

JOINT DECLARATION BY THE AOMF AND AIPPF IN TIRANA
ISSUES RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF WHISTLEBLOWERS IN THE
FIGHT AGAINST BREACHES OF INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC SERVICES AND
CORRUPTION

JUNE 25, 2025

Note: This translation of the original text of the declaration is provided by Ombud NB in order to comply with our obligations under the Official Languages Act.

On June 24 and 25, 2025, following **World Whistleblower Day**, representatives of the **Association des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie (AOMF)** and the **Association Internationale des Procureurs et Poursuivants Francophones (AIPPF)**, gathered in Tirana for the joint seminar on the protection of whistleblowers in the fight against breaches of integrity in public services and corruption, adopted the following declaration.

Having regard to:

1. The resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations entitled *The role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law* (Nos. 77/224, 75/186, 72/186, 71/200, 69/168, 67/163, 65/207 and 633/169);
2. The UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of December 16, 1966, which guarantees the right to freedom of expression;
3. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) of October 31, 2003, known as the “Merida”, which provides for the establishment of reporting systems to facilitate the disclosure of corruption, the protection of witnesses, experts, and victims, and the protection of persons who report information relating to corruption;
4. The United Nations resolution on the protection of whistleblowers (ICAC/COSP/2023/L.12/Rev.1) of December 15, 2023, which strengthens common standards for the implementation of disclosure mechanisms and the protection of whistleblowers against retaliation;
5. The OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions of December 17, 1997;
6. The African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (CUAPLC) of July 11, 2003;
7. The 1996 Inter-American Convention against Corruption;
8. The 1950 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as well as landmark rulings by the European Court of Human Rights concerning the rights of whistleblowers, such as *Halet v. Luxembourg* of February 14, 2023;
9. The Francophone Action Plan for Justice, the Rule of Law, Human Rights, and Development adopted in Cairo on November 1, 1995;
10. The Bamako Declaration on Democracy, Rights, and Freedoms adopted on November 3, 2000, and the appended Program of Action;
11. The Declaration on Conflict Prevention and Human Security adopted in Saint Boniface, Canada, on May 14, 2006;

12. Directive (EU) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council of October 23, 2019, on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law;
13. The 2019 G20 Guiding Principles for Whistleblower Protection Legislation;
14. Recommendation CM/Rec 1201417 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and Resolutions 1729 1201DI; 2300 120191 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the protection of whistleblowers;
15. The 2017 OECD Council Recommendation on Public Integrity, calling for the establishment of coherent and comprehensive public integrity systems and the development of a culture of public integrity across society;
16. The AOMF Quebec Declaration on the Protection of Whistleblowers, October 17, 2024.

Defining a whistleblower as a person who, in good faith and without compensation, discloses information about what they reasonably believe to be wrongdoing, violations of the law, or unethical behaviour, often in the course of their work. This information may relate to crimes, offences, damage to the environment, public health, safety, or other forms of malpractice, and requires protection, particularly in a professional context.

Whereas:

1. Integrity issues within public administration take many forms, including, but not limited to, abuse of power and public funds, corruption, influence peddling, extortion, illegal taking of interest, collusion, favouritism, ethical conflicts, or any form of serious mismanagement that undermines the integrity of public services or the health or safety of individuals or the environment;
2. Corruption and breaches of public integrity weaken the rule of law, undermine citizens' trust in institutions, and hinder the goals of justice, development, and democratic governance;
3. By reporting abuses, irregularities, fraud, or violations of fundamental rights, whistleblowers provide an invaluable service to society by highlighting shortcomings and triggering corrective action;
4. Their courage contributes not only to the disclosure of reprehensible acts, but also to the improvement of public practices, the protection of common goods, the prevention of serious harm, and the defence of the public interest;
5. Whistleblowers must receive guidance and support to prevent and combat the reprisals they too often suffer;
6. **Mediators**, as guarantors of the rights of public service users and promoters of good governance, **prosecutors**, as defenders of the interests of society and holders of public authority, but also **other interested parties** such as lawyers and associations, are pillars of institutional integrity and the fight against corruption;
7. Cooperation between these institutions is not only possible, but also **essential** to ensure the consistency, effectiveness, and credibility of government action in this area.

Solemnly reaffirm:

- The right of every person to safely report wrongdoing;
- The commitment to protect those who, in a spirit of civic duty, speak out in the name of the public interest;
- The requirement to build a legal, institutional and cultural environment **conducive to whistleblowing**, transparency, and accountability.

Emphasize the need for proactive public communication in order to:

- Raise public awareness of existing protection mechanisms, particularly those that guarantee the confidentiality of the process;
- Break stereotypes that wrongly equate whistleblowers with informers;
- Publicly recognize the contributions of whistleblowing to the rule of law, social justice, public ethics and institutional performance.

Recommend the consolidation of a lasting partnership between mediators and prosecutors, through:

- Clearly defined collaboration protocols;
- The establishment of confidential and secure exchange channels, tailored to the nature of the disclosure;
- The regular organization of bilateral or multilateral meetings to coordinate the institutional response to alerts;
- Training of public officials on the roles and obligations of both institutions;
- The joint development of practical guides or common reference frameworks for analyzing disclosures;
- A monitoring and evaluation framework, following on from these recommendations—known as the “Tirana recommendations”.

Call for a shared culture of public integrity, based on:

- Recognition of the complementary roles of mediation and legal action;
- Disseminating a shared vision of transparency and accountability;
- Defending the values of independence, integrity, fairness and efficiency;
- Mobilizing public institutions, civil society and the media to create a protective and respectful environment for whistleblowing;
- Research into cultural practices of whistleblowing.

Call upon the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) to:

- Promote throughout the Francophonie the cause of whistleblowers as a vehicle for democracy, reform and justice;

- Support legal harmonization efforts in the area of whistleblower protection;
- Support institutions in implementing sustainable and effective inter-institutional collaborations.

Conclusion

By organizing this seminar, the AOMF and the AIPPF wanted to send a strong message: **whistleblowing is a civic duty, and protecting whistleblowers is a collective responsibility.**

They undertake to bring this declaration to the attention of their institutions, the OIF, the competent authorities, and their respective networks, and to encourage them to develop their collaboration at the national level.

The AOMF and the AIPPF propose to jointly organize a meeting in 2026 to identify tools for collaboration between mediators and prosecutors, identify best practices in this area, and disseminate them to their members in order to advance the rule of law in the French-speaking world.