it signals Iran's commitment to financial transparency and anti-corruption efforts. This is particularly relevant in the current context of international scrutiny, where such a move could serve as a strategy to reduce investment risks. Furthermore, fulfilling Palermo's obligations would require strengthening the oversight systems of banks, financial institutions, and the private sector-an undertaking that would impose significant costs on the government and economic entities. In such a context, parts of the informal economy-operating for years through smuggling or tax evasion-would face serious constraints.

At the international level, accession to the Palermo Convention is seen as a positive step toward normalizing Iran's relations with the global community. It could pave the way for broader cooperation in various areas with the European Union and other member states. However, some regional and international actors may still use political tools to prevent Iran from fully benefiting from the Convention's advantages. Additionally, accession may provide grounds for increased international monitoring of Iran's activities in sensitive areas.

Thus, Iran's accession to the Palermo Convention presents both opportunities and challenges. If managed properly, this step could strengthen the legal system, enhance national security, attract investment, and improve Iran's international standing. However, judicial, security, and economic sensitivities must be carefully considered.

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Anti-Corruption Measures in Southeast Asian Countries under the UNCAC (South Korea/Indonesia/Singapore)

*By: Mahmoud Mahdavi-Far

Introduction:
The United Nations Convention against Corruption, also known as the *Merida Convention*, is the first international treaty dedicated to combating corruption. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly on October 31, 2003 and came into force on December 14, 2005. This convention aims to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance, and has been signed by over 180 countries to date.

Main Objectives:
1. Prevention of Corruption: Strengthening national institutions, improving public sector management, and promoting civil society participation.
2. Criminalization: Defining corruption-related offenses such as bribery, embezzlement, money laundering, and illicit influence.
3. International Cooperation: Facilitating extradition, judicial assistance, and recovery of stolen assets.
4. Asset Recovery: Assisting countries in reclaiming stolen assets resulting from corruption.

Structure of the Convention:
- 8 chapters and 71 articles, including provisions on prevention, criminalization, and technical cooperation
- Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) mechanism to monitor countries' implementation of the convention

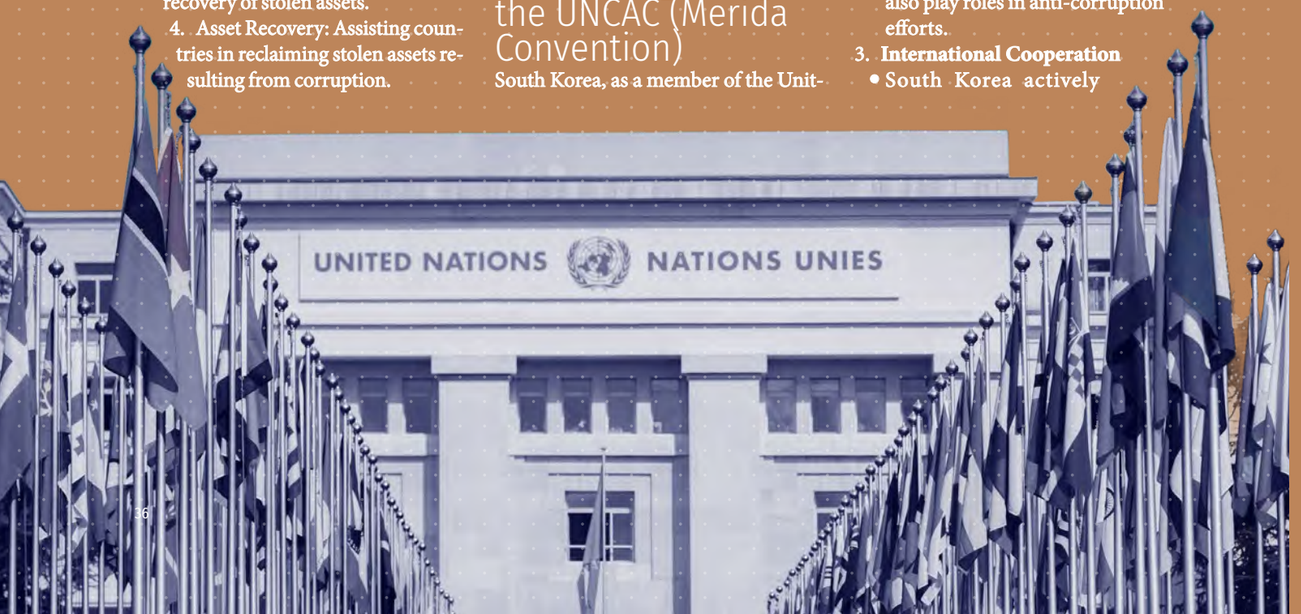
Global Importance:
The Merida Convention is recognized as a key instrument for combating corruption both nationally and internationally, with a particular emphasis on the role of the private sector and the media. Iran joined the convention in 2008. This document provides a comprehensive framework for anti-corruption efforts and its implementation requires political commitment and the involvement of all stakeholders.

South Korea's Actions Regarding the UNCAC (Merida Convention)

South Korea, as a member of the United Nations, has actively participated in the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Its actions can be summarized as follows:

1. **Ratification and Implementation**
   - South Korea signed the UNCAC in 2003 and ratified it in 2008.
   - Since then, the country has integrated anti-corruption measures into its domestic laws, such as the Anti-Corruption Act and the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act (commonly known as the Kim Young-ran Act).
2. **Anti-Corruption Agencies**
   - The Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption (KICAC) was established to implement the UNCAC principles, which later merged into the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC).
   - The Supreme Prosecutors' Office and the Korea Customs Service also play roles in anti-corruption efforts.
3. **International Cooperation**
   - South Korea actively participates in the UNCAC review mechanism, submits country reports, and undergoes peer reviews.
   - The country engages in asset recovery and mutual legal assistance with other countries under the provisions of the UNCAC.
4. **Public Sector Reforms**
   - South Korea has enhanced transparency in public procurement, political financing, and corporate governance to align with UNCAC standards.
   - There has been increased support for whistleblowers and the promotion of ethics training for public officials.
5. **Civil Society and Private Sector Engagement**
   - NGOs, such as Transparency International Korea, monitor the country's compliance with the UNCAC.
   - The Korean Chamber of Commerce promotes business integrity in line with UNCAC guidelines.

Challenges and Criticisms
Despite its progress, South Korea has faced criticism regarding political corruption scandals, including cases involving former presidents and corporate bribery cases, such as those linked to Samsung. Nevertheless, its legal framework remains robust under the obligations of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).



> "Despite its progress, South Korea has faced criticism regarding political corruption scandals, including cases involving former presidents and corporate bribery cases, such as those linked to Samsung. Nevertheless, its legal framework remains robust under the obligations of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)."

Indonesia's Actions Regarding the UNCAC

Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), Indonesia has actively participated in its implementation. The country has taken significant steps to align its anti-corruption framework with the principles of the Convention, including legal reforms, institutional strengthening, and international cooperation.

Key actions taken by Indonesia in relation to the UNCAC include:

1. **Legal and Institutional Reforms**
   - Ratification of the UNCAC (2006)
   - Indonesia ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption through Law No. 7 of 2006 and committed to implementing its provisions.
   - Strengthening Anti-Corruption Legislation
     - Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) – established under Law No. 30, later amended by Law No. 19.
     - Anti-Corruption Courts – specialized courts under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to handle corruption cases.
     - Asset confiscation and Anti-Money Laundering Laws – reinforced through Law No. 8 of 2010 on money laundering.
2. **Preventive Measures (as per Chapter II of the UNCAC)**
   - Public Sector Reforms
     - E-government initiatives to reduce bribery in public services.
     - Mandatory asset declarations for public officials.
   - Whistleblower and Witness Protection
     - Law No. 13 of 2006 provides protection for whistleblowers and witnesses in corruption cases.
3. **International Cooperation (as per Chapter IV of the UNCAC)**
   - Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA):
     - Indonesia has signed extradition treaties with several countries (such as Singapore and Australia) to prosecute corrupt fugitives.
     - Active participant in ASEAN Anti-Corruption Task Force and G20 anti-corruption initiatives.
4. **Asset Recovery (Chapter V of the UNCAC)**
   - Successful recovery of assets from major cases, such

as the Bank Indonesia Liquidity Support (BLBI) scandal.

Challenges and Criticisms

- Controversial amendments to Indonesia's anti-corruption law (2019 and 2023):
  - These reforms have weakened the independence of the country's oversight institution (KPK) by placing it under executive oversight and removing key powers.
- Slow progress in major cases:
  - Some large-scale corruption cases have faced political interference or delays.

Conclusion

Indonesia has made significant progress in implementing the UNCAC, especially in terms of legal frameworks and international cooperation.
However, recent setbacks in the independence of the KPK and implementation challenges highlight the ongoing struggle to fully uphold the ideals of the Merida Convention.

Singapore's Measures Regarding the UNCAC (United Nations Convention Against Corruption)

> "The Merida Convention provides a comprehensive framework for transparency, accountability, and good governance worldwide"

Singapore has been a strong supporter of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), also known as the Merida Convention, and ratified it on November 6, 2009. The country has implemented powerful anti-corruption measures that align with, and often exceed, the requirements of the Convention, reinforcing its reputation as one of the least corrupt nations globally.

Key Measures by Singapore Related to the UNCAC:

1. **Legal and Institutional Framework**
   - *Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) 1960*, amended in 2023
   - Singapore's main anti-corruption law, enforced by the *Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB)*-an independent body with strong investigative powers.
   - Recent amendments (2023) expanded jurisdiction to cover bribery committed by Singaporeans abroad and increased penalties.
   - Penal Code and other legislation also cover bribery, money laundering (*Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes Act*), and whistleblower protection.
2. **Preventive Measures (Chapter II of UNCAC)**
   - Strict integrity measures in the public sector.
   - Rigorous asset declaration rules, conflict of interest regulations, and a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption within government.
   - The *Public Service Commission* enforces high ethical standards for public employees.
   - Transparency in business and government: robust corporate governance laws, such as the Companies Act, accounting regulations, and oversight by the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority.
   - E-government initiatives reduce opportunities for petty corruption.
3. **Enforcement and Prosecution (Chapter III of UNCAC)**
   - *CPIB* is independent and empowered to investigate corruption in both public and private sectors without political interference.
   - High conviction rate (over 95% in prosecuted cases).
   - Specialized courts.
   - Corruption cases are efficiently handled under the oversight of Singapore's judiciary.
4. **International Cooperation (Chapter IV of UNCAC)**
   - *Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA):* Singapore maintains extradition treaties and MLA agreements with several countries (e.g., China, India, the USA).
   - Actively assists in cross-border corruption investigations.
   - Collaborates with ASEAN and plays a leading role in ASEAN anti-corruption initiatives and global partnerships.
   - Member of the *OECD Working Group on Bribery*.
5. **Asset Recovery (Chapter V of UNCAC)**
   - Strong *Anti-Money Laundering (AML)* framework.
   - Financial institutions are required to report suspicious transactions.
   - Proceeds of corruption are aggressively confiscated.
6. **Challenges and Criticisms**
   - Some critics argue that high-profile cases involving politically connected individuals are rare.
   - Despite consistently ranking among the top performers, concerns remain regarding private sector bribery and overseas dealings.

Conclusion:

Singapore's anti-corruption system-thanks to its robust legal framework, independent enforcement, and strong preventive measures-goes beyond many of the obligations of the UNCAC. While there are minor criticisms, its effectiveness is widely recognized at the global level.

General Inspection Organization: The National Anti-Corruption Authority and an Effective International Actor

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Introduction:

❖ The General Inspection Organization, as one of the key institutions in the oversight system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, holds a distinguished position within the legal and administrative structure of the country. This position, rooted in Article 174 of the Constitution, has been thoroughly established and defined through the Law on the Establishment of the General Inspection Organization passed in 1981 and its subsequent amendments. The duties and authorities of this organization-including oversight of proper implementation of laws, prevention of corruption, and addressing administrative and financial misconduct-have made it one of the main pillars of achieving transparent, accountable, and law-based governance.

In the legal system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the emphasis placed by the Supreme Leader on the oversight role of this organization confirms its fundamental importance in safeguarding administrative integrity and structurally combating corruption. This strategic vision has played a decisive role in shaping the institutional direction of the General Inspection Organization in recent decades and has contributed to elevating its status within the performance monitoring and evaluation system of executive bodies.

Beyond the domestic sphere, the General Inspection Organization has also played an active and influential role internationally. In collaboration with international oversight bodies, it has engaged in the exchange of experiences, participated in joint projects, and adopted best practices and global standards in the field of oversight and anti-corruption. This transnational presence has not only enhanced the organization's international credibility but also empowered it to increase the effectiveness of domestic oversight.

Alongside these strategic dimensions, the legal documents and institutional capacities of the General Inspection Organization demonstrate that this body possesses effective legal tools and reliable executive mechanisms for the prevention, oversight, and combating of corruption. Accordingly, designating the General Inspection Organization as the "National Authority for Combating Corruption" in all documents, laws, and macro-level policies is a necessary action grounded in the structural and functional realities of Iran's administrative system-an action that can not only strengthen institutional coherence in the fight against corruption, but also provide a foundation for the Islamic Republic of Iran to play a more active role on the global stage.

"This transnational presence has not only enhanced the organization's international credibility but also empowered it to increase the effectiveness of domestic oversight"

Section One – The Supreme Leader's Perspective on the Status of the General Inspection Organization in Iran's Legal and Administrative System

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic has repeatedly emphasized the special position of the General Inspection Organization as a pivotal institution within Iran's legal and administrative framework. His statements portray the organization as a supervisory arm of the Judiciary, a guarantor of administrative and financial integrity, and a key tool in public policymaking and the fight against corruption.

Legal Status and Supervisory Role

The Supreme Leader has affirmed that the *General Inspection Organization* is rooted in the Constitution and has underscored its supervisory role:

"It is explicitly stated in the Constitution that oversight of the proper implementation of laws and the sound execution of affairs lies with the Judiciary, and the Administrative Justice Court and the General Inspection Organization, as its two main arms, are responsible for these two critical duties." (July 3, 2017)

These remarks solidify the organization's position as an integral component of the Judiciary's supervisory structure and define its responsibility for ensuring proper implementation of laws and the sound functioning of public affairs.

Public Policy and Management Improvement

The Supreme Leader presents the organization as an instrument for improving governance and public policy and stresses the need for governing bodies to make use of its reports:

"This organization can serve as a tool for sound management by informing national administrators of the strengths and weaknesses of various agencies. Therefore, the executive branch, parliament, judiciary, and all institutions should regard the General Inspection Organization as a blessing, a source of support, and a beacon of hope, and should act on its reports." (April 21, 2003)

This viewpoint frames the organization not only as a watchdog but also as an analytical body whose reporting can strengthen strategic management and improve administrative processes.

Responsibility for Combating Economic Corruption

The Supreme Leader has emphasized the necessity of coordination between the General Inspection Organization and other supervisory bodies in order to prevent and combat economic corruption.

He stated:

"His Eminence, while stressing the need to take necessary measures to prevent economic corruption, and acknowledging the role of oversight bodies in combating such corruption and commending their efforts, emphasized the necessity of full coordination among the General Inspection Organization, the Supreme Audit Court, and the Ministry of Intelligence as the supervisory bodies of the three branches of power. He noted that oversight agencies must be actively and firmly present in bottlenecks and centers where there is a likelihood or possibility of economic corruption." (8 July 2002)

These remarks place the Organization alongside other oversight institutions, designating it as a key actor in proactively monitoring vulnerable areas and preventing economic corruption.

Ensuring Administrative and Financial Integrity:

The Supreme Leader has defined the responsibilities of the Organization in comprehensive oversight and preserving the health of the administrative system as follows:

"Precise and complete oversight of various state institutions and accurate reporting of problems and shortcomings were identified as two main responsibilities of the General Inspection Organization. He described the existence of the Organization as a guarantor of the health and integrity of state institutions. If legal guarantees are provided to ensure proper follow-up on its reports, the integrity of the country's institutions will be assured. The Organization must, based on its legal duties and powers, have sufficient presence in every part of the administrative system and act as a sound and precise eye overseeing affairs. Nothing should hinder this work, and anyone who creates obstacles in this path is, in fact, opposed to reform... No form of corruption is acceptable anywhere, and the Organization must expand its oversight across all institutions at every level-especially the executive and judicial branches-and ensure that corruption exists nowhere." (25 February 1997)

1. Deputy for Legal Affairs, Public Oversight, and Parliamentary Affairs
2. Researcher at the Deputy for Legal Affairs, Public Oversight, and Parliamentary Affairs

These emphases present the Organization as the guarantor of administrative and financial integrity, mandated to conduct extensive oversight and eliminate corruption at all levels, under broad legal powers.

Based on the views of the Supreme Leader, the General Inspection Organization holds a firm legal standing rooted in constitutional principles. As the oversight arm of the Judiciary, it has a fundamental responsibility to ensure the correct implementation of laws and the integrity of public affairs. Through analytical reports and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of institutions, the Organization plays a key role in public policy-making and the enhancement of overall governance. Moreover, through its cross-branch authorities and coordination with other oversight institutions, it serves as an effective body in preventing and combating economic corruption. Ultimately, the Organization's comprehensive and precise supervision over executive, judicial, and other institutions makes it a guarantor of the administrative and financial health of the system.

Part Two – The International Role of the General Inspection Organization: Cooperation, Initiatives, and Influence

The General Inspection Organization (GIO) of Iran, as one of the leading institutions in oversight and anti-corruption efforts, has earned a prominent position on the international stage through its rich background and targeted actions. This position has been strengthened through active participation in global and regional institutions, as well as bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The following outlines various dimensions of this international standing:

1. Participation in International Institutions

The General Inspection Organization has played an effective role in knowledge exchange and strengthening oversight mechanisms by engaging with specialized global institutions:

1-1. Asian Ombudsman Association:

Membership in the Asian Ombudsman Association has enabled the GIO to benefit from the experiences of Asian countries in overseeing executive bodies and protecting citizens' rights. This collaboration has supported the enhancement of public complaint mechanisms and improved accountability among government agencies.

1-2. International Ombudsman Institute (IOI):

Membership in the IOI, as a transnational body, has provided opportunities for engagement with global counterparts and access to successful models for strengthening the independence of oversight institutions. This participation has contributed to improving processes for addressing administrative violations and raising oversight standards.

1-3. International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA):

This association offers a professional platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience in combating corruption. GIO's membership has facilitated access to policy documents, comparative studies, and specialized training programs, thereby enhancing its oversight and operational capacities.

1.4. Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network):

Based on Article 48 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), this network

facilitates operational cooperation and information exchange among member countries. The GIO's membership in the GlobE Network has strengthened its capabilities in tackling transnational financial crimes.

2. Regional Initiatives Led by the Organization

The GIO has played a pivotal role in strengthening oversight cooperation through regional initiatives:

2-1. Eurasian Ombudsman Alliance (EOA):

This alliance, spearheaded by Iran with the participation of Eurasian countries, serves as a platform for sharing experiences in independent oversight and handling public complaints. Through the development of a charter for ombudsman activities, the EOA has provided a coordinated framework to promote the rule of law and combat misconduct.

2-2. Regional Cooperation Center for Anti-Corruption Agencies of ECO Member States:

This center, supervised by the GIO in collaboration with member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), is tasked with coordination, oversight, and information exchange in the field of anti-corruption. Developing unified procedures in line with international conventions and organizing regional training programs are among its key achievements.

2-3. Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA):

As one of the founding members of OICOA, the GIO has played a key role in strengthening oversight collaboration among Islamic countries. Its election as Vice President of the OICOA for a four-year term reflects Iran's prominent status within this association.

3. Strategic Cooperation with International Specialized Institutions

3-1. Engagement with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):

The UNODC office in Tehran, as the executive arm of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), collaborates with the *General Inspection Organization* (GIO) in the exchange of analytical information and the implementation of joint projects. This engagement has facilitated access to global databases and successful practices in the prevention of organized crime.

3-2. Cooperation with Transparency International:

The GIO utilizes the annual reports of Transparency International, including the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), for comparative analysis and the refinement of domestic anti-corruption strategies. This cooperation has contributed to improved transparency and accountability within governmental structures.

4. Bilateral Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)

4-1. Oversight Cooperation with Neighboring Countries:

Bilateral MoUs with regional countries focus on three main areas:

- Ombudsman Activities: Strengthening independent mechanisms for handling public complaints and protecting citizens' rights against administrative violations.
- Preventive Oversight: Sharing experiences in designing corruption risk management systems and developing guidelines for the prevention of bribery and embezzlement.
- Combatting Financial Corruption: Establishing joint protocols for judicial prosecution and operational actions against transnational corruption networks.

4-2. MoU with Leading Countries in Administrative Transparency:

An MoU with Denmark-a pioneer in administrative integrity-includes expert delegation exchanges, utilization of electronic financial monitoring systems, and the organization of joint workshops. This cooperation has facilitated benchmarking against global best practices in enhancing transparency and accountability.

Partner Institutions and Countries with Existing MoUs or Working Relations with the GIO:

- Corruption Eradication Commission of Indonesia
- Parliamentary Ombudsman of Denmark
- Ombudsman of the Republic of Turkey
- Ministry of Supervision of the People's Republic of China
- Commission of Integrity of the Republic of Iraq (Al-Nazaha)
- Ombudsman of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Ombudsman of the Republic of Namibia
- Board of Audit and Inspection of Japan
- Committee of Investigation and Inspection of Armenia
- Ombudsman Office of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan
- Human Rights Commission of the Russian Federation
- Anti-Corruption Organization of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation
- Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Tajikistan

Conclusion:

The *General Inspection Organization* (GIO) of Iran currently holds active and effective memberships in the following international bodies and forums:

- Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA): Founding member, Head of the Academy, Board Member, and Treasurer General
- International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA): Permanent member
- International Ombudsman Institute (IOI): Permanent member
- Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA): Founding member, Board Member, and Vice President
- Regional Center for Cooperation of Anti-Corruption Authorities and Ombudsman Institutions of ECO Member States (RCCACO): Founding member and permanent secretariat
- Eurasian Ombudsman Alliance (EOA): Founding member and Board Member
- Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network): Active member

This documented and consolidated international standing clearly demonstrates that the *General Inspection Organization* not only possesses the legal, structural, and technical capacity to serve as Iran's national anti-corruption authority, but has actively fulfilled this role in practice through its longstanding collaboration and engagement with major international anti-corruption institutions.

This reality forms a strong and justified basis for explicitly naming the GIO in national strategic documents and legislative frameworks related to Iran's comprehensive anti-corruption system.

> "Precise and complete oversight of various state institutions and accurate reporting of problems and shortcomings were identified as two main responsibilities of the General Inspection Organization"

Section Three – Legal Framework and Institutional Capacities for Prevention, Oversight, and Combating Corruption

A) The Law on the Establishment of the General Inspection Organization (GIO)

1. Legal analysis of paragraph (a) of Article 2: This provision outlines the core dimensions of the organization's jurisdiction and powers, clearly highlighting four distinct and essential

features that support its role as the "national anti-corruption authority":

Comprehensive scope of oversight: The legislator, by explicitly referring to a broad range of entities and executive bodies, including governmental, public, military, revolutionary institutions, municipalities, charitable foundations, and both state-owned and semi-public companies, has extended the GIO's jurisdiction beyond the traditional model of administrative oversight. This broad scope, which encompasses nearly all institutions operating in financial, administrative, and executive sectors, is unmatched by any other oversight body and forms a core pillar of its function as a national anti-corruption authority.

Feature of continuous and systematic oversight: The phrase "based on a regular program" in the law not only affirms the GIO's oversight role but also elevates it from sporadic and reactive supervision to a structured, ongoing, and goal-oriented mechanism. This is a fundamental element of any national anti-corruption authority and ensures proactive and effective oversight.

Cross-sectoral jurisdiction and ability to intervene in hybrid public-private domains: Expressions such as "entities in which all or part of the capital or shares belong to the government" and "entities that are in any way overseen or supported by the government" indicate that the GIO's jurisdiction extends to the intersections of the public and private sectors. Given that many instances of corruption arise at the intersection of public and private interests, such jurisdiction is essential for the effective exercise of national anti-corruption functions.

Legal basis for intervention at the level of state governance: By referring to the explicit wording of this legal provision, the GIO is granted full legal legitimacy to intervene in processes of detecting, preventing, and combating corruption at high levels of governance. This ensures supervisory justice across all levels of management and governance and provides the necessary legal foundation to fulfill its role as the national anti-corruption authority.

2. Legal analysis of paragraph (d) of Article 2: The content of paragraph (d) and its related notes position the GIO not merely as an oversight body, but as an intermediary and driving force within the chain of detecting, reporting, following up, and demanding accountability from relevant institutions and individuals during oversight processes. This status goes beyond the traditional reporting function and frames the GIO as an active and interventionist body in line with the requirements of a national anti-corruption authority.

Identification and reporting of offenses with public interest: According to paragraph (d), the GIO plays an active and initiating role in identifying and reporting offenses that have public interest. The organization is required to submit its documented reports for judicial action and to monitor the legal proceedings until a final decision is reached. This approach grants the GIO a prosecutorial-like nature that significantly exceeds the typical mandate of ordinary oversight institutions, uniquely positioning it to play a central role in combating corruption.

Obligation of the prosecutor to act in cases of financial harm to the public (Note 1): Under Note 1, in cases where the offense leads to the loss of public assets, the prosecutor is required, as a representative of society and without any court fees, to seek compensation for the damages through judicial channels. In this mechanism, the GIO's reports are effectively treated as legal documents and primary references for decision-making, and cooperation from all institutions in this process is legally mandated.

Supervisory role over executive enactments and protection of civil rights (Note 2): Note 2 affirms the organization's responsibility to identify and report inconsistencies between the resolutions, regulations, and circulars issued by executive bodies and the country's laws and individual rights. The submission of documented reports by the General Inspection Organization (GIO) to the Administrative Justice Court, along with the legal requirement for expedited review, indicates that the GIO plays an active role in safeguarding the rule of law, preventing the enforcement of unlawful regulations, and ensuring the protection of civil rights.

The combination of these competencies under paragraph (d) and its associated notes positions the GIO as a key institution in the national cycle of prevention, detection, reporting, and follow-up on violations and crimes related to corruption. These characteristics, both structurally and functionally, are fully aligned with the missions and requirements of a "national anti-corruption authority."

3. Legal analysis of Article 5: Article 5 of the Law on the Establishment of the General Inspection Organization outlines the organizational structure and operational procedures for conducting inspections. From a structural perspective, this article highlights three key features-professional specialization, independence in action, and the capacity for active intervention in cases of corruption-that qualify the organization for the role of a "national anti-corruption authority."

Structural reliance on technical and judicial expertise: The composition of inspection boards and the requirement that their heads be selected from among judges or senior experts demonstrates that the organization possesses the analytical and practical capabilities necessary for legal and technical investigations. This structural design is especially compatible with international standards for addressing complex financial, administrative, and organized corruption.

Quality control system for reports (Note 1): According to Note 1, inspection reports prepared by non-judicial inspectors that contain findings of violations or crimes can only be referred and acted upon if confirmed by a judicial inspector. This control mechanism prevents the referral of legally unsound reports to judicial authorities and ensures the credibility and integrity of the oversight process. Such a system enhances the legal standing of the organization and establishes it as a reliable institution within the criminal justice framework.

Special powers in cases of urgent and apparent corruption (Note 2): Note 2 grants special authority to the head of the inspection board in emergency situations involving clear and immediate instances of corruption, effectively transforming the organization into a quasi-judicial body with rapid-response capabilities. When there is a risk of collusion, suspect flight, or document destruction, the head of the inspection board (if judicially appointed) may independently order asset freezes, travel bans, and-where necessary-temporary detention with the authorization of judicial officials. These powers enable the organization to respond proactively to corruption cases, a feature rarely seen among oversight bodies in the country.

Based on Article 5 and its notes, the General Inspection Organization possesses a unique structure that combines judicial authority, expert precision, and operational agility. This distinctive combination places the organization in a superior position compared to other oversight bodies and significantly enhances its capacity to detect, pursue, prevent, and report violations and corruption-related offenses. Such a structure not only aligns with domestic requirements for serving as the national anti-corruption authority but also conforms to internationally recognized models and standards.

4. Legal Analysis of Article 10: Article 10 of the Law on the Formation of the General Inspection:Organization establishes a binding mechanism by setting a ten-day deadline for the initiation of executive actions in response to the inspection board's recommendations. This article serves not only as an effective barrier against procrastination or negligence by managers regarding oversight reports, but also provides an appropriate framework for immediate structural, financial, and administrative reforms aimed at preventing corruption.

Active and Binding Oversight: Unlike institutions that merely offer recommendations without enforcement mechanisms, the General Inspection Organization, by invoking Article 10, functions as a pursuing and binding oversight body. The continuation of oversight until results are achieved reflects a model of effective supervision grounded in accountability for implementing reforms. This feature sets the organization apart from other advisory or non-binding institutions.

Criminal Enforcement for Noncompliance with Recommendations: In cases where the organization's recommendation is aimed at preventing violations or corruption, and the responsible manager refuses to implement it, such refusal can be considered criminal. According to Note 1 of Article 8, if this failure to act is deliberate and results in corruption or loss of public rights, the manager in question will be personally liable and subject to punishment. Within this framework, both the mental element (knowledge and intent) and the material element (criminal result) constitute the basis for establishing criminal liability, which creates a strong deterrent effect at the management level.

Transparency and Combating Mismanagement: This article, by obligating agencies to respond and take action, structurally prevents the recurrence of dysfunctional executive cycles and continued mismanagement. By imposing direct responsibility on managers for omissions or failure to comply with warnings from the General Inspection Organization,

the legal framework needed to promote administrative transparency, enhance managerial integrity, and fight corruption is established.

