Transparency International Anti-Corruption Helpdesk Answer

Lessons learned from anti-corruption interventions in the policing sector in Asia

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This paper looks at evidence from police reforms in Asia to distill lessons learned. Successful interventions against police corruption in Asia have generally worked when they are comprehensive, systemic and address both the incentives and opportunities that enable corruption in the police. Successful anti-corruption reforms in the police have involved a combination of establishing independent accountability and anti-corruption mechanisms with the power to sanction misconduct and corruption, addressing economic drivers of police corruption and establishing trust-building measures.

Query

Please provide an overview of successful anti-corruption interventions in the policing sector in Asia.

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Introduction

Police corruption is a serious concern, both globally and in Asia. Twenty-six per cent of respondents in the Global Corruption Barometer 2020 for Asia, for instance, believed that "most or all" police officers are corrupt (Transparency International 2020: 14), while 28 per cent of those questioned stated they have "little or no" trust in the police (Transparency International 2020: 17).

According to the same survey, 23 per cent of citizens in Asia have paid a bribe to the police within the last 12 months (Transparency International 2020: 22). These figures were especially high in Taiwan, Thailand and India, where 67 per cent, 47 per cent and 42 per cent of respondents respectively had paid a bribe to a police officer in the last 12 months.

These numbers are reflective not just of Asian trends but a global issue. In Africa, the Americas and Europe, the police force is consistently viewed by the public as one of the least trustworthy institutions. Only 33 per cent of respondents in the Latin American Global Corruption Barometer

Main points

— Interventions against police corruption are most likely to be effective when they are viewed as comprehensive efforts and focus on both the system-wide drivers and individual level incentives for corruption in the police force.

— Money matters to police corruption. Salaries and inadequate funding for the operational budget are important economic incentives for police corruption across various countries in Asia.

— Interventions have been most successful when they have been driven by independent mechanisms such as an anti-corruption institution.

— Public participation is central to addressing police corruption, and public expectations can both contribute to increasing or reducing corruption.

(Transparency International 2019a) express confidence in the police, and 45 per cent report believing that most or all police officers are corrupt. Similarly, across Africa, police is considered the most corrupt institution with 47 per cent of respondents in the Global Corruption Barometer for Africa believing most or all police officers are corrupt (Transparency International 2019b).

While all forms of corruption have severe social, economic and political impacts, police corruption in particular can put the extent to which the police

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operates on behalf of the public and society into question. Police corruption weakens the rule of law and sets in motion a negative spiral of reduced legitimacy, falling levels of trust and impunity for those who break the law (Lee-Jones 2018:2). Police corruption also results in weakening governance in general and exacerbates fragility, as a weak rule of law may attract organisations and networks that benefit from transnational criminal flows and illicit markets (Lee-Jones 2018:3; Kemp and Shaw 2020). Furthermore, police corruption can feed social fragmentation and contribute to marginalisation of already deprived communities (Kemp and Shaw 2020).

Particularly in recent years, debates over police accountability, legitimacy, corruption and violence have come to be prominent in numerous countries across the globe. Police violence in America has taken much of the spotlight internationally, but debates have also raged in many countries in Asia.

In Malaysia, where 10 per cent of the population report believing most or all police officers to be corrupt (Transparency International 2020: 44), civil society has long worked towards establishing better accountability mechanisms for law enforcement. To promote and ensure police transparency, Malaysia's government introduced the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) bill in 2019. The IPCMC bill was meant to introduce new integrity mechanisms, enhance external oversight and improve disciplinary control over the police (Amnesty International 2020). However, the bill was met with significant resistance from the police, and was replaced in 2020 by a significantly weaker bill: the Independent Police Conduct Commission (IPCC) (Free Malaysia Today 2020).

Another country that is currently experiencing great social upheaval and a lively debate around police accountability is Thailand (AP 2021). In January 2021, Thailand's deputy prime minister announced that the government was drafting a police reform bill to improve transparency in policing. The bill, as things currently stand, could see Thailand's police personnel management policies overseen by a committee with at least some external members and also introduce some sort of public evaluation mechanism of the police

force (Bangkok Post 2021). However, allegations of serious corruption persist as commentators fear that attempts to reform the police are stalling due to a lack of political will in the country as it emerges from military rule (Chambers 2021).

