

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH



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SPOTLIGHT STORY



Corruption in humanitarian assistance: abusing a noble cause

Humanitarian assistance aims to save lives and alleviate the suffering of people in times of emergency. From human conflict to devastating natural disasters, humanitarian agencies are used to delivering aid in challenging circumstances. The heightened risk of corruption that comes with such an operating environment further complicates their mission, potentially jeopardising efforts to deliver relief to those who need it most. >> read more

ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD



The '2008 Report on Revenue Transparency of Oil and Gas Companies' shows companies should provide greater accountability >> read more



Transparency Watch speaks to Teun Bastemeijer, the new manager of the Water Integrity Network, about corruption in the water sector and how it hinders equitable development >> read more



EITI++, a new World Bank initiative aims to develop national capabilities to handle the current boom in commodity prices, and channel the growing revenue streams into fighting poverty >> read more

NEWS FROM THE ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT

Reports from Transparency International's national chapters, members and Secretariat. Click here to read this month's highlights. >> read more

CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS



Bulgaria's interior minister Rumen Petkov steps down amidst corruption and organised crime revelations >> read more



British High Court rules the director of SFO acted unlawfully by discontinuing investigation into BAE deal >> read more



In a surprising move Samsung Chairman Lee Kun Hee announced his resignation following his indictment for tax evasion and breach of trust >> read more

CORRUPTION IN QUOTES

"Have we as a society become more corrupt? Or have we in the FBI simply become more adept at rooting out fraud and corruption?" >> read more

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

Sorious Samura, BAFTA Award-winning journalist and documentary maker

By Mike Sidwell

In his latest documentary "Living with Corruption" Sorious Samura returns to Africa to reveal how corruption has become normal and accepted in many African countries. From a Kenyan slum to Sierra Leone's schools, Samura sets out to expose the pervasive nature of corruption which he claims is the largest stumbling block to Africa's development. He shows how the poor are cheated of desperately needed aid money and are forced to pay bribes to get work, receive medical attention, build a shack, even stay out of jail.



Transparency Watch (TW): *Firstly, congratulations on "Living with Corruption." It is both an excellent tool for raising awareness of corruption and its effects in Africa, and encouraging debate on the issue. Because it shows how corruption pervades African society at every level though, a viewer could be forgiven for feeling that the problem is so entrenched that any attempt to tackle it is futile. How in your opinion can corruption be best tackled?*

Sorious Samura (SS): It's really a very interesting question. I don't want to sound like I am an expert on dealing with corruption, but for me the problem of corruption is definitely entrenched in Africa, in African society. But I will also hasten to say that I believe that it is not so entrenched that with proper policy it cannot be fixed.

People always say that corruption is one of those problems that are impossible to sort out, and for me as long as people believe that, then it will be. I am not quite sure what the answers are, but I think that both the grassroots and the powerful elite need to know the damage that corruption does to them, how it slows development. People in Africa need to be educated about the moral values that we have lost, institutions need to be strengthened, that is partly the way corruption can be countered. And the West, I don't like playing the blame game, but those that are doing business with Africa need to change the way they are doing business, people have got to be more accountable, and I think societies, institutions, organisations working in Africa should be held to account. They should be more accountable. That, in my humble opinion, is the way forward to getting out of this mess.

"children are taught how to be corrupt from the very grassroots - from the classroom"

As for corruption, it is all over the place, it is not just the elite, it is not just the politicians, it is right across, and if we're going to deal with it then we have to address it on all fronts, from the grassroots right to the top. The majority one way or another, via the systems put in place, get stuck in the corruption web. The institutions that are there force a lot of people, for instance if you want to get a passport now and want to follow the proper procedure, then in some countries it will take you months.

The system is cleverly done in such a way that you are forced to wait for three, four, five months, and it's done deliberately by the people who work there so you have no choice other than bribe. So it's all those institutions that we need to look at and strengthen, and of course pay people well and make sure that everyone becomes a watchdog for the other. Only we can sort things out for our children, especially now that the West is busy with their fight against terror and the threat of recession.

In some cases it is the case that 'might is right,' but before I delve into that I want to say, corruption is clearly not just an African thing, we have corruption in societies all around the world. There used to be corruption even here in the West, now there are checks and balances though, and the West have managed to improve the fight against corruption, it's not to say it wasn't there though. It is not even completely won, but it has improved. Even way back in history in Africa, even before the colonial masters arrived, people used to give bribes using the barter system, but it has today become normal in Africa, it is now entrenched in us, it is now to a large extent acceptable. If you look in the classrooms in many parts of the African continent children are being encouraged to be corrupt, children are taught how to be corrupt from the very grassroots – from the classroom. And so you see it as a normal thing. In the West it would be unheard of, everyone would raise the roof, if children were asked to bring bribes or things, or even have sex with their teachers so that they get promoted, even if they don't deserve promotion. I am telling you that if that was in the West all hell would break loose, but in parts of Africa it is seen as perfectly normal. It is all those rotten attitudes so embedded in our systems that we have to change, so it is understood that it is not normal and it is not acceptable.

Returning to the might is right, that is also what corruption is about, it is about power – the man who is in a position. To a large extent I believe because most people in Africa are not well paid the scrabbling for

bribes is common. The fact is these people are poor and desperate, and as long as people are poor and desperate corruption will continue thriving in those societies. But, it is also a power game - the more powerful people are the more they want from the weak. Even the ordinary porter in the hospital demands bribes because he believes he has power to delay your child from getting treatment.

It [corruption] has become embedded in the system to such a degree that it is the norm, so people hardly complain. I have seen in Zambia when someone stood up against an institution that he felt was corrupt, the rest turned against him because he was delaying people in the queue. So it is a big, big problem and that is why I feel that grassroots, not just class room, grassroots education is the key, so that people know their rights, they know that they are not meant to bribe for things that they ought to get freely. We need a mass campaign in order to turn this fight against corruption round in Africa.

TW: *How was the documentary received in Africa?*

SS: We try to get most of the films that I do aired in Africa on their stations for free. Like "Living With Aids," I clearly remember the [Zambian] government saying it should not be shown. The first film I made about Sierra Leone, "Cry Freetown," the government at the time said, "No, it shouldn't be shown on the local TV station." But luckily CNN reaches all these people. Well not all of them, but so many small cinema houses show these films directly because they get CNN and some people – you know some people are getting richer and richer everyday – have CNN. And that is clearly the easiest way the films get seen. This film was not shown in Kenya by local TV stations or in Sierra Leone. We did get some serious responses – e-mails that were written, texts, very long texts and phone calls from Africa saying this is long, long overdue and we thank you for shining a torchlight on stories like this because this is the key, key problem we have in Africa. Most of the wars all play around corruption, because people are desperate and corrupt and are denied a stake, and then that pushes them to fight and so on. But most of what I am telling you about is from the ordinary grassroots people, the politicians don't want to have these conversations, they don't want to engage, the business people don't want to engage, because these are the people who benefit from corruption. It is from the grassroots people, some of the people who are involved in the fight against corruption and the few elite, who frankly speaking want to see a better Africa, that I received a very encouraging response. But obviously from Kenya there were one or two politicians who tried to cry the film down and so did local newspapers, so it was very encouraging to see that there are so many Africans who want to see a different Africa. We are always trying to find ways to make sure the films reach the grassroots people, the voiceless people.