According to the provisions of Article 10 and its note, **the General Inspection Organization not only possesses supervisory authority but is also endowed with binding powers and criminal enforcement mechanisms against misconduct by executive managers. This unique position elevates the organization beyond the role of a mere oversight body, transforming it into a structured, authoritative, and accountable institution within the cycle of reform, prevention, and the fight against corruption.**

Therefore, the position of the General Inspection Organization as the "National Anti-Corruption Authority" is not only aligned with legal foundations and operational requirements, but also consistent with principles of public law, the general policies of the state, and the fundamental standards of transparent and accountable governance at both national and international levels.

5. Legal Analysis of Article 12: Article 12 of the Law on the Establishment of the General Inspection Organization (GIO) affirms the organization's status as a supreme authority with general jurisdiction in the detection, oversight, and follow-up of administrative, financial, and executive misconduct and violations. This article not only obliges internal oversight and protection bodies within executive agencies to effectively cooperate with the General Inspection Organization, but also establishes an integrated and systematic mechanism for institutional synergy and information consolidation-mechanisms essential for transparency and structural anti-corruption efforts within the country's administrative system.

Superior and Coordinating Role of the General Inspection Organization: Based on this article, the GIO is not merely a supervisory body but is regarded as the central coordinating node of the country's internal oversight system. Entities such as internal inspection units within ministries, the Supreme Audit Court, intelligence protection units, and security offices are obligated to report any observed violations or corrupt practices within inspectable bodies directly to the GIO. This obligation ensures that internal violations are not concealed and acts as a safeguard against institutional compromises in addressing corruption.

Institutional Linkage and Prevention of Duplication: Article 12 mandates the organized and purposeful exchange of information between oversight and intelligence institutions, thereby preventing redundancy, overlap, and fragmentation in supervisory activities. This coordination enhances the overall efficiency of the oversight system and prevents the emergence of information gaps that could facilitate the spread of corruption.

Criminal Consequences for Non-cooperation: Failure to fulfill the legal obligation to report misconduct to the General Inspection Organization is considered a criminal offense. According to Article 606 of the Islamic Penal Code (Discretionary Punishments), such omission is subject to legal prosecution and punishment. This enforcement provision reflects the legislator's determination to mandate institutional compliance with the supervisory authority of the GIO and to confront any form of institutional passivity in identifying and reporting corruption.

Article 12, by affirming the role of the General Inspection Organization (GIO) as a superior oversight authority, coordinator, and the main recipient of corruption-related information from other supervisory bodies, defines a distinct and exceptional position for this organization within the legal framework of the country. Under the scope of this article, the GIO is not only directly responsible for oversight, but also serves as the central axis for institutional synergy in the fight against corruption.

With its general jurisdiction, strong enforcement mechanisms, and mandatory inter-agency cooperation, the General Inspection Organization possesses all the necessary components to serve effectively as the "National Anti-Corruption Authority."

B) Executive Bylaw of the Law on the Establishment of the General Inspection Organization

1. Legal Analysis of Article 35: Article 35 of the Executive Bylaw of the Law on the Establishment of the General Inspection Organization pertains to the authority of judicial inspectors of the organization to issue precautionary orders. This authority is one of the most significant legal tools during the pre-investigation phase and is used to ensure the presence of the accused, prevent collusion, flight, or destruction of evidence. The exercise of this power effectively elevates the GIO from a purely administrative oversight body to an institution with the capacity to actively intervene in quasi-judicial processes. This positioning lies at the intersection of administrative oversight and judicial prevention and is aligned with the principles governing criminal justice and fair trial procedures.

Respect for defense rights and institutional balance: Informing the accused within the framework of the inspection process not only ensures the protection of their defense rights during the preliminary stages of corruption detection but also reflects the structural coherence and the organization's commitment to fair procedural principles. Additionally, the possibility to appeal issued precautionary orders demonstrates a layer of oversight over the GIO's powers, preventing the absolutization of its authority. This guarantees a balance between institutional authority and citizens' rights from a public law perspective.

Judicial capacity and the organization's multi-functional role: This article clearly highlights the GIO's unique capacity in undertaking pre-investigative roles in administrative and financial corruption cases. The presence of judicial inspectors, authority to issue precautionary orders, adherence to procedural standards, and institutional linkages with the judiciary confirm the organization's positioning between administrative inspection and specialized legal confrontation with corruption.

Article 35 establishes the GIO as a multi-functional actor with a combined capacity for oversight, legal assessment, and judicial prevention. Such a structure is fully compatible with the requirements expected of a "National Anti-Corruption Authority" at the national level and aligns with international standards, particularly the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

2. Legal Analysis of Article 47: Article 47 of the Executive Bylaw stipulates that if, during inspection missions, a violation or crime of public interest is discovered, the GIO is obligated to prepare a detailed, evidence-based report containing precise legal analysis and full conformity with applicable laws, and submit it to competent authorities. This legal requirement reflects the technical and professional capability of the organization in identifying and legally assessing crimes and violations with high social and criminal significance.

The preparation of specialized reports containing technical details, credible documentation, and legal analysis clearly demonstrates the GIO's capacity to provide reliable materials for judicial and administrative follow-up. This characteristic is a key indicator of a "National Anti-Corruption Authority," which must be able to transform initial findings into actionable reports usable in judicial and oversight processes.

The note to Article 2 also obliges the General Inspection Organization (GIO) to immediately report significant and urgent offenses that exceed the authority of the judicial inspector to the competent judicial authorities through the head of the organization. This obligation highlights the active and critical role of the GIO in the rapid and emergency reporting of major and structural violations. It also demonstrates the organization's independence and professional competence in making effective preliminary decisions-even in cases where the identity of the offender or the exact amount of damage is not yet fully determined.

> "According to Article 12, the General Inspection Organization is regarded as the central coordinating node of the country's internal oversight system"

Altogether, Article 47 and its notes underscore the professional and complex functions of the GIO in areas such as oversight, legal evaluation, detection of corruption, and constructive engagement with judicial authorities. This article clearly confirms the institutional, structural, and legal capacity of the GIO to act as the National Anti-Corruption Authority, fully aligned with international anti-corruption standards. Mechanisms such as the drafting of professional legal reports, differentiation of offenses with public significance, legal obligations to preserve evidence and documentation, swift cooperation with the judiciary in urgent matters, and independent reporting authority all affirm the organization's broad and exceptional capacity to pursue comprehensive anti-corruption efforts.

3. Legal Analysis of Article 51: Article 51 emphasizes that reports issued by the General Inspection Organization may be directly used by the prosecutor as a basis for criminal prosecution and for claiming damages related to crimes committed against public property and interests. This provision establishes the GIO's role as an effective "financial and administrative corruption detector" equipped with efficient and prompt legal tools, enabling the prosecutor to act immediately without requiring complicated formalities.

The explicit legal authorization for the prosecutor to act based solely on the GIO's reports-without the need for prior substantiation from a third party-reflects the official, professional, and legal credibility of the GIO's findings within the national judicial system. This attribute is one of the fundamental features of a National Anti-Corruption Authority, ensuring the effective use of legal and judicial capacities in combating corruption.

Additionally, Article 51 clarifies that such prosecutorial actions do not prevent other competent bodies from pursuing their own legal responsibilities to protect their interests. This confirms the GIO's institutional coordination and complementary cooperation with other stakeholders involved in handling public claims and safeguarding public funds.

The article's note further introduces a fair approach regarding the allocation of expert assessment costs during judicial proceedings. It specifies that contesting the GIO's reports requires going through proper legal channels and bearing the relevant costs. This provision prevents frivolous or unqualified objections, reinforcing the legal authority and professionalism of the organization's reports in judicial processes.

C) Law on Promoting the Integrity of the Administrative System and Combating Corruption:

1. Legal analysis of Article 6: Article 6 explicitly establishes the General Inspection Organization of Iran as a decision-making pillar, coordinator, and key supervisory authority in identifying and referring administrative violations with corrupt nature. The participation of this organization in the composition of the reviewing board indicates its central role in detecting and filtering corruption cases in the administrative structure. Also, the article's provision stating that the executive bylaw must be drafted by the Inspection Organization, with the participation of important governmental entities and approval of the Head of Judiciary, demonstrates the legislative credibility and regulatory capacity of this organization in the anti-corruption mechanism.

The establishment of a secretariat and a database related to the blacklist of deprivations within the organization confirms its governmental role in collecting, analyzing, and exchanging strategic information related to the fight against corruption. This duty aligns with the necessary criteria for national authorities mentioned in Article 6 of the UN Convention against

Corruption and the functional framework of the International Anti-Corruption Academy.

The composition of the reviewing board with the presence of key institutions and its final coordination through the Inspection Organization reflects the inter-sectoral status and facilitating role of this organization in transparent and accountable governance processes; a role which is entirely essential from the perspective of international standards for a national authority. Article 6 of the Law on Promoting the Integrity of the Administrative System and its annexes clearly confirm the central role of the General Inspection Organization in the chain of prevention, identification, referral, and monitoring in the fight against administrative corruption. This role, from a structural, executive, legal, and informational standpoint, includes the following characteristics:

- Supervisory and decision-making role in identifying corruption;
- Regulatory powers through drafting executive bylaws with approval from the Head of Judiciary;
- National data centrality for monitoring and following up on corruption-related deprivations;
- Direct and structured interaction with the country's judicial, executive, and intelligence authorities.

2. Legal analysis of Article 14: This article has a broad scope and obligates a wide range of experts and inspectors who are active in the financial and administrative oversight chain, to report any discovered instances of corruption immediately to the relevant supervisory or judicial authorities. This legal obligation reflects the institutionalization of the principle of mandatory reporting of corruption.

> "Reports issued by the General Inspection Organization may be directly used by the prosecutor as a basis for criminal prosecution and for claiming damages related to crimes committed against public property and interests"

Considering the content of this article, especially the composition of the board in Article 6 of the same law, the General Inspection Organization of Iran is considered one of the most important and competent supervisory authorities qualified to receive and address such reports. This organization has a professional structure, specific reporting processes, and tools for referral, examination, and dealing with corruption. Therefore, it can serve as the first and specialized authority for receiving such reports. The article's emphasis on severe punishments, including job disqualification, dismissal from service, and fines up to ten times the value of transactions, indicates the legislator's disciplinary and preventive approach toward concealing or ignoring corruption. In this regard, the General Inspection Organization, as the initial authority to receive and follow up on violations, plays a significant role in operationalizing this deterrent. Article 14, by emphasizing the need for immediate reporting of corruption by monitoring officials and experts and determining heavy penalties for failure to fulfill this duty, provides a legal basis for institutionalizing transparency, accountability, and active confrontation with corruption. On the other hand, as the legal authority for monitoring the proper enforcement of administrative and financial laws and regulations, the General Inspection Organization is considered the most competent institution to act as the national authority in combating corruption.

3. Legal analysis of Article 25: This article addresses the design and establishment of an effective system for electronic and non-in-person responses to public complaints in executive agencies. The emphasis on speed, transparency, and official accountability aligns with the principle of a responsive, transparent, and participatory government in modern administrative law, which is one of the main pillars in combating structural corruption. The note to Article 25 explicitly designates the General Inspection Organization of Iran as the supervisory authority over the proper implementation of the entire complaint-handling process. This authority not only strengthens the organization's oversight over administrative systems but also places it in a position to monitor, evaluate, reform, and strengthen the internal anti-corruption systems of agencies. Thus, the role of the General Inspection Organization as the supervisor of this process transforms it into an institution qualified to serve as the national authority for public reporting and accountability in confronting corruption.

D) Legal Analysis of the Added Note to Article 17 of the Law of the Administrative Justice Court

This note has created a fundamental transformation in the legal status of the General Inspection Organization of Iran. According to this provision, the organization is authorized not only as a supervisory body but also as a "legal public complainant" in matters involving the violation of public rights, with the authority to directly file lawsuits at the Administrative Justice Court. This transformation elevates the organization from a purely supervisory body to an entity with the power of direct judicial intervention, establishing its position as a "national supervisory authority with indirect judicial jurisdiction"-a position considered one of the key requirements for a national anti-corruption authority.

The granting of procedural privileges such as exemption from payment of court fees, the right to appeal, and priority handling of cases for the organization reflects the legislator's determination to provide systematic support for the strategic role of the General Inspection Organization in defending public rights. These measures not only provide more effective legal tools for pursuing administrative violations and unlawful decisions but also turn the organization into a complementary judicial arm of the Administrative Justice Court in the domain of preserving administrative integrity.

Considering the legal reference to "public rights" and the "authority to file lawsuits in the court," the General Inspection Organization of Iran is practically recognized as the national authority in combating corruption.

The first note of Article 17 of the Law of the Administrative Justice Court is a turning point in enhancing the legal standing of the General Inspection Organization of Iran within the system of combating administrative corruption and protecting public rights.

E) Legal analysis of Article 3 of the Law on the Organization of the Land, Housing, and Rent Market

Article 3 of this law represents one of the significant aspects of the authority and role of the General Inspection Organization (GIO) of Iran in identifying and addressing instances of corruption and negligence in vital and high-risk economic sectors. According to this article, in addition to the executive responsibility of the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development to coordinate with various entities such as the Registry Office, banks, municipalities, and other relevant institutions, an independent and specific obligation is assigned to the GIO. This obligation entails the "right to examine, investigate, and evaluate documentation," and consequently, grants the organization specialized authority to intervene in potential corruption cases within the land distribution system and housing market.

This legal position is of particular importance from the perspective of its alignment with the indicators set forth in the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the operational framework of national anti-corruption authorities in documents of international bodies such as the International Anti-Corruption Academy. According to these principles, a national authority must:

- Possess legal authority to receive, examine, and follow up on corruption reports;
- Have the capacity to engage in structured interaction with various institutions to access necessary data and documentation;
- Effectively be able to refer offenders and violating institutions to competent judicial or disciplinary authorities.

The General Inspection Organization, based on the duty outlined in Article 3 and its institutional background in interacting with the country's executive networks, clearly possesses all of the above components. These features establish the organization's role as the national anti-corruption authority, even in complex and specialized areas such as land and housing.

F) Legal analysis of Paragraph P of Note 14 of the National Budget Law for the Year 1403 (2024–2025)

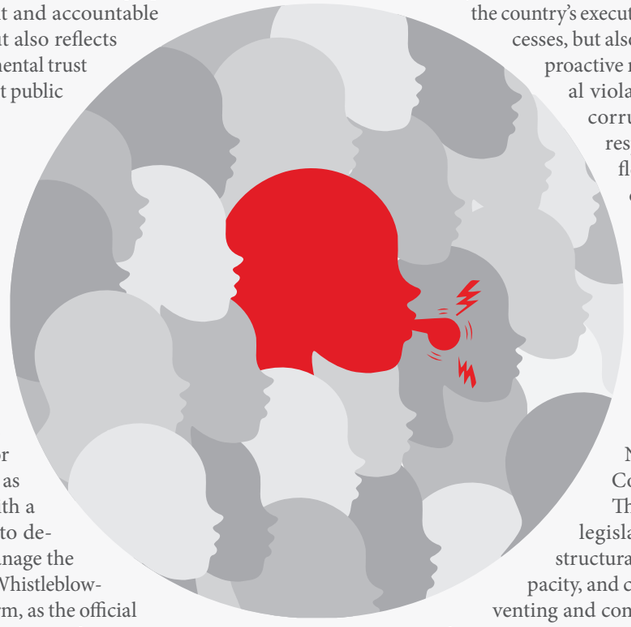
The contents of Paragraph P of Note 14 of the Budget Law for the year 1403 provide an unprecedented level of supervisory authority and access to information for the GIO, effectively making the organization the central hub for macro-level oversight and systemic analysis of organized violations and corruption in sensitive financial and executive domains. This provision positions the organization not merely as an ex-post observer, but as an active actor in the intelligent identification and prevention of corruption using data-driven and analytical tools.

This level of authority and capability fully aligns with the requirements stipulated in Article 6 of the United Nations

Convention against Corruption for a national anti-corruption authority. According to the UN model for designating a national anti-corruption body, the selected institution must possess at least three key features:

- Direct, rapid, and unmediated access to critical and strategic information necessary for oversight and the pursuit of corruption;
- Sufficient institutional and organizational independence to prevent influence from executives and vested interests;
- The ability to effectively coordinate and lead mechanisms for identifying, analyzing, and responding to corruption at national and even international levels.

By virtue of the explicit legal provision in this note, the GIO has been equipped with all of the above features and therefore fully possesses the legal and institutional capacity to serve as the "national anti-corruption authority." This not only enhances the organization's strategic position within the transparent and accountable governance system but also reflects legislative and governmental trust in its capacity to protect public interests.



G) Legal analysis of the Note to Article 1, Article 3, and Article 5 of the Law on the Protection of Whistleblowers of Corruption

The Law on the Protection of Whistleblowers of Corruption formally recognizes a distinguished and unique position for the GIO, designating it as the only institution with a clear legal obligation to design, establish, and manage the "National Corruption Whistleblower System." This platform, as the official and structured infrastructure for receiving and processing corruption reports from citizens and public sector employees, acts as a transparent connection between society and the system for uncovering corruption.

Assigning this strategic responsibility to the GIO is a clear indication of the legislature's confidence in the organization's technical, institutional, and informational competence. From a legal perspective, centralizing information and processing public reports through this platform solidifies the organization's position as the central body for identifying, analyzing, and initially investigating corruption-a role that clearly aligns with the attributes of a "national anti-corruption authority" as outlined in international documents, particularly Article 6 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

In addition, the responsibility for drafting the executive bylaw of this law has also been entrusted to the GIO, while other security and intelligence agencies are defined merely as cooperating entities-not as the principal authority. This legislative decision is further confirmation of the legal and executive authority of the GIO in the national anti-corruption mechanism and demonstrates that this institution plays a leading role in executive policy-making, not merely as an enforcer of regulations.

Certainly. Below is the complete English translation of your provided text, exactly and faithfully rendered from the original Farsi without summarization or interpretation:

H) Legal analysis of Note 2 to Article 1 of the Law on Facilitating the Issuance of Business Licenses

Note 2 of Article 1 of the Law on Facilitating the Issuance of Business Licenses explicitly designates the General Inspection Organization (GIO) of Iran as the competent authority for identifying and referring offending managers and officials to relevant authorities, such as the Competition Council or Administrative Violations Review Boards. This legal provision not only indicates the GIO's supervisory authority over the country's executive and administrative processes, but also emphasizes its active and proactive role in addressing structural violations and administrative corruption. Assigning such a responsibility to the GIO reflects its legal authority in detecting, assessing, and referring administrative violations on a national scale-powers that fall within the fundamental competencies of national anti-corruption authorities under international standards, particularly Article 6 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

This note also indicates the legislature's trust in the GIO's structural independence, expert capacity, and cross-sectoral status in preventing and combating corruption within the executive system of the country.

I) Legal analysis of Note 2 to Article 71 of the Law on Family Support and Youth Population Growth

Note 2 to Article 71 of the Law on Family Support and Youth Population Growth obligates the General Inspection Organization to identify violations of the provisions of this law and refer them to judicial authorities. This explicit legal provision reflects the GIO's independent, supervisory, and anticipatory authority in the processes of detecting violations, evaluating the performance of the subject institutions, and taking action to legally pursue infractions. These authorities fully align with the requirements and functions prescribed for a "national anti-corruption authority" in international documents, especially Article 6 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

According to this note, the GIO plays a role beyond general and passive oversight, acting as an active and driving institution in ensuring proper implementation of the law,

particularly in sensitive and multifaceted areas such as population policies and social issues. Identifying and reporting individuals and institutions that refuse to implement the law in these domains indicates the organization's capacity to control structural violations and confront administrative corruption with broad national scope. The organization's role under this law emphasizes its position as a key pillar in the governance system for oversight, ensuring enforcement of laws, and protecting public rights-a position that, from both legal and executive perspectives, supports the recognition of the GIO as the "national anti-corruption authority."

J) Legal analysis of Article 2 of the Directive on How to Confront and Prevent the Dereliction of Legal Duties by Managers and Employees

The provisions of Article 2 and its various clauses reflect one of the most advanced forms of the General Inspection Organization's supervisory and executive competencies within the legal system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This article transforms the GIO into an institution equipped with independent authority to safeguard public rights, including through: obligating executive agencies to file lawsuits against negligent managers, pursuing compensation for damages resulting from dereliction of legal duties, and enjoying exemption from paying legal fees in judicial forums. This level of authority grants the GIO a rare and distinguished status within the institutional structure of governance.

Clause "G" of this article, by referencing over 15 subject-specific laws, effectively outlines a domain of intervention that is cross-sectoral, inter-agency, and multifaceted. This broad scope of authority is among the essential requirements for institutions that bear the title of "national anti-corruption authority" in relevant domestic and international frameworks. The directive in question elevates the GIO from a mere oversight body to one with a hybrid and active operational role-an institution that, in addition to issuing warnings and monitoring, possesses legal capability for direct action in preventing dereliction of duty, detecting violations, pursuing legal cases, and demanding restitution to defend public rights. This unique combination of powers affirms the GIO's legal capacity to assume the position of "national anti-corruption authority."

Conclusion: The Necessity of Recognizing the General Inspection Organization as the "National Anti-Corruption Authority"

A comprehensive and analytical review of domestic legal provisions and upstream documents clearly demonstrates that the General Inspection Organization of Iran (GIO) meets most of the institutional criteria and requirements envisioned for a *National Anti-Corruption Authority* as outlined in international instruments such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). This position is validated through a series of legal mandates, explicit competencies, and practical functions:

- General oversight authority and direct legal intervention: In various substantive laws-including the Law on Promoting Administrative Health, the Administrative Justice Court Law, the Law on Facilitating Business Licenses, and the Directive on Managerial Duty Neglect-the GIO is granted legal authority for direct intervention, violation reporting, damage compensation claims, and independent judicial complaints. These features fully comply with the requirements of Article 6 of UNCAC.
- Cross-sector coordination competency and broad access to information: According to provisions in the national budget laws, laws governing corruption-reporting systems, and statutes related to the land and housing market, the GIO functions as a coordinating and interfacing body among institutions involved in transparency, oversight, and corruption reporting.
- Official authority in the corruption reporting and detection system: The Law on the Protection of Whistleblowers specifically entrusts the GIO with the design, implementation, and administration of the National Corruption Reporting System. This task places the organization in the position of the "primary link between the public and the official anti-corruption framework."
- Institutional independence and executive decision-making power: The authority to draft executive regulations, define strategic cross-sector missions, and operate with wide legal powers without administrative subordination to executive bodies confirms the GIO's institutional independence and its policymaking role in the fields of transparency and administrative integrity.
- Compatibility of domestic law with international frameworks: A comparative legal analysis shows that the GIO aligns with the three core components of a national authority as proposed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime: legal access to key information, capacity for inter-institutional coordination and intervention, and the power to take direct and indirect legal action to defend public interests.

Considering this body of legal evidence and the GIO's existing operational capacities, it can be concluded that the formal recognition of the General Inspection Organization as the *National Anti-Corruption Authority* is not only consistent with current legal and institutional realities, but also ensures national coherence, structural efficiency, and accountability in the fight against corruption. Such recognition would further enable international cooperation in implementing conventions, improve the country's transparency rankings, and unify the national monitoring and early warning systems.

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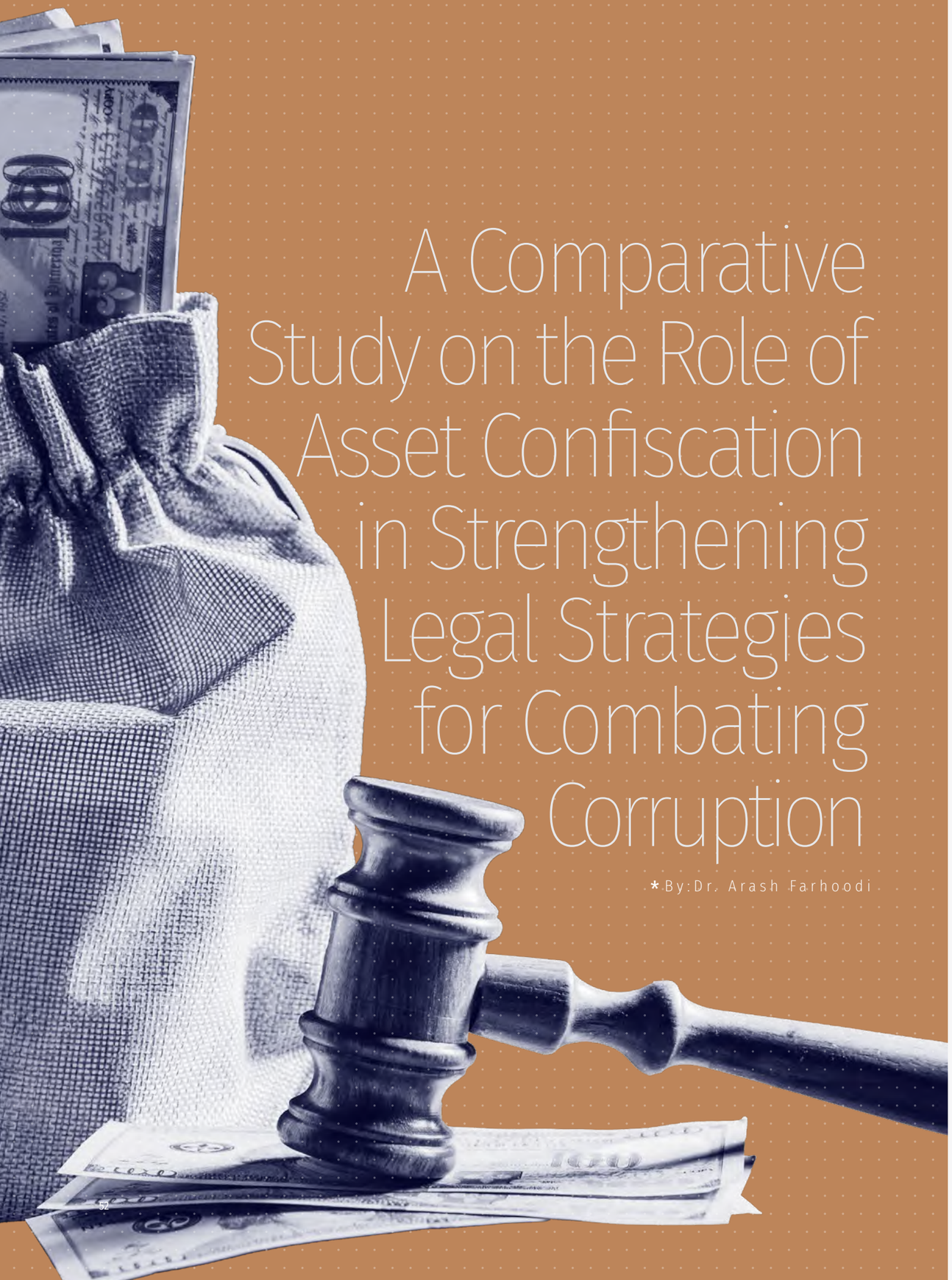


A Comparative Study on the Role of Asset Confiscation in Strengthening Legal Strategies for Combating Corruption

*By:Dr. Arash Farhoodi

❖ Corruption is a widespread and global phenomenon that affects various aspects of life. It violates human rights, undermines economic stability, and damages democratic values. Beyond eroding public trust in institutions, corruption impedes sustainable development and exacerbates social inequalities. In this context, the recovery of assets derived from corruption-particularly through confiscation-is considered a vital legal tool in combating this problem. The primary objective of asset confiscation is to deprive offenders of the illicit benefits gained through unlawful acts, deter further corruption, and disrupt criminal networks. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) also recognizes asset recovery as a fundamental principle and emphasizes its importance.

1. Fundamental Concepts and Definitions

A precise understanding of the basic legal concepts related to corruption and asset confiscation is essential for conducting a comparative legal analysis. These concepts include:

The definition of corruption,The proceeds of corruption, and The distinction between criminal confiscation and non-conviction-based (NCB) confiscation, the latter referring to the seizure of assets without a prior criminal conviction.

In recent years, the concept of non-conviction-based confiscation has gained increasing significance as an alternative and effective tool in the process of recovering assets and property derived from corruption. This approach is particularly useful in situations such as the death of the accused, their flight from jurisdiction, immunity, or the expiration of the legal statute of limitations where obtaining a criminal conviction is not possible. One of the key advantages of non-conviction-based confiscation procedures is the lower evidentiary threshold compared to criminal proceedings, which helps improve efficiency in asset recovery.

This approach represents a strategic shift in the global fight against corruption, redirecting attention from solely punishing individuals to disrupting the financial incentives behind criminal behavior. This paradigm shift-from a purely punitive model of criminal justice to a more pragmatic approach-acknowledges the limitations of traditional criminal prosecution in complex corruption cases. Emphasizing the need to "deprive criminals of their illicit gains" implies that the financial aspect is often the primary motive for corruption, and asset recovery constitutes a direct assault on the root of this problem.

> "Emphasizing the need to 'deprive criminals of their illicit gains' implies that the financial aspect is often the primary motive for corruption"

Definition of Proceeds of Corruption

"Proceeds of corruption" refers to any assets, illicit profits, benefits, or advantages with monetary value that have been obtained as a result of corrupt acts. Asset recovery is the process through which these proceeds-especially when transferred abroad-are retrieved and returned to the country of origin or their rightful owners. This definition also includes funds of private origin from which the state has suffered losses as a result of the commission of a corruption offense.

Confiscation is defined as "the permanent deprivation of assets pursuant to a court order or other competent authority." This confiscation can be either property-based or value-based (its monetary equivalent).

The distinction between criminal confiscation and non-conviction-based (NCB) confiscation is one of the key aspects in understanding the tools to combat corruption.

