

# Tanzanians perceive ineffective fight against corruption, say citizens have a role to play

**Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 48 | Rose Aiko**

## Summary

While the Tanzanian government's efforts to fight corruption date back many years, the past two decades have witnessed the most significant government and donor community commitment to the issue. Following a review in 1996 of the state of corruption and its causes by a presidential commission known as the Warioba Commission, the government started implementing national anti-corruption strategies and action plans (NACSAPs) in 1999. As of 2012, two phases of the NACSAPs had been implemented, encompassing a range of institutional reforms. Reviews and evaluations of the NACSAPs record several achievements of the anti-corruption drive since early 2000, including:

- Establishment of new public institutions to fight corruption and abuse of public office, including the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, the Ethics Secretariat, the Good Governance Coordination Unit, and the position of Minister of State for Good Governance,
- Revision of several laws and passage of new ones to help control abuse of public office.
- Establishment of anti-corruption focal points in government departments at the central and local levels.

To what extent have these achievements been reflected in the daily experiences of Tanzanians? How do citizens perceive the government's performance in fighting corruption? Do people feel they are sufficiently empowered to do something to make the anti-corruption fight effective?

Using the six rounds of Afrobarometer survey data collected in Tanzania since 2001 to examine popular perceptions and attitudes regarding the fight against corruption, this dispatch shows that in the most recent survey rounds, 2012 and 2014, Tanzanians have given the government more negative ratings on its performance in fighting corruption than they did a decade ago. People also express concern that the level of corruption increased between 2013 and 2014.

Promoting the importance of civic engagement, a majority believe that ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption by doing two things: refusing to pay bribes and reporting corruption incidents to the authorities. The data show, however, that most corruption incidents are not reported. Respondents attribute this to several factors, most commonly fear of consequences, ignorance of what to do and/or how to report, and perceived apathy among law enforcers in addressing corruption.

Taking these results as a cue, Tanzanian anti-corruption institutions might need to rethink their anti-corruption strategies to achieve better results, especially by making citizens meaningful partners in the effort. In particular, anti-corruption bodies might find it useful to put in place mechanisms that would make it safe for citizens to report corruption incidents, ensure that people can at all times access information about how to report, and demonstrate to the public that corruption reports are taken seriously.

## **Afrobarometer survey**

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and Round 6 surveys are currently under way (2014-2015). Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of between 1,200 and 2,400 respondents.

The Afrobarometer team in Tanzania, led by REPOA, interviewed 2,386 adult Tanzanians in August-October 2014. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Tanzania in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2012.

## **Key findings**

- Two-thirds (66%) of Tanzanians say the level of corruption increased between 2013 and 2014. The extent of corruption is perceived to be greatest among the police, tax officials, and judges and magistrates.
- Majorities of citizens in 2012 and 2014 rated the government's performance in handling the fight against corruption as "fairly bad" or "very bad." However, there is a slight improvement (8 percentage points) in 2014 compared to 2012.
- Citizens' experiences with front-line service delivery agents show that corruption is perceived to be more pervasive when accessing police and court services compared to other public services.
- A majority (55%) say that ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption. Citizens cite refusing to pay a bribe (mentioned by 39% of respondents) and reporting corruption (19%) as the most effective things ordinary citizens can do to help fight corruption.
- Eight out of 10 persons (82%) who were compelled to pay a bribe in order to access a public service did not report the incidents to the authorities. As for the main reasons for not reporting, respondents cite fear, ignorance about reporting procedures, and perceived government apathy in dealing with corruption reports.

