

Tunis, Tunisia
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News release

Tunisians are concerned about smuggling and corruption, say government is handling them poorly, Afrobarometer study shows

Most Tunisians say smuggling and corruption are problems in the country, and very few think the government is doing a good job of resolving them, a new Afrobarometer study shows.

Citizens are more than twice as likely to say they prefer buying legal but expensive goods over cheaper smuggled goods. Although most Tunisians say it is wrong to work as a driver of smuggled goods, a significant proportion think it is “wrong but understandable” to buy smuggled goods.

The study also shows that large majorities of citizens perceive an increased level of corruption in the country and think the government is performing poorly in its fight against corruption. Citizens who have heard about the National Anti-corruption Agency (INLUUC) are divided in their assessments of its performance.

Dissatisfaction with widespread corruption in Tunisia was one of the main causes of the 2011 revolution. Since then, however, the country's ranking in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index has worsened, from 59th out of 178 countries in 2010 to 74th out of 198 countries in 2019.

Key findings

- Almost nine in 10 Tunisians say smuggling is a major problem (71%) or a minor problem (16%) in the country (Figure 1). Only one in 10 (10%) think it is not a problem at all.
- Among those who see smuggling as a problem, only one-third (32%) say the government is doing “fairly well” or “very well” in handling the issue (Figure 2). Six in 10 (59%) say the government is doing a poor job of addressing it.
- More than two-thirds (68%) of citizens would rather buy legally imported goods than smuggled goods, even if it means paying a higher price. This includes 46% who “strongly agree” with this view (Figure 3).
- More than six in 10 citizens (64%) think it is “wrong and punishable” to work as a driver of smuggled goods, while 29% say it is “wrong but understandable” (Figure 4).
 - Fewer than half (46%) think it is “wrong and punishable” to buy smuggled goods; about the same proportion (43%) consider it “wrong but understandable.”
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of Tunisians think that the level of corruption has increased “somewhat” or “a lot” over the past year (Figure 5).
- Seven in 10 Tunisians (69%) say the government is handling the fight against corruption “fairly badly” or “very badly,” an assessment that has been fairly consistent since 2013 (Figure 6).

- Almost six in 10 citizens (56%) say they have heard about the National Anti-corruption Agency (INLUCC). Among these respondents:
 - Almost half (46%) say they are “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with its performance, while 49% are not satisfied (Figure 7).
 - Half (50%) say the INLUCC is effective in its anti-corruption work, while 44% say it is ineffective.
 - Only about four in 10 (38%) say they trust the INLUCC “somewhat” or “a lot,” while 58% trust it “just a little” or “not at all.”

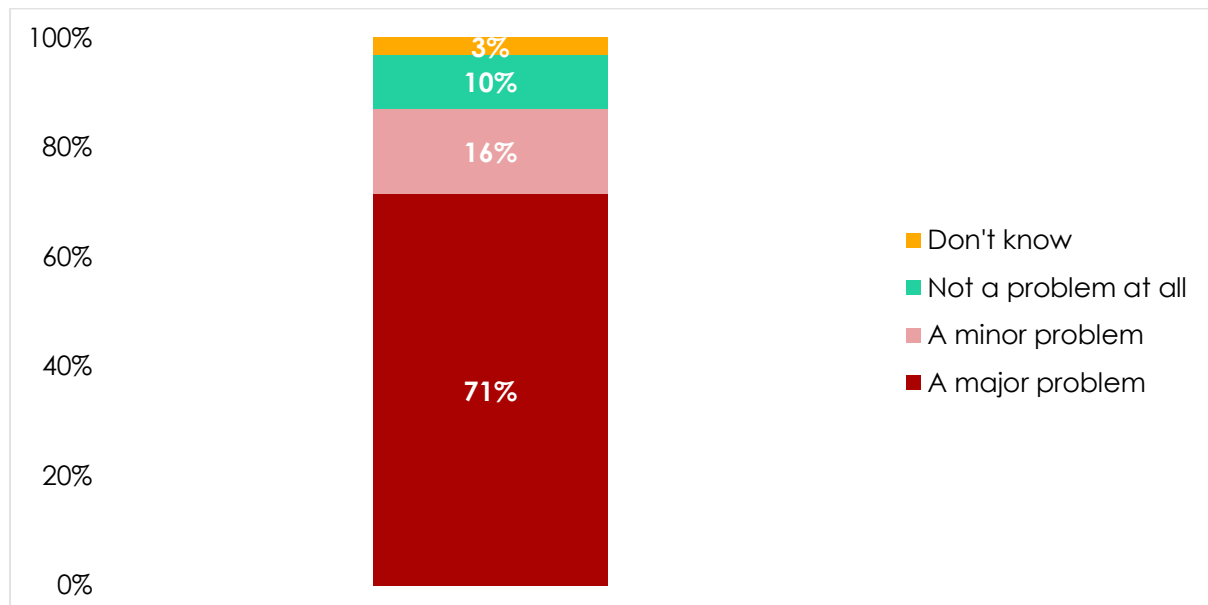
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2021 are planned in at least 35 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Tunisia, led by One to One for Research and Polling, interviewed 1,200 adults between 24 February and 18 March 2020. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Tunisia in 2013, 2015, and 2018.

