

# ASSESSING THE ADOPTION OF CONDITIONAL AMNESTY ON THE MARITIME INDUSTRIAL CORRUPTION TO NURTURE JOBS, MARITIME INTEGRITY, AND INVESTMENT

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## ABSTRACT

The paper assesses the case that in a conditional, time-bound amnesty, coupled with the recovery of assets, such disclosure and irreversible governance change could be used to end the vicious cycles of corruption and achieve three nation-building objectives: (1) creating new jobs; (2) enhancing maritime relations and performance; and (3) attracting long-term investment. Based on the comparative studies on anti-corruption, international principles (UNCAC; IMO guidance) and sectoral analyses of blue-economy projects and port-governance initiatives, the paper presents an overall policy road map. The main argument is that a sharply scoped amnesty can only be net-positive when it: (a) does not include deplorable offenses, repeat transgressors; (b) demands complete beneficial-ownership disclosure as well as restitution of illicit holdings; (c) is incorporated into a promising process of improvement of enforcement; and (d) tied to investment facilitation and maritime trade reforms that deliver quick productivity and employment. There is evidence that better corruption control fosters better Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) opportunities, that interventions in Blue Economy can create jobs, and that anti-bribery efforts in maritime settings reduce frictions in logistics. Nevertheless, amnesties by themselves have a patchy history and can devolve into impunity when not well-crafted. The paper suggests a five-pillar package—legal and justice, asset recovery and transparency, maritime and blue-economy jobs, investment facilitation, and social compact and monitoring along with an implementation roadmap and protection.

**Keywords:** corruption, amnesty, asset recovery, blue economy, maritime governance, FDI, investment facilitation, beneficial ownership, jobs policy.

## INTRODUCTION

Persistent corruption may result in the countries being trapped in low-trust equilibriums that leads them to be discouraged to invest, low quality of the services, and a distorted trade

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logistics. Policy makers sometimes contemplate amnesties as a way of resetting expectations. Nevertheless, blanket amnesties to corruption cases are controversial and are commonly accused of contributing to impunity (U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk, 2019). In this paper, I evaluate a national pursuit of an explicit model of conditional amnesty that takes the calculated risk of thoroughly addressing corruption dynamics by sparking employment, enhancing maritime relations and port performance and speeding the attractiveness of investments to build nations. The strategy is consistent with the prevention and asset recovery focus of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) (UNODC, n.d.-a; UNCAC Coalition, n.d.). It also taps into the sectoral frameworks in maritime governance such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) guidance on anti-corruption (IMO, 2022), regional security cooperation aimed at stabilizing sea-lines of communication (IMO, n.d.-a) and so on.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Anti-corruption and amnesties**

In comparative reviews, it is observed that corruption amnesties are atypical and politically controversial; in the cases where they are employed, their legality should be based on high levels of conditionality, transparency, and their placement in the context of other justice reform (U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk, 2019). The debates on transitions-justice are cautionary both about the potential destruction of the rule of law and the ability of blanket amnesties to extinguish it, unless coupled with truth-telling, reparation, or criminal prosecution of serious crimes (International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2008). Tax or financial practices evidence indicate mixed revenue/compliance outcomes on the application of stand-alone measures of tax or financial amnesties (Baer & Le Borgne, 2008). Recent quasi-experimental efforts imply rather that there are potentially positive spill overs e.g. amnesties can increase bank lending and firm employment when conditioned on financial-sector pipelines and compliance (Juarez, 2024) but only when so well designed.

### **Corruption control, FDI and investment facilitation**

Meta-reviews and regional studies all suggest a positive relationship between lower corruption and greater inflows of FDI (e.g., Dumludag, summarized in a 2023 systematic review; see SAGE, 2023) and that control of corruption increases FDI likelihoods (Bayesian regional analysis of ASEAN evidence) (Nguyen & Vo, 2024). UNCTAD (2024a, 2024b) cites a vulnerable international FDI environment in the World Investment Report 2024, arguing that investment facilitation, transparency, predictability of the rules, and procedural simplification of administration is essential to drive sustainable investment. Economy-wide facilitation and accountability are also similar to G20/T20 (T20 Brazil, 2024). More importantly, beneficial-ownership transparency (BOT) limits the opacity that facilitates illicit finance and discourages capital transparency; recent empirical work indicates that, when secrecy jurisdictions introduce a register of beneficial ownership, cross-border investment flows out of these countries drop (Abraham et al., 2025; see also CIPE/ACGC, 2023; UBO disclosure studies, eg Pham, 2022).