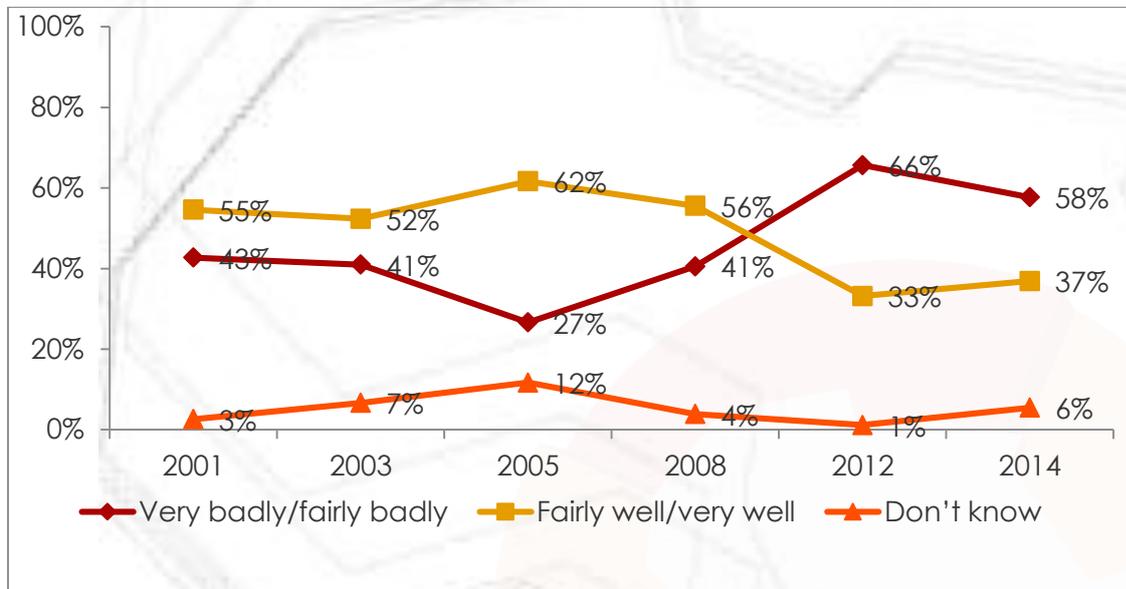
## **Progress in fighting corruption**

Over the past two decades, and particularly since 1999, the government has taken significant steps to fight corruption. Oversight agencies perceived as too weak to carry out their mandates effectively were given more power (e.g. the National Audit Office, the Prevention of Corruption Bureau (renamed Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau in 2007), and the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance) (United Republic of Tanzania & UNDP, 2012). Concurrently, several new oversight units/agencies (the Good Governance Coordination Unit, the position of Minister of State for Good Governance, the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, and the Ethics Secretariat) were established. Parliament also strengthened its oversight of public resources by establishing or reconstituting the leadership of Parliamentary Accountability Committees.

Yet public evaluations of government performance suggest that a majority of Tanzanians are dissatisfied with government efforts in the fight against corruption. In both 2012 and 2014, majorities of citizens considered the government's handling of the fight against corruption to

be “fairly bad” or “very bad” (Figure 1), although the proportion rating the government negatively decreased by 8 percentage points over the past two years.

**Figure 1: Popular evaluation of government’s performance in fighting corruption**  
 | Tanzania | 2001-2014

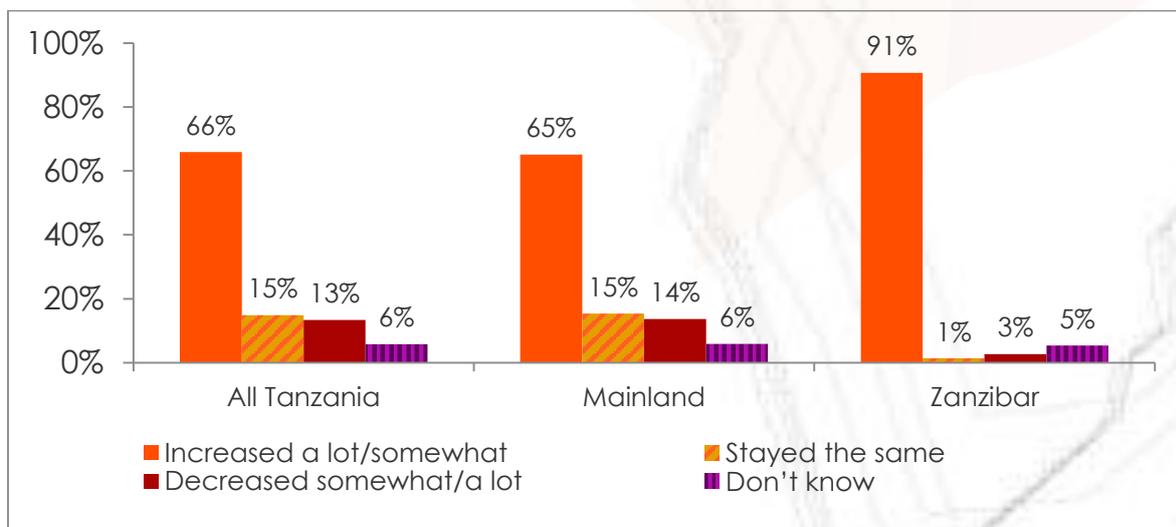


**Respondents were asked:** How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Fighting corruption in government?

**Perceived change in level of corruption**

Two-thirds (66%) of Tanzanians say that corruption increased “somewhat” or “a lot” in the year preceding the 2014 survey (Figure 2). The view that corruption increased is more pronounced among urban dwellers, men, the educated, and residents of Zanzibar islands.

