

Civil Society Anti-Corruption Initiatives in MENA Countries

Query:

"I am interested in civil society initiatives to tackle corruption, at country level as well as regional organisations, across the MENA countries. I am interested in both secular and religious movements and those which may be considered to be political (probably opposition) as well as purely civil society organisations. Besides an interest in the organisations themselves, I am interested to know about the limitations placed on their operation by State control and how this might impact on their ability / incentives in relation to anti corruption. I am aware of Lebanon Transparency Association (LTA) and Arab Parliamentarians against Corruption but am struggling to find much else written on civil society efforts in this area."

The enquirer is especially interested in ten MENA countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, Syria and Yemen.

Purpose:

"To assist in thinking about civil society in the Arab region and particularly in how it may be instrumental in demand for anti corruption reform."

Content:

- Part 1: Overview of Civil Society's Context of Operation in MENA Countries
- Part 2: Examples of Country Level Civil Society Anti-Corruption Initiatives
- Part 3: Regional Anti-Corruption Networks and Initiatives
- Part 4: Further reading

Summary:

Civil society faces specific challenges in the Arab world including political and legal restrictions imposed on civil society organisations (CSOs) by mostly non-democratic governments and the fragmentation and general lack of cross-sector coordination of civil society efforts. In spite of these various constraints, there is considerable potential for impact by civil society on anti-corruption work in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The growing number of anti-corruption initiatives and organisations from Algeria to Yemen demonstrate increased awareness of corruption issues and demand for change.

Introduction:

According to most Middle East experts, civil society remains weak in the MENA region in spite of the expansion of the associational sector in terms of numbers. This is usually explained by a variety of reasons. First, the Arab world is characterised by cultural specificities which have an impact on the form, nature and agenda of civil activism in the region. For example, there is no consensus within the international community on whether Islamic organisations should be counted and supported as part of Arab civil society. Civil society weaknesses are also mainly attributed to the social, legal and political context in which these organisations operate.

www.U4.no

www.transparency.org

www.cmi.no

Authored by:

Marie Chêne
U4 Helpdesk
Transparency International
mchene@transparency.org

Reviewed by:

Robin Hodess Ph.D.
Transparency International
rhodess@transparency.org

Date:

10 December 2007

This combination of factors leaves little manoeuvring space for civil society and imposes major constraints on their anti-corruption programmes and activities. As a result, only a few organisations - although a growing number - specifically focus on corruption issues at country or regional level. While morally opposed to corruption, little evidence was found of Islamic organisations specifically addressing corruption through targeted programmes and activities in the framework of this query. The relevance and opportunity of involving them in the fight against corruption is a debated issue both among the non religious civil society sector and the international community.

Part 1: Overview of Civil Society's Context of Operation in MENA Countries

Where do Islamist Organisations fit in the Arab Civil Society?

Many experts argue that the notion of civil society in the Arab region differs from what is commonly understood under this concept. There seems to be no consensual definition of what type of organisations Arab civil society precisely comprises. In recent years, the region has experienced the sprawling growth of religious voluntary organisations enjoying wide grassroots support and firmly grounded in the Islamist ideology and beliefs. In contrast, very few non religious CSOs have managed to mobilise such widespread support throughout society, as they tend to be more single-issue oriented. In addition to their religious or ideological agenda, many Islamic organisations provide basic social services when the state fails to do so, especially in conflict areas. As a result, the Islamist sector of Arab societies encompasses categories as diverse as political parties, charity organisations, health care providers, extremist groups or social clubs.

Religious groups conceptually stand against corruption and could potentially play an important role in the fight against corruption. Although little evidence was found of Islamic organisations specifically/concretely focussing on corruption issues, the challenge remains for the international community to position itself in relation to Islamist organisations. The dilemma is to determine whether these various groups can be considered an essential part of civic life when there is uncertainty about their support to democratic objectives and reforms. This has implications for the fight against corruption, as prevention strategies focusing on transparency and accountability measures are supported by values of democracy and participation.