### **Maritime governance, logistics integrity, and employment**

Maritime trade is a corruption hot zone—pilotage, customs, and inspection, where small frictions incur macro costs. IMO has also provided formal advice on the prevention and combat

of maritime corruption (IMO, 2022) as well as provided support to initiatives concerning the sector (IMO, 2020). Similar to the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN) and Nigeria Port service Support Portal and Help Desk, collective-action models report decline in corrupt demands and cost reductions in business (WCO, 2023). The maritime rule of law enhances international trade corridors by reducing risk since regional security cooperation with Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC/Jeddah Amendment) can work to allow safer trade corridors (IMO, n.d.-a). Blue-economy projects such as sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, coastal tourism, marine renewable energy offer employment potential and can be measured with policy packages and investment (World Bank, 2022; World Bank, 2020; IEG, 2023).

## **CONCEPTUAL MODEL: CONDITIONAL AMNESTY: AN INTEGRITY RESET**

The Amnesty-for-Accountability and Growth (AAG) model proposed here is a time-limited, one-time amnesty in which criminal exposure is traded in exchange for full disclosure, restitution, and disqualification to ever hold a sensitive position— packaged into a hardening of enforcement institutions. Design features:

1. **Eligibility & Exclusions:** Eliminate egregious crimes (e.g. violent crimes, grand corruption with exception of a threshold amount, human rights abuses), repeat offenders; focus on a list of specified economic corruption crimes (U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk, 2019; ICTJ, 2008).
2. **Mandatory Disclosure Restitution:** Demand complete disclosure of beneficial ownership of assets and the business entities and surrendering of illicit resources in the country or through the UNCAC Chapter V cooperation (UNODC, n.d.-a; UNCAC Coalition, n.d.).
3. **Forward-Looking Compliance:** Make the conditions dependent on compliance with anti-bribery, AML/CFT, procurement rules and tax over a certain probationary period; noncompliance at any time rescinds the amnesty.
4. **Institutional Lock-ins:** Pass parallel reforms, counsel original or environment inspired ability, specialized prosecutors, e-procurement, open contracting, BO register, risk-based customs and port-integrity systems (World Bank, 2020).
5. **Growth Linkages:** Lace enrolment with fast lanes to investment facilitation, and maritime/ blue-economy prospects that bring jobs (UNCTAD, 2024a; World Bank, 2022).

## **INSTRUMENTS AND POLICY PILLARS**

### **Pillar I: Architecture of Legal & Justice**

- **Enabling Act:** Identify the definition of scope, exceptions, disclosure responsibilities, compensatory formula and penalty of mis-stating. Establish an Amnesty Commission that will be combined with the prosecutor and Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).
- **Non-recurrence Measures:** Enhance conflict-of-interest, asset-disclosure, whistle blower protection and procurement debarment lists.

- **Default Transparency:** Advertise missing data of unidentified sums and nondisclosure case resumes to keep relative believability (World Bank, 2020; U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk, 2019).

### **Pillar II: Recovery and Transparency of assets**

- **Beneficial-Ownership Register:** Cross match with tax, customs, land, and corporate registries; known and proven risk-based access across many jurisdictions. The empirical evidence indicates that opaque flows can be repelled by means of BOT (Abraham et al., 2025; Pham, 2022; CIPE/ACGC, 2023).
- **Chapter V UNCAC Operations:** Proactive tracing, Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) requests, and non-conviction-based forfeiture where applicable (UNODC, n.d.-a; UNCAC Coalition, n.d.).
- **Development Reparation:** Channel reclaimed assets to port ring-fenced funds, Fisheries management and SME credit lines.

### **Pillar III: Marine Relations, Integrity, and blue-economy jobs**

- **IMO-Aligned Port Integrity Systems:** To implement FAL.5/Circ.48: standard operating procedures, hotlines, training, and criminal and administrative punishment (IMO, 2022).
- **Gateways Mass Action:** Participate in MACN initiatives; implement Help Desk/Port Community Systems, based on a PCS model closely resembling that of Nigeria (PSSP) to decrease the amount of demands to be subjected to facilitation (WCO, 2023; Basel Institute, 2024).
- **Cooperation on regional security:** Enhance interaction with DCoC/Jeddah Amendment, information-sharing to reduce the risks of piracy/illicit-trade and enhance the reliability of maritime corridors (IMO, n.d.-a).
- **Blue-Economy Jobs Portfolio:** Scale sustainable aquaculture, cold-chain, port-side logistics parks, and ship-repair clusters; in World Bank experience, hundreds of jobs per project with policy package clarity exists (World Bank, 2022; World Bank, 2020; IEG, 2023).