The Philippines is also witnessing intense debate around police accountability, corruption and violence. These concerns reached new heights in December 2020, following the shooting of a mother and son by an off-duty police officer (Portugal 2020). The tragedy is just one event in a long saga about escalating violence in the Philippines, in the context of an intensifying war on drugs that has dramatically expanded opportunities for predatory forms of policing, as well as executive interference in law enforcement (Jensen and Hapal 2018).

A critical point in the academic literature on police corruption is that there is no simple, uni-causal fix to tackle police corruption and misconduct. The police are a product of the society and political system that they operate in (Albrecht and Nielsen 2020). For instance, in many former colonies, the structure of the police reflects their origins as an agent of a state apparatus whose primary aim was to extract financial wealth (Albrecht and Nielsen 2020). Successful police reforms thus tend to be a more comprehensive institution building process that reflects that corruption in the police may exist for more than one reason.

Attempts to implement interventions focusing only on one driver of police corruption have often failed. For instance attempts to "defund" the police (something that is also called for in Asia, see Cogan 2020) have yielded a number of adverse effects in other geographical contexts (Albrecht and Nielsen 2020). Experiences from West Africa show that reform attempts, such as defunding initiatives, do not improve the lived experiences of police officers, improve their financial conditions, reduce incentives for corruption or improve relations between police and community (Albrrecht and Nielsen 2020). Another example of a simple intervention with limited chance of success would be to raise the wages of police (indeed an important step in many contexts) without also taking steps to enhance police accountability in other ways (Foltz and Opoku-Agyemang 2015).

Another unfortunate lesson comes from decades of interventions in the area of security sector reform (SSR), where a number of interventions have ended up fuelling corruption (Eckhard 2016: 23). Corruption risks are particularly high for SSR programmes that focus on building functional capacity and have limited focus on reforming the institutional setup or increasing accountability (Eckhard 2016: 23). For instance, increased funding can be diverted away from its intended use as has been the case with so-called ghost soldiers in Afghanistan or with the systems of "rapportage" that plague the Democratic Republic of the Congo's security sector.

The police are embedded into a wider network of institutions, and police corruption has multiple (co-existing and overlapping) drivers. This could be one of the reasons why interventions in the security sector and the police specifically have often proven challenging (ISSAT 2020). SSR has indeed proven one of the most complex forms of interventions in developing countries, and the majority of recent donor-led attempts to build internal security forces that are more responsive and accountable to community needs have had limited success (ISSAT 2020:3).

That said, there have also been successful donor-led and donor-supported interventions, notably in enhancing the legitimacy and bottom-up accountability of police forces in other ways (ISSAT 2020). This often includes a form of structured dialogue between security forces, such as the police and civilians. For instance, a number of programmes have successfully enhanced citizen participation in policing and law enforcement matters. In Ecuador, citizen observatories, known as Veedurias, have enhanced the say of civil society in security related matters, and civilians participate in so-called local security councils that help define local priorities (ISSAT 2020:5).

Furthermore, while experience from countries such as Singapore and Hong Kong (both discussed later) is that rooting out corruption in the police may be a lengthy process, progress is possible in a shorter time span. Two good examples of this are presented by the Georgian experience (see Lee-Jones 2018) and the

Solomon Islands (which is also discussed later in this paper).

Causes of police corruption

There are a number of theories that attempt to explain police corruption and why it is often (perceived to be) more widespread than corruption in other sectors and institutions. One hypothesis, the so-called invitational edge-theory, contends that police officers find themselves having to navigate the threshold between legality and illegality much more frequently than other professions. Police officers' proximity to the lucrative world of crime and their relative position of power will often put them in positions that involve more opportunities for corruption as well as discretion over the use of their power (Buttle et al. 2016: 6).

Another theory for why police corruption occurs is the so-called slippery slope theory, which states that police corruption often starts out relatively small scale, but then, over time, escalates into more systematic forms of corruption. For instance, a police officer may start their career accepting tea or coffee, later accept smaller gifts and then, at some point, bribes. As this happens, the self-identity of an officer also changes and the corrupt officer may start reflecting on themselves not merely as a public protector and servant but as someone who actually accepts graft and criminality (Buttle et al 2016: 7). Alternatively, the slippery slope model could also be used when criminals obtain more leverage over law enforcement by making them engage in acts of corruption whose nature escalates over time.

