



# The untouchables?

## Tanzanians' experiences and views of corruption

### 1. Introduction

Tanzania's fifth phase government under President Magufuli has brought a new approach to combatting corruption. This includes establishing a dedicated anti-corruption court, but the main strategy has been to take swift action in response to allegations of corruption and other wrongdoing. Port and tax authority officials were fired or suspended when evidence emerged of tax evasion at the ports, the export of mineral concentrates (*makinikia / vumbi*) was suspended when gold mining companies including Acacia were accused of deceiving the government about the value of minerals being exported, and several hundred public servants have been fired or suspended from a wide range of institutions under the banner of "lancing the boil" (*kutumbua majipu*). This has been accompanied by much greater internal

focus within government on cutting out waste and poor performance.

This new approach has attracted both praise and criticism. There is little doubt that corruption has long been a serious problem in Tanzania, and was the cause of much frustration among citizens – in 2014, for example, half the population thought there was no way corruption could ever be reduced<sup>1</sup>. As such, the new vigour with which allegations of corruption were being dealt with surprised and delighted many. However, critics point to the lack of respect for process and the rights of the accused, and to the apparent amnesty being given to former presidents for any involvement they may have had in past scandals. Further, the government is also doing other things that are likely to

1 Have more laws, agencies and commitments against corruption made a difference? – *Sauti za Wananchi brief, 2014*

weaken anti-corruption efforts in the long term such as reducing space for media and public debate and removing Tanzania from the Open Government Partnership.

This brief presents data on citizens' experiences of corruption and their views on how the problem can best be addressed. How often do they encounter corruption in their interactions with government and other institutions? How familiar are they with the cases of alleged corruption that have dominated headlines in recent years, and how do they rate the government's handling of these cases? And do they perceive a difference in the level of corruption in Tanzania now, compared to a few years ago?

Data for the brief come from Twaweza's flagship *Sauti za Wananchi* survey. *Sauti za Wananchi* is a nationally-representative, high-frequency mobile phone panel survey. It is representative for Mainland Tanzania. Information on the overall methodology is available at [www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://www.twaweza.org/sauti). For this brief, data were collected from 1,705 respondents from the 21st round of the second *Sauti za Wananchi* panel, conducted between July 27 and August 14, 2017.

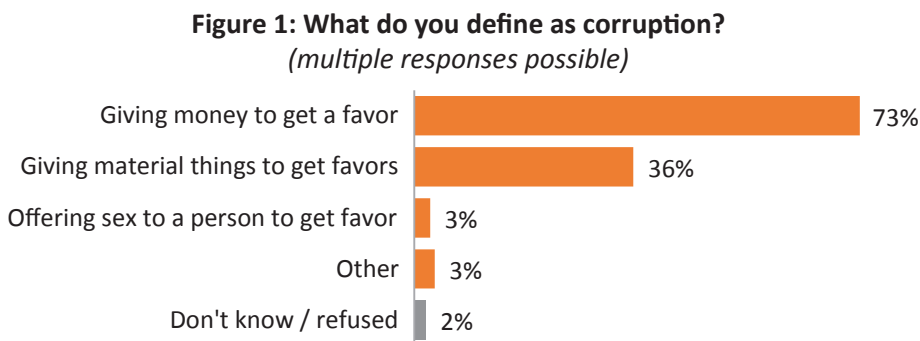
The key findings are:

- Citizens primarily think of corruption as giving money in return for a favour
- Half of citizens consider sitting allowances for public servants to attend meetings as corruption while less than 1 out of 20 think that businesspeople offering funding for elections in return for favours from government is corrupt
- Citizens see corruption as less common across all sectors than three years ago, but see the police and the courts as the most corrupt
- Citizens' experiences of corruption across most sectors and institutions have dropped since 2014
- Citizens are clear on the need to combat corruption, but divided on how best to go about it
- A clear majority say that if evidence is found that implicates a former president in corruption, they should receive no special treatment
- A majority of citizens have not heard of most major cases of alleged corruption, including the Acacia / mineral concentrates case
- Half of all citizens think corrupt politicians should be given prison sentences
- One in three citizens are aware of the anti-corruption court; two in three think it will be effective
- A large majority of citizens think the level of corruption has fallen in recent years

## 2. Eight facts about corruption in Tanzania

### Fact 1: Citizens mostly define corruption as giving money in return for a favour

Three in four citizens (73%) describe corruption as giving money to get a favour in return. One in three (36%) cite giving material things, and a small number (3%) mention offering sex in return for a favour.



