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News release

Zambians see corruption declining, especially among elected leaders; still rank police as most corrupt

A growing number of Zambians say corruption in the country is declining, a recent Afrobarometer study shows.

Drops in public perceptions of widespread corruption are particularly notable with regard to the Presidency, Parliament, and local government councils.

As in many African countries, the police are most widely perceived as corrupt, followed by business executives, judges and magistrates, and civil servants.

Despite improvements in public perceptions of official corruption, a majority of Zambians say ordinary people risk retaliation if they report corruption to the authorities.

Key findings

- More than half (53%) of Zambians say levels of corruption have decreased over the past year, up from 8% in 2020 (Figure 1).
 - Two in 10 (19%) say corruption has increased, down from 71% in 2020, while 23% say it has remained unchanged.
- Among key institutions and leaders, the police are most widely perceived as corrupt: 54% of Zambians say “most” or “all” police officials are involved in corruption, twice as many as see widespread corruption among business executives (27%), judges and magistrates (26%), and civil servants (25%) (Figure 2).
 - The proportion of Zambians who say that “most” or “all” officials in the Presidency are corrupt has dropped by more than half since 2020, from 40% to 16% (Figure 3).
 - Similarly, far fewer citizens see widespread corruption among members of Parliament (22%, down from 36% in 2020) and among local government councillors (23%, down from 36% in 2020).
- However, almost two-thirds (63%) of Zambians think ordinary people risk retaliation or other negative consequences if they report corruption to the authorities (Figure 4).
 - This perception is more common among women than men (66% vs. 60%) and among citizens with primary schooling or less (67%) than those with post-secondary education (57%) (Figure 5).

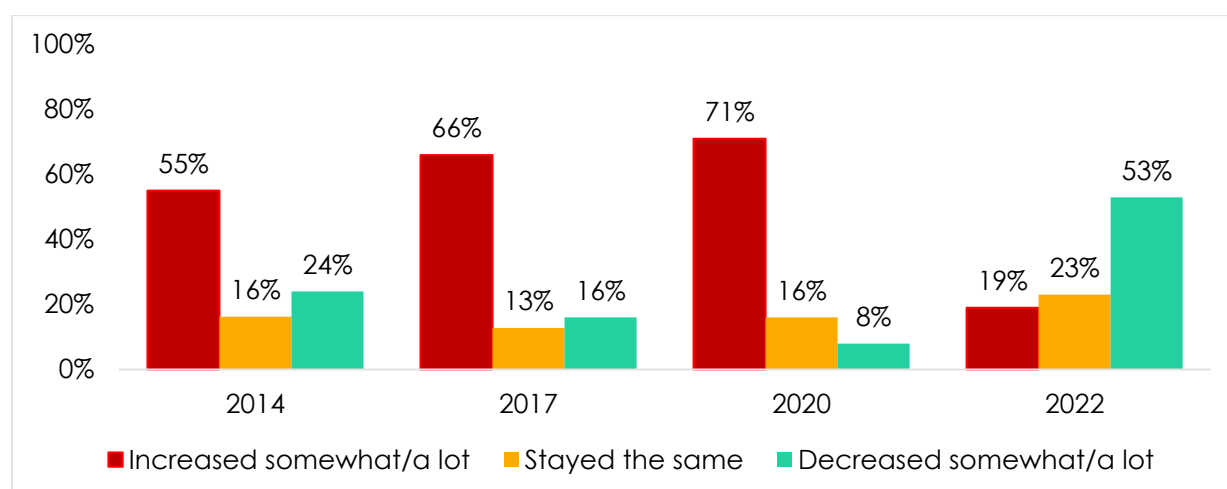
Afrobarometer surveys

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 conducted in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 9 surveys are being completed in early 2023. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Zambia, led by the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), a research wing of the University of Zambia, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 Zambian adults between 3 August and 7 September 2022. 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 have been conducted in Zambia in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2017, and 2020.