Yet another theory is more cultural and focuses on "police culture". Police officers tend to form strong social bonds of camaraderie with each other. The intra-organisational solidarity and high levels of loyalty that police work often fosters could potentially result in a culture where protecting one's colleagues is paramount. Many police forces may thus end up being silent about, or even protecting, their colleagues' corrupt practices out of a sense of solidarity and loyalty (Buttle et al. 2016: 7).

Another hypothesis, the theory of predatory policing, highlights more financial and systemic forms of police corruption in which police officers are concerned with extracting financial resources from their constituents. Predatory policing tends to be more common in countries with more systemic forms of corruption. In such cases, police officers do not always receive adequate salaries and the police department may not always have the needed operational budget (Buttle et al. 2016: 8). In many countries, profits from acts of petty corruption are funnelled up the chain of command. In such cases, bribery and petty corruption are not simply commonly occurring, isolated incidents but a symptom of a wider systemic corruption inside the police force.

Finally, some authors discuss so-called noble cause corruption, in which officers use extra-legal or corrupt means as part of their law enforcement efforts (see Crank and Caldero 2000; Crank, Flaherty and Giacomazzi 2007).

The dynamics described above likely all hold true to different extents in different settings. Regardless of the specific corruption risk factors for police forces in different contexts, it is clear that police forces tend to reflect the institutional, political, social and economic landscape of their country (Buttle et al. 2016: 13; Albrechtsen and Nielsen 2020).

In fact, some of the best indicators of police corruption at a societal level are social in nature. According to Gutierrez-Garcia and Rodriguez (2016: 16), social indicators such as male schooling, women's employment and other human development indicators are among the best quantitative determinants of police corruption.

Incentives and enablers of police corruption

In a comparative study of police corruption in Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, Quah (2020) identifies and measures the performance of these countries against five variables of police corruption. These are:

i) low salaries
ii) excessive bureaucracy
iii) meritocracy

iv) police accountability
v) strength of national anti-corruption institutional infrastructure

In addition to these, it is also worth mentioning another common driver of police corruption in Asia: inadequate operational budgets.

An important incentive for police corruption is low police salaries. Petty corruption in the police is often a coping strategy for low wages (Quah 2020: 200; Malik and Qureshi 2020). While police officers in countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines have seen their wages rise, wages still hover just above the "starvation level" and, in many cases, officers perceive a need to raise extra funds somewhere to sustain a desired standard of living (Quah 2020: 200).

Japanese and South Korean police officers receive a wage that affords a decent – though by no means glamorous – quality of life. Both Japan and South Korea, Quah argues, used to struggle with much higher rates of police corruption. For instance, at the beginning of the 1990s, South Korea had a relatively high rate of bribery in policing. However, the police budget has grown alongside South Korea's rapidly expanding economy, which has coincided with substantially decreased rates of bribery (Quah 2020: 200).

The argument that, all else being equal, low wages help drive police corruption is backed up by other studies. A study of police corruption in Pakistan finds that low wages are one of the most important drivers of police corruption (Malik and Qureshi 2020).

Using global data on the relationship between wages and corruption, economists Cornell and Sundell (2019) find that there is a robust statistical relationship between higher civil servant wages and lower levels of corruption as well as a weaker (but still statistically significant) one between lower-than-average civil service wages and higher levels of corruption.

However, the evidence is not uniformly in favour of increasing police officers' salaries. An experimental economic study from Ghana found that increasing salaries of police officers did not have any significant positive effect on those

officers bribe-taking and that officers who received pay increases demanded fewer but bigger bribes (Foltz and Opoku-Agyemang 2015: 24). These results, however, could potentially be explained by the fact that salary increases were not followed by a parallel increase in anti-corruption efforts (Foltz and Opoku-Agyemang 2015: 25).

