

**The Salvation Army**  
**International Positional Statement**

**CORRUPTION**

**STATEMENT OF POSITION**

The Salvation Army strongly condemns corruption in its entirety.

The Salvation Army is aware of and abhors the suffering that individuals, groups and nations endure because of corrupt behaviour by people in positions of power and those entrusted with the management of public and private resources. It accepts responsibility to work towards the eradication of corruption whether individual, organisational or institutional, resulting in a more equitable environment for all concerned.

The Salvation Army is committed in addition to prevent, identify and eliminate internal corruption.

**BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

Corruption may be defined as giving, obtaining or denying advantage through means which are illegitimate, immoral and/or inconsistent with one's responsibility towards other people. Corruption is a global challenge, impacting to various degrees, and in various ways, societies around the world.<sup>[1]</sup>

Corruption is a generic term which includes such things as bribery, extortion, cronyism, and nepotism. It can also take the form of obstruction of justice. Corruption can take many forms that vary in degree from the minor use of influence to systemic, pervasive institutionalised bribery. 'Agent fees' can be a euphemism for another type of bribe, an amount that is paid above the normal fee to an agent who in turn uses it to bribe certain individuals or officials to facilitate the granting of a contract or other favours.

Corrupt practices are always immoral, but are frequently also illegal.

Corruption can be interpreted differently in different cultural settings. For example, gifts offered before, during and after some business transaction are considered in some cultures as a bribe or undue influence (an inducement) for the service provider to decide in favour of the client. In other cultural settings, the same gifts may be acceptable and even expected. 'Where systemic corruption exists, formal and informal rules are at odds with one another.'<sup>[2]</sup>

Corruption undermines good governance and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets and erodes the quality of life. It is a key element in economic under-performance and a major obstacle to poverty alleviation and development.[3] It hurts the poor disproportionately by diverting funds intended for development, discouraging investment and foreign aid for developing countries, undermining a government's ability to provide basic services, and generally feeding inequality and injustice.

Corruption goes against the tenets of justice, human dignity, empathy with the needy and the spirit of stewardship. It undermines people's confidence, trust and moral character. It disadvantages those who have no resources to pay for favours. Corruption destroys the integrity of all involved.

Although the precise impact of corruption is difficult to quantify, according to Transparency International more than one in four people around the globe in 2013 report having paid a bribe.[4] World Bank estimates state that US\$1 trillion is lost every year due to bribery alone.[5]

## **GROUNDS FOR THE POSITION OF THE SALVATION ARMY**

Corruption is contrary to the principles of stewardship and moral values as advocated in the Bible.

### **God ordains stewardship**

Humankind was ordained by God from the beginning to take care of the resources provided and use them wisely (Genesis 2:15). Jesus calls us to be faithful and wise stewards (Luke 12:42-48).

### **The Lord requires justice**

The Lord requires us to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with him (Micah 6:8). God condemns those 'who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless' (Isaiah 10:1-2 New International Version) (see also Deuteronomy 24:17).

In the New Testament, the first Christians provided a model of the just, loving and equitable community that God intends for people (Acts 4:32-35).

### **Stewardship involves authority, responsibility and accountability**

God intends all people to be accountable for their actions. According to biblical conviction, power and authority are always an avenue for service and responsible stewardship. This stewardship involves accountability, honesty and mutual control of power. [6]

### **Integrity demands transparency**

While corruption is often hidden, God calls us to live in the light and be transparent about our actions (John 3:20-21).

### **God defends the cause of poor and marginalised people**

God chastises those who engage in bribery and treat the poor unjustly (Isaiah 1: 21-25). The Lord condemns those who enrich themselves through dishonesty and cheating (Micah 6:10-13).

### **God warns against greed and the pursuit of riches**

The false idol of money is at the root of much corruption (1 Timothy 6:9-10; Luke 12:15). In Matthew 23:16-25 Jesus exposes the deceitfulness of the Pharisees whose focus is mainly on the wealth brought to the temple rather than the temple's spiritual aspect.

### **God calls us to personal, collective holiness**

God calls us to a life of holiness, both personally and collectively. The rejection of corruption is an important part of holiness (Psalm 15).

### **Jesus stood up to corruption**

Jesus' crucifixion was a result of political and religious corruption. His example can inspire people as they pay the cost of discipleship in standing up against corruption.

## **PRACTICAL RESPONSES**

1. In order to tackle corruption, action is needed both individually and collectively. The Salvation Army will work intentionally to increase transparency, accountability and good governance in its own organisation. The Salvation Army particularly charges its leaders to exemplify and encourage the highest levels of accountability and reject of all forms of corruption.
2. Existing Salvation Army policies, procedures, orders and regulations must be followed to prevent corruption, bribery, cronyism and nepotism. The Salvation Army will regularly review its systems to ensure the highest possible standards are being followed.
3. The Salvation Army will promote environments which are corruption-free and based firmly on values of justice and mercy.
4. The Salvation Army will not knowingly accept any donations coming from the proceeds of corruption.
5. The Salvation Army will aim to raise public awareness against corruption.
6. The Salvation Army calls upon all legislators in local, national and international jurisdictions to create laws and enforcement mechanisms which deter corruption.
7. The Salvation Army is willing to cooperate with legitimate organisations where this will expose corruption and free societies from it.

8. The Salvation Army, in training its officers, soldiers, employees and those participating in its programmes, will seek to bring understanding of the danger and insidious nature of corruption. One example of a practical response could be for Salvation Army schools or youth training camps to make Salvationist youth aware of the corrosive nature of corruption and encourage them to fight it. Other possible ways of combating corruption could be through the use of social media, radio, talk shows and church groups.
9. The Salvation Army will encourage Salvationists to use every possible opportunity to condemn corruption and advance its eradication. We will support people who expose corruption.

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**Approved by the General, November 2013**

The views expressed in this international positional statement constitute the official position of The Salvation Army on the issue addressed, and they may not be modified or adapted in any way without the express written permission of International Headquarters.

[1] Transparency International. Corruption Perceptions Index

[2] The World Bank. Helping Countries Combat Corruption – The Role of the World Bank, p11.

[3] United Nations. United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

[4] Deborah Hardoon & Finn Heinrich. Global Corruption Barometer 2013, p10.

[5] The World Bank. Six Questions on the Cost of Corruption.

[6] Christoph Stückelberger. Continue Fighting Corruption: Experiences and Tasks of Churches and Development Agencies, p38.