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

Unpacking these definitions further by looking at specific scenarios, almost all citizens (93%) believe that candidates giving out money to voters during election campaigns is a form of corruption. Three in four (78%) view giving money or other materials to civil servants as corrupt, and a similar number (75%) consider candidates handing out gifts such as caps and t-shirts as corrupt.

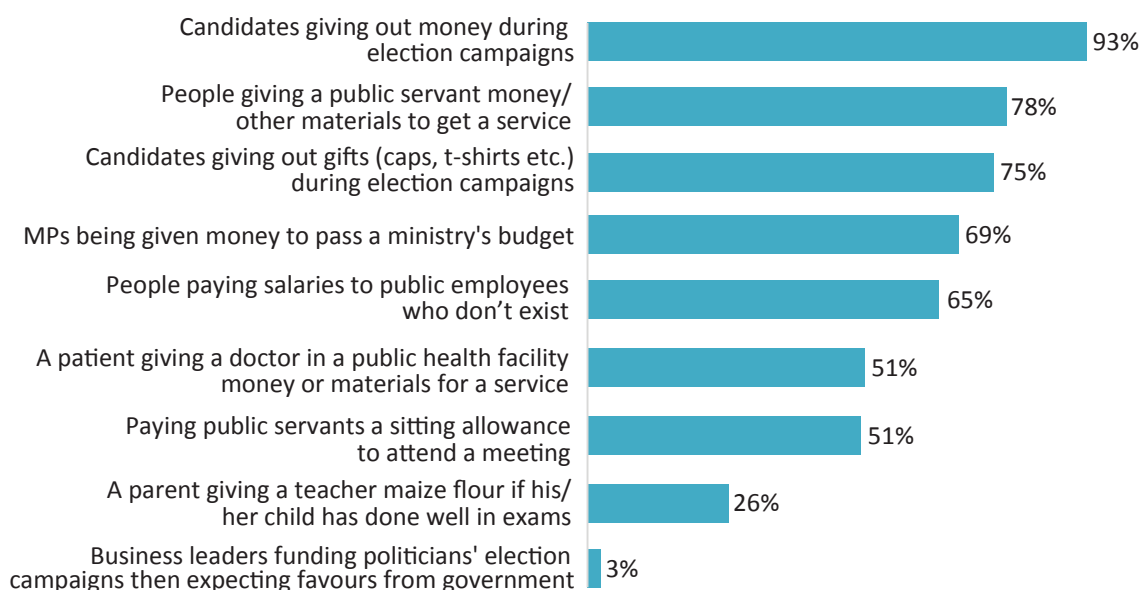
Other actions that are considered by a majority of citizens to be forms of corruption include MP's being given money to pass a ministry's budget (69%), people paying salaries to public employees who don't exist (65%), and a patient giving a doctor in a public health facility money or materials for a service (51%).

The widespread practice of paying public servants a sitting allowance to attend meetings is considered by around half the population (51%) to be a form of corruption.

Giving a teacher a gift after a child has performed well in exams is generally not considered corrupt, with just one in four (26%) classing this as corruption.

However one scenario stands out: the practice of business leaders funding politicians' election campaigns and then expecting favours from government in response is defined as corruption by very few citizens (3%).

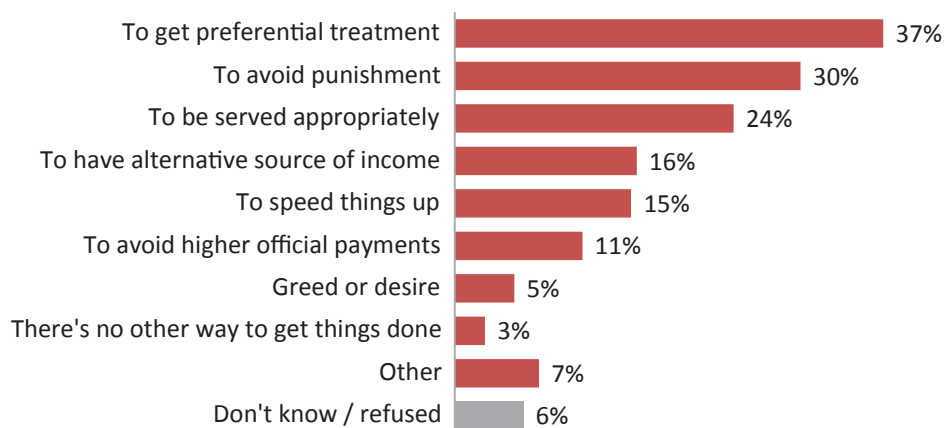
**Figure 2: Please tell me if you consider the following acts to be an act of corruption:**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