Evidence from the health sector likewise suggests that raising salaries alone is insufficient to reduce petty corruption; better paid health workers often display a higher proclivity to corrupt practices than their colleagues whose salaries are lower (Transparency International 2019c). A lack of accountability and supervision, limited consequences for corrupt officers, low morale and poor incentive structures appear to be often more relevant variables than salaries in explaining levels of police corruption (Pyman 2012; Newburn 2015; Quah 2007).

A related but less discussed potential driver of police corruption in Asia is the inadequate budget of many police forces across the region. In some Asian countries, police forces reportedly do not engage in corruption solely for private gain but to fund operational expenses involved in police work, such as utility bills and fuel (Malik and Qureshi 2020: 8; Buttle et al. 2016). In such cases, Malik and Qureshi (2020) contend that bribery constitutes a means of funding police work and may therefore have an element of "noble cause" corruption to it.

Excessive bureaucracy is also believed to create opportunities for police corruption as excessive red tape enables a range of corrupt behaviours across the various layers of the state apparatus (Quah 2020). This, too, is the case in the police, as police officers with considerable discretion may choose for their own advantage to speed up, slow down or manipulate bureaucratic processes such as issuing licences and identity documents or processing complaints. Quah (2020) argues that excessive red tape has been an important permissive condition for bureaucratic corruption in the Philippines and Indonesia, and that bureaucratic procedures are often used to extort bribes from citizens. Japan and South Korea, meanwhile, have attempted to reduce the unnecessary bureaucratic procedures that could

be used by police officers to solicit bribes or are vulnerable to bureaucratic corruption (Quah 2020).

A number of important enablers of police corruption originate from the institutional culture and personnel policies. One of the chief issues in many police forces in Asia is a lack of meritocratic procedures (Quah 2020). Most former colonial powers with territories in Asia were not concerned with establishing merit-based recruitment criteria, setting the basis for a more nepotistic institutional culture. The Dutch Empire, for instance, had a dual civil service in the colonies, where the "native" civil servants were chosen on the basis of their family background rather than their skills (Quah 2020).

In the post-colonial period, patronage often continued to trump skills and education in the civil service and, consequently, the police. Today, there are still many gaps in the implementation of police-wide standards and criteria when it comes to evaluating potential candidates for recruitment or promotion. In Indonesia, for instance, bribes continue to be a key means of securing positions, and many job postings are reportedly auctioned off to the highest bidder (Quah 2020). In the Philippines, there is an independent commission responsible for police recruitment, but Quah (2020) reports that is frequently subject to political pressure or bribery. Conversely, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea appear to have installed much more rigid and competitive recruitment processes. Another source of divergence is the actual level of training, which is significantly longer in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea than in Indonesia or the Philippines (Quah 2020).

The lack of accountability mechanisms for police officers is another important facilitator of police corruption (Quah 2020). The ability to enforce rules, sanction non-compliance and discipline civil servants plays a major role in addressing police related corruption (Lee-Jones 2018). On the other hand, a lack of disciplinary control and sanctioning capacities in the state apparatus can make police corruption a low-risk, high reward undertaking for unscrupulous officers (Quah 2020: 206).

A comparative study from 1999 found that civil servants in Hong Kong were 33 times more likely to be prosecuted than civil servants in the Philippines (Quah 2020: 206). This is not because

civil servants are more corrupt in Hong Kong than in the Philippines but that the risk of detection and prosecution is greater. It is in this area of establishing robust, independent accountability mechanisms that many Asian countries fall short; none of the Asian countries assessed by Quah (2020) fare well when it comes to actually implementing independent institutions for investigating, enforcing and prosecuting police corruption or misconduct.

Finally, the absence of a strong national anti-corruption institutional infrastructure can also allow police corruption to go unchecked. Strong national integrity systems, including a specialised anti-corruption agency/commission, politically independent judicial institutions, an auditor or comptroller general and other bodies such as a financial intelligence unit and financial regulatory authority form part of the integrity ecosystem needed to prevent and sanction police corruption (Quah 2020: 209).

Strategies for addressing police corruption in Asia

Ultimately, what is clear from the discussion above is that no one-dimensional intervention alone is a panacea to police corruption, rather a more holistic approach is needed. The next section turns to consider some potential ingredients of success.

