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# **The Limits of Anti-Corruption Policies in Morocco**

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# About the Author

## About the author

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# Introduction

## Introduction

On December 13, 2018, King Mohamed VI appointed the head of the National Commission for Integrity and Anti-Corruption (NCIAC). The head of the Commission was finally appointed seven years after the institution was set up by the 2011 constitution and two years after the government launched the National Strategy for Anti-Corruption (NSAC). Seven months earlier, the first meeting of the National Anti-Corruption Committee<sup>1</sup> was held in Rabat, which the Head of the Government considered as the effective start of the work of this committee. Among its main tasks is to follow up the implementation of the National Strategy for Anti-Corruption. The 10-year strategy (2015-2025) aims to bring corruption levels down to half; improve Morocco's international ranking in the hopes of enhancing the trust of Moroccan citizens' and that of the international community in Morocco as a stable country that is not tolerant of corruption. This shift reflects a growing sense among the political and civil society alike of the deepening and rampant phenomenon of corruption and its negative impact on development and trust in institutions. However, despite the positive impact of the launch of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, and despite the existence of a discourse and previously expressed political intention, Morocco's corruption rates have not declined. Morocco's low ranking in global indicators of corruption has been stagnant for several years, reflecting the "institutionalized" nature of corruption in Moroccan public life.

In general, there are four challenges hampering anti-corruption policies in Morocco. The first is linked to the seriousness of political will to fight corruption. The second challenge is due to imbalances and shortcomings regarding legal and institutional frameworks, leading to weak institutional performances, especially within the limited effectiveness of the national integrity system (NIS) in general and the accountability system in particular. The third challenge is the marked weakness in resources and capacities, the slow functioning of governance institutions, and the mixing between "improving governance" and "fighting against corruption". The fourth and final challenge is the apparent difficulties regarding integration of civil society into official efforts, as well as the prevalence of a culture of normalization with corruption. This is despite the fact that the official discourse speaks of efforts, programs and procedures adopted at all political, legal and administrative levels, which were initiated during the royal message addressed to the participants in the National Seminar on "Enhancing Ethics in Public facilities" held in 1999.<sup>2</sup>

Prime Minister's website, see the following link: <https://goo.gl/LaFwA8>

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2 A document issued in the spring of 2016 by an expert from Morocco's Ministry of Management Reform and Public Service divides previous anticorruption initiatives into three phases between 1999 and 2011. Confirms Morocco's "unsatisfactory arrangement in the Corruption Perception Index" in the absence of any national strategy to combat it, see: Abdelaziz El Houari, "Open Government and the Strategy for Fighting Corruption", 6 April 2016. The document can be found at <https://goo.gl/xfmYTx>

This paper aims to explain the failures of Morocco's anti-corruption policies, particularly those associated with political will, translating discourses, commitments into practical programs and actions as well as the challenges regarding the legal and institutional frameworks of governance, anti-corruption, and finally issues related to resources and capacities. This paper concludes with suggestions and recommendations in order to improve the results of anti-corruption policies and upgrade Morocco's ranking in the relevant international classifications.

## **The Three Phases of Morocco's Anti-Corruption Policies**

Until the second half of the 1990s, speaking of corruption has been a taboo in official Morocco. The coming of the alternance government led by Abderrahmane El Youssefi (Socialist Prime Minister: 1998-2002) was the first time the issue of corruption was discussed publicly, thus marking the first phase of Morocco's anti-corruption policies, which required a response from the state and its institutions. However, El Youssefi did not announce any offensive strategy in the fight against corruption, although his era witnessed the birth of the National Charter for good governance and the launch of a national plan to promote transparency and integrity in public administration. These efforts culminated with Morocco's best classification achievements in the year 2000. The best in its history in the Global Corruption Perception Index. However, throughout the period of the Jettou government (2002-2007), the Moroccan ranking has been steadily declining. Notwithstanding the fact that this period marked Morocco's signature of the International Convention against Corruption (2003) and its ratification on 9 May 2007.