**Figure 2: Perceived change in level of corruption** | Tanzania | 2014



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

(Note: Numbers in charts may not add up to 100% due to rounding.)

Urban dwellers are 9 percentage points more likely than rural respondents to perceive an increase in corruption. Considering responses by gender, men are 8 percentage points more likely than women to say that corruption increased (Table 1).

**Table 1: Perceived change in the level of corruption** | by respondent's location and gender | Tanzania | 2014

	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Total
<b>Increased somewhat/a lot</b>	72%	63%	70%	62%	66%
<b>Stayed the same</b>	15%	15%	14%	16%	15%
<b>Decreased somewhat/a lot</b>	9%	15%	13%	14%	13%
<b>Don't know</b>	4%	7%	4%	8%	6%

Examining perceptions by respondent education level, this analysis finds that people with post-secondary education are 15 percentage points more likely to say corruption went up than those with primary education or less (Table 2).

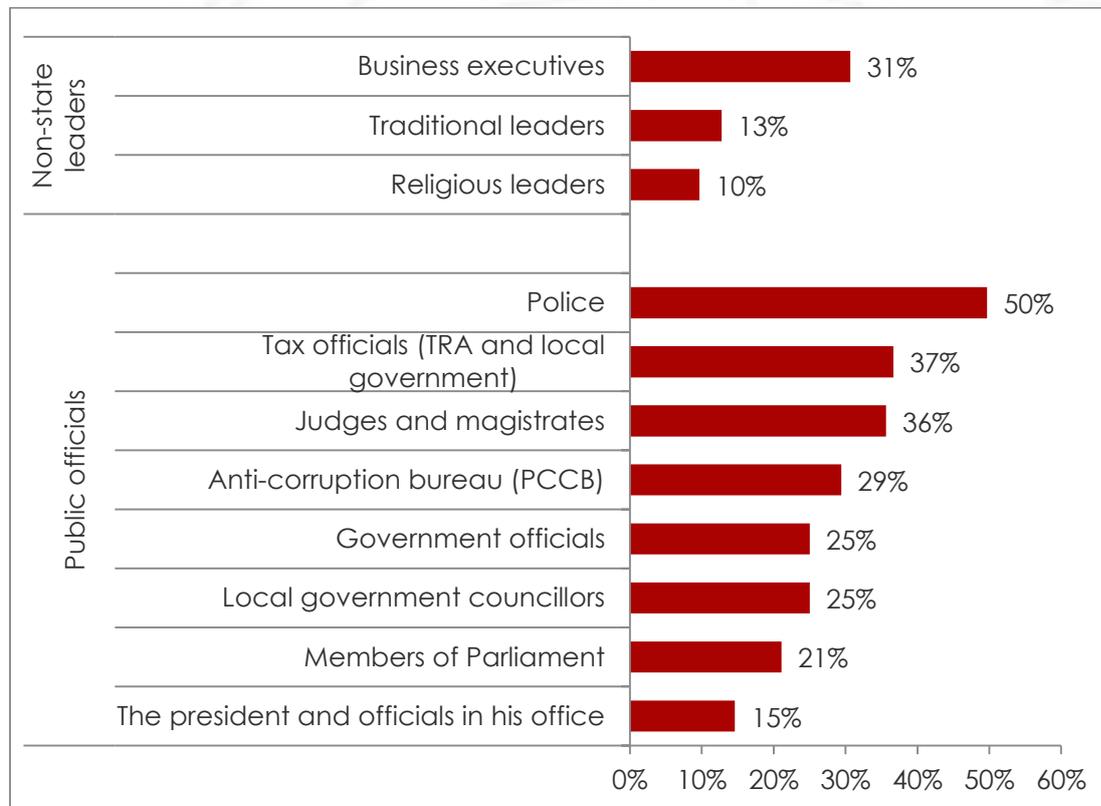
**Table 2: Perceived change in the level of corruption** | by respondent's education level | Tanzania | 2014

