INTERVENING WITHOUT CORRUPTION: GUIDANCE FOR POLITICAL-MILITARY PLANNERS

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Interventions Anti-Corruption Guidance

Transparency International (TI) is the world's leading non-governmental anti-corruption organisation, addressing corruption and corruption risk in its many forms through a network of more than 100 national chapters worldwide.

Transparency International Defence and Security (TI-DS) works to reduce corruption in defence and security worldwide.

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BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

Corruption and conflict go hand in hand

Corruption and conflict are bedfellows and their coexistence feeds a vicious circle of violence and instability. Between 2008 and 2016, corruption fuelled violent incidents in more than 50 countries, and contributed to large-scale conflicts in Nigeria, Yemen, Ukraine, and Afghanistan. Many of the lowest-scoring countries rated in the Corruption Perceptions Index are also among the least peaceful on the Global Peace Index, pointing to the key role that corruption plays in fragile and conflict-affected states.

Corruption will affect interventions such as stabilisation operations and security assistance

As international interventions – from stabilisation missions and peacekeeping contributions to security assistance – frequently take place in environments affected by corruption and conflict, they will need to grapple with corruption issues, including the particularly destructive form corruption can take in defence and security forces. Their design and implementation will need to take corruption risks into account, and will need to minimise the risk of missions exacerbating corruption. Where a military component is part of the intervention, the intervening forces will need to mitigate corruption risks in their own activities and be able to support wider anti-corruption measures.

While anti-corruption activities will usually be led by civilian entities, a large military presence on the ground means that:

- The armed forces will need to be mandated and resourced to mitigate corruption risks in their own activities;

- The military should be able to support anti-corruption initiatives as appropriate and possible; and

- In some cases, the armed forces might need to take the lead on tackling corruption, especially if they are the most important actor on the ground or if civilian actors cannot operate in non-permissive security environments.

Risk and opportunities

Key areas where missions need to take corruption into account are:

- Peace settlements, which should contain provisions controlling corruption;

- Mission mandates, which need to empower missions to mitigate corruption risks in their own actions, monitor the mission's impact on corrupt practices, and foster good practice in the host nation;

- Getting their own house in order by ensuring corruption risks within missions are mitigated to prevent international forces from contributing to the problem;

- A political-military approach to tackling corruption: an anti-corruption policy supporting agents of change and limiting the influence of malign actors who can undermine the peace process should be written into the mission mandate;

- Design of sanctions and incentives across the political and military spectrum to make corrupt practices less lucrative and more difficult;

- Addressing destructive corruption in host nation security forces;

How to use this guidance

This document is part of a larger body of work on analysing and mitigating corruption risks in interventions with a military component. It signposts the key issues that are likely to need attention at the strategic and political levels, where key policies are set, mission mandates established, and conditions for troop contributions agreed. For more detail on specific corruption pathways, mitigation measures, and military planning processes, please consult the Interventions Anti-Corruption Guidance website.

Corruption: what's in a name?

Transparency International defines corruption as the 'abuse of entrusted power for private or group gain'. This definition includes an element of subversion, or the illegitimate use of resources meant for a particular purpose to further another goal. It involves a benefit wrongly obtained, as well as harm to someone deprived of a benefit to which they were entitled. When applied to the public sector, it entails expectations and norms being flouted due to misuse of a public (usually state) system for a private (individual or group) benefit, rather than the public good. If repeated regularly, it leads to degradation of a system meant to benefit the public into one that benefits certain groups to the detriment of others.

Corrupt practices include:

