HumanRights and Public LibertiesReview
(H.R.P.L.R)

Vol° : 10 - N° : 02
An :2025
p.p : 66 - 89

High Authority for Transparency and the Prevention and Combat of Corruption between Constitutional Establishment and Legal Framework Manifestations

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Received: 21/10/2025 Accepted: 07/12/2025 Published: 22/12/2025

Abstract:

Algeria has progressively strengthened its anti-corruption framework, institutionalizing the National Authority for the Prevention and Fight against Corruption in 2006 and recognizing it constitutionally in 2016. A 2020 constitutional amendment replaced this body with the High Authority for Transparency and Anti-Corruption, granting it independence and expanded powers. Law No. 22-08 of 2022 further defined its organization and functions, consolidating its role as a constitutional institution dedicated to promoting transparency and accountability in public governance.

Keywords: High Authority; Transparency; National Authority; constitutional reform; Anti-Corruption.

1. INTRODUCTION

The progression of economic activities has inevitably led to the emergence of offenses that hinder development across political, social, cultural, and economic dimensions. Among

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these, corruption remains one of the most detrimental, as it undermines the effectiveness of public institutions and bodies, often leading to administrative paralysis, economic collapse, and, in some cases, social unrest and revolutions worldwide.

Like many other states, Algeria has taken an active stance in combating financial corruption, enacting relevant legislation and establishing dedicated oversight bodies.[1] At the core of these initiatives lies the High Authority for Transparency and Anti-Corruption, an institution established by the 2020 constitutional amendment under Chapter Four, entitled "Oversight Institutions." This body replaced the earlier anti-corruption authority formed under the 2016 constitutional reform and Law No. 06-01.

This study seeks to examine a key question: This research aims to address a central inquiry: what significance does the creation of the High Authority for Transparency and Anti-Corruption hold as the successor to the former National Authority, and in what manner is its legal framework structured, The importance of this study stems from the constitutional reform of 2020 and Law No. 22-08, which fundamentally restructured Algeria's anti-corruption framework. It aims to explore the legislative evolution that culminated in the creation of the High Authority for

[1]Abdelali Haj, *Legal Mechanisms for Combating Administrative Corruption in Algeria*, Doctorate of Science in Law, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Mohammed Khider University, Biskra, academic year 2012-2013, p. 108.

Transparency and Anti-Corruption, evaluate its operational effectiveness in combating financial misconduct, and examine its capacity to meet public expectations for enhanced accountability and the recovery of state assets.

Methodologically, the research employs an analytical and descriptive approach to examine the Authority's constitutional foundations, institutional structure, and functional performance.

The study is structured around two main themes: Institutional Overview and Legal Framework of the High Authority for Transparency and Anti-Corruption:

- High Authority for Transparency and Anti-Corruption – Institutional Overview and Key Features

- Legal Framework of the High Authority for Transparency and Anti-Corruption

2. High Authority for Transparency and Anti-Corruption – Institutional Overview and Key Features

The High Authority for Transparency and the Prevention and Combat of Corruption (HATPC) represents a key constitutional institution established under the most recent Algerian constitutional amendment. Examining its creation, distinct attributes, and the manner in which it diverges from its predecessor- the National Body for the Prevention and Fight against Corruption- requires addressing several key dimensions.

2.1 Institutional Transformation from the National Authority for the Prevention of Corruption to HATPC

The HATPC, succeeding the National Body for the Prevention of Corruption, reflects a pivotal institutional change reform introduced through the 2020 Algerian constitutional amendment. This development must be contextualized within the broader international and regional movement toward strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms, This development was significantly influenced by key international instruments on anti-corruption, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption, adopted by the General Assembly in New York on 31 October 2003, and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, adopted in Maputo on 11 July 2003.