TW: *The documentary highlights one prominent politician, Henry Kosgey, and a complaint filed against him to the Kenyan Integrity Centre [the official anti-corruption commission] alleging he stole people's land through "an irregular deal." Are you aware of what has happened since?*

SS: It is a long process. These people are doing everything they can to get their complaints heard at every level. They had been in the process before we had even contacted them to say that we were making this film. It turns out that their complaint gets to a certain level and then they are told to go to another office.



Just before the elections they informed us that they were planning to organise a massive demonstration outside the Integrity Centre, but it is difficult for them to raise the funds to pursue their case against Kosgey, it has been financially crippling for them.

Our rule here at Insight is always to follow up with the characters or fixers who help us make these films and we have spoken with those who helped us in Kenya to get in touch with the villagers, but since the fighting happened we haven't heard anything from them. Nothing has been done since the film has been released – no one has challenged Kosgey.

TW: *The story of how John Githongo, who incidentally used to head the Transparency International national chapter in Kenya, fled to the UK after exposing corruption involving politicians at the highest level of government shows the danger people who take a stand against corruption can face. Did you receive any threats or intimidation while filming the documentary or since its release?*

SS: You know nobody has asked me this before. Something did happen while we were there filming. There is somebody who is known for his involvement in the killing of, I believe, the foreign affairs minister some time back, during Moi's time. The allegation was that this was the man who carried out the killing. We used to have people like those in Sierra Leone who do the dirty work for the politicians if anyone messes about with them. According to a local contact we were working with at the time, she hadn't seen this guy for over two years. So, here we were in this hotel together with my producer, George Waldrum, when she looked around and saw this guy sitting right opposite her staring into her eyes and she started shaking like a leaf. We asked her what was wrong and she said, "I need to go. Now that you are here and I am working with you guys on corruption this guy shows up. I am not going to work with you anymore, I'm sorry, I hope you understand." She didn't get involved in the film after that at all, this is how scary it was. Once that had happened you know, we found it extremely difficult even to sleep in our hotel rooms, so if that was intimidation it worked. Even in Kibera you had the feeling that

they were going to come for you at any time. But apart from that I didn't have direct confrontation with any authority except Kosgey where he made the remark "you don't know Kenya," which together with what happened earlier, felt like a warning, so we had to wrap up quickly and leave the area. So I understand why someone like John left like a real marathon man.

Other than that, I had Sierra Leoneans in the UK who were supporting the government at the time who actually accused me of trying to sabotage their government.

Thank god nothing happened to any of our local contacts or any of the people who appeared in the film. On one hand we were lucky that the authorities were focused on the elections, but on the other hand it was a shame in the way that they didn't pay that much attention to the film, even though some of them will get CNN. That is perhaps why they didn't get the warning signs, I actually said in the film that if they are not careful with the level of corruption here it will affect them in the same way it did the people in Sierra Leone and sadly that came to bear.

TW: Do you think that corruption played a role in the violence that followed the Kenyan elections in December 2007?

SS: Why not? I think so. It's not my field, but I think the people had enough. Eric [who Samura lives with in Kibera in the film] explained in the film that the chief there had been an ordinary friend, but the minute he got appointed he started harassing them, making money, and has now become a different person.

People obviously believe that they have to do something, because they believe it is their money that these people get that is extorted from them. Everyone can see the new houses going up, the fences are rising, all these new cars are coming into the country, and how could somebody who just goes into politics amass that kind of money? It was obvious for them to see how the powerful people are using the money - aid money, or money that is given to the country or money that the government is meant to use for poor or sick people - for their own selfish purposes. So that caused a lot of people, I think, to rise up.



Even though, when the fighting started, people were saying it is tribal, but I don't think it was. Maybe a tribal element was used cleverly by the politicians, but I think those people were fed up with how the government was stealing every little thing that was meant for them. I find it tragic that it is the grassroots people again who pay the price, because if we went to Kenya now and looked at a registry of those killed, there would be none related to Odinga or Kibaki, that is the saddest thing when these things happen - not of course that I would wish for anyone to die.

TW: For many Western viewers it will be shocking to learn that aid money can be siphoned off into private pockets, effectively widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Do you think this issue is sufficiently discussed and addressed?

SS: I clearly think those that give should know that it is their right to demand answers or to monitor where it goes, especially tax payers. Sadly, it looks like that for many people who give it is just about, let me say, satisfying their consciences that they have done something. I think it should go beyond that, I think people should be able to say: "You know we are giving, we need to know, we need answers, we need receipts, we need to see." They need to monitor whatever they give to these countries and that will then enforce proper accountability. People who are giving deserve to know if their money or aid is reaching the grassroots people.

In business in the West we have found a way to answer this problem in a simplistic way: I used to work for Burger King in the UK and they used to have what they called a "mystery shopper." The mystery shopper poses as an ordinary customer and sees if all the policies are being correctly carried out. I think this is what aid agencies need to do. They need to get mystery shoppers who will go to all those villages and find out if the grain of rice or corn, or the money that is meant to build the hospital, is reaching the people, it's as simple as that. I'm not sure whether the NGOs and aid companies will really want to come off of their high horses though. I was surprised to learn from friends and others in Sierra Leone that they had never even seen aid workers. Apparently nobody has come to find out whether the projects that the money was meant for have been fulfilled. If you sit in all those air-conditioned offices there is no way you are going to find out whether this money has been implemented or used properly, and people out here who pay taxes and give deserve to know how their money is being spent.

TW: In the film, a former head of the Sierra Leonean Anti-Corruption Commission, Val Collier, explains why he believes "aid money is seen as fair game by the elite of Sierra Leone." As a result he finds Bob Geldof's talk of making poverty history a "waste of time" and that fighting corruption is the key. What is your opinion on this?

SS: The truth is, I think as an African, that he [Bob Geldof] has done his own bit to try and highlight the problem in Africa. However, I believe there has been a lot that he and his team or genuine people like him have not got quite right, so I understand where Val Collier is coming from. They still, or he still, believes in more aid to help sort Africa's problems and I am one of those who strongly doesn't believe that.

"More aid is not the solution to Africa's problems"

I don't believe in giving more aid to Africa, because the more that is given to Africa the more it fills the pockets of the greedy rich elite and politicians. I believe that is where they have got it wrong. More aid is not the solution to Africa's problems. Of course Africa needs aid, but we need the type that is monitored, the type that will help identify those that genuinely want to turn Africa around in Africa.

We need the type of aid which will empower Africans, so that in the long-term they will be able to look after themselves. We need the sort of aid that will not just be creating more employment for Westerners, or young Western graduates. It's just about empowerment. That is partly why I agree with someone like Val who says if you want to really and truly end poverty you must make corruption history first, because the aid that is going there, especially the cash aid, is corrupted over and over again and, even worse, it comes back to the West into bank accounts.

