

What Transparency International Chapters Around the World Are Saying About the Foreign Extortion Prevention Act

The Association for a More Just Society (Honduras):

FEPA has the potential of becoming a gamechanger in countries like Honduras, where national governments are unable or unwilling to prosecute officials due to their political or economic connections. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, a company registered in the US sold seven mobile hospitals worth 50 million dollars of Honduran taxpayers' money. Unfortunately, the hospitals were made of junk parts, reused medical equipment, and were not functional to treat Covid patients. It is widely believed that in order to effectuate the sales, Honduran officials solicited and received bribes from the company. Yet one year after the scandal, only two Honduran officials have been prosecuted, and the U.S. supplier remains at-large, as there are strong suspicions that a corrupt network of government officials is influencing the justice system.

Transparency International Malaysia:

FEPA is a brilliant idea and would add value to our anticorruption work. Currently, Malaysia has a law called the "Malaysian Anticorruption Act" that can be used to prosecute both the receiver and the giver of a bribe, including a foreign company and or foreign individual. If the United States was to have FEPA, it would build on our Act and help us work with the Malaysian government to hold corrupt officials accountable.

Transparency Venezuela:

We think that FEPA would be a good tool for going after corrupt officials in Venezuela. The prosecutor's office can prosecute petty corruption, but they cannot go after high-ranking officials, senior civil servants, or grand corruption. Grand corruption is rampant in Venezuela, and does not only involve high officials, but also the people who have worked with them, many of whom have companies in the U.S.

FEPA's "Victims of Kleptocracy Fund" would also be very interesting and relevant to our work because it would bring additional resources to mutual legal assistance treaties. We work to identify assets that have been stolen from corrupt actors in Venezuela, and a lot of these assets end up in the

United States. Our office has identified real estate, horses, luxury watches, and bank accounts that have been frozen by the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control. Most of these cases take place in South Florida and involve the beneficial owners of Venezuelan companies. If the United States could use FEPA's "Victims of Kleptocracy Fund" to help build these cases through better mutual legal assistance, it would be extremely beneficial for the people.

Transparency International Moldova:

FEPA is a positive initiative that could bring many benefits to Moldova. In Moldova, foreign companies are hesitant to bring their business to the country due to potential corruption issues and a corrupt justice system. There is significant risk for investors because of fear that their investments won't be protected. Moldovans are eager to have a stronger market for foreign investment that can help grow our economy. Even public awareness that the U.S. will seek to prosecute corrupt officials who demand bribes would be a good initiative for fighting corruption in Moldova, and could bring change.