An option for aid practitioners consists in defining civil society as secular in ideology, civil in behaviour, legally recognised and supportive of democratic reform, as the liberal Arab research institute Ibn Khaldun Centre for Development Studies in Cairo does. Using such definition excludes religious groups and limits civil society to membership-based professional groups, non governmental organisations providing social services, public interest advocates such as human right activists or corruption watchdogs, unions and informal social groups. However, in many countries, this approach is likely to exclude strong and lively segments of society that claim to be morally opposed to corruption, while making the civic sector appear weak and fragmented. (Please see: <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2005/issue4/Yom%20pdf.pdf>)

Political Obstacles to Civil Society Activism

The Middle East is characterised by a general context of conflict, growing tension and insecurity that ultimately threaten social peace and stability. Militarisation resulting from foreign occupation such as in Palestine or internal conflicts negatively influence the environment in which civil society organisations operate. Most governments in the region are also undemocratic (mainly military dictatorships, totalitarian regimes or monarchies), and impose severe restrictions to the freedom of association and expression, freedom of the press or access to information. The 2004 Arab Human Development Report published by UNDP analyses the roots of authoritarian rule and repressive nature of the Arab states, calling for urgent corrective action to limit the monopoly of power currently enjoyed by the executive in most countries in the region. (Please see: http://www.un-ngls.org/Arab_Human_Development_Report_2004_eng.pdf).

The main features of the regional political context include the absence of sound public institutions, weak legislatures and judicial systems, generalised violations of human rights and/or undue influence of the political leaders in public affairs. The state often controls civil and political rights and civil society operations are heavily restricted. As a result, the overall lack of freedom and democracy in the region limits opportunities for civil society to participate in the public debate, to influence public policies or to advocate for change whether for corruption or other development related issues. Governmental control over civil society organisations (CSOs) may also take other forms in the region. The scope of the non profit sector may be limited to certain areas while the ruling elite may also create their own organisations to enhance their outreach and influence among the population. In some countries, governments also seek to limit the influence of religious organisations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, by restricting their activities or banning them.

Legal Obstacles and Restrictions on Civil Society Operations

In Arab countries, laws regulating civil society organisations often lack clarity, restrict liberties or scope of activities and/or are not always efficiently administered. An article published in April 2007 in the International Journal of Not for Profit Law highlights the various legal obstacles to civil society operations in the region. (Please see: http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol9iss2/special_1.htm). This paper distinguishes between three categories of countries i) countries that highly restrict civil society and are characterised by the absence of CSO law; ii) countries where the CSO law serves as a tool for government to pressure and restrict civil society and iii) countries with relatively liberal laws where implementation problems hamper civil society.

There are many ways in which CSO laws may restrict civil society activities. For example, most laws in the region prohibit any group or individuals from conducting public activities unless they are registered as an association. Organisations may then be subject to complex, lengthy and cumbersome registration procedures. The scope of the organisation's permitted activities can be restricted or limited to the ones outlined in its founding documents. In most cases, CSOs are not permitted to engage in political or syndicate activities, which directly challenges anti-corruption initiatives. In some cases, public meetings may only be held when permission has been granted by the authorities prior to the meeting. In 2004, for example, the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights was not granted permission to hold a conference in Algeria. In other cases, joining regional or global networks or accessing foreign funding is also subject to government's approval, such as in Egypt.

The law can also enable government to dissolve the association for any reason and at any time or to monitor financial status as well as public and private activities of its members. In Egypt, a revision of the law in 2003 required all CSOs to register. Significantly, the applications of some long established human rights organisations were rejected. In Jordan, there have also been examples of CSOs being shut down in 2002 or trade unionists imprisoned because of advocating for political changes. (Please see: http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol7iss4/special_1.htm).

Structure and Nature of Civil Society in the Arab Region

Specific characteristics of civil society in the Arab world also challenge the scope and potential impact of local anti-corruption activities. A culture of charity prevails in Arab countries, and many CSOs have overtaken the role of providing basic social services in the absence of a functioning government in particular in times of conflict such as in Lebanon during the civil war. Many Arab civil society organisations are organised more as service providers than advocates, playing an important role in service delivery or community development such as in Egypt or Morocco. By nature, these organisations are not primarily structured as social movements with the capacity or the claimed mandate to influence public policies or decision making. As such, their potential in the fight against corruption may be limited to very specific sectoral interventions targeting service delivery.