Political will and national ownership

Addressing police corruption is a multi-dimensional endeavour and requires sustained political will (Ngich and Cho 2020; Lee-Jones 2018: 4). In many instances, police corruption serves specific political interests. Particularly in these cases, addressing police corruption without also addressing its political drivers may be unlikely to succeed. Every security sector reform attempt will produce both winners and losers (Eckhard 2016: 7). In countries with autocratic or authoritarian regimes in particular, SSR can be regarded as a challenge to the status quo. For instance, by losing control over security sector institutions (such as the police), an authoritarian government could worry that it may lose a seemingly important method of repression or a shield from

accountability (Eckhard 2016: 7). Indeed, in many parts of Asia, the police have been politicised and, in the South Asian countries, for example, it is common that police officials are parts of political patronage networks and high-ranking police officials may even be members of political parties (Malik and Qureshi 2020:11).

As a result, buy-in and political leadership can be limited, restricting the space for security sector reform, such as police interventions, and lending even greater importance to civil society involvement in incrementally creating momentum for reform (Eckhard 2016: 8). In the past, organisations working on security sector reform have had some success in raising the SSR agenda in regional organisations and creating regional guidelines on security sector governance (Eckhard 2016: 35). In West Africa, for instance, civil society actors that advocate for anti-corruption and accountability reform have used key documents written in the Economic Community of West African States as normative frameworks to hold its leadership to account for security sector reform (Eckhard 2016: 35).

Institutional anti-corruption reform

Successful police reform needs an anti-corruption institutional framework capable of investigating, prosecuting, preventing and raising awareness to corruption, both in the police and society more widely (Ngich and Cho 2020). As will be explored more in-depth, countries that have had success in countering police corruption have often adopted a two-pronged approach that includes both comprehensive, society-wide measures as well as police-specific anti-corruption interventions. Independent oversight mechanisms and institutions that are capable of sanctioning police officers' misconduct are considered essential (Lee-Jones 2018 4-6).

Public participation

Public participation is an indispensable element of successful police reform. This requires installing safe and confident reporting mechanisms for civilians to report police corruption. It also requires establishing channels that allows the police to consult with civil society to ensure that the needs

of the policed communities are taken into account (Lee-Jones 2018: 6-7; Ngich and Cho 2020).

According to the USAID (2020:1) and the ISSAT (2020:5), civilian-police partnerships are one of the most promising ways of securing increased public participation and improving police accountability. Such partnerships can be a mechanism for direct interaction between civilians and police, giving civilians an avenue to influence police priorities and generally improving communication (USAID 2020: 1, 17).

USAID mentions three Asian cases in which such partnerships have been implemented: one in Nepal, one in Papua New Guinea and one in the Philippines. The programme in Nepal was positively reviewed, particularly because it enabled increased positive interaction and dialogue between younger segments of the population and the police. The programme in the Philippines, on the other hand, found that the civilian-police partnerships ended up fuelling the exclusion of marginalised groups (USAID 2020: 16). The primary reason for this was that access to law enforcement services already relied on social connectedness and that embedding police officers more in the community tended to strengthen these dynamics.

Internal reforms and changes to human resource management policies and training

When it comes to the actual reform of policing, there are a number of relevant interventions to be considered. Raising salaries may in some cases be a necessary but not sufficient condition to curbing police corruption (Ngich and Cho 2020). Another relevant measure is to establish a code of conduct for officers, although the evidence on the effectiveness of such codes without concomitant training is mixed (Ngich and Cho 2020: 14).

Studies have indicated that high staff morale may also help reduce certain forms of unwanted behaviour and can contribute to compliance with the principles set out in the code of conduct (Ngich and Cho 2020: 14). At the higher level, supervisors, sergeants, lieutenants and commissioners should be held accountable for the behaviour of those officers that fall under their command (Ngich and Cho 2020: 14).This, in turn, requires more meritocratic personnel selection and advancement criteria.

Training is another recurrent theme that some studies state has a high potential to reduce corruption and improve relations between police and civilians. USAID (2020: 17) highlights the contribution of placing greater emphasis on "soft" skills such as mediation and communication in police training, pointing towards significant evidence that police officers who have had mediation training tend to have more productive interactions with civilians (USAID 2020: 20).

