



Press Release December 11, 2023

## **The UN Convention Against Corruption COSP10 Must Strengthen Enforcement of Anti-Corruption Laws and Allow More Civil Society Participation**

Marking the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the tenth session of its Conference of States Parties in the United States (COSP10), which opens today, [Integrity Initiatives International](#) (III) and [Club de Madrid](#) call on governments to do more to enforce the laws the convention requires of its member states, including by working towards the creation of an [International Anti-Corruption Court](#) (IACC) that would serve as a de facto enforcement mechanism of the UNCAC.

When the UNCAC was adopted in 2003, the convention was a landmark step in the fight against corruption. As the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument, it established and codified the consensus that bribery of public officials, embezzlement and other misappropriation of public funding, money laundering, and obstruction of justice in relation to those offenses are serious crimes. The UNCAC requires its 190 states parties, including 185 UN member states, to criminalize those forms of corruption.

“Grand corruption – the abuse of public power for private gain – is a blight on the planet, eroding public trust that democracies can solve global problems at a time when we need more international cooperation. Over 30 members of Club de Madrid have signed the Declaration calling for creation of an International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC). Democracy and the rule of law can be undermined by corruption and state capture, increasing the necessity for an IACC,” said Danilo Türk, Former President of Slovenia and President of Club de Madrid.

The [Declaration calling for the creation of the IACC](#) has been signed by over 300 world leaders, including more than 50 total former presidents and prime ministers and over 30 Nobel laureates. III and Club de Madrid work with nearly 100 additional civil society organizations in the campaign for an IACC. As a result of their advocacy, Canada, Ecuador, Moldova, the Netherlands and Nigeria have committed to working towards the creation of the Court, and the European Parliament has passed a resolution calling for it to be established.

“The International Anticorruption Court would be a great instrument to fight corruption worldwide and we, in Africa, have a special interest in setting up such a mechanism as studies indicate that 25% of African GDP is lost to corruption while large numbers of African populations still lack access to basic services and decent jobs,” said by Aminata Touré, Former Prime Minister of Senegal and Member of Club de Madrid.



Emblematic of the challenges facing implementation of the UNCAC is the limited role allowed for civil society participation. In an extreme example, Turkey has vetoed III's participation in COSP9 in Egypt and COSP10 in the United States, along with several other anti-corruption NGOs. The rules permit any member state to reject the accreditation of any NGO that does not have UN ECOSOC status.

Turkey objected to III's participation, incorrectly alleging III has material on its website glorifying what it deems to be Gülenist terrorism, and the attempted coup in Turkey in 2016. III does not have any material on its website that praises Gülen, terrorism, or any coup attempt. There are articles on its website that criticize the Turkish government for attacks on the independence of the judiciary and other concerning erosions of the rule of law.

“Integrity Initiatives International thanks the U.S. State Department and its partners for their efforts to get Turkey to remove its baseless objection to its participation in the UNCAC conference in Atlanta. It is reprehensible that any state, including states that may be led by kleptocrats, can bar an NGO dedicated to fighting corruption from participating in the UN's flagship conference on combatting corruption,” said United States District Judge Mark L. Wolf, the Chair of Integrity Initiatives International.

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