

Corruption in Arab Region

Kinda Hattar
Regional Advisor

Transparency International



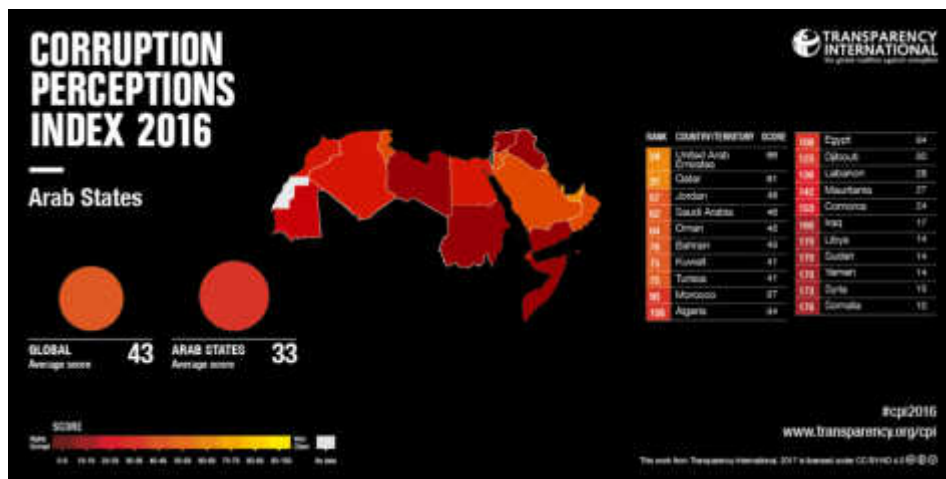
- Global Movement for Fighting corruption
- Secretariat in Berlin
- Over 100 Chapters (branch offices) around the world that are independent national NGOs who are accredited by TI-S based on integrity and transparency standards.
- TI in the Arab region: 7 effective and efficient Chapters in:
 - Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Bahrain, Tunisia and Morocco**
- TI globally is known for:
 - Corruption Perception Index (CPI)
 - Corruption Barometer
 - National Integrity System Studies
 - Advocacy and Legal Advice centers
 - Corruption in Defence Sector
 - Corruption in Mining sector
 - Corruption in Humanitarian Aid
 - Political corruption

Corruption in the Arab region



Despite the political changes that shook the Arab region six years ago, the hope for Arab countries to fight corruption and end impunity has not seen any progress yet. On the contrary, the majority of [Arab countries have failed to fulfil the will of the people](#) to build democratic systems allowing for greater transparency and accountability.

The failure to fight corruption explains the sharp drop of most of Arab countries in the [Corruption Perceptions Index 2016](#). 90 percent of these have scored below 50, which is a failing grade. The United Arab Emirates and Qatar have managed to remain above the average, in spite of their declined scores.



Five out of the ten most corrupt countries in the world are from the region: Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Yemen and Syria.

These countries are also inflicted with political instability, war, internal conflicts and terrorism, stressing the fact that war and conflict fuel corruption and in particular political corruption.

THE GOOD



Tunisia is one of the very few countries that slightly improved on the index.

The country took some serious anti-corruption steps last year such as passing the Access to Information law, one of the most progressive laws in the region, the Whistleblower Protection law and adopting a national anti-corruption strategy.

In addition, there is a good space for civil society to play a role in accountability. The parliament also adopted a Financial Court law, which allows the court to investigate [Grand Corruption](#) cases.

Yet Tunisia has adopted recently the “reconciliation” law which allows impunity to the corrupt of the past and sends negative messages that you can be corrupt and get away with it.

THE BAD



Gulf States have dropped on the index, as ruling families continue to hold power politically and economically, public freedoms are oppressed, and an active independent civil society is absent. The military involvement of these states in regional coalitions has raised the levels of secrecy and ambiguity of public expenditure and state budgets.

Qatar had the sharpest decline in the overall index this year by 10 points. The country has been implicated with FIFA corruption scandals, especially around the votes to host the 2022 World Cup, in addition to human rights violations of migrant workers.



Jordan also dropped below 50 compared with last year, despite the adoption of a new electoral law and integrity law. Many corruption cases were investigated, but no prosecution has taken place yet.

Many reports have shown that investment is also hindered in the country as government fails to address petty forms of corruption such as bribery and nepotism.

Corruption levels in **Egypt** are still high in the [absence of a real political will to fight it](#). In 2016, the government violated the independence of auditing institutions when the President Al Sisi sacked and [sentenced the head of Egypt's top auditing body](#), Hisham Geneina, for publicly exposing how much corruption has cost Egypt in the past four years.

CSO (Civil Society Organization) space in Egypt has also closed down which hinders the public efforts to hold governments accountable for their actions.

Global Corruption Barometer



WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK ABOUT CORRUPTION?

CORRUPTION IS PERCEIVED TO BE INCREASING

61%

of people think corruption has increased in the last year.



