Title of research article ⊕

Deterrent Mechanisms for Combating Bribery of National Public Officials: An Analysis in Light of Article 25 of Algeria's Law No. 06-01 on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption

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Abstract

Bribery of public officials constitutes one of the most pernicious forms of corruption, inflicting severe damage on the integrity of public service. Its proliferation adversely affects national economies, impedes sustainable development, and erodes public trust in administrative institutions. Given the transnational character of contemporary economic crimes, Algeria has undertaken substantive legislative reforms, notably through amendments to Law No. 06-01 on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption, to align domestic provisions with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003), which the country ratified in 2004. This alignment reflects a broader commitment to international standards in combating corruption, emphasizing both preventive and punitive measures. The study explores how these reforms, particularly Article 25, serve as deterrent mechanisms against bribery. By examining the conceptual underpinnings, criminalization strategies, and punishment policies, the research highlights the strengths and potential shortcomings of Algeria's approach. It argues that while the law provides a robust framework, its efficacy depends on effective implementation, including judicial enforcement and societal engagement. The analysis underscores the need for ongoing reforms to enhance deterrence, such as integrating advanced monitoring technologies and fostering international cooperation. Ultimately, this paper contributes to the discourse on anti-corruption strategies in developing nations, offering insights that could inform policy enhancements not only in Algeria but also in similar jurisdictions facing endemic corruption challenges.

1. Introduction

Safeguarding the state from corruption necessitates rigorous pursuit of public officials who abuse their authority or trade influence—whether real or perceived—to preserve the integrity of public office and the proper functioning of administrative apparatuses (Al-Shadili, 2005). Bribery of public officials is explicitly criminalized under Algerian law, particularly in Law No. 06-01, as well as in international instruments such as the United Nations Convention against

836 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 12, Vol. 8, 2025
Deterrent Mechanisms for Combating Bribery of National Public Officials: An Analysis in Light of Article 25 of Algeria's Law No. 06-01 on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption
Fares Khettabi

Corruption (United Nations General Assembly, 2003). This criminalization is not merely a legal formality but a critical response to the pervasive threat that corruption poses to governance and economic stability. In Algeria, where historical and socio-economic factors have contributed to corruption's entrenchment, such legislative measures represent a pivotal shift toward transparency and accountability.

The phenomenon of corruption, including bribery, has deep roots in many societies, often exacerbated by weak institutions, economic disparities, and inadequate oversight. In the Algerian context, post-independence challenges, including rapid urbanization and resource-dependent economies, have created fertile ground for corrupt practices. Bribery, in particular, undermines the merit-based allocation of resources and services, leading to inefficiencies and social inequities. Empirical studies, such as those by the World Bank (2019), estimate that corruption costs developing economies up to 2.6% of GDP annually, with bribery accounting for a significant portion through distorted public procurement and service delivery. The ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2004 marked a turning point, compelling Algeria to harmonize its domestic laws with global norms. Law No. 06-01, enacted in 2006, embodies this commitment by establishing a comprehensive framework for prevention, detection, and punishment of corruption offenses.

This study holds significant relevance within contemporary penal scholarship, which increasingly addresses the evolving nature of financial corruption. Recent literature highlights the shift from reactive to proactive anti-corruption strategies, incorporating behavioral economics and institutional theory to explain persistence (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). By focusing on Article 25 of Law No. 06-01, the research aims to illuminate the mechanisms for deterring bribery of national public officials. The central research question examines the efficacy of Algeria's criminalization and punishment policies in combating this offense. Subsidiary questions explore how the legislator has structured criminalization, what punitive measures have been enacted, and the implementation challenges that undermine deterrence. To address these, the study delves into the theoretical foundations of bribery, its legal typologies, and the practical implications of the law's provisions, drawing on comparative insights from other jurisdictions.

A descriptive–analytical **methodology** is employed to dissect relevant legal provisions. This approach involves a systematic review of statutory texts, doctrinal interpretations, and comparative analyses, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the law's intent and application. Methodologically, the study integrates qualitative content analysis of primary sources (e.g., Law No. 06-01 and UNCAC) with secondary data from scholarly works and reports (e.g., Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index). Comparative elements draw from civil and common law systems to evaluate Algeria's dual regime. The study is organized into three main sections: the first delineates the conceptual framework of bribery, providing a foundational understanding of its definitions, rationales, and legislative typologies; the second evaluates the criminalization and sanctioning regime under Article 25, with detailed examinations of its elements and penalties; and the third assesses effectiveness, implementation challenges, and policy implications through empirical and comparative lenses. Through this structure, the paper not only analyzes the current framework but also identifies research gaps, such as the limited empirical evaluation of Law No. 06-01's impact, contributing to the broader academic and policy dialogue on anti-corruption efforts in transitional economies.

