

Kampala, Uganda
20 February 2023

News release

Ugandans cite brutality and corruption among police failings

In Uganda, a majority of citizens say that police officers frequently use excessive force when dealing with protesters and suspected criminals, Afrobarometer survey findings show. Few think the police usually act in a professional manner and respect citizens' rights.

While the government receives favourable ratings on reducing crime, Uganda's police are widely perceived as corrupt and enjoy relatively weak public trust.

Among citizens who encountered the police last year, a majority say they had to pay a bribe to obtain assistance or avoid problems.

Key findings

- A majority of Ugandans say the police "often" or "always" use excessive force in managing protests (57%) and in dealing with suspected criminals (54%) (Figure 1).
 - A majority say the police at least "sometimes" engage in criminal activities (58%) and stop drivers without good reason (68%).
- Only about one in five citizens (22%) say the police "often" or "always" operate in a professional manner and respect all citizens' rights; about twice as many (42%) assert that such behaviour is rare or unheard of (Figure 2).
- Three-fourths (75%) of citizens say "most" or "all" police are corrupt – by far the worst rating among key government institutions the survey asked about (Figure 3).
- Only four in 10 Ugandans say they trust the police "somewhat" (16%) or "a lot" (25%). The share of citizens who say they don't trust the police "at all" has almost quadrupled since 2005 (Figure 4).
- Despite these perceived shortcomings, a majority (57%) of Ugandans say the government is doing a "fairly good" or "very good" job of reducing crime (Figure 5).
- At least half of Ugandans say they felt unsafe while walking in their neighbourhood (54%) and feared crime in their home (50%) during the previous year (Figure 6). Poor citizens are far more likely to be affected by such insecurity than their better-off counterparts.

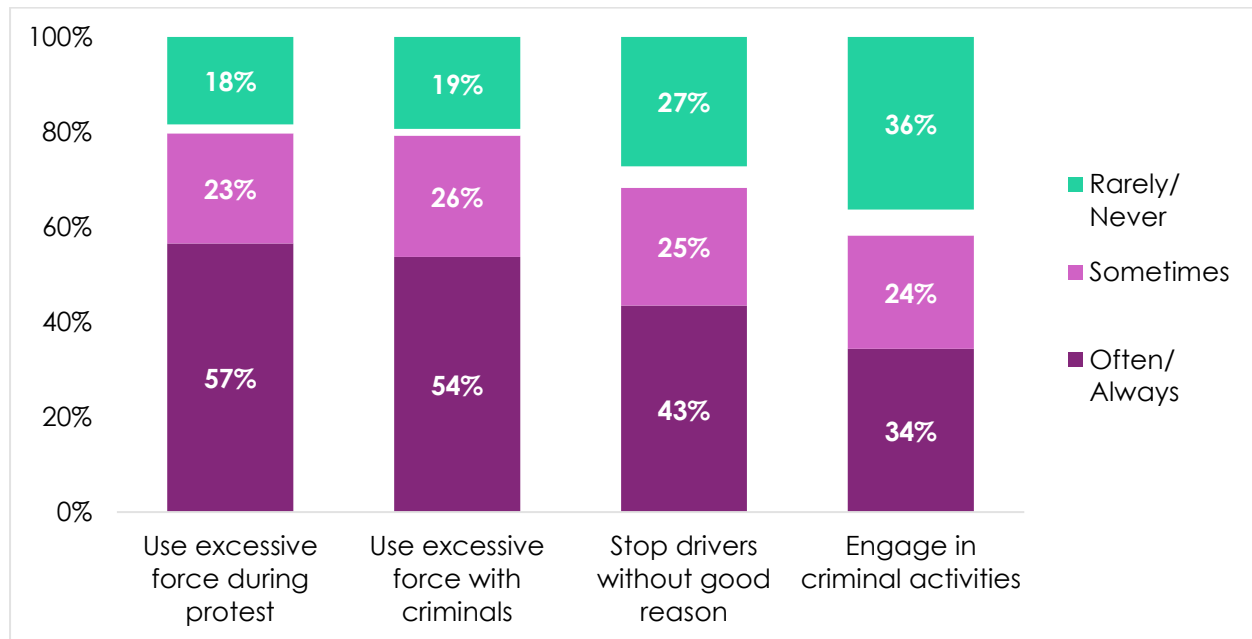
Afrobarometer surveys

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. Eight rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) are currently underway. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Uganda, led by Hatchile Consult Ltd., interviewed 2,400 adult Ugandans between 7 and 25 January 2022. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. This was the 12th Afrobarometer survey in Uganda since 1999.