In alignment with these international commitments, Algeria reinforced its domestic legal system by promulgating Law No. 06/01 of 20 February 2006,[2] addressing the prevention and suppression of corruption. This legislative framework was subsequently refined through amendments especially those included in Articles 17 to 24 of Chapter III.[3] which granted the national body a range of mainly advisory powers.[4] The internal organization and functional structure of

[2]Presidential Decree No. 06-137 dated April 10, 2006, ratifying the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, adopted in Maputo on July 11, 2003, Official Gazette No. 24, issued April 16, 2006.
[3]Official Gazette No. 14, issued March 8, 2006, as amended and supplemented.
[4]Ramzi Houhou and Loubna Danich, "The National Authority for the Prevention of Corruption and Combat," *Journal of Judicial Ijtihad*, Laboratory Impact of

the institution were later formalized through Presidential Decree No. 06/413, later modified and supplemented by Presidential Decree No. 12/64.[5]

Despite the early adoption of the pertinent legal and regulatory instruments, the actual operationalization of this body was deferred for nearly four years. Its constitutional entrenchment was later confirmed through the 2016 revision, under Chapter Three: Advisory Institutions, specifically in Articles 202 and 203, reaffirmed the existence of this body, largely reiterating the provisions already set forth in Law No. 06/01.[6]

Subsequently, with the 2020 constitutional amendment[7], Under Chapter Four, the constituent authority restructured the institution, establishing it as the HATPC: Control Institutions, as codified in Articles 204 and 205. This reform not only altered its nomenclature but also broadened its jurisdiction and competencies.

The reform process culminated in the promulgation of Law No. 22/08 of 5 May 2022, which precisely delineates the organization, composition, and authority of the High

Judicial Ijtihad on Legislative Movement, Volume 4, Issue 5, Mohammed Khider University, Biskra, 2009, pp. 71-79.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Jamal Doubi Bonoua, "The National Authority for the Prevention of Corruption and Combat as a Constitutional Mechanism for Combating Corruption in Algeria," *Journal of Rights and Political Sciences*, Issue 12, Abbas Laghrour University, Khenchela, 2019, pp. 30-46.

[7]Presidential Decree No. 06/413 dated November 22, 2006, Official Gazette No. 74, issued November 22, 2006.

Authority.[8] This legislation represents a significant evolution from the prior system, which had been governed primarily through regulatory decrees, marking a shift toward a more comprehensive and constitutionally grounded institution's structure.

2.2 Overview of the High Authority for Transparency and Anti-Corruption (HATPC)

The HATPC, an independent constitutional body tasked with enhancing transparency and addressing corruption, represents a significant institutional advancement in Algeria's institutional framework for governance and integrity.[9]

Article 204 of the 2020 constitutional amendment in Algeria formally recognized this body as an independent institution, succeeding the earlier National Authority for the Prevention and Fight against Corruption. The amendment introduced significant modifications to its designation and mandate compared to Article 202 of the former constitutional framework, which had defined the previous body as an autonomous administrative entity operating under the authority of the President of the Republic.

[8] Law No. 22/08 of 5 May 2022, which precisely delineates the organization, composition, and authority of the High Authority, *Official Gazette of the Algerian Republic*, No. 32, 14 May 2022.

[9] Gharbi, Ahsan. "The High Authority for Transparency, Prevention, and Fight against Corruption in Light of the 2020 Constitutional Amendment." *Journal of Research* vol. 6, no. 1 (2021): 687–707.

The authority's autonomy is primarily ensured through the swearing-in of its members and staff, and by the protection granted to them against any form of pressure, intimidation, or assault while performing their duties. Prior to the 2020 reform, Law No. 06/01 had already defined the institution as an independent administrative body with legal personality and financial autonomy, as provided under Article 18

It is an independent administrative body, endowed with legal personality and financial autonomy, operating under the authority of the President of the Republic.