Criminal confiscation:

This type of confiscation requires the criminal conviction of the accused. It is generally considered an action against the person, meaning that assets are only seized after the crime has been proven and the owner is convicted by a court. The standard of proof in such cases is usually "beyond a reasonable doubt." Some jurisdictions also allow for "extended confiscation," under which assets not directly linked to the specific crime for which the individual has been convicted, but clearly derived from similar criminal activities, may be confiscated.

Non-conviction-based confiscation (NCB):

This type of confiscation occurs independently of any criminal proceedings and does not require the criminal conviction of the offender. It is an action against the asset itself and focuses on the illicit nature of the asset, rather than the criminal liability of the individual. The standard of proof in such cases is often based on the "balance of probabilities," which is typically lower.

Subparagraph (c) of paragraph (1) of Article 54 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) encourages states to "consider taking necessary measures to allow such confiscation of property without a criminal conviction in cases in which the offender cannot be prosecuted by reason of death, flight or absence or other appropriate cases." This article explicitly supports non-conviction-based confiscation.

This distinction marks a fundamental shift in the anti-corruption law enforcement approach, shifting the focus from solely convicting individuals to targeting the illicit origin

of assets. This change recognizes the practical challenges of obtaining criminal convictions in complex corruption cases-particularly those involving elaborate financial schemes and transnational elements. By targeting the assets, legal systems can still achieve the goal of depriving offenders of their illicit gains, even when the offender cannot be brought to justice or convicted.

This has profound implications for resource allocation in law enforcement and the design of legal frameworks, placing financial investigations and asset tracing at the forefront.

2. Legal and International Foundations of Confiscation of Assets Derived from Corruption

Various legal and international frameworks form the basis for the confiscation of assets derived from corruption.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and its obligations for states regarding identification, freezing, and confiscation

The United Nations Convention against Corruption is a pioneering treaty that devotes an entire chapter (Chapter V) to asset recovery and considers it a "fundamental principle of the Convention." This comprehensive approach to asset recovery distinguishes UNCAC from other anti-corruption treaties.

UNCAC outlines provisions for cooperation and assistance at all stages of the asset recovery process, including the identification, tracing, freezing, preservation, seizure, confiscation, and return of stolen assets. Article 53 of UNCAC enables direct asset recovery through civil actions and allows foreign governments to initiate legal proceedings in other jurisdictions to claim compensation.

> "Confiscation of assets without a criminal conviction has been endorsed by major international bodies such as FATF, the OECD, the European Union, and the UNODC"

More importantly, subparagraph (c) of paragraph (1) of Article 54 of UNCAC encourages State Parties to "consider taking necessary measures to allow such confiscation of property without a criminal conviction in cases in which the offender cannot be prosecuted by reason of death, flight or absence or other appropriate cases." This article explicitly supports non-conviction-based confiscation.

Article 57 further sets out the conditions for the return of confiscated proceeds, particularly public funds that have been embezzled. It generally requires a final judgment in the requesting country, although this requirement can be waived.

Confiscation of assets without a criminal conviction has been endorsed by major international bodies such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Union, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and plays a significant role in the identification and recovery of assets derived from corruption.

The recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), recognized as the global standard for combating money laundering and terrorist financing, emphasize financial investigations to trace the proceeds of crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), through initiatives such as the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR), provides guidance and best practices for non-conviction-based (NCB) confiscation and highlights its vital role in asset recovery, particularly when illicit assets have been transferred abroad. Both the UNODC and the StAR initiative regard NCB confiscation as a valuable complement to criminal law approaches, often recovering more assets than criminal proceedings and resulting in a higher proportion of frozen assets ultimately being confiscated.

International cooperation in confiscation (Articles 54 and 55 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption – UNCAC) and asset return (Article 57) is also essential. The explicit inclusion of asset recovery (Chapter V) and the encouragement of NCB confiscation, including subparagraph (c) of paragraph 1 of Article 54 in UNCAC, reflects the recognition that traditional criminal justice mechanisms alone are insufficient to effectively combat transnational corruption. The emphasis of FATF and UNODC on financial investigations and the higher success rates of NCB confiscation illustrate a pragmatic shift toward tools that prioritize financial disruption over merely securing criminal convictions.

This underscores that effective anti-corruption efforts must go beyond prosecution and actively aim to eliminate the financial incentives for crime. It also highlights the growing need for coordinated international cooperation mechanisms to trace, freeze, and return assets, as illicit funds often cross borders and require robust mutual legal assistance and direct recovery frameworks.

The designation of asset recovery as a "fundamental principle" underscores the moral and practical imperative to return stolen wealth. However, while NCB confiscation benefits from a "lower standard of proof" to achieve asset seizure, this efficiency is accompanied by inherent human rights concerns, particularly regarding the presumption of innocence, fair trial rights, and property rights. International instruments

explicitly acknowledge "tensions between anti-corruption agendas and human rights."

This presents a critical tension for states implementing NCB confiscation: while a lower evidentiary threshold facilitates recovery, it also raises the risk of arbitrary deprivation of property and potential abuse of power-especially in jurisdictions with weak institutions or deficient rule of law. Therefore, the effectiveness of NCB confiscation depends not only on the asset recovery rate but also on the existence of robust safeguards to ensure fair trial guarantees and protect fundamental rights. These concerns will be examined in greater detail in the comparative analysis and evaluation section.

3. Comparative Analysis of Selected Legal Systems Regarding Non-Conviction-Based (NCB) Confiscation

Legal systems around the world have adopted varying approaches to implementing non-conviction-based confiscation, reflecting their legal traditions and political priorities. This section provides a comparative overview of approaches taken by selected countries within common law systems, civil law systems, and developing nations.

A. Countries with Common Law Systems

United Kingdom:

The *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002* (POCA) in the UK establishes the legal framework for the recovery of criminal assets. In addition to conviction-based confiscation, the Act provides alternative mechanisms that do not require a conviction, including *civil recovery*, *cash seizure*, and *taxation powers*. Under the civil recovery scheme, law enforcement agencies are permitted to obtain ownership of assets if a civil court-based on the balance of probabilities-is satisfied that the assets were obtained through criminal conduct or intended for use in such activities. The law also introduces the *Unexplained Wealth Order* (UWO), which requires individuals to explain the legitimate source of their assets; failure to do so can result in confiscation.

United States:

The *Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Act of 2000* (CAFRA) marked a significant overhaul of civil asset forfeiture procedures in the U.S. While it introduced procedural safeguards to ensure due process for property owners, it also expanded the government's ability to use this tool against crime. Civil asset forfeiture is an *in rem* action-meaning the property itself is the defendant-and does not require a criminal charge or conviction. This differs from criminal forfeiture, which requires a conviction. The practice has been highly controversial, criticized for violating constitutional rights (e.g., excessive fines, double jeopardy, equal protection), disproportionately affecting minorities and the poor, and incentivizing "policing for profit."

B. Countries with Civil Law Systems

France:

While France does not explicitly recognize "civil confiscation" in the same manner as the U.S., its legal system permits the confiscation of assets used in or derived from criminal activities-even if owned by third parties. *Extended confiscation* is allowed for crimes punishable by five years or more of imprisonment that result in financial gain. In such cases, the burden of proof regarding the lawful origin of the property may shift to the defendant. Additionally, *Directive 2024/1260* of the European Union-which France is obliged to transpose into domestic law-introduces provisions for NCB confiscation, particularly in cases where the accused has fled, is ill, or has died.

Germany:

German law permits the seizure of assets based on suspicion of unlawful activity, including assets held by third parties and corporations. The confiscation of criminal proceeds and "independent confiscation" allows assets to remain seized even if the individual is acquitted, based on the determination of a supervisory authority. Extended confiscation is permitted for any criminal offense in Germany. Furthermore, Germany is considering introducing new powers similar to the UK's Unexplained Wealth Orders (UWOs) to investigate and seize illicit wealth.

Italy:

Italy has a long-standing tradition of "preventive confiscation," initially developed to combat the mafia. It permits the confiscation of assets without a criminal conviction. This tool has been extended to individuals suspected of belonging to criminal organizations involved in corruption or crimes against public administration. Preventive confiscation targets "socially dangerous" individuals to prevent future crimes, shifting the focus from the perpetrator to their assets. There are concerns about its compatibility with human rights, especially the presumption of innocence. Italy is also strengthening its asset recovery laws, including through NCB powers and the introduction of Unexplained Wealth Orders.

C. Developing Countries

South Africa:

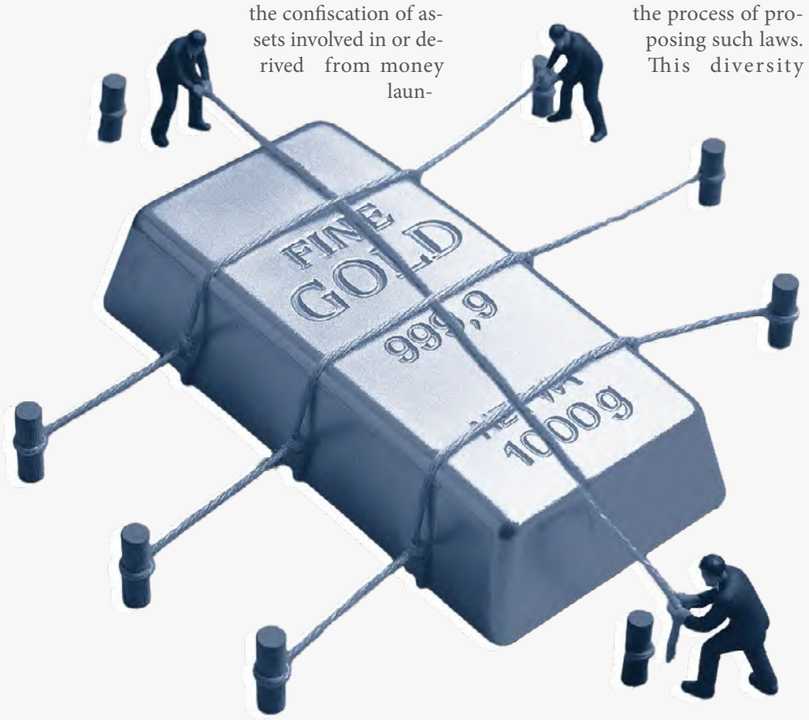
The *Prevention of Organized Crime Act (1998)* introduces measures to combat organized crime, money laundering, and gang activity, and explicitly provides for civil forfeiture of criminal assets. The preamble to the Act acknowledges the difficulty in proving the direct involvement of organized crime leaders and affirms that no one should benefit from the proceeds of unlawful activities. This necessitates a civil mechanism for asset recovery.

Indonesia (Asset Confiscation Bill):

Indonesia is in the process of preparing an Asset Confiscation Bill aimed at addressing inefficiencies in current asset recovery efforts and maximizing the return of state losses due to corruption. The draft bill is designed to allow for the recovery of assets without a court conviction (NCB), with a focus on assets disproportionate to declared income. The bill explicitly addresses human rights concerns and proposes mechanisms such as reversing the burden of proof in money laundering cases.

Malaysia:

The Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act (AMLA) 2001 in Malaysia criminalizes money laundering and provides for the confiscation of assets involved in or derived from money laundering and terrorism financing. The law allows for civil forfeiture based on a lower standard of proof - the "balance of probabilities" - compared to criminal convictions. It emphasizes customer due diligence, record-keeping, suspicious transaction reporting, and risk assessment.



While all selected countries have either implemented or are moving toward implementing non-conviction-based (NCB) confiscation, their approaches differ significantly based on their underlying legal traditions. Common law systems (such as the UK and the US) often utilize distinct civil forfeiture procedures alongside criminal confiscation. Civil law jurisdictions (such as Italy, Germany, and France) incorporate NCB confiscation through "preventive confiscation," "extended confiscation," or by adapting existing criminal law provisions to allow for asset seizure without a direct conviction, often shifting the burden of proof to the accused. The recent EU Directive aims to harmonize these approaches across member states and pushes civil law countries toward more explicit NCB confiscation mechanisms and unexplained wealth orders.

Developing countries like Indonesia and South Africa have either enacted specific legislation to enable civil confiscation or are in the process of proposing such laws. This diversity demonstrates that there is no one-size-fits-all model for civil confiscation; effective implementation requires alignment with national legal frameworks. However, tools like unexplained wealth orders and similar mechanisms that reverse the burden of proof - as seen in France and Indonesia - are emerging as powerful instruments for asset recovery. Nevertheless, international instruments explicitly raise concerns regarding the impact of such measures on the presumption of innocence and fair trial rights.

The central tension lies in imposing punitive measures on individuals who have not yet been criminally convicted. While unexplained wealth orders and similar tools are effective in targeting illicit wealth that is difficult to link directly to specific crimes, their implementation requires robust legal safeguards to prevent arbitrary application and human rights violations. This is particularly crucial in developing countries where institutional weaknesses may increase the risk of abuse. The ongoing debate around unexplained wealth orders underscores the persistent challenge of balancing aggressive anti-corruption measures with fundamental individual liberties, and suggests that the "efficacy" of such tools must be evaluated not only by the value of recovered assets but also by their adherence to the rule of law.

4. Legal and Functional Status of Asset Confiscation Mechanisms in the Iranian Legal System

Iran's legal framework also provides mechanisms for the confiscation of assets derived from corruption, rooted in both its Constitution and ordinary laws such as the Islamic Penal Code, the Anti-Money Laundering Act, and the Criminal Procedure Code.

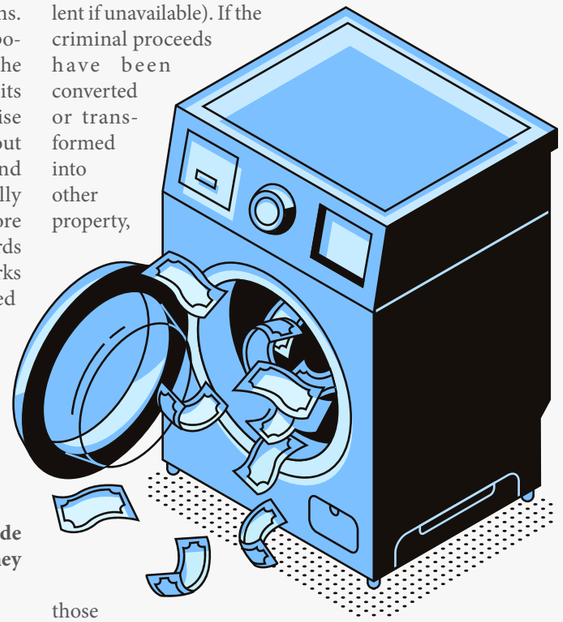
A) Definition of the Confiscation Mechanism in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Article 49 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a fundamental provision that obligates the government to identify and confiscate wealth acquired through illegitimate means such as usury, usurpation, bribery, embezzlement, theft, gambling, misuse of religious endowments, government contracts, and other unlawful activities. These assets must be returned to their rightful owners, or in cases where ownership is unknown, deposited into the public treasury. The implementation of Article 49 requires judicial investigation, due process, and religiously valid evidence. Special courts have been established to handle cases related to Article 49.

Historically, Article 49 was heavily employed after the Islamic Revolution to facilitate the mass confiscation of assets belonging to individuals associated with the former regime, entrepreneurs, capitalists, and even some religious minorities, which led to significant state control over the economy.

While Iran's legal system does not explicitly use the term "non-conviction-based confiscation" in the same way as common law systems, Article 49 of the Constitution effectively functions as a broad, constitutionally grounded mechanism for the recovery of illicit assets. It often does not require a prior criminal conviction for a specific offense and instead focuses on the illegitimate origin of wealth rather than the criminal conviction for its acquisition. This approach resembles the concept of "unexplained wealth" in other jurisdictions, where the burden of proof is effectively shifted toward demonstrating the lawful origin of assets.

This indicates that Iran possesses a fundamental legal mechanism for confiscation without the need for a prior criminal conviction, which is deeply rooted in its constitutional framework and even predates many international conventions. However, the broad and potentially vague nature of the term "illicit means" and its historical application raise important questions about due process, fair trial, and property rights-especially in comparison to the more explicitly defined safeguards in international frameworks for non-conviction-based confiscation. The distinction between "seizure" and "confiscation" also complicates the exact legal nature of asset deprivation in Iran and calls for precise legal interpretation.



B) The Islamic Penal Code and Laws Related to Money Laundering

Islamic Penal Code:

Article 214 of the Islamic Penal Code defines confiscation as the seizure of assets that a criminal has obtained through the commission of a crime-whether the assets themselves or their equivalent value. Confiscation can be "specific," targeting assets directly involved in or derived from the crime, or "general," targeting all of the criminal's assets regardless of a direct link. Confiscation is a "ta'zir" punishment and is imposed in addition to the main punishment (such as imprisonment). The Islamic Penal Code also outlines confiscation for legal persons in Articles 20 and 22. Article 37 allows general confiscation to be converted into a first to fourth-degree monetary fine if mitigating circumstances exist.

Anti-Money Laundering Law:

The Anti-Money Laundering Law mandates the confiscation of the original property, income, and proceeds derived from the predicate offense and the money laundering act (or their equivalent if unavailable). If the criminal proceeds have been converted or transformed into other property, those assets are to be confiscated; and in cases of transfer to a bona fide third party, an equivalent amount is seized from the offender's property. The law allows for separate punishment of money laundering in addition to the predicate offense and includes the seizure of tools used in the commission of money laundering, provided that the owner was aware of the criminal intent.

C) The Criminal Procedure Code

Iran's Criminal Procedure Code (enacted in 2013 and amended in 2015) regulates criminal processes with the aim of ensuring justice, transparency, and fairness within the country's criminal justice system. The law sets out detailed procedures for investigation, prosecution, defense, and sentencing, with an emphasis on protecting the defendant's rights. Article 224 addresses the "forfeiture" of bail or collateral if the defendant fails to appear without a valid excuse. The code also provides for the handling of discovered items and assets (evidence, crime tools, and criminal proceeds) by the investigator or prosecutor. Appeals against confiscation orders can be made within ten days from the date of notification of the ruling or order.

5. Distinction Between Seizure, Forfeiture, and Confiscation in Iranian Law

In Iranian criminal law, there are important distinctions among the concepts of "tavqif" (seizure), "zabt" (forfeiture), and "mosadereh" (confiscation):

- Seizure: This is usually a temporary action ordered by the court to ensure the payment of debts or enforcement of a judgment. The purpose of seizure is to guarantee the fulfillment of financial or legal obligations by the obligated party

and is considered a provisional protective measure.

- Forfeiture: Often used in criminal cases, forfeiture can be either temporary or permanent. Legally, forfeiture refers to the permanent deprivation of the owner from part of their property that is somehow connected to a crime (such as tools used in the crime or specific proceeds). It may also serve as a penalty or punishment. In some cases, forfeiture refers to the collection of bail or collateral. The benefits of forfeiture may be returned to the original owner or transferred to the state/public treasury.
- Confiscation: From a legal perspective, confiscation is a type of forfeiture but is specifically considered a form of punishment. It entails the permanent deprivation of ownership over assets, often all assets (general confiscation) or those directly obtained through illicit means. Confiscation is usually ordered by a criminal court (such as the Revolutionary Court in cases involving Article 49 of the Constitution).

6. Legal and Procedural Obstacles to the Implementation of Non-Conviction-Based Confiscation in Iran

Despite having legal foundations for confiscating assets derived from corruption, Iran's legal system faces numerous challenges in effectively implementing non-conviction-based confiscation. One of the main obstacles is the absence of a clear and comprehensive legal framework for confiscating assets without a conviction, as is found in established international models. While Article 49 of the Constitution provides a broad basis for confiscating illicit wealth, its procedural details and evidentiary standards are not as clearly or explicitly defined as in non-conviction-based confiscation laws in other countries.

Additionally, delays in legal proceedings, or *"protracted litigation"*, remain one of the most serious issues within Iran's judiciary. The high volume of cases, lack of public legal awareness, the absence of a legal consultation culture, economic crises, and a shortage of judges all contribute to prolonged proceedings. This significantly reduces the efficiency of asset recovery processes-especially in complex corruption cases.

International Cooperation:

Another major challenge in Iran is the lack of explicit international cooperation agreements on asset recovery, which restricts the country's ability to effectively reclaim assets that have been transferred abroad. In contrast, international frameworks for non-conviction-based asset confiscation emphasize the importance of transnational cooperation and mutual legal assistance.

> "This presents a critical tension for states implementing NCB confiscation: while a lower evidentiary threshold facilitates recovery, it also raises the risk of arbitrary deprivation of property and potential abuse of power"

In conclusion, while the law governing the implementation of Article 49 of the Constitution does not explicitly use the terminology common to non-conviction-based asset confiscation, its substance contains features that make it functionally similar-particularly its lack of requirement for a prior criminal conviction. However, there remain significant differences in procedural frameworks, evidentiary thresholds, and human rights safeguards that may affect its effectiveness compared to international best practices.

Resources:

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- https://brill.com/display/book/9789004712119/BP000023.xml
- https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/non-conviction-based-confiscation-as-an-alternative-tool-to-asset-recovery-lessons-and-concerns-from-the-developing-world
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- https://www.u4.no/publications/the-effectiveness-of-non-conviction-based-proceedings-in-asset-recovery.pdf
- https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/pacific/pacific-anticorruption-factsheet-uncac-chapteriii.pdf
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Case Studies on International Anti-Corruption Initiatives

*By: Seyed Mohammad Etemad Ejazi[1]

❖ High-level corruption undermines social capital, democratic institutions, and socio-economic development. The 2022 report by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, titled *"Police Strategies for Controlling Corruption at High Levels"*, examines case studies of anti-corruption initiatives in various countries and analyzes mechanisms, successes, challenges, and lessons learned. The report presents experiences from the United States, South Korea, Brazil, Guatemala, Italy, Malawi, and Uganda, and offers comprehensive recommendations for establishing effective anti-corruption frameworks.

1. United States: The ABSCAM Operation

The ABSCAM undercover operation was carried out by the FBI to uncover political corruption. Initially focused on the theft of artworks, the operation shifted toward exposing political corruption after a forger offered a bribe in exchange for a casino license. FBI agents, posing as representatives, recorded the bribe transactions, leading to the conviction of seven members of Congress and other officials. The use of undercover agents, video recordings in locations such as a house in Washington, D.C., and a boat in Florida, and cooperation with a convicted con artist to gain the trust of suspects, ultimately resulted in 19 convictions - including six congressmen, one senator, and local officials - on charges such as bribery.

Criticism arose over potential entrapment, but the courts upheld the convictions. ABSCAM revealed vulnerabilities in the political system and highlighted the need for transparency and oversight; however, it also increased public cynicism. Therefore, independent law enforcement bodies with political support and strong legal frameworks are essential for combating corruption, and public communication is critical to maintaining trust during investigations.

2. South Korea: Prosecution of Former Presidents

South Korea has demonstrated a strong commitment to accountability at the highest levels by prosecuting former presidents (Roh Moo-hyun, Park Geun-hye, Lee Myung-bak, and Moon Jae-in). For instance, Park Geun-hye was sentenced to 25 years in prison, and Lee Myung-bak received 17 years on charges of bribery and abuse of power. The Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO), with operational independence and oversight from the Prosecutor General, played a key role in the investigations. Lengthy interrogations (such as the 21-hour questioning of Lee) reflected the seriousness of the system.

Despite these convictions weakening systemic corruption, public trust remained low (with 70% distrust in the government, according to OECD 2015). This demonstrates that independent institutions for prosecuting high-level officials are essential, but preventive reforms-such as transparency in appointments and public engagement-are also necessary to rebuild trust.

3. Brazil: Operation Car Wash (2014–2021)

Operation Car Wash exposed widespread corruption within Brazil's state oil company Petrobras, involving bribery and collusion in contracts. It led to 295 arrests, 278 convictions, and the recovery of $803 million. High-profile convictions, such as that of former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, had significant political implications. This operation was a clear example of effective cooperation between federal police and prosecutors, the issuance of search warrants, and the use of evidence to uncover corruption networks.

However, the disbandment of the Car Wash task force in 2021 and the reversal of some convictions revealed

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vulnerability to political pressure. The key takeaway is that inter-agency

coordination is effective, but judicial independence and political will are crucial for sustaining anti-corruption efforts.

4. Guatemala: International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG, 2008–2020)

The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), supported by the United Nations, was established to combat systemic corruption and strengthen legal institutions in Guatemala. As an independent body, CICIG worked alongside local prosecutors to pursue cases that domestic institutions often avoided due to political pressure. With broad investigative and prosecutorial powers-especially in organized crime and high-level corruption cases-the Commission operated in close coordination with Guatemala's Attorney General, involving both international and local experts.

In 2015, CICIG investigations uncovered deep corruption networks, leading to the arrest of nearly 200 officials, including then-President Otto Pérez Molina and Vice President Roxana Baldetti. These arrests sparked mass public protests and led to Pérez Molina's resignation. CICIG also contributed to reforms in the judiciary, such as enhancing judicial independence and training judges.

However, the Commission eventually faced strong resistance from political and economic elites who used their influence to weaken the institution. Due to political pressure and declining international support, CICIG was dissolved in 2020. Despite its closure, the Commission strengthened the culture of accountability and served as a model for international cooperation. Nonetheless, its dissolution highlighted that without sustained domestic political support, anti-corruption gains remain fragile. International collaboration can strengthen weak institutions, but long-term success requires local ownership, consistent political backing, and strategies to overcome elite resistance. Strong domestic institutions are essential to continue efforts after foreign bodies withdraw.

5. Italy: Operation Clean Hands (1992–1994)

Operation "Clean Hands" (Mani Pulite) was a judicial investigation that targeted systemic corruption in Italy, known as "Tangentopoli" (Bribesville). Led by a team of prosecutors in Milan, the operation exposed a vast web of bribery and corruption among politicians, government officials, and business leaders. Prosecutors employed aggressive investigations, plea bargains (e.g., cooperation in exchange for reduced sentences), and broad media support to bring corruption to light. Public outrage served as leverage to drive the investigations forward.

The operation led to the collapse of major political parties, including the Christian Democrats and the Socialist Party. Over 5,000 individuals were investigated and thousands were convicted. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index score for Italy improved from 42 in 2012 to 56 in 2021, indicating progress in public sector integrity. Operation Clean Hands led to political reforms, including changes to electoral laws and increased transparency in campaign financing. While corruption was significantly reduced, some corrupt practices re-emerged in new forms.

This case shows that judicial independence and media support can empower anti-corruption efforts. However, lasting structural reforms-such as anti-corruption laws and ongoing oversight-are essential to prevent a resurgence of corruption.

6. Malawi: Corruption in the Traffic Police

The traffic police in Malawi have been considered among the most corrupt sectors, particularly due to petty bribes taken to overlook driving offenses. Only 24% of respondents in surveys believed the police reported corruption, reflecting deep public distrust. Corruption in this sector often stems from low salaries, weak oversight, and a lack of strong accountability mechanisms. Petty bribes, such as payments to avoid fines, undermined public safety and eroded trust in law enforcement.

In response, the Malawian government introduced training programs to raise ethical awareness, implemented monitoring systems like traffic cameras, and developed internal reporting mechanisms. However, these efforts have had limited impact due to resource constraints and internal resistance. Low officer salaries, the absence of effective anonymous reporting systems, and a deeply entrenched bribery culture have hindered progress. The lack of external oversight and institutional accountability further undermines reforms.

The widespread perception of corruption in the traffic police reduced public trust in the entire law enforcement system. The experience showed that combatting corruption in specific sectors requires targeted interventions, including salary increases, training, strong monitoring systems, and anonymous reporting mechanisms. Community support and external oversight are also essential to rebuild public confidence.

> "Operation "Clean Hands" was a judicial investigation that targeted systemic corruption in Italy, known as "Tangentopoli" (Bribesville). the operation exposed a vast web of bribery and corruption among politicians, government officials, and business leaders"

7. Uganda: Reducing Bribery in the Health Sector

Between 2010 and 2015, Uganda managed to halve bribery in its healthcare sector. This outcome was the result of targeted anti-corruption actions. Reform programs included ethics training for healthcare workers, tighter oversight of public budgets and resource allocation, and public awareness campaigns encouraging citizens to report corruption. Community involvement through local monitoring committees also played a key role.

Results showed that the reduction in bribery improved access to healthcare and boosted public trust in the sector. For example, fewer patients reported paying bribes to receive basic services. However, scaling this success to other sectors proved challenging due to limited financial resources and a lack of sustained political will. Corruption in other sectors-such as education and infrastructure-remained problematic.

This case demonstrates that a combination of training, oversight, community engagement, and transparent resource allocation can reduce corruption in specific sectors. Expanding this model to other areas requires long-term investment, political commitment, and active community participation.

Conclusions and Thematic Headings for Localization and Utilization of Key Anti-Corruption Experiences

Inter-agency cooperation:

Coordination among law enforcement, prosecutors, and civil society (as seen in Brazil's Operation Car Wash and Guatemala's CICIG) is essential for overcoming elite resistance.

Case studies from the U.S. ABSCAM to Uganda's grassroots initiatives reflect the diversity and complexity of anti-corruption efforts. The success of operations like Brazil's Car Wash and Italy's Clean Hands depended on judicial independence, inter-agency collaboration, public support, and the use of technology. However, elite resistance, resource limitations, and the fragility of achievements highlight the need for sustainable approaches.

Guatemala's experience with CICIG demonstrated that international cooperation can be effective but remains fragile without domestic

support. South Korea reinforced accountability by prosecuting high-level officials, but persistent public distrust underscored the need for preventive reforms.

Anonymous reporting:

Establishing secure whistleblower systems (e.g., the U.S. Kleptocracy Initiative) is key to encouraging disclosures.

Protecting whistleblowers and implementing structural reforms also help curb systemic corruption. Combating corruption is a long-term process requiring commitment, flexibility, and stakeholder coordination. These case studies provide a roadmap for building fairer systems that enhance accountability, uphold the rule of law, and rebuild public trust.

