

Topic 1: Corruption

I. Past and Current International Action

Corruption is an ever prevalent challenge in a nation's aspirations for democracy, as is especially the case in the Arab world. Lebanon, being one of the few parliamentary democracies in the Middle East ("Lebanon"), has a responsibility to be vigilant against the threat of corruption to foster the spread of democracy throughout the Arab world. It has become clear that in order to maintain a stable and just government in a hostile region such as the Middle East, the issue of corruption must be addressed.

Probably the most prominent international effort to counter corrupt governments was the adoption of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. The UNCAC was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on October 31, 2003 through the passage of resolution 58/4 (United Nations, General Assembly). The UNCAC is the only universal and legally binding document that addresses corruption, distinguishing itself from all other international anti-corruption efforts ("United Nations Convention"). The UNCAC lists and details five overarching methods to address corruption: "preventive measures," "criminalization and law enforcement," "international cooperation," "asset recovery," and "technical assistance and information exchange" (United Nations, General Assembly). Some important details of the convention include the request for the public dissemination of information regarding the issuing of government contracts—one of the major sources of corruption—as well as prohibition of "off-the-books" accounts or transactions between public and private officials (United Nations, General Assembly). The UNCAC represents a real effort in the international community to

address corruption, which remains one of the main issues that inhibits the formation of a substantive democracy.

At the regional level, within the Arab world, one of the most significant efforts to combat corruption has been the adoption of the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention by the League of Arab States. This convention was signed by members of the Arab League in December of 2010, serving as a more region-specific form of the previously mentioned UNCAC (“Arab Anti-Corruption”). The convention details and criminalizes what it deems to be corrupt behavior, including bribery in the public and private sector, laundering of criminal funds, and the misappropriation of public property (“Arab Anti-Corruption”). The convention also supports the use of “mutual judicial assistance” between nations to aid in the investigation and prosecution of corrupt officials, citing cases in which countries are obligated to provide such assistance, as well as cases in which the country can refuse such a provision (“Arab Anti-Corruption”). Overall, the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention, along with the UNCAC, show that Arab countries, as part of a greater international consensus, agree that corruption must be addressed and have provided guidelines on how to do so.

II. Country’s Position

Currently, Lebanon faces some challenges in regards to corruption. As of 2018 Transparency International has given Lebanon a score of 28 out of 100 on its Corruption Perceptions Index, ranking Lebanon 138 out of 180 countries and territories from least to most corrupt (“Corruption Perceptions”). At the moment, Lebanon is also embroiled in a movement of mass protests criticising an ineffectual and corrupt government (Chulov). Despite the current situation, Lebanon remains confident in the integrity of its government, especially its executive

leadership, while also acknowledging that reforms that tackle corruption nationally may be necessary to ensure a truly democratic government.

In 2008, Lebanon ratified the UNCAC through the authorization of Law No. 33, on the condition that it would not be bound by Paragraph 2 of Article 66 of the UNCAC, concerning with the arbitration of dispute settlements (“Overview”). This shows Lebanon’s commitment to addressing corruption within its government by partaking in an international agreement to uphold honest and fair governance. Lebanon also has its own pieces of legislation that have aimed to prevent corruption. The Lebanese Penal Code contains protections against bribery in the private sector, prohibiting the acceptance of gifts by employees to reveal confidential information, with offenders liable for bribery under Article 210 of the Penal Code (cite report). Law 154 of 1999 prohibits the “illicit enrichment” of senior public officials and members of political bodies, requiring them to disclose all assets, both financial and non-financial (“Overview”). These laws show the foundation of legislation that Lebanon seeks to improve upon in its fight against corruption.

Lebanon has also established institutional checks on corruption within its government. In 1993, the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform, was created to increase the efficiency and reduce the redundancy of the civil service, while also combating corruption (“Overview”). This office serves as one of the main methods to hold the Lebanese government accountable for any possible corrupt behavior, having taken part in drafting laws against corruption and increasing access of information (“Overview”). Lebanon also has two other organizations that counter corruption. The Lebanese Court of Account is responsible for the oversight of the management of public funds at both the state and municipal level, publishing an

annual report on its findings (“Overview”). The Special Investigation Commission of the Central Bank is responsible for the investigation of transactions that it may deem to be suspicious, being the sole body with the right to lift a bank’s secrecy, and also published annual reports on its actions (“Overview”). All the organizations mentioned are key instruments in the way Lebanon counters cases of corrupt activity.

