

One to One for Research and Polling
Tunis, Tunisia
1 October 2018

News release

Reporting corruption: Six in 10 Tunisians say they risk retaliation

Six in 10 Tunisians say they risk retaliation if they report incidents of corruption, although the same proportion think ordinary citizens can make a difference in fighting corruption, a recent Afrobarometer survey reveals. Citizens are divided as to whether authorities will take action when they report such incidents.

The study also shows that seven in 10 Tunisians say the level of corruption in the country has increased, compared to the previous year. Corruption ranks third among the most important problems that citizens want the government to address, and citizens are largely dissatisfied with the government's performance in fighting it. Government officials and members of Parliament are perceived to be the most corrupt leaders, while the police is the institution that citizens most frequently acknowledge bribing. Both rich people and, to a lesser extent, ordinary people are perceived as likely to get away with paying bribes or using personal connections to gain illegal advantages.

Perceptions of official corruption were one of the main reasons for the wave of protests in 2010-2011 that led to the overthrow of President Ben Ali. Seven years after these protests, Tunisia still scored only 42 (out of 100) on Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and ranked 74th out of 180 countries, an insignificant change from 73rd in 2011.

Key findings

- About six in 10 Tunisians (59%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that ordinary citizens can make a difference in fighting corruption (Figure 1). The same proportion (61%), however, say that people risk retaliation if they report incidents of corruption.
- Only four in 10 respondents (41%) say that it is “somewhat likely” or “very likely” that authorities will take action if they report incidents of corruption (Figure 2). The same proportion (42%) say it is “not very likely” or “not at all likely.”
- Two-thirds (67%) of Tunisians say the level of corruption has increased over the past year. The proportion of citizens who say the level of corruption has “increased a lot” rose from 42% in 2015 to 55% (Figure 3).
- Corruption ranks third among the most important problems that citizens want the government to address, after unemployment and management of the economy.
- Two-thirds (64%) of Tunisians say the government is handling the fight against corruption “very badly” or “fairly badly.” Citizens' assessments of government efforts in fighting corruption have remained critical since 2013 (67%) (Figure 4).
- Three in 10 Tunisians say “all” or “most” government officials (31%) and members of Parliament (30%) are corrupt. Judges/magistrates are rated the least corrupt: 16% of respondents say “all” or “most” are corrupt (Figure 5).

- Among respondents who had contact with relevant public services during the previous year, almost two in 10 say they paid a bribe at least once to avoid problems with the police (17%) or obtain assistance from the police (15%) (Figure 6). One in 10 say they paid a bribe at least once to obtain identity documents (12%), medical care (11%), household services (10%), or public school services (8%).
- Large majorities of Tunisians say both rich and ordinary persons could pay a bribe or use personal connections to avoid taxes, to avoid going to court, and to register land that's not theirs. The rich are seen as more likely to be able to do this (Figure 7).

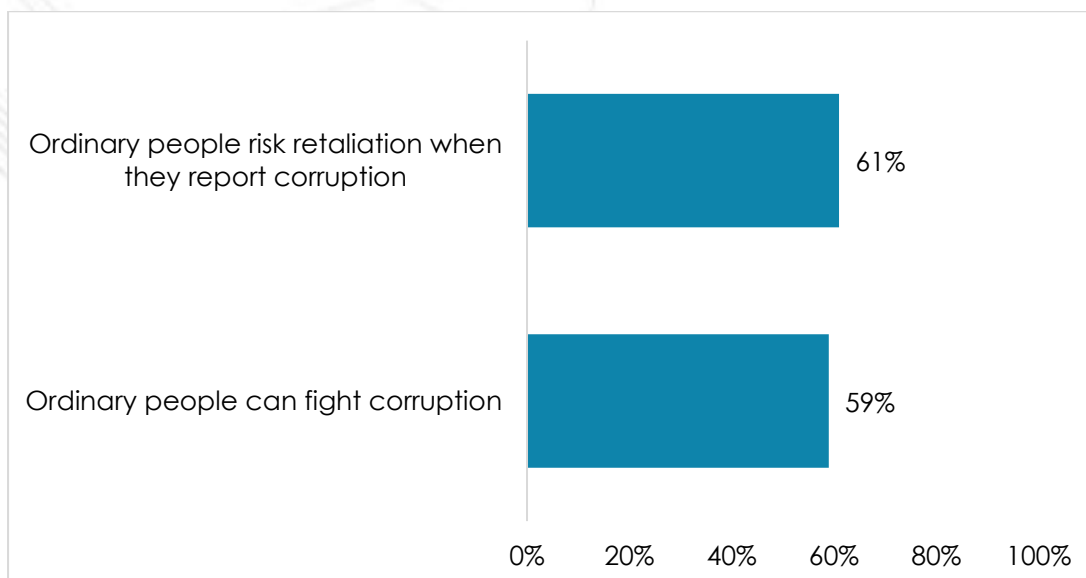
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Six rounds of surveys were conducted in up to 37 countries between 1999 and 2015, and Round 7 surveys are being completed in 2018. 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 adult Tunisians in April-May 2018. 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 and 2015.