Organisations benefiting from foreign funding are sometimes criticised in the region - not least by governments themselves - as implementing the donor agenda and lacking broad based trust and support. (Please see: <http://www.un-ngls.org/cso/cso6/arab.htm>). In addition, individuals in Arab societies often tend to primarily rely on indigenous, religious or ethnic structures such as their clans, tribes or religious affiliation. These informal networks lack structure and capacity to fully participate in broader advocacy efforts such as anti-corruption. As a result, there is little coordination or cross-sector coalitions of these various groups and organisations, whether at national or regional level, leading to a fragmented sector lacking a sense of unity or cohesion. The Arab NGO Network for Development (<http://www.annd.org/>) founded in 1997 as a regional network of 263 organisations in 12 Arab countries is trying to address this challenge by creating linkages between local, regional and international civil societies.

What do Arab Organisations Say about the Challenges they face?

A survey was recently conducted in 11 countries, through questionnaires sent to 103 civil society organisations of the 263 organisations that are members of the above mentioned Arab NGO Network for Development. The objective of the survey was to identify the main challenges that CSOs face when they operate in the Arab region. In spite of a rather low response rate, the findings provide valuable insight on what CSOs perceive as the main obstacles to their operations, the context in which anti-corruption organisations operate and the challenges they face. Three-fifths of the responding CSOs expressed positive views of their relationship with the government although 36% of them reported that it restricted their operations. 52% saw the legal framework as an obstacle to their operations, more so in conservative countries, where close to 70% viewed the legal framework as an obstacle and 62% reported that government has restricted their activities. 64% of CSOs operating in conservative countries reported financial restrictions. (Please see: http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol9iss2/special_1.htm).

Part 2: Examples of Country Level Civil Society Anti-Corruption Initiatives

Although the last two decades have seen the emergence of a broad range of civil society organisations in the Arab region, they continue to operate under extremely difficult circumstances and only few organisations - mainly linked to Transparency International's (TI) network - have embarked on systematically and specifically addressing corruption related issues¹. Although not prominently targeting corruption, there are also a growing number of CSOs working in related areas. Organisations addressing human rights, poverty, democratisation or justice related issues advocate for change and constitute obvious partners in the fight against corruption.

Secular Country Level Initiatives²

Algeria

In Algeria, CSOs are still regulated by a highly restrictive law adopted in 1990. The 1992 Emergency law as well as government directives and practices also continue to impose limits on the constitutional right of association. By law, freedom of speech must respect the imperatives of foreign policy and the

¹ A further difficulty to identify the scope and nature of their programme is that they don't always have an internet presence or exclusively in Arabic.

² This section is mostly based on reports from Freedom House (<http://www.freedomhouse.org>), the Global Integrity Index (www.globalintegrity.org) and UNDP-POGAR country profiles (<http://www.undp-pogar.org>) and the Business Anti corruption Portal (<http://www.business-anti-corruption.com/Home.asp?pageid=4>)

national defence. Reports of severe human rights abuses are on the decline since 2004 but, in some instances, government uses its broad power to deny CSOs the right to hold public meetings or forums. Within this context, civil society organisations fighting against corruption operate under extremely difficult circumstances.

The Algerian Association for the Fight against Corruption, TI's national chapter-in-formation, has been particularly active in promoting the ratification and implementation of the UN and African Union (AU) Conventions, writing letters to the government, commenting on draft legislation and conducting workshops to promote these instruments. The organisation is also particularly successful in raising public awareness and addressing corruption issues in the national media. Other significant advocacy groups include the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH) and the Algerian League for Human Rights (ALHR), the most active independent human rights groups in the country.

Egypt

Egypt rates strongly in the Global Integrity Index on indicators related to civil society but very weak in relation to media and access to information. Egypt is in a state of emergency, imposed by President Mubarak in 1981 and in place ever since. In 2002, the association law was revised to increase restrictions on CSOs' activities and funding ability. The law also prohibits CSOs from engaging in any kind of political or syndicate activities, which limits the scope of anti-corruption initiatives. Despite the highly restrictive nature of its civil society laws, Egypt enjoys a large and vibrant civil society. More than 16,000 CSOs are reported to be registered in the country.