BRIBERY IS WIDESPREAD

Nearly 1 in 3

paid a bribe in the last year, or around 50 million people

GOVERNMENTS ARE FAILING TO FIGHT CORRUPTION

68%



say their government is doing badly

26%



say their government is doing well



يسخس ويسر النجاح -
شش عماع بالواسطة يا غايي..
النجاح
واسطة
جورج أورويل

الشعب الذي ينتخب الفاسدين و الانتهازيين والمحتالين والناهبين والخونة، لا يعتبر ضحية بل شريكاً في الجريمة
جورج أورويل

The secret of success
Dear customer, next time please come back via an intermediary (wasta)
Stairway to the star of success is the "wasta"

"A people that elect corrupt politicians, imposters, thieves and traitors are not victims... but accomplices"
George Orwell

Corruption in Defence Sector

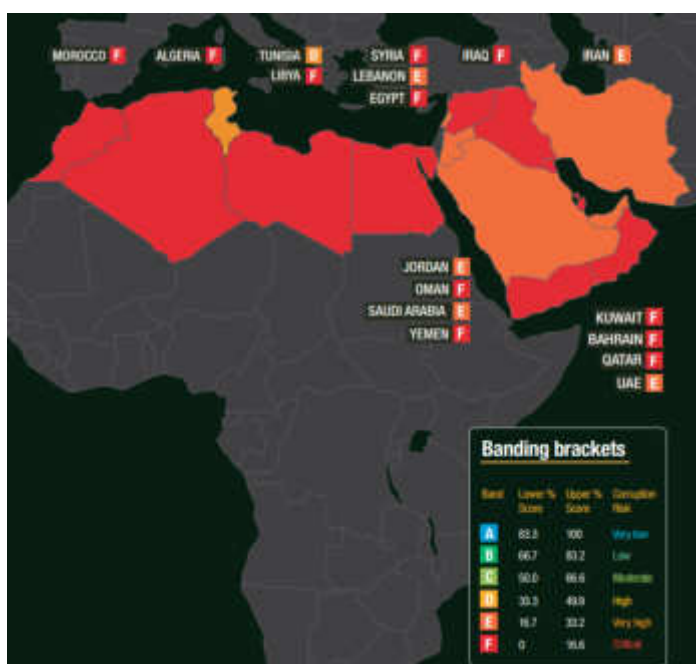


The region has some of the most rapidly growing defence budgets in the world, with a spend of **\$135bn**, and where up to a third of all government spending can be on defence.

Those at critical risk are **Kuwait, Morocco, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Qatar, Algeria, and Yemen** as there is virtually no accountability or transparency of defence and security establishments. Across the region only **Jordan and Tunisia** publish information on defence and security budgets, though with insufficient detail for any meaningful scrutiny.

However, all countries suffer from lack of **oversight, excessive secrecy, and widespread nepotism with networks based on family and business ties in the procurement of defence contracts.**

[*PRESS RELEASE](#) SAT 28 NOV 15



High-ranking Princes in **Saudi Arabia** preside over powerful defence agencies and use those assets to distribute patronage to their client base.

In **Iraq** individuals can buy military positions with a Divisional Commander's job reportedly being sold for \$2m. In Yemen and Oman all senior positions within the intelligence services are filled on the basis of political patronage and family ties.*

[*PRESS RELEASE](#) SAT 28 NOV 15

Palestine

- Corruption in Palestine is highly affected by the Occupation
- no CPI (corruption perception index) results for Palestine
- no proper governance system and institutions
- weakness of elected powers
- CSOs (civil society organisations) in Palestine are the strong institutions and historically were able to fill the gaps
- The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN) is the one of the oldest TI chapters – it received full accreditation in 2006
- AMAN has two main offices – Ramallah and Gaza



AMAN – TI Palestine

The fight against corruption in Palestine:

- Founder and leads the Civil Society Team for Enhancing Public Budget Transparency
- ALAC centre (Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre) aims at combating corruption through providing support and legal advice to victims, witnesses of corruption and whistleblowers in order to help in holding people accountable for their actions
- Youth for Integrity Network
- Palestinian Parliamentarians against corruption
- MEDIA for Integrity Network
- Higher education anti-corruption curricula taught in Palestinian universities
- Anti-corruption clubs in schools - actual cases reported to the Anti-corruption agency



AMAN – TI Palestine



The fight on regional and international levels:

- co-leader on Local Integrity System studies of 7 Libyan Municipalities
- leader of the MENA regional reporting on Political Corruption
- Enhancing the legal framework of freedom of Associations in the Arab World
- Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET) non governmental Group- UNDP
- The UNCAC Coalition (United Nations Convention against Corruption) is a global network of over 350 civil society organisations (CSOs) in over 100 countries, committed to promoting the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).



"Tomorrow the snow will melt, then we know what is hidden underneath."