TW: Ernest Bai Koroma became president of Sierra Leone in September 2007 promising "zero tolerance" for corruption in the country. Your documentary shows that fulfilling this pledge will clearly not be easy. Have your experiences of corruption in Africa made you cynical of such promises?

SS: I think cynical is quite extreme, because the truth is if I were cynical I would not be in this job! There is no doubt that there is hope, just the fact that part of his election campaign was against corruption and that most people voted for him on the basis of this promise is hope in itself. The people have shown that they are fed up with corruption, the only question is whether the president then delivers on his promises. I still want to be hopeful, but there are plenty of facts that need to be mentioned. Many people who go into politics today in Africa see it as a form of investment, they see politics as a way to gain wealth and power. They don't understand that they are meant to serve their people. There are some Africans who live in the West who go back during elections and support specific parties, they pour in money and if that party wins they expect to get positions or business concessions so that they can reap the money back and make profits on the money they believe they have invested. That is a major concern for me, but the fact that these people have voted him [Koroma] in on this ticket shows that they know that corruption is in office and they want it sorted. I think that if someone like Ernest or other heads of state come into office on similar tickets and don't deliver, they know that the people will kick them out after their term runs out. I am hopefully that in countries like Sierra Leone that the message of 'respect for the ordinary people' will slowly begin to filter through. I don't think that Ernest will get more than one term if he fails to deliver because the people are becoming more and more informed, ambitious and therefore empowered – that is hope for me.

The truth is I can't envy any new president who takes on the task of fighting corruption in their country. The reality is that it is tougher than outsiders think and I would like to give one example, which I term "my brother's keeper," to show how deep corruption is, how difficult it is to fight. When you are the lucky one in a family, if you have a break, for example become a successful young politician, you are expected in Africa to look after your immediate family. And after your immediate family, you are expected to look after your relatives, uncles, aunts, cousins and so on. And then it spreads, people living at each end of your street expect you to look after them as you had a break. Then it goes from your street to the surrounding area - ever wider. Once you want to be in power it won't stop you continue trying to find a way to look after these people.



If you don't have the finance and you don't have the money to look after these people what do you do? You start taking money, you start accepting bribes so that you can continue to satisfy all those people around you. The reason being that if you don't you become an outcast. Even your own family and neighbours will hate you and want nothing to do with you. You become public enemy number one. In the next election, if you are a good guy and you were not giving because you did not want to take bribes then you will go, but if you want to stay then you have to look after all these people. There is no doubt that Ernest Koroma will have all these demands to deal with. He maybe stands a chance of retaining his presidency if he tries to break away in such a way that will put fear in people so that they understand that he stands for no nonsense and that he sets examples. The very people who helped to get him there, ironically because he campaigned against corruption, have these expectations of him. It is "my brother's keeper" that is part of Africa's biggest problem with corruption. We have to break this chain. I think that the people in Botswana have successfully managed to deal with this cycle and embrace traditional democratic values, which has helped them to push corruption aside. They had people with the political will who had the values, who looked at the resources and said "let's use them to benefit the people" and that is what has made a difference. It is not that we don't have it in us, the Africans, we do, it's just a matter of making sure that we find people with the willpower to turn these things around and set clear examples.

"people are becoming more and more informed, ambitious and therefore"

In Kenya when Kibaki's government came to power on that anti-corruption ticket, at the beginning they looked serious. You had ordinary people in Kenya who were dragging the police and politicians to the police station.

empowered - that is hope for me"

People got the message and started thinking "we can't mess about here." The ordinary people were organising citizen's arrests and that was changing things in Kenya no doubt. But, as usual, down the line they weakened. This is why such a country of 30 million people who should be living well has become a country of 30 million poor, what a shame, Africa, what a waste.

TW: What motivates you to make documentaries?

SS: As an African I want to go back home someday, but I want to go a place where I can at least live peacefully. As I was growing up, I would have given anything for people who were storytellers to help tell our stories. Fortunately I have been given a chance by a small group of wonderful people at Insight News who just want to leave this world a little better than they met it. So whenever I go back and I see the suffering caused by corruption, I see people dying because of poverty, senseless wars, preventable diseases that are destroying the continent, I tell myself that I have to do something. I've got to use my own weapon, my camera and crew, to tell these stories and hope the rest of the world engages.

What I would have hoped to bring out in this film is the corruption at the very highest level. That is the corruption that people I have spoken to while making this film believes brings down governments, economies and makes the life of ordinary people hell.

Of course I miss my wife and kids when I am away and I am grateful for their support, but I also know how lucky we are, that our children are born in the UK where they get a good education and health care and social life even when I am away.

It has become a mission for me and although you can't measure effect, you just hope that by shining a light on these issues and putting a human face to the suffering that you are contributing in some way. When ordinary people come up to you and thank you, the way you're appreciated by these people is worth far more than money. It is because of people like these, ordinary, voiceless, defenceless people that I keep telling these stories. I owe it to them. They are my real heroes.

About Sorious Samura

Born in Sierra Leone, Samura shot to prominence with his self-made documentary "Cry Freetown." Filmed at the height of Sierra Leone's conflict, Samura risked his life to film the plight of his country and the atrocities being committed. "Cry Freetown" was broadcast in January 2000 to international acclaim and seized the attention of the United Nations.

Since "Cry Freetown" Samura has reported on many issues including the journey of African exiles to Europe, refugees being sexually abused by aid workers in Guinea and the reintegration of child soldiers into normal life in Sierra Leone. In his critically acclaimed "Living with" series Samura moves in with the people whose story he is telling – a method he terms "reality television." In doing so, Samura aims to give their voices and stories a platform to be heard.

Samura lives in the UK and is a board member of [Insight News Television](#). His films have won many prestigious awards including: a BAFTA, two Emmy Awards, two One World Media Awards, three Amnesty International Media Awards and a Peabody Award.

For more information on Samura's films please click [here](#).

An interview with Samura and executive producer Ron McCullagh on the award winning 'Living with' series can be viewed on YouTube [here](#).

SPOTLIGHT STORY

Corruption in humanitarian assistance: abusing a noble cause

By Mike Sidwell



Humanitarian assistance aims to save lives and alleviate the suffering of people in times of emergency. From human conflict to devastating natural disasters, humanitarian agencies are used to delivering aid in challenging circumstances. The heightened risk of corruption that comes with such an operating environment further complicates their mission, potentially jeopardising efforts to deliver relief to those who need it most.

Despite the risks the issue of corruption in humanitarian aid is a delicate and little discussed matter, as many aid agencies worry that reports of corruption could weaken public support and thus vital funding for their operations. However, when corruption is known to have prevented vital aid and services from reaching the people who need it most, then this reluctance to enter into public discussion on the extent and consequences of corruption ultimately undermines the very aims of humanitarian assistance.

Vulnerable to abuse

While humanitarian assistance is generally subject to the same corruption risks as development assistance, the conditions in which humanitarian assistance is delivered make it uniquely susceptible to abuse.