The 2020 constitutional revision brought both conceptual and structural changes, omitting the previous explicit mention of autonomy and replacing it with a general constitutional principle. The implementing framework was later set by Law No. 22/08, which defines the High Authority as an independent body with legal personality and financial and administrative autonomy. This legislative approach represents a deliberate broadening of institutional flexibility, allowing for greater adaptability in defining the Authority's competencies, structure, and operational modalities through ordinary law rather than rigid constitutional prescription.

2.3 Characteristics of the (HATPC)

The HATPC stands out from the former National Authority for the Prevention of Corruption through several institutional and functional distinctions. These elements illustrate the institutional development envisaged by the 2020 constitutional amendment and may be summarized as follows:

1. Institutional Independence

A defining feature of the High Authority lies in its constitutional recognition as an autonomous entity. The 2020 amendment elevated its status by replacing the term "national authority" with "high authority," thereby granting it enhanced institutional prominence within Algeria's constitutional order. This transformation also shifted its functional role from a predominantly advisory body- as prescribed in earlier frameworks- to one with substantive and operational authority in the national anti-corruption system.[10] While Article 202 of the 2016 constitutional amendment positioned the National Authority under the supervision of the President of the Republic, Article 204 of the 2020 amendment reconstituted the High Authority as an independent institution.[11]

Institutional independence is reinforced through members' secure mandates, transparent selection procedures, and effective insulation from political influence, together with the staff's oath of office and the legal safeguards that protect them from any form of pressure or interference. These measures collectively ensure impartiality and integrity in the Authority's oversight functions.[12]

2. Removal from Presidential Subordination

[10]Law No. 16/01 dated March 6, 2016, Official Gazette No. 44, issued August 10, 2016.

[11]Presidential Decree No. 20/442 dated December 30, 2020, regarding the constitutional amendment approved in the referendum of November 1, 2020, Official Gazette No. 82, issued December 30, 2020.

[12]Presidential Decree No. 14-249 dated September 8, 2014, ratifying the Arab Convention Against Corruption drafted in Cairo on December 21, 2010, Official Gazette No. 54, issued September 21, 2021.

A further distinguishing feature of the High Authority lies in its institutional detachment from the Presidency. While Article 202 of the 2016 amendment explicitly placed the former National Authority under the authority of the President of the Republic[13], Article 204 of the 2020 amendment, by contrast, no longer includes such a hierarchical link. This deliberate omission reflects a constitutional intent to fortify the independence of the new institution and to insulate it from potential executive influence.

The reform thus embodies a clear departure from hierarchical subordination, ensuring that the High Authority operates as an autonomous regulatory actor within Algeria's constitutional structure.

3. Classification as a Regulatory Institution

Another significant development is the reclassification of the body as a regulatory institution. Under Chapter Four of the 2020 constitutional amendment, the High Authority is explicitly categorized among the "Institutions of Control," which perform regulatory and supervisory functions. This marks a conceptual and functional evolution from the 2016 framework, in which the National Authority was merely a consultative body. The new designation underscores the Authority's enhanced mandate not only to advise but also to monitor, evaluate, and enforce transparency and integrity measures within public administration.

3. Title: Legal Framework of the High Authority for Transparency and Anti-Corruption

[13]Official Gazette No. 32, issued May 14, 2022.

To grasp the legal framework regulating the HATPC, it is essential to consider its institutional setup and core functions, as well as the main distinctions that set it apart from the former National Authority for the Prevention of Corruption.

3.1 Organizational Framework and Composition of the HATPC

The HATPC holds constitutional recognition as an independent entity possessing legal personality, along with financial and administrative autonomy.[14] Headquartered in Algiers, it plays a central role within the national institutional system. Understanding its structure thus entails examining both its internal organization and administrative hierarchy. Under Article 205 of the 2020 Constitution, ordinary legislation is entrusted with specifying the Authority's structure, composition, and prerogatives. This constitutional delegation led to the enactment of Law No. 22/08, which operationalizes the framework and functions of the HATPC.

