



CITIZEN SECURITY IN THE AMERICAS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Corruption is one of the main risks to citizen security in the Americas. Corruption interferes with the orderly functioning of the democratic institutions that were established to secure peace and the free exercise of citizens' rights, such as the police forces, prosecutors office and public ministries, judicial system, intelligence agencies, military forces and the regulators of private security forces.

In the Americas, vulnerable political and institutional systems coexist with high levels of impunity. These factors can lead to state capture by criminal groups and undermine the capacity of states to develop far-reaching public policies which can prevent violence and guarantee citizen security.

We strongly believe that living conditions and citizen security in the Americas will improve with the implementation of measures that seek to increase transparency, access to information and accountability by all state entities responsible for guaranteeing citizen rights, as well as with initiatives aimed at ensuring actual participation of civil society in the fight against corruption in their countries and within the Organization of American States (OAS).

Transparency International (TI) hereby presents recommendations to be included by States Parties in the Declaration of the 2010 General Assembly and as part of thematic resolutions related to the fight against corruption. TI and the 17 organisations that it works with throughout the region, hopes that its recommendations will contribute to the debate and progress towards a region free of corruption.

I. DECLARATION OF SAN SALVADOR: CITIZEN SECURITY IN THE AMERICAS

- 1.** The OAS should adopt effective mechanisms to promote accountability and transparency in citizen security programmes, police force administration and prison systems.
- 2.** The OAS should promote processes aimed at enhancing the integrity of security forces and other public officials.
- 3.** The OAS should promote transparency within the institutions responsible for the design, execution and monitoring of government programmes on citizen security, ensuring citizen participation and the effective implementation of such programmes.
- 4.** The OAS should promote the fight against corruption within the institutions entrusted with overseeing citizen security and respect for civil rights.

II. PLAN OF ACTION OF SAN SALVADOR: CITIZEN SECURITY IN THE AMERICAS

1. The OAS should encourage increased professionalism among members of the security forces by establishing improved systems of evaluation and performance for personnel.
2. The OAS should promote ongoing training opportunities for the members of the security bodies and ensure better employment conditions and salaries.
3. The OAS should establish the fight against corruption and transparency as the centrepiece of programmes for the security forces.
4. The OAS should promote the introduction of effective internal control mechanisms in the security forces which can ensure the integrity of officials.

III. STRENGTHENING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY

Mechanism for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption – MESICIC

1. The Committee of Experts should ensure that on-site visits are conducted during the Fourth Round of Review of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACAC), as agreed at the Third Conference of States Parties to the MESICIC, and should encourage all States to participate.
2. The States Parties to the MESICIC must demand the definition of a clear profile for experts, who should have high technical expertise and sufficient independence to be in a position to make recommendations to the States about the implementation of the IACAC.
3. States Parties should publish action plans and annual progress reports on the recommendations issued to them by the Committee of Experts, and civil society should participate in the preparation of such plans.
4. The States Parties should accept national progress reports on the implementation of the IACAC submitted by civil society organisations.
5. States Parties should institutionalise opportunities for civil society organisations to participate at meetings of the Committee of Experts, and CSOs should serve as permanent observers of the Committee's work.

6. States Parties should make financial resources available to civil society organisations so that they can continue their necessary and meaningful engagement in the MESICIC, in terms of technical training, preparation of reports and attendance at the Committee's meeting.

7. The MESICIC Secretariat should agree with the States Parties a set of indicators to help States assess the degree of compliance with the IACAC based on the availability of increased levels of hard and objective information.

8. The MESICIC Secretariat should systematise and disseminate tools of best practices to assist in the implementation of the IACAC, especially for the protection of whistleblowers and victims of corruption.

9. We call on Barbados to ratify the IACAC and we encourage Dominica and Saint Lucia to join the MESICIC.

Access to public information

1. The OAS should develop an internal policy regulating access to public information held by the organisation, which should be consistent with the standards followed by other multilateral organisations.

IV. STRENGTHENING THE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE OAS ACTIVITIES

1. The OAS should adopt the New Strategy for Strengthening the Participation of Civil Society, in order to ensure more inclusive and effective participation of civil society organisations in its activities.
2. The OAS should eliminate all restrictions to civil society participation, such as the right of States to veto the registration of organisations in the OAS registry of civil society organisations. Since 2009, several civil society organisations have been vetoed without justification.
3. The OAS should eliminate the restriction on civil society participation in the Mechanism for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, by amending article 34 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Experts.

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL IN THE AMERICAS

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TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	The Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute	www.transparency.org.tt
URUGUAY	Uruguay Transparente	www.uruguaytransparente.org.uy
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TI also works actively with civil society organisations in countries where it has no formal partners.

For more details visit www.transparency.org/americas/conventions or contact the regional conventions team at the TI Secretariat:

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