Just over one in three citizens (37%) cite preferential treatment as one of the main motives behind corruption. This is followed by avoiding punishment (30%) and to get an appropriate service (24%).

**Figure 3: In your opinion, what are the main motives behind corrupt practices?**  
(multiple responses permitted)



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

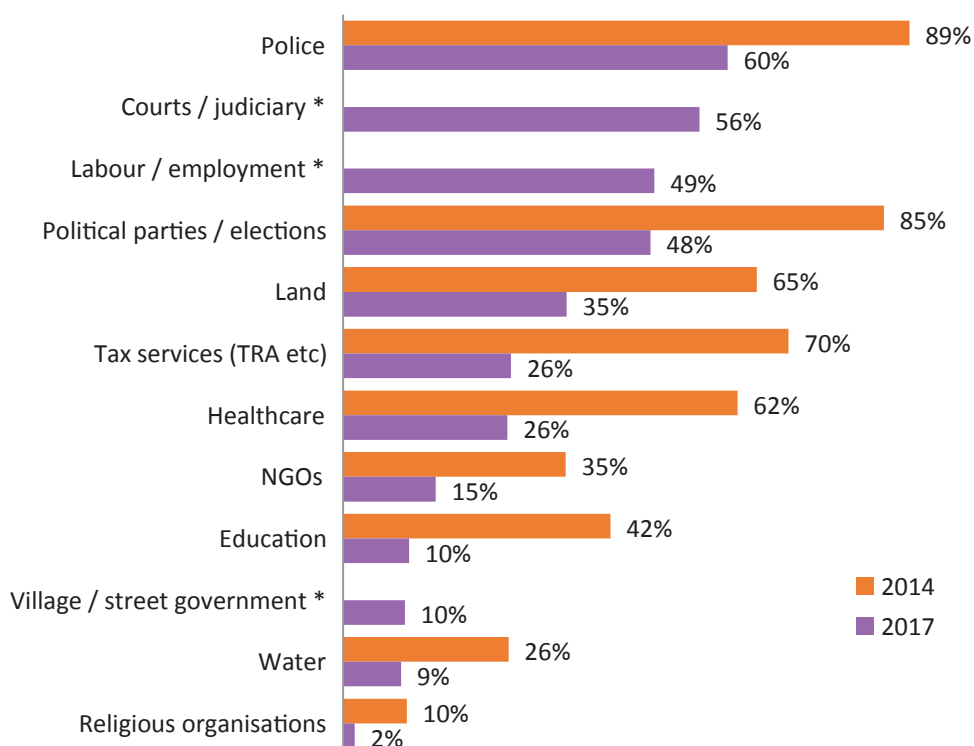
## Fact 2: Compared to 2014, citizens see less corruption in all sectors, but the police still lead

Six in ten citizens (60%) say corruption is “very common” in the police – more than for any other institution or sector. However, this is down considerably since 2014, when 89% said the same. A similar number (56%) say corruption is very common in the courts and judiciary.

In all sectors where there are comparable numbers available, citizens perceive corruption to be less prevalent than they did three years ago. This applies particularly to political parties and elections (down from 85% saying “very corrupt” to 48%), the land sector (65% to 35%), TRA and other tax services (70% to 26%), healthcare (62% to 26%) and education (42% to 10%).

The perceived drop in corruption extends beyond the public sector: NGOs (35% to 15%) and religious organisations (10% to 2%) are also now seen as less corrupt than in 2014.