The Arab Centre for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession (ACIJLP) supports judicial reform and promotes independence of the judiciary, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the region in general and in the country in particular. An Egyptian Global Compact Network has also been established with more than 50 Egyptian companies. (http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/networks_around_world_doc/Annual_Reports_2006-07/Egypt_Annual_Activity_Report_2006-2007.pdf). Kifaya (Arabic for "Enough!") is the unofficial moniker of the Egyptian Movement for Change, a grassroots coalition which draws its support from across Egypt's political spectrum to oppose the current regime. Kifaya just published a massive report on corruption in Egypt, naming names and exposing corruption among the country leaders. (www.ikhwanweb.com/lib/Kefayafasad.doc)

Jordan

Much like in Egypt, Jordan has a large civil society that stands in contrast to very restrictive association law. The law regulating CSOs was adopted in 1966 and counts among the oldest and most arbitrary in the region. There are about 2000 CSOs in Jordan, working in areas such as women's rights, environment, health, as well as social and political issues. They are considered relatively weak, only entitled to work in their specialised area. Their licences can be immediately withdrawn if they are judged to be subversive. Many foreign organisations such as Care or Save the Children also operate in Jordan. All publications in Jordan have to be licensed by the government. A new press law was approved in 2007. The journalists' syndicate lobbied successfully to remove measures permitting journalists to be imprisoned for a broad range of motives. The Jordan Transparency Forum, former TI chapter-in-formation, has been advocating persistently for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission, which the government agreed to put in place when it signed the UNCAC in 2003.

Lebanon

In the Global Integrity Index, Lebanon scores very strongly on indicators related to civil society organisations, moderately for the media and very weak in terms of access to information. In Lebanon, freedom of association is guaranteed by the national constitution and the legal framework in place is

U4 Expert Answer

considered to be fairly good. Formation of association only requires informing the Ministry of Interior of their structure and existence. Similarly, the Lebanese media remains rich and varied despite the government's decision to drastically reduce the number of TV stations in 1996. As a result, Lebanon enjoys one of the largest, most active and least restrained civil societies in the region. In addition to a large number of professional organisations, trade unions or various private sector associations, about 300 significant CSOs are based in Beirut, many of them in the form of non-confessional or multi-confessional welfare organisations. Networks such as the Lebanese NGO Forum or the Collective of Lebanese Voluntary NGOs provide some avenues for coordination.

TI has a National Chapter in Lebanon, the Lebanon Transparency Association (LTA) that runs, for example, projects in the area of access to information, corporate governance or civic education, as well as campaigns for electoral reform. LTA contributed to the drafting of the Access to Information Law. LTA has also focused on anti-corruption measures for the private sector, and developed in cooperation with representatives from the private sector and the government the first Lebanese Code for Corporate Governance. Regional or international anti-corruption initiatives such as the Arab Anti-corruption organisation, the Global Integrity Alliance or the Arab Parliamentarians Against Corruption (ARPAC), which is hosted by the LTA, are also active in Lebanon. The Centre for Democracy and the Rule of Law runs a campaign for good governance in Lebanon (<http://www.cggl.org/>). The largest human rights group is the Institute for Human Rights in Lebanon which is part of the Beirut Bar Association. Amnesty International also has a regional office in Beirut.

Morocco

By law, civil society organisations are not allowed to engage with political issues. The Minister of Interior has the right to dissolve associations and is reported to deny approval of CSOs. Although the constitution guarantees the freedom of opinion and of expression in all forms, the monarchy has traditionally exerted a tight control over the media. The press law gives the Ministry of Interior and Prime Minister the power to suspend a publication for various reasons. In recent years, publications have been closed, journalists imprisoned, significant fines have been imposed on media officers. However, in spite of these various restrictions, Moroccan civil society has gained a certain degree of autonomy and freedom over time.

TI's national chapter in Morocco, Transparence Maroc (TM), was created in 1995 as a network of lawyers, journalists and business people and was officially recognised by the authorities in 1998. Transparence Maroc has been especially active in promoting the ratification (achieved in May 2007) and implementation of the UNCAC. The organisation contributed to the formulation of a national action plan in line with the UNCAC framework, particularly pushing for the creation of a national anti-corruption commission. TM has also established a National Corruption Observatory (<http://www.u4.no/helpdesk/helpdesk/queries/query73.cfm>). In addition, a network against corruption has also been created with 46 CSOs including TM and government officials. Other prominent active advocacy groups in the country include organisations such as l'Association Marocaine des Droits Humains (AMDH), l'Organisation des Droits Humains (OMDH), Maroc 2020, and Morocco's two most effective women's right groups, the Democratic Association of Moroccan Women (ADFM) and the Union for Women's Action (UAF).