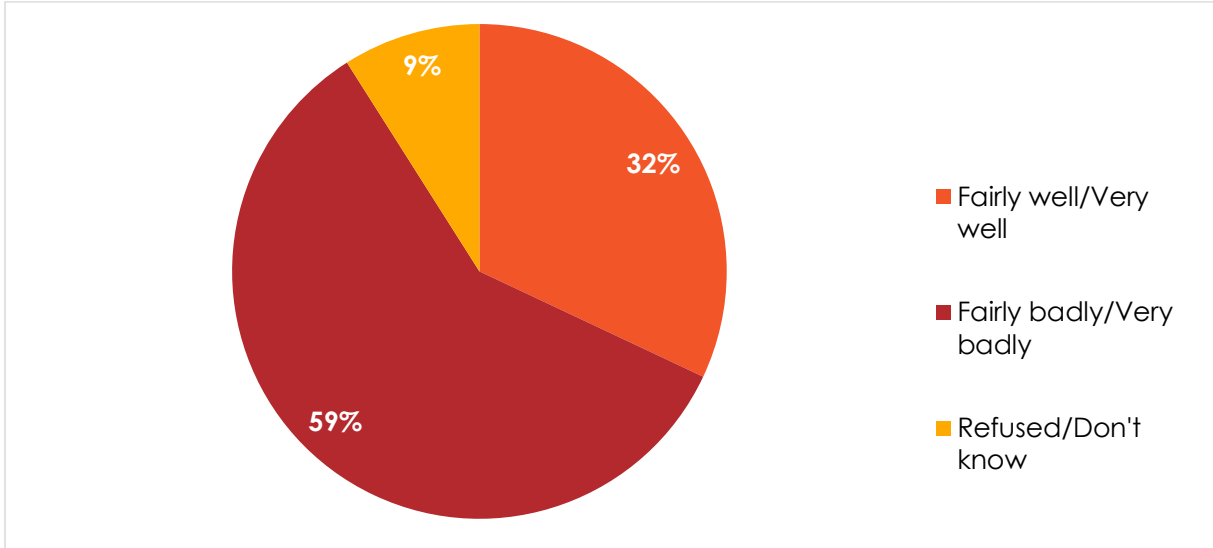
Charts

Figure 1: How much of a problem is smuggling? | Tunisia | 2020



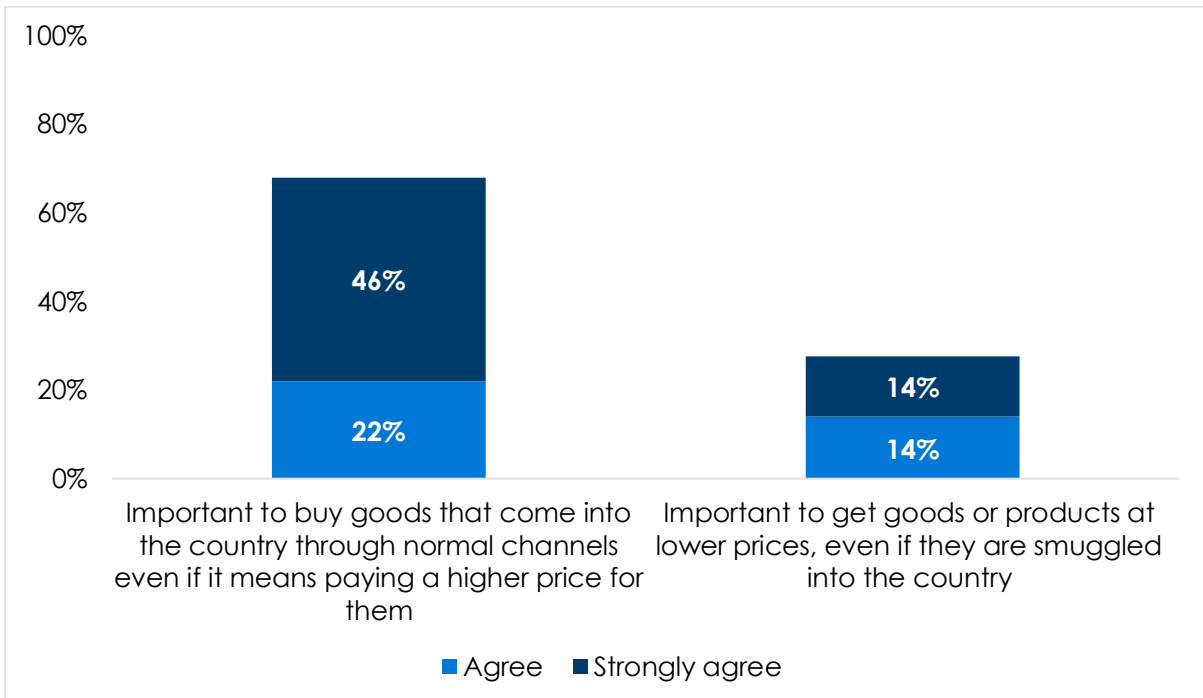
Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how much of a problem is smuggling in Tunisia today?*

