

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN COMBATING CORRUPTION: LEGAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Annotation. *Corruption is a global problem that affects all spheres of government and society, hindering economic and social development. It is widespread not only within a single country, but also internationally. Corruption occurs mainly in government agencies, in the business sector and in social services, which reduces public trust and exacerbates social injustice. This article examines the legal and theoretical dimensions of international collaboration in combating corruption, emphasizing the evolution of global norms, institutional mechanisms, and cooperative frameworks. It highlights the significance of international legal instruments such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention. The article concludes with recommendations for strengthening multilateral collaboration and enhancing international legal mechanisms to effectively address corruption as a transnational threat.*

Keywords: *United Nations Convention against Corruption, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Istanbul Plan for Combating Corruption, global governance, anti-corruption policy, UNCAC, legal framework.*

Introduction

Corruption represents one of the most significant impediments to sustainable development, democratic governance, and the rule of law. Its transnational nature demands coordinated international efforts. Over the past decades, the international community has developed a comprehensive network of legal instruments and institutions to promote integrity and transparency in both public and private sectors. However, despite notable progress, the effectiveness of international anti-corruption cooperation remains uneven, primarily due to disparities in national legislation, political will, and enforcement capacity.

Today, corruption has emerged before the world community as a negative vice that hinders the development of states, their economic, political, and spiritual progress. As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh. Mirziyoyev, noted, "If we do not prevent corruption, we cannot create a real business and investment environment, and in general, no sector of society will develop"[1]. Indeed, corruption crimes hinder the development of the

state, as well as weaken the people's trust in state bodies [2]. The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-6257 dated July 6, 2021 "On measures to create an environment of uncompromising attitude towards corruption, sharply reduce corruption factors in state and public administration, and expand public participation in this" and the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-6013 dated June 29, 2020 "On additional additional measures to improve the system of combating corruption in the Republic of Uzbekistan" brought reforms in this area to a new level. These documents specifically emphasize the tasks of strengthening international cooperation in the investigation of corruption crimes, establishing and developing effective relations with the relevant bodies of other states.

Corruption is a misuse of power for personal gain, manifesting through acts such as bribes, fraud, and bias from influential entities like governments and businesses. It leads to significant social and financial consequences, eroding democracy and public trust, while also limiting access to critical services for vulnerable populations [3]. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Combating Corruption" of January 3, 2017 defines corruption as "the unlawful use of a person's position or office for personal gain or for the benefit of others in order to obtain material or non-material benefits" [4]. This definition is consistent with international standards, but is also distinguished by the breadth of the scope of subjects, the diversity of goals, and the material and non-material types of benefits.

Methodology

The legal framework for international cooperation in the investigation of corruption crimes is determined by national and international legal instruments.

Professor V.V. Luneev noted that "corruption is a social phenomenon that is much broader than bribery. It includes any situations associated with the use of their powers by an official for malicious purposes" [5]. This idea shows the evolution of the modern concept of corruption.

As a result of studying the legal framework for international cooperation in the investigation of corruption crimes in Uzbekistan, the following important legal documents exist:

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan sets out the general directions of the implementation of interstate relations. Article 32 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Combating Corruption" (January 3, 2017) establishes issues of international cooperation in combating corruption. Chapter 5 of the Law regulates issues of international cooperation in the field of combating corruption.

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-6257 dated July 6, 2021 "On measures to create an environment of uncompromising attitude to corruption,

sharply reduce corruption factors in state and public administration and expand public participation in this" also sets out the tasks of developing international cooperation in the field of combating corruption.

Also, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-6013 dated June 29, 2020 "On additional measures to improve the anti-corruption system in the Republic of Uzbekistan" establishes the tasks of coordinating the activities of anti-corruption bodies and strengthening international cooperation.

The following international conventions and agreements are of particular importance as the legal basis for international cooperation in the field of combating corruption:

1. United Nations Convention against Corruption (October 31, 2003, New York).
2. Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (November 21, 1997, Paris). This convention regulates international cooperation in combating bribery of foreign public officials.
3. Convention on Criminal Law of the Council of Europe (January 27, 1999, Strasbourg). This convention regulates cooperation between European countries in combating corruption. Articles 25-26 define international cooperation.

The Republic of Uzbekistan acceded to this Convention on July 7, 2008. The Convention is the main legal framework for international cooperation in combating corruption and regulates the following issues:

1. Legal assistance in criminal matters (Article 46);
2. Extradition (Article 44);
3. Conduct of criminal proceedings (Article 47);
4. Conduct of cooperative investigative actions (Article 49);
5. Use of special investigative techniques (Article 50);
6. Return of assets (Articles 51-59).

Within the CIS, a number of agreements have been signed in the field of combating crime, including corruption, for example:

The Minsk Convention "On Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Criminal Matters" of January 22, 1993,

The Chisinau Convention "On Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Criminal Matters" of October 7, 2002.

Bilateral agreements. The Republic of Uzbekistan has concluded bilateral agreements on legal assistance in criminal matters and extradition with many countries. For example, with Turkey, Russia, Kazakhstan, China and other countries.