Furthermore, the importance of this analysis extends beyond Algeria. In an era of globalization, where corruption often transcends borders, understanding national mechanisms like those in Law No. 06-01 can inform international best practices. For instance, the law's emphasis on both active and passive bribery aligns with trends in jurisdictions such as France and the United States, where similar dual regimes are employed to combat corruption (Fisman & Golden, 2017). However, challenges such as enforcement gaps and cultural attitudes toward corruption persist, necessitating a multifaceted approach that includes education, institutional reforms, and technological innovations. This introduction sets the stage for a deeper exploration, emphasizing that effective deterrence requires not only strong laws but also their rigorous application in practice, supported by empirical evidence and theoretical rigor.

2. Conceptual Framework of Bribery of Public Officials

Public administration is executed through public officials, who may solicit bribes or succumb to inducements in exchange for facilitating services. Algerian legislation incorporated bribery within the specialized framework of Law No. 06-01 (Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire, 2006), in harmony with the

837 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 12, Vol. 8, 2025
Deterrent Mechanisms for Combating Bribery of National Public Officials: An Analysis in Light of Article 25 of Algeria's Law No. 06-01 on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption
Fares Khettabi

United Nations Convention against Corruption (United Nations General Assembly, 2003). This integration reflects a deliberate effort to address corruption as a systemic issue rather than isolated incidents. Bribery, as a core manifestation of corruption, involves the illicit exchange of benefits for official actions, distorting the principles of fairness and efficiency in governance. Drawing on principal-agent theory, bribery can be viewed as an agency problem where officials (agents) prioritize personal gains over public interests (principals), leading to moral hazard (Klitgaard, 1988). This section (2.1) addresses the definition and rationale for criminalization and comparative legislative perspectives, providing a comprehensive conceptual base for the subsequent analysis.

2.1. Definition and Rationale for Criminalization

2.1.1. Definition

Neither Law No. 06-01 nor the United Nations Convention explicitly defines bribery. Doctrinally, bribery is conceptualized as the commodification of public office and a breach of the duty of integrity incumbent upon any holder of public authority or provider of public services (Boussaïga, 2013). It entails an agreement whereby a public official obtains—or is promised—an undue advantage in return for performing or omitting an official act. Two principal actors are involved: the "bribe" (public official who solicits, accepts, or demands the advantage) and the "briber" (individual offering the advantage to secure the act or omission) (Al-Shadili, 2005).

This definition captures the essence of bribery as a transactional offense, where the public official's role is pivotal. For example, in practical scenarios, a customs officer might demand a payment to expedite the clearance of goods, or a licensing authority could accept gifts to approve permits that would otherwise be denied. Such acts not only violate legal norms but also perpetuate a cycle of dependency on illicit incentives. The absence of an explicit definition in the law allows for flexibility in interpretation, enabling courts to adapt to emerging forms of bribery, such as those facilitated by digital means or crypto-currencies. However, this flexibility can also lead to inconsistencies in application, highlighting the need for judicial guidelines to ensure uniform enforcement. Doctrinal scholars emphasize that the core of bribery lies in the undue nature of the advantage, which must be distinguished from legitimate gifts or rewards (Hosni, 1988). From a theoretical standpoint, this aligns with game theory models of corruption, where bribery represents a Nash equilibrium in low-trust environments, perpetuating inefficiency (Aidt, 2003). In Algeria, historical cases, such as the 2010s scandals in the energy sector, illustrate how undefined boundaries enable sophisticated bribery schemes involving offshore accounts and intermediaries (Global Integrity, 2021).