Following a major crisis there is great pressure on humanitarian agencies to be seen to respond quickly as lives may be at stake. However, it is not easy to do so as operations will often take place in unfamiliar environments or require existing development programmes to be rapidly scaled-up. Further complications can arise if local institutions and public services are adversely affected or even destroyed through a conflict or natural disaster. It is also worth noting that many of the countries in which a humanitarian crisis is likely to happen score lowly (are perceived as corrupt) in Transparency International's [2007 Corruption Perceptions Index](#). In addition, the need for speed may necessitate a hurried recruitment drive where usual background checks are put off, while the nature of the job means there can be a comparatively high turn-over of supervisory staff resulting in few staff with a deep understanding of the situation and the accompanying corruption risks.

The combination of such an operating environment, a large influx of resources, and the urgency of delivering relief and reconstruction supplies unsurprisingly can lead to potentially high corruption risks.

Types of corruption

While the siphoning of funds is a clear danger, corruption risk in humanitarian assistance is by no means limited to financial resources. Food aid is particularly vulnerable as there are so many opportunities for its diversion and corruption – from the way it is allocated to how it is shipped and stored. Similarly, expensive and scarce drugs are attractive for those looking to make a profit. Meanwhile procurement processes can offer multiple opportunities for corruption, such as collusion and kick backs to delivering substandard goods.

'The abuse of entrusted power for private gain,' Transparency International's (TI) definition of corruption, encompasses not only fraud, embezzlement and contract kickbacks, but also a range of non-financial forms of corruption. It can include the manipulation or diversion of humanitarian assistance resources to benefit individuals or groups in order to enhance the political, social or economic power of the corruptor; allocation of relief resources in exchange for sexual favours; preferential treatment in the registration of beneficiaries for family members or friends; or coercion and intimidation of staff or beneficiaries to turn a blind eye to or participate involuntarily in corruption.

Transparency International's work

TI recognises that the staff of humanitarian agencies face immense challenges in carrying out their vital work and will continue to work in partnership with such organisations, along with other stakeholders from government agencies and civil society, to better understand corruption and corruption risks in the emergency context and establish measures to crackdown on it. If corruption is minimised, emergency aid will not only be delivered with greater transparency and accountability, but the actual quality and quantity of the aid will increase substantially. To further discussion and knowledge sharing on corruption in humanitarian assistance TI has launched a new ['Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Assistance'](#) section on its website. The web pages detail TI's work on the issue, as well as highlighting national chapters' current and past projects. It also brings together all relevant TI publications and a comprehensive resources section.

As part of a programme to curb corruption in humanitarian operations TI released a report in July 2006 entitled: '[Mapping the Risks of Corruption in Humanitarian Action](#),' which sets out the various elements of the humanitarian assistance supply chain in tabular form to map where various types of corruption may occur. TI national chapters and the [Overseas Development Institute](#) – a British international development and humanitarian issues think tank – interviewed humanitarian practitioners, including local and international civil society organisations and government officials in ten countries that have experienced natural disasters or civil conflict to validate the Corruption Risk map framework.

The second phase of the programme involves TI working with a number of leading international humanitarian non-governmental organisations to discuss the corruption risks they face in their work, both at headquarter and field levels. The findings of the research will be highlighted in an upcoming report to be published in early May. Furthermore, the results of this dialogue will become a handbook of best practices for preventing corruption in humanitarian assistance, aimed at managers and staff of humanitarian assistance agencies, which is expected to be published in early 2009.

Following the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami that hit South and Southeast Asia in December 2004, TI organised a regional meeting in April 2005 on "Curbing Corruption in Tsunami Relief Operations" together with the Asian Development Bank and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Hosted by the Indonesian government, the meeting brought together representatives of the six worst-affected countries, from government and civil society as well as major aid organisations, to identify concrete measures to curb corruption in post-tsunami relief and reconstruction activities for the first time. For its part, [TI Sri Lanka](#) has undertaken several initiatives in the aftermath of the tsunami with the principal objectives being to prevent corruption in the reconstruction process and promote accountability and transparency. Most recently a hotline was established in early 2007 to receive complaints and public views from tsunami affected areas. Received complaints are forwarded to the relevant authorities and institutions for further investigations. Also, a number of field visits were conducted in the second half of 2007 to assess the ground situation three years after the tsunami.

Reconstruction in post-war Lebanon after the war of July 2006 gave birth to a new wave of efforts in rehabilitating the war-torn country. However, the reconstruction process has been riddled with corruption scandals that have not only discouraged foreign investors but have also had a pervasive effect on the national economy. In February 2007, the TI national chapter in Lebanon, the [Lebanese Transparency Association](#) (LTA), organised with the [Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development](#) (OECD) the "Transparency in Reconstruction" conference. A series of recommendations were established at the conference, which was attended by all Lebanese stakeholders, as well as representatives of international organisations and donor countries. LTA launched its "Transparency and Integrity in Post-War Reconstruction and Compensations" campaign in August 2007 which included a petition, case study reports and various discussions with stakeholders. LTA's latest research project in cooperation with [TIRI](#) and other partners, which is part of a multi-country study on corruption in post-war reconstruction countries, looks at the experiences of Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mozambique, Palestine, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste.

In February 2006, TI and [TI-Pakistan](#) arranged a two-day workshop in response to the earthquake in Pakistan in October 2005 to ensure the transparent use of earthquake reconstruction funds. Key government agencies, international donors and experts, as well as both national and international civil society organisations, attended to identify a framework of relevant good practice and stakeholder responsibilities.

Following Hurricane Stan in October 2005, the Guatemalan TI national chapter, [Acción Ciudadana](#), initiated the signing of a "Government Commitment to Integrity and Access to Information in the Execution of the National Reconstruction Programme." The project focused on the areas hardest hit by the hurricane, generally areas with high levels of poverty and underdevelopment. A range of methodological tools were developed during the programme, such as a 'Citizen's Guide to Social Auditing,' and directed at civil society organisations; a public agent's accountability guide; and a web portal providing detailed information on the reconstruction process.

ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD

Promoting Revenue Transparency report shows oil and gas companies should provide greater accountability

By Mike Sidwell



On 28 April, Transparency International (TI) launched the '2008 Report on Revenue Transparency of Oil and Gas Companies.' The report, part of the Promoting Revenue Transparency Project, evaluates 42 leading oil and gas companies on their current policies, management systems and performance in areas relevant to revenue transparency in their upstream operations. The companies are evaluated in a total of 21 countries of operation.

Three areas of corporate action are included where disclosure can contribute to improved accountability in the management of extractive revenues: payments to host governments, operations and corporate anti-corruption programmes.

Oil, gas and minerals, or the extractive industries, generate great wealth. Oil export revenues for 2006 alone are estimated to make up approximately 1.8 percent of the World's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and more than half of the combined GDP of the 53 lowest income nations. High revenues from the extractive industries have often fuelled corruption, economic stagnation, inequality and conflict. One step towards reversing this curse lies in the transparent and accountable management of revenues generated from the extractive industries. "Oil and gas wealth, if properly managed, should support better services and infrastructure. It should lead to a better quality of life for all citizens. It is the duty of civil society to work with companies and governments to unlock this potential," said TI Chair Huguette Labelle.

