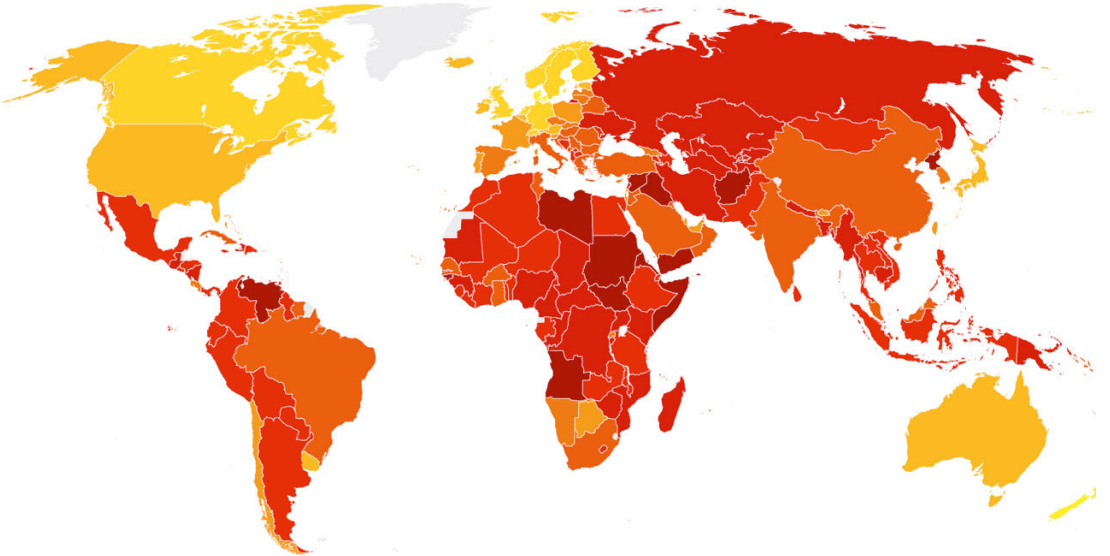




مركز البيان للدراسات والتخطيط
Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies

How to improve Iraq's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index: Experiences from Egypt and Kuwait

By Ghazwan Rafiq and Hassan Kadhim



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How to improve Iraq's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index: Experiences from Egypt and Kuwait

By Ghazwan Rafiq and Hassan Kadhim*

Without a doubt, corruption is a problem for all countries in different legal, economic, and social dimensions. However, it varies in size and extent from one country to another. Governments have worked on different measures, whether prevention or deterrence, to combat or limit corruption while acknowledging that every approach should be preceded by a careful diagnosis, otherwise the results will not yield satisfactory results.

International organizations have also worked to find ways to diagnose corruption, its assets, and its dimensions. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index is one of the world's most recognized indicators. Governments, businesses, civil society and the media are concerned with its results, as well as its local, regional, and international impact on the investment sector and the reputation of the state since it measures the degree of perceived corruption in the public sector.

This brief study provides an overview of the index, and it focuses on the most important steps taken by Iraq's neighbours that have made progress in the index, in order to benefit from their experience to improve Iraq's ranking. Egypt and Kuwait were selected because they improved their ranking in the index by a significant extent, and because of the availability of necessary resources in this regard.

* Researchers specialising in combating corruption.

A general definition of the Corruption Perceptions Index

Transparency International¹ has published a Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) since 1995. It is an annual index (based on a set of sub-indicators) that assesses and ranks countries according to the degree of corruption in the public sector based on the understanding of businesspeople and analysts, including specialists and experts. The index assesses the level of corruption in the countries of the world on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 refers to the highest level of corruption. 100 refers to the lowest level of perceived corruption (the perception of the public sector as being completely free of corruption).

The Corruption Perceptions Index report is based on 13 sub-indices in the ranking of states in terms of corruption in the public sector, and each sub-index is issued by another institution independent of Transparency International. It is not required from a state to assess all these sub-indicators. There are at least three sub-indicators available for each country, and the sub-indices of the CPI report include a large number of questions aimed at assessing different areas of the country concerned, including aspects of political, economic, social, security, regulatory and electoral development. The CPI relies only on corruption-related questions.