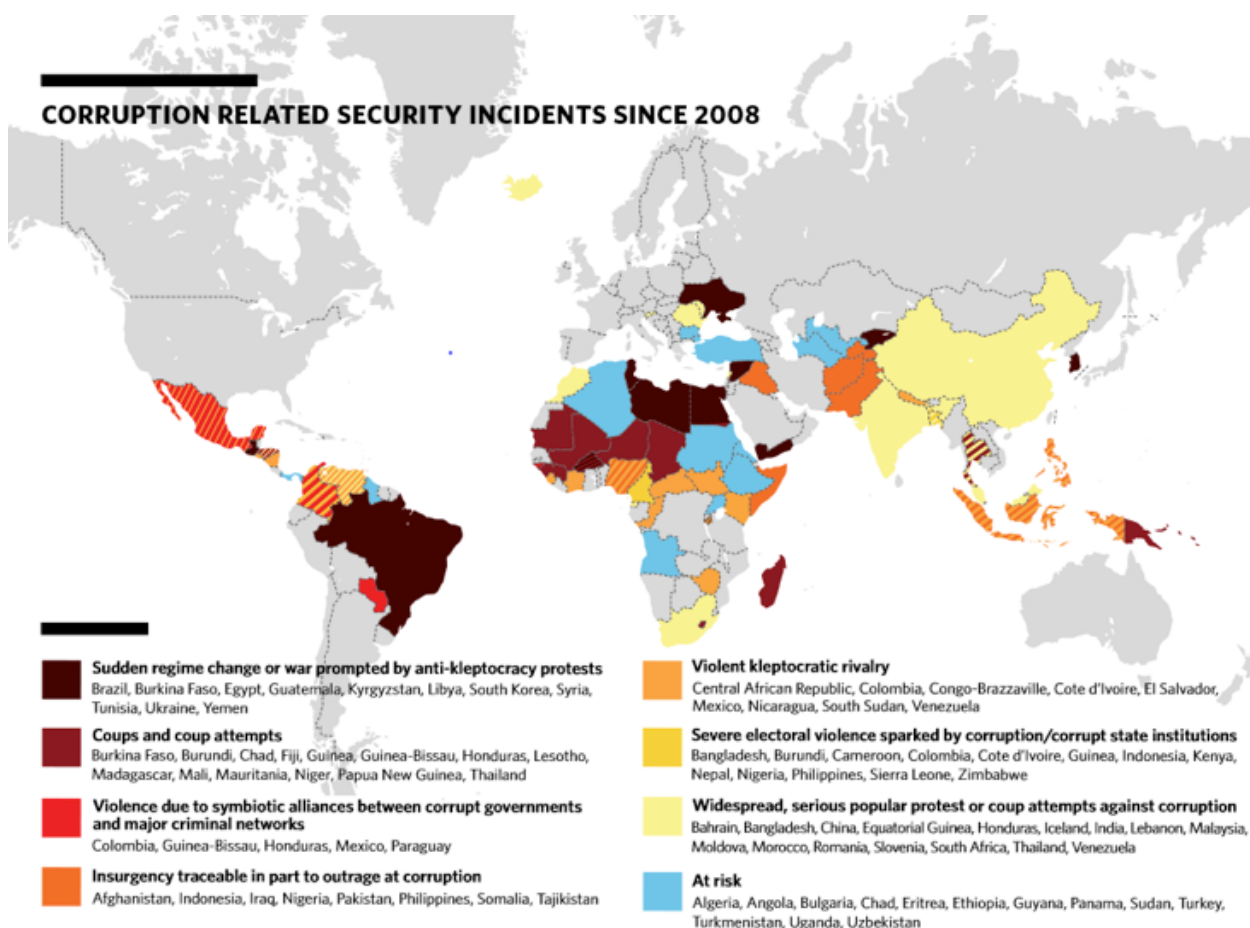- Bribery, most readily identified as a form of corruption
- Nepotism and favouritism in hiring and promotions
- Embezzlement of (state) funds
- Extortion
- Electoral fraud

The scale of corruption:

- Petty: low-level bribery and influence peddling
- Grand: affecting institutional processes such as procurement
- Kleptocracy/state capture: the repurposing of entire state apparatus for personal or group enrichment

WHY CARE? CORRUPTION, CONFLICT AND INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index suggests that in between half and two-thirds of the countries analysed, corruption contributes to poor quality of public services. In these countries, bribery shapes access to government services, state institutions are repurposed for private gain, and perceptions of corruption as a significant issue undermine trust in governments and societies.[1] These issues are particularly problematic in conflict and fragile states: 7 out of the 10 lowest-scoring countries in the 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index were also among the 10 least peaceful countries in the 2017 Global Peace Index.[2] Corruption and political instability are correlated, and states dominated by narrow patronage systems are more susceptible to bouts of insecurity and instability.[3] Between 2008 and 2016, corruption-related violent incidents (from violent demonstrations against corruption to regime change and civil wars) occurred in over 50 countries, including large-scale conflicts in Nigeria, Yemen, Ukraine, and Afghanistan.

CORRUPTION RELATED SECURITY INCIDENTS SINCE 2008

Sudden regime change or war prompted by anti-kleptocracy protests
Brazil, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, South Korea, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, Yemen

Coups and coup attempts
Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Fiji, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Thailand

Violence due to symbiotic alliances between corrupt governments and major criminal networks
Colombia, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay

Insurgency traceable in part to outrage at corruption
Afghanistan, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Tajikistan

Violent kleptocratic rivalry
Central African Republic, Colombia, Congo-Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Sudan, Venezuela

Severe electoral violence sparked by corruption/corrupt state institutions
Bangladesh, Burundi, Cameroon, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe

Widespread, serious popular protest or coup attempts against corruption
Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, Equatorial Guinea, Honduras, Iceland, India, Lebanon, Malaysia, Moldova, Morocco, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand, Venezuela

At risk
Algeria, Angola, Bulgaria, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guyana, Panama, Sudan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017

Countries where instability, insecurity and conflict prevail are the most frequent hosts and recipients of international interventions, including development projects, government capacity building, security assistance to the country's armed forces, and peacekeeping or stabilisation missions. While often necessary, international engagement in countries affected by instability and conflict presents unique challenges, from weak aid absorption capacity and difficulties in managing the injection of resources, to a shifting political balance due to the presence of international actors. It is also almost certain that interveners will face corruption issues, not only those related to the host nation, but also to their own projects. And, while international interventions aim to improve the situation, they need to reckon with the possibility that their impact can make corrupt practices either better or worse. The challenge for international interventions, including military operations, is therefore twofold:

- To manage the risks that corruption can pose to the goals of a particular mission.

- To mitigate their own, often inadvertent, contribution to corrupt practices in the area of operations.

