

**Statement by the Working Group on Human Rights and Corruption
Human Rights Council Advisory Committee**

Advisory Committee meeting on Wednesday, 18 February 2026, at 3 p.m. (CET) in Room XVI of the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.

Resolution: <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/59/6>

14. Requests the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council to prepare a comprehensive study in which it develops concrete guidelines on implementing existing procedural and substantive human rights obligations of States in the context of preventing and combating corruption, and to present the study to the Council at its sixty-fourth session;
15. Requests that the above-mentioned study be developed in close cooperation and coordination with the Office of the High Commissioner with a view to building on its existing work, supporting technical assistance and capacity-building efforts and providing a strong foundation for policy development, information-sharing and awareness-raising at the national, regional and international levels;
16. Requests the Advisory Committee to seek input from States, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and a broad, diverse range of stakeholders, including relevant international organizations and intergovernmental bodies, human rights mechanisms, local authorities, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector and academic institutions;
17. Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to share the study with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

34th session of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee

Item 3. (j) Guidelines on implementing existing human rights obligations of States in the context of preventing and combating corruption

18 February 2026, 15:00-16:10

Statement by the Working Group on Human Rights and Corruption of the Global Civil Society for the UNCAC

Madam Chair, distinguished members of the Advisory Committee,

Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to be part of this important discussion. I am speaking on behalf of the Human Rights & Corruption Working Group of the Global Civil Society Coalition for the UNCAC. This platform brings together almost 240 individuals from civil society and academia from almost 100 countries around the world to advance anti-corruption efforts from a human rights perspective. I have the pleasure of serving as a

co-chair of this WG alongside Andrea Rocca from Transparency International and Morten Koch Andersen from the Raoul Wallenberg Institute.

I would like to thank all of the experts who contributed to this statement.

We welcome the Advisory Committee's ongoing preparation of this comprehensive study, mandated by Human Rights Council Resolution 59/6. We consider this study both timely and essential. Across the world, civil society is operating in increasingly constrained spaces, the rule of law is under pressure, and corruption continues to harm communities, particularly the most vulnerable.

At the outset, we would like to emphasize the importance of explicitly affirming the principle of systemic integration of international law as reflected in Article 31(3)(c) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. States' existing procedural and substantive human rights obligations should be at the heart of anti-corruption measures. Human rights law and anti-corruption law should not be treated in isolation. States' commitments under international human rights law must guide the interpretation and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Many UNCAC provisions are rooted in human rights, including Article 13 on the participation of society, as well as provisions relating to access to information, protection of reporting persons, asset recovery, compensation of victims, and international cooperation. Such legal coherence is crucial for consistent and effective national implementation of both anti-corruption and human rights commitments, as they are mutually reinforcing.

Building on this foundation, it is essential to clearly articulate how human rights can be operationalized as concrete anti-corruption tools. This includes rights such as access to information, meaningful participation in public decision-making, access to justice, and effective remedies and reparation, as well as obligations to protect individuals and communities from corruption-related harm caused by both State and non-State actors. This is particularly relevant in light of States' obligations under Article 2(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights to use the maximum of available resources to realize economic, social, and cultural rights. Corruption and the misappropriation of public resources directly undermine these obligations, making anti-corruption measures a necessary component of fulfilling economic and social rights.

A strong focus on implementation at the institutional level is essential. While the normative links between corruption and human rights are well established, guidance on translating these standards into policies and practices remains limited. The study should therefore include concrete, identity-specific examples of how human rights standards have been the foundation of legal and institutional reform and integrated into anti-corruption laws, policies, and institutional procedures and practices. This may include collaboration among anti-corruption agencies and national human rights institutions, judiciaries, and civil society organizations; the inclusion of human rights safeguards in national anti-corruption strategies; and reciprocal efforts to incorporate anti-corruption tools into human rights action plans. It should also describe challenges in implementing a human rights approach to anti-corruption, highlighting obstacles, lessons learned, and areas where further guidance is needed.

It would also be valuable to ensure that the study addresses the roles, responsibilities, and accountability frameworks of all branches of the State, including the executive, legislative,

oversight, and judicial. A comprehensive human rights-based approach to preventing and combating corruption requires differentiated and context-specific guidance for each branch, recognizing their distinct functions in policy design and implementation, law-making and oversight, adjudication, and enforcement. This would strengthen institutional coherence, close systemic accountability gaps, and reinforce the separation of powers as a safeguard against corruption and impunity.

The study should explicitly address the perspectives and rights of victims of corruption and the critical role of civil society organizations. Integrating equality, non-discrimination, and participation as implementation obligations can significantly strengthen prevention, oversight, and accountability. From a human rights perspective, States have procedural duties to ensure participation, protect civic space, and enable access to information. These obligations allow CSOs, journalists, victims, witnesses, experts, academia, and affected communities to contribute effectively to anti-corruption efforts. The study should provide guidance on how to operationalize these obligations, including legal standing in anti-corruption proceedings, protection from reprisals, and meaningful participation in review and decision-making processes, including under the UNCAC framework.

We highlight the importance of applying a human rights lens in the UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism. This would strengthen transparency, foster inclusive participation throughout the review and follow-up process, and enable civil society and affected individuals to provide input on the UNCAC's practical implementation. Reports, recommendation and findings from UN human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies, special procedures, and the Universal Periodic Review, should be recognized as highly relevant for assessing corruption risks, social impacts, and accountability gaps, including in the context of the UNCAC IRM, in line with provision 27(c) of its Terms of Reference.

Finally, we encourage emphasizing the importance of proactive and preventive approaches. Integrating human rights into anti-corruption efforts is not only about responding to violations after they occur, but about preventing corruption and human rights violations by addressing structural risks, power imbalances, exclusion, and lack of accountability frameworks before harm occurs.

For civil society, this study would serve as an essential tool to support advocacy, guide effective implementation of anti-corruption measures, and reinforce public trust in institutions. We hope that the Committee's guidelines will provide practical, actionable, and people-centered guidance that can be applied across regions and contexts.