Charts

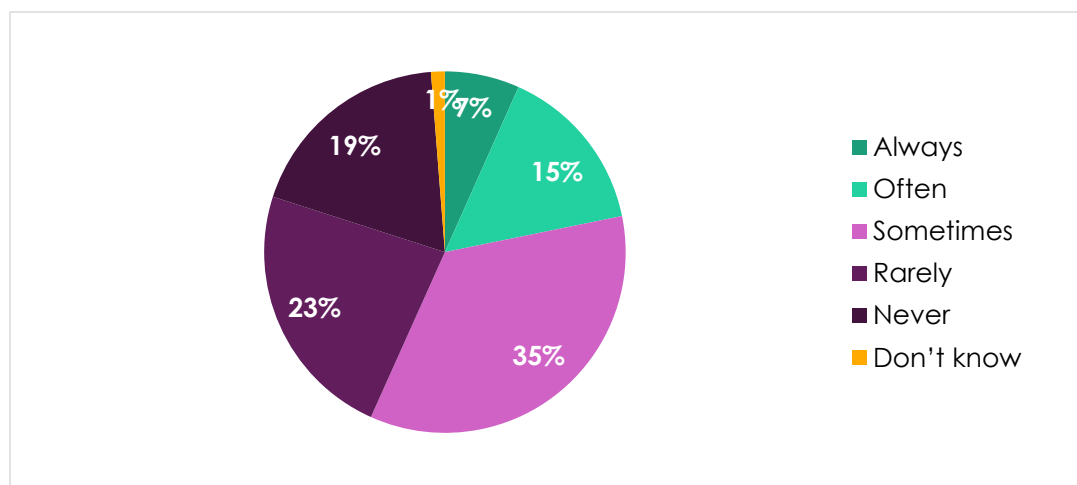
Figure 1: Police brutality and improper practices | Uganda | 2022



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often do the police in Uganda:

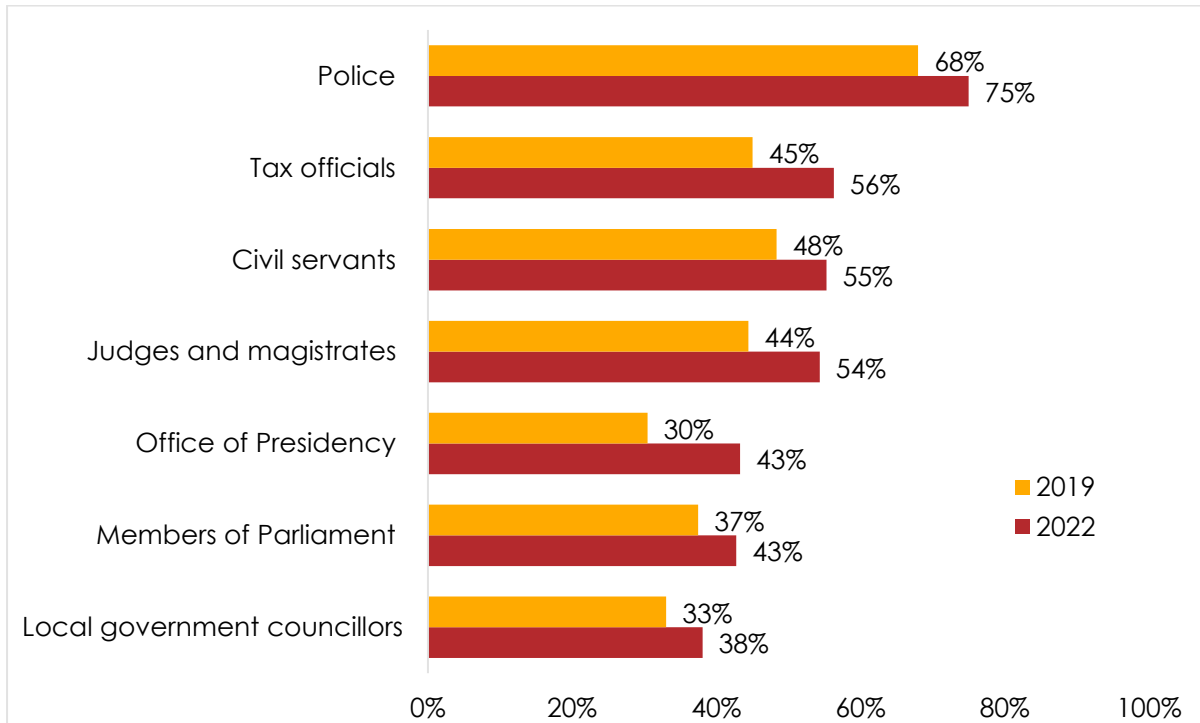
- Stop drivers without good reason?
- Use excessive force in managing protests or demonstrations?
- Use excessive force when dealing with criminals?
- Engage in criminal activities?