PLANNING INTERVENTIONS WITH A MILITARY COMPONENT

Addressing corruption in international interventions is usually seen as a long-term enterprise led and implemented by civilians. Civilian leadership is indeed key in designing comprehensive interventions that can help mitigate the impact of corruption on development and political stability, and in implementing anti-corruption safeguards such as reforms in public financial management and oversight. But this does not mean that the armed forces on the ground, whether they deliver security assistance programmes or participate in stabilisation or peace operations, do not have responsibilities in this area.

Where a significant military intervention or a security assistance programme is planned, civilian and military leaders need to ensure that the armed forces are capable of mitigating corruption risks among mission troops and in their own activities, such as local sustainment or the hiring of local personnel. The presence of the military should also be part of an overarching plan, and its role in supporting others' anti-corruption activities – for example through information gathering or providing security in a way that doesn't empower the corrupt – needs to be considered.

Recent experience indicates that a lack of recognition of the significance of corruption by both political and military actors can have dire consequences. In Afghanistan, the prioritisation of short-term security goals and the armed forces' cooperation with malign actors strengthened corrupt networks and led to major failures of the intervention in the long term.[4] Once the international community realised that corruption was posing significant problems, it attempted to minimise its impact. However, without decisive political support, major investigations into corrupt networks were thwarted and military-led efforts instituted to tackle corrupt practices – such as Task Force Shafafyiat – disbanded.[5]

It is largely up to the political community to put forward realistic expectations and a coherent policy for engaging host nation counterparts who participate in corruption. While isolating malign actors can be an effective approach, it is not always the case that international interventions need to sever contact with those they suspect of being corrupt. That contact will often be necessary or unavoidable if the interventions are to function, especially if corrupt networks have captured state institutions. However, the international community needs to consider the degree of support and endorsement offered, opportunities for changing behaviour, and how to balance the trade-offs between supporting malign actors and those who are attempting to reform the system.

Ideally, every mission would have a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy encompassing both preventing and detecting corruption within the mission, and addressing corrupt practices in the area of operations. This requires time, resources, and political buy-in (especially for robust anti-corruption measures in multinational missions), and all of these can be lacking if the mission in question is a response to a fast-moving crisis. However, if analysis of corruption risks and potential mitigation measures, both internal and external, is applied to horizon scanning and crisis monitoring in peacetime, relevant information can be accessed at short notice during crises. Including corruption as a factor to be considered in everyday political and military activity can help alleviate the demands of unexpected situations that need a quick response.

AREAS OF RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Preventing corruption from subverting the goals of interventions in fragile and conflict states requires that interveners are able to recognise, understand the impact of, and mitigate corruption risks as much as feasible. For that, the interventions – especially those which either contain a military element or deal with defence and security institutions – need political, strategic and tactical conditions that empower and equip them to tackle the issue. It is up to political decision makers, with input from military officers, to shape the conditions that will enable both civilian and military actors.

Peace settlements

Rampant corruption is frequently a legacy of violent conflict and a stubborn barrier to long-term stability. State institutions are significantly weakened in post-conflict environments, pushing the population toward alternative sources of security and ways of meeting basic needs, such as criminal patronage networks. Civil wars erode social capital and raise the levels of criminality, particularly when demobilised combatants lacking relevant peacetime skills retain access to weapons, and when wartime networks are turned into organised crime syndicates. At the same time, weakened police and judicial institutions remove constraints on crime.[6]

> Post-conflict states dominated by exploitative, kleptocratic systems are likely to see a recurrence of conflict: over 20% of conflicts brought to an end through negotiated settlements fell back into conflict within five years.
>
> *Human Security Brief,* 2006
>
> Good governance increases the likelihood of a durable peace: the risk of renewed conflict can be reduced in countries with strong formal and informal governance institutions, including an ability to control corruption and a limited involvement of the military in the political and economic life of the country.
>
> *Governance and Conflict Relapse,* 2015
>
> Peace settlements containing forward-looking formulas – such as ways to improve governance-rather than just those that deal with the past, tend to last longer.
>
> *Negotiating Peace and Confronting Corruption,* 2011

A post-conflict peace settlement is a fork in the road: it could enable the host nation and the international community to tackle corruption early, or could, by omission or conscious neglect, enable corrupt networks to grow and exert increasing influence on the political system. However, transforming the networks which thrive in wartime to peacetime conditions is not easy, and in some cases, accommodating corrupt actors may be seen as a necessary evil if violence is to be stopped: a tacit understanding that participating in a peace agreement will enable warring sides to access resources and state institutions can encourage recalcitrant factions to join peace negotiations.[7] Addressing corruption may then be put off due to fears of recurrent violence, particularly if reforms threaten to reduce rents for those benefitting from corrupt arrangements.[8]

Such trade-offs may be justifiable in the short term, but unless peace processes lead to the adoption of corruption mitigation measures, the price of short-term stability is to reinforce exploitative, dysfunctional state structures in the longer term. Should these structures be allowed to thrive, they will perpetuate or recreate the conditions which led to conflict in the first place (such as weak governance and theft of state resources) creating inequalities and resentment, and potentially propelling a return to conflict in the longer term.