Held at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, the evening launch featured a panel discussion on "Turning a transparent profit in the oil & gas industry: Opportunities and challenges for revenue transparency." Speakers included Vanessa Herringshaw, Director London Office, Revenue Watch Institute; Keith Myers, Partner, Richmond Energy Partners; Juanita Olaya, Revenue Transparency Programme Manager, Transparency International; and was moderated by Michael Peel, legal correspondent for Financial Times.

The Promoting Revenue Transparency Project is run by TI in partnership with the Revenue Watch Institute, and builds on the work of the Save the Children UK 'Beyond the Rhetoric' report from 2005. The project aims at making extractive industry revenues of most benefit to society by increasing transparency and accountability.

To read the report and discover more about the project please click [here](#).

ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD

Interview: Teun Bastemeijer, manager of the Water Integrity Network

By Georg Neumann



Teun Bastemeijer is the new manager of the [Water Integrity Network](#) (WIN), a network aiming to fight corruption in the water sector worldwide in order to reduce poverty. Transparency Watch speaks to him about corruption in the water sector, how it hinders equitable development and how the WIN supports the fight against corruption.

Transparency Watch (TW): *You have worked in the water sector for almost 20 years. Have you had to face corruption at any point?*

Teun Bastemeijer (TB): Corruption has many faces. I can give examples at every level, for example at the community level where leaders can take advantage of the water or sanitation systems by locating taps, hand pumps and subsidised latrines near their houses. At the municipal level it is not uncommon for a mayor to use revenues from the sale of drinking water for his campaign or petty cash. Corruption is often related to the unauthorised or illegal dumping of wastes in rivers because it's often cheaper to pay off an official than to construct a treatment plant. Unfortunately, there are so many concrete examples that I could go on for ages.

TW: *What makes corruption in the water sector such a fundamental issue?*

TB: Corruption is one of the key factors contributing to the destruction of natural resources and therefore also water sources. To put it very briefly: corruption leads to the fact that the water, sanitation, food and environment related UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Targets will not be met, meaning a lot of people may die because of corruption, because they don't have access to vital basic resources. This may be a blunt way of putting it, but I believe it's not far from the truth.

TW: *Developing countries are facing dramatically rising food prices, even causing riots in the streets of Cameroon and Haiti. How does corruption in the water sector relate to poverty and development?*

TB: Water and sanitation are key factors in improving the situation of the poor. Any shortcomings can condemn people to poverty, preventing them from reaching a degree of inclusiveness in the economic development that is necessary to combat poverty. The 2008 Global Corruption Report (GCR) on corruption in the water sector - coming out end of June - states that water is one of the main factors vital for economic development, as does the 2006 Human Development Report. Corruption can affect the efficiency of investments and the lifetime performance of infrastructure and facility services in such a way that it causes death and destruction.

TW: *How does the WIN tackle corruption?*

TB: The WIN concentrates on capacities in the water sector, including environment and sanitation with issues such as water pollution and access to reliable water sources, but we also try to engage actors outside the water sector who can help to tackle corruption because they have the knowledge and experience, as well as commitment, to work on water related issues. We are an expanding network with over 600 members drawn from international organisations, civil society organisations, as well as public and private sectors. We have individual and corporate members from many countries. Through our relationship with Transparency International (TI), we can gain access to information that is needed to fight, identify or diagnose the risk of corruption, but there are thematic areas that need water specialist skills and knowledge. We also do national and international advocacy, as well as local actions, and hope to link up with some of the TI national chapter activities. Though this link with TI and other strategic networks we hope to be able to become a platform for water and governance related organisations to meet.

TW: *What are the priorities of your work with WIN for the next year? What are the key events taking place?*

TB: The launch for the 2008 GCR is on 25 June in New York with the United Nations Development Programme. In this context, we are also looking into events to publicise the GCR nationally and advocate for change at a country level. The Stockholm Water Week is in August followed shortly after by the International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) in Athens in October. Regarding the IACC, we will facilitate discussions about corruption in the different water sectors, including or relating to the

environment, sanitation, agriculture and energy. We will also ensure a strong participation of water specialists. In the short term, we hope to gain experience and disseminate lessons learnt through small projects under the recently launched Small Grant Fund and to access additional funds to support more action on the ground. With a view to long-term impact, we are developing a strategic programme framework 2009-2015, taking into consideration the UN Millennium Declaration designated 2015 milestone.

Teun Bastemeijer has a background as a civil engineer from Delft University, specialising in Polder Development, water in relation to land use management and physical infrastructure planning. He has almost 20 years experience in the water sector and over 30 years involvement with development work in government, civil society and academic environments. He has previously worked as a project manager, country director and senior advisor for the UN, the SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and the International Water and Sanitation Centre IRC.

For more information on the work of the WIN please visit: www.waterintegritynetwork.net

ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD

World Bank: EITI++ initiative announced

By Georg Neumann



During the World Bank and IMF Spring Meetings from 12-13 April, the World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick announced the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Plus Plus (EITI++) designed to develop national capabilities to handle the current boom in commodity prices and channel the growing revenue streams into fighting poverty.

Welcoming the initiative, Huguette Labelle, Chair of TI said that: "Extractive resources need to provide real benefits for the peoples of the countries where these minerals are located." The TI Chair was one of the panellists invited to participate with Zoellick in announcing the "EITI++" project. The project is inspired by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), of which TI is a co-founder.

At a meeting convened by the World Bank, Labelle stressed that: "We welcome this initiative because it relates directly to transparency across the value chain of actions in the oil and mining sectors where we have seen in the past extensive corruption, violence, death, destruction and destabilization.

The "EITI++" spearheaded by the World Bank can offer the opportunity that the vast mineral wealth of Africa benefits the people of Africa – starting with open and fair contracts between governments and companies, through to the equitable disbursement of revenues to support sustainable anti-poverty goals."

Also around the World Bank and IMF Spring Meetings, the TI national chapter in the USA organised an expert panel to examine the harmful impact of corruption on development outcomes based on a recent World Bank Detailed Implementation Review (DIR) of five World Bank health projects in India. The session under the title "Corruption as a Barrier to Achieving the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals]: Lessons from the World Bank's India DIR" included John Zutt (Department of Institutional Integrity, World Bank), John Roome (South Asia Region, World Bank) and Aneta Wierzynska (Transparency International-USA).

In an [online brief](#) published in April, TI took a closer look at the relation between poverty and corruption and the anti-corruption strategy of the World Bank.

CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS

Organised crime and corruption in Bulgaria result in government reshuffle

By Mike Sidwell



On 13 April, Rumen Petkov, Bulgaria's interior minister, stepped down because of shortcomings in the fight against organised crime that [Reuters](#) writes could "threaten the government's long-term survival and cost the country millions in aid from the European Union."

The [Economist](#) reports that Petkov resigned following a leaked intelligence report detailing that "a drug gang had received top-secret internal documents from officials in his ministry, while illegal booze producers gave money to a senior crime-fighter in return for information and the destruction of incriminating evidence."

According to [Balkan Insight](#): "His [Petkov] ministry has been criticised for failing to root out corruption and curb organised crime. The killings of an author of books on the Bulgarian mafia and the chief of an energy company were killed in two separate incidents in Sofia sparking warnings from the European Union about the country's failure to tackle contract killings."