Figure 2: Do the police act professionally and respect citizens' rights? | Uganda | 2022



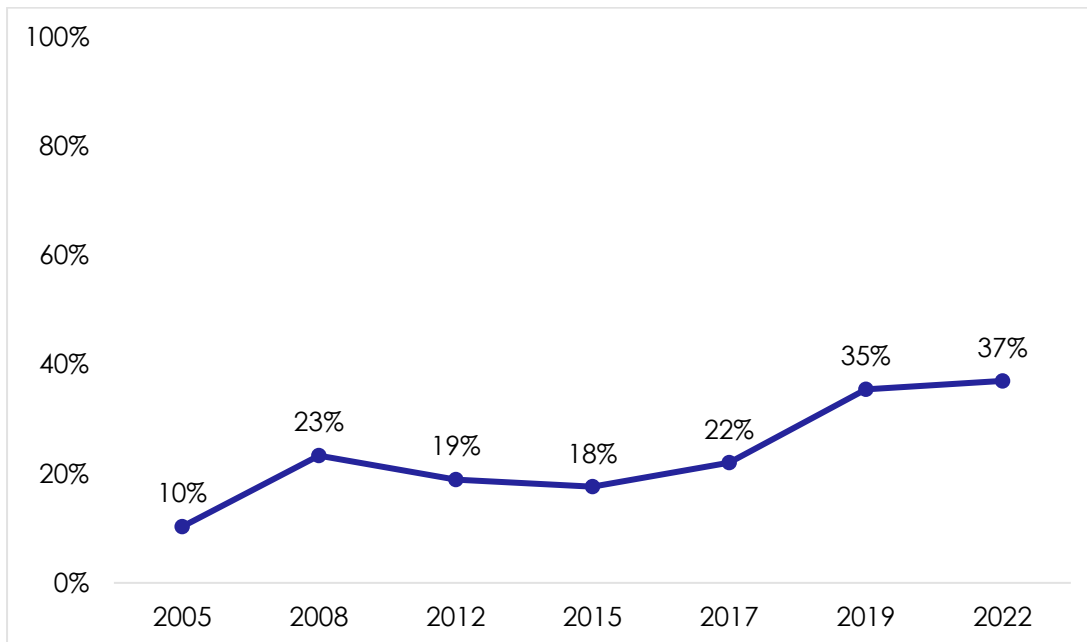
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often do the police in Uganda operate in a professional manner and respect the rights of all citizens?