2.1.2. Rationale

The protected legal interest is the integrity of public administration—an indispensable pillar of organized society. Trading official acts reduces public service to a marketable commodity, stripping it of its elevated status and undermining citizens' respect for state institutions (Hosni, 1988). Bribery engenders unjust discrimination: those who pay secure preferential treatment, while others are marginalized, thereby corroding public confidence in governmental impartiality. It further enriches officials illegitimately, distorts egalitarian relations between the state and citizens, and fosters inequity among public servants, potentially incentivizing emulation and systemic corruption (Al-Shadili, 2005). Article 1 of the United Nations Convention articulates the overarching objective: promoting integrity, accountability, and proper management of public affairs and property (United Nations General Assembly, 2003).

Beyond these immediate effects, the rationale for criminalizing bribery extends to broader socio-economic impacts. In Algeria, where corruption has been linked to inefficiencies in sectors like oil and gas, bribery exacerbates poverty and hinders foreign investment. Studies indicate that corruption can reduce GDP growth by up to 1-2% annually in affected countries (World Bank, 2019). Moreover, it perpetuates inequality by favoring the wealthy or connected, undermining social mobility and democratic principles. The Convention's emphasis on prevention underscores that criminalization alone is insufficient; it must be coupled with ethical training and transparent processes. In this light, Algeria's Law No. 06-01 serves not only as a punitive tool but also as a deterrent signal, reinforcing the state's commitment to ethical governance. Critically, the rationale also considers the psychological dimensions: bribery erodes moral standards within bureaucracies, creating a culture where integrity is secondary to personal gain (Vermelle, 1994). Institutional economics further supports this, positing that bribery increases transaction costs and reduces institutional trust, leading to suboptimal resource allocation (Lambsdorff, 2007). In developing contexts like

838 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 12, Vol. 8, 2025
Deterrent Mechanisms for Combating Bribery of National Public Officials: An Analysis in Light of Article 25 of Algeria's Law No. 06-01 on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption
Fares Khettabi

Algeria, this rationale is amplified by post-colonial legacies of patronage networks, which Law No. 06-01 seeks to dismantle through targeted criminalization (Khan, 2006).

2.2. Legislative Perspectives on Bribery Typology

Bribery manifests in unilateral and bilateral forms, with Algerian law recognizing three variants under Law No. 06-01: bribery of national public officials (Article 25), foreign officials, and in public procurement. Two doctrinal systems prevail: the unitary and dual regimes. This subsection explores these regimes in detail, offering a comparative lens to evaluate their implications, informed by cross-national data on anti-corruption efficacy.

2.2.1. Legislative Regimes

- **Unitary Regime**: Views bribery as a single offense perpetrated by the public official, with the briber as an accomplice when participation conditions are met. This approach, common in some civil law traditions, emphasizes the official's breach of duty as the primary violation. For instance, in Egyptian penal law, bribery is treated as a unified crime centered on the public servant's actions, with accomplices liable under general complicity rules (Hosni, 1988). The unitary model simplifies prosecution by focusing on the core harm to public integrity, avoiding the need to prove mutual intent between parties. Empirical studies show that unitary systems can achieve higher conviction rates in resource-constrained environments due to streamlined evidentiary requirements (UNODC, 2015).
- **Dual Regime (adopted in Algeria, mirroring French law):** Distinguishes two discrete offenses—"passive bribery" (solicitation or acceptance by the official) and "active bribery" (offering or granting by the briber) (Boussaïga, 2013). This bifurcation allows for independent prosecution of each party, even if the transaction is incomplete. In France, this regime has evolved through amendments to the Penal Code, enabling authorities to target corporate entities involved in active bribery (Vermelle, 1994). Algeria's adoption of this model aligns with the Convention's requirements, facilitating cross-border investigations where one party may be outside jurisdiction.

Comparatively, the dual regime is also evident in common law systems, such as the UK's Bribery Act 2010, which criminalizes both offering and accepting bribes as separate offenses, with provisions for corporate liability. In contrast, some jurisdictions like Germany blend elements of both, treating bribery as a core offense but allowing for differentiated penalties based on the actor's role (Transparency International, 2020). These variations highlight the adaptability of anti-corruption laws to cultural and legal contexts. For example, data from the OECD (2018) indicate that dual regimes correlate with a 15-20% increase in corporate prosecutions, though they may complicate cases involving international elements.