This law explicitly repealed all conflicting provisions, including those contained in Articles 17 to 24 of Law No. 06/01, which had governed the former National Authority for the Prevention and Combat of Corruption. The new legal framework thus introduced a revised organizational structure, establishing the High Authority as consisting of two principal organs:

1. The President of the High Authority, and

[14]Ibid., Article 39.

2. The Council of the High Authority.

A detailed discussion of the Authority's structure necessarily involves outlining the composition and membership of these components. The President serves as the head of the institution, while the Council functions as a collegial body responsible for oversight, evaluation, and strategic direction. In contrast to the former National Authority, the Council's structure under the new regime demonstrates a broader and more formalized governance model. For reference, Article 5 of Presidential Decree No. 06/413[15] which regulated the former authority and stipulated that:

The Authority includes a Monitoring and Evaluation Council composed of a president and six members appointed by presidential **decree** for a term of five years, renewable once. The terms of these members conclude in the same manner.

The High Authority's current composition under Law No. 22/08 represents an institutional evolution, ensuring a more transparent, accountable, and autonomous framework for decision-making and anti-corruption oversight, aligning with the constitutional spirit of the 2020 amendment.

3.2 The Specific Roles within the High Authority

The legal framework set forth by Law No. 22/08 provides a detailed outline of the internal composition and operational roles of the HATPC, which is organized into several principal components, as follows:

[15]Ibid., Article 41.

A. President of the High Authority

Article 21 of Law No. 22/08 stipulates that the President of the HATPC is appointed by the Head of State for a five-year renewable term. The role is incompatible with any elected mandate, public employment, or professional occupation, a safeguard intended to preserve the officeholder's independence and neutrality. Article 22 of the same law designates the President of the HATPC as its legal representative, vested with essential strategic, administrative, and oversight responsibilities Designing and implementing the national framework for transparency and anti-corruption, ensuring its effective execution across all relevant sectors:

- Preparing the annual operational plan and drafting the internal regulations governing the Authority's activities.
- Exercising full administrative supervision over the Authority's personnel and proposing the employment statute applicable to them.
- Supervises the planning and conduct of the Council's sessions and related activities.
- Formulates the draft annual budget and compiles the activity report, whichupon the Council's approval are transmitted to the President of the Republic.
- Referring matters that may entail criminal liability to the competent regional public prosecutor, while transmitting those related to administrative or financial misconduct to the President of the Court of Accounts.

- Promoting mutual cooperation and the exchange of relevant information with international and regional entities engaged in anti-corruption efforts.
- Ensuring that the Council remains duly apprised of all communications received and the follow-up measures subsequently undertaken.
- Acting as the principal financial authority entrusted with authorizing and supervising the expenditure of the Authority's funds.[16]

B. Council of the High Authority

The Council serves as the main decision-making body of the High Authority. It is led by the President of the High Authority and includes twelve members, each appointed by presidential decree for a single five-year term, in accordance with Article 26 of Law No. 22/08. The Council's composition is as follows:

- Three national figures designated by the President of the Republic.
- Three judges representing the Supreme Court, the Council of State, and the Court of Accounts, each selected by their respective judicial councils.
- Three independent experts, recognized for their competence in legal, financial, or anti-corruption matters, appointed respectively by the Presidents of the two parliamentary chambers and the Prime Minister.
- Three civil society representatives, appointed by the President of the National Observatory of Civil Society,

[16]Ibid., Article 42.

chosen for their active engagement in promoting transparency and combating corruption.

The President and Council members are fully equipped to perform their duties and are legally safeguarded against defamation or attacks related to their official functions, threats, or assaults arising in connection with the exercise of their functions under the Authority's mandateThe Council is entrusted with significant powers, including:

- Reviewing and approving the national transparency and anti-corruption strategy.
- Assessing and endorsing the annual action plan.
- plan proposed by the President.
- Issuing directives and recommendations to public institutions and agencies in cases of integrity violations.
- Approving the High Authority's annual budget and internal rules.
- Reviewing corruption-related cases submitted by the President.
- Providing advisory opinions to the government, parliament, or any other entity within its competence.
- Approving the annual activity report of the High Authority.
- Evaluating international cooperation projects related to anti-corruption and transparency.

