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The phenomenon of corruption in the activities of international organizations

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Abstract:
Corruption, as a serious phenomenon that has come to characterize contemporary societies, is now appearing at the level of official and unofficial institutions. This phenomenon has acquired an international dimension, evident in the activities of international organizations, whose activities have become the subject of reports, press statements, and official pronouncements, as well as complaints from many affected parties. These organizations have begun to deviate from their work due to those who benefit from their activities, or due to financial or funding systems, and due to the nature of their activities. This affects the role they were established to fulfill and leads to them becoming a means of threatening the security of the countries in whose territories they are located.
Keywords: international organizations, corruption, National Security.

Introduction:

Corruption is a serious phenomenon that has affected most contemporary societies, both developed and developing. It is a trans-societal phenomenon, prevalent in all countries without exception, albeit to varying degrees, despite numerous efforts to combat it, whether national or international, and whether legislative or institutional.

The danger of corruption lies not only in its impact on national institutions and individuals, but also in its international dimension. This is evident in the corruption plaguing international organizations, a phenomenon supported by numerous indicators of corruption within these organizations. The causes of this corruption are varied, and attempts to combat it have failed despite the grave risks associated with its presence. This failure stems from a range of obstacles that hinder the success of these solutions, leaving the future of international organizations uncertain. The very purpose for which they were established cannot be realized, or at least not in the way it should be. Thus, the activities of international organizations are rendered

meaningless by corruption, whether this corruption manifests as misconduct or a lack of transparency in their operations.
Therefore, the central problem addressed in this research paper can be formulated as the following question:
How can we provide an overview of the phenomenon of corruption within international organizations, in light of the data revealed regarding corruption at the international level?

This problem can be answered by addressing the following points:
First: - Manifestations of corruption within international organizations.
Second: - Causes of corruption within international organizations.
Third: - Risks of corruption within international organizations.
Fourth: - Methods for combating corruption within international organizations.

This is structured as follows:
First: - Manifestations of corruption in the work of international organizations:
The manifestations of corruption within international organizations are numerous and varied, depending on the perspective from which they are viewed. In this context, we can point out that these manifestations can be found in statements from those affected by the activities of international organizations, in press reports and articles published on various websites, and in official statements and reports.
Below, we will address the most significant of these manifestations.
01 – Manifestations of Corruption in the Work of International Organizations Based on Statements from Those Affected by Their Activities:
The most prominent manifestations of corruption in the activities of international organizations emerge in the form of statements from those affected by the activities of these organizations, which deviate in their operations due to corruption. For example, but not limited to:
- Statements from those affected by international crises who were consulted in Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Syria, and Yemen during the regional consultations for the Middle East and North Africa regarding the World Humanitarian Summit. These statements generally indicated that:
• Humanitarian actors – who are mostly international organizations – do not respect international legal obligations.
• International humanitarian organizations focus their efforts on providing material aid rather than fulfilling their role in humanitarian protection.
• Many humanitarian actors—including relevant international organizations—do not provide aid based solely on needs. Many consider appearance, belief, or political affiliation before addressing actual needs.
• The phenomenon of politicizing humanitarian work is evident in many humanitarian organizations.[1]

[1] Preparatory Stakeholder Analysis, World Humanitarian Summit "Regional Consultations for the Middle East and North Africa," 2015, p. 11.

2. Manifestations of Corruption in the Work of International Organizations: A Look at Press Reports and Websites:

Numerous reports and press publications across various media outlets and websites highlight the following: Corruption has become widespread in the activities of international organizations, including, but not limited to:

• As Shatha Zafer Al-Jundi pointed out in her online article titled "Corruption in Humanitarian Aid in Syria," aid intended for vulnerable or needy countries is being exploited by humanitarian actors—including relevant international organizations—and diverted to benefit unintended or unintended groups. This applies to both project-based and humanitarian aid, as well as to familial, tribal, or sectarian interests, or to obtain sexual favors or preferential treatment for specific individuals.[2]

• • What the German magazine Stern revealed in an extensive journalistic investigation into what it described as corruption within the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), reporting that UNHCR employees were helping African nationals be included on UN resettlement lists for refugees classified as needing special protection, in exchange for payments. The report stated that UNHCR employees were providing forged documents that allowed individuals to be included on resettlement lists in Western countries.[3]