	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary	Total
<b>Increased somewhat/a lot</b>	63%	64%	72%	79%	66%
<b>Stayed the same</b>	14%	16%	13%	12%	15%
<b>Decreased somewhat/a lot</b>	10%	15%	13%	7%	13%
<b>Don't know</b>	13%	6%	3%	2%	6%

### Perceived extent of corruption in various institutions

When asked to rate the extent to which they perceive officials in 11 types of institutions as corrupt, Tanzanians give the police the most negative rating: Half (50%) of respondents say that "most" or "all" police are corrupt (Figure 3). Tax officials (the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) and local government) and judges/magistrates are in second and third place, with 37% and 36%, respectively, of Tanzanians saying that most or all of them are involved in corruption. Business executives (31%) are followed by the Tanzanian anti-corruption agency, the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) (29%). Religious leaders, traditional leaders, and the president's office are perceived as comparatively clean.

**Figure 3: Levels of perceived corruption in institutions | Tanzania | 2014**



**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")

Despite a slight improvement between 2012 and 2014 in public perceptions of some organisations, such as the police and civil servants, perceptions of corruption in public institutions and among officials increased across the board over the past decade (Table 3).

**Table 3: Trends in perceived corruption among public officials | Tanzania | 2003-2014**

						Change (% points)	
	2003	2005	2008	2012	2014	2012-2014	2003-2014
President / officials in his office	10%	5%	12%	13%	15%	2	5
Members of Parliament	17%	8%	12%	19%	21%	2	4
Government officials	23%	10%	18%	31%	25%	-6	2
Local government councillors	17%	10%	13%	25%	25%	0	8
The police	44%	34%	37%	56%	50%	-6	6
Tax officials (TRA and local government)	34%	20%	28%	38%	37%	-1	3
Judges and magistrates	28%	25%	24%	32%	36%	4	8
Anti-corruption bureau (PCCB)	..	..	..	28%	29%	1	..

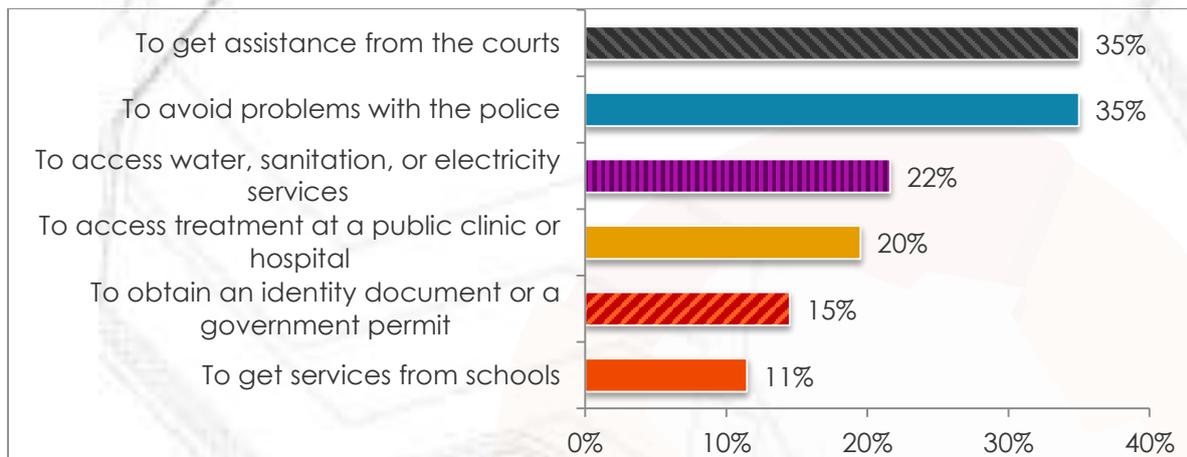
(% who said "most of them" or "all of them")

(Notes: ... = no data (agency not included in that survey round). Numbers may not add up due to rounding.)

### Corruption in accessing public services

In its 2014 survey, Afrobarometer asked about respondents' experiences with paying bribes in order to access six types of public services (school, health, processing of identity documents and permits, utility services, police, and courts). Among people who tried to obtain services during the 12 months before the survey, two of 10 indicate that they were compelled to pay a bribe. According to survey responses, bribe payments are more common when accessing police and court services (Figure 4) than when accessing other services.