C. Specialized Structure for Administrative and Financial Investigations into Unlawful Enrichment

The High Authority is supported by a specialized investigative unit tasked with examining cases of illicit enrichment by public officials. Operating under the Authority's supervision, this unit may be complemented by additional administrative or financial divisions established by regulatory decree, thus promoting technical and procedural efficiency in investigative activities.

D. Council Secretariat Office

The Secretariat, headed by the Secretary-General of the High Authority, ensures the administrative and logistical coordination of the Council's operations, maintains official records, and ensures the implementation of decisions adopted by the Council and its President.

E. Task-Specific Committees

The Council can form special committees to support specific tasks, based on a proposal from the President of the High Authority. The composition, conditions, and procedures governing these committees are determined by the internal regulations of the High Authority. Such committees serve to enhance the institution's operational capacity, particularly in technical, legal, or financial domains.

This organizational framework demonstrates a marked institutional sophistication compared to the previous system. It emphasizes collegial governance, legal autonomy, and procedural transparency, ensuring that the High Authority functions not merely as an advisory institution but as a central regulatory actor within Algeria's broader integrity and anti-corruption structure.

3.3 Tasks and Powers of the (HATPC)

According to Article 205 of the Algerian Constitutional Amendment, the HATPC is entrusted with a comprehensive set of missions and powers aimed at promoting integrity in public life and combating corrupt practices. Its key functions include:

Developing a national strategy focused on transparency, corruption prevention, and anti-corruption initiatives, while ensuring its proper implementation and continuous oversight.

Collecting, analyzing, and sharing information within its scope, making relevant data accessible to authorized state institutions.

Reporting identified violations to the Court of Accounts and relevant judicial authorities, and providing guidance to the institutions involved or agencies when deemed necessary.

Contributing to the capacity building of civil society organizations and other stakeholders engaged in anti-corruption activities.

Promoting and institutionalizing a culture of transparency, ethical conduct, and prevention of corruption within both public and private sectors.

Providing advisory opinions on draft legal and regulatory texts related to transparency and anti-corruption.

Participating in the training and professional development of officers and agents working in anti-corruption and transparency bodies. Supporting promoting ethical

governance by strengthening integrity, transparency, sound management, and anti-corruption measures across all public institutions.

Law No. 22/08 further elaborates on these constitutional responsibilities, granting the High Authority broader and more robust powers under Articles 4 to 15.[17] These provisions mark a significant institutional advancement in comparison with the previous National Authority for Combating Corruption, established under Article 203 of the 2016 law Constitutional Amendment and Article 20 of Law No. 06/01.

The expanded jurisdiction of the High Authority illustrates its dual nature as both a regulatory and an advisory-educational institution.[18] It acts not merely as a body for oversight but also as a platform for policy development, a source of legal guidance, and a repository of information concerning transparency and anti-corruption initiatives.

A particularly noteworthy evolution lies in the exclusive constitutional prerogative granted to the High Authority to formulate and supervise the national anti-corruption strategy, a function that its predecessor lacked. This enhancement underscores the legislature's intent to endow the High Authority with a more strategic and proactive role in coordinating national efforts against corruption.

[17]Ibid., Article 5: "The High Authority conducts administrative and financial investigations into manifestations of illicit enrichment among public officials who cannot justify a significant increase in their financial estate."
[18]Masouda Amara, "The National Authority for the Prevention of Corruption and Combat between Institutional Necessity and Limited Competencies," Annals of the University of Algiers, Volume 32, Issue 2, pp. 419-421.