Palestine

Although the Global Integrity Index rates Palestine as very weak on indicators related to civil society, media and access to information, the legal system in Palestine is also considered one of the best in the region and civil society enjoys a fairly large degree of independence. The Association law was adopted in 2000 as a result of a CSO campaign after an attempt by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to assert control over civil society by issuing a highly restrictive draft CSO law. The foreign occupation and political context of the country strongly affect the role, mandate and performance of civil society organisations. In August 2007, for example, the Prime Minister announced the decision of government to dissolve 103 philanthropic CSOs as a result of grave legal, administrative and financial

offences and to scrutinise the operations of the remaining 2,400 organisations. This decision was criticised by the opposition as being political and mainly targeting the opposition's philanthropic organisations. In spite of these recent developments, the West Bank and Gaza enjoy a wide variety of welfare, charitable, research, and human rights organisations, many funded by international donors. Privately owned media also manage to survive despite attempts by the Authority to restrict their activities.

The AMAN Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (national chapter of TI) was founded in 2000 and, among other activities, is active in the field of UNCAC promotion and access to information. For example, AMAN was successful in convincing the PNA to send a letter to the UN Secretary General stating the unilateral commitment by the PNA to implement the provisions of the UNCAC, a remarkable achievement since Palestine is not able to sign the Convention, due to its non-state status. In 2007, AMAN also developed and introduced an anti-corruption training course for the Birzeit University as well as a code of conduct for NGOs that was signed by a large number of Palestinian CSOs.

Tunisia

The number of CSOs in Tunisia has more than tripled since 1987. There are about 7,500 CSOs currently operating in a wide range of sectors. CSOs are prohibited by law from engaging in political activity, and they must be registered with the Ministry of Interior. Members of associations are also required to submit the organisation's charter and by-laws to the ministry in order to be granted approval. Public meetings of CSOs require prior approval from the ministry. In principle, there are no legal restrictions on issues that the media may address. In practice, however, the majority of information originates from the Tunis Afrique Presse (TAP). Foreign publications must also be approved by the Ministry of the Interior before distribution.

No evidence of civil society organizations specifically focusing on the fight against corruption was found in the time frame of this query. The Tunisian League of Human Rights is one of the most active independent advocacy groups in Tunisia but operates under several restrictions. A Tunisian court forbade the Tunisian League of Human Rights from holding its congress scheduled for February 2007. The organization has been unable to hold a congress since 2005. Since 1998, the government has refused to authorize the National Council for Liberties (Conseil national pour les libertés en Tunisie, CNLT) as an NGO. The CNLT issues statements very critical of the government's human rights practices. In September 2005, the government closed the office of the Association of Tunisian Judges and banned the congress of the Union of Tunisian Journalists. (Please see: http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/Tunisia_APS.doc).

Yemen

Yemen scores very weakly on all indicators related to civil society organisations, media and access to information in the Global Integrity Index 2006. The Association Law forbids CSOs from engaging in any political activities and all unlicensed demonstrations have been banned by the Minister of Interior in October 2007. In 2004, about 2,500 CSOs were officially registered. Yemen's press is, however, considered one of the freest of the region and any citizen, institution or political party is granted by law the right to publish newspapers. Foreign funding for this is nevertheless not permitted. In 2001, journalists were imprisoned or fined, later amnestied in 2002.

Human rights organisations seem to operate without serious impediment. Such organisations include the Forum for a Civil Society, the Yemen Institute for Democracy Development, the Human Rights Information and Training Centre, the Women's affairs Support Centre, the Sisters Arabic Forum and the Civic Democratic Forum.

