

Sieging and Demolishing: Developing the Methods and Policies of Combating Corruption



Surely, criminal thought and corrupt practices have developed. They are no longer limited to individuals and groups confined to a certain geographical area. In the last decade, they have become transnational crimes, casting dark shadows over economies and means of development in defiance of laws and precautionary measures taken by countries to confront them. As a result, it was necessary at the international level to restructure and update systems, controls, and procedures that fight and combat corruption. The General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed an international document on combating corruption by virtue of a resolution issued in 2003: "[The United Nations Convention against Corruption". It entered into force on December 14, 2005 to become the most comprehensive and widespread Convention at the international level in this field.



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Egypt was one of the first countries to accede to the convention, believing in the inevitability of concerted efforts and convergence of legislation aimed at combating corruption. The UN Convention was followed by an international trend towards expanding regional conventions of preventing and combating corruption. The League of Arab States issued and put into force the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention. The African Union issued the African Convention on preventing and combating corruption. There are also networks, gatherings and unions working to besiege and combat corruption, such as the Arab Anti-Corruption Network, the European Network for the Prevention of Corruption, the Egmont Group, and the African Union of Anti-Corruption Bodies.

We all have to realize the real negative impact of corruption at all levels and in all fields. It has negative social consequences which lead to disruption of moral values, feelings of frustration and the spread of indifference and negativity. It gives way to intolerance, extremism in thought and the spread of crime as a reaction to the collapse of values and unequal opportunities, and the sense of injustice and unfairness. Corruption leads also to unprofessionalism, loss of work value, acceptance of the idea of neglecting the standards of performing job duties, declining interest in the public right, the spread of hatred among the segments of society, great imbalance that affects work ethics and community values, and the prevalence of a state of mind among individuals and groups that justifies corruption. This leads to a loss of confidence in the importance of work and its value, as the income gained from corrupt practices exceeds that gained from honest work. Corruption also affects economic development, as it so corruption leads to disinterest of foreign investments, and the flight of local capital, because corruption conflicts with the existence of a competitive environment. All lead to a general weakness in providing job opportunities, and expands unemployment, poverty and waste of resources due to the overlap of personal interests with public development projects and the high cost to the public treasury. It leads to the emigration of economic competencies due to the emergence of nepotism and favoritism in occupying public positions. As for its impact on administrative level, it creates lack of respect for working time and the employee's failure to perform required work (complacency and slackening), failure to comply with the assignments and directives of superiors, fraud in the completion of work and lack of responsibility, issuing orders and instructions that violate the system and functional norms, harming the public

interest and achieving personal interest, failure to maintain the dignity and prestige of the public office, combining two jobs at the same time, misuse of power, mediation, favoritism, unfairness in dealing with the public, financial deviations, non-compliance with the provisions, rules, and public and private financial texts of the organization, extravagance and waste of public money and criminal crimes such as bribery, misappropriation of public money, forgery and damage to public money and all functional excesses.

Egypt has restructured and updated its legislative system of fighting corruption, issuing the Civil Service Law and its Executive Regulations (containing Articles that support justice, integrity, merit, transparency and combating corruption), a law regulating the work of associations and other institutions working in the field of civil work, and an investment law simplifying procedures and eliminating bureaucracy. These procedures had an active role in attracting more foreign investments and increasing investor confidence, as well as a direct impact in modifying Egypt's classification in some international indicators, including the ease of business index issued by the World Bank, and the Law on Contracts concluded by public entities, which replaced the Tenders and Auctions Law to comply with international standards of public procurement. Amendments were also made in some legislations, including the Penal Code, which included articles that criminalize the bribery of a foreign public official or an employee of an international public organization, and the Anti-Money Laundering Law which included articles concerned with expanding the source's crime to include any felony or misdemeanor and increasing the authorities obligated to notify a suspected money laundering crime. Amendments also included the Laws of Illicit Gain and Criminal Procedures, by adding articles concerned with reconciliation with the accused in crimes of aggression against public money and amending the expiration period of the criminal case so that it begins after the public employee leaves the service, as well as preparing some draft laws, including the Law on Protection of Witnesses and Whistleblowers, the Law on the Access and Freedom of Information, and the Law of international judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

