



**The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity- AMAN**

# **Administrative Report 2023**

**May 2024**

## **Introduction**

This report provides an overview of the most significant activities and accomplishments implemented and achieved by AMAN Coalition as an executive team and governing body (Board of Directors, Oversight Committee, and Internal Audit) in 2023. The executive staff was able to efficiently carry out 75% of the activities planned for 2023, while Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip hampered the completion of the activities during the final quarter of the approved plan, primarily in the Gaza Strip and partially in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Moreover, the executive staff was forced to develop alternative plans that are compatible with the current situation and address the challenges posed by the escalation of occupation practices in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

## **AMAN Coalition Board of Directors Report 2023**

During 2023, AMAN's governing body convened four Board of Directors meetings and a General Assembly meeting and developed a set of interventions to work on in a focused manner. These interventions included:

- Mechanisms and strategies for responding to the Israeli occupation's genocide in the Gaza Strip.
- Strategies for dealing with civil society constraints, particularly in light of the complaint filed by the President's office against AMAN Coalition.
- Strategies and mechanisms for dealing with financing challenges resulting from some international parties' decisions to freeze funding.

### **First: Mechanisms and strategies for responding to the Israeli occupation's genocide in the Gaza Strip.**

During its meetings, the Board of Directors emphasized the need for AMAN to expose the occupation's practices at both local and international levels, as well as exert pressure to cease the genocide and provide relief to our people in Gaza. In addition to collaborate with civil society organizations to develop position papers and other relevant community interventions and establish mechanisms to support AMAN's staff in Gaza.

The executive team reflected these strategic directions in its action plan, particularly in:

- Launching ongoing lobbying and advocacy campaigns through local radio stations and social media platforms, emphasizing the importance of ending the aggression and holding the occupation accountable for its genocidal crimes.
- Holding several meetings with international and local parties as part of the lobbying process, to spread the Palestinian narrative and affirm the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.
- Preparing and issuing statements, position papers, and correspondence to international networks, groups, and others.
- Preparing a number of pertinent investigative reports (extortion and bribery at the Rafah Crossing, distribution of humanitarian aid and relief, consumer protection, and the role of clans, local groups, and governmental bodies in aid distribution).

### **Second: Strategies for dealing with civil society constraints, particularly in light of the complaint filed by the President's office against AMAN Coalition.**

Members of the Board of Directors attended numerous meetings to discuss how to confront the restrictions on civil society space, which were led in particular by the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy-Miftah, as well as the case brought against AMAN coalition. It was also decided that a section in the annual corruption report would be dedicated to shed light on this matter.

- AMAN Coalition developed a draft of a government general policy that clarifies the government's relationship with civil society. It was presented to the former Prime Minister and reiterated during the meeting between the new Prime Minister and civil society representatives. The draft policy will be followed up with the Prime Minister's Office in preparation for its development and approval.
- AMAN Coalition participated in all meetings organized by local civil society networks and institutions to discuss the civil society space.
- AMAN Coalition will participate in implementing a four-year project in partnership with Miftah, Al-Istiqlal Center, MADA Center, and SHAMS Center, to enhance and protect civil society space.
- AMAN Coalition appeared in court three times in 2023 (sessions), regarding the case brought against it by the Presidential Office, where the case was postponed multiple times for various reasons, including a lawyers' strike. Noting that the first two sessions witnessed broad solidarity and participation from human rights organizations, activists, and representatives of foreign countries.

### **Third: Strategies and mechanisms for dealing with financing challenges resulting from some international parties' decisions to freeze funding.**

AMAN Coalition, like other institutions, faced numerous challenges as a result of the funding freeze imposed by the Swedish government, the European Union, and others. The executive management submitted a special report to members of the Board of Directors outlining the challenges and proposals to overcome. The Board of Directors adopted these proposals for implementation, which resulted in overcoming all the obstacles that arose. Members of the Board of Directors also participated actively in meetings with representatives of donor countries to AMAN Coalition, which contributed significantly to overcome these hurdles while also exposing the falsity of the Israeli narrative.

## **Report on the Implementation of Strategic Directions and Action Plan for 2023**

AMAN Coalition carried out several interventions outlined in the 2023 Action Plan and amended the plan in response to the Board of Directors' decisions concerning the genocide in the Gaza Strip and the challenges associated with the funding freeze. Nearly 75% of the approved action plan was implemented, as the vast majority of interventions in Gaza were not implemented in the last quarter of the year owing to the war, and the majority of the annual conferences scheduled for the final months of the year were canceled.