**Figure 4: Please give me your opinion on how common or rare you think corruption is in each of these sectors and services?**  
(% saying “very common”)

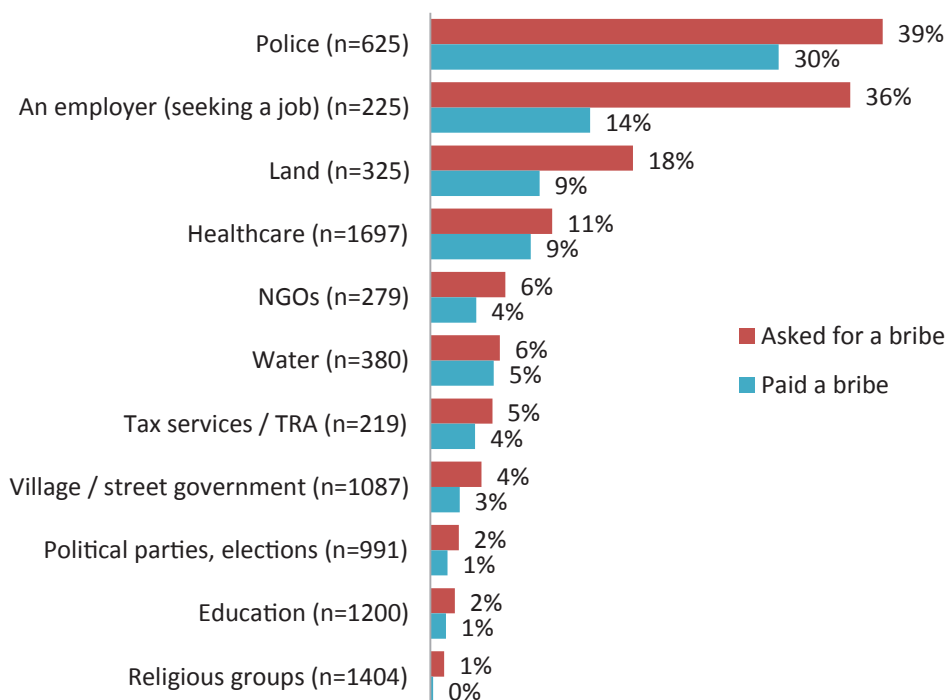


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Panel 1 Round 19 (June 2014) and Panel 2 Round 21 (July-August 2017)

*\* data for 2014 not available*

Of those who have interacted with the police, four in ten (39%) report having been asked for a bribe, and three in ten (30%) paid a bribe. One in three (36%) of those seeking employment report being asked for a bribe.

**Figure 5: The last time you interacted with service providers in the following sectors, were you asked for, and did you pay, a bribe?**  
(% answering yes)

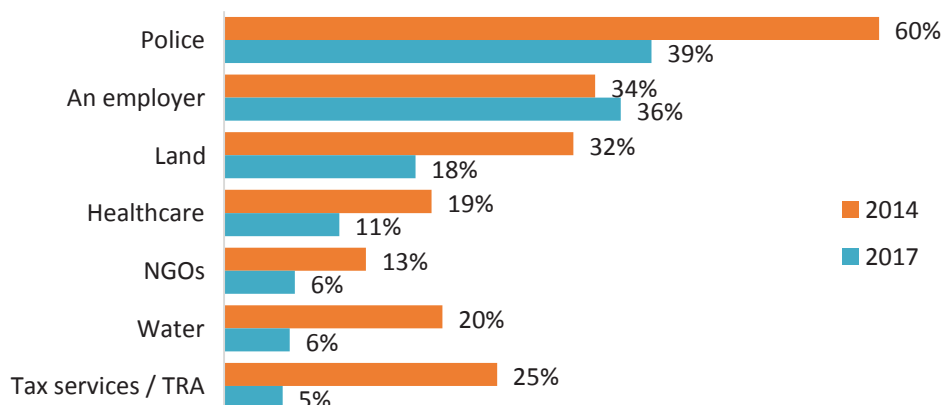


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

As with perceptions of corruption, so citizens' experiences of corruption have dropped since 2014. Across policing, land, healthcare, NGOs, water and tax, the number of citizens who report being asked for bribes has declined sharply in the past three years.

The exception is among those looking for work, where the number of citizens who report being asked for a bribe remains almost the same as in 2014 (36%, up from 34%).