Furthermore, the High Authority is vested with the power to issue formal instructions and recommendations to relevant public institutions and administrative bodies, thereby strengthening its regulatory authority.[19] Nevertheless, it lacks autonomous sanctioning power; any potential punitive measures must be pursued through the judicial system.[20]

In addition, the governing law requires the High Authority to compile and publish an annual report detailing its activities, findings, and initiatives.[21] The report is submitted to the President and made publicly available to ensure accountability and transparency and the dissemination of anti-corruption progress within Algerian governance. [22]

[19]See Article 12 of Law No. 22/08: "When the High Authority encounters facts that may be criminally described, it notifies the competent regional public prosecutor. It notifies the Court of Accounts if it encounters acts within its jurisdiction. The High Authority provides the notifying entity with all documents and information related to the subject of the notification."

[20]See Article 9 of Law No. 22/08: "The High Authority, when it observes, either on its own or after being informed or notified, a violation of the quality and effectiveness of procedures applied within public bodies, associations, and institutions related to the prevention and detection of acts of corruption, issues recommendations for taking measures to address these violations within a specified deadline. The relevant institutions and bodies must submit a report to the High Authority regarding compliance with these recommendations. In cases of non-response or inadequate response, the High Authority issues an order to the institution or body concerned to implement the recommendations within a period not exceeding one year."

[21]Ibid., Article 10: "In the event of non-compliance with the order, the High Authority notifies the relevant competent authorities, as defined by regulation, to take appropriate measures."

[22]Ahmed Amiri,“ Moralization of Public Life and the Promotion of Transparency Principles pursuant to the 2020 Constitutional Amendment – The High Authority

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the 2020 Algerian constitutional amendment transformed the former National Authority for the Prevention of Corruption into the HATPC, which now functions as an independent constitutional regulatory body, free from the oversight of any other governmental body. It represents a pioneering mechanism designed to promote transparency, strengthen integrity, and institutionalize the principles of good governance while effectively preventing and combating corruption.

The enhanced powers vested in this institution are intended to enable it to carry out its mandate with greater efficacy and to serve as a central actor in Algeria's anti-corruption framework. Its success will depend on the effective implementation of its duties, full utilization of its constitutional and legislative authorities, and the establishment of strong institutional practices.

To further consolidate the High Authority's role and effectiveness, the following strategic recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthening Institutional Independence:

- Explore the option of selecting the President of the High Authority through an internal voting process instead of a direct presidential appointment, to ensure independence and impartial decision-making.

for Transparency, Prevention and Fight against Corruption as a Model," Journal of Research in Law and Political Science, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2021. pp. 71-72.

- Implement additional protective measures to shield members from political or institutional pressure while performing their duties.

2. Expanding Deterrent and Enforcement Powers:

- Empower the Authority to impose administrative sanctions directly on violators within public institutions, while continuing to refer criminal cases to the judicial system.
- Authorize the High Authority to issue binding directives to relevant agencies to ensure compliance with anti-corruption measures.

3. Enhancing Transparency and Accountability:

- Require the High Authority to publish a comprehensive annual report detailing investigations, outcomes, and actions taken, making it accessible to the public to reinforce accountability.
- Develop an open-access digital platform to share updates on institutional measures, promote transparency, and receive citizen feedback.

4. Building Institutional and Human Capacity:

- Organize continuous professional development and training programs for the High Authority's members and staff on best practices in anti-corruption, financial, and administrative investigations.

- Strengthen cooperation with international anti-corruption organizations to adopt global best practices and adapt them to the national context.

5. Promoting Civil Society Engagement:

- Actively involve civil society organizations and NGOs in monitoring the implementation of national transparency and anti-corruption strategies.
- Conduct public awareness campaigns to foster a culture of integrity, ethics, and accountability across both government institutions and society at large.
- By implementing these measures, the High Authority can effectively consolidate its regulatory, advisory, and educational roles, ensuring that it operates with independence, authority, and efficacy in advancing Algeria's national anti-corruption objectives.

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