**Figure 4: Proportion who paid a bribe to obtain a service | Tanzania | 2014**

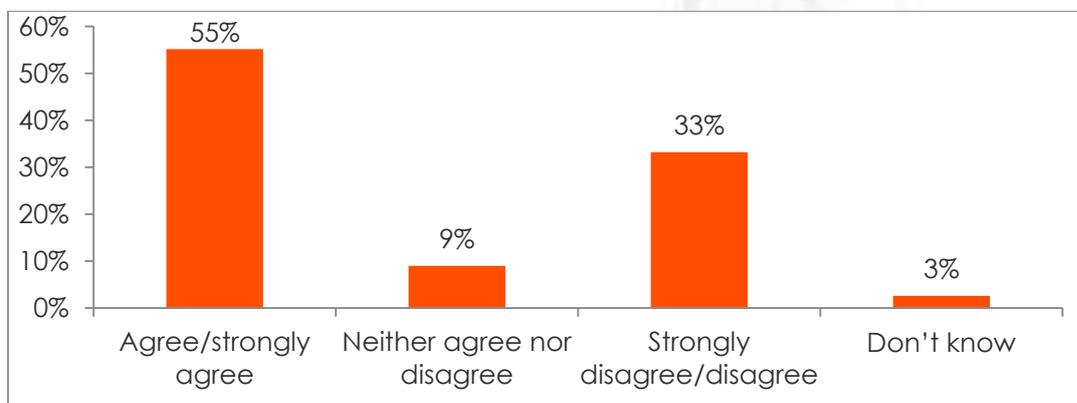


**Respondents were asked:** *In the past 12 months, have you had contact with [service provider type]? If yes, how often, if ever, did you have to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour for [officials of the service-providing institution] in order to get the service you needed? (% who say they paid a bribe "once or twice," "a few times," or "often")*

### Can citizens make a difference in the fight against corruption?

The PCCB exhorts citizens to help in the fight against corruption by refusing to engage in corrupt practices and reporting corruption when they experience or see it. Ideally, when people report corruption incidents, alleged culprits can be investigated and prosecuted. Asked whether they believe that ordinary citizens can make a difference in fighting corruption, a majority (55%) of Tanzanians say they can (Figure 5).

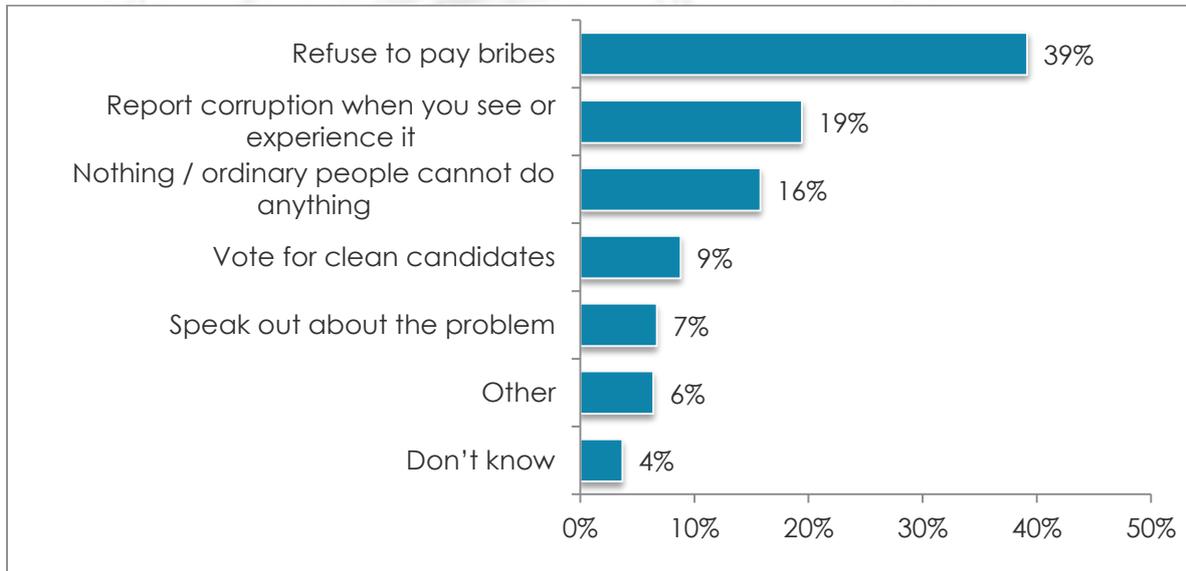
**Figure 5: Can ordinary people make a difference in fighting corruption? | Tanzania | 2014**