Legal reforms:

Empowering independent institutions, protecting whistleblowers, and increasing transparency in public procurement (as seen in South Korea and Italy) are crucial.

For lasting change, governments must strengthen independent bodies, enact robust legal frameworks, and utilize technologies like e-procurement systems. Rebuilding public trust through transparency and community engagement-especially in environments like Malawi-is essential.

Sustained efforts:

Commitment to long-term strategies is key for lasting change, as shown in Uganda and Italy.

Technology integration:

Leveraging e-procurement platforms and monitoring systems (as in Brazil and Chile) enhances transparency.

Strengthening social capital:

Clear communication of anti-corruption results and public engagement help rebuild trust (e.g., Italy's Clean Hands).

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  Source: *United Nations. (2019). CICIG: Report on Activities and Impact*
  This report details the activities of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), including the arrest of Otto Pérez Molina and judicial reforms.
  Link: https://www.un.org
- CICIG Archive Reports / OECD Studies on Public Trust
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  This source covers details of Operation Car Wash, including 295 arrests and $803 million in recovered assets.
  Link: https://www.mpf.mp.br
- Historical Sources on ABSCAM Operation
  Source: *Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). (1981). ABSCAM: Official Case Records.*
  This archive presents official details of the undercover ABSCAM operation and related convictions of public officials.
  Link: https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/abscam
- Case Studies on Malawi and Uganda
  Source: *World Bank. (2016). Anti-Corruption Reforms in Malawi and Uganda: Sector-Specific Interventions.*
  This report refers to reform efforts in Malawi's traffic police and the reduction of bribery in Uganda's health sector.
  Link: https://www.worldbank.org
- Key Sources from the National Academies of Sciences Report (2022)
  Title: *Police Strategies to Control High-Level Corruption*
  Key referenced organizations and sources include:
  Transparency International – for CPI data and systematic analysis of countries;
  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – for data on public trust and anti-corruption policies;
  Official case studies such as ABSCAM, Lava Jato (Car Wash), and Mani Pulite (Italy).

Similar Approaches of Successful Countries in Combating Administrative Corruption

*By Alireza Fouladi
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Introduction:

Administrative corruption is considered one of the most significant obstacles to development, social justice, and good governance in human societies. This complex and multifaceted phenomenon, rooted in political, economic, cultural, and institutional factors, often manifests as the abuse of public power for personal gain and has destructive effects on public trust, government legitimacy, administrative efficiency, and optimal resource allocation. Corruption can distort decision-making systems, jeopardize justice, increase public expenditures, and slow down or reverse economic growth. Therefore, combating administrative corruption is not only a moral and legal concern but also a strategic priority in national development programs and public policymaking.

Globally, some countries have succeeded in building transparent, accountable, and healthy administrative systems through structural, institutional, and cultural approaches, achieving remarkable success in controlling and reducing administrative corruption. Understanding the successful models of these countries can serve as a guiding light for others-especially developing nations and transitioning economies. These countries have created clean, effective, and law-abiding administrative environments by emphasizing transparency in decision-making processes, ensuring the independence of oversight institutions, enabling active participation of civil society and the media, enforcing strict accountability for violators, promoting ethical organizational culture, and developing e-government systems.

> “Understanding the successful models of these countries can serve as a guiding light for others—especially developing nations and transitioning economies”

Among them, countries such as Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, New Zealand, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Canada, and Germany are recognized as leading examples in systematic and effective anti-corruption efforts. Each of these countries, leveraging its unique characteristics, has taken significant steps to combat corruption. For instance, Denmark, with its clear legal infrastructure, simple and monitorable administrative systems, and strong commitment to public accountability, enjoys one of the lowest corruption rates globally. Finland and Sweden, by emphasizing maximum transparency of government information, a free press, ethical training in the public sector, and long-term political commitment, have succeeded in fostering an anti-corruption culture across various levels of governance.

Norway, relying on a strong welfare system, independent and professional institutions, and transparent government contracts, has managed to build a trustworthy and clean administrative structure. New Zealand, with effective oversight bodies, electronic public service systems, and rigorous media scrutiny, holds a top position in global transparency indices. Switzerland and the Netherlands have significantly limited the space for administrative corruption by combining traditional institutions with technological innovation, advanced legal frameworks, and a high level of civic culture. Likewise, Canada and Germany, by enacting comprehensive anti-corruption laws, developing whistleblowing systems, and ensuring the independence of the judiciary and administrative oversight institutions, have provided effective models of transparent and accountable governance.

A comparative study of successful countries shows that effective anti-corruption measures are not merely about criminalizing corrupt behaviors or judicially punishing offenders, but require reforming administrative structures, enhancing governmental efficiency, expanding public participation, and strengthening a culture of accountability across all levels of society. These countries' experiences also suggest that success in this field demands strong political will, broad social support, and continuity in anti-corruption policymaking.

Given that administrative corruption is a dynamic, adaptable, and resilient phenomenon resistant to superficial reforms, a precise and scientific analysis of successful global models in this area can lay a solid foundation for formulating localized, realistic, and sustainable strategies in other nations. Therefore, this study aims to examine the experiences of successful countries in controlling administrative corruption, analyze effective strategies, tools, infrastructures, and mechanisms, and attempt to present a comprehensive, scientific, and adaptable model for various administrative contexts.

Section One: Key Measures Implemented

Successful countries in combating administrative corruption have adopted multidimensional approaches, combining legal, institutional, technological, and cultural tools, while relying on sustained political will and public participation. These achievements are the result of a set of coordinated and targeted actions, which are detailed below:

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1. Establishing Independent and Specialized Oversight Institutions

Countries such as Denmark, Canada, and Finland have established independent oversight bodies, including audit courts, inspector general offices, and anti-corruption commissions, to ensure impartial and rigorous monitoring of public institutions. Key features of these bodies include structural and financial independence, prosecutorial authority, access to information, and mandatory accountability mechanisms.

2. Enacting and Implementing Comprehensive Anti-Corruption Legislation

These countries have passed extensive legislation criminalizing various forms of corruption such as bribery, embezzlement, abuse of power, conflicts of interest, money laundering, document forgery, and procurement fraud. Germany and the Netherlands, with well-defined legal frameworks, enable swift and uniform responses to violations. Their laws typically include criminal and administrative penalties, provisions for prosecuting high-ranking officials, and mechanisms for restitution.

3. Enhancing Institutional Transparency and Public Access to Information

The right of citizens to access public information is a cornerstone of anti-corruption efforts in countries such as Sweden, Finland, New Zealand, and Canada. Budget documents, public contracts, payment records, meeting minutes, and executive decisions are readily accessible. Access-to-information laws are not merely symbolic but serve as effective tools for public oversight.

4. Developing E-Government and Digitizing Administrative Processes

Minimizing direct contact between citizens and officials by digitizing procedures has proven one of the most effective anti-corruption strategies. Estonia, Finland, and New Zealand are pioneers in e-government. Services such as company registration, tax payments, licensing, and public contracting are handled electronically without human intervention, greatly reducing opportunities for abuse.

5. Legal and Practical Protection for Whistleblowers

Exposing corruption from within the system is only viable when whistleblowers feel legally, professionally, and personally secure. Successful countries have implemented specific protective laws, confidential reporting platforms, and bans on retaliation. Norway and Canada stand out in fostering a supportive culture for whistleblowers.

6. Creating Public Complaint and Reporting Systems

Simple, transparent, and traceable systems for filing complaints and reporting administrative violations play a crucial role in identifying corruption. Switzerland and the Netherlands have launched online portals, dedicated phone lines, mobile apps, and digital forms to facilitate direct, unmediated communication between the public and oversight bodies.

7. Developing and Enforcing Ethical Codes for Public Officials

Professional ethics codes include principles such as honesty, impartiality, accountability, respect for citizens' rights, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. These codes are mandatory in successful countries, with periodic training provided to civil servants. In Finland and Germany, violations of ethical codes, even absent criminal behavior, can result in dismissal.

8. Reforming Recruitment Systems and Promoting Meritocracy

Countries like Norway, Germany, and Sweden have implemented transparent, competitive, and multi-stage recruitment processes to prevent nepotism, discrimination, and political interference. Promotions are based on performance, expertise, and periodic evaluations.

9. Increasing Transparency in Public Procurement and Contracting

Public tenders are conducted transparently, electronically, and competitively. Every stage-from the call for bids to awarding and contract implementation-is publicly documented. In the Netherlands and Denmark, third-party monitoring and the public disclosure of results play a vital role in preventing corruption in this sector.

10. Judicial Independence and Efficiency in Handling Corruption Cases

An independent, specialized, and accountable judiciary is a key pillar of anti-corruption efforts. Germany, Switzerland, and Canada have created special anti-corruption courts or dedicated prosecution units to prevent political interference. Speed, accuracy, transparency, and impartiality in proceedings serve as strong deterrents.

11. Incorporating Anti-Corruption Education in Schools and Public Institutions

Many countries have embedded principles of honesty, accountability, civic responsibility, and anti-corruption in school and university curricula to instill these values in future generations. Periodic training for government officials is also implemented in countries like Canada and Switzerland.

12. Implementing Continuous Evaluation and Monitoring Systems for Administrative Integrity

Advanced internal monitoring systems and precise integrity indicators are used to track organizational health, identify corruption-prone areas, and issue timely warnings. Countries such as Finland and Sweden rely on strong internal management control systems.

13. Empowering Free Media and Civil Society Organizations

Free and independent media act as watchdogs, playing a vital role in exposing and tracking corruption. Denmark and New Zealand guarantee media freedom and non-interference, enabling open criticism and public oversight of government actions. Civil society organizations specializing in transparency provide complementary oversight functions.

14. Ensuring Equal and Firm Enforcement of Laws Without Discrimination

The most powerful message in the fight against corruption is the impartial and consistent enforcement of the law. Successful countries grant no immunity to senior officials-laws apply equally to all. This principle is strictly upheld in Switzerland, Finland, and Germany, bolstering public trust and deterrence.

Final Analysis of Anti-Corruption Measures in Successful Countries

The review of successful countries' experiences in combating administrative corruption-particularly developed nations such as Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Canada, New Zealand, and Estonia-demonstrates that fighting corruption is not merely a judicial or supervisory approach. Rather, it requires a multidimensional, systemic, and sustainable response encompassing all aspects of governance, administrative structure, political culture, and social participation.

What sets these countries apart is their smart combination of legal, institutional, technological, cultural, and managerial actions, designed and implemented in a coordinated and purposeful manner. Instead of focusing solely on punishment, these countries have aimed to build transparent, accountable, and preventive systems that control and suppress corruption from its inception.

From an analytical perspective, these actions can be categorized into several key dimensions:

1. Institutional Dimension: Strengthening the Independence, Expertise, and Operational Capacity of Oversight Bodies

The creation of independent and well-equipped oversight institutions is a foundational step in structurally controlling corruption. Countries like Denmark and Canada have ensured effective and politically unbiased supervision by granting broad legal authority, stable funding, and political independence to anti-corruption bodies. These institutions also play roles in producing transparent reports, issuing systematic warnings, and reforming public policy.

2. Legal Dimension: Comprehensive Criminalization, Removal of Immunity, and Impartial Law Enforcement

Through comprehensive anti-corruption laws, successful countries have built legal systems that clearly define, criminalize, and penalize all forms of corruption. Crucially, the consistent and impartial application of the law-with no exemptions for any official or institution-has reinforced public trust and served as a powerful deterrent against high-risk behavior.

3. Transparency Dimension: Information Disclosure, Public Access, and Institutional Accountability

Corruption thrives in opacity. Therefore, transparency is one of the most effective antidotes to corruption. Successful countries treat government information as a public right. Not only have they enacted freedom of information laws, but they have also provided the technical and cultural infrastructure to make transparency a practical reality. This openness has led to enhanced accountability, citizen engagement, and social control.

4. Technological Dimension: E-Government, Eliminating Human Interactions, and Process Transparency

Widespread implementation of electronic government services has improved efficiency and access while removing traditional channels

of corruption. Estonia, New Zealand, and Finland have integrated systems for registration, licensing, payments, and procurement-significantly reducing opportunities for administrative corruption.

5. Socio-Cultural Dimension: Promoting Administrative Ethics, Public Education, and Social Responsibility

Fighting corruption is not possible without reforming administrative and social culture. These countries have developed ethical codes, provided continuous training for staff, and institutionalized values of administrative integrity through media, education, and civil institutions. This cultural shift has had a long-term impact on reducing opportunistic behavior.

6. Public Participation Dimension: Whistleblower Protection, Free Media, and Civil Society Empowerment

Increasing social participation through legal protection for whistleblowers, strong press freedom, and active civil society organizations has been a cornerstone of successful strategies. Transparency and oversight cannot rest solely with the state-external actors play a crucial role in detecting, exposing, and containing corruption. In these countries, independent media function as effective unofficial oversight bodies.

7. Procedural Dimension: Reforming Recruitment, Procurement, and Ongoing Evaluation

Corruption-prone areas such as hiring, government purchasing, and resource allocation have been redesigned or minimized through structural reforms. Countries like Norway and Germany have implemented transparent hiring competitions, electronic procurement systems, and effective internal controls-successfully curbing corruption in early decision-making and execution stages.

> "What guarantees their effectiveness is a synergistic combination of structural, technological, cultural, and legal reforms within a framework of sustained political will and national ethical commitment."

Conclusion

Overall, the experience of successful countries demonstrates that there is no one-dimensional or short-term solution to corruption. What guarantees their effectiveness is a synergistic combination of structural, technological, cultural, and legal reforms within a framework of sustained political will and national ethical commitment.

Moreover, a preventive approach-rather than a purely punitive one-has been the key to the durability of their results. These countries have rightly understood that building systems resistant to corruption is more effective than fighting individual corrupt actors. This approach has enabled them not only to reduce corruption levels but also to achieve higher rankings in good governance, foreign investment, public trust, and sustainable development.

Although these successful models are shaped by specific cultural, political, and economic contexts, they can still inspire other nations seeking to reform their administrative systems, rebuild public trust, and enhance the integrity of governance. The following sections will analyze how such measures can be localized, the challenges of adaptation, and the requirements for successful implementation.

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International Practical Trainings

According to Article 60 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, which focuses on *technical assistance and training*, each State Party shall, to the extent necessary, initiate, develop, or improve specific training programs for personnel responsible for preventing and combating corruption. Given the importance of keeping colleagues, stakeholders, and researchers involved in anti-corruption efforts up to date with the latest global knowledge and scientific advancements, from this issue forward, we will introduce educational courses-preferably self-paced and freely accessible-offered by reputable international institutions specializing in anti-corruption.
In this edition, the featured training programs are selected from the Basel Institute on Governance.

1. Open Source Intelligence (OSINT): A Key Tool in Modern Investigations

Open source intelligence plays a critical role in contemporary investigations. This approach enables analysts to uncover hidden connections and gain valuable insights using publicly available sources.

The course introduced below equips participants with the skills and tools needed to effectively conduct open-source investigations, extract meaningful data, and develop actionable intelligence.

What You Will Learn in This Course

Enhance your skills and learn how to:

- Understand the basic concepts of open-source intelligence (OSINT) and the intelligence cycle.
- Set up a safe and effective investigative environment.
- Search the open web and deep web databases.
- Analyze domain records and identify website ownership.
- Retrieve past information using cached and archived web pages.
- Extract information from social media platforms.
- Analyze images through visual inspection and metadata.
- Investigate online communities, dark web pages, and cryptocurrency transactions.
- Structure OSINT findings into well-organized investigative reports.

Course Structure

- Self-paced learning: Learn at your own speed.
- Structured sessions: Each session builds on the previous one – recommended to start from Session 1.
- Recommended device: Laptop or desktop for optimal learning experience.

Who Should Take This Course?

- Financial investigators
- Intelligence analysts
- Journalists and researchers

Prerequisites

Familiarity with online research and data analysis is helpful, but no prior OSINT experience is required.

Course Duration
- 9 sessions
- Approximately 5 hours of effective learning

Registration and More Information:
https://learn.baselgovernance.org

2. Data Cleaning and Extraction

In financial investigations, messy data can slow down analysis and hide critical leads. This course teaches powerful techniques in Excel and data extraction to help you quickly transform data chaos into clarity and easily identify suspicious transactions.

What You Will Learn

Enhance your skills by learning to:
- Prepare financial documents for data analysis.
- Use Excel functions to fix formatting errors.
- Identify complementary sources of financial data.
- Use OCR software to digitize and extract data.
- Scrape data from websites for investigative purposes.

Course Structure
- Self-paced learning: Learners can plan at their own speed.
- Structured sessions: Designed sequentially – start from Session 1 for best results.

Who Should Take This Course?
- Financial auditors and intelligence analysts

Prerequisites

Basic familiarity with Excel is recommended.

If unfamiliar with financial data analysis, consider first taking the "Financial Analysis with Excel" course.

Course Duration
- 8 sessions
- Around 4 hours of effective learning

Language: English

Registration and More Information:
https://learn.baselgovernance.org

> "Messy data can slow down analysis and hide critical leads – powerful techniques in Excel and data extraction can transform chaos into clarity"

3. Preventing Fraud and Corruption in Public Procurement

This course is jointly developed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA).

Course Objective

The course "Preventing Fraud and Corruption in Public Procurement" is designed to promote clean procurement processes and raise awareness of fraud and corruption in public procurement. It provides a practical introduction to identifying procurement risks and strategies to mitigate them. The course is built on internationally recognized principles and UN initiatives.

Course Description
- This training is part of UNOPS's preventive efforts in collaboration with IACA to strengthen transparency in public procurement.
- The course focuses on the procurement process and how to reinforce it based on international standards.
- Real-world case studies from various countries are included to demonstrate the role of anti-corruption systems in improving procurement performance.
- The course is self-paced, allowing participants to learn flexibly.
- Materials include instructional videos and recommended reading resources.

Course Duration
- Self-paced and flexible
- For effective learning, it is recommended to study each section over 1–2 days
- Total estimated time: 6 hours or more

Final Assessment

Participants can measure their learning through a final test and identify areas for review.

Course Access
- Registration is open at any time.
- Access to course content is available for 30 days after registration.

Certificate of Completion

Upon successfully passing the final assessment, participants will receive a certificate of completion from the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA).

For More Information and Registration, please visit the IACA or UNOPS websites.

4. Doing Business with Integrity

This training course is organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in collaboration with the Siemens Integrity Initiative and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

Course Objective

In today's world-where trust and transparency are more important than ever-companies are under growing pressure to demonstrate ethical conduct at all levels. This course is designed to support businesses in building and institutionalizing a culture of integrity and fighting corruption.

Course Description

The course includes 9 interactive sessions, each based on real-life business scenarios.

The course provides practical tools to identify and manage corruption risks in business environments.

Scenario-based learning helps companies strengthen their ethical standards in realistic settings.

Topics Covered:
- Gifts and hospitality
- Conflict of interest
- Facilitation payments
- Third-party evaluations
- Social investments
- Bid-rigging
- Whistleblower protection

Who Should Take This Course?

This course is suitable for all companies, regardless of size or sector. It is recommended as a foundational training for employees and business partners.

Voices on the Importance of Integrity

Sanda Ojiambo, Assistant Secretary-General, UN Global Compact:

"People demand higher ethical standards from the business community more than ever."

Ghada Waly, Executive Director, UNODC:

"This tool is vital to fight the destructive effects of corruption that undermine competition, distort markets, and discourage investors."

Certificate of Completion

An official certificate is awarded upon successful completion of the course.

Course Details
- Type: Self-paced
- Duration: Over 60 minutes
- Level: Foundational
- Language: English
- Partners: UNODC, Siemens Integrity Initiative, NORAD

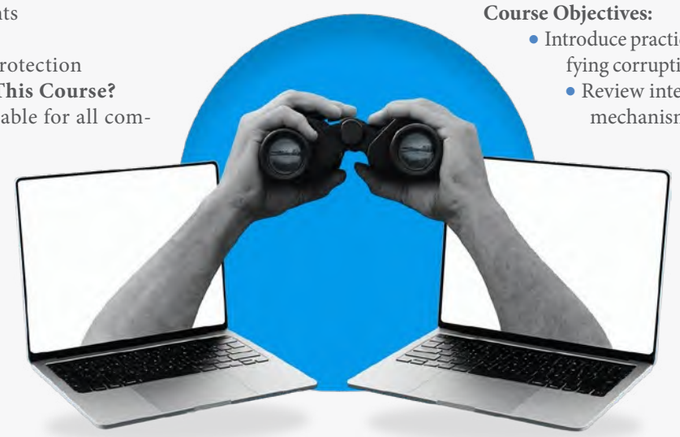
For more information, visit the UNODC website or the UN Global Compact.

5. Application of Corruption Risk Identification and Assessment Guidelines in the Audit Process

Course Introduction

The Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation has developed this training course focusing on the identification and assessment of corruption risks in the audit process. It is the first specialized course to address both the detection and evaluation of corruption risks and the assessment of corruption risk management systems in audited institutions.

This course is particularly useful for Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs), as well as regional audit and control organizations.



Course Objectives:
- Introduce practical methods for identifying corruption risks during audits.
- Review inter-agency cooperation mechanisms with oversight and judicial authorities.
- Train auditors to assess corruption risk management systems in audited entities.
- Integrate modern IT solutions into audit processes with an anti-corruption approach.

Course Content:

Lesson 1:

Importance of developing guidelines, international best practices, and the Accounts Chamber's cooperation with oversight bodies to identify corruption risks.

Lesson 2:

Core principles of the guidelines, their use in audits based on institutional mandates, and IT applications to improve risk identification.

Lesson 3:

General structure of the guidelines, key concepts, definitions, and basic tools used in corruption risk assessment.

Lesson 4:

The process of identifying and analyzing corruption risks during audits and evaluating links between identified violations and potential corruption.

Lesson 5:

Assessment of corruption risk management systems in audited bodies, introduction of a two-tier evaluation process, block diagrams of risk management systems, and structured

checklists for interviewing audit subjects.

Course Details:

- Total Duration: 30 minutes
- Number of Lessons: 5
- Number of Videos: 5
- Language: English
- Format: Video-based, self-paced learning

Target Audience:

Auditors, financial oversight experts, risk analysts, and internal inspection authorities. This course provides a practical framework for integrating anti-corruption perspectives into audit workflows.

More Information & Access:
https://u-intosai.org/courses

6. Corporate Liability for Corruption

A specialized course on corporate legal responsibility for corruption offenses, featuring examples from around 50 countries.

Course Description

In many countries, traditionally only natural persons were held criminally liable for corruption offenses such as bribery. This focus on individual liability stemmed from the personal nature of criminal intent under criminal law. However, the recognition of corporate liability in corruption-related crimes is now expanding worldwide.

This course, developed by the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), examines the rationale, legal models, and mechanisms for holding companies accountable for corruption offenses. It also presents practical examples from the laws of approximately 50 countries, offering key insights for drafting or reforming national anti-corruption legislation.

What You Will Learn:

- Key models of corporate liability for corruption
- Fundamental elements of corruption offenses (e.g., bribery, embezzlement, abuse of office)
- Types of penalties applicable to legal entities
- Essential components of an effective legal framework
- Analysis of pros and cons of alternative approaches in national laws
- Case studies from different countries for practical understanding

Who Should Take This Course?

This course is particularly useful for:

- Legislators and anti-corruption policy makers
- Legal advisors in the public and private sectors
- Compliance officers and internal auditors
- Researchers in economic and administrative criminal law

Course Format:

- Delivery: Self-paced
- Format: Text-based with diagrams, visuals, and interactive elements
- Main content: Conceptual slides with explanations

Estimated Time to Complete:

- Flexible schedule
- Recommended: 1–3 days per module
- Total: Approx. 24 to 30 hours of instruction

Assessment:

- Self-assessment quizzes after each section
- Final exam required to receive a Certificate of Completion

This is one of the most comprehensive trainings on corporate liability for corruption, supporting national decision-makers in designing modern, effective legal frameworks.

More Info and Enrollment:
https://u-intosai.org/courses

7. Virtual Seminar: Ombuds Work Agreements – Scoping from Intake to Impact

This practical and engaging seminar provides tools to help ombuds professionals clearly define, price, and deliver their services with confidence. The seminar "Ombuds Work Agreements: Scoping from Intake to Impact" introduces a real-world ombuds project example and teaches how to turn it into billable, actionable phases.

From reviewing documentation and leveraging tech collaborations to designing intake processes, branding, and client consulting, you'll develop a roadmap for delivering professional ombuds services.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will learn to:

- Translate ombuds skills into structured, contract-based services
- Effectively communicate the value of their services to leadership and decision-makers
- Manage project scope and build in flexibility
- Present compelling, professional proposals tailored to their expertise

Instructor:

Dr. Alicia J. Booker Cormier

- Founder & CEO, *Corporate Confidence*
- Chief Ombuds at Baylor College of Medicine
- Recognized expert in organizational conflict resolution
- 15+ years of experience launching ombuds programs at institutions such as Stanford Research Institute, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and University of Alabama at Birmingham
- Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution
- Former President of the International Ombuds Association (IOA)

Additional Details and Event Policies:

- Format: Online and interactive seminar (deeper learning than standard webinars)
- Language: English
- Subtitles: English enabled; translation available in Arabic, French, Spanish, German, and Persian (Farsi) upon participant support

More Info:
- https://ombuds-blog.blogspot.com/2025

Upcoming Events

The global nature of corruption and the interconnectedness of administrative systems make coordinated international efforts essential. These events serve as critical platforms for sharing best practices, harmonizing legal frameworks, and building capacity to combat corruption and enhance public trust worldwide.

The role of ombudsman institutions, as independent oversight bodies, is increasingly recognized as central to ensuring fairness and administrative accountability - and thus making a direct contribution to public sector integrity.

Effective anti-corruption strategies require a multi-stakeholder approach, engaging governments, civil society, academics, and the private sector. These international forums bring all these actors together to collectively advance the agenda of administrative integrity.

1. 11th Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)

- Dates: December 14–19, 2025 (Azar 23–28, 1404)
- Location: Sheraton Hotel, Doha, Qatar
- Organizers: UNODC and the Government of Qatar
- Civil Society Day: December 14, 2025

This is the premier global anti-corruption event under UNCAC, serving as the Convention's main decision-making body. Its mission is to assist States Parties in implementing the Convention and to guide policy development and coordination in anti-corruption efforts.

The event emphasizes a multi-stakeholder approach, highlighting the role of civil society, which will have a dedicated day of coordination and engagement. Side event applications are open until August 15, 2025.

Official website:
- https://uncaccoalition.org/cosp11

2. IACA Annual Conference 2025: Global Trends and Challenges in Anti-Corruption

- Date: November 13, 2025 (Aban 22, 1404)
- Organized by: International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA)
- IACA invites English-language academic papers on key themes, including:
  - Corruption and integrity in sports
  - Corruption in humanitarian aid
  - Asset recovery and management
  - Role of emerging technologies in anti-corruption

Top four papers will be presented at the 2025 Annual Conference.

Key Deadlines:

- Abstract submission: August 31, 2025 (Shahrivar 9)
- Acceptance notification: September 12, 2025 (Shahrivar 21)
- Paper presentation: November 13, 2025 (Aban 22)
- Final submission for publication: December 15, 2025 (Azar 24)

More info:
- https://www.iaca.int/

Call for papers PDF

3. Transparency International Australia: Anti-Corruption Summit 2025

- Date: August 21, 2025 (Mordad 30, 1404)
- Location: Sydney, Australia

Celebrating 30 years of leadership in integrity, this regional summit convenes policy makers, business leaders, civil society, journalists, and activists to confront urgent corruption challenges.

Key themes:

- Dirty money and financial crime
- Lobbying and political financing
- Whistleblower protection
- Geopolitics and investigations
- Civil society's role
- Transferring lessons across sectors

The summit focuses on sector-specific and regional issues, while addressing global implications - reinforcing the need for watchdog mechanisms and multi-level accountability.

Official website:
https://transparency.org.au/australian-anti-corruption-summit/

Global Transparency and Anti-Corruption Events – 2025

4. Global Transparency Forum 2025

- Host: Government of the Republic of Korea (Ministry of Environment)
- Official Website:
- https://climate-transparency-platform.org/events/global-transparency-forum-2025

Following the milestone of 2024-the submission of the first Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs)-this forum aims to further strengthen climate transparency and data-informed climate action. While BTRs and NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) are conceptually interconnected, in practice they often lack alignment. This forum will explore how to better synchronize these processes to ensure climate strategies are built on accurate data and aligned with national priorities.

The forum includes high-level participation from past and upcoming COP presidencies and serves as a platform for countries, climate experts, MDBs, GEF agencies, and development partners to:

- Share lessons learned from the first BTR submissions
- Strengthen peer-to-peer learning and cooperation
- Explore how transparency can support updated and ambitious NDCs
- Discuss transitioning from ad-hoc reporting to institutionalized systems
- Contribute to a policy brief and roadmap to guide improved transparency practices globally

5. 9th Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies

- Date: October 28, 2025
- Organized by: Basel Institute on Governance, in partnership with Europol & UNODC
- Official Website:
- https://baselgovernance.org

This high-level conference focuses on illicit financial flows, cryptocurrency misuse, money laundering, and asset recovery. It explores how emerging technologies are being exploited for criminal purposes and the need for specialized investigative expertise and enhanced international cooperation.

> "The emphasis on beneficial ownership transparency is a recurring and vital theme, highlighting its fundamental importance in combating illicit financial flows and asset recovery"

Key themes include:

- Digital assets and crypto-based financial crime
- Investigation and asset tracing in the digital era
- Multilateral cooperation to disrupt illicit financial networks

The event highlights the urgency of reinforcing cross-border mechanisms and regulatory frameworks in a rapidly evolving digital financial landscape.