The second phase (the period of the Abbas El Fassi government: 2007-2012) began with Morocco's implementation of a plan that conforms the international anti-corruption convention provisions to its national legislation, starting with its publication in the Official Gazette on January 17, 2008. This phase has also witnessed a major event: the activation of the role of the Moroccan Supreme Audit Institution (also known as the Court of Accounts) in addressing mismanagement and misuse of public funds. Although Morocco has not improved its global ranking, the main shift in the country's strategy in the fight against corruption has

been the practical activation of the Court of Accounts starting in 2007, under the era of its former President Ahmed El Midaoui. The audit institution has rapidly assumed prominence as one of the main pillars of Morocco's integrity system,<sup>3</sup> in view of its familiarity with the realities of public administrative and financial management. Its observations and recommendations had an impact on the prevention of corruption as well as its referral to criminal jurisdiction of suspected criminal files aid in deterring and fighting corruption. The Court of accounts also has the legal capacity for financial disciplinary accountability regarding administrative irregularities of a non-criminal nature but which represent a gateway to mismanagement and waste of public money.

The Government has taken punitive measures against some administrative officials who have been mentioned in the reports of the Court of Accounts, as well as some cases of criminal follow-ups based on the work of the Commission, which was formed by the former Minister of Justice (El Mustapha Ramid) following his department's examination of the annual reports of the supreme audit institution. The Court's authority to audit the accounts of political parties, its endowment of trust and responsibility with regard to the control and follow-up of asset statements in accordance with a new law issued in 2009 in this regard, all led to an increasing demand for the role of the Court of accounts by both political and civil societies, and amounting interactions with its reports and constant expectation of public opinion to their issuing, along with rising questions about their outcome.

More recently, the King has relied on a Court's report to take punitive measures in 2018, called "political earthquake", against a number of ministers and senior officials in the Ministry of Interior. Following the imbalances observed in the execution of Al Hoceima, *Manarat Al Mutawassit* program.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these efforts, anti-corruption policies have not invested much to the appropriate political climate following the 2011 Constitution, and to the national mobilization against corruption that has resulted from the interactions of the

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<sup>3</sup> In the evaluation report of the World Integrity Organization on Morocco in 2008, we note that Morocco's total score was very low (48 points) but the Supreme Council of Accounts at that time scored 84 points, the highest indicator among the analytical indicators of the Moroccan institutional components that are adopted by the organization. For the report published in English, see the following link: <https://goo.gl/FzgKGX>

<sup>4</sup> MAP (official news agency), see the following link: <http://www.mapnews.com/2168144/>

Arab spring popular movement. Those policies continued to be characterized by the absence of a long-term, practical strategic vision, embodied in a time-bound road map. This was manifested in the delay in launching the national anti-corruption strategy, which was announced only at the end of the government of Abdelilah Benkirane period (2012-2017), and was not implemented until 2018 after the coming of his successor, Saadeddine Othmani (pertaining to the islamist party of the PJD). The start date of the implementation of the strategy can be seen as the beginning of the third phase of anti-corruption policies in Morocco.

How can this delay be explained?

## **Institutional and legal efforts**

The official discourse declares that the ruling establishment has the political will to fight corruption, citing the content of royal speeches, ratifying the International Convention against Corruption and reviewing the Constitution in 2011. This including several principles and institutions that can form what is called the institutional framework of the national integrity system (NIS) and a number of announcements and procedures, as well as an arsenal of laws. However, Moroccan official circles recognize the difficulty of practical progress and limited results compared to aspirations.

Many official royal speeches involve an ongoing call to embrace the values of good governance and to implement mechanisms of Control, accountability, evaluation, law enforcement and fighting corruption in all sectors and areas. The throne speech of July 29, 2017 is the most recent and earnest in tone in which the king called for strict enforcement of the principle of “linking responsibility to accountability”. Following this speech, a number of ministers and officials of the Ministry of Interior have been sacked<sup>5</sup>. The approach adopted in the implementation of “linking responsibility to accountability” in the case of “Al Hoceima, Manarat Al Mutawassit” can be described as an approach based on giving example from top to bottom. On July 1, 2018, King Mohammed VI, through a

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<sup>5</sup> Arabic version of 360, quoted by MAP, see the following link: <http://en.le360.ma/politique/119837>



message addressed to the 31st Summit of the African Union, reaffirmed that the fight against corruption should be placed at the heart of the priorities, as long as corruption constitutes the biggest obstacle to economic and social development efforts and hinders the aspirations of young people; he expressly said that “corruption contributes to the perversion of democratic norms of practice, as well as to the undermining of the rule of law and the right to life. Corruption also leads to the deterioration of the quality of life, and to the spread of organized crime, insecurity and terrorism”<sup>6</sup>.