The interventions generally included networking and coordination with various civil society organizations, especially in terms of enhancing political integrity and combating corruption, and preparing reports, studies, and indicators that addressed several aspects, including; political corruption, general budget, security sector, local authorities, public services, appointments, corruption risk studies

focusing on gender-based corruption, annual reports, opinion polls, and others. AMAN Coalition implemented capacity-building programs for promoting integrity, combating corruption, raising community awareness in various sectors, implementing advocacy and lobbying campaigns and activities, listening and accountability sessions and workshops, producing educational materials, and supporting many institutions in incorporating accountability and integrity into their programs. Moreover, AMAN Coalition, in cooperation with its partners in the Gaza Strip, implemented initiatives during the aggression aimed at creating a database that monitors aid and violations. Interventions in 2023 also included continuing to build procedures, regulations, manuals, and increasing job satisfaction.

The most significant activities and achievements at the main levels (programmatic and institutional) can be summarized according to the four approved objectives, as follows:

### **First Objective: Strengthening integrity, transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption systems in the management of public funds and services provision**

- During 2023, AMAN Coalition focused on interventions that protect public institutions from corruption, such as implementing programs to develop the capabilities of public sector employees by enhancing the concepts of integrity, transparency, and accountability in the provision of public services, particularly for the benefit of marginalized groups such as women and youth. AMAN's interventions were based on the results and recommendations of diagnostic reports that assessed the risks of corruption in the supply of certain services, such as in the security establishment and local authorities. Many recommendations were adopted by some of the targeted institutions, and training programs were implemented in light of these recommendations (some interventions came as a result of campaigns for demands that AMAN Coalition led or participated in with other civil society organizations), including the following:
  1. The Palestinian Ministry of Finance published six out of eight main budget documents on its official website, up from less than four.
  2. The issuance of Decree Law No. (5) of 2023 concerning the General Petroleum Authority, which is consistent with AMAN Coalition's recommendations regarding the necessity to enact a general petroleum authority law and regulate this significant and vital sector.
  3. On March 20, 2023, the government decided to settle the distressed debts of fuel and gas stations in a transparent and accountable manner. Additionally, on February 13, 2023, the Palestinian government decided to form a special tender committee to develop petroleum and gas depots across Palestine. These decisions are consistent with AMAN's prior recommendations to consolidate governance and oversight of the fuel sector, which is a critical resource for the public treasury.
  4. On February 6, 2023, the government decided to assemble a team to audit Israel's clearing fund deductions. This is consistent with AMAN Coalition's recommendation to activate the understandings between the Palestinian and Israeli sides regarding the clearing mechanism and adopt actual trade volume rather than invoices held by each party to determine the value of clearing funds generated by bilateral trade exchange. This will address a portion of the problem of financial leakage.
  5. On January 3, 2023, the government amended its decision to establish the Administrative Unit for Net Lending and Debt Collection. This is consistent with AMAN Coalition's recommendation to

activate the unit responsible for monitoring net lending within the relevant authorities and ensuring implementation.

6. On January 16, 2023, the government approved the Telecom Regulatory Authority's Board of Directors. This decision is aligned with AMAN Coalition's recommendations to establish the Palestinian Telecom Regulatory Authority in accordance with Law No. (37) of 2021, as well as to ensure effective oversight of companies that provide telecommunications services to citizens, thereby strengthening accountability systems in public work.
7. On January 9, 2023, the Council of Ministers approved the Technical Committee for State Property Management's recommendations and worked to remove encroachments on state lands in accordance with the law, implement decisions against violators, and hold them accountable. This decision is in line with AMAN's direct recommendation.
8. On February 27, 2023, the government directed the Ministries of National Economy and Agriculture to take up supervisory roles in markets to protect consumers. This is consistent with AMAN Coalition's campaign to strengthen oversight over the prices of basic goods and services, as well as to ensure their distribution and quality, particularly during emergencies.
9. The government made decisions concerning the Jerusalem District Electricity Company (JDECO) to prevent unauthorized cuts from external sources. This is consistent with a direct recommendation from AMAN Coalition for a more proactive government policy toward local authorities to prevent debt accumulation.
10. The Council of Ministers established a committee to oversee the exploitation of state lands with the goal of facilitating the establishment of vital projects. This is consistent with AMAN Coalition's recommendation of enacting laws against trespassing on state lands, holding violators accountable, and exploiting these lands in accordance with legal regulations.
11. On October 23, 2023, State Property Leasing Regulation No. (13) of 2023 was issued. It is consistent with AMAN Coalition's recommendations to maintain integrity in the management of state lands and properties. The system precisely specifies the executive procedures for public tenders and auctions, including all the details required to facilitate the leasing process, and contributes to reducing the risks of corruption in any operations related to leasing state property.
12. On November 27, 2023, the government adopted a framework for regulating medical referrals with the goal of improving transparency and efficiency in the provision of health services to citizens. This decision is consistent with AMAN Coalition's previous recommendations to manage and gradually reduce medical referrals outside the government health system.
13. In response to financial challenges, the government implemented austerity measures on November 22, 2023. These decisions are consistent with AMAN Coalition's repeated calls to reduce spending while preserving social and economic justice, protecting rights, and ensuring the quality of public services.
14. The Palestinian Disaster Risk Management Center (PALDRM) developed the National Strategic Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction in Palestine (2023-2027), which included numerous recommendations made by AMAN Coalition.
15. The Council of Ministers adopted a number of general policies governing the management of various aspects of public affairs, including the general framework for the strategic plan for social assistance, the general framework for the governance of medical referrals, the financial system for public institutions, and the approval of recommendations for the safety of Christian and Islamic lands in Jerusalem.