2.2.2. Critical Evaluation

The dual regime contravenes logical coherence by fragmenting a singular transaction into independent crimes, ostensibly to enable prosecution when one party rejects the overture. However, the unitary approach better aligns with the protected interest—administrative integrity—primarily violated by the official entrusted with its preservation. Passive bribery could be independently criminalized (e.g., as improper receipt of gifts), rendering the dual framework redundant (Al-Shadili, 2005). Critics argue that the dual model risks over-criminalization, potentially deterring legitimate business interactions due to fear of misinterpretation. For example, in procurement processes, offers of hospitality might be misconstrued as active bribery, stifling economic activity. Behavioral studies support this, showing that ambiguous laws can lead to risk aversion among firms, reducing investment (Gans-Morse et al., 2018).

On the other hand, proponents of the dual regime, including Algerian legislators, contend that it enhances deterrence by holding both parties accountable, thereby disrupting the supply-and-demand dynamics of corruption. Empirical evidence from France suggests that this approach has increased conviction rates, as it allows for standalone charges against bribers even if officials evade prosecution (OECD, 2018). In Algeria, the dual regime's implementation has faced challenges, such as evidentiary burdens in proving intent, but it has enabled high-profile cases, like those involving state-owned enterprises in the Sonatrach scandal, where active bribery by foreign firms was prosecuted independently (Freedom House, 2020). A balanced evaluation suggests that while the unitary regime

839 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 12, Vol. 8, 2025
Deterrent Mechanisms for Combating Bribery of National Public Officials: An Analysis in Light of Article 25 of Algeria's Law No. 06-01 on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption
Fares Khettabi

offers conceptual purity, the dual model's practicality in modern, transnational corruption scenarios makes it more effective for deterrence. Future reforms could hybridize elements, such as incorporating accomplice liability within a dual framework to address criticisms (Boussaïga, 2013). This critical lens underscores the need for ongoing legislative refinement to optimize anti-bribery mechanisms, potentially informed by econometric models assessing regime impacts on corruption indices (Serra, 2006).

3. Criminalization and Punishment Policy under Article 25 of Law No. 06-01

Article 25 criminalizes bribery of national public officials, drawing directly from Article 15 of the United Nations Convention (United Nations General Assembly, 2003). It imposes aggravated misdemeanor sanctions consonant with international standards. This section examines criminalization provisions and punitive measures, while also assessing their effectiveness and potential challenges in implementation, supported by empirical data and comparative analysis.

3.1. Criminalization Policy

Article 15 of the Convention mandates states to criminalize: (a) promising, offering, or giving an undue advantage to a public official; and (b) solicitation or acceptance thereof, to induce an act or omission in official duties. Article 25 mirrors these elements, encompassing passive and active bribery. This policy reflects a proactive stance, aiming to cover all stages of the bribery process from initiation to completion. In theoretical terms, this aligns with deterrence theory, where comprehensive criminalization increases perceived risks for potential offenders (Becker, 1968).

3.1.1. Elements of Passive Bribery

Three constituents are required:

• **Presumed Element:** Public Official Status

Article 2(2) of Law No. 06-01 defines a public official broadly, encompassing legislative, executive, administrative, or judicial personnel—appointed or elected, permanent or temporary, remunerated or not—and any person performing a public function or service as per domestic law. This definition aligns with the Convention and diverges from narrower administrative law conceptualizations (Piquamel, 1973, as cited in Jedidi, 2011). The breadth ensures coverage of diverse roles, such as contractors providing public services, addressing gaps in traditional definitions. Historically, narrower scopes in Algerian law limited prosecutions, but this expansion has facilitated cases against quasi-public entities. However, it raises questions about overreach, potentially including private actors in public-private partnerships. Comparative analysis with the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act shows similar broad definitions enhance enforcement but require clear guidelines to avoid vagueness (Koehler, 2012).

• **Material Element**

Comprises solicitation, acceptance, or receipt of an undue advantage in exchange for an official act or omission.

- **Solicitation:** Unilateral demand by the official, sufficient even absent acceptance, as it commodifies public duty (Hosni, 1988). This element captures proactive corruption, where officials initiate demands, common in bureaucratic bottlenecks like permit approvals. Case studies from Algeria reveal solicitation often occurs in customs and licensing, contributing to 30% of reported corruption cases (Algerian Ministry of Justice, 2022).

- **Acceptance:** Genuine agreement to receive the advantage; feigned acceptance to facilitate detection negates criminality (Boussaïga, 2013). Courts must discern intent, often relying on circumstantial evidence like communications or financial trails. Digital forensics has become crucial here, with tools like blockchain analysis aiding proof in modern cases (Kshetri, 2017).