**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.*

Survey respondents agree with the PCCB as to the most effective things they can do to fight corruption (Figure 6): refuse to pay a bribe (mentioned by 39% of respondents) and report corruption when it happens (19%) (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: What citizens can do to help fight corruption | Tanzania | 2014**

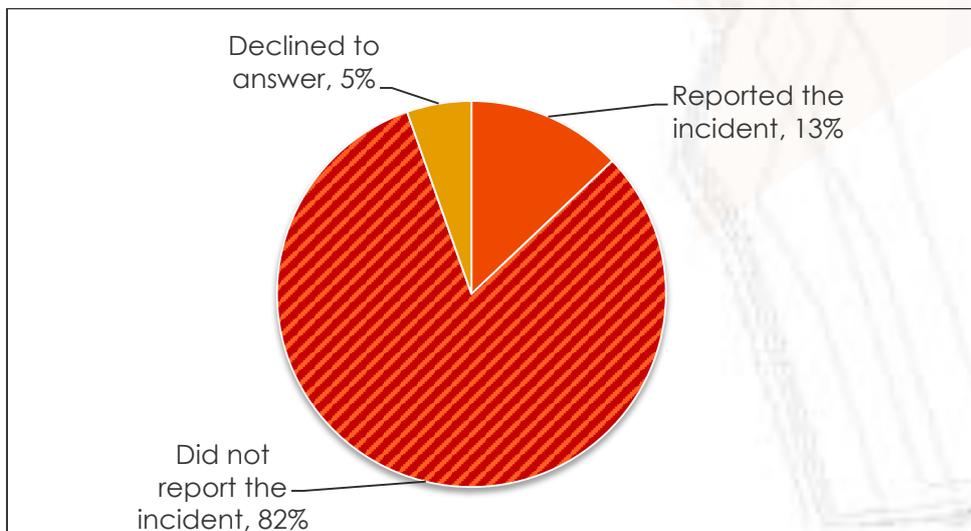


**Respondents were asked:** What is the most effective thing that an ordinary person like you can do to help combat corruption in this country?

*Few people take the initiative to report corruption*

Although reporting is perceived to be the second-most-effective way for citizens to fight corruption, very few citizens who experience corruption actually take the initiative to report the incidents to the authorities. When respondents who indicated that they were compelled to pay a bribe to access a public service were asked whether they reported the incidents, 82% say they did not (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Proportion of bribe-givers who report the incidents | Tanzania | 2014**



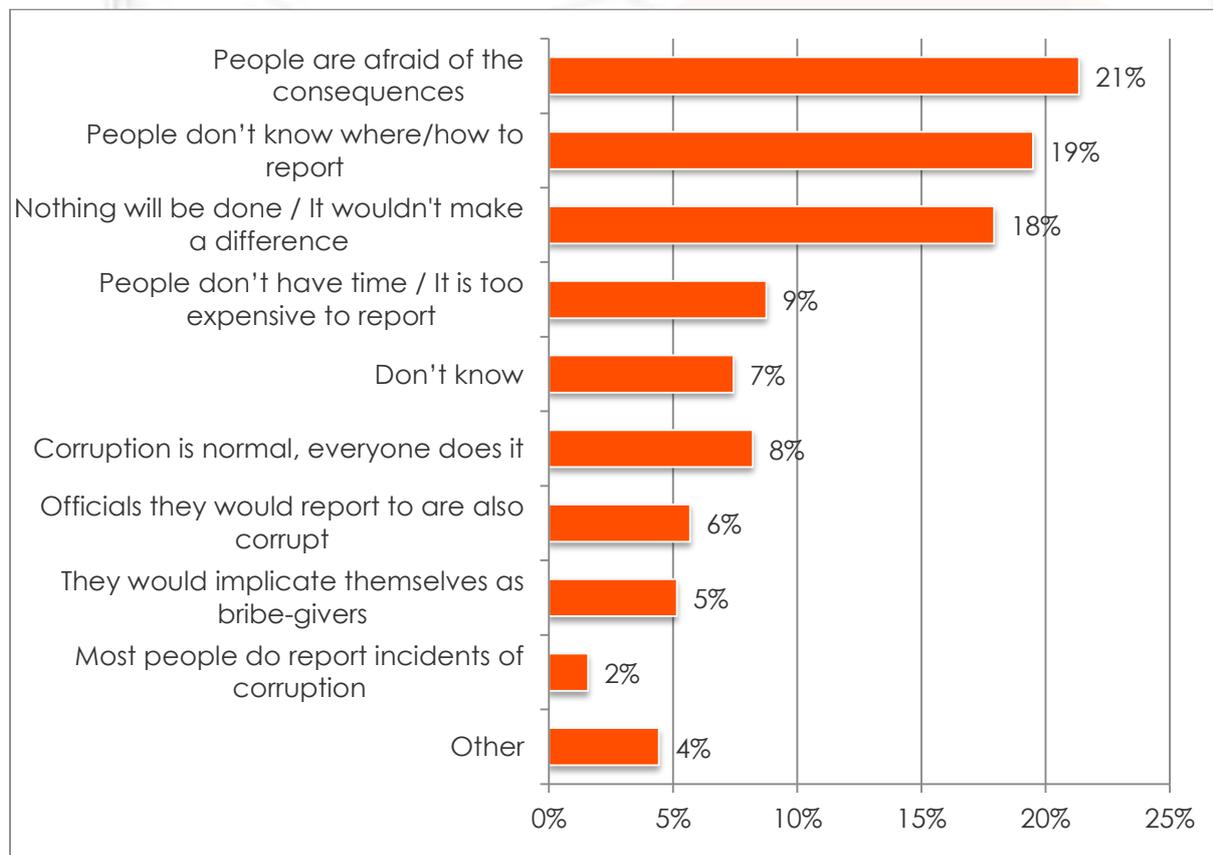
**Respondents were asked:** If you ever paid a bribe for any of the services discussed above, did you report any of the incidents you mentioned to a government official or someone in authority?