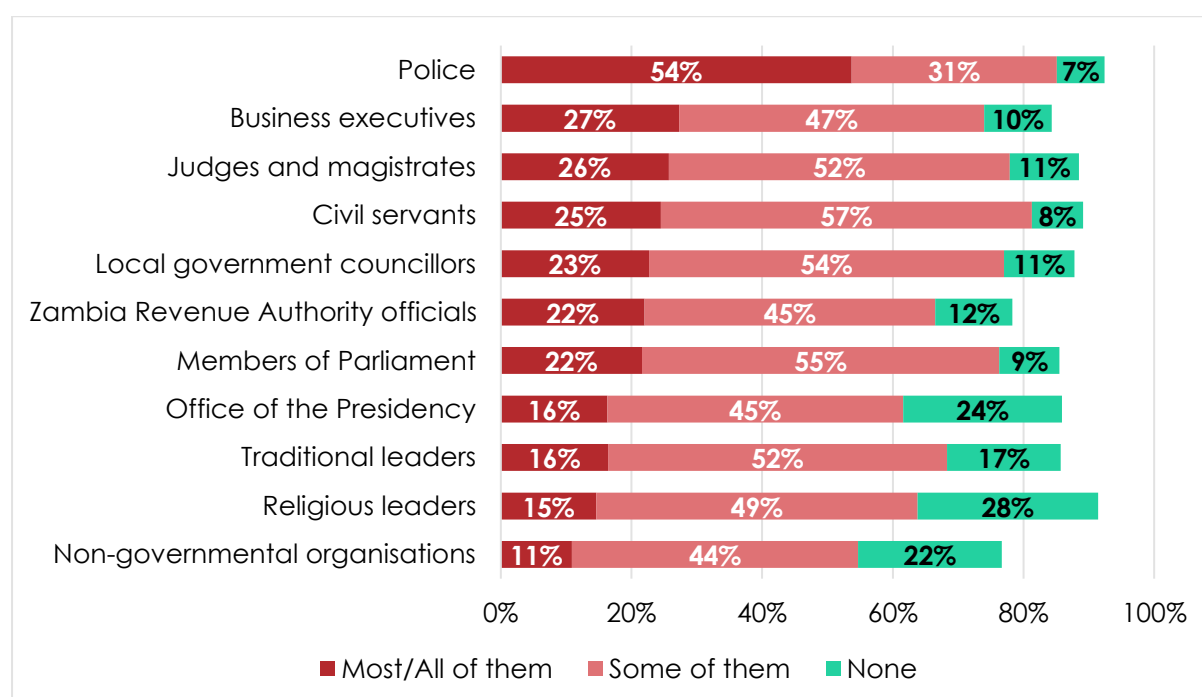
Charts

Figure 1: Level of corruption | Zambia | 2014-2022



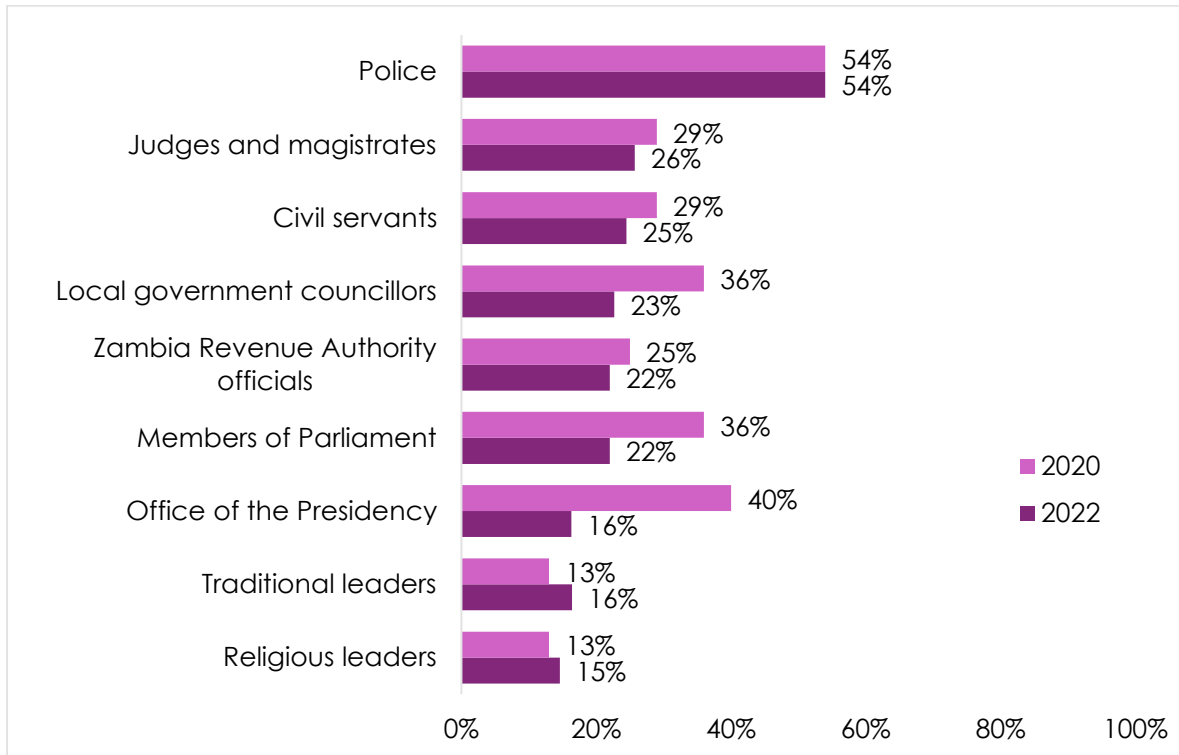
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Figure 