Take contextual factors into account

Studies find that contextual factors play a key role in driving police corruption and they will therefore also need to be taken into account in the intervention against police corruption (Buttle et al. 2016). There may be particular local drivers, historically specific causes for police corruption or cultural variables that should be taken into account.

Lessons learned from successful police reforms in Asia

Singapore

The most frequently cited case of successful police reform in Asia is Singapore. Police corruption was a systemic and rampant issue during and right after the British colonial period and worsened substantially in the three years of Japanese occupation during the Second World War (Quah 2014: 192).

Evidence from historical sources indicates that the nature of police corruption in Singapore involved the protection of organised criminal markets (predominantly gambling) and extensive bribery (Quah 2014: 189). Corruption was outlawed in the 1870s, and the British were also keen to install various so-called commissions of inquiry and other anti-corruption institutions, such as the Anti-

Corruption Branch (ACB), but these were ineffective and often meant to pre-empt more substantive reforms (Quah 2014: 196).

Police corruption in Singapore was the product of several of the causes and drivers discussed above, including low salaries (for non-European officers), limited mechanisms for controlling the behaviour of officers and a very ineffective institutional framework for countering police corruption (Quah 2014: 196). The turning point for Singapore came after the Second World War due to an increase in political rights and, by 1948, the first elections. In 1952, following a large police corruption scandal, which the colonial system was incapable of tackling adequately, the colonial government decided to replace Singapore's ineffective Anti-Corruption Branch with the Corrupt Practices Investigations Bureau (CPIB).

This move was not very effective initially, but Singapore's government had a clearly defined political ambition to curb corruption across all layers of government, which included the police. In 1959, the pro-independence People's Action Party of Singapore won a landslide victory, and shortly thereafter started developing a national anti-corruption strategy. This strategy, as will be described below, focused on both eliminating incentives and opportunities for corruption (Quah 2014: 198). In 1960, the government of Singapore enacted the Prevention of Corruption Act which substantially strengthened the mandate and capabilities of the CPIB (Quah 2014: 197).

Following these legislative changes, the CPIB was mandated with receiving, investigating and taking action on corruption allegations in both public bodies (including the police) and the private sector. The Prevention of Corruption Act also tasked the CPIB with screening all potential civil servants for corruption risks. Following these improvements, Singapore's government also made moves to improve the salaries, benefits and working conditions for police officers. In addition to pay rises, police officers received improved health coverage, and married staff were given accommodation guarantees (Quah 2014: 198).

Later, the CPIB and Singapore's police forces founded a joint task force with the objective of identifying corruption risks in the police force,

devising policies that addressed these risks, and monitoring and sanctioning misconduct and corrupt practices (Quah 2014: 199). In addition to prosecution, police officers in Singapore can expect a number of administrative penalties for misconduct such as fines, dismissals or demotions (Quah 2014: 213).

On the other hand, police officers who have refused bribes can often expect some form of positive recognition (Quah 2014: 213). Singapore's police also devised more rigid personnel selection methods that include psychological tests and interviews (Quah 2014: 201).

Whereas during large parts of the colonial era, no training was needed to become a police officer, post-independence, the length of compulsory training was increased to first six, and later nine months. Training includes a module on policing values, integrity and the code of conduct (Quah 2014: 202). Additionally, Singapore's police introduced a number of administrative measures such as: regular but predictable post rotation (particularly for major crimes units to prevent officers forming illicit links with criminals); requiring officers to submit their credit status annually to the consumer credit bureau; and other measures like banning certain police officers from visiting casinos (Quah 2014: 2014).

These efforts appear to have borne fruit. Singapore has a much lower rate of corruption offences among police officers than was previously the case, and more cases are exposed and investigated. More generally, Singapore is also among the least corrupt countries in Asia (Quah 2014: 188).

Singapore's success in reducing police corruption has not been a result of any one specific intervention but a result of a comprehensive package of reform. The reforms were, first and foremost, backed up by strong political will and leadership, robust measures to reduce the economic incentives for corruption, human resource policies that emphasised quality, meritocracy and integrity, stringent sanctioning mechanisms for corruption or misconduct as well as a strong, independent anti-corruption institution (Quah 2014: 215).