Abdelilah Benkirane’s government has taken a number of measures. The National Commission for Integrity and Anti-Corruption has been established, replacing the Central Commission for the Prevention of Bribery. The Authority’s independence has been expanded and its mandate extended to include investigations and law enforcement. Also, the enactment of the Council of Competition with broad and authoritative powers has been mandated to ensure transparency and equity in economic relations, to monitor practices against them and illegal trade. The Government reviewed the legal text governing public transactions by introducing a series of amendments to ensure greater transparency and equal opportunities. Procedures for building and housing permits were simplified<sup>7</sup>. On the other hand, a number of laws aimed at curbing corruption have been enacted, such as the Anti-Money Laundering Law, the Compulsory asset declaration Act and the Protection of Victims, Plaintiffs and Witnesses Act. Reform of the judiciary, the creation of the justice system and the modernization of the judicial administration have been initiated<sup>8</sup>.

## The Limits of Anti-Corruption Policies

Despite this entire legal arsenal, the institutional system and the package of measures achieved by the ruling establishment, corruption is still rampant in

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6 The Website of the Sahara newspaper; see the following link: <https://assahraa.ma/web/2018/142642>

7 Ministry of Governance and Public Affairs (document on combating corruption), see the following link: <http://www.mag.gov.ma/index.php/en>

And the brochure of Integrity and Anti-Corruption strengthening issued by the Ministry of the reform of the Administration and the Civil Service, see the following link:

[https://www.mmsp.gov.ma/uploads/documents/depliant\\_LCC.pdf](https://www.mmsp.gov.ma/uploads/documents/depliant_LCC.pdf)

8 op. cit.

Morocco, leaving severe economic, social and moral consequences at the level of Morocco's image. Losses are estimated at between 5% to 7% of GDP<sup>9</sup>, or at least one quarter of the state budget and three times the budget of the National Initiative for Human Development. The waves of protests and social tensions have also been the echo of popular dissatisfaction with the integrity and good conduct of public affairs in Morocco. This is confirmed by a series of national and international reports, among them Transparency International's Annual Corruption Perception Index. According to the latest 2018 report, concerning year 2017, Arab countries, excluding the UAE and Qatar, have low ranking on the indicators of corruption perception. Saudi Arabia received 49%, compared with 44% for the Sultanate of Oman, 42% for Tunisia, and only 40% for Morocco. Morocco ranked 81<sup>st</sup> among the world countries covered by the index, preceded by Tunisia in the Maghreb region. Morocco's corruption perception index since the post-2011 constitution government took office.

#### Morocco's Ranking in Corruption Perception Index

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Index	36	37	39	36	37	40
Global Ranking	88	91	88	88	90	81

Source: Transparency International's Reports

Morocco's low ranking on the corruption perception index poses a key question about the effectiveness of past policies and the seriousness of the political actors will in fighting corruption in Morocco. The strategy adopted by the ruling establishment so far is characterized by a slow pace of progress, based on sensitization rather than punishment.

Generally speaking, the reasons behind the weakness of the official strategy can be found in the following obstacles:

- Difficulty in activating the political will.

<sup>9</sup> Othmani: Corruption costs Morocco 5% to 7% of GDP, Al sharq alawsat, July 29, 2018, issue number 14488.

- Weakness in applying international standards by governance and anti-corruption bodies.
- Lack of resources, capacities, and low institutional effectiveness.

## The difficulty of activating the political will

The executive track of the State's strategy in the fight against corruption is hindered by structural political obstacles. These obstacles are mainly due to the failure of the political parties to engage in fulfilling it and the attempts to sometimes conceal the objections attributed to their members and more generally the absence of political consensus in this regard.