16. The mechanism for preparing the annual report on government complaints has improved. As the tenth report of the Directorate General of Complaints for the year 2022, which was approved by the Council of Ministers at its session held on 7/31/2023, presented an analysis of complaints, their nature, and examples of success stories, in addition to the challenges facing complaints departments. The report concluded with specific recommendations to various public institutions to overcome challenges, which is considered a step forward compared to previous reports.

- In terms of strengthening governance in the **work of local authorities**, AMAN Coalition elevated its collaboration with municipalities, local and village councils. Interventions ranged from issuing diagnostic studies to publishing manuals of practice, building employee capacities, and supporting and implementing community accountability initiatives.

Most notable achievements:

- ✓ Gaza Municipality developed a comprehensive framework that included a code of conduct, a conflict-of-interest prevention system, and mechanisms to promote social accountability.
- ✓ Ramallah Municipality established a Good Governance Committee with the active participation of Ramallah residents, with the aim of strengthening good governance practices in municipal operations.
- ✓ Birzeit Municipality adopted all of the recommendations resulting from the Local Integrity System Study.
- ✓ Many West Bank municipalities adopted AMAN Coalition's manuals aimed at promoting integrity, transparency, accountability, and combating corruption, including the following:
- ✓ Yatta Municipality adopted manuals for financial and administrative systems, as well as a manual for complain management.
- ✓ Qalqilya Municipality adopted manuals for budget preparation, appointments, contracting, and procurement processes.
- ✓ Al-Bireh Municipality adopted a communication and outreach strategy based on a proposal prepared by AMAN Coalition to improve interaction between municipalities, citizens, local committees, and media. AMAN Coalition also provided training for this strategy.
- ✓ Salfit Municipality implemented a manual for complaint management.
- ✓ AMAN Coalition, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government in Gaza, was successful in launching the National Participatory Budgeting Day. This included workshops in which 138 representatives (89 males and 49 females) in charge of budget preparation in 25 municipalities took part. These sessions included workshops, training, and a media campaign centered on the Citizen Budget.
- ✓ The Council of Ministers approved the Code of Conduct and Ethics for Employees of Local Authorities and Joint Services Councils on August 7, 2023, and it was published in the Official Gazette on September 25, 2023. The Code outlines best practices for employee conduct.
- Following the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, AMAN Coalition collaborated with regional partners to develop a digital platform for tracking all humanitarian aid allocated to Gaza. The creation of this joint data platform is a collaborative effort to improve oversight of the aid distribution process. It is intended to make this information available to a wide range of

stakeholders, including official bodies, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations. The platform can be accessed at: <https://gazatrack.net/en/>

## **Second Objective: Promoting integrity of the governance system and holding the political class accountable concerning their decisions for public interest**

AMAN Coalition paid special attention to this objective due to its significant impact on Palestine's governance system, as well as the dangers of private interests prevailing over public interests in the country's decision-making. AMAN Coalition worked to publish a series of diagnostic reports, which were followed by dozens of lobbying and advocacy campaigns.

Marsad AMAN continued to monitor public decisions and assess their consistency with the public interest, such as senior official appointments, executive interference in judiciary affairs, civil and media space related decisions, and conflicts of interest.