Results and discussion

Corruption, the fraudulent use of public power for personal gain, transcends national borders. It stifles economic development, erodes public trust, and undermines democracy. While some countries have taken steps to combat corruption, the global nature of the problem requires international cooperation. However, this cooperation faces a tightrope walk between theoretical foundations and complex legal realities. It must be admitted that the fight against corruption in our country is also being carried out consistently. Speaking about this, it should be noted, first of all, that our country joined the Convention against Corruption in 2008, the Istanbul Plan for Combating Corruption adopted within the framework of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 2010, and the Oliy Majlis ratified the Agreement on the Eurasian Group on Combating the Legalization of Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism in 2011. In particular, the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Combating Corruption", as well as the establishment of the Republican Interdepartmental Commission on Combating Corruption and the adoption of state programs on combating corruption have served to increase the effectiveness of a number of measures aimed at preventing corruption-related offenses in our country.

On January 3, 2017, Law No. 419 "On Combating Corruption" was adopted. This law determined the priority areas of state policy in combating corruption and regulated anti-corruption activities, creating a legal framework for combating corruption. Article 3 of this law defines the concept of corruption. According to it, corruption is the unlawful use of a person's position or office to obtain material or non-material benefits for personal gain or the benefit of others, as well as the unlawful presentation of such benefits.

Theoretical issues:

Different definitions: The definition of corruption may vary across cultures, and what is considered a "gift" in one society may be considered bribery in another. This ambiguity hinders standardized approaches.

Sovereignty and cooperation - It is important to strike a balance between national sovereignty and international cooperation. Countries may be hesitant to share sensitive information or allow external investigations.

Focus on the public and private sectors: The current system often emphasizes corruption in the public sector. However, private sector corruption also needs to be given increased international attention.

Legal obstacles:

Jurisdictional issues: Investigating and prosecuting cross-border corruption can be complicated. Jurisdictional ambiguity and the lack of extradition treaties create obstacles.

Asset Recovery Recovering assets stolen from corrupt officials often involves navigating complex legal systems and overcoming resistance from countries where the money is hidden.

Potential Solutions:

Standardized definitions International treaties with clearer definitions of corruption can facilitate cooperation.

Information Sharing Secure channels can be established between countries to share information about corruption cases.

A multi-pronged approach Working with civil society, the private sector, and international organizations can create a broader front against corruption.

International cooperation in the fight against corruption is very important, but it requires overcoming theoretical and legal complexities. By developing a spirit of cooperation, creating clear foundations and eliminating shortcomings in implementation, the global community can move closer to a future free of corruption.

As part of international cooperation in the fight against corruption in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Anti-Corruption Agency signed 8 memorandums of understanding on international cooperation in 2020-2021, in particular, the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in the Republic of Uzbekistan on December 7, 2020; Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption of the Republic of Slovenia and the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan on October 11, 2021; October 28, 2021 Memorandum of Understanding on establishing cooperation between the Agency, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the British Embassy in Tashkent and the Intergovernmental Cooperation Service.

These include the Memorandum of Understanding between the Agency and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on November 17, 2021; the Memorandum of Understanding between the International Anti-Corruption Academy and the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan on November 18, 2021.

In 2023, 4 memorandums of understanding and 2 action plans were signed on cooperation with international organizations and anti-corruption agencies of foreign countries. In particular, Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the Agency and the Department of Administrative Control and Transparency of the State of Qatar, the Center for the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption, the Korean Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, and the Administrative Control Agency of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The Republic of France In 2023, 4 memorandums of understanding and 2 action plans were signed on cooperation with international organizations and anti-corruption agencies of

foreign countries. In particular, Memorandums of Understanding were signed between the Agency and the Qatari State Administration for Administrative Control and Transparency, the Center for the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption, the Korean Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, the Administrative Control Office of the Arab Republic of Egypt. An action plan for the implementation of the memorandum was signed between the French Anti-Corruption Agency and the State Financial Control and Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Tajikistan. It should be noted that the harm caused by corruption is considered equal for all countries, and this vice negatively affects various spheres of the state, in particular, the reforms being carried out in the political, economic, social, cultural spheres, as well as the country's image in the international arena and its investment attractiveness.

The findings suggest that while international cooperation against corruption has achieved normative success, its practical effectiveness depends largely on domestic implementation. Legal harmonization remains limited by differences in political systems and judicial capacity. Moreover, theoretical models underscore the tension between state sovereignty and global governance. Liberal institutionalism explains why states agree to cooperate, but realist perspectives remind us that compliance often reflects national interests rather than moral imperatives.

Conclusion

Effective cooperation requires strengthening mutual legal assistance, enhancing information exchange, and promoting transparency in public procurement and finance. Additionally, civil society and the private sector play increasingly important roles in monitoring government accountability and fostering ethical behavior.

Currently, there is growing interest in international legal cooperation between states in combating corruption, since corruption is one of the factors that threatens not only the economic development of a country, but also social relations. International collaboration against corruption is an evolving and complex process, blending legal obligations with moral and political commitments. While instruments like UNCAC have established a robust legal foundation, their success depends on consistent national enforcement and cross-border cooperation. Theoretical insights from liberal institutionalism and global governance theory illustrate both the opportunities and constraints of international efforts. To advance the global anti-corruption agenda, states must reinforce institutional integrity, support transnational investigative mechanisms, and promote a culture of transparency and accountability.

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