Since the Supreme audit institution (Court of accounts) began publishing its oversight reports, including those relating to the scrutiny of the accounts of the parties and their disbursements to the public support provided to them, some political parties attacked the Court accusing it of exceeding its competencies and operating with selectivity in monitoring and accountability. In 2008, Hamid Chabat, former Secretary-General of the Istiqlal Party, described in a provocative statement the judges of the Regional Court of Accounts in Fez as terrorists<sup>10</sup>. The official spokesman of the same party in 2014 expressed a position accusing the central Court of exceeding its powers and interfering in political affairs following of the slips revealed by the Court in the management of the medicines sector in the era of Istiqlal Party Minister Yasmina Badu<sup>11</sup>. The Socialist Union Party in 2012 asked a parliamentary question to the Minister of Justice on what he called “selectivity in the files before the judiciary, and speed to decide on some of them without the other,” following the arrest of a leader of the party Khalid Alioua on the glitches recorded in the administrative

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10 Chabat opens fire on the Board of Accounts and accuses terrorist elements of having contaminated it”, *Al-Massae* website, see the following link: <https://www.maghress.com/almassae/9501>

To consult the background of the provocative statements of Chabat, see the article by Leila Slimani: Leila Slimani: A quoi joue Hamid Chabat; *jeune Afrique*, 17 mars 2010, in: <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/198036/politique/a-qui-i-ou-hamid-chabat>

11 The report relates only to the political measures and decisions of those responsible for the sector, which is not the jurisdiction of the judges of Jettou and is not subject to their guardianships, “according to Adel Benhamza. For more details, see the Arabic version of 360 at the following link: <http://en.le360.ma/politique/12183>

The report relates only to the political measures and decisions of those responsible for the sector, which is not the jurisdiction of the judges of Jettou and is not subject to their audit, “according to Adel Benhamza. For more details, see the Arabic version of 360 at the following link: <http://en.le360.ma/politique/12183>

and financial management of Mortgage and Tourism Loan Corporation (CIH)<sup>12</sup>. The Justice and Development Party has also called on the Court of Accounts to adopt a clear strategy for oversight<sup>13</sup>. In December 2018, the same party accused the President of the Court of political evaluation of the government's work<sup>14</sup>, against the background of the criticisms embedded in its annual briefing before the parliament and which concerned debt and social sector management. The Court's reports have confirmed the absence of good financial governance for the management of most political parties. At the same time, the issue of anti-corruption has become a theme for inter-party controversy between the different political parties, especially the PAM (Authenticity and Modernity Party). PAM, the first party in the opposition considers that the failure of anti-corruption policies is the only failure of the government and its parties, and that there is no real will to combat corruption. Recalling that, the former head of the government Abdelilah Benkirane (2012-2017) has stated more than once that corruption fights him and not the other way around and that he has already raised the white flag against corruption<sup>15</sup>. The statement "Afaa Laho Ama Salaf" (God forgives what has been past)<sup>16</sup> made by the former prime minister in an interview with Al-Jazeera in 2012 has had a negative impact and has led to a wave of criticism and skepticism about the government's ability and willingness to turn pledges into effective operational policies.

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12 The Socialist Union transfers the file of Alioua to parliament, and the parliamentary group warns of selectivity in dealing with files of corruption, the site of *Assabah* newspaper, see the following link:

<http://www.maghress.com/assabah/29957>

13 The PJD "calls" the Council of Jettou "to adopt a clear strategy in audit, the site of the Justice and Development Party, see the following link:

News / PJD-Calls-Council-Jettou-To-Adopt-Strategy-Clear-In-Audit / <https://www.pjd.ma/>

14 The PJD to "Jettou": It is not your specialty to politically evaluate the work of the government, *Alyoum 24* website, see the following link: <http://www.alyaam24.com/1185039.html>

*Al3omk* website, see the following link: [https://m.al3omk.com/134354.html?mobile\\_switch=mobile](https://m.al3omk.com/134354.html?mobile_switch=mobile) ١٥

16 The man wanted to say that his government intended, among other things, "to protect investment and not to create a climate of fear." Benkirane and the slogan "Afaa Laho Ama Salaf" (Allah forgives what has been past) al-Jazeera.net, see the following link: <https://goo.gl/8ShXoB>  
For a scientific paper that puts the maxim in the context of international best practice in addressing the problem of "the preceding corruption," consider our analytical article: Mohamed Berraou: Morocco and the problem of dealing with "the previous corruption", September 27, 2012, see the following link:

<https://www.hespress.com/writers/63396.html>

## **Weak application of international standards by governance and anti-corruption bodies**

Despite the apparent goodwill derived of a range of government endeavors and actions, they remain limited and ineffective. One of the most important reasons is weak application of international standards and practices besides the slow functioning of governance and anti-corruption bodies. This is particularly true with regard to independence, freedom of action, resources and capacities, poor communication and coordination between the different bodies and in their relation with the government, the parliament and the judiciary. Some of the most significant “latent” criteria, i.e., those that have not yet been achieved or are limited and incomplete, include:

Regarding the independence and effectiveness of such organs: the absence or limitation of the requirements for the effective application of the elements of its legal and institutional framework, the effectively sufficient powers, full freedom to establish the annual program and to perform all functions legally vested in it, the full right to access information, and, last but not least, in the appropriate mechanisms for tracking recommendations and fighting impunity in respect of the offenses committed.

Regarding the transparency and accountability of these bodies: It can be observed that these organs do not publish their own strategy as well as their budget and time schedule, neither do their independent audit reports nor external evaluation or peer review of their achievements. They do not publish convincing information about the extent to which substantive professional standards adhere to the selection of their interventions, fueling doubts and statements about the integrity of such interventions.

Thus, although Morocco has the basic elements of a relatively modern normative and institutional system, the practical effectiveness of the governance system and the fight against corruption remain one of the main reasons for the weaknesses of anti-corruption policies, which can be explained by the following five basic challenges:

- First, there are multiple commission and bodies without an institutional framework for coordination and cooperation between them, especially between the internal and external oversight bodies: The general inspectorates of the ministries, the general inspectorate of the territorial administration, the general inspectorate of finance and the Court of Accounts, on one hand, and the parliament and the judiciary on the other hand. This is what renders functional communication and coordination between these institutions that share the same strategic objective<sup>17</sup> difficult.
- Second challenge is the prevalence of a culture of control philosophy submerged in pure regularity and formal conformity, which is based on the canonization of the written formal acts and procedures at the expense of results and performance. The value of the recommendations made by the institutions of governance and anti-corruption in improving the efficiency of public administration and in reducing the abuse of public funds in the absence of quality assessment systems and mechanisms are not quite clear. These institutions did not publish any evaluation study of the value and benefits of their reports regarding the effectiveness and impact of the work they have done. They stand at the level of release of observations and recommendation outputs and do not attribute them to the level of evaluation of the outcome of these actions according to the “value and benefits” approach<sup>18</sup>.
- Third is the limited transparency and weak results regarding the law enforcement process outcome allocated to cases of corruption and referred to the judiciary, raising questions among public opinion regarding the seriousness of the principle of non-impunity.
- Fourth is the non-distinction between the observations regarding the mismanagement of public offices, programs and projects, whose admini-

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that in 2017 the Moroccan government created the National Anti-Corruption Committee as a new institutional mechanism to coordinate anti-corruption efforts. It should also be noted the absence of a mechanism for communication between it? and the Supreme Council of Accounts, neither in its founding decree (issued on June 23, 2017) nor outside the framework of this decree. The Supreme Council of Accounts, despite its independence from the government apparatus, is considered one of the most important pillars of the integrity system in accordance with international best practices and standards, and must in turn engage in the implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy. The National Commission for Integrity and Anti-Corruption is a body independent of the government apparatus, but stipulated in the decree.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with the researcher, *Almassae* Newspaper: No. 3671 Saturday-Sunday, 25-26 / 08/2018, weekly file on the reports of the institutions of governance

nistrative and political consequences should be arranged, and the irregularities and slips that characterize crimes and embezzlement, and whose perpetrators should be criminally prosecuted. This leads to confusion between the concept of governance and the concept of anti-corruption<sup>19</sup>, or between the correction of the imbalances in management and the renunciation of corruption in the management of public affairs. The community focuses on the punishment and the official authorities focus on prevention, as if we had two options: either total impunity or total criminal punishment<sup>20</sup>.

- Fifth is the cultural impediments of establishing a normalized behavior with corruption in the collective consciousness of significant sectors of society that are expressed by popular expressions such as: *Lei Ma'endo Flus Clamo Mesos* (Lit he who has no money, his words are unpleasant), “*Dhen Syyr Ysyyir*”, makes it difficult to integrate civil society in official efforts as well as the complaints of civil society associations of harassment and lack of resources and capabilities.