[Reuters](#) reports that Petkov has admitted to being "responsible for some appointments in the ministry through which I misled the leadership of the country."

Following Petkov's resignation, Bulgaria's Prime Minister Sergey Stanishev told the Sofia branch of his Socialist Party: "There must be clear professional and political outlines in the government from now on," reports [Balkan Insight](#).

Stanishev has since "sacked the ministers of defence, agriculture and health, and named a new interior minister to replace Rumen Petkov," lists the [BBC](#).

On 28 March, European Commission President Jose Barroso condemned Bulgaria for "failing to deal with organized crime and corruption more than a year after it joined the 27-nation bloc" ([Bloomberg](#)). Bulgaria stands the risk of facing "sanctions if the European Commission's mid-2008 report on the country's progress in fighting corruption and organised crime is negative," according to [Balkan Insight](#).

"The EU suspended payments by some agricultural and transportation projects in February after its anti-fraud office found irregularities in distribution. The bloc has earmarked subsidies of 11 billion euros ([US] \$17.3 billion) for Bulgaria through 2013" ([Bloomberg](#)).

CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS

British High Court rules that SFO acted unlawfully

By Mike Sidwell



On 10 April, the British High Court ruled that the director of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), a British government department, acted unlawfully by discontinuing a corruption investigation into BAE Systems' arms deals with Saudi Arabia.

According to the [Financial Times](#) (FT), two top judges "delivered a fierce rebuke to the government for "failing to recognise the rule of law" and allowing a foreign nation to "pervert the course of justice" in a case that triggered global condemnation." Lord Justice Moses ruled that: "the Serious Fraud Office had illegally allowed threats by Saudi officials to derail the bribery probe, which was scrapped in December 2006" ([FT](#)).

The [BBC](#) details how Moses told the High Court: "No one, whether within this country or outside, is entitled to interfere with the course of our justice," adding: "It is the failure of government and the defendant to bear that essential principle in mind that justifies the intervention of this court."

In an interview with [Sky News](#), Lord Goldsmith, who announced in December 2006 that the investigation into the arms company was to be discontinued, accused the judges of "failing to live in the real world and undermining a key legal principle." He also asserted that: "it was the right decision to take, in the public interest, in order to prevent terrorism."

The [Guardian](#) writes that: "His [Lord Goldsmith] intervention follows an indication from Downing Street that Gordon Brown [UK prime minister] is planning a "hands on" operation to ensure that the government faces down any attempt to reopen the inquiry."

In a press release issued on 24 April, the [SFO](#) announced that "the Administrative Court certified that there were points of law of general public importance and granted the Serious Fraud Office leave to appeal to the House of Lords. The SFO will be pursuing this appeal."

The [Economist](#) writes that: "The SFO, anxious not to give the impression that BAE is too big to jail, is examining its dealings in six other countries."

According to the [FT](#), government ministers "vowed to drive through unprecedented statutory powers to shut down investigations on national security grounds," just hours after the High Court ruling.

"The Government is bracing itself for further humiliation over its decision to scrap a corruption inquiry into a multibillion pound arms deal between British Aerospace and Saudi Arabia with a powerful international watchdog poised officially to reprimand the UK later this year. It will make Britain just the second country to be reprimanded by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Anti-Corruption Unit" ([Independent](#)).

For its part, BAE said: "The case was between two campaign groups and the director of the SFO. It concerned the legality of a decision made by the director of the SFO...BAE Systems played no part in that decision," reports the [BBC](#).

On 21 April, Richard Alderman replaced Robert Wardle as director of the SFO.

CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS

Samsung Chairman resigns following indictment

By Mike Sidwell



In a surprising move Samsung Chairman Lee Kun Hee resigned following his indictment on charges of tax evasion and breach of trust.

According to the [Financial Times](#) (FT), "After months of investigating, a special prosecutor last week [17 April] concluded that Mr Lee, the chairman, breached his financial duty by letting his children buy bonds of Samsung's affiliates through irregular financial transactions, incurring losses at the companies. He also found that Samsung managed about Won4,500bn (\$4.5bn) [€ 2.8 bn] in borrowed-name accounts, and Mr Lee had evaded Won112.8bn [€ 71 million] of income taxes."

[Bloomberg](#) writes that: "The government named a special counsel to investigate allegations by a former Samsung lawyer that the group ran a bribery slush fund," but they didn't uncover evidence of bribery.

In a televised speech announcing his resignation Lee declared, "I am saddened as there is still much to do and a long way to go, but I am leaving with all the faults of the past," reports the [FT](#), describing the move as "unprecedented in corporate Korea, where tycoons usually continue to run their business groups even after being convicted of serious white-collar crimes."

However, according to the [International Herald Tribune](#), "civic groups dismissed the resignation and several other measures announced Tuesday as a shrewd public relations stunt designed to keep Lee out of prison [...] and lambasted the special counsel for failing to delve deeper into allegations of embezzlement and bribery."

[Yonhap News](#) writes that if found guilty, the Samsung chairman "could face a sentence of between five years to life in jail. However, few analysts believe that the chairman will serve a jail term."

Jae-yong, Lee's only son, stepped down as chief customer officer to "work overseas in a "tough environment," but this doesn't mean the heir apparent of the giant family-run conglomerate is gone for good," notes the [Korea Times](#). According to [Yonhap News](#), the key question surrounding Samsung, the biggest industrial conglomerate in South Korea, is: "When will the only son of the senior Lee take the helm of the group?"

NEWS FROM THE ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT

This area provides highlights of the valuable work being done by Transparency International national chapters, members and Secretariat.

- [Africa and the Middle East](#)
- [The Americas](#)
- [Asia and the Pacific](#)
- [Europe and Central Asia](#)
- [TI - Secretariat](#)

Africa and the Middle East

Israel: Transparency Shield award ceremony 2007

In March, the TI national chapter in Israel, SHVIL, held its annual 'Transparency Shield Award' ceremony at Tel Aviv University, Israel, recognising individuals and/ or organisations leading in implementing ethical behaviour and promoting transparency and social responsibility in Israeli society. This year's award was granted to the seven local municipalities Beit Arye-Ofarim, Haifa, Migdal-HaEmeq, Misgav, Ma'alot Tarshiha, Nes-Ziona and Shoham. The ceremony event included a lecture by Professor Josef Gross, Chair of SHVIL, as well as a discussion panel on "Municipal Corporate – between business and public". Galia Sagy, the CEO of SHVIL, further presented the findings of the "Transparency and Open Access to Information in Local Municipalities" project, which examines transparency, access to information and dissemination in 15 of the largest independent municipalities in Israel. The event concluded with scholarships awarded to four MA and PhD students whose studies promote the objectives of TI and ethics in Israel. The award is in memory of Dove Izraeli, the founder of the organisation.

The Americas

Argentina: Global Leadership award for TI national chapter head Laura Alonso

Laura Alonso, the head of the TI national chapter in Argentina, Poder Ciudadano, has been honoured with this year's Vital Voices Global Leadership award.