2: Perceived perpetrators of corruption | Zambia | 2022



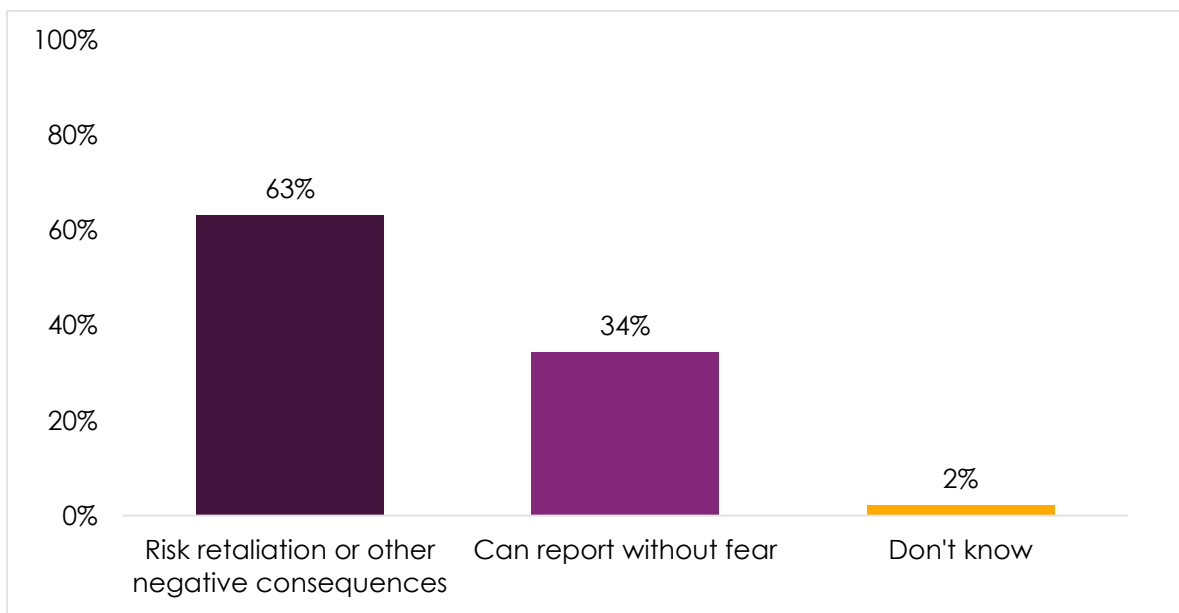
Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