- **Object:** Any undue advantage—pecuniary (money, assets) or non-pecuniary (promotion, favors) (Al-Shadili, 2005). The law's inclusivity covers modern forms, such as digital assets or intangible benefits, adapting to evolving corruption tactics.

• **Moral Element**

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Intentionality is indispensable; negligence is insufficient. The official must know their status, competence, and the undue nature of the advantage, with volition directed toward solicitation or acceptance (Al-Shadili, 2005; Boussaïga, 2013). This requires proof of mens rea, which can be challenging in covert operations but is essential to distinguish corruption from inadvertent errors. Psychological profiling in investigations, as used in advanced jurisdictions, could enhance this element's application (Vrij et al., 2017).

3.1.2. Elements of Active Bribery

Mirrors passive bribery but initiates from the briber: promising, offering, or granting an undue advantage to induce official misconduct. The promise must be serious and aimed at subverting duties (United Nations General Assembly, 2003; Journal Officiel, 2006). The moral element replicates passive bribery requirements, emphasizing deliberate intent. Active bribery often involves corporate actors, as seen in international scandals like the Odebrecht case, where firms bribed officials across borders. In Algeria, this element has been crucial in prosecuting foreign companies involved in energy sector deals, aligning with the Convention's transnational focus. Challenges include proving the link between the advantage and the official act, particularly in complex financial arrangements. Econometric analyses suggest that targeting active bribery reduces overall incidence by disrupting supply-side incentives (Abbink et al., 2002).

3.2. Punishment Policy

Algerian penalties for corruption offenses, including bribery, reflect heightened severity, departing from traditional misdemeanor ceilings. This escalation signals a strong deterrent intent, recognizing bribery's profound societal harm, consistent with rational choice models of crime (Paternoster, 2010).

3.2.1. Principal Penalties

Article 25 prescribes imprisonment from 2 to 10 years and fines from DZD 200,000 to DZD 1,000,000. Aggravated sanctions (10–20 years) apply to judges, senior officials, judicial police, or court clerks, reflecting the gravity and trust reposed in their roles (Article 48, Law No. 06-01). These penalties are calibrated to match the offense's severity, with aggravation factors considering the official's position and potential impact. For instance, bribery by a judge undermines the justice system, warranting harsher punishment. Cross-national data indicate that such graduated penalties correlate with lower corruption perceptions in countries like Rwanda (Transparency International, 2020).

Mitigation or exemption is available under Article 49: full exoneration for pre-prosecution disclosure aiding identification of perpetrators; halving of penalty for post-prosecution cooperation leading to arrests. This incentivizes repentance and investigative assistance, consistent with Article 37 of the Convention (United Nations General Assembly, 2003). Such provisions have proven effective in other jurisdictions, like the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, where deferred prosecution agreements encourage self-reporting. In Algeria, however, utilization remains low due to distrust in authorities, suggesting a need for whistleblower protections. Studies show that robust leniency programs can increase reporting by 25-40% (Bigoni et al., 2012).

3.2.2. Complementary Penalties

Article 50 incorporates penalties from Article 9 of the Penal Code, including confiscation, civic disenfranchisement, residence restrictions, professional disqualification, enterprise closure, public procurement exclusion, and publication of convictions. Article 51 authorizes freezing, seizure, and confiscation of illicit proceeds, safeguarding bona fide third-party rights. These measures extend beyond incarceration, aiming at long-term deterrence by stripping offenders of gains and opportunities. Confiscation, in particular, aligns with the Convention's asset recovery provisions, enabling the return of funds to public coffers. Practical examples include the seizure of properties in Algerian corruption trials, which have recovered millions in assets. However, implementation challenges, such as tracing hidden assets, underscore the need for enhanced forensic capabilities. International comparisons, such as Italy's anti-mafia asset forfeiture laws, demonstrate that effective confiscation can recover up to 10% of illicit gains annually (Calderoni, 2014).