Figure 2: Government performance in handling the issue of smuggling | Tunisia | 2020



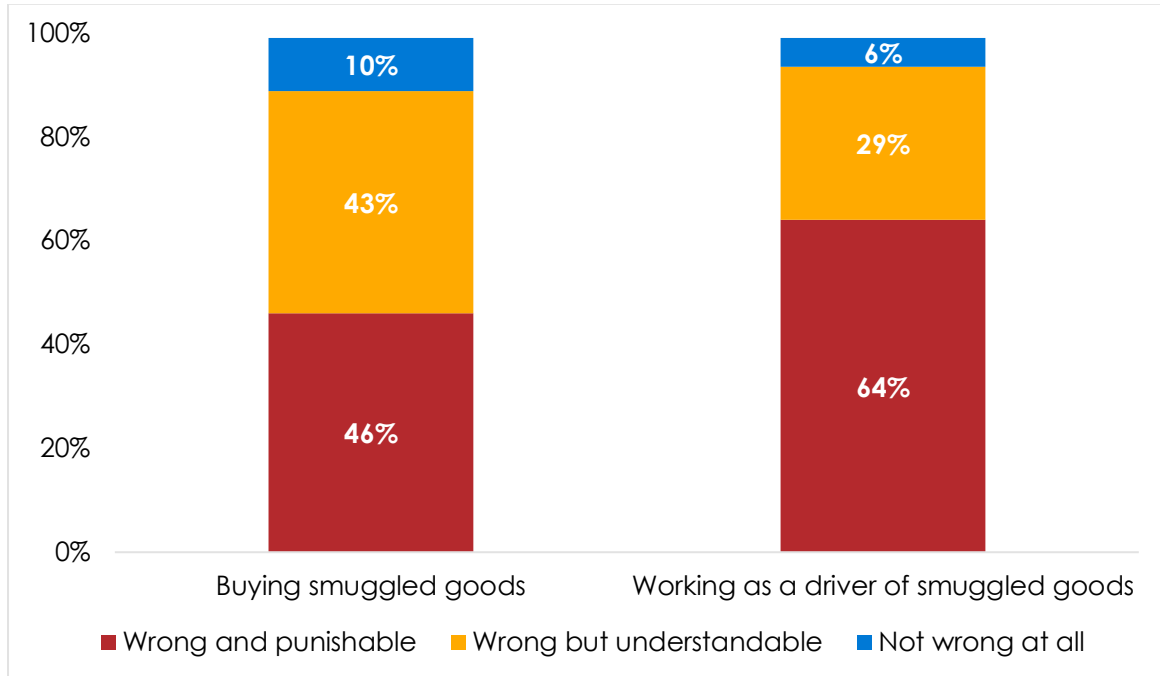
Respondents who said smuggling is a “major” or “minor” problem were asked: How well or badly would you say the government is handling the issue of smuggling of goods in this country, or haven't you heard enough to say? (Note: Figure excludes respondents who said smuggling is “not a problem at all” or didn't know)

Figure 3: Expensive legal goods vs. cheaper smuggled goods | Tunisia | 2020



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: It is more important to get goods or products at lower prices, even if they are smuggled into the country.
 Statement 2: It is more important to buy goods that come into the country through normal channels even if it means paying a higher price for them.