The effectiveness of peace settlements would therefore be enhanced by addressing the following issues:

- **Power sharing:** arrangements assigning pre-determined slices of power (such as government posts or parliamentary seats) to ethnic groups or other networks can diminish political competition and, in the long term, the effectiveness and resilience of state institutions. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Burundi, for example, such divisions made it easier for elected officials to interfere with the functioning of state institutions, while cumbersome institutional designs diminished the overall effectiveness of the state.[9] If power sharing is necessary to bring about the conclusion of conflict, it should be accompanied by institutional designs strengthening control and oversight over governments.

- **Organised crime and corruption:** a transition from conflict to peace is an opportunity for networks which controlled resources in wartime to transition their power to peacetime structures. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, elections were held just a year after the Dayton Peace Accords had led to the conclusion of fighting. This short timeframe enabled wartime smuggling and organised crime networks to field candidates favourable to them, in the face of an opposition which did not have sufficient time to develop or the resources to compete on an equal footing.[10] With organised crime reportedly managing to gain a foothold in state structures, revenue streams for criminal groups have simply shifted from war profiteering to human trafficking, drugs and arms smuggling, and the blackmail of politicians – all of which are enabled by corruption.[11] The result is that Bosnia and Herzegovina has been left with ethnic divisions that are far from repaired, an ineffective government that stymies development, political representation that is used for personal enrichment, and criminal networks that can count on protection from state services meant to dismantle them.

- **Predatory security sectors:** the defence and security sector can make or break peace accords. On the one hand, effective armed and police services, focused on providing security to the population, could help the fragile peace survive. Conversely, unreformed military or militia forces left to fend for themselves after a civil war can easily turn into a predatory force protecting only those who promise resources and benefits – a particularly dangerous outcome in countries where access to natural resources is one of the spoils of warfare. And yet, the defence and security sector is frequently omitted from peace settlements. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, following the deadliest war in modern African history (1998-2003), the 2002 Global and All-Inclusive Agreement created a power-sharing arrangement between the former combatants, civil society and the political opposition. The Agreement focused mainly on the reintegration of rebels into the state's armed forces, neglecting to implement a system of funding, management, and oversight of the security forces. Instead, the Agreement perpetuated the role of the armed forces as a source of insecurity and instability, and failed to break the cycle of extortion and abuse of civilians that had existed since the 1960s.[12]

Peace settlements provide the scaffolding for subsequent interventions and assistance from the international community, and can help create conditions in which corrupt wartime networks find it more difficult to entrench their peacetime position. By being aware of the issues above and shaping settlements accordingly, peace deals can help set expectations and provide a common reference framework for actors working on corruption issues.

Potential military role: if peacekeeping or stabilisation operations are in place following a peace agreement, they will be in a position to observe the extent and impact of corrupt practices, especially in everyday life and in the host nation defence and security forces. They should be mandated and resourced to monitor corruption and its impact on the implementation of the peace agreements.

Mission mandates

The mandates of peacekeeping and stabilisation operations – often deployed in the wake of a peace settlement – rarely, if ever, contain direct references to tackling corruption or even assessing the risks it poses. At best, tackling corruption can be seen as a task implicit within the broader responsibility to establish security and governance. But without explicit direction, peacekeeping and stabilisation operations are likely to sidestep corruption issues, often viewing them as too complicated and not part of the mandate.[13] This is particularly the case with missions with large military components, as corruption is not yet seen as an integral part of the military's mandate or expertise.

'…the central paradox was that in the early years of this intervention [in Afghanistan], the military took the view (conscious or unconscious) that it needed to suppress concerns about corruption in order to focus on the overriding military imperative. Then, far later down the track, there's the sudden realisation that the military mission is becoming jeopardised by… corruption.'

Corruption: Lessons from the International Mission in Afghanistan, 2016[14]

Mission mandates should therefore make clear whether and how corruption issues are relevant to mission goals, and what steps should be taken, at which levels, to mitigate the risks. At the stage of translating a mandate – be that a UN Security Council Resolution, a North Atlantic Council directive setting up a NATO mission, or a national government estimate or parliamentary mandate – into specific mission planning, the direction to address corruption issues needs to be incorporated into military planning documents (such as the Concept of Operations and the Operational Plan) and considered in force generation processes to ensure that relevant expertise is available to the mission.

Security assistance and defence capacity building missions equally need anti-corruption and governance safeguards built into their design at the political-military level and translated into specific measures related to the implementation of particular training, advisory, and equipment assistance programmes. For example, in the National Defense Authorization Acts for 2016-2018, the US Congress has provided for security assistance to Ukraine to be conditional on improvements to the country's defence governance and mitigation of corruption risks. Similar safeguards – such as the tracking and monitoring of equipment and requirements related to procedural improvements – are built into specific US programmes, especially those involving the donation or sale of equipment.[15]

Potential military role: The armed forces will need to translate mission mandates into military planning documents, but they should also provide advice and help political bodies shape the mandates. If corruption and governance do not feature in draft mission mandates, military planners could request specific guidance. If they are included in the mandate, implementation staff, including military officers, might need to:

- Identify the way that corruption can pose risks to particular missions;

- Provide guidance on the measures and capabilities required to mitigate these risks.

