Press release issued by
The Lebanese Transparency Association - No Corruption
On the occasion of the launch of the Corruption Perceptions Index 2021

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with a score of 24/100 and ranking 154/180

The Lebanese Transparency Association-No Corruption (LTA), the national chapter of Transparency International, announced Lebanon’s score on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for the year 2021, which amounted to 24/100, registering a six-point decrease since 2012, Lebanon’s lowest score ever, and ranking 154/180. The CPI results were announced during a press conference at the Press Club in Furn El Chebbak.

This year's Corruption Perceptions Index comes after nearly two years of popular anger at rampant corruption in the public sector, manifestly expressed by the Lebanese people on October 17, 2019. Yet, according to LTA’s Executive Director, Julian Courson, this was not enough, “Both the Parliament and the Lebanese government have to take practical and serious steps to reduce or at least prevent corruption.”

To measure the level of corruption in Lebanon, the CPI relies on several manifestations of corruption, namely the government’s ability to reduce corruption and impose effective mechanisms to enshrine the principle of integrity in the public sector, genuine and tangible criminal prosecutions of corrupt officials, effective anti-corruption laws and the ability of civil society to access and obtain information related to public affairs and others.

In view of that, Courson said, “It is no wonder that Lebanon got its lowest score ever on the Index. Past experiences are not encouraging when talking about the implementation of anti-corruption laws, despite the legislative workshop that is currently taking place on the matter, whereby the Parliament approved last year a series of anti-corruption laws such as the Law on the Recovery of the Proceeds of Crimes of Corruption, the Law Amending the Right of Access to Information Law, the Law on Combating Corruption in the Public Sector, the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, which is tied to the implementation of a
number of laws and decrees, as well as the Whistleblower Protection Law and the Illicit Enrichment and Asset Declaration Law.”

As for the Public Procurement Law recently approved by the Parliament, Courson added, “It constitutes a qualitative leap in terms of the governance of public tenders and the disbursement of public money. However, it is necessary to follow this law with multiple steps to enhance safeguards against any corruption that may occur within the procurement procedures, including the collection and analysis of information on beneficial owners of companies contracting with the state, the involvement of civil society bodies in monitoring procurement procedures, and the adoption of the highest standards of transparency within the procurement procedures through the application of the Public Interest Test (Harm vs. Public Interest Test) on exempted information and the prevention of absolute exceptions, and that in accordance with the provisions of the Lebanese constitution and the international obligations of the Lebanese state in this field.”

On the other hand, Courson stressed the importance of “Guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary by working on the adoption of a modern law that ensures the independence of the judiciary as an authority independent of both the legislative and executive authorities, and the adoption of the highest standards of transparency in the maritime border demarcation process in a manner that guarantees Lebanon's interests in its territorial waters.” He further called upon the Lebanese government, “To adopt the highest standards of transparency with regard to the exploration process in Block 4 by publishing non-exempt content, according to the Right of Access to Information Law, in the report submitted by Total on the results of drilling.”

As for the energy, social affairs, and health sectors, Courson stressed the need to “Publish all documents that must be published legally in relation to the three sectors as per Chapter Two of the Right of Access to Information Law. For, in an index prepared by the LTA about the extent to which some ministries are committed to publishing information required by the law without receiving requests for access to such information, such as all financial transactions whose value exceeds 50 million Lebanese pounds and their legal basis like a contract, for example, the Ministry of Energy and Water scored 1/12 (8.33%) and the Ministries of Social Affairs and Health 3/12 (25%) only.”
Concerning the investigation into the Beirut port explosion, Courson reiterated “The importance of expediting the investigation in this case immediately, leading to trials in order to achieve justice without any obstacles or delays.”

In its statement, the LTA appealed to those concerned to adopt and implement a recovery plan in light of the economic and financial collapse in a manner that guarantees the rights of depositors and a fair distribution of losses so that the latter do not bear the losses of the banking sector, by involving and working with the Committee of the Rights of Depositors established by the Beirut Bar Association and adopting the highest standards of transparency in reporting to the public regarding the outcomes of the talks with the International Monetary Fund.

The statement concluded with a call for concerted efforts between both the public and private sectors and the effective involvement of civil society organizations in combating corruption and public sector governance to achieve a more effective participatory policy, in order to guarantee the implementation and respect of human rights. This is achieved through a clear and explicit decision by the Lebanese state with all its authorities to combat corruption in the public sector, to work to implement the National Anti-Corruption Strategy in a timely manner and to inform the Lebanese citizens of the results of this operation, the difficulties faced and how to overcome them.

**CPI: Global Highlights**

The CPI defines “corruption” as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” and ranks 180 countries and territories around the world by their perceived levels of public sector corruption based on data from 13 external sources including the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, venture companies, and private consulting firms, research centers, and others, and the results reflect the opinions of experts and businessmen.

For the tenth year in a row, the CPI global average remained unchanged at 43, and two-thirds of countries scored below 50, while Denmark, Finland, and New Zealand topped the Index with a score of 88, Somalia and Syria scored 13, and Sudan 11, coming last in the Index.
In addition, 27 countries, including Cyprus, Belgium, Lebanon, Nigeria, Switzerland, Turkey, and Venezuela, recorded their lowest levels ever in history this year. In the past decade, 155 countries have regressed or made little or no progress. Since 2012, 23 countries have witnessed a significant decline in the Index, including advanced economies such as Australia (73 points), Canada (74 points), and the USA (67 points), and the latter, for the first time, is no more among the top 25 countries on the Index. 25 countries also significantly improved their scores, including Estonia (74 points), Seychelles (70 points), and Armenia (49 points).

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