Charts

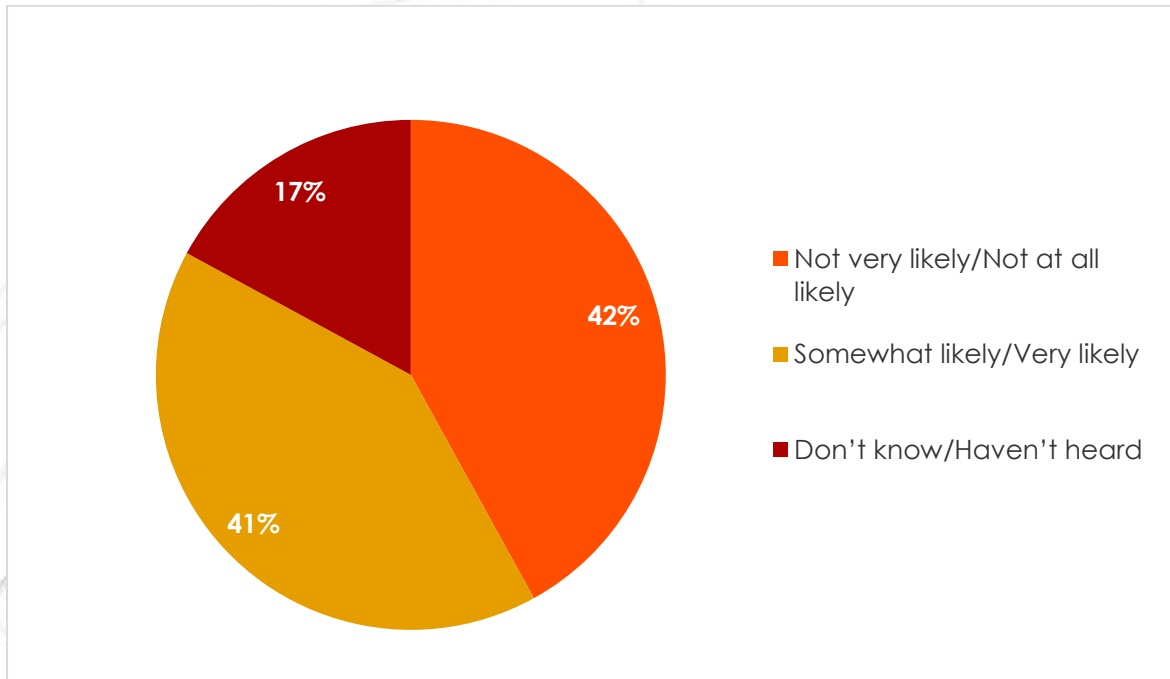
Figure 1 : Citizens' role in fighting corruption | Tunisia | 2018



Respondents were asked:

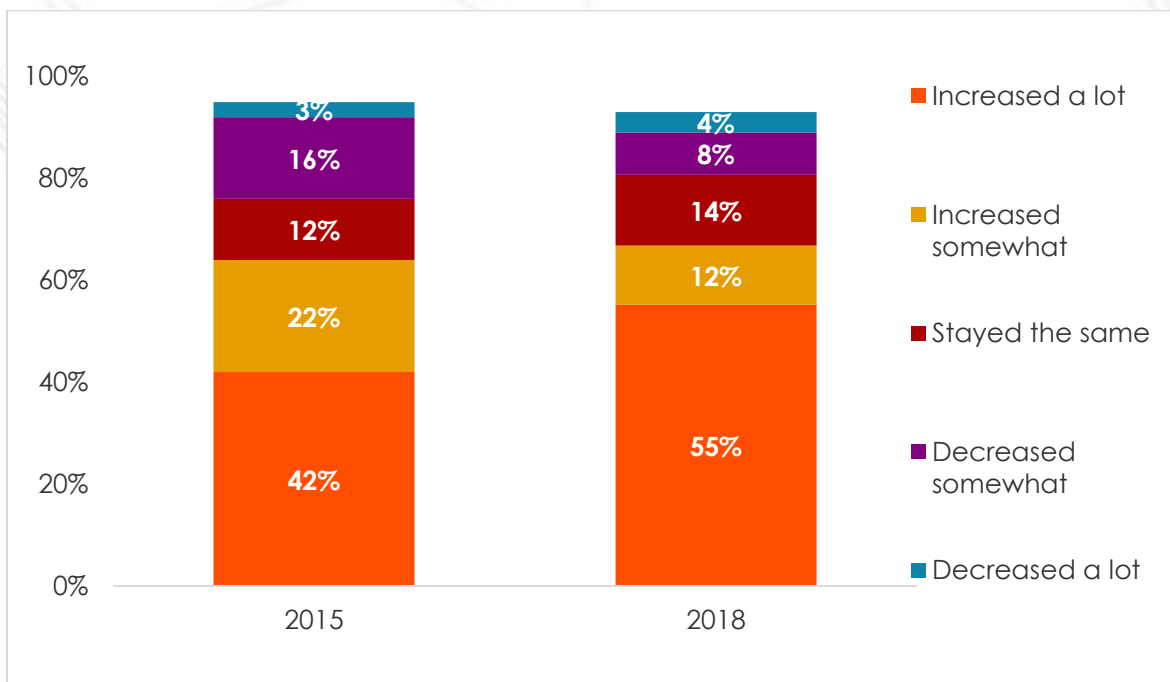
- Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption? (% who "agree" or "strongly agree")
- In this country, can ordinary people report incidents of corruption without fear, or do they risk retaliation or other negative consequences if they speak out? (% who say they risk negative consequences)

Figure 2: Will the authorities take action when corruption is reported? | Tunisia
 | 2018



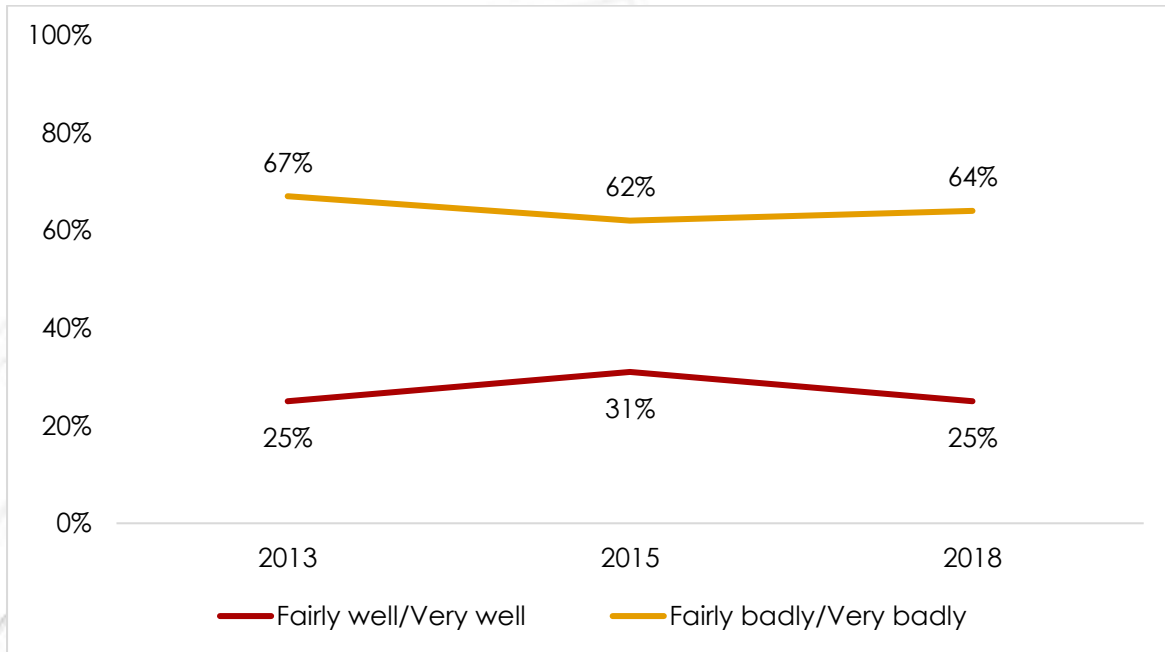
Respondents were asked: How likely is it that you could get someone to take action if you went to your local government council to report corrupt behaviour like misuse of funds or requests for bribes by government officers, police, or school or clinic staff?