III. Proposed Solutions

Lebanon believes that reforms on government activity among nearly all Arab League members is necessary to fully address the issue of corruption in the Arab world, while also affirming Lebanon’s belief that state sovereignty should be maintained throughout such reforms. With this perspective in mind, Lebanon proposes a solution that addresses the issue at hand in two important ways: the creation of an Arab League Corruption Investigation Commission and a peer review system among members of the Arab League.

Lebanon first proposes the establishment of the Arab League Corruption Investigation Commission, charged with investigating suspicious transactions and other activities between officials of different member states. This commission would be headed by the Special Commissioner of Corruption Investigation, appointed with a two-thirds consensus of the Arab League to serve a two-year term in this position. The nationality of the Special Commissioner will be rotated through all the members of the Arab League to ensure that this commission remains as impartial as possible. The purview of this commission would be restricted to transactions or other dealings that occurred between member states, allowing countries to maintain their sovereignty in addressing its own internal affairs. The commission would be able to use its resources to investigate any government official under suspicion of engaging in illegal

activities with another member state government as defined by the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention. The Special Commissioner would be required to release an annual report on the progress of any investigations, with the inclusion of a corruption watch list that contains all individuals found by the commission to have engaged in corrupt activities. Individuals on this watch list would be barred from participating in foreign diplomacy between member states, with the individual being able to appeal to the Arab League to be taken off the list. Member states could use this watch list, as well as any other findings listed on the report, to prosecute and suspend listed corrupt officials through internal processes.

The second solution proposed by Lebanon would be a system of peer review between Arab League member states. A Corruption Advisory Board comprised of seven member states, rotating every three years, would be tasked with evaluating and investigating the degree of corruption in each member state. Member states serving on this board would appoint representatives that would work with each other on investigative efforts. At the end of each three year cycle, this board will release a report on each member state on its evaluation of the country's corruption, with suggestions on how that country may address its problems. This would allow the Arab League to pressure nations to reduce internal corruption and provide nations with possible options on how to do so. This would allow for member states to be held accountable for instances of corruption while also maintaining state sovereignty as much as possible. This solution, coupled with the Corruption investigation commission, seek to provide a way to promote meaningful reform to combat corruption, while also respecting the sovereignty of member states by giving them choice on how to respond to recommendations put forth by the Arab League.

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Topic 2: Human Trafficking

I. Past and Current International Action

The issue of human trafficking, while a major issue in all parts of the world, is evermore prevalent in the Arab world due to its nature of constant conflict and instability. Many migrant laborers or individuals living in war-torn regions may find themselves vulnerable to gross exploitation at the hands of discrete criminal organizations. As a greater number of abuses by human traffickers are uncovered, the international community has found it increasingly important to work together to solve this issue. Lebanon, given its close proximity to regions ravaged by conflict such as Syria and the West Bank, has a greater priority placed on itself to address the issue of human trafficking.

One of the major international documents concerned with the issue of human trafficking is the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, as part of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (*United Nations Convention*). The protocol, signed into effect in December of 2000, sets out a specific definition for what it considers to be the “trafficking of persons” and also defines the actions that constitute exploitation (*United Nations Convention*). The protocol also lays out specific suggestions on actions countries should take regarding topics such as the status and repatriation of victims, information exchange and training, and border security (*United Nations Convention*). This convention represents one of the first international efforts to directly address the issue of human trafficking, with a focus on the protection of victims of such crimes.

Within the Arab League, similar efforts have been made to address this issue. In cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Qatar Foundation for

Combating Human Trafficking, the Arab League launched the Arab Initiative to Build National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking in the Arab Countries (“The Arab Initiative”). Some goals of this initiative include the establishment of national and regional coalitions to combat human trafficking, and improving mechanisms to help identify, support, and protect victims of human trafficking (“The Arab Initiative”). This initiative, in conjunction with other past actions by the United Nations, shows that the Arab League prioritizes the issue of human trafficking just as much as the rest of the world.