*Fear, ignorance, and perceived government apathy discourage reporting*

Respondents offer many explanations for why people may not be reporting corruption incidents to the authorities. The three mentioned most frequently are fear of the consequences (cited by 21% of respondents), ignorance of how to report (19%), and the perception that nothing will be done (18%) (Figure 8).

These perceptions confirm findings of expert reviews of Tanzania's anti-corruption efforts. For example, fear of consequences can be linked to Tanzania's poor record in protecting whistle-blowers (U4, 2014) and the absence of a law to protect them (United Republic of Tanzania & UNDP, 2012). The sentiment that nothing will be done can be traced to the perceived ineffectiveness of the PCCB and the government in general in punishing those involved in corruption, especially when they are key public figures (Bertelsmann Foundation, 2014).

**Figure 8: Why people do not report corruption incidents | Tanzania | 2014**



**Respondents were asked:** *Some people say that many incidents of corruption are never reported. Based on your experience, what do you think is the main reason why many people do not report corruption when it occurs?*

Other reasons, though cited by few respondents, can inform the effort to make the fight against corruption more effective. These include:

- *The environment makes it hard to put together evidence. The accused may easily deny the allegations. Corruption is secretive.*
- *Authorities who fight corruption are far from the people. The opportunity cost of reporting corruption is high.*

- *People believe that without giving a bribe, they may not get the kind of assistance/services they need.*
- *Because there is help involved when a bribe is given or taken, you cannot report someone who has helped you.*
- *People feel they will not get help next time, so they have to give and receive bribes.*
- *People lack education about corruption.*

## **Conclusion**

Despite significant government anti-corruption efforts, a majority of Tanzanians perceive a recent increase in corruption and a stagnating fight against corruption. Since success in fighting corruption depends on citizen participation, the government can benefit from consideration of citizens' views regarding hindrances to becoming meaningful partners in the effort.

A majority of Tanzanians believe that ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption, mainly by refusing to engage in corruption and reporting corruption incidents to the authorities. However, very few people who are compelled to pay bribes report the incidents, primarily because of fear of the consequences, ignorance about what to do or how to do it, and the perception that nothing will be done by the responsible authorities.

Measures to address these barriers can include mechanisms that make citizens feel safe enough to report corruption incidents and that ensure that people have ready access to information about their rights and obligations and a proper understanding of pathways for engaging with the authorities. Besides the PCCB, civil society and the news media can be of significant help by providing public education to citizens. In addition authorities will need to demonstrate to the Tanzanian public that corruption reports are taken seriously.

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**To further explore this data, please visit Afrobarometer's online data analysis facility at [www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis](http://www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis).**

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