• What Ibrahim al-Duwayni and Mustafa Shahin pointed out in their online article, "International Organizations: Allegations of Corruption and Collusion" (dossier), regarding corruption in aid distribution across the Turkish-Syrian border. Their report stated that a US government oversight body conducted investigations last year into corruption in aid delivery across the Turkish-Syrian border. These investigations revealed the involvement of a large number of organizations in widespread forgery and corruption, despite some of these organizations having a long history of humanitarian work, as confirmed by an announcement from the US Agency for International Development (USAID).[4]

• The UN World Food Programme's admission, following accusations by the Consumer Protection Association that wheat distributed to Yemen was expired, was met with skepticism. The UN attempted to justify its actions by claiming that part of the wheat shipment had spoiled due to exposure to seawater during shipping[5] However, its statement came after the accusations were made against it, which means that it was intended to justify the wheat's spoilage and to evade the accusations leveled against it. If the shipments had actually spoiled due to water, it

[2] Shatha Zafer Al-Jundi, Corruption in Humanitarian Aid in Syria, accessed on November 28, 2020, at 12:10 AM via the following link:
http://geiroon.net/archives.120687.

[3] Anonymous Article, Suspicions of Corruption in the UNHCR Resettlement Program, accessed on November 27, 2020, at 11:15 PM via the following link:
http:///www.infomigrants.net/ar/post/22000/

[4] Shatha Zafer Al-Jundi, op. cit.

[5] brahim Al-Duwayni and Mustafa Shahin, “International Organizations: Accusations of Corruption and Espionage,” cited from the website accessed on November 7, 2020, at 6:30 PM, via the following link: http://lusailnews.net.article/politics/international/07/05/2017%D8%A7%D09%84%D9%85%D8&B8 &D9%85.

would have made its statement before being accused, and expired wheat would not have been distributed to those in need in Yemen.

• A 2016 Guardian report stated that the UN had awarded contracts worth tens of millions of dollars in Syria to individuals and organizations close to the Assad regime. Foreign Affairs magazine further stated that the UN was the largest donor to the Assad regime.[6]

3. Manifestations of Corruption in the Work of International Organizations Based on Official Statements:

We can glean manifestations of corruption in the activities of international organizations from official statements or published official reports.

For example, during the investigations conducted by the UN Commission of Inquiry into the Oil-for-Food scandal, concerning the involvement of senior officials and multinational corporations in millions of dollars at the expense of the Iraqi people's needs, the Commission accused senior international officials in the Oil-for-Food Program in Iraq of receiving bribes from companies working with the United Nations under the program. The former head of procurement for the program, Yakovlev, later admitted to receiving bribes in US court. The Commission also accused the former head of the Oil-for-Food Program, Benon Sevan, of receiving commissions of approximately $150,000, transferred to him by a relative of former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. While these suspicions did not directly implicate former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, there are suspicions that he was aware of the scandal.[7]

An Associated Press report stated that several UN aid workers in Yemen were accused of illicit enrichment through trafficking in food, medicine, and fuel, and of misappropriating international donations. The report also alleged that the UN had employed unqualified staff at high salaries and entered into dozens of dubious contracts without proper documentation[8], reflecting widespread corruption within its operations.

Furthermore, in a statement upon his resignation from the peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, Andres Kompass said that during his two decades of service, he witnessed massacres, torture, killings, displacement of civilians, and sexual assaults, even against children.[9]

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[6] Ammar Boudou, “The United Nations: An Unreformable Organization,” cited from the website accessed on November 28, 2020, at 10:10 AM, via the following link:
https://www.maghrebvoices.com/opinonss/24/06/2020.

[7] An unattributed article, "Oil-for-Food Scandal: Widespread Corruption and Exploitation of the Suffering of the Needy," accessed on November 27, 2020, at 9:15 PM via the following link:
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[8] Ammar Boudou, op. cit.