It is worth noting that the project of rooting out police corruption in Singapore was not a process. It was a persistent political project that started prior to Singapore's independence and carried on for decades.

Hong Kong

Another frequently mentioned example of relatively efficient police reform in Asia is Hong Kong. Corruption was a widespread issue in the Hong Kong police force in the 1960s and 1970s; links between organised crime and police forces were systemic ,and accessing most police services required payment in the form of "tea money" (Wu 2006: 1). The police had its own internal anti-corruption unit, but it did not have any independent mechanisms and was ineffective (and potentially corrupt). A large-scale corruption scandal involving Hong Kong's police chief superintendent in 1973 resulted in mass protests against corruption and sparked the campaign that would lead to the establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) one year later (Lee-Jones 2018; Hui 2016: 149).

The formation of ICAC was an important turning point in the history of Hong Kong's measures to counter corruption in general and police corruption in particular. From 1977 onwards, the ICAC led a systematic attempt to improve the police force's integrity and enhance its legitimacy among the citizens of Hong Kong (Wu 2006: 2), receiving and investigating a relatively large number of corruption complaints (Wu 2006: 3) and pushing into force a series of personnel policy changes and organisational reforms in the Hong Kong police.

These changes included the ability of the ICAC to impose disciplinary measures on officers involved in misconduct (Hui 2016: 150). Changes also put in place more rigid recruitment procedures that included integrity checks and various personality tests. New integrity training modules were given to officers and numerous new initiatives were implemented to foster a more integrity-oriented policing structure (Hui 2016: 152). Importantly, the salary structure of the Hong Kong police was also overhauled resulting in better pay and benefits (Hui 2016: 152).

Overall, the ICAC focused on various opportunities and incentives for corruption by taking a three-pronged anti-corruption strategy. It would i) make corruption a more risky crime; ii) minimise opportunities for corruption; and iii) seek to transform norms and behavioural patterns to better reflect values of integrity (Wong no date: 146; Hui 2016: 150).

A significant part of the city state's success in addressing corruption in the police has often been attributed to the efficiency (and sometimes aggressiveness) of the ICAC in investigating and reacting to complaints of corruption, launching initiatives to curb various types of corruption in different sectors (including fraud in the housing market, petty corruption and financial crime) as well as its political independence that allows it to do its work efficiently (Wu 2006).

These changes did not come without some backlash from the Hong Kong police force, and there have at times been considerable tensions between the Hong Kong police and the ICAC (Hui 2016: 153). Yet by the 2000s, the Hong Kong police had developed such expertise in community relations that Hong Kong police officers were sent to western countries, including the UK, to train officers there (Sataline 2019)

However, the political shifts and democratic backsliding in Hong Kong in recent years are causes for concern that some of the professionalism and neutrality that had become a hallmark of Hong Kong's police is evaporating (Hui 2016; Sataline 2019). Critics argue that in the past few years the political independence and neutrality of Hong Kong's security apparatus has evaporated as the force has become highly politicised, less accountable and more violent (Sataline 2019).

The Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is another relevant (and less well known) example of police sector reform. While corruption continues to be a major issue on the Solomon Islands, some observers contend that the stabilisation programme in the country is among the more successful donor-led interventions (Kates 2017). From 1998 to 2003, the Solomon Islands were embroiled in a conflict between rivalling ethnic groups on Guadalcanal and by 2000, a

group known as the Malaitan Eagles staged a coup, which led to an escalation in the fighting and risked the total collapse of the Solomon state.

The Solomon police, once a respected institution, was mired in corruption, lacked any capacity to enforce law and order and was itself part of the problem due to criminal capture (Der Heyer 2016: 185). The police lacked internal management structures and there were no external oversight functions, while officers endured low wages (Der Heyer 2016: 186)

In 2003, an Australian-led intervention, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), was sent to put an end to the immediate violence. RAMSI, unlike most peacekeeping missions, was a police-led effort. Australians were stationed in the Solomon Islands for over a decade until 2017.

