



Book review
The Fruits of the Corrupted Administration
By: Dr. Reda Saadeh



Author's Background: the author used to be a civil servant. He is an ex educational inspector and a former member of the Central Inspection Board.

1. Books' details: the Book is published by Dar Al- Bilal Printing House (Beirut 2011).

2. Dedication: To every honest Lebanese citizen, rebel against injustice and corruption, and willing to reform, achieving the truth and justice.

3. Objective: to collect and analyze samples from corruption cases found in public administrations which will enable different Lebanese citizens to get insights on corruption, bribery, and irregularities supported by facts and figures.



4. Introduction to the book: the author talks about the history of corruption exploring its philosophical origins through maintaining an exotic literary style.

“... The risk and fear together, when corruption becomes generally acceptable in the Society, when it becomes a culture that changed the perception of the honorable and the honest, when integrity becomes a deviation, and consider the violation of the corrupt regimes, acceptable and applicable, and the decadent values of the prevailing... from here a duty to fight corruption starts with continuous efforts to eradicate it...

5. Chapters of the book: the book is divided into fourteen chapters; each chapter talks about a particular topic.

- In the first chapter, the author talks about the defect at the level of power and governance. He says: “as if our successive governments work on a philosophical approach and not on a scientific one. Because scientists begin their research from the point predecessors reached, while philosophers tend to demolish all what their ancestors reached and starts from scratch.
- In the second chapter, the author sheds light on obstacles hindering effective oversight mechanisms and he blames the political establishment of making this happen.
- In the third chapter, the author mentions solid facts of corruption in public administration. He then concludes that “within a political system characterized by heavy corruption, those lawful employees feel themselves weird of such an environment”.
- In the fourth chapter, the author talks about public money and how this money is misused and mismanaged.
- In the fifth chapter, the author talked about irregularities of salaries and wages. According to him, the entire wage scale set by the Lebanese authorities is illogical whereby he cites an example of an employee getting a salary that is 120 times more than the minimum wage level.



- In the sixth chapter, the author details corruption in the education sector. He concludes that “the persistent cultural and educational system do not encourage decent education. However, nepotism and favoritism were also included to be elements of obtaining an educational degree”.
- In the seventh chapter, the author explores procurement affairs proving that they do not follow any legal and systematic procedures neither from the provider nor from the supplier side.
- In the eighth chapter, the author depicts the reality of the agricultural sector whereby the absence of enforcing laws encourages violations to the environment.
- In the ninth chapter, the author describes corruption, bribery, and other illegal practices in the energy sector. It is noteworthy to say that 20 years had passed from the date the civil war ended in Lebanon; however, the Lebanese citizens still do not enjoy full access to electricity.
- In the tenth chapter, the author mentions wide spread corruption in the communication sector and citizens ‘heavy expenditure on these services.
- In the eleventh chapter, selection of decisions made by the administrative council is presented by the author.
- In the twelfth chapter, the author cites several examples of bribery in the general directorate which manages driving licenses and explains how many of these licenses were given to applicants without necessarily being qualified.
- In the thirteenth chapter, the author mentions cases of counterfeit drugs and medications, in addition, the author frames these cases into more broad irregularities done at the level of public policies (environment, public health, etc...).
- As for the fourteenth chapter, the author explores the loopholes of then institutional and regulatory frameworks especially the Taef Accord which consequently leaves a room for corruption and nepotism.



To conclude, the author recommends promoting transparent culture within the society and this mission will never be achieved before undertaking concrete measures. These measures, according to Dr. Saadeh, starts with eradicating political sectarianism, making sure no conflict of interest at any level occurs, and finally strengthening the role of judiciary an oversight institutions.

A selection of Corruption cases mentioned in the book:

- A candidate to parliamentary elections spent \$ 3 Million on his campaign. This amount was completely refunded by an Arab Minister after the candidate announced his withdrawal.
- At the level of Ministry of telecommunication there was an over usage of fuel (500,000 Liters consumed by 12 cars) in addition to normal citizens using the ministry's cars and phones.
- One of the companies' tax files was not properly audited by three public servants (two financial controllers and one head of department), which has lead to the loss of 3,323,000,000 LL. This case was discovered after the file was reanalyzed by the Central Inspection Board.
- A Member of Parliament, who is an owner of a sand and rock quarry company, submitted a law case in front of the administrative court asking for indemnity after a decision was taken to close all sand and rock quarry companies. The company was granted USD 219 million while his company has never reported any profits to the state during its operation!
- A head official at the Registration and Cadastre departments, which is a public entity, has become a wealthy person with a fortune that exceeds 10 billion LL. He built his fortune through selling, buying and bribery after reducing the transfer of ownership fees. For example, the official can value an apartment that is worth 500 Million LL at 100 Million LL, therefore reducing the transfer of ownership fees of 24 Million LL and claiming 4 Million LL as a bribe.
- The state paid the amount of 1,200,000,000 LL to the Council of Reconstruction and Development (CDR) in order to provide maintenance services to Saida Municipal Stadium. Even now, citizens' do not know to whom this money was paid or what maintenance has taken place. This story was revealed by the Head of the Municipal Council who stated



that the Municipality has been offering the maintenance service for two years and so far, they have not received any money from the state.