6. 14th Expert Meeting to Enhance International Cooperation under the UNCAC

- Date: September 3–5, 2025
- Location: Vienna, Austria
- Organizer: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- Official Website:
- https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/EMIC/session14.html

This expert meeting supports Chapter IV of the UNCAC, focused on international cooperation including:

- Extradition and mutual legal assistance
- Law enforcement cooperation
- Asset recovery and beneficial ownership transparency
- Avoiding safe havens for proceeds of corruption

Discussions will explore innovative legal and policy alternatives to traditional enforcement methods and aim to foster ongoing capacity-building among UNCAC State Parties. These expert group meetings are central to the practical implementation and evolution of the Convention's provisions.

This meeting will be held from 12 to 14 Shahrivar 1404 (September 3 to 5, 2025) in Vienna, Austria. Although the specific objectives of this meeting have not been detailed, the general mandate of the expert meeting is to provide advice and assistance to the Conference on all aspects of international cooperation under Chapter IV of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. This includes issues such as asset extradition, mutual legal assistance, law enforcement cooperation, as well as facilitating the exchange of experiences and identifying capacity-building needs.

These working group sessions are essential for the continuous review and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Joint sessions represent an integrated and comprehensive approach to combating corruption, recognizing that issues such as asset recovery, beneficial ownership, and international cooperation are highly interrelated and cannot be effectively addressed in isolation. The focus on "alternatives to traditional enforcement" and "denial of safe havens for proceeds of corruption" reflects an evolving legal and policy landscape designed to address complex transnational corruption cases more effectively. The emphasis on beneficial ownership transparency is a recurring and vital theme, highlighting its fundamental importance in combating illicit financial flows and asset recovery.

More information: https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/EMIC/session14.html

7. Events and Training Opportunities of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA)

The International Ombudsman Association is the leading professional association dedicated to supporting organizational ombuds worldwide. The IOA offers a wide range of professional development and networking opportunities.

IOA Live Webinar

Engaging Visitors: The Vital Role of Ombuds Office Websites

About the Webinar

This webinar explores the results of an extensive study on ombuds websites in higher education institutions and provides a platform to discuss best practices in website design. Ombuds office websites are often the first point of contact for individuals seeking ombuds services; however, there has been limited information available about the type of content presented on these websites.

The session focuses particularly on how academic ombuds offices organize and present information on their websites, including:

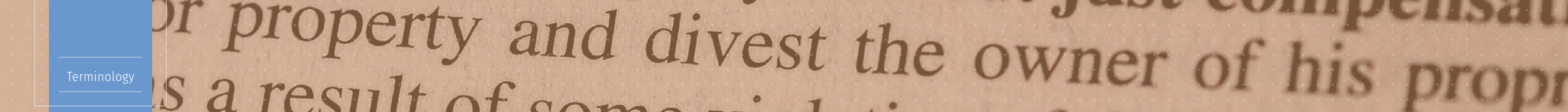
- The structure and organizational placement of the ombuds office;
- Number, names, and professional backgrounds of ombuds personnel;
- Target service groups (e.g., students, faculty, staff);
- Types of services provided (confidential consultation, facilitated dialogue, referrals, etc.);
- Clarification of what the ombuds does and does not do;
- Reference to the IOA's professional standards and Code of Ethics;
- Posting of the ombuds office charter;
- Access to annual reports;
- Resources such as institutional policies, tips, and guidance for managing interpersonal conflicts;
- Contact instructions for reaching the ombuds.

A review team composed of three experienced ombuds, one ombuds coordinator, and one conflict management specialist from three institutions evaluated 160 websites selected from approximately 500 ombuds offices in the U.S. and Canada. The above elements were used as primary criteria for identifying trends and best practices in website design and content.

Objectives:

By participating in this webinar, attendees will be able to:

- Describe the primary roles and functions of ombuds office websites in higher education.
- Apply best practices for organizing and presenting information on ombuds office websites.
- Identify opportunities for inter-institutional collaboration in sharing website content to save time and reduce costs.



Glossary of Corruption

The study of corruption and the methods to combat it have become increasingly complex over the past two decades, now involving technical intricacies and specialized terminology. Starting from this issue and within this section, with the aim of supporting interested colleagues and relevant professionals in understanding key concepts and their practical usage, specialized terms and expressions related to corruption are presented. These are selected from reputable sources, including the 2024 Corruption Glossary, the Anti-Corruption Resource Centre Glossary, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and the book English for Anti-Corruption, Administrative Integrity, and Ombudspersons.
Additionally, where applicable, equivalent concepts and definitions from domestic laws are also presented in a comparative format. It is worth noting that in dynamic and evolving fields, concepts constantly change, applications develop, and new ideas require new terminology-something that can only be achieved by drawing upon reliable and first-hand sources.

Code of Conduct

A *Code of Conduct* is a set of rules or guidelines, often based on ethical principles, applied to individuals working within a business, government agency, or third-sector institution (such as NGOs). Codes of conduct define the ethical framework within which employees are expected to operate.

For this reason, codes of conduct are considered one of the key elements of anti-corruption efforts in many organizations. One mechanism for monitoring the implementation of a code of conduct is an ethics committee.

Multiple definitions of codes of conduct have been provided by international and academic institutions, each emphasizing different aspects of the concept:

General Definition:

Generally, a code of conduct is a set of rules and guidelines designed to define acceptable behaviors for members of a group, organization, or profession. This framework helps guide the actions and decisions of employees within an organization or profession, ensuring that they act ethically, responsibly, and in line with the organization's values and

goals. This definition emphasizes the practical and guiding aspects of codes of conduct.

Definition by Transparency International:

According to Transparency International, a code of conduct is "a statement of principles and values that sets out expected standards of behavior for an organization, public institution, company, affiliate, or individual, including minimum levels of compliance and disciplinary measures." This definition emphasizes compliance and the consequences of violations, as breaching these codes often leads to disciplinary or legal action.

Definition from the Oxford Dictionary of Law:

A code of conduct is a set of rules for practical guidance or establishes professional standards of behavior, but it does not have legal enforceability. For example, a driving code. Under the Fair Trading Act of 1973, the Director General of Fair Trading is tasked with encouraging trade associations to draft and distribute codes of conduct among their members to provide guidance in protecting and promoting the interests of UK consumers. Several such codes have been approved by the Director General. Codes of conduct have also been published by the Health and Safety Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, and the Department for Work and Pensions, offering guidance to employers, employees, and their representatives on fulfilling their legal obligations in the relevant areas.

Codes of conduct under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 regulate the searching and interrogation of suspects by police. In general, failure to comply with a code of conduct does not, by itself, lead to criminal prosecution or civil liability. However, it may be used as evidence that an individual did not meet the relevant legal requirements.

Distinction Between "Code of Conduct" and "Code of Ethics"

Although the terms *"Code of Conduct"* and *"Code of Ethics"* are often used interchangeably, there is a critical distinction between them that is essential for a precise understanding of anti-corruption tools.

Code of Ethics:

This document is an aspirational statement that expresses the core ethical values, principles, and ideals of an organization. A code of ethics is a broad and general policy text that focuses on values and helps members discern right from wrong. It may contain general guidelines to support judgment and decision-making and serves as a foundation for conduct rules. Its purpose is to guide members of the organization to act honestly and with integrity.

For example, the World Bank Group defines its *Code of Ethics* as guidance on its "core values" and "norms and behaviors we expect from ourselves and each other."

This code focuses on the "why" and the "what"-that is, the reasons behind behaviors and overarching principles.

Code of Conduct:

In contrast, a *Code of Conduct* is a directive document that outlines specific procedures and behaviors that must be followed or avoided. This document is focused and specific, emphasizing rules and compliance. A code of conduct is a set of rules that governs actions and defines accountability for adherence and the consequences of violations.

Breaching this code can lead to termination or dismissal from the organization. In other words, the code of conduct outlines the "how"-how to do things and what practical behaviors are expected.

Understanding this distinction is particularly important for a specialized dictionary in the field of administrative corruption. Administrative corruption can stem both from violations of clearly defined behavioral rules (as outlined in a *code of conduct*) and from weaknesses in ethical values and principles (as articulated in a *code of ethics*). Therefore, understanding both concepts and their relationship helps the user of the dictionary to better categorize various anti-corruption tools and address both the deeper roots and the practical manifestations of corruption.

Sample Sentences:

- -Employees must follow the organization's code of conduct
- -A strong code of conduct helps prevent unethical behavior
- - Violations of the code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action

Commit

Meaning: To carry out or perpetrate an act, especially one that is wrong or criminal.

Sample Sentences:

- -He was arrested for committing fraud
- -Anyone who commits bribery should face legal consequences
- -The official committed a serious offence by misusing public funds

Competent

Having the necessary knowledge or ability to do something correctly and effectively.

- Competent Authority

Competent Authority means an official body or person that has the legal power and responsibility to take decisions, enforce laws, or perform specific duties under a law or regulation.

In practice, it refers to the organization or authority that is formally designated by law to handle a certain matter.

Examples:

- In customs law, the "competent authority" is the customs office legally empowered to inspect and clear goods.
- In environmental law, it may be the ministry or agency authorized to issue permits or enforce regulations.
- In criminal law, it could be the court or prosecutor that has the legal jurisdiction over a case.

Confiscation

The process of legally seizing and appropriating property or assets by the state or competent authorities, usually as a consequence of committing a crime or offense. Confiscation is often used in contexts such as corruption, money laundering, organized crime, or tax violations, and may include assets directly obtained from crime or used to commit it.

Sample sentences:

- The court ordered the confiscation of all assets gained through money laundering.
- Confiscation of property is a common penalty for large-scale corruption cases.
- The authorities initiated confiscation procedures against the company for tax evasion.

Conflict of Interest

A misalignment between the interests of individuals who hold power and responsibility and the interests of the persons or groups on whose behalf they perform their duties. The fact that individuals have diverse interests, which may clash with one another, is a fundamental concept in theories related to corruption. Conflict of interest is used to describe situations where individuals or institutions possess interests that are incompatible with fulfilling their assigned duties or with the proper use of entrusted power. The term is most commonly applied to describe the tension between private interests and the public interest.

Sample sentences:

- The minister resigned after allegations of a conflict of interest in awarding government contracts.
- Conflict of interest policies are essential for maintaining integrity in public service.
- The board member recused himself from voting due to a potential conflict of interest.

Conviction

The formal judgment of a court declaring that an individual has committed a crime and is found guilty. A conviction usually follows a trial and the presentation of evidence, and it may result in penalties such as fines, imprisonment, or confiscation of assets.

Sample sentences:

- The conviction was based on strong forensic evidence presented during the trial.
- After his conviction for fraud, he was sentenced to five years in prison.
- A criminal conviction can have long-term consequences on a person's career and reputation.

Corruption

The abuse of entrusted power for personal gain that harms the public interest, usually accompanied by violations of laws, regulations, and/or standards of administrative integrity and ethics. This definition is derived from Joseph Nye's 1967 formulation, popularized by Transparency International in the 1990s, and later developed by the Centre for the Study of Corruption at the University of Sussex. It represents an approach that integrates perspectives based on public office and public interest.

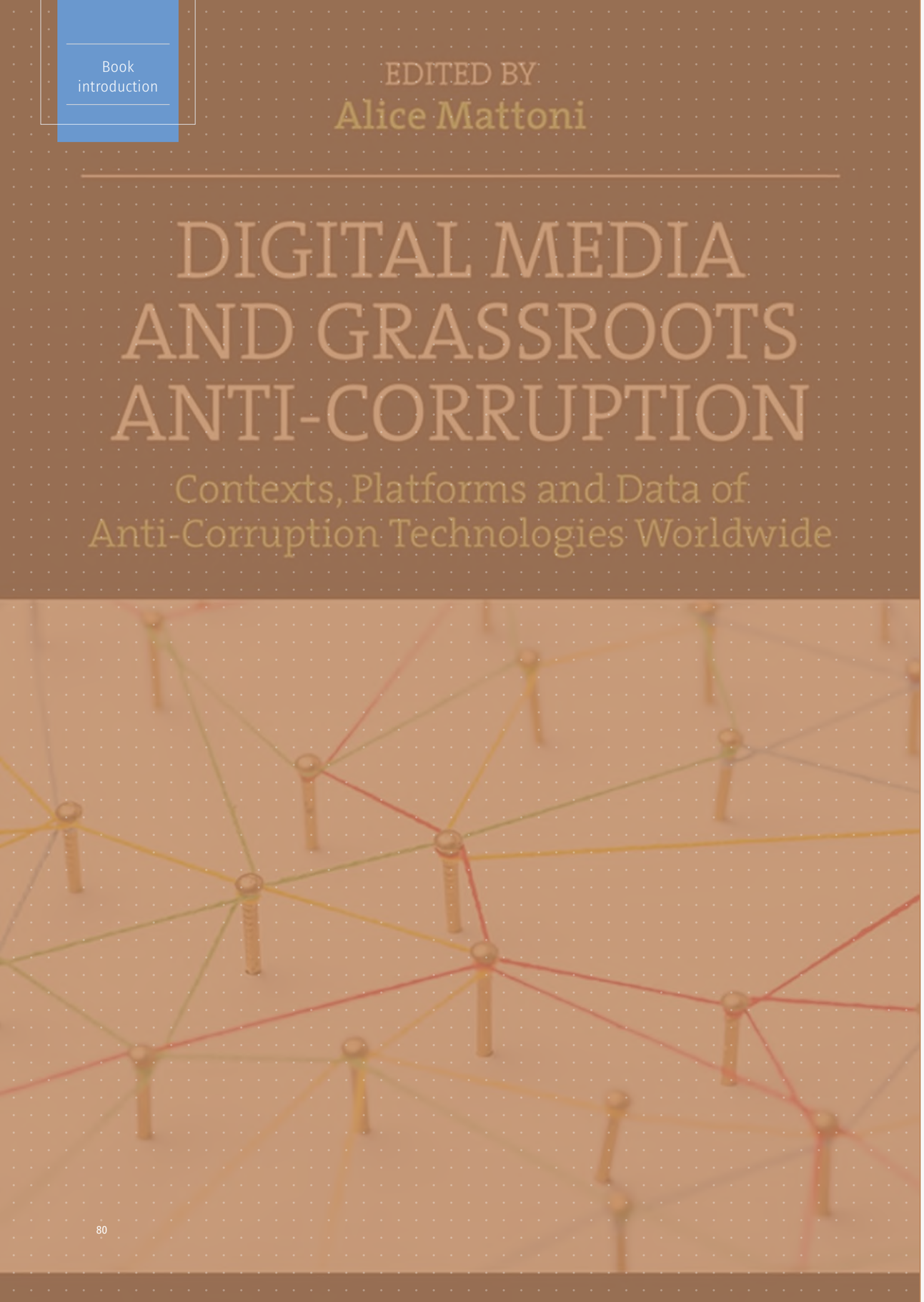
"Entrusted power" refers to authority granted within a trusted role-in government positions, the private sector, or non-profit organizations-where an individual or entity holds decision-making power over others. Abuse of this power typically undermines the public interest.

"Abuse" refers to the breach of duties or misuse of entrusted power, which may occur through acts or omissions. Abuse does not necessarily have to be illegal to constitute corruption; it may also involve violations of regulations or standards of administrative integrity, and may include a series of actions or behavioral patterns amounting to collective abuse.

"Personal gain" covers both financial and non-financial benefits accruing to the individual or their associates, as well as factional or group interests that benefit specific persons or entities. Such gain may also involve the avoidance of loss or the satisfaction derived from harming others.

Sample sentences:

- Widespread corruption in public procurement has eroded citizens' trust in government institutions.
- The anti-corruption agency launched an investigation into allegations of bribery and abuse of office.
- Corruption often thrives where transparency and accountability mechanisms are weak.



Digital Media and Technologies in Grassroots Anti-Corruption

- Author: Alice Mattoni
- Publication year: 2024
- Publisher: Edward Elgar

Corruption, as a social problem, manifests in different forms across the world and presents multiple challenges for combating it, even at the grassroots level. Activists, civil society organizations, and citizens fight corruption in various ways. There are examples where digital media, especially social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, have played a crucial role in sparking and expanding protest movements over the past decade; for instance, the large-scale anti-corruption movement in India in 2011, the wave of protests in Brazil in 2013, and the anti-corruption demonstrations of young protesters against political elites in Romania in 2016.

The chapters of this book focus on why and how anti-corruption activists decide to design, expand, and deploy different types of digital and technological media to assist them in their struggle against corruption.

This book is the first systematic attempt to address key questions explored by the authors through examining various case studies worldwide. In addition to offering valuable insights into how digital media and technologies are used in grassroots anti-corruption efforts, it discusses the opportunities and challenges these tools create for activists and anti-corruption organizations. The book also contributes to a broader discussion on the role of digital media and technologies in anti-corruption, the involvement of political actors, and their anti-corruption actions.

The book begins with a general framework in the first section, laying the foundation for case studies that follow. The second section starts with a brief review of existing research on corruption and examines to what extent these studies have considered the role of digital media and technologies in grassroots anti-corruption. This section also explains why digital media and technologies should be seen beyond a purely instrumental perspective and raises the question of why anti-corruption activists and civil society organizations use these tools. To foster this shift in perspective, the concept of "Anti-Corruption Technologies" (ACTs) is introduced as an exploratory approach that emphasizes aspects beyond the functional goals of anti-corruption actors. Each of these aspects is then examined in depth to provide a comprehensive picture of the diversity of practical examples of anti-corruption technologies.

The following section explains that although anti-corruption efforts and the use of digital media and technologies have global dimensions, ACTs acquire unique characteristics due to the specific conditions and contexts in which they emerge. These characteristics result from a combination of factors such as access to material resources, the presence of particular symbols, and the participation of specific social groups. This section also presents a classification of ACTs that reviews the general objectives of using digital media and technologies in anti-corruption struggles and analyzes them from material, symbolic, and social perspectives.

In conclusion, the book highlights its main contribution: a collection of empirically based chapters that examine the role of digital media and technologies in anti-corruption struggles across different countries and from multiple perspectives.

It is worth noting that the book employs the term "digital media" in a broad sense, encompassing a wide range of digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, social media platforms, whistleblowing platforms, open data portals, AI-driven chatbots, and video conferencing applications.

The shadow of corruption and conflict of interest in the world's largest stock market

* By: Hadi Moradi Nik[1]

Part One: Introduction1

In 2008, the global economy was hit by one of the deepest and most complex crises in modern history. Although the crisis originated in the U.S. housing market, it rapidly spread through financial and banking systems and even impacted the real sectors of economies worldwide. Prior to this crisis, Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs) were regarded as "neutral arbiters" of debt markets (such as bonds). However, in reality, these institutions were plagued by deep structural weaknesses, systemic conflicts of interest, and widespread administrative corruption. The conflict of interest arising from their financial relationships with bond issuers, disregard for professional standards, and intense competitive pressures led credit ratings to become tools for deceiving investors.

This article first examines the nature and impacts of the 2008 crisis, then explores the role of corruption in the performance of credit rating agencies.

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It analyzes the structure and responsibilities of these institutions, explains the legal reform introduced through the Dodd-Frank Act, discusses the challenges of effectively implementing these legal reforms, and finally provides recommendations for preventing similar future crises and improving the quality of anti-corruption efforts in financial markets and institutions.

Section Two: The 2008 Financial Crisis and Its Impact on the U.S. Economy

The 2008 financial crisis, often referred to as the subprime mortgage crisis, had its roots in the issuance of home loans to low-income individuals with weak credit histories. Beginning in the mid-2000s, under competitive pressure and the illusion of quick profits, U.S. banks began widely issuing subprime loans. These loans were structured with variable interest rates and initially appeared easy to repay, but once interest rates rose, monthly installments became unaffordable for many borrowers.

To conceal the core issue, banks bundled these loans into mixed packages of various types of securities-such as mortgage-backed securities (MBS) and collateralized debt obligations (CDOs)-and sold them to investors worldwide. Each debt-backed package typically contained several tranches, which, depending on the proportion of conservative versus risky assets, were rated from "AAA" to "D." A "AAA" rating was considered the safest and least risky option, while lower ratings indicated higher risk. However, structural corruption and conflicts of interest within credit rating agencies led to situations where the highly rated "AAA" tranches were, in fact, mixtures of both high- and low-risk loans. These agencies had assigned high ratings to these securities, creating the illusion of safety for investors when, in reality, they were not-ratings were artificially and strategically engineered.

This multifaceted corruption stemmed from several key factors:

1) Revenue Model: Credit rating agencies were paid by the very banks or financial institutions whose securities they were rating (issuer-paid model), creating a fundamental conflict of interest.

2) Competitive Pressure and Client Attraction: Banks and financial firms had the freedom to choose any rating agency they preferred. As a result, rating agencies, in pursuit of securing more business and income, were incentivized to appease their clients by assigning overly favorable credit ratings.

3) Weak Oversight and Lack of Transparency: Prior to the crisis, there were few strong and independent regulators monitoring the performance of credit rating agencies. Disclosure of rating methodologies and assumptions was minimal and often superficial.

When borrowers failed to repay their loans, the entire system collapsed. As a result:

- Major banks like Lehman Brothers went bankrupt;
- Stock markets crashed;
- Interbank credit froze, and many companies were unable to pay their employees;
- Over 8 million jobs were lost in the United States;
- The U.S. unemployment rate exceeded 10%;
- Millions of families lost their homes;
- And the U.S. government was forced to implement bailout packages worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

What initially appeared to be a financial crisis quickly turned into an economic and then a social crisis, severely damaging public trust in financial institutions and governments.

Section Three: The Role and Nature of Corruption in Credit Rating Agencies and Its Impact on the Crisis

In theory, credit rating agencies are supposed to function as the impartial eyes and ears of the debt market. They are responsible for collecting and analyzing both financial and non-financial information from bond issuers, assessing the likelihood of default or delay in repayment of principal and interest, and ultimately assigning a "credit score" to each financial asset-for example, AAA indicating very low risk, and C or D indicating very high risk or even default. These scores serve as the basis for decisions made by investors, regulators, and even central banks regarding resource allocation and risk assessment.

Given the monopoly power of these agencies-especially Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch, which control about 95% of the global market-even governments rely on their evaluations. But why did such a colossal error occur? The answer lies in the internal structure of these agencies. Their business model was not neutral but inherently conflicted with the public interest. These institutions were paid by the very entities they were supposed to evaluate.

Evidence of corruption, documented in reports from various authorities and commissions as well as numerous academic studies, clearly shows that in some cases, analysts at these agencies deliberately downplayed hidden risks or manipulated stress-testing models in order to maintain AAA ratings.

- There were secret agreements between banks and rating agencies to set fee rates based on the volume of securities sold and the rating assigned.
- Some former employees of these agencies revealed that managerial pressure to please clients sometimes forced them to violate professional standards.

Eventually, when borrowers defaulted on their loans and the value of these securities plummeted, it became clear that the high ratings issued by these agencies did not reflect the actual risk. Many investors suffered heavy losses, and public trust in these agencies was severely undermined.

Section Four: What Is the Dodd-Frank Act and What Impact Did It Have on Rating Agencies?

The Dodd-Frank Act was passed in 2010 in response to the 2008 financial crisis and its devastating effects on the U.S. and global economy. Its main goal was to reform the financial system, prevent similar crises in the future, and protect consumers and investors. The law spanned more than 2,300 pages and addressed many sectors of the financial market. One of its key sections was the regulation specifically aimed at reforming the structure of credit rating agencies. The most important changes introduced by these regulations are:

1. **Reduced Legal Immunity**: Credit ratings are no longer considered absolute "expert opinions," and legal action can now be taken for damages caused by negligence.
2. **Establishment of the Office of Credit Ratings within the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC):** This office is responsible for inspecting the quality of processes, disclosing conflicts of interest, and conducting periodic assessments of the agencies' activities.
3. **Mandatory Disclosure of Rating Methodologies**: Agencies are required not only to disclose their methodologies but also to publish stress scenarios, sensitivity tables, and key assumptions.
4. **Revenue Structure Reform**: The SEC was tasked with proposing solutions to reduce conflicts of interest, including the potential development of alternative payment models or guaranteed funds.
5. **Improved Transparency and Quarterly Reporting**: Rating agencies were obligated to submit performance reports and disclose all conflicts of interest in their dealings with issuers.

Section Five: Challenges and Concerns in Implementing the Dodd-Frank Act

The implementation of the Dodd-Frank Act faced several problems. First, the rating agencies threatened that if legal liability were imposed on them, they would no longer be willing to rate certain securities. In practice, this threat led to parts of the law being suspended to avoid disrupting the securities market. Second, the complexity of the law and its detailed provisions caused delays in the implementation of some regulations-some were postponed for years or never enforced at all. Third, some analysts believe that despite its breadth, the law failed to address the root problem: the revenue model of the rating agencies. As long as these agencies are paid by the same companies they are supposed to evaluate and rate, the conflict of interest persists. These issues, alongside lobbying by banks and a lack of financial and human resources at the Securities and Exchange Commission, have left parts of the problem unresolved.

All these challenges show that legal reforms can only be effective when accompanied by a redefinition of incentive mechanisms, strengthened oversight institutions, and the creation of a culture of transparency and internal accountability.

Section Six: Policy Recommendations for Other Countries

Based on the U.S. experience, countries that already have credit rating agencies-or plan to establish such systems-can benefit from the following measures to reduce structural corruption and more effectively address conflicts of interest:

- Establishing non-profit or public credit rating agencies to provide more independent assessments;
- Prohibiting the "issuer-pays" revenue model and replacing it with alternatives such as payments from stock exchanges, guarantee funds, or investors;
- Encouraging competition and the establishment of multiple rating agencies to avoid monopolies;
- Enhancing transparency by requiring public disclosure of data, methodologies, and rating histories;
- Providing public education to raise investor awareness of the limitations of ratings;
- Imposing legal and ethical accountability on credit rating agencies;
- Promoting international cooperation and regulatory harmonization (aligning domestic rules with international standards, multilateral supervisory agreements, etc.).

Section Seven: Conclusion

During the 2008 financial crisis, credit rating agencies, instead of serving as market watchdogs, became one of the aggravating factors. Structural conflicts of interest, dependency on major clients, and lack of adequate oversight led to the issuance of ratings that did not reflect reality. The Dodd-Frank Act was a significant attempt to reform this system; however, practical experience revealed that meaningful change requires deeper reforms, simplified structures, and, especially, well-designed incentives for rating agencies.

If financial markets are to become more resilient to future crises, these agencies must be transparent, independent, and accountable. Other countries can draw inspiration from the U.S. experience and adopt a comprehensive approach-combining regulatory reform, improved incentive structures, enhanced supervisory capacity, and public education-to build a framework where combating corruption and protecting public and small investor interests take precedence over the conflicting interests of powerful stakeholders.

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Ombudsmans, Guarantors of Justice and Transparency

Introduction

❖ The Ombudsman institution, as an independent, impartial, and non-adversarial body, plays a vital role in the architecture of modern governance. Its primary function is to investigate citizens' complaints against administrative bodies, thereby ensuring justice and fairness, promoting accountability, and reinforcing the rule of law. Over time, this institution has evolved and become a global model, recognized and adopted across various legal and political systems worldwide. This global expansion reflects the adaptability and universal appeal of the Ombudsman institution in addressing the shared human need for administrative justice. The Ombudsman acts as an essential bridge between citizens and the state, providing a vital non-judicial mechanism for redress that effectively contributes to administrative justice.

This institution directly participates in protecting the individual rights of citizens. It achieves this by rigorously addressing cases of mismanagement, preventing abuse of power, and reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies that often disrupt citizens' well-being. Beyond that, the Ombudsman plays a pivotal role in actively promoting good governance. This includes advancing transparency, fostering ethical behavior, and ensuring that public institutions are accountable to the needs and concerns of citizens. Ultimately, the Ombudsman's function as a vital accountability mechanism-emphasizing its ability to hold officials and public bodies accountable for their actions and decisions-helps strengthen public trust. In fulfilling this role, the institution indirectly but significantly enhances the overall quality of governance in a country and thereby its international standing.

The existence of a strong and independent Ombudsman reflects a nation's deep commitment to the rule of law, human rights, and transparent governance. In turn, this commitment becomes part of a country's "soft power"-the ability to influence others through appeal rather than coercion. Countries with robust Ombudsman systems are often seen as more stable and trustworthy, which can attract foreign investment, enhance diplomatic relations by demonstrating adherence to global governance norms,

Tehran Declaration; a significant step toward strengthening and developing Ombudsman institutions of Islamic countries

and reinforce internal stability by providing a legitimate and peaceful channel for addressing citizens' grievances-potentially preventing social unrest. Thus, the Ombudsman, beyond its immediate administrative duties, becomes a strategic asset in both international engagement and domestic cohesion.

The Fourth General Assembly of Ombudsmen from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Member States, held on May 13–14, 2025 (23–24 Ordibehesht 1404), in Tehran, marked a significant milestone in the collective commitment to just governance and Islamic unity. The main theme of the assembly-"Inclusive Accountability, Just Governance, Unity of the Islamic Ummah"-clearly articulated its core objectives: promoting transparency, strengthening fairness, and fostering unity within the broader Islamic community. The assembly served as a renewed declaration of steadfast commitment to the defense and promotion of human rights, the administration of justice, and the advancement of social peace.

The final statement of the assembly begins by referencing the Quranic verse:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice" (Surah An-Nisa, 4:58).

This verse provides a strong divine and ethical foundation for the role of the Ombudsman in Islamic societies, tying its mission to deep-rooted Islamic values. The consensus among participants on "the unity of the Islamic Ummah" as a strategic principle reflects the collective spirit and shared vision that guides this declaration. This principle is presented as "a guarantee for strengthening cooperation and solidarity among Islamic countries in facing common challenges."

At the same time, the strengthening of domestic governance mechanisms, such as the Ombudsman, is not merely an internal administrative matter; it has direct and profound implications for a country's credibility, standing, and legitimacy on the international stage.