RAMSI was a three-staged stabilisation programme (restoring stability, countering corruption, strengthening self-reliance), in which strengthening and reforming the Royal Solomon Police Force played a critical role in each stage. From the very outset of the programme, rooting out police corruption was key, and the participating police force (that is the Australian stabilisation forces) were quick to arrest more than 160 corrupt Solomon police officers and dismissed a quarter of the Solomon police force (Den Heyer 2016: 185).

RAMSI then moved on to improve access to justice and took steps to strengthen the mandate and powers of the public prosecutor. Additionally, three different integrity squads have been established within the police: one focusing on corruption, one on fraud and one on internal investigations (Den Heyer 2016: 186).

Subsequently, RAMSI established a joint task force with the Solomon Islands police force to root out corruption, both in society and in the police force (Den Heyer 2016: 186). While significant and systemic corruption persists in the Solomon Islands police force to this day, public perception surveys indicate that the police-focused reforms have improved trust in the police. A majority (64 per cent) of citizen respondents in a 2013 survey said that they believed the police force had improved since 2007 (Der Heyer 2016: 185). In a

more recent poll, 65 per cent of respondents reported that they believe the police resolve disputes well (UNDP 2019).

The Solomon Islands is currently in the process of implementing a number of other anti-corruption reforms. In late 2018, the Solomon Islands adopted the Anti-Corruption Act which instituted an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). The commission is mandated to investigate and prosecute corruption as well as to receive complaints of corruption. State building in the Solomon Islands is a process, and there is certainly a long way to go with regards to establishing police accountability and transparency. Nevertheless, the relative success of RAMSI has produced a number of lessons, some of which are positive, for donors involved in police reform (Der Heyer 2016; Kates 2017).

Indonesia

Despite multiple attempts at instituting police reform, Indonesia has had limited success in curbing police related corruption. Indonesia's police has historically played a very political role, enjoying high levels of operational autonomy as it supported the army in the fight against foreign colonial powers (The Netherlands and Japan) (Buttle et al 2016). During Suharto's regime, the police continued to operate along a largely paramilitary-esque ethos, supporting the government. After the fall of Suharto's regime, Indonesia instituted a number of laws to reform the police, including the 2002 Police Law which decentralised the structures of Indonesia's police.

In 2005, the police adopted a community policing programme. While the rationale behind these reforms were to transform policing in a more accountable direction, they never truly transformed the relationship between the police and the public (Buttle et al. 2016). This is particularly so because the attempts to reform policing did not adequately manage to reduce corruption in the police and, over the last decade, Indonesian police have seen numerous high-profile corruption cases.

First, the reforms did not adequately address the systemic nature of corruption in the country's law enforcement and judiciary sectors. Corrupt patronage networks between courts, prosecutors

and commissioners were easily able to escape justice and anti-corruption interventions (Buttle et al 2016). Even government agencies may have to bribe the police to have offenders reported for prosecution. The decentralised structure of policing in Indonesia allow provincial police units to operate with little oversight from any central structure, which enables systemic corruption to flourish in remote provinces in particular.

Another important factor, Buttle et al. (2016) argue, is the funding structure of the Indonesian police forces. The Indonesian police (at the time of writing) has allocated about 20 per cent of the budget for operational costs (compared to 75 per cent for wages), which is clearly not enough (Buttle et al. 2016). Much of the financial gains from corruption is not meant for self-enrichment but reportedly goes into the police's operating budget (Buttle et al. 2016).

This need for external funding meant that the Indonesian police has, in many cases, been susceptible to wealthy patrons' sponsoring operations and has used bribery to fund itself. Bribery is also used inside the police force, ensuring successful applications and promotions (Buttle et al 2016: 12). Rents produced in criminal markets also find their way into the police force. This is particularly so for illicit logging, one of Indonesia's most lucrative criminal markets (Buttle et al. 2016).

Yet another reason why Indonesia's attempts to curb police corruption has borne limited fruit is the role of public perception. In societies in which citizens expect the police to be corrupt, there is some suggestion that this can reduce the constraints on corruption as citizens may pre-emptively attempt to bribe officers (Buttle et al. 2016: 14-15). This underscores the importance of perceptions and social norms related to corruption, and illustrates how the public's assumptions and expectation of police corruption itself poses a challenge to police reform (Buttle et al. 2016: 14).

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