In the 2018 index, more than two-thirds of the countries in the index scored below 50. As for Iraq, it achieved the same score of 18 in 2017 and 2018 and improved its ranking by only one place, reaching 168 out of 180 countries. This took Iraq out of the bottom ten countries ranked in the index. Iraq is ranked 16 out of 21 Arab countries. It should be noted that the score for each country is much more important than its ranking, since ranking of countries varies depending on the number of countries classified in the index.

After reviewing the results of the Corruption Perceptions Index of 2018, we found that both Egypt and Kuwait had improved their ranking significantly, as shown in the following table:

1. TI is an international non-governmental organisation established in 1993 by the former Director of the World Bank, the German lawyer Peter Eigen. It is based in Berlin, Germany, and currently has branches in more than 100 countries. It is known for producing indicators to measure corruption. Transparency International defines corruption as the “misuse of public office for private interests”.

How to improve Iraq's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index

Country	2017			Change in Country's Ranking	Change in Country's Score	2018		
	International Ranking	Arab Ranking	Score out of 100			International Ranking	Arab Ranking	Score out of 100
Egypt	117	11	32	+12	+3	105	10	35
Kuwait	85	8	39	+7	+2	78	8	41

After studying the experiences of Egypt and Kuwait and reviewing the best practices of the two countries in improving their ranking in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Report 2018, below we list some of the steps implemented by those countries:

Egypt's experience:

Experts in Egypt agree, both in academic and professional fields, that the most prominent reasons behind the improvement of Egypt's ranking and score in the 2018 CPI are:

1. Developing a unified electronic portal for the submission of electronic tenders (signing government contracts).
2. Engagement with youth by holding conferences in the presence of state officials in the executive branch to benefit from their ideas and proposals.
3. Adopting a national anti-corruption strategy and taking effective steps by the Egyptian Administrative Control Authority, which is responsible for the fight against corruption, to return some stolen state assets.
4. Setting clear criteria for the selection of administrative leaders in the country and for all functional levels, with a real desire to implement them.

Kuwait's experience:

The most important reasons behind the Kuwait's improvement are the following:

1. Taking serious measures to provide an investment-friendly environment by streamlining bureaucratic procedures.

2. Preparing and implementing a promotional and awareness-raising media plan for the marketing and dissemination of measures to deter and prevent corruption by the Government and the relevant regulatory bodies to eliminate corruption.
3. The Kuwaiti Audit Bureau published the audit reports on its website and made them available to the public. The various media outlets analyzed the observations in these reports and discussed the high-risk issues, which need to be addressed by the Kuwaiti National Assembly and the Council of Ministers. The bureau also published the Citizens Report that addresses citizens directly to sensitize them to the most important topics in an accessible manner, with the aim of enhancing community oversight to improve the government's performance.
4. Facilitating procedures, reducing the bureaucratic cycle by adopting e-government systems, and encouraging the culture of public electronic services.
5. Implementing the provisions of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption 2003 to reduce conflict of interest by passing a law prohibiting conflicts of interest in 2018.

Requirements for improving Iraq's CPI score considering the experiences of Egypt and Kuwait

1. Holding a quarterly conference that includes the Council of Ministers, heads of independent bodies, and governors, in partnership with Iraqi youth from different backgrounds. It is preferable to hold these conferences in different provinces according to its importance, and the priorities of government action specified in the government program.
2. Expediting the formation of the Federal Public Service Council, setting professional standards for the selection of senior administrative officials, and declaring them transparently to the media and the public, while obliging ministries, bodies and entities not affiliated with a ministry and governorates to implement them according to a specific timetable.
3. Developing a centralized electronic system for the signing of government

contracts to eliminate foul play that occurs between administrations, contractors, and private companies.

4. Accelerate the developing of a national strategy to combat corruption in Iraq by the Supreme Council for Combating Corruption, which includes serious and clear steps, backed by specific deadlines to deal with corruption. As a result, this will help in improving the image of the country internationally.
5. Developing and implementing a media strategy to promote the steps mentioned above to help improve the country's image and enhance the spirit of citizenship.