Figure 3: Perceived perpetrators of corruption | Zambia | 2020-2022



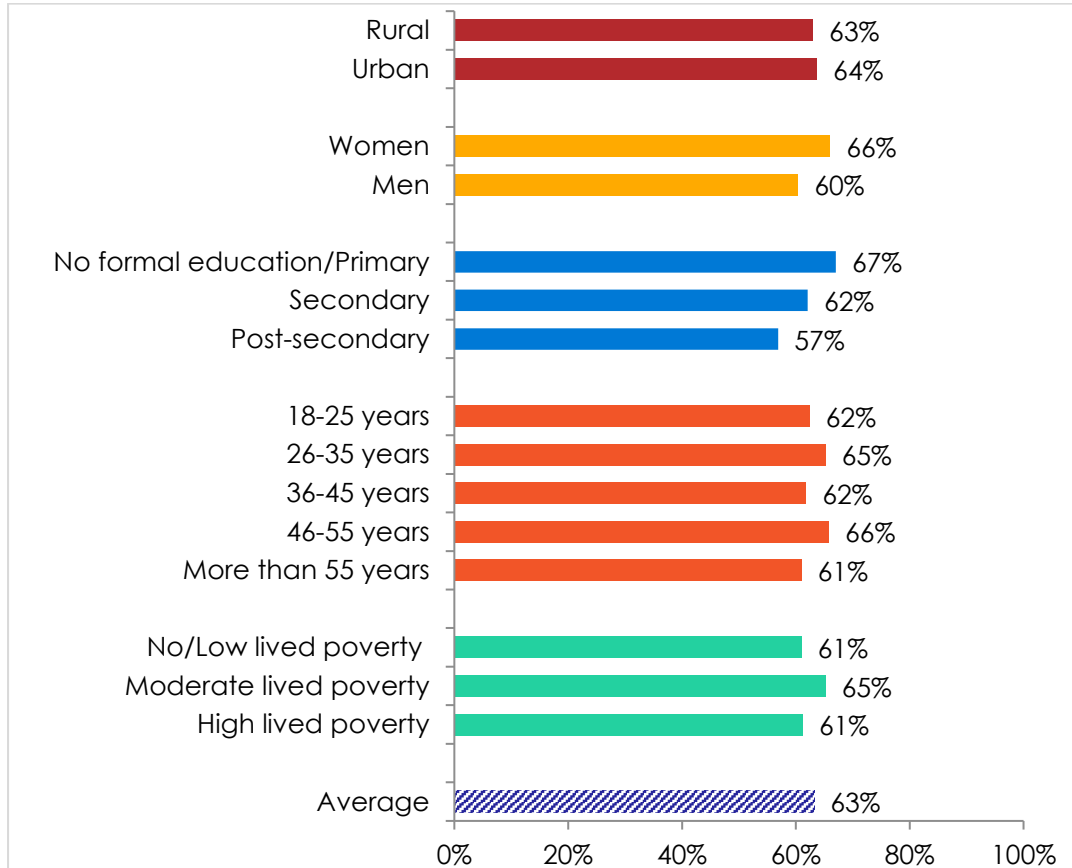
Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

Figure 4: Do people risk retaliation if they report corruption? | Zambia | 2022



Respondents were asked: 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?

Figure 5: Do people risk retaliation if they report corruption? | by demographic group | Zambia | 2022



Respondents were asked: In this country, do ordinary people risk retaliation or other negative consequences if they speak out?

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