

Accra, Ghana 29 January 2024

### News release

# Africans cite corruption, brutality, and lack of professionalism among police failings, new Afrobarometer report reveals

Only one in three Africans say their police usually operate in a professional manner and respect citizens' rights, a <u>new Afrobarometer report</u> shows.

An analysis of survey findings from 39 African countries finds that substantial minorities report corruption, use of excessive force, and even criminal activity by their police forces. Fewer than half express trust in the police or approve of their government's performance in fighting crime.

The analysis shows that negative perceptions of police professionalism and corruption go hand in hand with low public trust in the police, poor marks on government performance in reducing crime, and citizens' sense of insecurity.

#### **Key findings**

- Only one-third (32%) of citizens say their police "often" or "always" operate in a professional manner and respect the rights of all citizens, ranging from just 13% in Nigeria to 58% in Burkina Faso (Figure 1).
- Among respondents who sought police assistance during the previous year, 54% say it was easy to get the help they needed, but 36% say they had to pay a bribe. Among those who encountered the police in other situations, 37% report having to pay a bribe to avoid problems, ranging from 1% in Cabo Verde to 70% in Liberia (Figure 2).
- Across 39 countries, three in 10 citizens (29%) say their police "often" or "always" engage in criminal activities, in addition to 27% who say they "sometimes" do (Figure 3).
- On average, about four in 10 Africans say their police "often" or "always" use excessive force in managing protests (38%) and dealing with suspected criminals (42%) (Figure 4).
- Fewer than four in 10 citizens (37%) say their government is doing "fairly well" or "very well" at reducing crime, ranging from just 10% in Sudan to 77% in Benin (Figure 5).
- Fewer than half (46%) of citizens say they trust the police "somewhat" or "a lot" (Figure 6).



#### 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. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) cover 39 countries.

Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with samples of 1,200-2,400 adults that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-3 to +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

#### Charts

Figure 1: Do police act professionally and respect citizens' rights? | 39 countries | 2021/2023

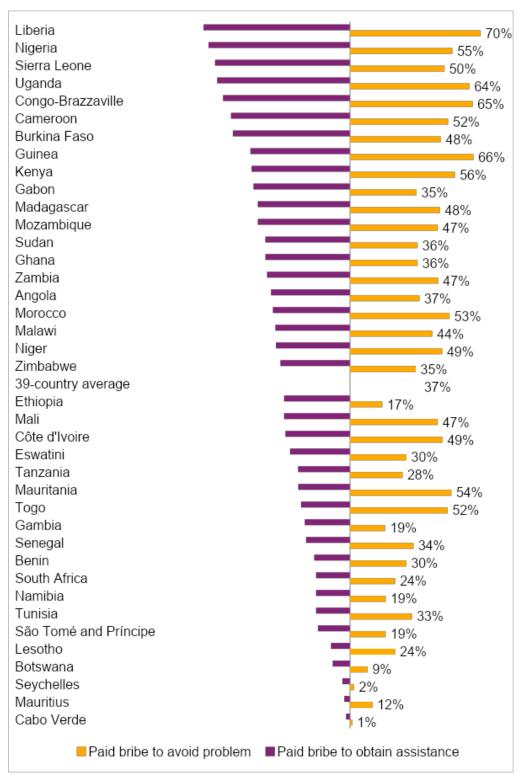


Burkina Faso		58%	2	2%	19%		
Morocco		57%		26%	17%		
Viger		55%	22	%	18%		
Benin 📗		54%	27	27% 199			
Vlali 📗		54%	14%	2	6%		
Senegal		50%	25%		24%		
Tanzania	45	5%	29%		24%		
Vladagascar 📗	44	%	26%	2	6%		
Mauritania 📗	43	%	26%	29	9%		
Mauritius	42'	%	40%		17%		
Botswana 📗	38%		24%	34%	6		
Côte d'Ivoire	36%		27%	36%	, D		
Ethiopia	35%	2	9%	35%			
Годо	34%		36%		)%		
Vamibia 📗	33%		40%		25%		
Cabo Verde	33%		39%	2	6%		
Tunisia	32%	30	<b>)</b> %	35%	6		
39-country average	32%	32	2%	34%	6		
Cameroon	31%	32	%	37%			
Vlozambique 📗	29%	32%	6	37%			
Gambia .	29%		43%	2	7%		
Malawi 📗	28%	24%		45%			
Sudan	27%	26%		45%			
Zambia 📕	27%	37°	%	31	%		
Zimbabwe 📗	26%	31%	31%				
_esotho	24%	24%		48%			
South Africa	24%	42%	42%		%		
Seychelles	23%	45°	45%		24%		
Ghana 📗	23%	47	%	30%			
São Tomé and Príncipe 📘	22%	27%		48%			
Guinea	22%	27%		50%			
Jganda	22%	35%		42%			
Angola	21%	28%		45%			
_iberia	20%		61%		18%		
Gabon	20%	30%		50%			
Sierra Leone	19%	40%					
Eswatini <b>E</b>	19%	31%					
Kenya	18%	21%		60%			
Congo-Brazzaville	17%			54%			
Vigeria 📗	13%	36%		49%			
0%	20%	6 40%	60%	80%	10		
			t know ■F				

