

## Parliamentarians and the Supervisory Bodies Tower against Corruption



**Adel Bin Abdel-Rahman Al-Asumi**



President of the Arab Parliament

**Corruption is a serious phenomenon, which threatens societies' security and stability, wastes financial and human energies, impedes the development efforts and prevents the resources equitable distribution. Indeed, there is a close link between corruption in its various types and the forms of organized crime, such as terrorism, drug and human trafficking, money laundering etc. Hence, fighting corruption is a vital requirement for achieving sustainable development, enhancing the countries democratic building, establishing the rule of law, as well as consolidating the transparency and good governance principles. It is also one of the main guarantees for maintaining an effective and administrative apparatus capable of working efficiently in line with the construction and development requirements.**

Undoubtedly, parliaments are institutions that can play a major role in enhancing transparency, supporting accountability and combating corruption in all its forms, at the national, regional and global levels, by virtue of their powers. In fact, some regional and international parliamentary groups and organizations have been established for this specific purpose, because corruption is no longer an internal national affair; rather, it is a worldwide phenomenon, varying in intensity from one region to another and from one country to another.

By reviewing the constitutions of Arab countries and the internal regulations of their councils and parliaments, we find that parliamentarians assume a major role in preventing corruption, through strengthening the tools of transparency, disclosure, governance and raising awareness of its risks. They also combat corruption through criminalization and prosecution, while performing their basic functions in the areas of legislation and control, which places a great burden on them in the face of this serious scourge.

At the legislative level, parliamentarians assume the primary role of enacting legislation and laws to guarantee and impose effective frameworks and mechanisms for drying up the sources of corruption, and setting necessary penalties and deterrent measures for preventing it. The legislative role of parliamentarians also includes urging governments to join the relevant Arab, regional and international conventions, and working to include the provisions of these conventions in national legislation to ensure individual countries' commitment to them.

As far as their supervisory function is concerned, parliamentarians are responsible for activating the various forms of monitoring and accountability mechanisms for ensuring the proper implementation of anti-corruption laws in line with their enactment purposes. Parliamentarians also have many supervisory tools ranging from requesting briefings to questioning the executive authority, with its various organs, if it fails to fulfill its duties in taking preventive measures for preventing corruption or taking necessary measures for prosecuting the corrupt. In this context, parliamentarians can form special committees to investigate the corruption-related files and issues, as well as periodically discuss the reports of the relevant regulatory bodies and institutions.

In light of the serious worldwide repercussions of the Corona pandemic, the parliamentarians' responsibility in combating the corruption scourge has become greater, particularly in the most affected sectors. They have played a vital role in following up and monitoring implementation of the plans designed for achieving safe recovery from this pandemic, through verifying that the executive authority and all state institutions exercise their functions as per the constitution and law for achieving the citizens' public interest.

In fact, the parliamentarians' performance of their role in this context requires securing the necessary technical support for them, by providing appropriate technical and administrative services to enhance their ability to evaluate the existing legislation and issue new laws. This is because

fighting corruption is a permanent activity and diligent work requiring ceaseless monitoring and evaluation.

#### Anti-Corruption on the Agenda of the Arab Parliament

In its new strategy, the Arab Parliament attaches great importance to promoting joint Arab action for preventing and combating corruption and supporting transparency, realizing that corruption is no longer a local phenomenon specific to one country. The Arab Parliament is keen on coordinating efforts and enhancing cooperation among Arab countries as well as between them and other countries to exchange the best experiences and practices related to promoting integrity, combating corruption and creating the appropriate environment for work, production and progress.

The Arab Parliament has always stressed the importance of activating implementation of the provisions of the UN Conventions, the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention and the other relevant regional and international conventions. This aims to ensure that Arab countries implement their obligations under these conventions, as well as conduct a regular evaluation of the national legislation, regulations and decisions related to combating and preventing corruption to determine their adequacy and compliance with the relevant Arab and international conventions.

The Arab Parliament has a firm belief in the noble role and appreciated efforts exerted by the institutions and supervisory bodies in the Arab countries for combating corruption and spreading the values of integrity, transparency and governance. This reflects the Arab Parliament's keenness on enhancing cooperation with these bodies and establishing institutional partnerships with them to empower parliamentarians as well as build and strengthen their capacities in the area of governance, transparency, integrity and combating corruption.

#### Cooperation between Egypt and the Arab Parliament

Egypt is one of the first countries to sign the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention. In addition, Egypt has a strong commitment, legislation and a number of laws for preventing and combating corruption as well as a national anti-corruption strategy listed by the United Nations as one of Egypt's most successful practices in preventing and combating corruption.

In fact, the relationship between Egypt and the Arab Parliament is one of cooperation and partnership, particularly the cooperation between the Arab Parliament and the Administrative Control Authority, the body concerned with preventing and combating corruption in Egypt.

In light of the accumulated national, Arab and international experiences with the Administrative Control Authority in Egypt, and the Egyptian Anti-Corruption Academy (EACA), with its recognized role in qualifying the human cadres working in this field, the cooperation between the Arab Parliament and the Administrative Control Authority aims to enhance the Arab parliamentarians' capabilities for combating Corruption. It also aims to organize joint events based on the mutual technical support, achieving ideal exchange of the various Arab expertise and experiences, as well as building a scientific, academic and research partnership between the two parties to produce work programs, training courses, and study tours for parliamentarians to familiarize them with other parties' experiences.

The cooperation between the Arab Parliament



One of the Arab Parliament's meetings in October 2021

**"Anti-Corruption Manual for Arab Parliamentarians" will be the first document of its kind at this level. This manual includes a clear interactive map of the relevant international, regional and Arab agreements, as well as the most prominent national laws, which can be used as effective guiding models in developing the legislative structure for preventing and combating this phenomenon.**

and the Administrative Control Authority aims to develop a "Guide for Arab Parliamentarians to Combat Corruption". This guide will be the first document of its kind at this level, including a clear interactive map of the relevant international, regional and Arab agreements, as well as the most prominent national laws, which can be used as effective guiding models in developing the legislative structure for preventing and combating corruption.

It will also provide the ideal frameworks and standards supposed to be available in successful experiences in combating corruption, based on some leading national, regional and international experiences.

This guide represents a qualitative addition, which can strengthen the Arab parliamentarians capabilities and empower them at all levels, as well as familiarize them with the supporting tools to play their role and shoulder their responsibilities in preventing and combating corruption. It will also enable them to follow international, regional and national indicators and set the necessary policies and legislation for implementing them through corresponding to the specificity of Arab societies.

Effective corruption prevention requires an independent parliament capable of exercising its duties and shouldering its responsibilities in legislation, control and accountability. This is the best approach to consolidating the culture of fighting corruption and achieve the growth, prosperity and sustainable development, sought by our Arab peoples. We should also realize that the reasons for corruption proliferation are variable; and they change and vary from place to place and from time to time, which requires constant vigilance and steadfastness. It is also important to emphasize that a major aspect of the war on corruption is linked to increasing societal awareness of its dangers and its devastating repercussions on societies and countries alike. This means that combating corruption is a shared societal responsibility that is not limited to the role played by official authorities; and all individuals, civil society organizations and the media must unite forces to prevent and eradicate it.