Figure 4: Is dealing in smuggled goods wrong and punishable? | Tunisia | 2020

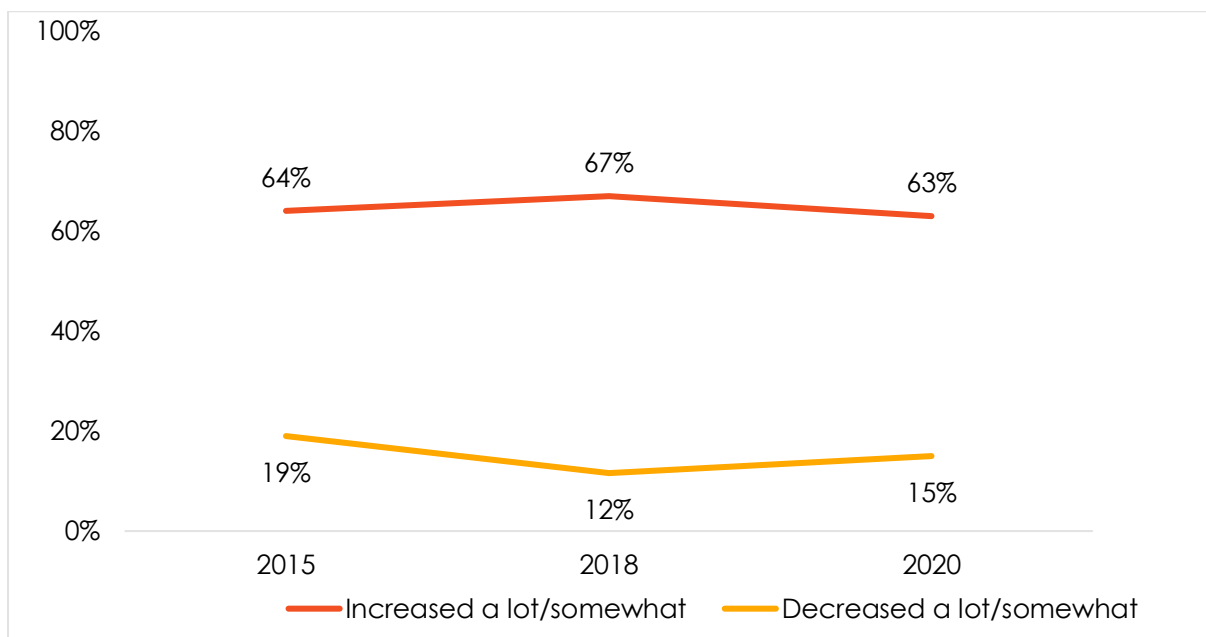


Respondents were asked: For each statement, please tell me whether you think the action is not wrong at all, wrong but understandable, or wrong and punishable:

An individual knowingly buying goods smuggled into the country?

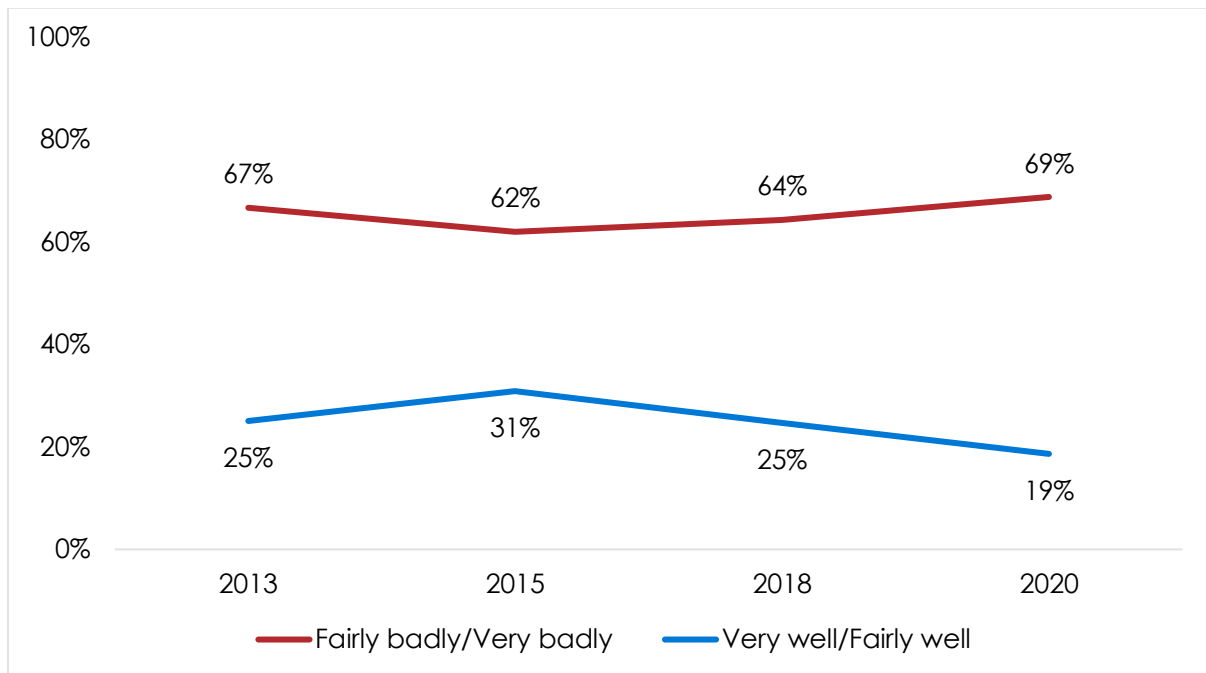
An individual accepting to work as a driver of a cargo van carrying goods that are known to be smuggled?

