

When Corruption Becomes a Tool of Ruling Governance, not Just an Administrative Flaw!

(Translated)

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Corruption is neither always a mistake in the state's records, nor a flaw in its administrative mechanisms, nor a result of weak competence, nor a result of a lack of resources, as the state often tries to convince its citizens.

In some countries, corruption is more organized than the law itself, more effective than official institutions, and a more honest expression of the nature of the ruling system. There, corruption is not managed in secret; it is managed openly without being named. It is not treated as an exception to be fixed, but as a tool of governance.

In official discourse — especially in dependent states — corruption is presented as an administrative deviation, or individual behavior, caused by weak oversight or flawed laws. However, this description, despite being common, does not explain the depth of the phenomenon, its ability to survive for decades, or the repeated failure of most anti-corruption efforts.

This explains why corruption in many regimes is not an accidental defect, but a central tool of ruling governance, consciously managed and used to control elites, redistribute loyalties, and ensure survival in power.

In this context, the right question is not: Why did the state fail?

Instead, it is: How did the regime succeed in surviving, despite the failure of the state? How did public funds turn from a resource for service, into a tool of control? How did corruption turn from an administrative flaw into a complete system of rule?

Accordingly, states can be classified into three main types:

1. Fragile, authoritarian, dependent states: where corruption turns into a parallel system indeed, the backbone of governance.

2. Stable states: usually major capitalist world powers, governed by the positive laws (Latin: *ius positum*, man-made laws), where corruption is an exception within a system that basically works.

It is because of these major world powers that Muslim countries live with corruption and suffer from it. The major powers preserve this corruption because they are the biggest beneficiaries of it, using it to protect their interests and ensure the dependence of local rulers.

3. Ideological states: which change the very soil in which corruption grows, so it does not arise in the first place.

We will examine each type separately.

First: Corruption from a tool of rule to a political environment

In this type of state, corruption is not discussed as a moral sin, but as a political choice and a structure of governance. These regimes rely on a delicate balance among multiple centers of power: military, economic, tribal, party-based, or sectarian. It is because they usually lack real institutional legitimacy, that they turn to corruption as a way to guarantee loyalty.

Seizing public funds, controlling contracts, and escaping accountability are allowed — but not for everyone. This “permission” is conditional on political loyalty. Corruption thus becomes a double-edged sword: a reward for loyalists, and a permanent means of blackmail, since their cases can be opened at any moment.

As for “anti-corruption campaigns” in these states, they are usually politicized from the start. They target individuals, not the system, and are used to settle domestic conflicts within the regime itself. These campaigns only mobilize when power balances change, when elites need to be reshuffled, or when warning messages must be sent to specific actors. In this way, fighting corruption becomes a purely political tool, not a genuine reform project.

In these countries, the relationship between the ruler and the ruled is not based on taxes and accountability, but on the distribution of spoils. Corruption is granted in the form of exclusive contracts, import monopolies, land and real estate, and positions distributed for plunder, based on loyalty, not competence. Sensitive institutions - the security and military apparatus, “the state’s stick” - are also given economic privileges and immunity from accountability, not because the regime overlooks this, but because its survival depends on keeping them satisfied.

When disputes arise within the ruling elite, corruption cases suddenly appear through carefully planned leaks. This confirms that the corruption was known and accepted from the outset, but the person’s position in the balance of power has changed. These regimes are often linked to a major power they depend on, and even in times of international conflict, individuals change, but the system does not.

This model represents most Arab countries, Latin America, parts of Asia, and most of Africa—that is, structurally dependent states.

The tragic part is that countries of the “Arab Spring,” or those that experienced regime change, mostly returned to their previous condition. It is as if no model is allowed in Muslim lands, except corruption as a tool of rule, and dependency as a fixed destiny - something the West is keen to maintain.

Corrupt regimes do not fall when corruption increases, but when the regime can no longer distribute spoils. When the network of loyalties collapses, and a force outside the system emerges that cannot be contained by corruption, dominant powers rush to ride the wave, and reproduce corruption with new faces - except in cases of real, radical change.

Second: Stable states

These are the major powers whose systems of ruling governance are based on the positive laws. Corruption exists in them, but it is a deviation **within** the system, not a tool **of** the system. In most of these countries, corruption is exposed and punished, and - at least in theory - there is no absolute political protection and no one is above the law.

However, this does not apply when major interests are at stake. In such cases, the system is bypassed through political money, powerful lobbies, and actors who stand above formal authority - the so-called “deep state.”

These states try to fight corruption without uprooting it. Corruption remains embedded within the positive laws itself, which is based on compromise solutions. At its core, this law legalizes multiple forms of corruption, under the label of “freedoms,” stemming from the capitalist ideology that separates religion from life and prioritizes the individual over society.

Today, we are witnessing the beginning of the decline of stable states as capitalism loses its meaning and international law becomes selective. These states were built on three interconnected pillars, all of which have begun to erode:

A regulated economy: now largely absent, with severe inflation, early signs of recession, and repeated financial crises - results of the capitalist ideology itself.

A domestic legal system regulating the relationship between state and society: where the gap has widened in unprecedented ways, enabling the rise of far-right extremist parties.

Commitment to international law: which has sharply declined - not only with respect to dependent states, but even among independent ones - especially under the global bullying practiced by the United States, which has relegated international law to its worst ever condition and state.

When states begin to lose their commitment to this system, they do not collapse suddenly. Instead, they enter a phase of slow deterioration, becoming states that are independent in name, fragile in substance, and functionally isolated.

Third: The ideological state

This is the state that changes the very soil in which corruption grows, so it does not arise in the first place. Such a state, in its complete form, does not exist on the international stage today - but there are those working to restore it. In the near future, by the Permission of Allah (swt), it will appear and show the world that the solution always lays in its existence.

It is the Khilafah (Caliphate) state, which adopts Islamic principles as its constitution. Islam is a rational creed from which a divine system emerges.

Islam does not allow corruption to exist at all - so how could it allow it to become a tool of governance? There is a clear difference between corruption occurring as a human error, and corruption being legalized or adopted by the regime.

In the Islamic ideology, corruption is a violation of Islamic Shariah Law for which a person will be held accountable in the Hereafter, and for which the state will hold them accountable in this world. Corruption is not limited to money; it includes oppression, the breaking of justice, consuming people's rights, and turning authority into personal spoils.

In Islam, authority is a trust, not a privilege. There is no such thing as "political corruption." The ruler — whether a Khaleefah (Caliph) or a waali (governor) — is questioned, held accountable, and removed if necessary.

Thus, the Islamic state does not claim immunity from human error, but it establishes a system of ruling governance that never reconciles with corruption. It is built on caring for people's affairs and applying divine Shariah rulings that regulate a person's relationship with themselves, with their Lord, and with others.

Once this method is adopted as a way of life, society becomes upright and justice spreads, because this Deen alone is capable of liberating people from servitude to other people to servitude to the Lord of people, and from the Dhulm (oppression) of man-made systems, to the justice and light of Islam.