The most notable outcomes that were consistent with the recommendations of AMAN Coalition, its campaigns, and its coordination efforts with its civil society partners:

- A presidential decree was issued at the end of 2023, effectively ending the practice of extending the service of both public and military employees once they reach the legal retirement age. This decree is consistent with the recommendations made by AMAN Coalition, given that such practices frequently allow loyalists to retain influential positions, which may conflict with the public interest and, in many cases, violate existing laws.
- Withdrawal of Draft Law No. () of 2023: Regulations on Publishing, the Press, and the Media. This withdrawal followed a lobbying and advocacy campaign led by civil society organizations, which argued that what was stated in the draft violated international principles and standards related to freedom of the media.
- On May 8, 2023, the Council of Ministers decided to establish a ministerial committee for dialogue and hold meetings with civil society. This decision is consistent with the recommendations of AMAN Coalition and its partners regarding the necessity of adopting an open policy towards civil society. This policy would include adopting the basic principles that respect civil work, integration, and partnership, as an official policy and guideline for all officials and employees in ministries and public institutions, in terms of their relationship with civil society organizations, cooperating with them, and involving their representatives in decision-making processes.
- The Palestinian government postponed the approval of the Draft Law on the Right to Access Information in response to AMAN Coalition's and other partner civil society organizations' demand that it be cancelled because it violates the basic principles and standards of access to information legislation previously agreed upon with the government.
- The decision to repeal Presidential Decree No. 17 of 2022, which established the Supreme Council of Judicial Bodies and Authorities. AMAN Coalition demanded that this decree be repealed because it undermines the judiciary's independence, disregards the principle of separation of powers, and violates the Palestinian Basic Law.

- The Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission responded to the AMAN Coalition's call to amend the Disclosure of Conflict of Interest Regulation, and submitted a request to the Council of Ministers (at the end of the previous government's term) to include ministers.
- The Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission responded to the need to adopt the National Cross-Sectoral Strategy for Integrity and Anti- Corruption as one of the Council of Ministers' official cross-sectoral strategies. AMAN Coalition was notified of the Council of Ministers' approval of the request and its referral to the competent authority in the Council, and it is currently being followed up with the new government.
- The Ministry of Interior responded to the findings of the corruption risk measure in the security establishment, and an action plan for 2024 was developed in collaboration with it and officially approved by the Minister of Interior.

### **Third Objective: Promoting community mobilization in support of anti-corruption efforts and holding power to account for the common good**

This strategic objective comes within the framework of the importance of strengthening the process of mobilization and networking, whether at the level of civil society organizations, coalitions, and networks, or at the level of citizens, both directly and indirectly. The significance of this objective is also highlighted in light of the escalation of challenges to governance integrity in Palestine, which necessitated increased efforts by AMAN Coalition and its work to raise community awareness among citizens about the various forms of corruption, its causes, impact, and how to report it. Efforts to raise community awareness take many forms, including direct awareness meetings, networking, building and strengthening existing alliances, increased investment in social media platforms and media sites, publications, educational programs and courses, receiving individuals to AMAN Coalition's Advocacy and Legal Advice Center, and networking with civil society organizations in various regions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

During 2023, AMAN Coalition operated on a variety of levels and accomplished numerous achievements, including:

- The Anti-Corruption Diploma Program, designed by AMAN in collaboration with Birzeit University's Faculty of Law and Public Administration, was officially accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- Following the implementation of the Youth Empowerment Program, in which youth hold public institutions in general, and security institutions in particular, accountable. The youth groups were able to carry out 40 accountability sessions and follow up on their findings with the security establishment.
- Following the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns and activities encouraging citizens to report corrupt practices, particularly political corruption, there was a considerable increase in the number of persons contacting AMAN, whether to report or seek legal support and advice.
- Citizens' interest in the content of the various AMAN Coalition websites has expanded significantly, as the level of interaction has increased across AMAN's social media platforms, reaching approximately 3,000,000 followers on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



- During 2023, there was a stronger media interest in raising topics that AMAN Coalition addressed, whether in AMAN's reports, position papers, or news of activities, and speakers from AMAN Coalition were hosted 78 times.
- The Legal Advocacy and Advice Center received around 531 requests for legal advice on various subjects. AMAN took over 52 cases due to suspicions of corruption, and the number of women who approached the Center climbed from 13% to 22%.
- Members of the Civil Forum for Enhancing Good Governance in the Security Sector and the Civil Society Team for Enhancing Public Budget Transparency were particularly active in 2023. It was noted that more inclusion of governance and accountability activities in partner institutions' programs coincided with a greater commitment to implementing the two teams' decisions, participating in scheduled activities, and supporting AMAN Coalition's efforts. The number of individuals joining the two teams rose in 2023 due to the addition of new institutions.
- AMAN Coalition was able to establish the foundation of the "Women against Corruption" network, which will be further institutionalized during 2024 and become part of an effective regional network.

