

CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS

PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Axtam TURSUNOV *



* Chairman of the Public Council under the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Doctor of Law, Professor

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The fight against corruption is a comprehensive process, which must involve not only government agencies, but also civil society institutions.

If we look at the experience of countries that have achieved high results in the fight against corruption, we can see that in these countries, civil society institutions are one of the key players in combatting corruption. In general, the effectiveness of the fight against corruption cannot be achieved without the participation of civil society institutions.

At this point, the question arises, how can civil society institutions play an important role in combating corruption, while they do not have those special powers and administrative resources which are available at the disposal of government agencies?

The role of civil society institutions in combating corruption is primarily reflected in the process of identification of corruption risks. The point is that corruption risks are not considered offenses and the state does not define responsibility for allowing them. However, the risks of corruption are always negatively perceived by society, including civil society institutions and in their turn they respectively respond to them.

Analyses show that the general public also plays an important role in exposing corruption. In this regard, there are many examples where the general public exposed corrupted cases not detected by the public bodies while there were bodies that have special powers to expose corruption. The reason for this is that the public cannot be deceived and misled. No matter how secretive it is, the public will become aware of the corruption anyway.

Transparency and accountability are the most important tools in the fight against corruption. Because corruption always happens in secret, because it is not only an illegal act, but also strongly condemned by society as a negative situation. That is why **the “biggest enemy” of corruption is transparency.** By ensuring openness and transparency in the activities of government agencies and organizations, as well as the accountability of officials to the public, necessary conditions are created for effective and efficient public control in public administration.

The Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On openness of the activities of public authorities and administration bodies” (May 5, 2014) and “On public oversight” (April 12, 2018) set out the openness of activities of public authorities and the mechanisms of public control over them.

Civil society institutions also play an important role in forming an intolerant attitude towards any form of corruption. If corruption is accepted by society as a normal social norm, then the fight against corruption will be ineffective. The public's strong response to any form of corruption is important in the fight against this trouble.

In short, civil society institutions represent a comprehensive mechanism for shaping, developing and realizing society's opportunities and potential to fight against corruption.

The attitude of the wide general public towards corruption causes public pressure. **Although public pressure is not considered a legal lever, it allows for the implementation of civic initiatives in the fight against corruption by effectively influencing government agencies and officials.**

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated July 4, 2018 No PP-3837 “On measures to organize the activities of public councils under government agencies” established the legal basis for the activities of public councils, a permanent advisory body under the state body, which conducts its work on a public basis.

At the same time, in order to ensure the effectiveness of public councils, a methodology for rating evaluation of the

effectiveness of public councils under public authorities and administration bodies has been developed and implemented.

Article 13 of **the United Nations Convention against corruption** (New York, October 31, 2003) sets out the legal framework for public participation in the fight against corruption. According to it, in order to prevent and combat corruption, each participating state shall take appropriate measures to promote the active participation of groups and individuals outside the public sector, such as civil society, non-government organizations and community-based organizations in order to give society a deeper understanding of the existence of corruption, its causes, dangerous features and threats.

Over the past five years, Uzbekistan has also made significant reforms in the fight against corruption. First of all, the legal and institutional framework for combating corruption has been created and developed. International standards for combating corruption are also being introduced. In addition, special attention was paid to ensuring the participation of the general public in the fight against corruption. In particular, Article 14 of the Law on Combating Corruption (January 3, 2017) created a legal framework for the participation of citizens' self-government bodies, non-governmental non-profit organizations and citizens in the fight against corruption.

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-6257 of July 6, 2021 “On measures to create an environment of intolerance to corruption, drastically reduce corruption factors in public administration and society governance and expand public participation in the fight against corruption” identified important issues related to increasing the effectiveness of the system of combating corruption and early prevention of corruption, the broad involvement of the public in this process and the formation of an environment of intolerance to corruption.

For the effective participation of civil society institutions in the fight against corruption, the following is required:

first, the society itself must understand the need for active public participation in the fight against corruption;

second, the participation of civil society institutions in the fight against corruption should be encouraged by the state;

third, it is necessary to enhance the role of the mass media in the fight against corruption and to support their activities at all times. Independent specific media outlets, at least programs that cover anti-corruption issues, are particularly important in this regard;

fourth, it is important to establish and expand the activities of special non-governmental non-profit organizations fighting corruption, to guarantee their independence and inviolability;

fifth, it is necessary to develop cooperation between the state and civil society institutions in the fight against corruption.

Thus, the role of civil society institutions in the fight against corruption has an irreplaceable potential, nurturing the immunity of society in the fight against corruption and uniting the capabilities of the general public.