Syria

Although the Syrian constitution grants any citizens the right to meet and demonstrate peacefully, by law, they must also work to defend a socialist Arab society system. A series of emergency laws allow the government to interfere in many areas of society life in the name of national security. In 2001, for example, ten opposition leaders were arrested including two Members of Parliament. Organisations such as the Committee for Defence of Human Rights in Syria are not licensed and civil society advocacy groups have experienced several crack downs of CSO forums. A number of individuals have also been prevented from leaving the country, including the director of the Damascus Centre for Human Rights Studies or the head of the Jamal al-Atassi Forum for Democratic Dialogue. This is seen by observers as an attempt to prevent civil society from interacting with the outside world. Under such circumstances, there is little room for civil society to fight against corruption and no evidence was found in the framework of this query on CSO initiatives specifically focusing on anti-corruption mandates and activities.

Non Secular Initiatives: The Muslim Brotherhood Example

Although most religious movements publicly denounce corruption for moral or political reasons, there is little evidence of religiously oriented movements explicitly addressing corruption related issues in the region through targeted anti-corruption initiatives. The Muslim Brotherhood is the world's largest and most influential political Islamic group claiming to be opposed to violent means to reach its goals. Although it has been banned in the country, it is particularly active in Egypt where it managed to capture 88 seats in the People's assembly in 2005. (<http://www.albionmonitor.com/0602a/egyptislamistcharity.html>). When it is legally possible, the movement has gained considerable grassroots support in the country by providing a wide range of social services through an important network of Islamic charities. As a result of these wide ranging social programmes, it has earned a reputation of competence and integrity at grassroots level. The political arm of the movement also claims to stand against corruption and has been very vocal on related issues. However, some experts question its commitment to reform in view of what is seen as an absence of convincing strategies and further suspect the movement's anti-corruption agenda to be a purely political instrument targeting the regime in place. For the international community, the dilemma is to determine whether such movements are genuinely devoted to democratic reforms-including anti-corruption reforms- or just see them as a means to reach power through democratic elections. (Please see: "Civil Society and Democratisation in the Arab World": <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2005/issue4/Yom%20pdf.pdf>).

Part 3: Regional Anti-Corruption Networks and Initiatives

National, regional or global networks have become decisive vehicles to develop and promote region specific tools against corruption. Establishing wider linkages with other actors and activists also provides mutual learning as well as advocacy opportunities, especially in political contexts where severe restrictions are imposed on civil society at country level. In the Arab region, there are two major civil society based regional initiatives specifically focusing on corruption related issues, led by the Arab Region Parliamentarians Against Corruption (ARPAC) and the TI network of national chapters in the region. In addition, a number of regional as well as global organisations and networks carry out regional corruption related activities.

The Arab Region Parliamentarians Against Corruption (ARPAC)

The Arab Region Parliamentarians Against Corruption (<http://www.arpacnetwork.org/>) has started to address some of these issues. It was founded in November 2004 in Beirut as a regional chapter of Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) and has continuously grown

ever since. National Chapters have also been established in Palestine, Yemen, Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain, Morocco, Algeria, and Lebanon. In addition to supporting the establishment of National Chapters in the region, ARPAC's main objective is to call Arab Governments to ratify and implement the UNCAC. In December 2006 for example, ARPAC co-organised the parliamentarians' side-meeting at the Conference of State Parties to the UNCAC. (http://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/convention_corruption/cosp/session1/V0659361e.pdf).

ARPAC has also organised several regional meetings and workshops with the view to develop and promote anti-corruption tools, resulting for example in the adaptation to the Arab context of the Parliamentarians Handbook on Controlling Corruption. In future, ARPAC intends to focus on the development of a code of conduct for Arab Parliamentarians and conflict of interest, on the improvement of the oversight capacity of Arab Parliamentarians in monitoring public funds as well as on the monitoring and implementation of the UNCAC.

Please see: <http://www.gopacnetwork.org/Docs/ARPAC/Arpac%20Progress%20Report.pdf>. The role of Parliaments in the fight against Corruption more specifically focusing on the Middle East region has been more fully developed in a Recent U4 Expert Answer that can be obtained through the U4 website (www.u4.no).