[9] dres Kompass, “Moral Failure Was the Reason for My Resignation from the United Nations,” cited from the website accessed on 28/11/2020 at 12:30 PM via the following link:
https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/ar/2016/06/17/mpl-hsry-lfshl-khlqy-sbb-stqty-mn-l-mm-lmthd

Second: Causes of Corruption in the Activities of International Organizations:

Just as the manifestations of corruption in the activities of international organizations are numerous, so too are its causes. These causes may be related to the beneficiaries of the services or activities of international organizations, or to the failure of aid to reach those who deserve it, or to threats to national security, as we will attempt to point out in the following points:

1- Causes of Corruption in the Work of International Organizations Related to the Beneficiaries of International Organizations' Activities:

Some causes of corruption in the activities of international organizations stem from the beneficiaries of these activities. In this regard, the preparatory stakeholder analysis for the regional consultations for the Middle East and Africa regarding the World Humanitarian Summit indicated that those affected by the activities of humanitarian actors—including the organizations themselves—do not know how to seek protection from these actors. Furthermore, there is a significant weakness in communication between humanitarian or aid organizations and the people who need that aid.[10]

2. Causes of Corruption in International Organizations Related to Their Financial Practices:

The operations and activities of international organizations have been shrouded in suspicion and raised many questions due to the vast sums of money they possess and spend. These funds come from various sources, such as grants, donations, and other forms of funding.

Many organizations have generated considerable controversy regarding how they acquire and spend these funds. For example, many international organizations spend more than 60% of the budget allocated to a specific project on their own operations, leaving the intended beneficiaries with only about 40% of the funds originally allocated to their project.[11]

3. Causes of Corruption in International Organizations Related to the Nature of Their Activities:

Many international organizations deviate from their intended purpose or activities. Several have been accused of interfering in the affairs of states, exerting pressure on them regarding political matters, and acting as agents of foreign powers[12]. This stems from the nature of their activities, which appear political and perhaps security-related rather than those of an international organization with specific mandates. It also arises from the possibility that these organizations may be working for specific entities that exert pressure on them in exchange for donations or financial grants.

Furthermore, the accountability system within the United Nations is dysfunctional, or rather, non-functional. The UN rarely holds its staff accountable for unethical conduct, especially those in positions of power. Even when it does, meaningful sanctions are rarely imposed.[13]

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[10] Preparatory Stakeholder Analysis, op. cit., p. 7.

[11] rahim Al-Duwaini - Mustafa Shahin, op. cit.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Andres Kompass, op. cit.

Third: - Risks of Corruption in the Activities of International Organizations:

Corruption in the activities of international organizations poses numerous risks, varying according to the nature of the organization's work. These risks include, but are not limited to:

1- Risks of Corruption in the Work of International Organizations Related to Impeding Their Operations:

The former Secretary-General of the United Nations stated at the 2008 Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption that "corruption impedes the United Nations' ability to grow and flourish."[14] Corruption prevents international organizations from achieving the purposes and objectives for which they were established. Consequently, the failure to achieve these objectives will hinder the work of international organizations, and this hindrance constitutes, in fact, the greatest risk of corruption in the work or activities of international organizations.

2. The Risks of Corruption in International Organizations Related to Development Aid Not Reaching Its Intended Recipients:

The former UN Secretary-General, at the 2008 Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, stated that "corruption in 2007 prevented 30% of development aid from reaching its intended recipients, meaning that bridges, hospitals, and schools were not built."[15] This statement is merely a small expression of the most significant risks posed by corruption in the work of international organizations, particularly those involved in development and humanitarian work. Corruption hinders the implementation of development projects, and while this hindrance is serious, even more serious is the failure to deliver aid, especially food, to those in need.

3. The Risks of Corruption in International Organizations Related to Threats to National Security:

The Secretary-General of the Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdul Mohsen Tawous, revealed that eight (8) Israeli UN employees arrived in Yemen in 2018 for intelligence work.[16]

The United Nations, the world's largest organization, is considered by some to be politically and humanely paralyzed due to widespread corruption within its operations. This is because it provides legitimacy to dictatorial regimes[17], thus threatening the national security of the countries where such regimes exist.

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[14] nference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, 2nd Session, Nusa Dua, Indonesia, January-February 2008, United Nations, 2008.

[15] bid.

[16] unattributed article, "Taous Reveals for the First Time the Secrets of Organizations and Explains the Reasons for the Reduction of Aid," accessed on November 27, 2020, at 7:30 PM, via the following link:
http://newsformy.com/news-135974.html.

[17] Ammar Boudou, op. cit.

Therefore, corruption within the United Nations poses one of the greatest threats to national security, at a time when these organizations are supposed to contribute to achieving, not undermining, this security.

