

Pretoria, South Africa
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News release

South Africans say corruption has increased and citizens risk retaliation if they report it, new Afrobarometer study shows

A majority of South Africans say corruption in the country is getting worse and the government is doing a poor job of fighting it, a new Afrobarometer survey indicates.

Most citizens say ordinary people risk retaliation if they speak out against corruption, and only a few believe that the authorities will take action in response to reported corruption.

Only about one-third of South Africans say the government is committed to fighting corruption, although more than half believe it has the capacity to do so.

Majorities say that companies implicated in corruption should be barred from doing business with the government and that cabinet ministers and government officials who have been charged with corruption should step down immediately.

Key findings

- More than eight in 10 South Africans (82%) say corruption in the country increased "somewhat" or "a lot" during the year preceding the survey, up 10 percentage points from the last Afrobarometer survey in 2021 (Figure 1).
 - Only 10% of citizens believe the government is performing "fairly well" or "very well" in fighting corruption, down 11 percentage points compared to 2021.
- Almost three-quarters (72%) of South Africans say ordinary people risk retaliation or other negative consequences if they report corruption (Figure 2).
- Even if people do report corruption, only one in four citizens (25%) believe that government authorities will take action, and only about one-third (34%) think the government is committed to fighting corruption (Figure 3).
- But more than half (54%) of South Africans believe that the government has the capacity to fight corruption, and even larger majorities say that businesses implicated in corruption should be prohibited from dealing with the government (76%) and that cabinet ministers and government officials charged with corruption should step down (80%) (Figure 4).

Afrobarometer surveys

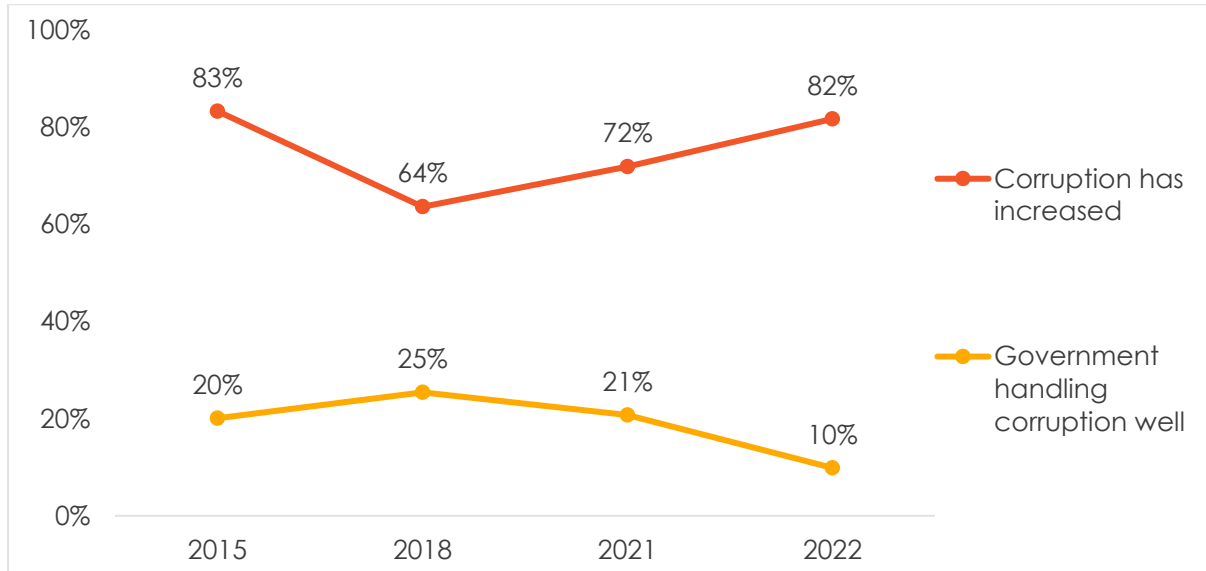
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys are being completed in 2023. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in South Africa, led by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,582 adult South Africans in November-December 2022. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of

+/-2.5 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in South Africa in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2015, 2018, and 2021.

Charts

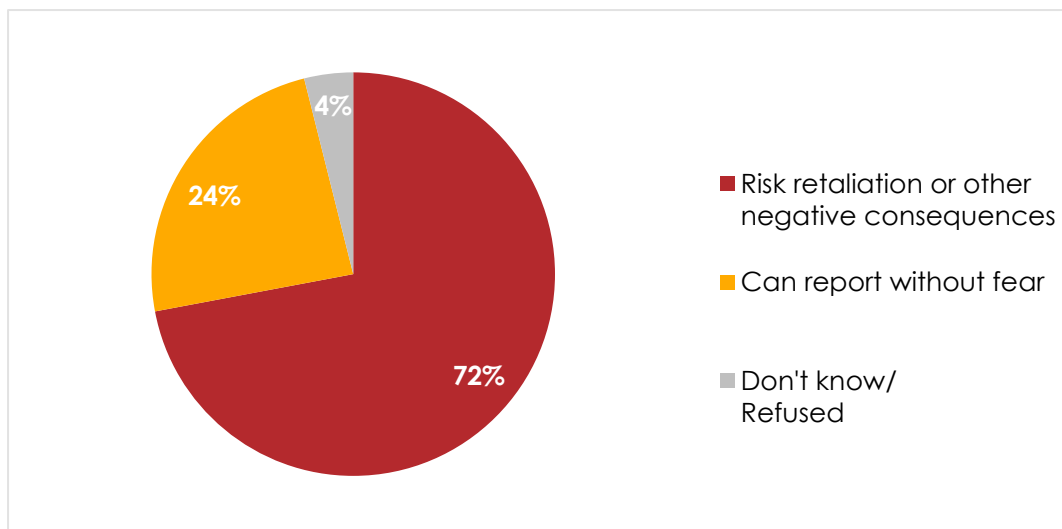
Figure 1: Perceptions of corruption | South Africa | 2015-2022