With the practical application of the UN Convention, it proved that the controls, rules, precautionary measures and legislative amendments implemented by many countries were not sufficient to curb corruption and limit sinful acts, and that the most effective

treatment is to create a state of societal consensus between individuals, groups and countries aimed at rejecting corruption and highlighting its negative impact on all levels and aspects of life. As Egypt has always been a pioneer and in affirmation of its sincere political will in confronting and combating corruption, the President of the Republic declared that building people and developing their capabilities is one of the most important goals of the next stage, as Egypt has witnessed a growing interest in combating corruption and a remarkable development in the efforts made to enhance the values of integrity and transparency and raise awareness among citizens of its severe effects. Egypt has taken many measures, most notably the establishment of the National Coordinating Committee for Preventing and Combating Corruption and its subcommittee. It launched and implemented a national strategy to combat corruption in two phases from 2014 to 2022. All administrative units, law enforcement agencies, sovereign and religious institutions, and civil society organizations joined forces to implement the objectives and procedures of this strategy, whose vision was to emphasize society's rejection of corruption and strengthen the administrative apparatus to become more efficient and effective. The strategy has become a message to all, emphasizing that integrity, transparency and accountability are priorities of the state in all fields to achieve sustainable development and the well-being of citizens. The Administrative Control Authority has adopted the idea of building the human being, expanding the scope of his knowledge and realizing the negative impact of corruption on his personal capabilities and state gains. It has, in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning, prepared and put into force the Code of Conduct for

Employees of the State's Administrative Apparatus; it developed a modified version of it, distributed it to all units of the state's administrative apparatus and made it available on private websites. Most employees were trained on it, and penalties were imposed in the internal regulations for its violators. In implementing the strategy, the authority monitored the preparation of codes of conduct for many entities, consistent with the nature and functions of their employees. Codes of conduct were issued to members of the Public Prosecution, members of the Administrative Prosecution, diplomats and envoys at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and employees of the Central Bank. The authority cooperated with a civil society organization to prepare a guideline for implementing an Integrity Code in the private sector, and cooperated with Cairo University to prepare an ethical Code for the university community, which included a Code for university students and a code for faculty members and their assistants. The authority carried out several media awareness campaigns on the dangers of corruption according to a study in which media experts, psychologists and sociologists participated. The first campaign was launched between 2015 and 2016 under the slogan "Egypt is stronger than corruption" to strengthen the

citizen's confidence in state institutions and to emphasize the will and ability to confront corruption, followed by the 2017-2018 campaign with an idea centered on "mirrors" that carried the slogan "If we look in mirrors, this is the beginning" and the slogan "You are the mirror of yourself". It was broadcasted on all television channels, radio stations and social networking sites to directly influence the trends and behavior of the citizen, stir the conscience of society and affirm the joint responsibility of the citizen and state institutions in fighting corruption. In 2019/2020-, the Authority launched a multi-campaign under the slogan "Know Your Right" to inform citizens of their rights in different laws and raise their awareness of some specific crimes and how to avoid them, such as bribery, forgery, fraud, embezzlement, graft, money laundering, illegal foreign exchange in violation of the Central Bank law and trafficking crimes in humans and human organs. Realizing that today's youngsters are tomorrow's youth and the nation's leaders in the future, the Authority cooperated with the Ministry of Education and formed the "Higher Committee for Consolidating Values". One of its most prominent achievements was the National Standards Document for Kindergarten, on the basis of which the kindergarten curriculum was designed with the aim of supporting the values of Citizenship in children,

including providing the child with the principles of democracy and proper ethics, such as honesty, loyalty and preserving public and private property). Brochures and competitions were prepared for students and teachers to raise their awareness and consolidate their values. Subjects at various educational levels have included concepts related to the values of integrity, transparency and anti-corruption, such as religion, social studies, philosophy,

national education, psychology and Arabic. Covers of school books included some patriotic and moral slogans supporting the rejection of corruption to deepen the values of citizenship and belonging, in accordance to the content of the scientific material and the age of the student.

To sum up, corruption is the biggest obstacle in the way of sustainable development and a great defect that undermines investment opportunities. It is not a problem confined to certain countries, but rather a global phenomenon that affects all societies and economies in varying degrees. Each country deals with it according to its culture, perceptions and the will of its leaders. We are certain that the sincere efforts in the field of preventing and combating corruption, by the Administrative Control Authority in cooperation with law enforcement agencies and all units of the state's administrative apparatus, under the directives of an honest Leader whose will is relentless, keen without complacency on the capabilities of the country and the citizen, will have great impact on undermining and dismantling corruption.

May Allah Bless Egypt!