II. Country’s Position

Lebanon is currently making significant progress in the fight against human trafficking. Lebanon is currently classified by the United States State Department as a Tier 2 country, the same as that of developed countries such as Germany and Denmark (“2019 Trafficking”). A Tier 2 classification indicates that while the country does not meet the minimum requirements set by the United States in combating human trafficking to become a Tier 1 country, it is making significant efforts to adhere to those standards (“2019 Trafficking”). In contrast, other prominent Arab League members such as Saudi Arabia and Syria are Tier 3 countries, indicating that they have not made significant efforts to comply with basic standards in preventing human trafficking (“2019 Trafficking”). This shows that can be a leading example in the fight against human trafficking in the Arab world.

In 2005, the Lebanese Ministry of Justice worked with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on a project LEBR61, titled “Measures to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings In Lebanon” (Smith). This project aimed at strengthening Lebanon’s overall capabilities in countering human trafficking, in part through an assessment of the existing

combative efforts against human trafficking at the time (Smith). The assessment noted that while the “problem of trafficking in Lebanon appear[ed] to be small,” with approximately sixty reported or suspected cases each year, Lebanon can improve in its definition of human trafficking, as well as in victim identification, given that “trafficking in persons” is not classified as its own crime in Lebanon (Smith).

In place of separately criminalizing “trafficking in persons,” Lebanese law criminalizes various aspects of comprise up the act of human trafficking. The acts of abduction, deprivation of personal liberty, and acts of debauchery are punishable by imprisonment—or in some cases years hard labor—under the Lebanese criminal justice system (Smith). Lebanon also has measures in place to protect victims of human trafficking. Article 7 of the Lebanese criminal court code gives victims of human trafficking to take prosecute their offenders before an examining magistrate, and Article 273 allows for compensation in the form of rehabilitation programs to be given out through the Ministry of Social Affairs (Smith). These laws, along with Lebanon’s cooperation with the United Nations to combat human trafficking, show that Lebanon has a strong foundation upon which to fight human trafficking.

III. Proposed Solutions

Given that the volatility of the Arab world allows for a greater number of cases of human trafficking, the Arab League must take a more prominent role in addressing this issue. Lebanon firmly believes that the reduction of human trafficking in the Arab world would greatly help in achieving stability in the region. Therefore, Lebanon proposes a two-part solution that addresses the issue. Firstly, the Arab League must set out a plan of goals on the reduction of human trafficking among member states. Furthermore, the Arab League must work with various

organizations to provide a network of support for human trafficking victims across all member states.

The first proposal of Lebanon is that the Arab League must put forth a set of goals outlining targets for the reduction of human trafficking among member states over the course of four years. Lebanon believes that countries should aim to reduce the number of reported or suspected cases of human trafficking to less than 1 case per 100 thousand people per year. Member states should aim to reduce the rate of abductions in conflict zones by 50 percent, through greater law enforcement and sharing of information in these regions. The final goal is to have all member states attain at least a Tier 2 status by increasing policing and investigative efforts in human trafficking, as well as by increasing relief and reintegration programs for victims of human trafficking. An annual report would be commissioned to analyse the progress of all individual Arab League members in meeting this set of goals, with the Arab League reconvening on this topic after this period of four years, either to recalibrate the goals in the case that they are not met, or to draft new goals, seeking to further limit the extent of human trafficking, that the member states can continue to work towards. This set of ambitious and comprehensive goals would signal a great step in the Arab world against human trafficking.

Lebanon's second proposal would be the establishment of a League-wide relief network for victims of human trafficking. This relief and support would be carried out in three steps, when addressing these victims. State governments would first establish programs—in partnership with local non-governmental organizations is necessary—that would provide aid in relieving any lasting psychological trauma in victims. Victims would be assessed based on the severity of their trauma and would be given up to a month's time in these preliminary programs.

The Arab League would then partner with local advocacy groups to make sure victims can take legal action against their traffickers to ensure that these criminals are punished under the law.

The Arab League would finally organize rehabilitation and reintegration programs for these victims, as many of these victims will be hundreds of miles from their original communities in a foreign land. These programs would be tasked with either helping return victims to their families or obtaining a legal status for those in their new places of residence, helping them integrate into their new society with job training programs. All of these efforts will be overseen by an appointed Special Counselor on Human Trafficking Relief, who would be responsible for coordinating these programs among all the member states of the Arab League. Through the implementation of these solutions, Lebanon hopes to provide those who have been or could be a victim of human trafficking a more secure future.

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