Figure 3: Level of corruption in the country | Tunisia | 2015-2018



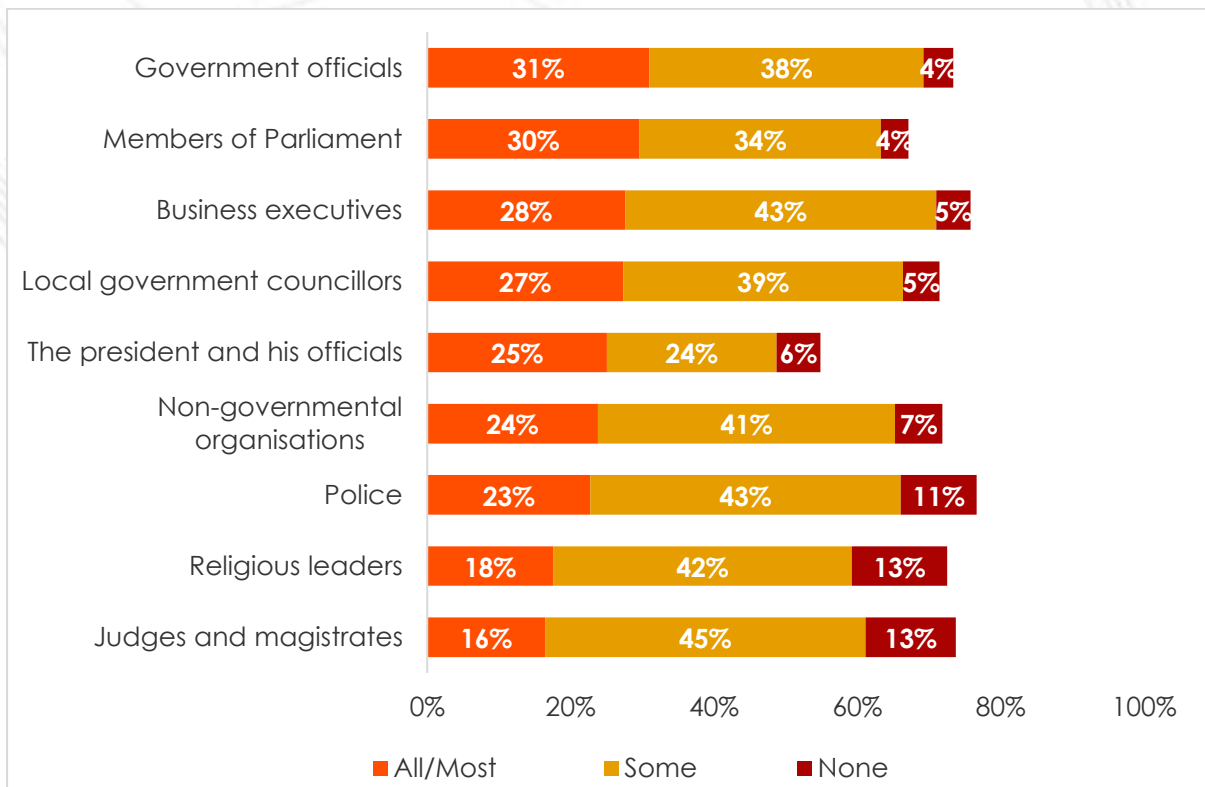
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Figure 4: Government performance in fighting corruption | Tunisia | 2013-2018