TI Network Regional Initiatives

The regional campaign "Promoting the UNCAC in the MENA" includes activities conducted by TI's network of contacts, partnering organisations and national chapters in Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan and Bahrain. The programme has focused on analysing the legal shortcomings in selected countries, working on concrete policy recommendations, and advocating for the implementation of the UNCAC. On a regional level, an UNCAC Expert Meeting was organised in Amman in September 2006. At this meeting, delegates drafted policy recommendations to be presented to the Forum for the Future 2006. These recommendations address the need for an effective review mechanism, call for the protection of whistleblowers and request the strengthening of anti-money laundering measures, both at a national and a regional level. Regional efforts will be intensified from 2008 around the UNCAC, through a series of 12 regional meetings and workshops. Within this framework, National Integrity Country Studies will be conducted in Lebanon, Palestine and Morocco.

Examples of Other Corruption Related Networks and Organisations

The Arab Centre of Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession (ACIJLP)

ACIJLP is a non-governmental institution based in Cairo working to reinforce and support the status of justice in the Arab region, the independence of the judiciary, the legal profession and the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It organises regional workshops and conferences, local and regional trainings and awareness raising campaigns. (<http://www.acijlp.org/home.htm>).

The Arab Centre for the Development of the Rule of Law and Integrity (ACRLI)

ACRLI is a regional organisation based in Beirut aiming to strengthen the rule of law, fight corruption and build independent justice systems. Among other programmes targeting the media, the judiciary and parliaments, ACRLI manages an electronic library with a database of Arab legislations, regulations and key actors. It also proposes a platform for judiciary training in the region. Country reports are available on Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Syria and Yemen. (<http://www.arabruleoflaw.org/Templates/Hometemplate.aspx?PostingId=284>)

The Arab Anti-Corruption Organisation

The organisation is based in Beirut, as a non-profit independent civil society institution, seeking to promote transparency and good governance in the region. It organises seminars and workshops and disseminates reports and research on corruption in the region. No evidence of its outreach and coverage in the region was found in the framework of this query.

(<http://www.arabanticorruption.org/News/NewsDetails.aspx?NewsID=401>)

Examples of International organisations operating at country/regional level:

Other international organisations operate at country or regional levels in the region. The **International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES)** for example runs several projects in the region at national and regional levels, promoting citizens' participation in the democratic process and greater accountability of politicians to their electorate. IFES has offices in Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian Territories. (<http://www.ifes.org/mena.html?url=mena.html&Go.x=11&Go.y=12>). The **Global Integrity Alliance (GIA)** is an international group of individuals and organisations, launched at the World Ethics Forum in Oxford UK in April, 2006. The GIA's mission is to promote ethical, accountable and effective leadership and focusing on integrity as a fundamental aspects of development efforts. It is meant to serve as an avenue for knowledge sharing among the various actors in the alliance. In the Arab region, the Global Integrity Alliance is hosted by the Lebanese Transparency Association (<https://www.integrityalliance.org/>). The **International Development Law Organisations (IDLO)** has also supported and implemented a series of judiciary capacity building initiatives against corruption in a number of MENA countries. (http://www.idlo.int/english/Documents/WHERE_Middle%20East.pdf)

Part 4: Further reading

Civil Society in the Arab World: The missing concept

This article discusses civil society in the specific context of Islamic states and societies and looks at the relationship between civil society in the Arab world and democracy. It also examines the development of civil society in the MENA region.

http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol9iss2/special_2.htm

Civil Society in the Arab Region: Its Necessary Role and the Obstacle to Fulfilment

This article seeks to explore the reasons why civil society in the Arab region has not fulfilled its potential. It analyzes the objective barriers limiting CSOs' abilities to increase their impact and improve their roles in society. http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol9iss2/special_1.htm

NGO Laws in Selected Arab States

This article briefly introduces the contours of civil society organisations and the laws that affect them in the Middle East. It profiles ten major Middle Eastern countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen, whose laws span the gamut from extremely repressive to excessively liberal. http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol7iss4/special_1.htm

Strengthening civil society in the Arab region: models for legal reforms

This document resources materials compiled for a Conference on strengthening civil society in the MENA region organised by the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law in Beirut in July 2006

http://www.icnl.org/programs/location/mena/beirut_conference/Beirut_Materials_English.pdf

KNA-MENA Governance Data Base

This WBI data base compiles a list of government and non government legal and judicial institutions in MENA countries.

http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/WBI/WBIPROGRAMS/PSGLP/0,,contentMDK:20565005~pagePK:64156158~piPK:64152884~theSitePK:461606,00.html#III_Intl_NGOs