## Lack of resources and capacities and slow activation of governance institutions

In addition to the issue of the seriousness of political will and the institutional and cultural challenges, the issue of adequate human, material and financial resources and the institutional and management capacities of governance and anti-corruption bodies is one of the main challenges behind Morocco's slow anti-corruption policies. For example, the Court of Accounts, according to the statistics of 2017, has only 324 judges and 34 judicial attachés<sup>21</sup> to deal with a large number of public accounts, institutions, programs and projects, as well as

<sup>19</sup> The concept of governance should not be confused with the concept of anti-corruption, despite the link between the two concepts. In this respect, the world-renowned expert Daniel Kaufmann considers this as a conflagration of myths about the relationship between governance and the fight against corruption with the following conclusion:

“It is clear that the scope of the concept of governance is much greater than that of corruption. As we will see later, governance and anti-corruption may be related, but they are distinct notions, and ought not to be regarded as the same. See: Myth # 1: Definition: Governance and anti-corruption are one and the same “. Source: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/2-1\\_Governance\\_and\\_Corruption\\_Kaufmann.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/2-1_Governance_and_Corruption_Kaufmann.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Interview with the researcher, French version of 360: Mohammed BERRAOU: «La reddition des comptes est une révolution au Maroc»; in: <http://fr.le360.ma/culture/mohammed-berraou-la-reddition-des-comptes-au-maroc-est-une-revolution-143645>

<sup>21</sup> The Supreme Council of Accounts, Annual Report 2016 and 2017, (2018, p. 611).

assistance to other constitutional branches such as the Parliament and the judiciary.

The National Commission for Integrity and Anti-Corruption is practically frozen, its structure has not yet been established, and the head position of the commission was vacant until December 2018. This is in spite of the creation and the enactment of the new law. The final requirements of its new Basic Law are also insufficient in terms of the Commission's powers and capacities to effectively promote the task of combating corruption, making a wide difference between the ambitious wording of the constitutional text and the fragmented version of the legal text. The Competition Council, in turn, is frozen and its new law is inoperative and has not issued a report since 2014. Furthermore, its new president was not appointed until November 2018. The presence and role of the Competition Council has been urgently required in the context of the late social tension related to boycotts of some companies.

In addition, the judiciary is still in the process of reconstruction and reform, and it is in turn suffering from poor human resources, according to the first report of the Supreme Judicial Council issued in 2018. For all the foregoing reasons, it was not surprising that the latest Transparency International report published at the beginning of 2018 confirmed that Morocco is still among the countries that have been suffering from "chronic" stagnation in the Corruption Perception Index, over the past seven years. In a similar vein, Saadeddine Othmani, the head of the current government, acknowledged that Morocco's activism in this area "is still low, and that insufficient progress has been achieved"<sup>22</sup>.

It was obvious in this case that these institutional impediments would result in a shake of national and international trust in Morocco's ability to fight corruption, where observers and interested parties seem to take steps that are more symbolic and fall within the scope of "declaring intentions without any translation into reality", according to the former General Secretary of Transparency Morocco<sup>23</sup>. All of this is with the knowledge that to win the fight against cor-

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22 Moroccan researchers: the consecration of democracy and the prosecution of those steal public money is enough to fight corruption; Anatolia Agency, see the following link:  
<https://ar.haberler.com/arabic-news-1171141>

23 Fouad Abd El Moumni, former General Secretary of Transparency Morocco, "Moroccan Researchers ...", op. Cit



ruption depends on the availability of three strategic weapons: serious political will, appropriate institutional conditions, and adequate resources and capacities.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

It will be difficult for Morocco to meet its international obligations in the fight against corruption through the rapid progress in the mechanism for reviewing the results of its implementation<sup>24</sup> and to move up the ranks of international classifications of integrity through technical measures or isolated projects, if the relative effectiveness of Morocco's national integrity system remains limited and its results weak. In light of this structural conclusion, what the public anti-corruption policies offer, taking into consideration some limited initiatives and punitive measures, are that they give impression -according to Transparency - as if we are in front of "symbolic discourses or statements or awareness campaigns that no longer give rise to much attention, or that they emanate from good will but are inhibited by the absence of independence and freedom in work and resources"<sup>25</sup>.