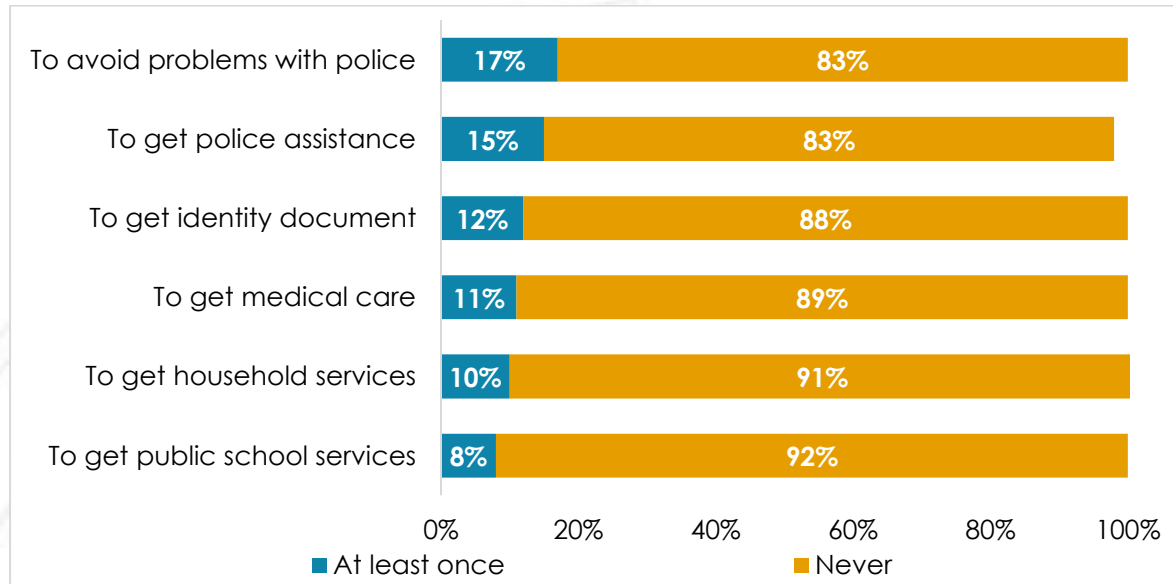
Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Handling fighting corruption?

Figure 5: Who is corrupt? | Tunisia | 2018



Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

Figure 6: Paid bribe to obtain services | Tunisia | 2018

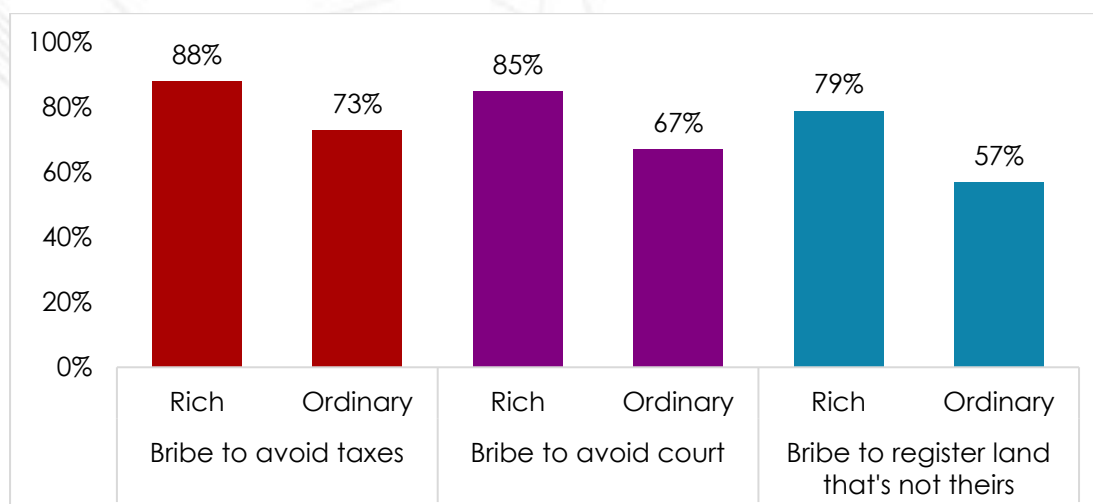


Respondents who said they had contact with selected public services during the previous year were asked: And how often, if ever, did you have to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favor:

- For a teacher or school official in order to get the services you needed from the schools?
- For a health worker or clinic or hospital staff in order to get the medical care you needed?
- For a government official in order to get the document you needed?
- For a government official in order to get the services you needed?
- For a police officer in order to get the assistance you needed?
- For a police officer in order to avoid a problem during one of these encounters?

(Note: Figure excludes respondents who said they had no contact with these public services during the previous year.)

Figure 7: Bribery by the rich vs. ordinary people | Tunisia | 2018



Respondents were asked: In this country, how likely do you think it is that an ordinary person/a rich person could pay a bribe or use personal connections to get away with:

- Avoiding paying taxes they owe to government?
- Avoiding going to court?
- Registering land that does not belong to them?

(% who say "somewhat likely" or "very likely")

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