UN General Assembly Resolution 177/79, dated December 17, 2024 (27 Azar 1403), described in the statement as "a historic step" in affirming the importance of Ombudsman and mediation institutions in promoting and protecting human rights, good governance, and the rule of law, serves as external validation. This, in turn, reinforces the domestic mission and elevates the status of these institutions within OIC member states. This approach signals a strategic necessity for OIC members to align their governance practices with international human rights and rule of law standards. Such alignment serves not only the internal interests of society but also strengthens their collective voice, influence, and credibility in global forums-particularly in addressing complex shared challenges such as human rights issues.

This means that strong, transparent, and accountable domestic institutions are the fundamental platforms on which effective diplomacy and international cooperation must be built.

The ultimate success and impact of the declaration fundamentally depend on the active participation, unwavering commitment, and diligent efforts of member countries. On this basis, a permanent section titled "Ombudsman" will be dedicated in the *Journal of Nations' Experiences* to facilitate the dissemination of information and the exchange of Ombudsman-related knowledge and experiences. This section will also highlight innovative achievements and successful models-especially those from Islamic countries.

❖ *Final declaration of the 4th General Assembly of Ombudsmen of the OIC Member States*

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people, to judge with justice." (Surah An-Nisa, 4:58)

The convening of the 4th General Assembly of Ombudsmen of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Member States in Tehran reaffirms the firm commitment to defending and promoting human rights, ensuring justice, and strengthening social peace.

The General Assembly of Ombudsmen of the OIC Member States, after the exchange of views and constructive discussions regarding the role of Ombudsman institutions in strengthening governance and justice, which took place on May 13 and 14, 2025, in Tehran, emphasizes the following points to enhance their performance:

Member states affirm the importance of the theme of the summit: "Inclusive Accountability, Just Governance; Unity of the Islamic Ummah."

The members emphasize the unity of the Islamic Ummah as a strategic principle and consider it a guarantee for strengthening cooperation and solidarity among Islamic countries in the face of common challenges.

Participants acknowledge that exchanging experiences and knowledge among Ombudsman institutions at the international level can lead to improved efficiency of these institutions. Accordingly, the members agree to share best practices through holding joint training workshops, exchanging specialized personnel, and forming technical working groups.

In this regard, the "General Assembly of Ombudsmen of the OIC Member States" plans to establish purposeful relations with the "International Ombudsman Institute (IOI)," which includes some OIC countries, with the aim of utilizing the aforementioned capacities. These include organizing specific training programs for member institutions, focusing on their particular concerns, and empowering members, especially in the two areas of anti-corruption activities and promoting citizens' rights across various fields.

The Assembly welcomes the commendable action of the United Nations in recognizing the role of Ombudsman institutions. Participants consider the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution No. 177/79 dated December 17, 2024, a historic step in affirming the importance of Ombudsman and mediation institutions in promoting and protecting human rights, good governance, and the rule of law. Members, while emphasizing the recommendations of the mentioned resolution, declare their readiness to enhance interaction with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and commit to making effective efforts toward implementing the resolution by regularly exchanging information and experiences with

each other and with global forums.

The General Assembly emphasizes the necessity of expanding transnational cooperation among Ombudsman institutions of the OIC Member States. This cooperation, especially on common issues and challenges faced by Islamic countries, can be very useful and impactful.

The General Assembly commits to using all its diplomatic, legal, media, and Ombudsman capacities to defend the rights of the people of Gaza and Lebanon and to pursue justice against Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister, and Yoav Gallant, former Defense Minister of the Zionist regime, for committing international crimes including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Accordingly, participants, while condemning the crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza and Lebanon and expressing deep regret over the killing of innocent civilians and gross violations of human rights in these areas, emphasize the necessity of taking necessary measures to establish a high-level Ombudsman body under the Assembly with the capacity to pursue and secure citizens' rights.

The 4th General Assembly of Ombudsmen of the OIC Member States, with the goal of continuing cooperation and achieving the outlined objectives, adopts the following practical proposals and recommendations:

Strengthening regional and international cooperation among Ombudsman institutions by forming a high-level Ombudsman body in Islamic countries to create synergy on shared issues.

Focusing on preventive actions, such as conducting inspections and audits, emphasizing recurring issues from the citizens' perspective, and paying attention to public education.

Establishing a mechanism for continuous interaction among Ombudsman institutions of Islamic countries. This mechanism may include the creation of an academy with a specialized approach in the fields of administrative integrity and human rights, holding periodic meetings at specified intervals, and forming specialized working groups on shared topics to exchange information, scientific documentation, and experiences.

Developing an index for evaluating the quality of complaint handling, monitoring the status of public complaints, and assessing the performance of Ombudsman institutions in Islamic countries and publishing annual results within the framework of launching a "Joint System for Registering and Analyzing Public Complaints of OIC Ombudsman Institutions" aimed at collecting, analyzing, and improving public complaint handling in Islamic countries. Additionally, establishing an "Islamic Ombudsman Award for Best Performance in Public Complaint Handling," based on defined evaluation indicators to set models and create a competitive environment for improving standards.

Utilizing modern technologies, especially artificial intelligence, to increase access and efficiency of Ombudsman services and ensure inclusive accountability for citizens. Reports of successful initiatives in member countries should be compiled and shared with other members through the Assembly Secretariat so that everyone can benefit from each other's successful experiences.

Many of the current practical actions are derived from previous guidance and complement earlier agreements. Therefore, the Secretariat and the Executive Board are requested to prepare a report on the status of implementation of previous resolutions and present recommendations for improving cooperation at the next Assembly.

Finally, with trust in Almighty God and through the sincere cooperation of the members, the time and location of the 5th General Assembly of Ombudsmen of the OIC Member States will be announced subsequently by the Secretariat and the Executive Board.

United Nations

UN General Assembly Resolution 79/177:

Strengthening the Role of Ombudsman and Mediator Institutions

❖ Resolution 177/79, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 17, 2024, is a pivotal document that emphasizes "the role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance, and the rule of law." This resolution, as a powerful statement, highlights the essential place of these institutions within the structure of democratic and accountable governance worldwide. Its adoption reflects the General Assembly's renewed commitment to the foundational goals and principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This emphasis firmly roots the resolution within the framework of international law and universal values.

This document not only addresses the current importance of Ombudsman and mediation institutions, but also, by recalling previous General Assembly resolutions on the same subject - including Resolutions 65/207 (2010) to 77/224 (2022) - demonstrates a historical continuity in international attention to these institutions. The current trajectory reflects the international community's growing recognition of the increasing importance of these bodies. This ongoing process underscores the fact that governance and human rights challenges are persistent and require continuous institutional solutions. This background enhances the credibility and weight of the current resolution and provides a strong justification for greater investment in and support of these institutions by Member States.

The main objective of this resolution is to strengthen the vital role of Ombudsman and mediation institutions in promoting human rights, good governance, and the rule of law. This includes encouraging the establishment, enhancement, and support of the independence and effectiveness of these institutions at the national level, and, where appropriate, at regional or local levels.

The resolution seeks to enable these institutions to address the power imbalance between individuals and public service providers and to assist in the resolution of national complaints. This approach reflects the resolution's practical and citizen-centered focus, aiming to create mechanisms for fair and easy access to public services and the protection of citizens' rights. In addition, the resolution emphasizes the participation of ombudsman institutions in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 16. Goal 16 focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies with access to justice for all and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Integrating the role of ombudsman institutions into the achievement of this goal goes beyond a purely human rights function. It means that the work of these institutions not only contributes to justice and good governance but also directly impacts sustainable development and social stability. This marks a paradigm shift-elevating ombudsman institutions from mere complaint-handling bodies to key actors in national and international development, thereby reinforcing their strategic importance on the global agenda.

In view of the importance of the aforementioned resolution, its full text is provided below:

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2024 on the report of the Third Committee (A/79/458/Add.2, para. 99)] 79/177.

The role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law

The General Assembly,

- Reaffirming its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1
- Recalling the Vienna Declaration

and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, 2 in which the Conference reaffirmed the important and constructive role played by national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

- Reaffirming its resolutions 65/207 of 21 December 2010, 67/163 of 20 December 2012, 69/168 of 18 December 2014, 71/200 of 19 December 2016, 72/186 of 19 December 2017, 75/186 of 16 December 2020 and 77/224 of 15 December 2022 on the role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law,
- Recalling the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993 and annexed thereto,
- Acknowledging the principles on the protection and promotion of the Ombudsman institution (the Venice Principles) Recalling its previous resolutions on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular resolutions 66/169 of 19 December 2011, 68/171 of 18 December 2013, 70/163 of 17 December 2015, 74/156 of 18 December 2019 and 76/170 of 16 December 2021, as well as Human Rights Council resolutions 23/17 of 13 June 2013,3 27/18 of 25 September 2014,4 33/15 of 29 September 2016,5 39/17 of 28 September 2018,6 45/22 of 6 October 2020,7 51/31 of 7 October 20228 and 57/23 of 10 October 2024,9
- Reaffirming the functional and structural differences between national human rights institutions, on the one hand, and Ombudsman and mediator institutions, on the other, and underlining in this regard that reports on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on the role of the Ombudsman and mediator institutions by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should be stand -alone reports,
- Noting with appreciation that some Ombudsman or mediator institutions have been designated as national preventive mechanisms under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
- Acknowledging the long history of Ombudsman institutions and the subsequent extensive developments throughout the world in creating and strengthening Ombudsman and mediator institutions,

and recognizing the important role that these institutions can play, in accordance with their mandate, in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, promoting good governance and respect for the rule of law by addressing the imbalance of power between the individual and the providers of public services,

- Welcoming the rapidly growing interest throughout the world in the creation and strengthening of Ombudsman and mediator institutions, and recognizing the important role that these institutions can play, in accordance with their mandate, in support of national complaint resolution,
- Recognizing the essential efforts of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 16, by fostering peaceful and inclusive societies and providing free and accessible complaints mechanisms, identifying systemic issues, and thus enhancing the effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness of public administration at all levels,
- Encouraging Member States to establish independent Ombudsman and mediator institutions and to strengthen existing institutions, including by ensuring their independence, consistent with relevant principles, including the Venice Principles, and to consider seeking the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in this regard,
- Recognizing that the role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions, whether they are national human rights institutions or not, is the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, promotion of good governance and respect for the rule of law, as a separate and additional function, but also as an integral part to all other aspects of their work,
- Underlining the importance of autonomy and independence from the executive or judicial branches of Government, its agencies or political parties, of Ombudsman and mediator institutions, where they exist, in order to enable them to consider all issues related to their fields of competence, without real or perceived threat to their procedural ability or efficiency and without fear of reprisal, intimidation or recrimination in any form, whether online or offline, that may threaten their functioning or the physical safety and security of their officials,
- Noting with serious concern that Ombudsman and mediator institutions, where they exist, may be under threat, whether to their autonomy or credibility, to theirbudgets or to the physical safety and security of their officials,
- Deeply concerned that some Ombudsman and mediator institutions face challenges related to conflict situations, current political conditions in their different contexts, systemic discrimination, the devastating impact of climate change, the shrinking of civic space, staff harassment, resource cutting and politicized selection and appointment processes,
- Considering the role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in promoting good governance in public administrations and improving their relations with citizens, in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and in strengthening the delivery of public services, by promoting the rule of law, good governance, transparency, accountability and fairness, thus contributing to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16,
- Considering also the important role of the existing Ombudsman and mediator institutions in contributing to the effective realization of the rule of law and respect for the principles of justice and equality,
- Acknowledging the importance of affording these institutions, as appropriate, the necessary mandate, including the authority to assess, monitor and, where provided for by national legislation, investigate matters on their own initiative, as well as protection to allow action to be taken independently and effectively against unfairness towards any person or group and the importance of State support for the autonomy,competence and impartiality of the Ombudsman and of the process,
- Stressing the importance of the financial and administrative independence and stability of these institutions, and noting with satisfaction the efforts of those States that have provided their Ombudsman and mediator institutions with more autonomy and independence, including by giving them an investigative role or enhancing such a role,
- Stressing also that these institutions, where they exist, can play an important role in advising Governments with respect to drafting or amending existing national laws and policies, ratifying relevant international instruments and bringing national legislation and national practices into line with their States' international human rights obligations,

> "Integrating the role of ombudsman institutions into the achievement of this goal goes beyond a purely human rights function"

- Stressing further the importance of international cooperation between Ombudsman offices and mediators, and recalling the role played by regional and international associations of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in promoting cooperation and sharing best practices,
- Encouraging the Ombudsman and mediator institutions to share best practices on their work and functioning, and to continue engaging actively with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Ombudsman Institute, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and other regional networks and associations to exchange experiences, lessons learned and best practices,
- Underscoring the importance of appointing focal points in public administration to facilitate the exchange of information with Ombudsman and mediator institutions and ensure the efficient handling of complaints,
- Noting with satisfaction the active continuing work of the global network of Ombudsmen, the International Ombudsman Institute, and the close cooperation with the active regional Ombudsman and mediator associations and networks, namely, the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen, the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsmen, the Association of Ombudsmen and Mediators of la Francophonie, the Asian Ombudsman Association, the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association, the Arab Ombudsman Network, the European Mediation Network Initiative, the Pacific Ombudsman Alliance, the Eurasian Ombudsman Alliance, and other active Ombudsman and mediator associations and networks,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;

2. Strongly encourages Member States:

A) To consider the creation or the strengthening of independent and autonomous Ombudsman and mediator institutions at the national level and, where applicable, at the regional or local level, consistent with the principles on the protection and promotion of the Ombudsman institution (the Venice Principles), either as national human rights institutions or alongside them;

B) To endow Ombudsman and mediator institutions, where they exist, with the necessary constitutional and legislative framework, as well as State support and protection, adequate financial allocation for staffing and other budgetary needs, a broad mandate across all public services, the powers necessary to ensure that they have the tools they need to select issues, resolve maladministration, investigate thoroughly and communicate results, and all other appropriate means, in order to ensure the efficient and independent exercise of their mandate and to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of their actions as mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights and the promotion of good governance and respect for the rule of law;

C) Where they exist, to take the appropriate steps to ensure that the means of appointment of the Ombudsman or mediator respect the full independence and State recognition of, as well as respect for, the Ombudsman and mediator institutions and their work;

D) To provide for the clear mandate of Ombudsman and mediator institutions, where they exist, to enable the prevention and appropriate resolution of any unfairness and maladministration and the promotion and protection of human rights, and to report on their activities, as may be appropriate, both generally and on specific issues;

E) To ensure that the Ombudsman and mediator institutions and their staff have appropriate protections from unwarranted and arbitrary abuses of legal process in respect of matters carried out in connection with their lawful duties and obligations;

> "Stressing the importance of the financial and administrative independence and stability of these institutions, and noting with satisfaction the efforts of those States that have provided their Ombudsman and mediator institutions with more autonomy and independence"

F) To take the appropriate steps to ensure that adequate protection exists for Ombudsman and mediator institutions, where they exist, against coercion, reprisals, intimidation or threat, including from other authorities, and that these acts are promptly and duly investigated and the perpetrators held accountable;

G) To give due consideration to the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) when assigning to the Ombudsman or the mediator institution the role of national preventive mechanisms and national monitoring mechanisms;

H) To develop and conduct, as appropriate, outreach activities at the national level, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, in order to raise awareness of the important role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions;

I) To share and exchange best practices on the work and functioning of their Ombudsman and mediator institutions, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and with the International Ombudsman Institute and other international and regional Ombudsman organizations;

3. Recognizes that, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, it is the right of each State to choose the framework for national institutions, including those of the Ombudsman and the mediator, which is best suited to its particular needs at the national level, in order to promote human rights in accordance with international human rights instruments;

4. Encourages Member States to ensure adequate protection for their respective Ombudsman and mediator institutions against coercion, reprisals, intimidation or threat;

5. Also encourages Member States to ensure that adequate funding is provided to their respective Ombudsman and mediator institutions to enable them to discharge their mandates in an independent and efficient manner;

6. Recognizes that the practical effectiveness of the chosen framework for such national institutions should be monitored and assessed, consistent with internationally accepted and recognized standards, and that this framework should neither threaten the autonomy nor the independence of the institution nor diminish its ability to carry out its mandate;

7. Welcomes the active participation of the Office of the High Commissioner in all international and regional meetings of Ombudsman and mediator institutions, whether in person or, alternatively, by electronic means;

8. Calls upon Members States to refrain from abolishing Ombudsman or mediator institutions, where they exist, with a view to upholding the right to access to justice and effective and accountable public administration;

9. Encourages Member States and regional and international Ombudsman and mediator institutions to regularly interact, exchange information and share best practices with the Office of the High Commissioner on all matters of relevance;

10. Encourages the Office of the High Commissioner, through its advisory services, to develop and support activities dedicated to the existing Ombudsman and mediator institutions and to strengthen their role within national systems for human rights protection;

11. Recognizes that Ombudsman and mediator institutions, that are mandated to promote and protect all human rights, are encouraged to request, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner, accreditation by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions;

12. Encourages Ombudsman and mediator institutions, where they exist:

A) To operate, as appropriate, in accordance with all relevant international instruments, including the Paris Principles and the Venice Principles, in order to strengthen their independence and autonomy and to enhance their capacity to assist Member States in the promotion and protection of human rights and the promotion of good governance and respect for the rule of law;

B) To request, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner, their accreditation by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, where the Ombudsman or mediator institution is the national human rights institution, in order to enable them to interact effectively with the relevant human rights bodies of the United Nations system;

C) To publicly report, in the interests of accountability and transparency, to the authority that appoints the Ombudsman or the mediator of Member States on their activities at least annually;

D) To cooperate with relevant State bodies and develop cooperation with civil society organizations, without compromising their autonomy or independence;

E) To conduct awareness-raising activities on their roles and functions, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders;

F) To engage with the International Ombudsman Institute, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and other regional networks and associations, with a view to exchanging experiences, lessons learned and best practices;

13. Requests the President of the General Assembly to hold, within existing resources, during the eightieth session, a high-level panel on the theme "The importance of complying with the Venice Principles for Ombudsman institutions to strengthen the institutions' independence and autonomy and create an enabling environment to perform their mandate nationally and internationally" and prepare a summary of the discussion for transmission to all Member States;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution, in particular on the role played by the Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 16, as well as on solutions to promote the role and work of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law.

53rd plenary meeting
17 December 2024

Ombudsman Assembly of Pakistan; Ombudsman Institutional Model

* By: Dr. Morteza Vahedi[1]

❖ The Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman (FPO) was inspired by the innovative vision of the Federal Tax Ombudsman and eventually evolved into a network that reflects its strong commitment. Officially registered on June 4, 2011, under the Societies Act (Act No. 21 of 1860), it was initially established on April 15, 2011, and is recognized as a platform for shared ideals.

The Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman exemplifies professionalism, independence, and impartiality, operating with a firm resolve to ensure rigorous standards in holding public officials accountable through ombudsman offices across Pakistan. Its primary objective serves as a guiding light for improving governance at national, provincial, and local levels.

This distinguished mission of the Forum is pursued through well-structured social and educational training programs, with a strong focus on the determined pursuit of knowledge-transcending geographical boundaries to promote the Pakistani ombudsman model globally.

At the core of the Forum's charter lies a firm commitment to enhancing the complaint redress mechanisms within the framework of ombudsman offices throughout Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. This involves strengthening core capacities and achieving a higher level of professionalization across ombudsman operations.

Through the organization of training courses, awareness and advocacy campaigns, and professional development workshops within a precise and coordinated framework, the Forum seeks to reduce public tolerance for poor governance and reinforce the concept of accountability among public servants in alignment with the Islamic values enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman also anticipates and envisions reforms in the legislative and procedural frameworks of ombudsman offices, both at the federal and provincial levels. This vision is driven by the Forum's commitment to institutionalizing uniformity in terms and operational standards, thereby enhancing the capacity of the ombudsman institution to strengthen accountability and foster the principles of good governance.

Members:

A) Executive Board:

President: Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah

President of the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman, Federal Tax Ombudsman

Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah is a prominent figure in Pakistan, widely recognized for his multifaceted roles as a philanthropist, customs officer, medical doctor, social worker, and author. He graduated from King Edward Medical University and joined the civil service (Customs and Excise Group) in 1992. In his customs career, he held notable positions, including his appointment as Collector of Customs (Appeals) in Lahore.

In September 2021, Dr. Jah was appointed as the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) for a four-year term, following his early retirement from the Pakistan Customs Service. He is a BS-21 grade officer, and his appointment officially took effect on September 21, 2021.

Dr. Jah's efforts extend beyond his professional duties. He is a well-known philanthropist and founded the "Customs Healthcare Society" in 1998, aimed at serving humanity during times of crisis. This organization has played a vital role in providing medical treatments, establishing healthcare clinics, schools, and mobile hospitals across Pakistan. These facilities offer free healthcare and education services to the underprivileged.

He has been honored with prestigious awards for his services, including the Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 2015 and the Hilal-e-Imtiaz in 2021. These honors were awarded in recognition of his humanitarian work and professional contributions to national revenue enhancement. Additionally, Dr. Jah is a recognized author, having written around 25 books, some of which have been published by the National Book Foundation under the patronage of the Government of Pakistan. His literary work has received national and international acclaim.

Dr. Jah's commitment to public service is evident in his various initiatives. He has been actively involved in relief efforts during national disasters, such as the 2005 earthquake. His work has had a significant impact in regions like the Thar Desert and remote areas of Balochistan, where he has helped provide clean drinking water and supported green projects.

In summary, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah's professional and humanitarian contributions portray a deeply committed individual who has made remarkable impacts across diverse fields-from medicine and customs management to social work and literature[2].

Executive Secretary: Almas Ali Jovindah

Executive Secretary of the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman, Legal Advisor to the Federal Tax Ombudsman

Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah is a prominent legal figure in Pakistan with extensive experience across various legal domains. In his current role as Legal Advisor at the Federal Tax Ombudsman's office, he offers strategic and analytical insights on tax laws and regulations to help alleviate the challenges faced by taxpayers.

Mr. Jovindah is also a partner at a law firm specializing in corporate and commercial law. His deep expertise in these areas, along with his exceptional communication skills, make him a valuable asset to the firm and its clients.

He also serves as the Executive Secretary of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ombudsman Association and the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman. In addition, Mr. Jovindah is the head of the "Cyber Legal Arm," where he actively works to raise awareness about cyber laws and cybersecurity, aiming to protect individual rights and privacy

1. Ph.D. in Law; Inspector General for Foreign Affairs, Parliament, the Presidency, and Affiliated Units of the General Inspection Organization of Iran

2. https://fpo.org.pk/dr-asif-mahmood-jah/

in the digital age.

As President of the Peace Association of Pakistan, Mr. Jovindah is deeply committed to promoting peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding among diverse communities. He tirelessly works toward building a more inclusive and just society.

Almas Ali Jovindah is a distinguished figure in the legal field, with notable achievements in both his professional and personal endeavors. His dedication, knowledge, and efforts to improve society make him an inspiration to all who know him.

B) Federal Members:

1. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan

Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi was sworn in as the 8th Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan on December 27, 2021. He holds a master's degree in Political Science from the University of the Punjab and a master's degree in Public Policy and Planning from Pennsylvania State University, USA. He joined the Pakistan Civil Service in 1972 through a competitive examination.

> "The Forum seeks to reduce public tolerance for poor governance and reinforce the concept of accountability"

Throughout his career, he served in key positions within both the federal and provincial governments, including Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, and Federal Secretary in the Ministries of Railways and Environment. He also held positions as Provincial Secretary in various departments and served as Additional Chief Secretary, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Assistant Commissioner in different regions.

In his diplomatic career, he served as Consul General and Trade Commissioner of Pakistan in Canada and as Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), affiliated with the United Nations. In recognition of his exceptional service during the 2005 earthquake, he was awarded the Nishan-e-Isaar.

Before assuming the role of Federal Ombudsman, he served as Senior Advisor to three former ombudsmen and as the National Commissioner for Children's Affairs at the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat in Islamabad.

He is also President of the Asian Ombudsman Association and a member of the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman, the OIC Ombudsman Association, and the International Ombudsman Institute.

2. Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, Federal Tax Ombudsman

President of the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman, Federal Tax Ombudsman

3. Ms. Fauzia Viqar ,Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace

Ms. Fauzia Viqar, the Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace, is a prominent expert in women's rights and empowerment, recognized both in Pakistan and internationally. As the founding Chairperson of the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, she led policy and legal reforms to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and placed gender equality at the center of governance processes.

Previously, she worked with leading women's rights organizations in Pakistan, focusing on research and advocacy for women's empowerment and human rights. In Canada, she served as a Human Rights Advisor at the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Government of Ontario. She continues to teach laws and measures related to women's rights in public academies and civil institutions.

Ms. Viqar has advised major governance, accountability, and social inclusion programs across Pakistan and has collaborated with government entities, international organizations, and UN-affiliated bodies.

She played a pivotal role in developing a culture of gender-disaggregated data collection for evidence-based policymaking through specialized digital platforms (Punjab Gender Management Information System) and surveys. She also introduced successful models for promoting women's leadership ("Women in Leadership"), economic empowerment (Job Portal and Women's Business Incubation Center), and rehabilitation of survivors of violence (Transitional Housing).

She has served on the boards of various charitable organizations, public bodies, and private corporations.

4. Sirajuddin Aziz, Banking Mohtasib ,Federal Banking Ombudsman

Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz assumed the office of the Banking Mohtasib on July 18, 2023, for a four-year term under Section 3 of the Federal Ombudsmen Institutional Reforms Act, 2013.

He was appointed based on his extensive background in the banking sector. Mr. Aziz is a seasoned professional banker who has served in various organizations across Pakistan, China, Hong Kong, the UK, Nigeria, and the UAE.

He previously served as President and CEO of HabibMetro Bank and as CEO of Bank Alfalah from 2006 to 2011. In these roles, he held top leadership positions for over fifteen years. His most recent position was as CEO of Global Financial Institutions at Habib Bank Zurich, Switzerland.

Sirajuddin Aziz is also a renowned author and regular contributor to national and international newspapers, magazines, and journals on diverse subjects. He frequently participates in televised debates on the economy, education, and social issues.

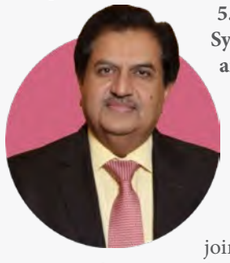
His published works include books such as *Chasing a Mirage*, *Bitter & Sweet – Life & Times of My Father*, *In Search of a Mirage*, *The Nature of Islam*, *Emerging Dynamics of Management*, *Handbook of Effective Management*, and *Corporate Pakistan (A Leadership Perspective)*.

He is a member of the Institute of Bankers Pakistan (IBP) and served as the editor of its journal for over a decade. He is also affiliated with the Institute of International Affairs Pakistan and the Pakistan English Language Association.

Mr. Aziz serves on the boards of trustees of various educational and social institutions and regularly delivers lectures and hosts sessions at universities and leading professional forums.

> "The Forum seeks to reduce public tolerance for poor governance and reinforce the concept of accountability"

5. Federal Insurance Ombudsman Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah, Federal Insurance Ombudsman



Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah, a senior retired Pakistani bureaucrat, was sworn in as the Federal Insurance Ombudsman of Pakistan in June 2024 by President Asif Ali Zardari.

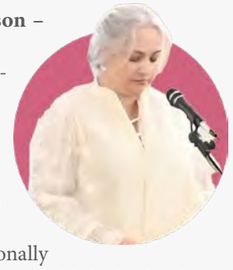
He hails from Sindh province and joined the Pakistan Administrative Service after passing the Central Superior Services (CSS) exam in 1984. He has served in several key positions, including Federal Secretary for Maritime Affairs, Federal Secretary for Religious Affairs, and Chief Secretary of Sindh.

Before his promotion to Grade 22 in 2017, Shah held various senior roles in the Sindh government, including Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Director of Anti-Corruption Establishment, Secretary of Services, Secretary of Information, Secretary of General Administration, and Secretary of Population Welfare.

At the beginning of his career, he served as Assistant Commissioner in Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab. He also worked as District Coordination Officer (DCO) in Badin, Mirpurkhas, and Naseerabad in Balochistan.

C) Provincial Members

1. Punjab Provincial Ombudsperson – Ayesha Hamid



Ms. Ayesha Hamid has been appointed as the 9th Provincial Ombudsperson of Punjab. She has been a senior partner at the law firm "Hamid Law Associates" and was admitted as an Advocate of the High Court in 2008 and of the Supreme Court in 2016.

She has appeared in many constitutionally significant cases published in legal journals and has provided extensive pro bono services to underprivileged individuals and charitable organizations, including the Punjab Girl Guides Association.

She has also served as an elected independent director in a multinational company. Prior to her legal career, she taught at a prestigious educational institution.

2. Punjab Provincial Ombudsperson – Nabeela Hakim Ali Khan

Ms. Nabeela Khan, the fourth female Ombudsperson of Punjab, was sworn in in June 2021. She is a practicing lawyer and runs her own law firm, "Nabeela Khan Law Associates."

From 2013 to 2018, she served as an opposition member in the Punjab Provincial Assembly. She is an alumna of the National Defence University (NDU) and was the only female participant in a judicial delegation of ten members trained across various U.S. states.

She has extensive experience in women's social welfare and child protection. She served two terms on the District Council (2002–2008) and chaired the Public Safety and Police Complaints Commission in Sahiwal.

She has played a key role in enhancing transparency in the use of public sector resources and is currently working to strengthen the Punjab Women Ombudsperson Office.

Since her appointment, she has resolved thousands of cases. Across the province, there are many success stories where deserving women have reclaimed property rights-something historically elusive for millions of women in the subcontinent. Ms. Nabeela Khan has made the Ombudsperson Office more accessible and efficient.