Choosing your partners: marginalising spoilers, supporting agents of change

Kleptocratic networks and the theft of state resources are enabled by bad judgment, inadvertent facilitation, negligence, and sometimes targeted support offered by the international community, particularly when corrupt strongmen are perceived as important to short-term security goals. Corrupt actors rely on financial networks to hide the proceeds of grand corruption, and in some cases, on international support to foot the bill for basic public services, as they spirit away national resources. Political support for strongmen, especially in fragile and conflict states, can tip the scales in their favour, enabling them to build patronage networks and secure lucrative income streams; the injection of resources through development projects and contracting can provide resources that enable malign networks to consolidate their power.

- In South Sudan, a bloated defence force financed by an unaccountable budget was used by top officials to buy the loyalty of various factions – but at the cost of other government departments, whose budgets were raided and whose resources were redirected to the defence sector. In 2012, when defence and security expenditure constituted 35% of South Sudan's budget, donors funded 75% of South Sudan's health sector. South Sudan's national security apparatus also routinely overspent its budget: in the first quarter of 2015, the Ministry of Defence overspent by 150%, and the Veterans Affairs department by 113%. This money came from other government agencies, meaning that the War Widows and Orphans Commission received only 5% of its funding, the Human Rights Commission only 29%, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 56% of promised funding.[16]

- The post-2001 international mission to Afghanistan illustrates the pitfalls of ignoring corruption and criminal patronage networks. The 2001 Bonn agreement, which set up the framework for post-Taliban Afghanistan, placed former warlords (many with substantial records of human rights abuses) in positions of power, either as provincial governors or government ministers, and enabled them to reinforce strong, violent criminal patronage networks which undermined stabilisation efforts. The same pattern played out at the provincial level: in the key southern province of Kandahar, strongman Gul Agha Sherzai used his position as provincial governor and chief US ally to build up an economic and political empire. Having facilitated the entry of US troops into Kandahar, Sherzai was seen as an important asset whose less savoury exploits could be overlooked if he could deliver security – including security for US bases. Sherzai and his approximately 1,500 men were thus showered with funding and support which gave Sherzai not only weapons and money, but also a powerful position from which to consolidate his impact on the province. As US troops bedded down in Kandahar, Sherzai became the key supplier of materiel and labour for the Kandahar Air Base. This enabled him to charge exorbitant prices: a truckload of gravel used to rebuild the runway at the Kandahar Airfield, for example, was billed at $100, even though the actual cost was around $8. With the money that he made from these contracts, Governor Sherzai was able to monopolise other areas, including water and petrol distribution, real estate, taxi services, mining, and eventually opium smuggling. He was able to impose taxes on local businessmen and used his monopolies to strengthen his political position.[17]

  In return, Sherzai attempted to provide to the US forces what they needed most: intelligence on the Taliban. By 2002, however, the Taliban had been largely pushed back to the border regions with Pakistan. Sherzai's security services used this as an opportunity to create an enemy from within the population of Kandahar, accusing individuals of ties with the Taliban and using the impunity allowed by US backing to extort the population. In the long run, the actions of warlords like Sherzai bred resentment and support for the insurgency, and these relationships with warlords tarnished international forces by association: they came to be seen as complicit in corruption, extortion, and the creation of insecurity.[18]

- In post-conflict Guatemala, on the other hand, the United Nations supported a quasi-judicial initiative, the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), formed in 2006. Tasked with addressing human rights abuses by the Guatemalan security forces, CICIG ended up focusing on corruption issues and prosecuted more than 160 current or former government officials, including former and sitting Presidents, Vice Presidents, and former defence and interior ministers. The Commission also succeeded in building up the capacity of the Guatemalan police and prosecution services, including an ability to handle evidence and build cases around physical evidence in addition to witness testimonies. It created 'islands' of vetted, reliable police, investigators and prosecutors, training teams and cementing them through victories on major cases. Long-term international support enabled the Commission's largest successes, which did not happen until 6 to 8 years after it was established, showing that long-term planning and patience are necessary if structures like these are to work.[19]

The international community – whether governments, civil society or international organisations – can play a positive role in ending conflict. UN support to Guatemala's CICIG, for example, was a crucial factor in the success of the organisation.[20] Equally, however, the international community can do more harm than good. Political support for kleptocratic leaders, a focus on short-term security goals, a failure to shape the conditions necessary for long-term development, or an irresponsible approach to international trade can all add to the factors driving instability. In particular, the international community needs to let go of the illusion that in all cases, strongmen create stability. Supporting Afghan warlords and Iraqi sectarian leaders with very few strings attached undermined the longer-term goals of international interventions, and unconditionally supporting any military that creates instability through repression, violence and corruption, is unlikely to bring better results. But there are other equally damaging, if less obvious ways in which the international community is sustaining corrupt power structures, including by rolling out the diplomatic red carpet to corrupt leaders, allowing them to access property markets, bank accounts and other services. The international community needs to marry human security with state security and stability, and undertake interventions which build resilient institutions geared toward creating long-term security and development.