Respondents were asked:

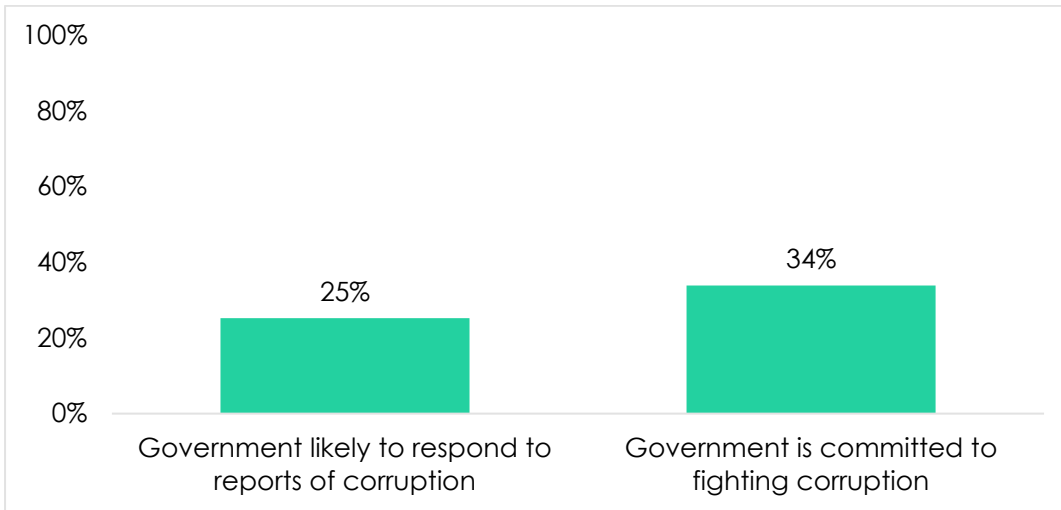
In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same? (% who say "increased somewhat" or "increased a lot")
How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Fighting corruption in government? (% who say "fairly well" or "very well")

Figure 2: Can people report cases of corruption without fear? | South Africa | 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 3: Government's response to corruption | South Africa | 2022

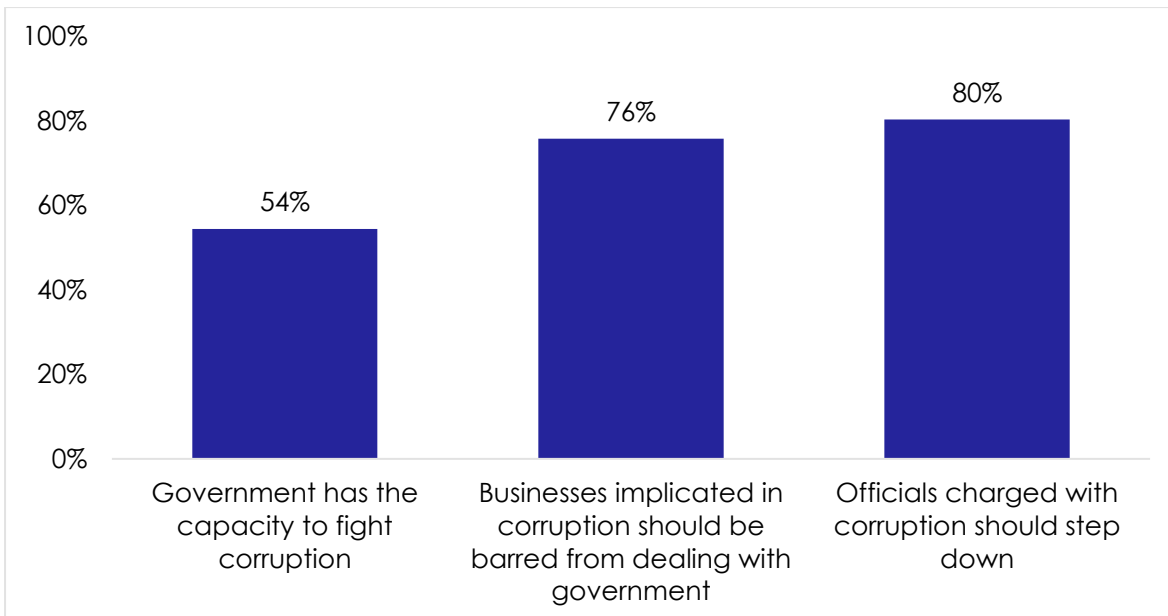


Respondents were asked:

How likely is it that you could get someone to take action if you went to a local government office or anti-corruption authority to report corrupt behaviour like misuse of funds or requests for bribes? (% who say "somewhat likely" or "very likely")

For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't you heard enough to say: The government is committed to act against all acts of corruption. (% who "agree" or "strongly agree")

Figure 4: Fighting corruption | South Africa | 2022



Respondents were asked: *For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't you heard enough to say:*

Cabinet ministers and government officials who have been charged with corruption should step down immediately.

Businesses implicated in corruption should be barred from doing business with the government.

The government has the capacity to act against all acts of corruption.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree")

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