

UZBEKISTAN ANTI-CORRUPTION DIGEST

ANTI-CORRUPTION

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN COMBATING CORRUPTION

Gulnora BABADZHANOVA*



* Director of the Journalists' Retraining Centre of Uzbekistan, Member of the Public Council under the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, PhD in Philology

Abstract: *The article focuses on the possibility and educational value of mass media as an important tool of public control to inform about the cases of corruption and to form an intolerant attitude towards it in society and citizens, to activate people to fight against it.*

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In recent years, the problem of corruption, along with other serious challenges and threats, has become a very significant factor of social instability and critical events in many countries around the world. In fact, corruption undermines the democratic foundations, institutions, pillars and moral values of society. This is not the story of just one country; it is already widespread in many countries of the world.

In addition, it causes irreparable damage to all the world's economies. That is why many countries of the world are actively involved in the fight against this evil, using all kinds of means and tools.

Corruptibility, embezzlement, and bribery are just three examples of corrupt practices. Corruption, unfortunately, occurs at all levels of society. The anti-corruption organization Transparency International publishes an annual Corruption Perceptions Index; the 2021 index does not reflect very well the decline of corruption. It shows that corruption levels around the world are stagnating: 86 percent of countries have made little or no progress over the last decade. Failure to fight corruption exacerbates human rights abuses, undermines democracy and creates a vicious circle. Denmark, Finland and New Zealand were the least corrupt of the 180 countries. In addition, Somalia, Syria and South Sudan were the most corrupt in Transparency International's survey.

Even developed countries around the world, such as Germany, score 80 out of 100, which is relatively high compared to other countries. Germany ranks 10th in the international ranking; Hartmut Baumer, Chairman of Transparency International

Germany, believes that Germany's ranking has not improved in the past six years. This indicates a lack of significant progress in the fight against corruption. Hartmut Baumer notes: "After the 'Mask Affair' during the coronavirus pandemic, the pressure on lobbyists finally increased last year and the rules on the secondary activities of MPs became stricter. However, there is still massive secrecy in all spheres of public life – management is still for the most part subject to official secrecy, the criminal liability of companies is still not regulated, and whistleblowers are still not adequately protected. Arbitrary recourse by companies to trade secrets often prevents the elucidation of alleged cases of corruption."

Along with the national law enforcement system, other stakeholders and civil society institutions, the media is also actively involved in preventing and combating corruption. This is not coincidental, as the media has the potential to be inclusive, responsive and accessible to all citizens. It is also important to note the degree of citizens' trust in the information disseminated by the media.

The media, as an important instrument of public control, has the ability to inform the public about cases of corruption, to create a sense of rejection in the population and to activate people to fight corruption. In addition, social partnerships between law enforcement agencies, journalists and civil society representatives can be an important mechanism in preventing corruption. It is within the framework of such effective partnerships that investigative journalism can be conducted and its results published, exposing to the public those responsible for these crimes and preventing new cases of corruption. Such work requires broad and effective use of all opportunities offered by the media. Of course, for journalists to cover these issues well, they need very serious and deep knowledge about the causes, mechanisms and means of corruption, how to make their stories interesting, promote legal education and adhere to ethical standards in their work. In short, journalists

and bloggers need good knowledge in this specialized field.

An important social and educational function of the media is also the formation of an anti-corruption mentality in society and the understanding by young people and their families from an early age that corruption is a crime. This is the goal and objective of the project "Building the Capacity of Media Representatives, NGOs, and Bloggers to Counter Corruption" implemented by the Journalists' Retraining Centre of Uzbekistan with the support of the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan. As part of the project, educational training sessions were held throughout the country to increase the professional and legal literacy of participants and to give them investigative journalism skills. To support journalists, bloggers, and journalism students, a training manual on covering corruption issues was developed, social videos were prepared, and a creative contest on the theme "We Against Corruption!" was organized. At the same time, it should be noted that this work must be actively pursued in partnership with all the stakeholders in society, involving more young journalists. The main message of all the work is "Everyone should start the fight against corruption with themselves!"