Potential military role: While the overall direction of a mission and its relationship to stakeholders within the host nation will be set by political planners, in some cases the armed forces will have some discretion as to who to engage with and who can support mission goals – especially if the armed forces have a significant presence on the ground. These decisions should be made with long-term governance and development objectives in mind, prioritising agents of change and supporters of effective governance arrangements. In some cases, these choices will clash with shorter-term security objectives, which is one reason for the military and civilian components of the mission to coordinate when making these decisions. Equally, the military's presence on the ground will enable it to gather information about stakeholders' and institutions' impact on the population, and feed that analysis into political decision making.

Less often, the armed forces might need to take the lead on tackling corrupt networks, and they will need to instigate political and civil coordination to achieve that. Task Force 2010, for example – a US team deployed as part of ISAF to ensure that local contractors were vetted for links to criminal and insurgent networks – would often initiate cooperation with civilian agencies such as the FBI or the Department of Justice to ensure that a full spectrum of information and sanctions is brought to bear on a particular network or individual. Similarly, where mission personnel commit abuses or crimes, investigations initiated by the armed forces might later involve cooperation with civilian law enforcement agencies.

Reforming the Host Nation Defence and Security Forces (HNDSF)

Where international interventions take the form of peacekeeping or stabilisation missions or assistance to the host nation security forces, they encounter not only the intersection between corruption and conflict, but also the most destructive form of corruption: that of defence and security forces.

Institutional fragility is particularly dangerous when it affects government departments charged with providing security and justice. In some cases, the effects of corruption are immediately visible, with predatory security forces abusing the populations they were set up to protect. In other cases, the secretive nature of the sector hides the effects of corruption until a crisis reveals them. In either case, when military structures have been damaged by corruption, they are incapable of responding to insecurity and violence. When a military fails, it fails spectacularly: predatory, hollowed-out forces create the space for the likes of Boko Haram, ISIS, and organised crime groups to thrive. The consequences of these forces failing are too big to be ignored by either the security or the development community. If peace and security are to take hold and create conditions for development, defence and security corruption – especially in fragile and conflict-affected states – must be a priority for both.

"If we'd been able to reform the defence forces – turn them into institutions that people trusted – maybe the Houthis wouldn't have had so much success, so quickly, and been able to reverse the progress we were starting to make after the revolution."

Saif Al Hadi, TI Yemen

In Iraq, corruption was at the root of one of the most spectacular defeats of the 21st Century: 25,000 Iraqi soldiers and police were defeated by just 1300 ISIS fighters in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul in June 2014. While tactical mistakes played a part in the debacle, key factors in the failure were related to corruption and factionalism. Following the US withdrawal from Iraq in 2009-2010, Shia Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki sought to cement his control over Iraqi political and military institutions by appointing officials loyal to him, frequently with Shia supremacist views.[21] Senior officers, appointed on the basis of factional and sectarian loyalty rather than due to their professional record, were far more focused on amassing personal fortunes through corrupt practices, including the embezzlement of public resources and the extortion of those under their command, than on maintaining an effective fighting force and assessing intelligence accurately.[22] It had rapidly become customary in the ISF to buy senior command posts through patronage networks. Battalion command posts, for example, could be purchased for $10,000 USD, and division command posts for $1 million USD. The opportunity to skim salaries and support budgets, however, made it fairly simple to recoup that investment.[23]

Audits, both before and after the Mosul battle, revealed the existence of about 50,000 ghost soldiers – individuals enrolled on paper, but never actually showing up to train or fight. The ghost soldiers cost the Iraqi military $380 million USD per year, with their salaries either pocketed by senior officers or split between the shirking soldier and higher-ranking officers, with both benefitting from the scheme.[24] When they were needed most, these soldiers did not show up, rendering the Iraqi forces much weaker in reality than they were on paper.

At the other end of the spectrum are defence and security forces whose power in the country is disproportionate and affects the overall political and economic situation. These militaries, often outwardly effective and powerful, often receive significant international support. The most obvious example of this has been the misplaced support for the Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF). Following the Arab Spring and the end of the Hosni Mubarak regime, the high hopes of many Egyptians for a new social contract after the Arab Spring protests have effectively been subverted by the military. This happened with the often tacit, but vital, support of the international community. Significant security assistance and numerous joint exercises have helped the EAF cement its privileged economic and political position and develop its business empire, from the control of hotel chains to access to unfair advantages such as the use of convict labour. Initially – following the anti-Morsi military coup – the US suspended delivery of major weapons systems (including F-16 fighters, Apache helicopters, missiles and tanks), only to reinstate it in March 2015. The F-16s were delivered in August of that year and the US embassy even announced this on Twitter, using President el-Sisi's campaign slogan as a hashtag. The message was that 'business as usual' was back on the cards.[25] International support and financial assistance in post-Mubarak Egypt have removed any pressure to rein in the armed forces' excesses or prevent them from developing such a tight hold on the economy.