#### **Fourth Objective: Developing the institutional and organizational performance of AMAN Coalition to meet its vision, and partnerships at all national, international and Arab levels**

As part of achieving its fourth strategic objective, AMAN Coalition sought to implement an ambitious program to develop its organizational, administrative, and programmatic capabilities, strengthen its internal integrity system, expand its donor base, and increase its activity at the regional and international levels as an expert house in the field of combating corruption. The most notable achievements in this regard include the following:

##### **First: At the institutional and capacity building level:**

- As part of AMAN Coalition's endeavors to develop internal administrative and organizational procedures and tools that are consistent with international best practices, to enable it to perform its functions efficiently and effectively, and to adapt to new circumstances and needs, an expert was contracted to assess AMAN's institutional performance from a variety of perspectives. The assessment resulted in a wide range of recommendations, which are currently being reviewed by the Audit Committee and Internal Oversight before being presented to the Board of Directors, particularly in terms of organizational structure, powers and responsibilities, the annual performance evaluation system, and others.
- The Coalition has introduced a range of improvements to strengthen its management and internal governance, in accordance with the recommendations of its membership re-accreditation committee as a national chapter of Transparency International (MAC). Among these reforms is a change to the term structure for Board of Directors members, which allows them to serve for specific periods with a break between terms. AMAN Coalition also received a re-accreditation certificate from Transparency International in 2023, following a rigorous assessment of its organizational and programmatic capabilities.

- The Coalition sought to enhance career development opportunities and employee capabilities by having various staff members participate in training programs, as well as local and international participations, which contributed to develop their performance and increase their knowledge of emerging issues related to anti-corruption efforts, such as political integrity and combating political corruption. Moreover, AMAN Coalition has organized a specialized training course to train Coalition staff on the mechanisms for integrating gender into the Coalition's programs and operations.
- AMAN Coalition, with the aim of improving the work environment, rented half of the second floor in the same building and equipped it with the technologies required to enhance productivity and provide a healthy work environment.
- A committee of the Coalition's employees was formed to review the human and administrative resources manual and provide recommendations for its development in order to increase job satisfaction.

**Second: At the level of the relationship with the donor community:**

To address the challenges posed by the funding freeze, AMAN Coalition worked diligently to strengthen the partnership with potential donors, and to mobilize sufficient financial resources to finance its current and future operations. Through its contacts and partnerships with international and civil society organizations, as well as joint efforts with Transparency International, the Coalition was successful in concluding the following new financing agreements:

- A financing agreement signed with the European Union in partnership with Miftah Foundation to implement a civil society space project worth around €89,000 over four years beginning in April 2024.
- A new financing agreement of £1.1 million signed with the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) for three years, expiring in March 2026.
- A project for community oversight of the PEGASE mechanism for financing the Palestinian Authority worth approximately €300,000 approved, starting in mid-2024 and for a period of two years.
- A regional project approved in cooperation with Transparency International worth €160,000, starting in mid-2024 and for a period of four years.
- 100% of the main program budget for the years 2023 and 2024, and 70% of AMAN's budget for 2025 secured.

**Third: At the level of knowledge production:**

During the current year, AMAN Coalition contributed to providing dozens of literature, including reports, studies, and manuals that promote integrity and combat corruption, such as the following:

- AMAN Coalition developed a methodology for diagnosing corruption risks in service delivery and operational procedures by adapting the United Nations methodology for the Palestinian context. The Coalition used this methodology to prepare numerous studies, including ones on the security establishment.

- AMAN Coalition continued to develop its digital platform, "Marsad AMAN," with information. Marsad AMAN is an essential instrument for monitoring and following up on variables pertaining to integrity, anti-corruption, and public finances management policies.
- During the current year, AMAN Coalition prepared a national shadow report assessing Palestine's commitment to implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Furthermore, it generated 56 reports (including 23 staff-prepared ones) that monitored the reality of integrity and anti-corruption in various sectors and services, as well as presenting crucial recommendations to Palestinian decision makers on how to promote integrity and combat corruption.

#### **Fourth: Executive staff**

In 2023, the number of full-time employees in the Ramallah and Gaza offices reached 30 male and female (57% of whom are women), with two part-time employees. Three new employees joined AMAN Coalition during the aforementioned fiscal year, while two resigned at the end.

Within the context of the 2024 employment plan, new job advertisements for 2-3 employees will be posted in May 2024, in addition to increasing the number of contracted part-time experts to support AMAN's executive staff.

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**Note:** Attached is a full report of all activities carried out during 2023.