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

**Figure 2: Pay bribe to receive police assistance/avoid problems** | 39 countries | 2021/2023

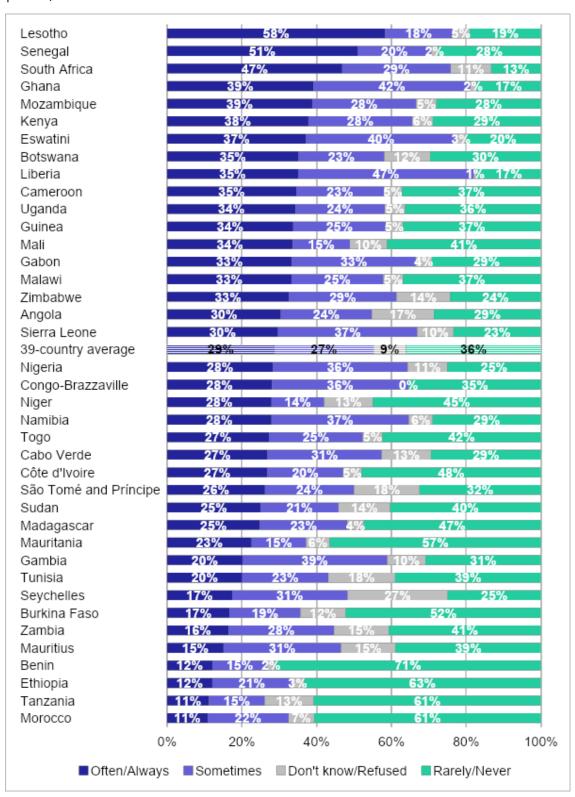




**Respondents who encountered the police during the previous year were asked:** How often, if ever, did you have to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour for a police officer: In order to get the assistance you needed? In order to avoid a problem during one of these encounters? (% who were asked to pay a bribe) (Respondents who did not have contact with the police are excluded.)



Figure 3: How often do police engage in criminal activities? | 39 countries | 2021/2023





**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, how often do the police in [your country] engage in criminal activities?

**Figure 4: Do police use excessive force with suspected criminals?** | 39 countries | 2021/2023



Senegal <b>=</b>	62%		20% 1% 17%			
Gabon	57%			26%	2% 15	%
Tunisia	56%		7	20%	10% 14	<b>!%</b>
Lesotho	56%		1	8% 5%	21%	
Kenya	55%			22% 2	<b>% 20%</b>	•
Mali	55%		16	<b>%</b> 7%	22%	
Cameroon	55%			1% 16	%	
Congo-Brazzaville	54%		30%		16	%
Uganda	54%			1% 19%	,	
Niger	53%	53%		19% 9%		
Eswatini	51%	51%		34%	1% 14	<b>!%</b>
Guinea	48%		23%	2%	27%	
Nigeria	46%		30%	6	7% 179	%
Zambia	45%		26%	7%	21%	
Angola	45%		23%	10%	22%	
Côte d'Ivoire	45%		26%	1%	29%	
Benin	45%		27%	0%	28%	
Sudan	44%		25%	4%	26%	
Zimbabwe	44%		29%	89	<b>6</b> 19%	6
39-country average	42%		28%	5%	25%	
South Africa	42%		29%	109	19%	5
Tanzania	42%		24%	3%	31%	
São Tomé and Príncipe	42%		23%	9%	26%	
Botswana	41%		24%	8%	27%	
Ghana	40%		42%		1% 179	<b>%</b>
Togo	39%		30%	2%	28%	
Cabo Verde	39%		30%	4%	27%	
Liberia	38%		44%		0% 179	%
Namibia	37%		35%		3% 24%	
Mozambique	37%		29%	4%	30%	
Morocco	37%		31%	2%	30%	
Sierra Leone	35%		37%	3%	25%	
Mauritania	35%		34%	4%	28%	
Gambia	33%		40%	79	6 20%	,
Malawi	33%	26%			36%	
Burkina Faso	30%	29%		- %	33%	
Ethiopia	25%	25%	2%	489		
Mauritius	21%	42%		5%	32%	
Madagascar	19% 22%			53%		
Seychelles		33%	23		25%	
0%	20%	40%	60%		30%	100
070	2070	4070	00 /0	,	70 70	

**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, how often do the police in [your country] use excessive force when dealing with criminals?



Figure 5: Government performance on crime reduction | 39 countries | 2021/2023

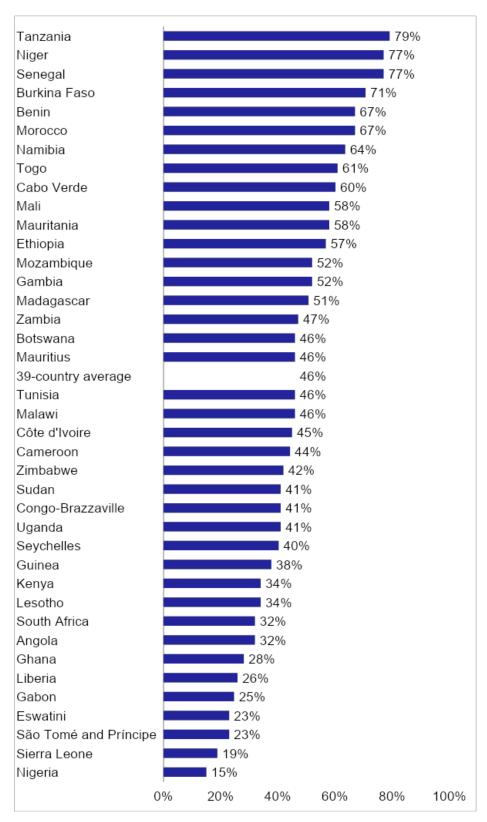




**Respondents were asked:** How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Reducing crime? (% who say "fairly well" or "very well")

Figure 6: Trust the police somewhat/a lot | 39 countries | 2021/2023





**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 "somewhat" or "a lot")



## For more information, please contact:

Daniel Iberi

Afrobarometer communications officer for East Africa

Email: diberi@afrobarometer.org

Telephone: +254725674457

Visit us online at www.afrobarometer.org.

Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.