Egyptian civilians have paid a high price for the coup the military orchestrated and the EAF's subsequent increased control over the country's political life. Human rights organisations have reported on civilian deaths in detention and Freedom House recently rated Egypt as 'not free' because of censorship, attacks on journalists and the marginalisation of the opposition parties.[26] But the military has also suffered: busy competing for commercial contracts and running businesses, the armed forces have been struggling to cope with increasing threats from ISIS-affiliated groups: border control, search and rescue operations, and counter-terrorism activities have all seen diminished effectiveness.[27]

When designing interventions in countries with highly corrupt defence and security institutions, the international community needs to consider the role of the sector and the use to which its intervention could be put. To prevent resources being wasted by corrupt militaries or appropriated by those preoccupied by commercial concerns, these interventions need to be shaped by careful consideration of political and military factors. A clear end state and pathways to it need to be established, and appropriate guidance provided for the military effort. The provision of assistance could be linked to specific political and operational benchmarks and conditions, such as increasing the effectiveness of the armed forces or decreasing their control over the political realm. Interventions could also exert pressure on individual leaders through, for example, extending or curtailing travel, investment, or educational opportunities.

The conditional approach might not always work, especially in cases where individuals are not interested in either domestic change or international legitimacy, where there are few pressure points, or where conditions are exacting and outcomes uncertain. In these cases, it is worth considering directing resources to where they can actually make a difference. Interventions should also establish clear conditions for withdrawal, so that intervening actors are prepared to cease their activities if more harm than good is being done, or if activities can reinforce negative trends in the host nation. Accepting from the outset that failure is an option and that outcomes depend on conditions could help prevent situations in which pressure to avoid failure leads to more resources being invested in the wrong environments.

In 2015, in response to increasing violence in the country and a rising number of abuses committed by the defence and security forces, the Dutch government suspended a Security Sector Development programme in Burundi scheduled to run from 2009 till 2017.

> The Netherlands and Belgium have worked together successfully for many years on professionalising Burundi's security sector. However, it would be irresponsible to continue under the present circumstances.
>
> Lilianne Ploumen, Netherlands Development Cooperation Minister, 2015

A long-term, flexible programme built on the expectation of managing changing conditions rather than goals set in stone, the SSD design could evolve with the environment it was operating in. Withdrawal was largely seen as a response to deteriorating conditions rather than a failure of the programme.

Potential military role: here, the armed forces are likely to be implementing at least part of the security assistance programme. Their technical and host country expertise will be key to designing and implementing programmes which contain elements of conditionality. Information gathering and monitoring of the way host nation forces act, as well as evaluation of the effectiveness of security assistance programmes, will equip them to feed into political decisions regarding programme design, delivery and potential suspension, and will inform iterative programme design for security assistance.

Getting your own house in order: anti-corruption for mission forces

International forces deployed for peacekeeping and stabilisation operations are not immune from corruption risks. Illegal activities among mission troops and police officers – from embezzlement and black market fuel sales to participation in illegal trade and sexual abuse – lead to the abuse of civilians, can strengthen corrupt networks in the host nation, and make it far more difficult for the mission to achieve its goals. But despite the seriousness of the issue, many operations do not have arrangements for either preventing or sanctioning corruption in their ranks. Most of the top 25 Troop Contibuting Countries (TCCs) to United Nations missions, for example, do not provide systematic training on corruption or ensure that occurrences of corruption are monitored or investigated.[28] For some, peacekeeping missions are lucrative opportunities for enrichment; with few controls either in pre-deployment recruitment or during the operation, abuse is likely.

The UN, while it does have an oversight and investigative system for alleged abuses, including corruption, relies on national enforcement systems for sanctions for offenders. Some steps to strengthen the process – including publicly releasing information on offences committed and actions (not) taken by the troop-contributing nation – were taken in relation to incidents of sexual exploitation in the Central African Republic.[29] Overall, however, in approximately 40% of the top 25 TCCs there is no evidence that other breaches of codes of conduct such as engaging in corrupt activities are addressed by either the armed forces or civilian courts. There is also considerable inconsistency and a lack of effectiveness in enforcement: in most cases, offenders are simply redeployed elsewhere rather than brought to court.[30]

Accountability for corruption-related activities in international operations remains ill-defined. In the UK, for example, engaging in bribery as part of a 'proper function' of the intelligence services or armed forces conducting international operations can be used as a defence against possible penalties resulting from the 2010 Bribery Act; what constitutes a 'proper function' has not been defined.[31]

Corruption among mission troops affects the legitimacy and effectiveness of the force. The political-military level, where missions are designed, needs to push for a robust investigative and sanctions system to be available for missions. This could be either multinational and mission-wide or, as has so far appeared more realistic, national, with troop-contributing countries responsible for sanctioning the misconduct of deployed personnel and for wide-ranging oversight of mission expenditures.

The US, for example, has developed an extensive investigative system in the last decade. Key elements include the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) and a very similar system in Iraq (SIGIR), with a mandate to track the spending of US funds in the respective operational theatres. SIGAR's principal tasks involve auditing

spending and the delivery of specific projects, investigations into fraud, abuse, and waste, and the gathering of lessons learned. Endowed with full law enforcement powers, the SIGAR can apply a variety of criminal, civil and administrative sanctions, from prosecution to suspension and debarment of non-compliant contractors.[32] Other agencies – from the FBI to Inspectors General for particular government departments – have also conducted investigations, especially into contractor conduct, resulting in convictions in US courts.[33]

While sanctioning deployed troops for misconduct has mostly been seen as a national responsibility, the impact on the mission overall suggests that this is an issue that international institutions should press their troop-contributing countries to address. This could be done through, for example, tying financial reimbursement from international organisations to the creation of a robust system of safeguards.