3. Sindh Provincial Ombudsman – Muhammad Sohail Rajput

Mr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput is currently serving as the 7th Provincial Ombudsman of Sindh. He is a senior and experienced bureaucrat who has held several key positions and specializes in financial management, development, and

project implementation.

He has more than 25 years of experience in Pakistan's civil service, including managing provincial finances and implementing diverse development projects.

He earned his medical degree in 1988 from Liaquat Medical College, Jamshoro, a postgraduate diploma in business management in 2004 from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, and a master's degree in economic policy focusing on international energy management from Columbia University, New York.

He was awarded a U.S. State Department scholarship for his managerial skills, which included training at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University, as well as an internship at the World Bank.

He has also undergone extensive training at the Civil Services Academy Lahore, National School of Public Policy Lahore, University of Birmingham (UK), and Joint Vienna Institute (Austria).

His main areas of expertise include public financial management and project development, particularly in the energy sector. Notable achievements include developing the Thar coal and thermal power plant project, improving Sindh's financial health through effective fiscal management, and establishing a strong monitoring and implementation system in the Sindh Chief Minister's Secretariat.

> "The Forum enhances the capacity of the ombudsman institution to strengthen accountability and foster good governance"

4. Sindh Ombudsman for Harassment Cases – Retired Justice Shahnawaz Tariq

5. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Ombudsman – Syed Jamaluddin Shah

Syed Jamaluddin Shah was sworn in as the 4th Provincial Ombudsman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on August 2, 2021. Before this, he served over 33 years in the provincial civil service in various administrative and field capacities.

His roles included Secretary of the Provincial Ombudsman Secretariat, Department of Local Government, Elections and Rural Development, and the Department of Sports, Culture, and Tourism.

He also served as Commissioner of Kohat Division, Afghan Refugees Commissioner, Director General of Excise and Narcotics Control, District Coordination Officer (DCO) of Bannu, and Additional Secretary in the Chief Minister's Secretariat of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He held political administrative roles as Assistant Political Agent (APA) in five tribal areas, including Khyber, South Waziristan, Kurram, and Orakzai.

He holds a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Peshawar.

6. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ombudsperson for Harassment – Rakhshanda Naz

Ms. Rakhshanda Naz was born in Balochistan and completed her early education there. She earned her bachelor's degree in Punjab and her law degree in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She also holds a management degree from King's College, University of London.

In 2019, she was appointed as the Ombudsperson of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Workplace Harassment of Women.

She has founded several organizations that provide legal services and shelter to women and children and actively supports minority women and Afghan refugees.

7. Balochistan Provincial Ombudsman – Mr. Nazar Baloch

8. Balochistan Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment at the Workplace

9. Ombudsman of Azad Jammu and Kashmir – Chaudhry Muhammad Naseem

Under the authority provided in Article 3(1), the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir appointed Mr. Chaudhry Muhammad Naseem as the Ombudsman on March 1, 2021. His oath ceremony was held on March 4.

He officially assumed his duties on March 5, 2021, and upon taking office, he declared his commitment to address public complaints swiftly and effectively without unnecessary delays.

Islamic African countries; a bridge between civilizations and ombudsman institutions

*By: dr.Arash farhoodi

❖ The Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators is an international non-governmental organization that brings together "mediator" or "ombudsman" institutions from Francophone countries. The idea of establishing the Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators was conceived in October 1996; subsequently, the organization was officially founded in 1998 with the participation of 18 founding institutions. Its main objective is to support citizens' rights, improve governance, and strengthen the rule of law in member countries.

Today, the Association includes nearly fifty member institutions from various regions including Europe, Africa, North America, and Oceania, and it receives financial support from the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF). The core mission of the Association is to promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, and social peace in the Francophone world, and to safeguard human rights through the strengthening of ombudsman and public mediation institutions.

> "Today, the Association includes nearly fifty member institutions from various regions including Europe, Africa, North America, and Oceania"

In this context, Francophone Islamic countries in Africa play a particularly important role in establishing connections between the Ombudsman Association of OIC Member States and other ombudsman networks, such as the Francophone Ombudsman Association.

The ombudsman in governance systems serves as an intermediary between the people and the state, addressing citizens' complaints against public authorities and ultimately contributing to improved governance through corrective recommendations. Therefore, the creation of a network of ombudsman institutions in countries with a shared French language was a significant initiative for enhancing government accountability and ensuring civil rights.

The Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators, by providing a platform for dialogue, training, and cooperation among these institutions, has played a key role in empowering them and facilitating public access to non-judicial justice. The following section outlines the structure, objectives, missions, and selected achievements of this specialized organization, which continues to be of interest to legal and governance experts.

History of Establishment and Development

The idea of establishing an international association to coordinate among ombudsmen and mediators of Francophone countries was first proposed in October 1996 during the 6th International Conference of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) held in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

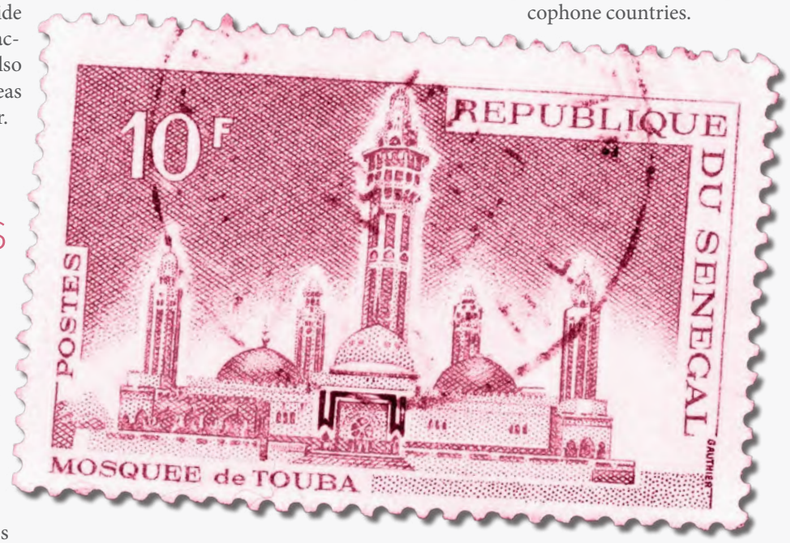
At the aforementioned meeting, Daniel Jacoby, the Ombudsman of Quebec, Canada, and Jacques Pelletier from the Mediator Institution of the Republic of France proposed the creation of a formal network to foster mutual cooperation and better coordination among the ombudsman institutions of Francophone countries. The aim was to improve the protection of human rights against state institutions. The proposal also emphasized the importance of strengthening solidarity and advancing democracy through the establishment or consolidation of ombudsman offices in Francophone countries that lacked such institutions.

This vision materialized with financial support from the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation of Francophone Countries, which later became the "Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie" (OIF). The first official gathering of Francophone ombudsmen and mediators took place from June 9 to 12, 1997, in Quebec City, Canada. Subsequently, in May 1998, the statute of the Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators was adopted by 18 founding members in Nouakchott, Mauritania, thereby marking the formal establishment of the association.

The first General Congress of the association's members was held in November 1999 in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, with the participation of representatives from the Francophonie Agency, the International Ombudsman Institute, and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights.

Since then, the Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators has convened a congress every two years, hosted by one of its member institutions. During each congress, a general assembly is held to deliberate on shared programs and policy directions. For instance, at the 9th Congress of the association held in October 2015 in Quebec City, participants from Africa, Europe, and the Americas adopted the "Quebec Declaration." This declaration aimed to strengthen and reinforce mediation institutions as promoters of democratic values, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. The main theme of that congress was "The Role of Ombudsmen and Mediators as Promoters of Good Governance and Guardians of Administrative Integrity," providing an opportunity to exchange experiences on how ombudsman institutions address governance crises, and promote transparency and administrative integrity within governments.

Over the past two decades, the Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators (AOMF) has experienced significant growth. In 2018, the association celebrated its 20th anniversary, with its membership expanding to nearly 50 ombudsman institutions from various countries. These institutions include national and regional ombudsman offices across different Francophone countries in Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Oceania. Alongside its quantitative expansion, the activities of the association have also evolved, encompassing new areas which will be discussed further.



Objectives and Missions of the Association:

The statutes and mission documents of the Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators (AOMF) emphasize the promotion of democracy, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights across Francophone countries. The core mission of the association is to strengthen the role of ombudsman and mediation institutions within the governance systems of its member countries, as well as to support the development and consolidation of these independent oversight bodies. In other words, the AOMF seeks to enhance public trust in public administration and services by reinforcing non-judicial mechanisms for addressing citizens' grievances.

The association assists Francophone member countries in establishing new mediation institutions and shares its expertise and experience with existing bodies. For instance, in the years following its founding, the AOMF advised several African member states that lacked ombudsman offices, helping them establish such institutions and thereby expanding the reach of oversight bodies within the Francophone world. Members of the AOMF and the association itself are committed to promoting and defending democracy, the rule of law, and social peace and justice within the international Francophone community. Furthermore, they pledge to uphold and advocate for the implementation of national and international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Bamako Declaration adopted in 2000 by the Conference of Ministers of Francophone Countries.

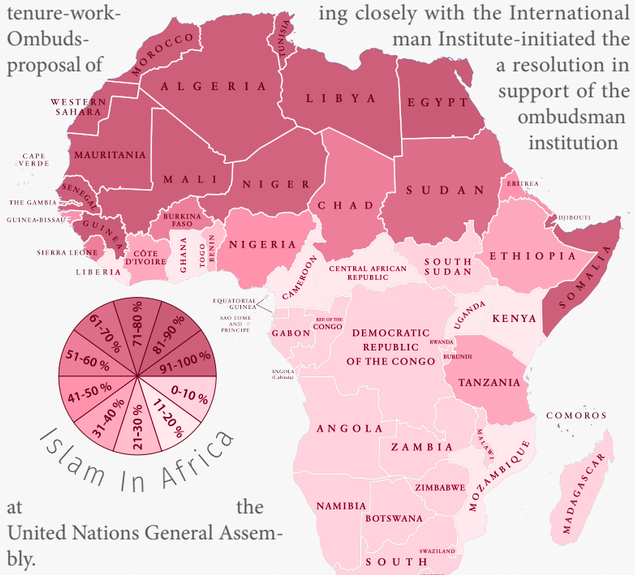
According to the association's statutes, the spirit of intra-network cooperation within the AOMF is grounded in solidarity, altruism, and shared human values, facilitated by the common French language. All members of the association continuously strive to improve the quality of public services in their respective countries, an objective that is closely tied to the protection of fundamental citizens' rights. Additionally, since 2012, the special protection of children's rights has been added as a new priority within the AOMF's mission, reflecting the association's focus on vulnerable groups within society.

Legal Structure and Organizational Components

The AOMF is organized as an international non-profit association, officially established under its statutes adopted in May 1998 in Nouakchott by 18 founding members. According to these statutes, the members of the association are divided into several categories: voting members (usually national or regional ombudsman institutions), associate members (institutions or individuals with consultative or observer status), and honorary members. For example, in 2022, the association had 41 full voting members and 4 associate members, reflecting its wide influence among Francophone countries.

Structurally, the Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators (AOMF) includes three main decision-making bodies: the General Assembly, which encompasses all members and serves as the highest policy-making authority; the Administrative Council (Board of Directors), responsible for managing affairs and strategic decisions between General Assembly sessions; and the Executive Office (Presidency), which oversees the day-to-day operations and implements the decisions of the Administrative Council. The Administrative Council consists of elected members from the different geographic regions (for example, one representative each from the Africa and Europe regions). The presidency of the Council and the Association is typically held by the head of one of the member institutions (a national or regional ombudsman), elected by the members for a defined term. For instance, from 2013 to 2015, Raymond

Saint-Germain of the Quebec Ombudsman Office in Canada served as president of the AOMF, followed by Marc Bertrand of the Wallonia and Brussels Federation in Belgium, who was elected at the 2015 Congress for a three-year term. In 2018, the rotating presidency was passed to Mohamed Benalilou, the Mediator of Morocco, who during his tenure-work-ing closely with the International Ombudsman Institute-initiated the proposal of a resolution in support of the ombudsman institution at the United Nations General Assembly.



Since 2006, the Executive Office of the AOMF has had a permanent secretariat based in Paris. This secretariat is responsible for administrative, communication, and expert support for the association's programs and its members. It serves as the central contact point of the network and facilitates coordination of training programs, publications, and conferences. The AOMF's operating budget is primarily funded through contributions from the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) and membership fees, ensuring a degree of financial independence.

Activities and Ombudsman Functions of the AOMF

To fulfill its mission, the AOMF carries out a wide range of programs and initiatives, all aimed at strengthening the role of ombudsman institutions in promoting good governance. One of the main areas of focus is the organization of training sessions and capacity-building workshops for members. Through regular educational programs, the AOMF facilitates the exchange of experience among staff from various ombudsman offices. For example, the Training and Exchange Center in the field of mediation, based in Rabat, Morocco, was established under the AOMF and is responsible for conducting professional training to enhance the skills of mediators. The association has also developed and published the "Ombudsman Doctrine," a compilation of principles and strategic practices used by ombudsman institutions, which serves as a reference for knowledge-sharing among members.

In addition to training, the AOMF has created specialized working groups focused on specific issues related to human rights and governance. For example, the AOMF's Child Rights Committee was established following the prioritization of children's rights in the association's mandate in 2012. This committee focuses on sharing experiences and proposing policy recommendations related to child protection. More recently, the AOMF also established a Women's Rights Committee to address issues of gender equality and anti-discrimination, holding annual meetings to advance its goals. The formation of these committees reflects the AOMF's proactive approach in identifying and addressing emerging areas within the realm of civil rights and good governance.

Another important activity of the AOMF is the regular organization of international summits and conferences, which offer opportunities for dialogue among ombudsmen. Every two years, at the association's congress, members present reports on their institutional performance, discuss challenges and achievements, and adopt joint declarations or recommendations. These gatherings not only align strategies among member institutions but also strengthen solidarity and create a united front in defending the independence and authority of ombudsman institutions at the international level.

The Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators (AOMF) has also established broad interactions with other related organizations and networks. For example, in October 2016, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the AOMF and the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), which outlined the framework for mutual cooperation. Through such partnerships, the AOMF has been able to share experiences from the Francophone world with the global ombudsman community, while also benefiting from international knowledge and support to strengthen its own members. The shared goal of all these collaborations is to emphasize the importance of the ombudsman institution in promoting transparency, accountability, and public trust across the globe.

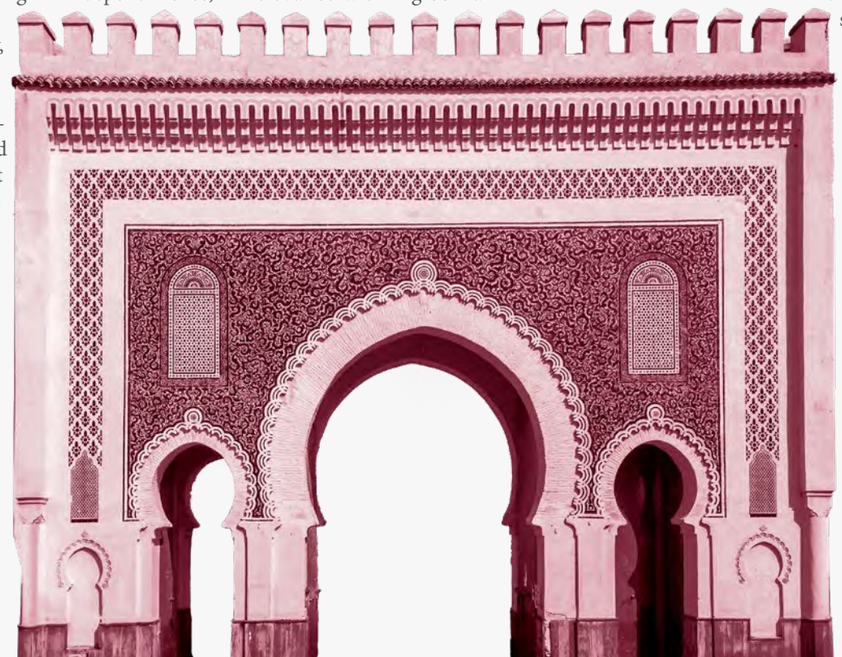
Achievements and Successful Experiences

Over more than two decades of activity, the AOMF has recorded significant achievements. One of its most notable successes has been the expansion of the ombudsman model in Francophone countries that previously lacked such institutions. Through the efforts of the association, several African and Asian Francophone countries established ombudsman or public mediator offices in the years following 1998. This directly fulfilled one of the founding goals of the AOMF - to develop citizen oversight mechanisms in all Francophone nations. In parallel, the association has expanded its membership, particularly by attracting new members from Francophone regions in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, bringing the network to nearly 50 members and broadening its geographic scope in support of citizen rights.

The AOMF's training and capacity-building efforts have also yielded tangible results. The development of specialized human resources for ombudsman offices, the creation of shared professional standards, and the dissemination of successful practices through publications like the *Doctrine of the Ombudsman* have all significantly contributed to the efficiency of member institutions. As a result, the quality of complaint handling and the advisory capacity of ombudsman offices has improved, leading to greater accountability in government institutions and more equitable resolutions for citizens in member countries.

One of the AOMF's most prominent achievements on the international stage was its contribution to the adoption of a UN resolution supporting ombudsman institutions. In December 2024, the UN General Assembly, following an initiative led by the AOMF and in collaboration with the IOI, adopted a historic resolution recognizing the ombudsman institution and emphasizing its core principles, including independence, impartiality, transparency, fairness, and objectivity. This resolution marked an important step in global recognition of the ombudsman's role in promoting good governance, protecting human rights, and upholding the rule of law. It demonstrated that the AOMF's efforts had transcended the boundaries of the Francophone world, successfully amplifying the collective voice of ombudsman institutions on the international stage and asserting their relevance within global governance frameworks.

> "Since then, the Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators has convened a congress every two years, hosted by one of its member institutions"



Domestically, the AOMF has also made significant contributions. The strong connections it has built among member institutions have enabled swift collective action during crises, such as when governments attempted to curtail the powers or independence of ombudsmen. In such cases, the association acted promptly by issuing joint statements or engaging in diplomatic advocacy to defend the status and authority of its members. This collective support has served as a safeguard for maintaining and enhancing the institutional position of ombudsmen within the governance systems of member states and has helped ensure their continued effectiveness.

Furthermore, the synergy created by the AOMF's network has led to joint initiatives among its members. Over the past two decades, member ombudsman offices have adopted more effective methods for handling citizen complaints based on collaborative thinking within the framework of the AOMF. Many successful practices - such as mediation mechanisms for expedited complaint resolution or the creation of dedicated units to support vulnerable groups - have been modeled and replicated across different countries. This exchange of experiences and the relative standardization of procedures can be considered among the most important indirect achievements of the AOMF, with clear impacts on improving the efficiency of its member institutions.

Shared Historical and Cultural Aspects Between Two International Ombudsman Associations

Eight countries hold simultaneous membership in both the Association of Francophone Ombudsmen and Mediators (AOMF) and the Ombudsman Association of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): Morocco, Senegal, Djibouti, Guinea, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and Tunisia. These countries occupy a unique intersection between two spheres of linguistic-cultural and religious-civilizational influence - the Francophone world and the Islamic world - making their position particularly significant.

The overlapping membership of these countries in both associations is the result of a combination of historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors.

Cultural and Linguistic Heritage:

Many of these shared member countries, particularly in Africa, tic bond has ensured that the French language continues to play a central role in their administrative and educational systems. As an administrative and cultural language, French links these countries to the AOMF.

> "Francophone Muslim African countries can act as a 'bridge'-both culturally and in the field of ombudsman diplomacy—between the Islamic world and other Francophone nations"

Significant Muslim Population:

At the same time, these countries have substantial Muslim populations, making them eligible for membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and, by extension, the OIC Ombudsman Association. This religious-cultural overlap is another key driver of their dual membership. The concurrent presence of a dominant French-speaking administrative culture and a Muslim-majority society positions these countries to engage with both associations. This demonstrates how multi-layered identities can play a pivotal role in the foreign policy and international relations of these states and serve as an asset in cultural diplomacy.

A Cultural "Bridge" and Ombudsman Diplomacy:

Francophone Muslim African countries can act as a "bridge" - both culturally and in the field of ombudsman diplomacy - between the Islamic world and other Francophone nations. They are uniquely positioned to share experiences and best practices from both spheres. This allows them to play a leading role in developing more comprehensive models of good governance and human rights protection. With a deep understanding of the perspectives of both the Francophone and Islamic worlds regarding governance and rights, they can help foster greater convergence between the two associations. They may even contribute to the development of new ombudsman models that blend the best elements from both traditions. This is a unique opportunity for these countries to act as pioneers of innovation in the international governance of ombudsman institutions.

Future Outlook

The AOMF's future vision emphasizes the continued promotion of the rule of law and civil rights across the Francophone world. According to announced plans, the AOMF aims to expand its active presence and cooperation into new Francophone regions such as the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe, encouraging the formation of new mediation institutions and inviting them to join the network. In addition, enhancing the professional capacities of member offices through continuous training and expert exchanges will remain a key priority. The defense of children's rights and vulnerable groups, as well as attention to issues such as gender equality, also holds a special place in the association's future programs.

Resources:

- https://www.aomf-ombudsmans-francophonie.org
- https://www.hautcommissariat.mc/en
- https://www.mediateur.ma
- https://www.clom-aomf.org

ays islamiques d'Afrique: un pont entre les civilisations et les forums des ombudsmans

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❖ Le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones est une organisation non gouvernementale internationale qui regroupe les institutions de « médiateurs » ou « ombudsmans » des pays francophones. L'idée de créer ce forum a été lancée en octobre 1996 ; par la suite, cette association a été fondée en 1998 avec la participation de 18 institutions fondatrices, avec pour objectif de soutenir les droits des citoyens, d'améliorer la gouvernance et de renforcer l'état de droit dans les pays membres. Aujourd'hui, le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones regroupe près de cinquante institutions membres provenant de différentes régions d'Europe, d'Afrique, d'Amérique du Nord et d'Océanie, et bénéficie du soutien financier de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). La mission principale de ce forum est de promouvoir les valeurs de la démocratie, de l'état de droit et de la paix sociale dans l'espace francophone, et de protéger les droits humains par le renforcement des institutions d'ombudsman et de médiation publique.

Dans ce contexte, les pays islamiques francophones d'Afrique jouent un rôle et une importance particuliers dans l'établissement d'un lien entre le Forum des Ombudsmans des pays membres de l'Organisation de la Coopération Islamique et d'autres forums d'ombudsmans, tels que le Forum des Ombudsmans Francophones.

L'ombudsman joue un rôle de médiateur entre le peuple et l'État dans le système de gouvernance, en traitant les plaintes des citoyens à l'encontre des institutions gouvernementales et, en fin de compte, en contribuant à améliorer la qualité de la gouvernance par la formulation de recommandations correctives ; dans ce sens, la création d'un réseau d'institutions d'ombudsmans dans les pays partageant la langue française représentait une initiative importante pour renforcer la responsabilité des gouvernements et garantir les droits des ci-

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toyens. Le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones, en fournissant un cadre de concertation, de formation et de coopération entre ces institutions, a joué un rôle significatif dans leur renforcement et dans la facilitation de l'accès du public à une justice non judiciaire.

Ce qui suit présente la structure, les objectifs, les missions et certains acquis de cette association spécialisée, qui retient l'attention des experts en droit et en gouvernance.

Historique de la création et du développement

L'idée de créer une association internationale pour coordonner les activités des ombudsmans et médiateurs des pays francophones a été proposée pour la première fois en octobre 1996, lors de la sixième conférence internationale de l'Institut international de l'ombudsman (IOI) à Buenos Aires, en Argentine. Lors de cette réunion, Daniel Jacoby, ombudsman de la province de Québec au Canada, et Jacques Pelletier, du Médiateur de la République française, ont proposé la création d'un réseau officiel destiné à renforcer la coopération et la coordination entre les institutions d'ombudsmans des pays francophones, afin de mieux protéger les droits des individus face aux gouvernements. Ce projet mettait également l'accent sur le renforcement de la solidarité et le développement de la démocratie par la création ou la consolidation de bureaux d'ombudsmans dans les pays francophones qui en étaient dépourvus.

> “En mai 1998, les statuts du Forum ont été adoptés par 18 membres fondateurs à Nouakchott, en Mauritanie”

Cette vision a été réalisée grâce au soutien financier de l'Agence de coopération culturelle et technique francophone, qui deviendra par la suite l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. La première réunion officielle des ombudsmans et médiateurs francophones s'est tenue du 9 au 12 juin 1997 à Québec, au Canada. Par la suite, en mai 1998, les statuts du Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones ont été adoptés par 18 membres fondateurs à Nouakchott, en Mauritanie. Ainsi, le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones a officiellement commencé ses activités. Le premier congrès général des membres du Forum s'est tenu en novembre 1999 à Ouagadougou, capitale du Burkina Faso, en présence de représentants de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, de l'Institut international de l'ombudsman et du Centre des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies.

Depuis lors, le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones organise tous les deux ans un congrès, accueilli par l'une des institutions membres, au cours duquel une assemblée générale est convoquée pour prendre des décisions concernant les programmes et les orientations communes. Par exemple, lors du neuvième congrès du Forum, qui s'est tenu en octobre 2015 dans la ville de Québec et qui a réuni des participants d'Afrique, d'Europe et des Amériques, la Déclaration de Québec a été adoptée dans le but de renforcer et de consolider les institutions de médiation en tant que promotrices des valeurs démocratiques, de l'état de droit et du respect des droits de l'homme. Le thème principal de ce congrès était : « Le rôle de l'ombudsman et de l'institution de médiation comme promoteur de la bonne gouvernance et garant de l'intégrité de l'administration publique », ce qui a permis un échange d'expériences sur des sujets tels que la manière dont les ombudsmans font face aux crises de gouvernance, l'amélioration de la transparence et de l'intégrité dans les administrations publiques.

Au cours des deux dernières décennies, le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones a connu une croissance significative. En 2018, l'association a célébré le vingtième anniversaire de sa fondation, et le nombre de ses membres a atteint près de cinquante institutions d'ombudsman issues de divers pays. Ces institutions comprennent des bureaux d'ombudsmans nationaux et régionaux dans différents pays francophones d'Europe, d'Afrique, des Amériques et d'Océanie. Parallèlement à cette expansion quantitative, les activités de l'association se sont développées et ont couvert de nouveaux domaines, qui seront abordés dans la suite.

Objectifs et missions du Forum

Les statuts et documents de mission du Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones mettent l'accent sur la promotion de la démocratie, de l'état de droit et de la protection des droits de l'homme dans l'espace francophone. La mission principale de cette association est de renforcer le rôle des institutions d'ombudsman et de médiation dans le système de gouvernance des pays membres, ainsi que d'aider au développement et à la consolidation de ces organes de contrôle indépendants ; en d'autres termes, le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones s'efforce de renforcer les mécanismes extrajudiciaires de traitement des plaintes des citoyens afin d'accroître la confiance du public envers les administrations et les services publics.

Le Forum aide les pays membres francophones à mettre en place de nouvelles institutions de médiation et met également son expertise et ses expériences à la disposition des institutions existantes ; à titre d'exemple, dans les années suivant sa création, le Forum a conseillé certains pays africains membres qui ne disposaient pas encore de bureaux d'ombudsman afin qu'ils puissent les établir, élargissant ainsi la couverture des organes de contrôle au sein de la famille francophone. Les membres du Forum et le Forum lui-même se sont engagés à promouvoir et défendre la démocratie, l'état de droit, la paix et la justice sociale dans l'espace francophone international ; ils s'obligent également à respecter et à faire appliquer les instruments nationaux et internationaux relatifs aux droits de l'homme, notamment la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme et la Déclaration de Bamako adoptée en 2000 par la Conférence des ministres des pays francophones.

Selon les statuts du Forum, l'esprit qui régit la coopération au sein du réseau repose sur la solidarité, l'humanisme et le partage de valeurs humaines, facilités par l'usage de la langue commune française entre les membres. Tous les membres du Forum s'efforcent en permanence d'améliorer la qualité des services publics dans leurs pays respectifs, objectif étroitement lié à la protection des droits fondamentaux des citoyens ; de plus, depuis 2012, la protection particulière des droits des enfants a été ajoutée aux priorités du Forum, reflétant l'attention portée par l'association aux groupes vulnérables de la société.

Structure juridique et organes organisationnels

Le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones est organisé en tant qu'association internationale à but non lucratif, officiellement fondée sous le statut adopté en mai 1998 à Nouakchott par 18 membres fondateurs. Conformément à ce statut, les membres du Forum sont classés en plusieurs catégories : les membres votants, comprenant les membres titulaires, généralement des institutions nationales ou étatiques d'ombudsmans ; les membres associés, incluant des institutions ou des personnes exerçant un rôle consultatif ou d'observateur ; et les membres honoraires. Par exemple, en 2022, cette association comptait 41 membres titulaires avec droit de vote et 4 membres associés, illustrant l'étendue de son influence au sein des pays francophones.

Sur le plan structurel, trois organes décisionnels sont prévus au sein du Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones :

- **L'Assemblée générale**, qui comprend tous les membres et constitue la plus haute autorité de décision politique ;
- **Le Conseil d'administration**, chargé de la gestion des affaires et des décisions stratégiques entre deux réunions de l'Assemblée générale ;
- **Le Bureau exécutif**, responsable de la gestion quotidienne de l'association et de la mise en œuvre des décisions du Conseil d'administration.