### **Pillar IV: Investment Facilitation and FDI Signalling**

- **Single Investment Window:** Regulatory guillotine to efficiency approval and permits; service standards to be published, and live dashboards (UNCTAD, 2024a, 2024b; T20 Brazil, 2024).
- **Integrity-Linked Incentives:** Introduce verification of BO disclosure, clean-contracting provisions, and histories of compliance as the means to tie tax or land inducement. Targeted Promotion.
- Target maritime value chains, renewable energy, agri food logistics, and digital services, where a high multiplier of jobs are achieved and the investor base is highly sensitive to governance (SAGE, 2023; Nguyen & Vo, 2024).

**Pillar V: Monitoring, Sunset and Social Compact Participatory Oversight**

- Monitoring committees of civil-society and business associations; publication of quarterly stats of compliance.
- **Evening and One-Time Rule:** Amnesty window (e.g., 612 months); later there is better enforcement, which will not breed moral hazard.
- **Impact Evaluation:** Monitor the transportation logistics expenses/duration, port accident reports, newly designed fixed employment, FDI project numbers and recoverable assets figures.

**RISKS AND MITIGATION RISK IMPACT**

- **Impunity Risk:** It is probable that this is the first time that a physician has educated the community about the procedures, and hence the man from the community has left the community.
- **Moral Hazard:** Offset by stringent exclusions, honest-disclosure examinations, and rejection of offences; confine to serious or repeat demonstrations (U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk, 2019; ICTJ, 2008).
- **International Credibility:** Hard sunset one-time law, pair it with a permanent enforcement authority deterrence.
- **Equity Concerns:** Fold-on to the guidance of UNCAC and IMO, release BO data and enforcement results (UNODC, n.d.-a; IMO, 2022). Dedicate reclaimed assets to communal job schemes and community welfare goods; empower SMEs to enjoy access to investment provision.

**IMPLEMENTATION (PLAN OF UP TO 12 MONTHS, 24 MONTHS)**

- **Months (03–06):** Stakeholder consultations; draft bill; design BO register; select two pilot ports; confirm MACN partnership.
- **Months (04–06):** Amnesty and transparency package; establish single investment window in beta; issue port SOPs and hotlines (IMO-aligned).
- **Months (07–12):** Window open on amnesty; initiate asset-tracing; initiate blue-economy job-projects (aquaculture, ship-repair); implement Help Desk.
- **Months (13–18):** Closing months, close amnesty; publicise results; start revocations of non-compliance, scale investment facilitation; sign DCoC/Jeddah Amendment cooperation memoranda of understanding.
- **Months (19–24):** Self-assessment; imbibe reforms; scale-up BO verification and e-procurement to sub-national organizations.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- **Jobs:** Direct/indirect employment based on aquaculture, logistics parks and modernization of ports; case evidence notes hundreds of jobs per project depending on project size (World Bank, 2022).

- **Maritime Relations & Performance:** Decreased demands associated with corruption, accelerated ship turnaround, enhanced monitoring of the risk of customs, enhanced regional security cooperation (IMO, 2022; WCO, 2023; IMO, n.d.-a).
- **Investment:** More FDI projects in those sectors where the government is sensitive to investment; greater investor confidence due to enhanced transparency and facilitation (UNCTAD, 2024a; Nguyen & Vo, 2024; SAGE, 2023).
- **Integrity:** More recouped asset and validated coverage ownership information and publication of enforcement activities (UNODC, n.d.-a; UNCAC Coalition, n.d.).

## CONCLUSION

Conditional, transparent, one-time amnesty can allow resetting expectations only provided it is embedded in irrevocable governance reforms and combined with the sectoral policy where a jobs-first approach becomes a priority. The combination of beneficial-ownership and asset-recovery with maritime integrity and investment facilitation IMO-aligned combining the most beneficial effects; governments can credibly turn an integrity re-set into job creation and dependable trade and sustainable investment. Done poorly, amnesties threaten to harden impunity; done well, amnesties can turn privately created incentives to compliance and growth, especially as the Blue Economy and the ports begin to offer clean and job-rich development demonstration sites.

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