841 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 12, Vol. 8, 2025
Deterrent Mechanisms for Combating Bribery of National Public Officials: An Analysis in Light of Article 25 of Algeria's Law No. 06-01 on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption
Fares Khettabi

Sci. Educ. Innov. Context Mod. Probl.| ISSN p (e): 27900169; 27900177

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3.3. Effectiveness and Challenges in Implementation

While Article 25 provides a solid legal foundation, its deterrent impact hinges on effective enforcement. Challenges include judicial capacity, political interference, and cultural norms that normalize petty corruption. Statistics from Algeria's National Anti-Corruption Authority indicate a rise in prosecutions since 2006, with over 1,500 cases annually by 2022, but conviction rates remain modest at around 40%, often due to evidentiary hurdles (Algerian Ministry of Justice, 2022). Comparatively, countries like Singapore have achieved greater success through stringent enforcement and high salaries for officials, reducing incentives for bribery and achieving a Corruption Perceptions Index score of 85/100 (Transparency International, 2020).

To enhance effectiveness, Algeria could invest in specialized anti-corruption courts and digital tracking systems, such as AI-based anomaly detection in procurement data, which has reduced corruption in Estonia by 15% (Kattel & Mergel, 2018). Moreover, public awareness campaigns could shift societal attitudes, complementing legal measures. Addressing these challenges is crucial for realizing the law's full potential. Empirical regression analyses from similar contexts suggest that combining legal reforms with institutional strengthening yields a 20-30% reduction in bribery incidence over a decade (Treisman, 2007).

3.4. Empirical Evidence and Policy Implications

This subsection presents empirical insights into Article 25's application, drawing on data from Algerian courts and international benchmarks. Between 2006 and 2022, Article 25 was invoked in 28% of corruption trials, leading to 1,200 convictions, with an average sentence of 5.5 years (Algerian Ministry of Justice, 2022). However, a panel data analysis of North African countries reveals that Algeria's enforcement lags behind Tunisia's, where similar laws achieved a 12% drop in reported bribery post-2011 reforms (World Bank, 2021). Policy implications include the need for capacity-building in forensic accounting and international asset recovery, as per UNCAC Article 60. Integrating behavioral nudges, such as ethics training programs, could further enhance deterrence, as evidenced by randomized controlled trials in India showing a 10% reduction in corrupt behavior (Banerjee et al., 2017). These findings underscore the importance of adaptive policy-making to bridge the gap between legal intent and practical outcomes.

4. Conclusion

Algeria's Article 25 of Law No. 06-01 coherently operationalizes Article 15 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, ratified in 2004. Bribery gravely undermines public service integrity, manifesting in passive (official-initiated) and active (citizen-initiated) forms. Effective enforcement remains pivotal, as the law's success depends on judicial independence and resource allocation. Empirical evidence highlights modest gains but persistent gaps, necessitating reforms.

- **Recommendations include:**

- Salary augmentation for public officials to reduce financial incentives for corruption, drawing from successful models in Nordic countries where high wages correlate with low corruption levels (Transparency International, 2020);
- Enhanced civil society and media sensitization through targeted campaigns and partnerships with NGOs to foster a culture of accountability;
- Standalone criminalization of passive bribery to streamline prosecutions and emphasize the official's primary responsibility;
- Elevation of baseline imprisonment to 10–20 years to heighten deterrence, particularly for repeat offenders;
- Fines at tenfold the bribe value to ensure economic disincentives outweigh potential gains, as seen in U.S. sentencing guidelines;
- And life imprisonment for aggravated cases under Article 48, reserved for instances involving national security threats or massive economic damage.

Additionally, integrating technology such as blockchain for transparent transactions and AI-driven monitoring could preempt bribery attempts, with pilot studies showing efficacy in reducing procurement fraud (Kshetri, 2017).

842 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 12, Vol. 8, 2025
Deterrent Mechanisms for Combating Bribery of National Public Officials: An Analysis in Light of Article 25 of Algeria's Law No. 06-01 on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption
Fares Khettabi

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International cooperation, including mutual legal assistance treaties, would address transnational elements, aligning with UNCAC's global framework. Implementing these reforms requires political will and sustained investment, but they hold the promise of transforming Algeria's anti-corruption landscape. Ultimately, while Law No. 06-01 represents a commendable step, its evolution must adapt to emerging threats—such as digital corruption and climate-induced resource scarcity—to ensure enduring integrity in public administration. Future research should employ longitudinal studies to quantify the law's long-term impact, filling critical gaps in penal scholarship.

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843 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 12, Vol. 8, 2025
Deterrent Mechanisms for Combating Bribery of National Public Officials: An Analysis in Light of Article 25 of Algeria's Law No. 06-01 on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption
Fares Khettabi

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