Alonso received the award in the Political Participation category for being one of Latin America's most prominent activists for open, accountable government and because Poder Ciudadano's work helps improve the living conditions of women and the creation of new opportunities for their development within the Argentinean society.

In her acceptance speech at the awards ceremony, which took place in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., Alonso thanked Vital Voices for having "given me the energy I need and the reinforcement that I am on the right track. Because of you I will go back to my country more energized and more committed to make change happen."

Every year the international NGO Vital Voices honours the work of remarkable women leaders who are pioneers of social, economic and political change in their countries and around the world. Women who not only have extraordinary achievements as individuals, but whose work has contributed immeasurably to the betterment of their societies. Women who have inspired countless others to become champions for political, economic and social progress.

For more information please click [here](#).

Guatemala: new governmental anti-corruption body formed

The previous governments in Guatemala have all had different institutions responsible for fighting corruption within the Executive. The last institution in place ceased functioning in January 2008, when the new elected government took office. In order to avoid this institutional gap, Acción Ciudadana (AC), the TI national chapter in Guatemala, advocated for the establishment of a new official body responsible for fighting corruption. In March 2008 the Transparency and Anti-corruption Commission was created, which is headed by the vice-president. High level public officials will be involved in the work of the Commission, while non-governmental actors – including AC will assist in an advisory role. One of AC's first efforts was to submit a draft work plan to the newly created Commission.

Nicaragua: what do Nicaraguans think about the judiciary?

Etica y Transparencia, the TI national chapter in Nicaragua, carried out a public opinion survey on how citizens in three municipalities perceive institutions in the justice sector. They were asked for their general opinion as well as their view on the quality of the service delivery. 40 per cent of citizens asked have “some” trust in the institutions (from no trust, some, quite some, a lot of) and about 20 per cent said that they were “not at all” satisfied with the service delivery (not at all, some, quite some, totally satisfied).

TILAC and JSCA join forces

Transparency International for Latin America and the Caribbean (TILAC) signed a cooperation agreement with the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) in April. Both organisations are joining forces to combat judicial corruption - a source of injustice that denies citizens the basic right to a fair trial. The agreement establishes a general framework for cooperation on the development and implementation of joint activities. The entities will jointly sponsor conferences, seminars, workshops and other academic meetings; coordinate tasks of interest to both agencies; exchange information; and execute projects. “In order to protect the rights of all and not only the privileged few, judicial reform with a focus on increasing transparency should be a priority for all leaders who are truly working to decrease the inequality and poverty that affect nearly 40 per cent of Latin Americans,” said Silke Pfeiffer, Director for the Americas at Transparency International, in Santiago, Chile, where she signed the accord.

Asia and the Pacific

India: TI India 2007 Journalism Award

On 15 March, the TI national chapter in India awarded its second ever Rai Bahadur M S Oberoi Media Award in an award ceremony in Dehli. [Poonam Agarwal](#), correspondent for New Delhi Television Limited (NDTV), India’s largest private television production house, won the Gold category award for exposing the alleged involvement of defense and prosecution lawyers in winning over prime witness Sunil Kulkarni in the BMW case. The channel’s chief correspondent [Siddharth Pandey](#) won the Silver category award for his story exposing illegal mining in Delhi. The Silver category award went to [Divya Shah](#), a correspondent with the CNN-IBN news channel, for her story highlighting how easy fake official documents can be procured. While [Meher Prasad Yadav](#), co-editor of Dainik Bhaskar (Jhansi), a Hindi daily newspaper, won the Gold award in the Print Media category for his story exposing the alleged misuse of funds in the mid-day meal scheme in 30 districts of the Bundelkhand region.

The annual ‘Rai Bahadur M.S. Oberoi Media Awards’ were founded by TI India and the Oberoi Group in 2006 to recognise stories exposing corruption in India. There is one award for print and one for electronic media - each award is made up of a medal, a citation and cash prizes of Rs. 2 Lakhs (€ 3200, US \$5100) and Rs. 1 Lakh (€1600, US \$2550) for the first and second prizes for each category respectively.

Sri Lanka: first report on 'Mega Cabinet in Sri Lanka: Perceptions and Implications'

As part of its programme monitoring ministerial expenditure, the TI national chapter in Sri Lanka (TISL) published its first report on 'Mega Cabinet in Sri Lanka: Perceptions and Implications'.

The report provides an analysis on the expenditure involved in maintaining a large cabinet in Sri Lanka within the current political and economic context.

The cabinet of Sri Lanka was sworn in November 2005 with 26 ministers. With subsequent reshuffles it has expanded in the last two years to the present 108 ministers. Civil society opinion in Sri Lanka is predominantly critical of the present cabinet. TISL plans to continue this research with a view to creating a public debate on the need for adhering to standards of good governance.

For more information please click [here](#).

Vanuatu: Blandine Boulekone awarded Legion of Honour

In a ceremony held at the French Ambassador’s residence in March, the Ambassador, His Excellency Mr Pierre Mayaudon, awarded Blandine Boulekone, the managing director of the TI national chapter in Vanuatu, the Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur on behalf of the President of the French Republic. The Ambassador highlighted Blandine’s engagement and action in favour of the handicapped, the family (creating an association for the Family Health), women (founding member of the Vanuatu National Council of Women), and citizenship and good governance (founding member of Transparency International Vanuatu in 2001 and responsible for its management since 2004).

Europe and Central Asia

ALAC: three new Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres

New ALACs in Haiti, Ukraine and Kazakhstan will bring the total number of ALACs to 22 worldwide.

On 7 April, the Kazakhstan Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre in Almaty and its anti-corruption hotline opened. Citizens can call 2 600 678 everyday from 10.00 to 18.00 for advice from ALAC professionals. On the day the hotline was launched, it received numerous calls and already 12 cases were taken on by the legal advisors of the centre. The project is implemented by the Civic Foundation Transparency Kazakhstan and receives funding from the European Commission. A second ALAC in Astana will be launched in autumn this year.

On 14 April, the National Contact Group of TI Ukraine “Anticorruption Committee” announced the official

launch of its "Anticorruption Information Service". Funded by Management Systems International (MSI), the Service provides legal advice to victims of corruption and a toll-free hotline through which citizens can seek advice in corruption related matters. The hotline number in Kiev is 8 800 500 3 100. The official presentation on 14 April was attended by representatives of the Ukrainian Government and MSI.

In Haiti, the first French speaking ALAC worldwide was launched during a press conference on 22 April. The launch has been postponed due to the food riots that have rocked Haiti since the beginning of April. The Centre de Plaidoyer et d'Assistance Juridique (CEPAJ) will operate a toll free hotline – 2 518 0757 - where victims and witnesses of corruption can voice their concerns and provides free legal advice. The project is implemented by the Heritage Foundation Haiti and funded by the Haiti Civil Society Advocacy Project of USAID.

Armenia: TI Armenia focuses on new challenges for civil society

On 19 February, Armenia voted for the new president. TI Armenia has been monitoring the transparency of political financing during the election campaign. According to its findings, two of the nine presidential candidates (among which was the current President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan) exceeded a limit of the campaign expenses as set by the electoral fund. The limit is set to provide fair conditions and a level playing field during the electoral campaigns.