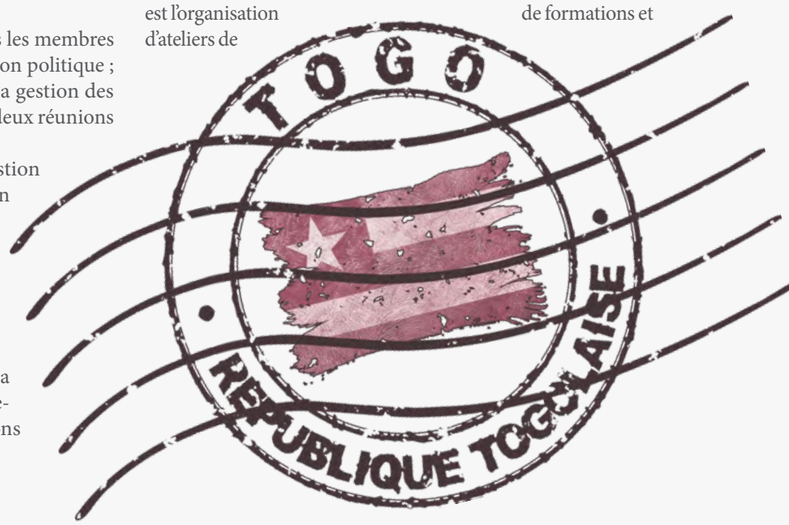
Le Conseil d'administration est composé de membres élus parmi les institutions membres de chaque région géographique (par exemple, chaque région comme l'Afrique ou l'Europe dispose d'un représentant au sein du Conseil). La présidence du Conseil et du Forum est généralement assurée par l'un des chefs des institutions membres (un ombudsman d'un pays ou d'un État), élu pour un mandat déterminé par les membres. À titre d'exemple, de 2013 à 2015, la présidence du Forum était assurée par Raymond Saint-Germain, ombudsman de la province de Québec (Canada), et ensuite, lors du congrès de 2015, Marc Bertrand du Médiateur de la Wallonie et de la Fédération Bruxelles–Belgique a été élu comme nouveau président pour un mandat de trois ans. Il a été suivi, en 2018, par Mohammed Benalilou, du Médiateur du Royaume du Maroc, qui, durant son mandat et en coopération étroite avec l'Institut international de l'ombudsman, a lancé l'initiative de présenter une résolution en soutien aux institutions d'ombudsman devant l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies.

Depuis 2006, le Bureau exécutif du Forum dispose d'un Secrétariat permanent, basé à Paris, qui assure le soutien administratif, communicationnel et technique aux programmes de l'association et à ses membres. Le Secrétariat permanent agit comme point de contact central du réseau et facilite la coordination des programmes de formation, des publications et des rencontres du Forum.

Le budget opérationnel du Forum est principalement financé par les contributions de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie et les cotisations de ses membres, ce qui garantit une certaine indépendance financière à l'organisation.

Activités et performance ombudsmannienne du Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones

Le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones (FOMF) met en œuvre une variété de programmes et d'initiatives pour réaliser ses missions, tous visant à renforcer le rôle des institutions d'ombudsman dans la bonne gouvernance. L'un des axes majeurs d'action du Forum est l'organisation de formations et d'ateliers de



renforcement des capacités à l'intention de ses membres. Grâce à ces programmes réguliers de formation, l'association facilite le partage d'expériences entre les collaborateurs des bureaux d'ombudsman de différents pays. À titre d'exemple, un Centre de formation et d'échange en médiation a été établi dans la ville de Rabat, capitale du Maroc, sous l'égide du Forum, avec pour mission d'organiser des formations professionnelles destinées à former et perfectionner les compétences des médiateurs.

Le Forum a également élaboré et publié un recueil doctrinal de l'ombudsman, qui compile les principes et pratiques stratégiques des institutions d'ombudsman et sert de référence pour le partage des connaissances entre membres.

Outre la formation, le Forum met en place des groupes de travail spécialisés sur des thèmes spécifiques liés aux droits de l'homme et à la gouvernance. Par exemple, le Comité des droits de l'enfant a été créé après que la protection de ces droits a été ajoutée aux priorités du Forum en 2012. Ce comité se concentre sur l'échange d'expériences et la formulation de propositions de politiques pour soutenir les droits des enfants. Ces dernières années, le Comité des droits des femmes a également vu le jour, abordant les questions d'égalité des sexes et de lutte contre les discriminations, tout en organisant des réunions annuelles régulières.

La création de ces comités illustre l'approche proactive du Forum dans l'identification et le traitement des nouveaux enjeux dans le domaine des droits civiques et de la bonne gouvernance.

Parmi les autres initiatives du Forum figurent l'organisation régulière de conférences et de rencontres internationales, qui offrent une opportunité d'échange entre les ombudsmans. Tous les deux ans, lors du congrès du Forum, les membres présentent leurs rapports d'activités, discutent des défis et réussites de leurs bureaux, et prennent position sur des déclarations ou recommandations communes. Ces rencontres favorisent non seulement l'alignement stratégique des institutions membres, mais aussi le renforcement de la solidarité et la création d'un front uni en faveur de l'indépendance et de l'autorité des ombudsmans au niveau international.

Le Forum entretient également des relations étroites avec d'autres organisations et réseaux pertinents. Par exemple, en octobre 2016, un protocole d'accord a été signé entre le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones et l'Institut international de l'ombudsman, établissant un cadre de coopération bilatérale. À travers ces partenariats, le Forum transfère l'expérience de la région francophone vers le réseau mondial des ombudsmans, tout en tirant parti du savoir-faire et du soutien international pour renforcer ses membres.

L'objectif commun de toutes ces collaborations est de souligner l'importance des institutions d'ombudsman dans la promotion de la transparence, de la responsabilité et de la confiance publique à travers le monde.

Réalisations et expériences réussies

Au cours de plus de deux décennies d'activité, le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones (FOMF) a enregistré des réalisations remarquables. L'un des succès majeurs du Forum a été l'expansion du modèle d'institution d'ombudsman dans des pays francophones qui en étaient auparavant dépourvus. Grâce aux efforts du Forum, plusieurs pays africains et asiatiques membres de la francophonie ont, après 1998, créé des bureaux d'ombudsman ou de médiateur de la République. Cela a permis de concrétiser l'un des objectifs initiaux des fondateurs du Forum : le développement de mécanismes de contrôle citoyen dans l'ensemble de l'espace francophone.

En parallèle, l'association a élargi son réseau à environ 50 membres en accueillant de nouvelles institutions, notamment issues de régions francophones d'Europe de l'Est et du Moyen-Orient, ce qui a permis un élargissement géographique considérable du soutien aux droits des citoyens.

Les actions de formation et de renforcement des capacités menées par le Forum ont également produit des résultats tangibles. La formation de personnel qualifié, l'élaboration de normes professionnelles communes et le partage d'expériences à travers des publications telles que le *Recueil doctrinal de l'ombudsman* ont grandement contribué à améliorer l'efficacité des institutions membres. Ces acquis ont permis d'améliorer la qualité du traitement des plaintes des citoyens et la capacité de recommandation des bureaux membres, ce qui s'est traduit, dans les pays adhérents, par une meilleure réponse des administrations publiques et une résolution plus équitable des litiges.

Sur le plan international, l'un des faits marquants du Forum est l'adoption d'une résolution par l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies en décembre 2024, en soutien aux institutions d'ombudsman. Cette résolution, fruit de l'initiative et des efforts du Forum en collaboration avec l'Institut international de l'ombudsman, reconnaît officiellement le rôle des ombudsmans et souligne des principes fondamentaux tels que l'indépendance, l'impartialité, la transparence, l'équité et la neutralité.

Cette résolution représente une étape cruciale dans la reconnaissance mondiale des ombudsmans en tant qu'acteurs essentiels de la bonne gouvernance, de la protection des droits humains et de l'état de droit. Autrement dit, le succès du Forum à rallier le soutien de l'ONU démontre que ses efforts dépassent le seul cadre francophone et parviennent à porter la voix unifiée des ombudsmans sur la scène internationale, en soulignant leur importance dans l'architecture de la gouvernance mondiale.

En matière d'impact interne également, le Forum a obtenu des résultats significatifs. Le lien fort établi entre les bureaux d'ombudsman des pays membres a permis à l'association d'intervenir rapidement dans les situations de crise – par exemple, face à des tentatives de certaines autorités gouvernementales de restreindre les compétences ou porter atteinte à l'indépendance des ombudsmans. Dans ces cas, le Forum a émis des déclarations collectives ou engagé des démarches diplomatiques pour défendre ses membres. Ce soutien collectif a constitué un garant institutionnel de leur indépendance et a permis à ces institutions de continuer à jouer un rôle effectif.

Par ailleurs, la synergie générée par le réseau du Forum a conduit à la création de plusieurs initiatives communes. Ainsi, au cours des deux dernières décennies, les bureaux membres ont, grâce aux échanges d'expériences au sein du Forum, mis

en œuvre des pratiques plus efficaces pour le traitement des plaintes citoyennes. Nombre d'entre eux se sont inspirés des méthodes de médiation rapide ou de la création de services dédiés à la protection des populations vulnérables dans d'autres pays.

Cet échange de bonnes pratiques et la standardisation partielle des procédures figurent parmi les apports indirects mais essentiels du Forum, dont l'influence sur l'efficacité globale des institutions membres est désormais largement reconnue.

Similarités historiques et culturelles entre deux organisations internationales d'ombudsmans

Dix pays sont membres à la fois du *Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones* (FOMF) et de l'*Association des Ombudsmans des pays membres de l'Organisation de la Coopération Islamique* (OCI). Ces pays sont : le Maroc, le Sénégal, Djibouti, la Guinée, le Bénin, la Côte d'Ivoire, le Togo, la Tunisie, le Niger et le Burkina Faso. Ces États se trouvent à l'intersection unique de deux sphères d'influence : l'une linguistico-culturelle francophone, l'autre religieuse et civilisationnelle islamique, ce qui leur confère une importance particulière.

Facteurs d'adhésion croisée : un héritage combiné

L'appartenance simultanée à ces deux réseaux est le résultat d'un mélange de facteurs historiques, culturels et géopolitiques.

- Héritage culturel et linguistique : Beaucoup de ces pays, notamment en Afrique, ont été d'anciennes colonies françaises. Ce passé colonial a contribué à faire du français une langue officielle qui joue un rôle central dans leurs systèmes administratifs, éducatifs et juridiques. Cela les lie naturellement au réseau francophone et au FOMF.
- Population majoritairement musulmane : En parallèle, ces pays comptent une population musulmane importante, ce qui les qualifie pour l'adhésion à l'OCI et à son réseau d'ombudsmans. L'identité religieuse et culturelle islamique renforce donc leur légitimité à faire partie de cette autre structure.

Cette double identité – linguistique et religieuse – fonctionne de façon complémentaire, rendant ces pays aptes à jouer un rôle central dans les deux sphères. Cela démontre que les identités multiples jouent un rôle stratégique dans la politique étrangère de ces États et peuvent être valorisées dans le cadre d'une diplomatie culturelle efficace.

> “En décembre 2024, l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies a adopté une résolution en soutien aux institutions d'ombudsman”

Un pont entre civilisations : diplomatie et innovation ombudsmannienne

Ces pays africains musulmans francophones ont le potentiel d'agir comme un “pont” culturel et institutionnel entre le monde islamique et l'espace francophone. En combinant les meilleures pratiques des deux univers, ils peuvent :

- Partager des expériences croisées et des modèles hybrides ;
- Faciliter le dialogue entre les deux sphères sur les questions de gouvernance et de droits humains ;
- Promouvoir de nouvelles approches de la médiation et de l'ombudsmannerie, inspirées à la fois des traditions juridiques francophones et des valeurs de justice sociale dans l'Islam.

Cette position privilégiée leur permettrait de jouer un rôle pionnier dans la convergence des principes et pratiques des deux organisations, et même de créer de nouveaux modèles d'ombudsman international, adaptés à des contextes culturels multiples.

Perspectives d'avenir

Le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs Francophones, dans sa vision stratégique à venir, continue de mettre l'accent sur le renforcement de l'état de droit et des droits citoyens dans l'ensemble de l'espace francophone.

Les priorités annoncées incluent :

- L'expansion vers de nouvelles régions francophones comme le Moyen-Orient, l'Asie du Sud-Est et l'Europe de l'Est, avec pour objectif d'encourager la création ou l'intégration de nouvelles institutions de médiation dans ces zones ;
- Le renforcement professionnel des bureaux membres par la formation continue et l'échange d'experts ;
- Une attention renforcée aux droits des enfants et des groupes vulnérables, ainsi qu'un engagement actif en faveur de l'égalité de genre.

En somme, le Forum entend étendre son influence, diversifier son réseau et approfondir son impact, tout en restant fidèle à sa mission première : promouvoir une gouvernance juste, transparente et respectueuse des droits fondamentaux dans le monde francophone.

Sources :

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- https://www.hautcommissariat.mc/en
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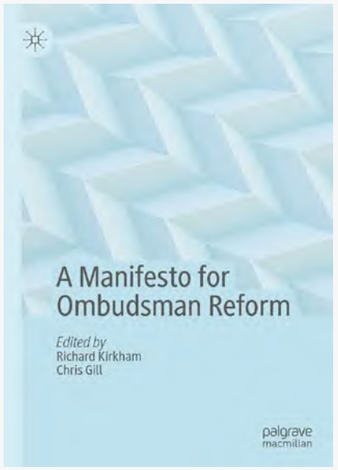
- https://www.clom-aomf.org

Ombudsman Library

*By: Dr. Sajedeh Moghaddami[1]



1. A Manifesto for Ombudsman Reform

Richard Kirkham (Senior Lecturer in Public Law at the University of Sheffield, UK) and Chris Gill (Lecturer in Public Law at the University of Glasgow, UK) in this book aim to persuade policymakers and legislators of the need for legal reform in the ombudsman sector and to document how such reform legislation can be effectively designed. In pursuit of this goal, the volume offers an academic response to the challenge raised by the current Parliamentary Ombudsman at a Justice Organisation event in February 2018. Drawing on the authors' original research, the book grounds its reform proposals in a fundamental rethinking of the focus and purpose of ombudsman systems.

A Manifesto for Ombudsman Reform addresses the key and recurring debates in ombudsman research, including the expected role of ombudsmen, the methods they should employ, the powers required for their effectiveness, and the means of ensuring both independence and accountability. The book shapes academic and policy discussions on the future of the ombudsman institution in the UK, and its analysis is likely to be of interest to scholars and policymakers in other jurisdictions as well.

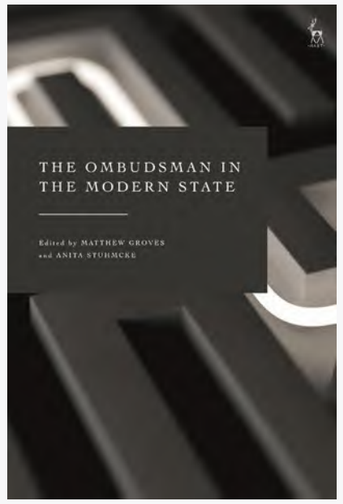
In her review, Professor Carol Harlow writes:

"Since the first ombudsman began work in our country in 1967, the institution has expanded, gained popularity, and achieved success. Ombudsmen have emerged sporadically across both public and private sectors. We can no longer speak of a unified public ombudsman system. The draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill that had been under consideration was sidelined due to Brexit. Now, we must start anew. The editors and authors of this book call for deeper and more systematic reforms. All of them have been researching ombudsmen for years, and anyone who reads this scholarly work will agree that there is no one better suited to address this topic. So let us step forward toward reform without delay."

A Manifesto for Ombudsman Reform 1st ed. 2020 Edition

- Publisher : Palgrave Pivot
- Publication date : April 7, 2021
- Edition : 1st ed. 2020
- Language : English
- Print length : 180 pages
- ISBN-10: 3030406148
- ISBN-13: 978-3030406141

1. Researcher at the Center for Training and Research on Administrative Health and Anti-Corruption, General Inspection Organization of Iran



2. The Ombudsman in Modern Government

Ombudsman institutions are a global phenomenon and an essential part of the public law framework in modern liberal democracies. This edited volume examines the role of the ombudsman in contemporary governance by bringing together leading international scholars from across the globe-including Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, South Africa, Germany, and Austria. The book explores the current and future challenges facing ombudsman institutions and the governmental systems within which they operate. Its global perspective offers a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of how ombudsmen function in both civil law and common law systems.

Two central themes, explored by the book's editors-**Matthew Groves**, Alfred Deakin Professor of Law at Deakin University, Australia, and **Anita Stuhmcke**, Professor and Associate Dean of Research at the University of Technology Sydney Law Faculty-are the enduring question of the viability and function of ombudsmen within evolving systems of public law and the challenges they face in modern governance. The collection contributes significantly to public law scholarship by addressing a common issue across all public law inquiry: the evolving nature of modern public administration.

The **first part** of the book focuses on better understanding the development and future of legal ombuds institutions. It addresses themes such as:

- The role of the legal ombudsman in modern governance
- Maladministration and the unique jurisdiction of ombudsmen
- The enforceability of ombudsman recommendations and their interaction with judicial review
- Understanding how health organizations respond to health ombudsman investigations-a new conceptual model
- The role of ombuds institutions in ensuring equal access to justice for all

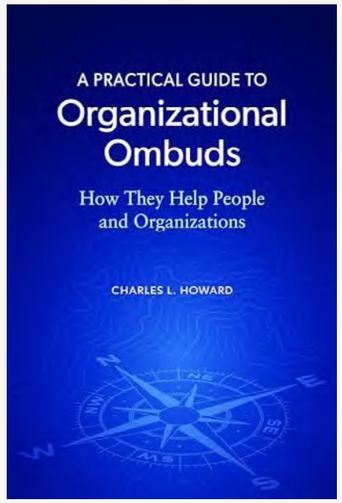
The **second part** deals with modern governance challenges faced by ombudsman institutions. Topics include:

- Bringing the ombudsman's role and powers into the 21st century
- Ombudsmen and courts in the digital age: shaping digital legal consciousness
- The effectiveness of complaint resolution: what can we learn from industry-based ombudsman schemes? (by **John McMillan**, Australian National University)
- Decentralized regulation in the ombudsman sector: the British model
- Reforming the national ombudsman scheme-a journey
- Ombudsmen and anti-democracy: the gas earthquakes in the Netherlands and the democratic role of the national ombudsman
- Towards resolving healthcare complaints
- High-ranking officials at street level: a mixed-methods study on the advisory days of Austrian ombudsmen
- Rethinking the classic ombudsman: disability rights, democracy, and inclusion
- A look at the guardian: the role of the New Zealand Parliamentary Ombudsman in the health and disability system
- Ombudsman institutions as non-judicial mechanisms for protecting and promoting the rights of older persons

This volume offers a timely and critical contribution to the evolving understanding of ombudsmen's place in modern legal and political systems, showcasing their continuing relevance-and necessary reforms-in the face of 21st-century challenges.

The Ombudsman in the Modern State

- Publisher : Hart Publishing
- Publication date : October 19, 2023
- Language : English
- Print length : 480 pages
- ISBN-10: 1509943285
- ISBN-13: 978-1509943289



3. A Practical Guide to Organizational Ombuds: How They Help People and Organizations

Many individuals and organizations are unfamiliar with what organizational ombuds do or how they operate. When proposals are made to establish such programs, leaders often raise questions-wondering, for instance, why another overhead cost is necessary. They seek to understand what real value these programs add and frequently express skepticism about ombuds' claims of confidentiality and how such offices can function independently within an organization. When an ombudsman might be a staff member of the same organization, people question whether these programs truly offer unique benefits.

This book serves as a practical guide for anyone with questions about ombuds programs and their operations. The first section directly addresses many of the tough questions the author has encountered over the years-questions such as: What exactly are ombuds offices? What needs do they fulfill that other similar bodies cannot? Why is confidentiality so critical, and why is the structure of the office essential to maintaining that confidentiality?

The second section presents stories that illustrate real-life examples of what ombuds do. These are genuine, anonymized cases-not fictional composites-shared by actual ombuds practitioners. These stories, more than any abstract discussion, reveal the unique value that ombuds programs offer.

A Practical Guide to Organizational Ombuds: How They Help People and Organizations

- Publisher : ABA Book Publishing
- Publication date : January 1, 2022
- Language : English
- Print length : 342 pages
- ISBN-10: 1639050531
- ISBN-13: 978-1639050536

4. A Guide to Best Practices in Combating Corruption

This book outlines 27 best practices, each representing an initiative from a member state of the European Union that has had a positive impact on preventing or combating corruption. The *Guide to Best Practices in Combating Corruption*, which compiles successful practices of accountability, transparency, and ombudsman operations from across the EU, can serve as a list of concepts and ideas for evaluating and improving anti-corruption and ombudsman efforts in other countries. With a practical and analytical approach, this book has been selected and translated as a reliable reference for researchers, inspectors, and professionals in this field, with the hope that it can contribute to leveraging successful experiences and preventing corruption.

5. The Ombudsman in Islamic Countries: Programs and Special Initiatives

This book first explores milestones and key developments in the ombudsman institutions of several leading Islamic countries. It then examines regional and international collaborations, with an emphasis on the role of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC). The next section presents case studies of successful ombudsman programs and initiatives in countries such as Turkey, Morocco, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, and Iran. The book concludes with an analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing ombudsman institutions in Islamic countries.

6. A Study of Ombudsman Laws, Regulations, and Institutional Structures

Ombudsman institutions around the world differ significantly in terms of jurisdiction, structure, and complaint-handling procedures. Therefore, reviewing the laws, regulations, and structures of these institutions in various countries can help identify strengths and weaknesses, and provide insights for improving complaint handling in other jurisdictions.

This book aims to introduce ombudsman institutions in leading countries such as Sweden, the United Kingdom, South Korea, France, Singapore, Japan, Australia, the United States, China, and Hong Kong, as well as Islamic countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia. It also examines their complaint intake and handling procedures, as well as relevant laws and regulations.

7. The Ombudsman as a Global Institution

The author of this book illustrates how the ombudsman evolved from an administrative law innovation in a handful of countries to a global institution. The first chapter introduces the ombudsman concept and presents the theoretical framework of the study. Chapters two and three focus on case studies of Finland and the European Ombudsman. Another chapter explores the historical development of the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice in Finland.

The chapter "*The European Ombudsman as a Supranational Accountability Institution*" is followed by a section on the transformations and challenges faced by the European Ombudsman since its inception. The book is organized around three interconnected themes: governance, public administration, and accountability.

8. A Legal Analysis of the Ombudsman in Iran and the World

This book is organized into nine chapters:

- Chapter 1 explores the conceptual foundations of the ombudsman;
- Chapter 2 provides a genealogical study of the topic;
- Chapter 3 categorizes the different typologies of ombudsman institutions;
- Chapter 4 discusses the roles and responsibilities of ombudsmen, including their human rights, inspection, oversight, and anti-corruptionfunctions;
- Chapter 5 focuses on the importance of the ombudsman in promoting administrativetransparency;
- Chapter 6 examines ombudsman institutions in Iran and their legal foundations;
- Chapter 7 reviews international trends in the development of ombudsman institutions;
- Chapter 8 analyzes the challenges to ombudsman development in Iran and proposes solutions;
- Chapter 9 contains a selection of legal documents related to ombudsman institutions at both the national and international levels.

9. Introduction to the General Inspection Organization of Iran: The Ombudsman Institution of the Islamic Republic (Foundations, Structure, and Oversight Activities)

This book, as the first comprehensive reference on the subject, introduces the General Inspection Organization (GIO) as the highest supervisory body in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It discusses the GIO's position within Iran's governance structure, compares it with other domestic and international oversight institutions, and examines in detail the relevant laws and regulations governing its operation.

Adopting an analytical approach, the book provides comparative insights into the GIO's functions and structure relative to other similar national and international ombudsman institutions. It offers a valuable opportunity for drawing upon global experiences and best practices.

Overall, this work is a notable and highly recommended resource for inspectors, professionals, and researchers in the fields of oversight, auditing, and anti-corruption.

10. Specialized English for Anti-Corruption, Administrative Integrity, and Ombudsman Institutions

This book is designed to enhance the linguistic and professional competencies of readers engaged in the fields of transparent governance, administrative integrity, and the role of ombudsman institutions in combating corruption.

Structured into three sections, the first part introduces essential terminology and key concepts related to administrative corruption, public integrity, and ombudsman systems. The second part offers contrastive translation of two key international documents: the *United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)* and *UN General Assembly Resolution 79/177 (adopted on 17 December 2024)* on the role of ombudsman institutions.

The third section presents a comprehensive glossary of frequently used terms and expressions in these domains, along with accurate Persian equivalents.

11. Ombudsman Performance: Indicators and Measurement Tools

The main goal of this translated book is to guide ombudsman institutions around the world-including members of the Asian Ombudsman Association-in evaluating their own performance.

To this end, it discusses the nature and conceptual foundations of the ombudsman, its key features, interactions, its status within Iran and internationally, and presents performance measurement indicators based on processes and impact. The book outlines practical principles to support performance evaluation and institutional development in the ombudsman field.

Call for Papers

❖ Esteemed Experts in Ombudsman and Mediator Institutions

As you are aware, the Center for Ombudsman Studies and Anti-Corruption Research at the General Inspection Organization of Iran (GIO) has, since the beginning of 2022, launched the quarterly journal "Experiences of Nations: Anti-Corruption and Innovation" with the aim of enhancing institutional knowledge and familiarizing readers with international experiences related to the Organization's core missions. To date, eight issues have been published and made available to esteemed scholars.

On the occasion of the Fourth General Assembly of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association, hosted by the General Inspection Organization of Iran on May 13–14, 2025, a special edition (Issue No. 7) of the journal was prepared under the theme "Ombudsman Affairs", authored by a distinguished group of in-house and external researchers specializing in ombudsman institutions and administrative corruption. The English version of this issue was distributed at the event and warmly welcomed by the participating countries.

In light of the positive reception and the necessity of maintaining scientific engagement with reputable domestic and international institutions—especially in the Islamic world—the journal is now published bilingually in Persian and English, and some articles are also available in French.

Accordingly, and with the goal of enriching the content of the journal, we cordially invite experts from ombudsman offices, mediation institutions, and anti-corruption agencies to contribute scholarly articles or short notes reflecting their preferred topics, innovative research, and impactful ombudsman experiences related to the aforementioned themes.

Please submit your contributions via email to:
bazrasi.research@136.ir

Appel à articles

❖ Chers experts éminents et distingués des institutions d'Ombudsman et médiateurs

Comme vous le savez, le Centre de formation et de recherches en matière d'Ombudsman et de lutte contre la corruption de l'Organisation de l'Inspection Générale de la République islamique d'Iran, dans le cadre de sa mission de renforcement des connaissances institutionnelles et de familiarisation avec les expériences internationales dans les domaines liés aux missions de l'Organisation, a lancé depuis le début de l'année 2022 la publication d'une revue trimestrielle intitulée « Expériences des Nations : Lutte contre la corruption et initiatives ». À ce jour, huit numéros ont été publiés et mis à disposition des chercheurs et spécialistes.

À l'occasion de la quatrième assemblée générale du Forum des Ombudsmans des pays membres de l'Organisation de la Coopération Islamique, tenue les 13 et 14 mai 2025 à Téhéran, sous l'hospitalité de l'Organisation de l'Inspection Générale, le septième numéro de cette revue a été publié sous forme de numéro spécial consacré à l'Ombudsman. Ce numéro, rédigé avec le concours d'un groupe de collègues et de chercheurs de renom dans les domaines de l'Ombudsman et de la lutte contre la corruption administrative, a été distribué lors de ladite assemblée en version anglaise, et accueilli chaleureusement par les délégations invitées.

Compte tenu de cet accueil positif et dans le but de renforcer les échanges scientifiques avec des institutions spécialisées de référence, tant au niveau national qu'international, en particulier dans l'espace des pays islamiques, la revue est désormais publiée en version bilingue (persan-anglais) et, pour certains articles, en français.

À cette fin, et pour enrichir le contenu de cette revue, nous vous invitons cordialement à contribuer en proposant des articles, tribunes ou notes d'analyse portant sur des sujets pertinents, des recherches innovantes ou des expériences intéressantes liées à l'Ombudsman, à la médiation ou à la lutte contre la corruption.

Nous vous prions de bien vouloir transmettre vos contributions à l'adresse e-mail suivante :
bazrasi.research@136.ir

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE la francophonie

Historique de la création du Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie

Octobre 1996
Buenos Aires, Argentine

Lors de la sixième conférence internationale de l'Institut international de l'Ombudsman (IOI) tenue à Buenos Aires, l'idée de créer un Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie a été proposée par l'ombudsman de la province de Québec, au Canada, et le Médiateur de la République française. Leur objectif était de renforcer la coopération et la coordination entre les pays francophones dans les domaines des droits de l'homme, de la promotion de la participation démocratique, de l'amélioration du traitement des plaintes des citoyens et du renforcement des bureaux d'ombudsmans et de médiateurs dans ces pays.

9 au 12 juin 1997
Québec, Canada

Cette vision a pris forme grâce au soutien financier de l'« Agence de la Francophonie» et s'est concrétisée lors de la première réunion des ombudsmans et médiateurs francophones.

Mai 1998
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

À la suite de ce congrès, un comité de suivi a été mis en place et le bureau de l'ombudsman de la province de Québec, au Canada, a été chargé de rédiger le projet de statut en vue de la création de l'association des ombudsmans et médiateurs francophones.

Novembre 1999
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Avec l'adoption du statut et la participation de 18 membres fondateurs, le premier congrès du Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie s'est tenu. Cette réunion a rassemblé des représentants de l'Organisation de la Francophonie, de l'Institut international de l'Ombudsman et du Bureau des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies.

Aujourd'hui

Le Forum des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie compte aujourd'hui près de 50 membres issus d'Europe, d'Afrique, des Amériques et de l'Océanie. L'association continue de promouvoir le développement et le renforcement des institutions indépendantes de médiation dans les pays francophones.

Source: https://www.aomf-ombudsmans-francophonie.org

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