Stemming from the awareness of the Moroccan ruling establishment of the fact that the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies depends on the effectiveness of the national integrity system (NIS), and the effectiveness of the latter in the activation of its pillars and the completion of its structure and the empowerment of its architecture. New royal decrees were issued during the months of November and December 2018. These important decisions were the appointment of a new president of the Competition Council and the subsequent appointment of its members, as well as filling in the vacancy of the position of the chairman of the National Commission for Integrity and Anti-Corruption and the appointment of a new leader for the Mediator Institution. These appointments were accompanied by explicit Royal directives calling for institutional coordination of anti-corruption efforts and the implementation of the punish-

<sup>24</sup> It is appropriate to note that there have been international commitments undertaken by Morocco since its ratification of the International Convention against Corruption. These commitments were confirmed when Morocco chaired the 2011 United Nations Convention against Corruption Conference during which the Marrakesh Declaration was issued. A follow-up recommendation was unanimously approved in 2015.

<sup>25</sup> A study of the National Integrity System 2014, Transparency Morocco, published on 26 March 2015, report conclusions, p. 10. The full report (Arabic version) can be found at [http://www.transparencymaroc.ma/TM/sites/default.asp/files/Etude%20SNI%20finale%20ar\\_0.pdf](http://www.transparencymaroc.ma/TM/sites/default.asp/files/Etude%20SNI%20finale%20ar_0.pdf)

ment mechanisms through legal and judicial measures<sup>26</sup>. All of these are developments that are moving in the right direction and predict that the wisdom and consequences of anti-corruption policies can be improved in the medium to long term.

Based on the above observations and lessons learned, this paper recommends that Morocco's political decision-maker and other stakeholders work in two directions: the first concerns the general political orientation, and the second concerns practical policies.

#### Strategic policy recommendation:

In order to earn points in the battle to overcome corruption, an obvious precondition must be available, which is to unify efforts and make the battle a national one, involving the state establishment, political and civil societies, citizens and international partners. This can be done by demystifying the issue of combating corruption and removing it from the political auction market, and by working to form a **broad bloc** and broad political and social consensus framed by a **national anti-corruption pact** as a pre-requisite reference to the success, efficiency and sustainability of any serious anti-corruption policies.

#### Practical policy recommendations:

Accelerate the implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy by activating the coordinating role of the National Committee for Anti-Corruption and by enabling stakeholders to follow up, evaluate the strategy, and draw lessons towards collective and participatory progress in the fight against corruption. At the same time, the process of reviewing and revising the legal and institutional frameworks and strengthening the resources and capacities of the institutions of governance and the fight against corruption should be pursued.

<sup>26</sup> In this context, the King directed the newly appointed Head of National Commission for Integrity Anti-Corruption to work towards optimizing the functions entrusted to this national commission by the Constitution, especially with regard to initiating, coordinating and supervising the implementation of anti-corruption policies and ensuring their follow-up, the consolidation of the principles of good governance, the culture of public facilities and public good, and the values of responsible citizenship. He also called for coordination, cooperation and concerted efforts with the relevant national institutions and bodies for collective mobilization and the use of all awareness mechanisms and legal means to prevent this phenomenon, combat it in its various manifestations, and implement the legal and judicial measures against perpetrators. Source: MAP on 13 December 2018, see the following link: <https://goo.gl/LUEWmB>

Activate the National Commission for Integrity and Anti-Corruption and strengthen its current legal and institutional framework, through providing it with financial and human resources and capacities. As a result, this should enable it to monitor and evaluate the national strategy against corruption. Also bridge the gap relationship between it and the internal and external oversight bodies (especially the Court of Accounts) on the one hand and the Judiciary on the other, as well as to accelerate the activation of the Competition Council and to redouble efforts in the area of law enforcement and penalization in accordance with recent royal directives.

Launching a collective and interactive awareness campaign to prevent corruption and its harming effects, and to keep in mind the entry into force of the Law on the Right to Information, and its dissemination to the public, while improving it and making it more responsive to the requirements of Morocco's engagement regarding the Open Government Partnership Initiative (OGP). Adopt codes of ethics in the public and private sectors; and the generalization of intelligent technologies in the communication of the public service beneficiaries and citizens with the administration, particularly with regard to the latter's transactions with contractors and businessmen on public procurement and investment projects.



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