Figure 5: Level of corruption over the past year | Tunisia | 2015-2020



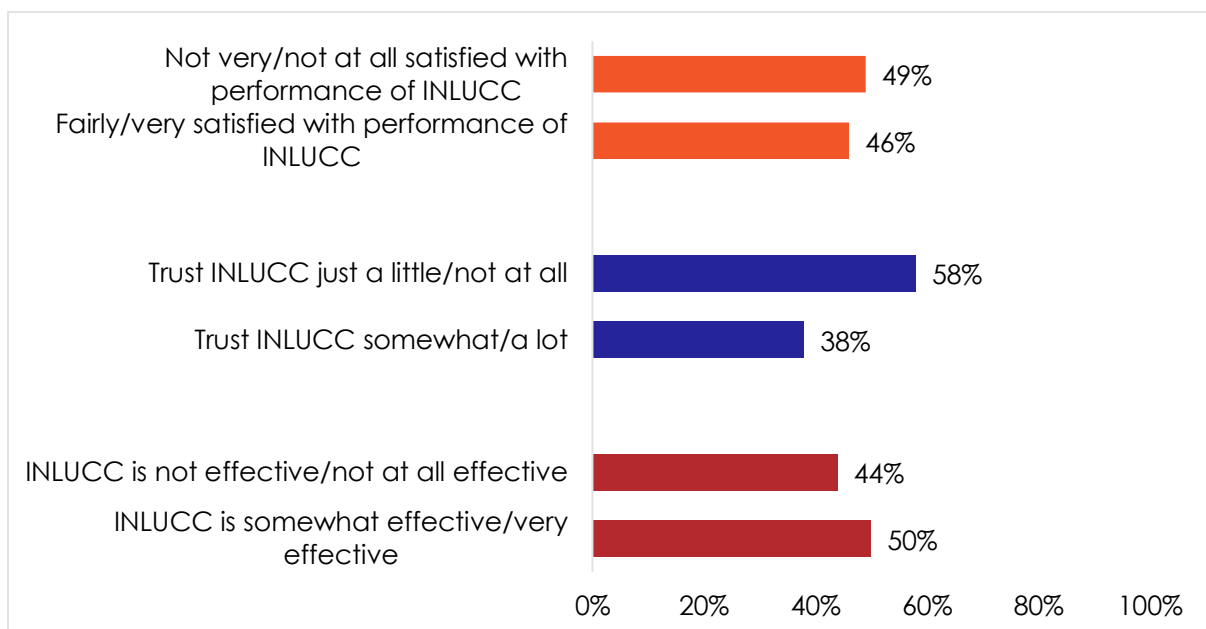
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased or stayed the same?

Figure 6: Government performance in fighting corruption | Tunisia | 2013-2020



Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling fighting corruption in government, or haven't you heard enough to say?

Figure 7: Perceptions of the National Anti-corruption Agency | Tunisia | 2020



Respondents who have heard about the National Anti-corruption Agency were asked:
 Would you say the National Anti-corruption Agency or INLUCC has been effective or ineffective in the fight against corruption in Tunisia?
 Overall, how satisfied are you with the performance of the National Anti-Corruption Agency or INLUCC?
 How much do you trust the National Anti-corruption Agency or INLUCC?
 (Note: Figure excludes respondents who said they haven't heard about the INLUCC.)

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