Transparency International Defence & Security

https://ti-defence.org/

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Background

Corruption is a fundamental threat to human security and peace. Where corruption is rampant, conflict is not far. All of the ten lowest-ranking countries in Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) exhibit low to very low states of peace in the 2023 Global Peace Index (GPI), with four of them being amongst the lowest-ranking countries in the GPI too.

Corruption in the defence and security sectors in particular has a far-reaching negative impact on human security as well as on sustainable development as a whole. It renders defence and security institutions ineffective, which in turn undermines the provision of security, promotion of rule of law, and protection of human rights. The grievances that it creates erode public trust, fuel instability and in some cases drive recruitment into violent extremist groups – the list goes on. It distorts political incentives away from decision-making in the public interest towards decision-making in private interests, and wastes money that could otherwise have been spent on public services and other public goods.

The world has come a long way towards understanding the threat that corruption poses to security, as highlighted by the UN Security Council when it met in 2018 to discuss the nexus between corruption and conflict. But this understanding is not yet cemented internationally, and does not reliably translate into anti-corruption being made an urgent and critical requirement by governments and multilateral organisations concerned with national and international security.

Anti-corruption endeavours frequently take a back seat to traditional security priorities. For instance, peace accords prioritise the prevention of renewed armed conflict above all else, sometimes sidelining robust anti-corruption measures. This oversight poses a significant risk as unchecked corruption, left unaddressed for the sake of immediate cessation of armed violence, can become a breeding ground for future conflict. Predatory economies that emerge in contexts with high risks of corruption can also undermine long-term stability and human security, as well as perpetuate conditions conducive to further corruption.

This trend continues in the defence and security sectors, which are often directly linked to conflict and insecurity, and closely connected with instability such as coups. The very sectors which are most explicitly engaged with conflict and insecurity, and most closely connected with instability such coups,

are frequently overlooked when it comes to anti-corruption measures, or given a special pass. This is despite the defence and security sectors being exceptionally prone to corruption, due to their particularly high levels of secrecy, complexity, and spending. 62% of the countries ranked in Transparency International's [Government Defence Integrity Index](#) (GDI) indicate high to critical levels of corruption risks across their defence sectors. Perhaps unsurprisingly, five of the ten lowest-ranking countries on the GDI also show low to very low levels of peace according to the GPI.

Chapeau

(Add your concise, concrete, and action-oriented language for the Chapeau)

Our vision for a New Agenda for Peace which enables our collective security system to better prevent, manage and resolve conflicts, guided by principles of trust, solidarity and universality, necessitates global efforts to address the drivers of conflict and insecurity. Corruption, conflict and instability are fundamentally intertwined, and prioritising the fight against corruption is a crucial step in breaking the threat that this toxic nexus poses for present and future generations.

Addressing corruption in the defence and security sectors, those whose very role it is to provide security and protection to populations, is of particular urgency. Prioritising the building of more effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions in these sectors is crucial for the achievement of sustainable and human-centred peace and security. These long-term goals, for which anti-corruption is a crucial pre-requisite, must not take a back-seat to shorter-term security goals.

States Parties:

Acknowledging that corruption has a devastating impact on societies, economies, political cohesion, and conflict prevention;

Noting that corruption depletes state resources, erodes public trust in state institutions, causes societal grievances, undermines the rule of law, empowers non-state and extremist armed groups, and weakens defence and security institutions, thereby posing a fundamental threat to security;

Recognising that corruption can serve as a weapon of statecraft, destabilising even strong democracies;

Understanding that corruption in defence and security has a particularly pernicious effect on human, state, and international security, undermining the effectiveness of security forces, facilitating the proliferation of weapons, and increasing the risk of conflict;

Concerned about the resultant threat to global security posed by corruption, as a driver and enabler of conflict, insecurity, and instability;

- Commits to enhance the alignment between governmental initiatives tackling corruption and peace and security initiatives.
- Encourages States Parties to integrate anti-corruption efforts into their national security, foreign policy and development agendas, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure a holistic and sustainable approach to combating corruption as a security threat;

- Urges States Parties to take concrete steps to prevent and combat corruption in the defence and security sectors by strengthening their legal and institutional frameworks, enhancing transparency and accountability, and promoting public participation in decision-making processes;
- Encourages States Parties to develop and implement national action plans on corruption in the defence and security sectors;
- Urges States Parties to provide adequate resources and support to anti-corruption agencies and other institutions responsible for preventing and combating corruption in the defence and security sectors.

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

(Add your organization's concise, concrete, and action-oriented recommendations for Chapter 1)

Chapter II. International peace and security

(Add your organization's concise, concrete, and action-oriented recommendations for Chapter 2)

States Parties need to agree on action to tackle corruption risks, particularly in the defence and security sectors, as part of their efforts to tackle the drivers of conflict and blockers of sustainable peace and security.

Global recognition of corruption as a threat to international security and the imperative for collective action at a multilateral level and at state level to address it, is a key first step.

Effective, accountable, and inclusive defence and security institutions are crucial for the achievement of sustainable and meaningful peace and security. And to build such institutions, tackling corruption must be prioritised, so that decisions and actions are taken in the interests of populations rather than for private gain or interest.

States Parties therefore:

- Commit to approaching anti-corruption as an essential component of security and stability;
- Affirm that corruption poses a significant threat to security, encompassing various dimensions, including economic, political, social, and environmental, and underscores the need to recognise and address this threat comprehensively for sustainable peace;
- Recognise that short-term security priorities must not override anti-corruption objectives, as this will undermine long-term security; and reflect this acknowledgment in resolutions, reports, and the work of the UN Secretariat and its partners;
- Consider and address corruption in all international, national, and human security strategies and approaches;
- Include an agenda item on policy solutions to address corruption strategically as a security threat within the framework of the Pact for the Future and future implementation policies, in order to review progress and share best practices in addressing this critical issue.

Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

(Add your organization's concise, concrete, and action-oriented recommendations for Chapter 3)

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

(Add your organization's concise, concrete, and action-oriented recommendations for Chapter 4)

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

(Add your organization's concise, concrete, and action-oriented recommendations for Chapter 5)