Figure 3: Perceived corruption among institutions | Uganda | 2019-2022



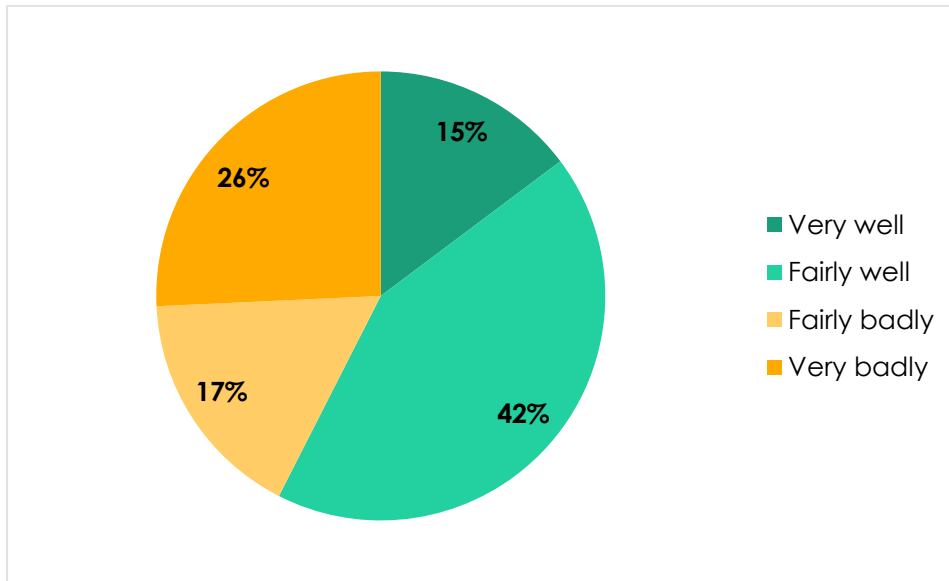
Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say "most of them" or "all of them")

Figure 4: Don't trust the police 'at all' | Uganda | 2005-2022



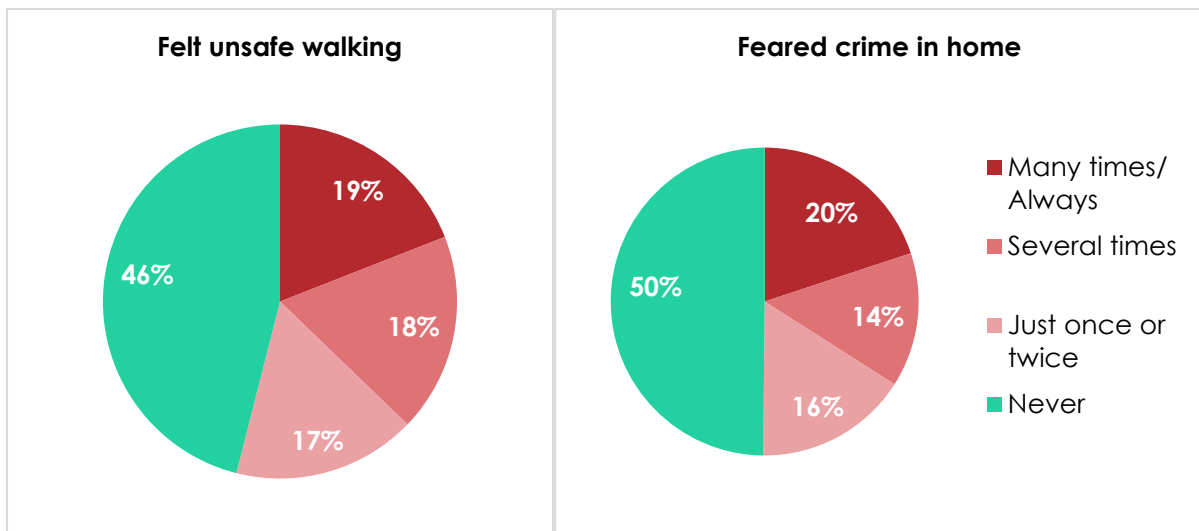
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The police? (% who say "not at all")

Figure 5: Government performance on reducing crime | Uganda | 2022



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

Figure 6: Insecurity and fear of crime | Uganda | 2022



Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Felt unsafe walking in your neighbourhood? Feared crime in your own home?

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