On 1 March a 20 day state of emergency was officially declared by the Armenian President after cracking down on a peaceful post-election protest of supporters of the main oppositional candidate for the Presidency. The state of emergency involved an information blockade, a mass media censorship and a ban on public gatherings. Armenian NGOs and civil society organisations are confronted with a new challenge on how to operate in this new political environment.

TI Armenia continued to advocate for the protection of human rights and freedoms, transparency and accountability during the state of emergency period by initiating petitions and public statements, consultations with other civil society activists, meetings with diplomatic missions and international organisations, condemning any violence and terror, and urging for appropriate measures be taken against any violation of human rights and freedoms.

On 8 April, the eve of the inauguration of the new president Serzh Sargsyan, TI Armenia, together with its partners, civil society organisations and activists, organised a Quo Vadis Forum in Yerevan on the challenges civil society is facing in the current political situation. During the forum some 50 representatives of NGOs, as well as media outlets and international organisations, discussed issues such as possible human rights and freedoms violations, increased control over mass media, restrictions on the activities of civil society and work with the National Assembly. A list of immediate actions, such as a petition to the National Assembly to lift all anti-democratic restrictions on public gatherings, together with medium and long-term initiatives, such as the creation of a victims of repressions database and lobbying for media-related reforms, were undertaken by four working groups and widely disseminated among all interested parties.

France: French government to include anti-corruption in its forthcoming EU presidency work plan

In cooperation with the TI national chapter in France, Transparency International sent a letter to Jean-Pierre Jouyet, French State Secretary for European Affairs, highlighting TI's point of view on several anti-corruption related issues in February. TI hopes that the upcoming French EU Presidency will address these priorities when they take over from Slovenia in the second half of 2008. The French government responded to TI's letter on 1 April, confirming that issues such as financial transparency and reinforcement of EU cooperation to fight tax fraud and tax evasion are on the EU Finance Minister's agenda. The government further assured TI that France is for the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the enforcement of international anti-corruption rules within the EU.

Review the TI letter at www.transparencyinternational.eu

Hungary: parliamentary hearing on TI NIS country study

On 8 April, the Hungarian Parliament discussed the latest TI NIS (National Integrity System) Country Study on Hungary during a joint session of the Budget and the European Affairs Committees. During the hearing, the TI national chapter in Hungary, TI Hungary, presented the report and called for closer attention to party and campaign financing as well as to public procurement. Noemi Alexa, the director of TI Hungary, said that since the report on corruption came out last December, progress has been made in several areas, however, concrete changes have not yet been revealed and despite good legal regulations against corruption in Hungary, their implementation raises serious concerns. The hearing was also attended by all G8 ambassadors and other international representatives.

Russia: TI Russia launches Anti-Corruption Online Office

TI Russia is establishing a web portal, the Anti-Corruption Online Office, which contains legal information and provides advice to victims of corruption. This project was initiated and developed by the Project Team of TI Russia, a group of young activists who are currently students at the High School of Economics in Moscow and other universities in Russia. The main aim of the project is to help citizens and businesses concerned about daily corruption within state and municipal services. The Anti-Corruption Online Office will provide data on legal provisions, document templates and instructions on how to file complaints, contact details of the relevant institutions, along with featuring success stories. Users of the web portal will be able to voice their concerns and stories and thereby provide a picture of

the daily corruption ordinary citizens face. TI Russia will use this information for analytical reports and advocacy events. The project is funded by CIDA.

Russia: TI Russia to contribute to the GRECO evaluation report on Russia

The Council of Europe's GRECO (Group of States against Corruption) review team is visiting Russia from 21 April to 25 April for meetings with the Russian government to prepare the first GRECO Evaluation Report on the Russian Federation. The review team will cover the subjects included in the first and second rounds of GRECO reviews, such as the independence, specialisation and means available to national bodies engaged in the prevention and fight against corruption; the extent and scope of immunities; identification, seizure and confiscation of corruption proceeds; public administration and corruption (including conflicts of interest); efficiency and transparency with regard to corruption; prevention of legal persons being used as shields for corruption; tax and financial legislation to counter corruption and links between corruption, organised crime and money laundering.

TI Russia will participate in evaluation meetings in Russia and plans to fill in an evaluation questionnaire to provide GRECO with its vision of how anti-corruption work in the country could progress.

TI - Secretariat

EU budget requires accountability

In April, the Brussels office of TI-S submitted recommendations for the European Union (EU) Budget review. As the EU seeks for ways to improve how it spends its budget – currently at 129 billion euros (US \$205 billion) – TI recommends that EU institutions and member states increase transparency and accountability and that each member state should assume more responsibility for funds spent within their own territories. The recommendations address three challenges: reducing complexity, addressing inherent risks and overhauling the management and control arrangements at EU level. TI believes that the most effective means for improving transparency and accountability in EU spending are:

- to systemically publish the recipients of EU funds
- to set proper financial incentives (financial sanctions, blacklisting, debarment from public contracts) for those who do not comply with the rules
- to increase accountability for spending under shared management which accounts for over 80 % of EU spending, by better delineating the obligations of the Commission and the Member States

For more information on TI's work on the European Union, see: www.transparencyinternational.eu

Call for Integrity Award nominations

TI is calling for nominations for the 2008 Integrity Awards, honouring individuals and organisations that have demonstrated exceptional courage and outstanding leadership in fighting corruption. Each year TI receives nominations for candidates who have risked their lives and their livelihoods in the name of justice, transparency and integrity. Winners have come from Asia and Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. They have included journalists and public prosecutors, accountants, government officials and leaders of civil society. Launched in 2000, the goal of the Integrity Awards is to offer greater recognition and support to those who investigate and unmask corruption, often at great personal risk. Nominations for the 2008 Integrity Awards will be accepted until 31 August 2008. For further information please click [here](#).

CORRUPTION IN QUOTES

"We will build a Paraguay that will not be known for its corruption and poverty, but for its honesty."

Paraguay's new president, Fernando Lugo, addressing his supporters.

[The Times Online](#), Paraguay, 22 April 2008

"Have we as a society become more corrupt? Or have we in the FBI simply become more adept at rooting out fraud and corruption?"

FBI Director Robert Mueller poses the question in a speech to the American Bar Association.

[Associated Press](#), US, 17 April 2008

"At the end of July, a missile was fired at my home. It fell about five meters away. It hit another house next to mine, and of course my family was terrified."

Radhi al Radhi, Iraq's former top anti-corruption official and judge, describes the intimidation he faced in fighting corruption in Iraq.

[CBS News](#), US, 13 April 2008

"I offer my sincere apology for causing concerns for the people [...] I am going to take full responsibility, both moral and legal."

Lee Kun Hee, the chairman of Samsung Group, announces his resignation following his indictment on charges of tax evasion and breach of trust.

[International Herald Tribune](#), South Korea, 22 April 2008

"Olmert is in a grave situation, it is doubtful whether he will be able to continue to hold his position"

Anonymous senior legal source on Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert being questioned by police in connection with a corruption affair.

[Haaretz](#), Israel, 2 May 2008

MASTHEAD

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