Fourth: Methods of Combating Corruption in the Activities of International Organizations:

Although some consider combating corruption more important in weak and fragile states, some of which have emerged from conflict and where sovereignty, the rule of law, and institutions remain weak[18] (i.e., states undergoing transitional phases), the reality is that combating corruption is a necessity and a priority in all countries, societies, and institutions, as corruption is not limited to weak and fragile states.

In this context, the necessity of combating corruption in the activities of international organizations becomes evident, through the adoption of several methods, the most important of which are:

1- The Necessity of Responsibility and Accountability for Corruption in the Activities of International Organizations:

Many entities concerned with combating corruption in general, including corruption in the activities of international organizations, have called for the necessity of establishing better accountability mechanisms to counter political influence on the activities of international organizations.[19]

Holding accountable the employees of international organizations will prevent the spread of corruption. To ensure their accountability, the criteria for their appointment or employment must be reviewed. Furthermore, all those who commit errors or are suspected of corruption must be held accountable. Accountability can lead to punishment and also serves as a future deterrent against corruption within international organizations.

2. The Necessity of Involving All Stakeholders in Combating Corruption in International Organizations:

Calls for genuine reform of the activities of international organizations—particularly those involved in humanitarian work—have been repeatedly made. This reform should involve and better encourage the efforts of numerous regional and national institutions and organizations to combat corruption[20]. As key stakeholders, their efforts to combat corruption within international organizations must be combined. By uniting their efforts, they will become stronger and more effective in the fight against corruption.[21]

Preventing corruption is a collective responsibility; therefore, all activities and efforts must be combined to combat corruption in the activities of international organizations.

[18] nference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, op. cit.

[19] Preparatory Stakeholder Analysis, op. cit., p. 11.

[20] Ibid., p. 11.

[21] Shatha Zafer Al-Jundi, op. cit

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research paper demonstrates that corruption is a transnational phenomenon. It is not limited to corruption within state institutions and among their employees, but extends to the activities of international organizations and their staff. Our study of corruption within international organizations has yielded several findings, the most important of which are outlined below:

- Corruption in the work or activities of international organizations manifests itself in numerous ways. These manifestations can be gleaned from statements made by those affected by the activities of international organizations, from official statements and reports issued by responsible parties and the media, and from what is published on media and online platforms. In fact, these manifestations can expand as new issues emerge and provide further insights.

-The causes of corruption within international organizations are numerous, but some of the most significant can be attributed to a lack of awareness among beneficiaries and a lack of connection between them and the organizations. Other contributing factors include the influence of funders on these organizations through dictates and conditions imposed during their operations, and the organizations' habit of spending vast sums of money with minimal oversight, making it easy to continue this practice and divert funds. These causes may also be linked to the very nature of the organization's activities, particularly when its objectives are clearly at odds with its stated purpose.

In fact, these causes can expand as new factors contributing to corruption within international organizations emerge.

-The risks of corruption within international organizations are numerous. Corruption can be inherent to the organization itself, undermining its effectiveness, rendering it ineffective, and eroding its credibility. It can also prevent aid from reaching its intended recipients, resulting in organizations receiving substantial funds that do not benefit those they were meant to serve, thus exacerbating their suffering, especially since the very entity meant to protect them is the one causing the harm. Furthermore, corruption can threaten national security, either through the prioritization of political agendas within the organization or through activities that directly or indirectly threaten national stability and security.

In reality, the risks of corruption within international organizations have many other dimensions, both overt and covert. The hidden or covert risks are among the most dangerous because they go undetected and therefore cannot be addressed, either by those responsible for monitoring the organization's operations or by those directly threatened.

- Corruption in international organizations can be overcome or countered by activating both accountability and responsibility systems. This can deter current and future corrupt actors. Furthermore, this corruption can be addressed through the combined efforts of all stakeholders. **Finally, it should be noted that corruption in international organizations cannot be countered without establishing an appropriate international legal framework, alongside raising awareness among the staff of these organizations, beneficiaries of their activities, and other stakeholders. Addressing this phenomenon requires a concerted effort characterized by awareness and respect for the law. While this may be a challenging task at a time when corruption characterizes the activities of many national and international**

institutions, both official and unofficial, it is at least possible to mitigate its risks and reduce its manifestations.

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