



IWatch statement to the IRG

Vienna, 5 June 2014

I WATCH's intervention is going to mainly **cover the issue of whistleblowers' protection**. It will highlight our work to **assist whistleblowers**, to ensure **adequate and concrete legal protection of these persons and to obtain legislative reforms** to ensure the necessary legal framework. All of this work aims to contribute to our government's enforcement efforts.

1. I WATCH is playing an active role in terms of WB's protection:

- The platform that we developed www.billkamcha.tn (means caught red handed) that allows people to report cases of corruption as they happen. It is an incentive to encourage people to report corruption, and the "Whistleblower of the Year Award" initiative that aims at paying tribute to the persons who had the courage to blow the whistle on the corrupt practices they encountered, and to **change the public perception of WB from snitches to heroes**, For whistleblowers, the award is a **public recognition to their efforts and sacrifices**. The award is an incentive to encourage people to report corruption. It is also an opportunity to lobby around a whistle-blower protection law, and catch decision-makers' attention about how crucial such a law is.

→ The 2 initiatives represent an opportunity to lobby around a whistle-blower protection law, and catch decision-makers' attention about how crucial such a law is.

- I WATCH contributed to the UNCAC review process through a parallel report, and through working on 5 main recommendations (a recommendation about WB's protection is included) through which we aim at helping the gvt implement the UNCAC. The report is a contribution to the gvt's work as constructive partners. In our report we reviewed decree N° 120 establishing an anti-corruption framework. This decree encourages public officials to report corruption practices, but without providing the necessary protection for such people. Moreover, existing whistleblower protection laws only cover reporting on offences like money laundering and terrorism, which are not offences that happen on an everyday basis.

To conclude, I'd like to highlight that whistleblower protection is important if we are aiming at having a democratic country where freedom of expression- reporting corruption is considered as such- reigns and we are working to support government in achieving an adequate framework



Whistleblowers' protection is just one step in a much greater process to ending impunity for corruption offences but it is a critically important one.