Potential military role: the military mission will need to take a lead on tackling corruption in its own ranks. It will need to ensure that investigative and monitoring systems are in place to prevent and tackle corruption. Funding and authority for such capabilities, as well as a sanctions system for those engaging in corruption, is usually decided, and needs to be supported, at the political level.

ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES AND POLITICAL-MILITARY COORDINATION: MEASURE-BY-MEASURE

Countering corruption and mitigating associated risks will likely remain a domain of civilian leadership. However, where projects affect host nation armed forces or where there is a significant military presence through a peacekeeping or stabilisation mission, the armed forces will need to play a role in mitigating corruption risks. They will need to:

- Mitigate risks coming directly from their actions;
- Monitor corruption risks in projects they are implementing;
- Support initiatives led by others where possible and appropriate;
- Less frequently, take the lead on addressing corruption issues.

Coordination at the political-military level will be crucial here: leaders will need to determine what measures should be implemented and what the role of the armed forces in each of them will need to be. Depending on their designated role, the armed forces will need to ensure the existence of appropriate reporting and coordination chains, as well as staffing responding to the needs identified at tactical, operational and strategic levels. In some cases, necessary personnel will need to come from civilian augmentation and will need to be agreed at the political-military level.

The table below contains suggestions on political-military cooperation on particular anti-corruption measures. Far from being exhaustive or suggesting that a given arrangement will always work in the same way, it is meant to provide food for thought. For more detail on other mitigation measures, please consult the Interventions Anti-Corruption Guidance.

The suggested role for the armed forces in this table only applies to situations in which they have a presence in the host nation, either through a military operation or the delivery of security assistance programmes. This equips them to participate in programme planning and implementation.

Anti-corruption measure	Rationale	Who mandates and leads implementation?	Military role	Example
Shaping incentives and limiting opportunities: a full-spectrum approach (civil forfeitures, visa bans, political recognition)	Changes incentive structures	Donor/Troop Contributing Nations' departments of foreign affairs Donor/Troop Contributing Nations' interior ministries Donor/Troop Contributing Nations' law enforcement agencies	Information gathering to assist political decision making	Military officers can inform decisions on political support for particular stakeholders and cooperate in gathering data for, and monitoring, other approaches, from visa bans to civil forfeiture.
Investing carefully and applying conditionality	Changes incentive structures Can promote accountability and effectiveness of state institutions	International development institutions and trust funds National aid agencies Donor (and recipient) legislatures Donor/Troop Contributing Nations' departments of defence and foreign affairs	Information gathering to assist political decision making Delivering or assisting in programme delivery Leading on risk monitoring and fulfilment of pre-set conditions	The 2018 National Defence Authorization Act makes the delivery of U.S. security assistance to Ukraine conditional upon progress in the governance of the defence sector and the technical capacity of Ukrainian forces. Some of the programmes will likely be implemented by the US military, which should be able to monitor improvements in technical capability, and observe procedures and practices that are part of defence governance.
Investing in monitoring and oversight	Reduces opportunities for corruption Builds host nation anti-corruption capacity Helps develop host nation economy	Donors (including international institutions) Host nation governments and defence and security forces Host nation and international media and civil society	Increasing transparency in contracting Leading monitoring and oversight in non-permissive areas, as appropriate Leading in due diligence for, and overseeing, own contracts and sustainment Cooperating with civilian authorities in monitoring and oversight	In response to International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan funds being stolen, ISAF encouraged the involvement of local organisations in project monitoring. Organisations such as Integrity Watch Afghanistan monitored the delivery of reconstruction contracts. On the troop contributing nation side, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction monitors US contracts in Afghanistan.

Reforming the host nation defence and security institutions (HNDSF): modernising personnel and acquisition systems	Reduces opportunities for corruption in key institutions Improves institutional effectiveness Prevents waste and diversion of resources	Host nation government institutions with support from donors Security assistance programme implementers	Leading in observing and reporting need for reform Reporting on violations and practical implementation of reforms Encouraging and exerting pressure on partner forces to adopt reforms.	When delivering security assistance, armed forces are likely to observe shortcomings in personnel and procurement processes which might need to be addressed through a political process.
Supporting civilian initiatives: law enforcement	Acts as deterrent Changes incentive structures	Host nation institutions, with support from donors Donor institutions if jurisdiction allows	Preserving evidence Collecting information Providing physical security to whistleblowers and law enforcement agents	When conducting kinetic operations, commanders should direct troops to preserve any paper or electronic evidence that could help map criminal networks.
Getting your own house in order: anti-corruption for mission forces	Prevents crime Mitigates the risk of mission contributing to corruption in theatre	Mission staff: inspector general, military police Troop-contributing nations' military and civilian leaders	Leading on monitoring the integrity of mission troops Leading on preventing and sanctioning troops' participation in corrupt schemes	Commanders need to ensure that the military police or a similar organisation is able to investigate allegations of corruption, and that a sanctioning mechanism for troops is in place.

ENDNOTES

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