**Figure 6: The last time you interacted with service providers in the following sectors, were you asked for a bribe?**  
(% answering yes, 2014 and 2017)



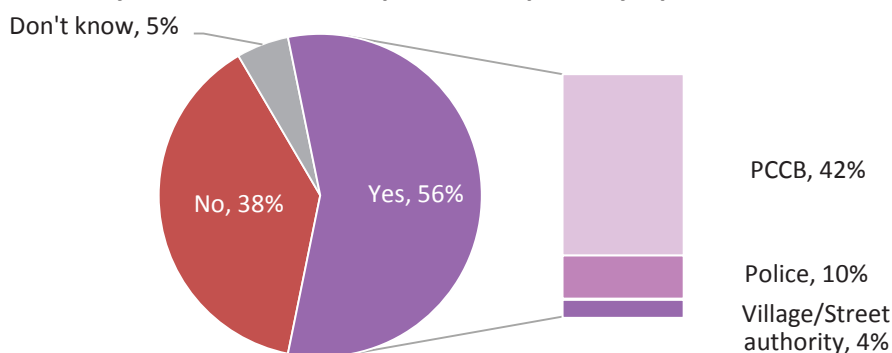
**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

### Fact 3: Just over half the population know where to report corruption

A little over half of all citizens (56%) know where to report corrupt acts by public officials. This includes four in ten (42%) who cite the Prevention and Combatting of Corruption Bureau (PCCB, also known as TAKUKURU), one in ten (10%) who cite the police, and a small number (4%) who cite village or street authorities.

Four in ten (38%) say they don't know where to report corruption.

**Figure 7: Do you know where to report a corrupt act by a public official?**

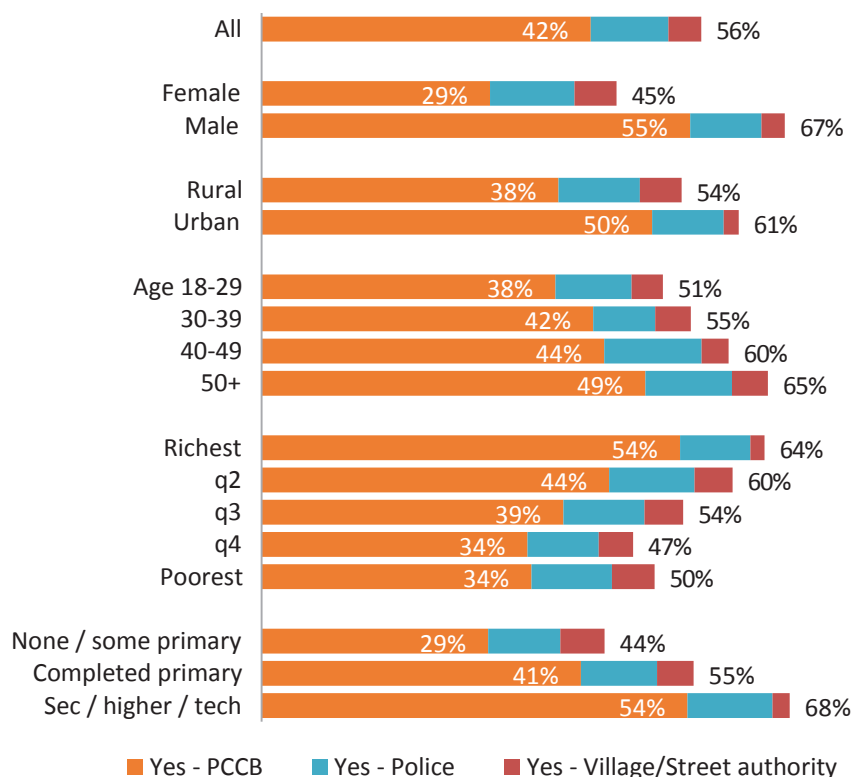


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

Knowledge of where to report corruption has grown since 2014, when under half of citizens (44%) knew where to do this (now 56%), and one in three (33%) specifically mentioned PCCB (now 42%) (not shown in charts).

Some demographic groups are more confident than others in their knowledge of where to report corruption. Men (67%) are considerably more likely than women (45%) to know. Older, wealthier and better-educated citizens are more likely to know than the young, poor or less well-educated.

**Figure 8: Do you know where to report a corrupt act by a public official?**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

Seven in ten citizens (70%) is aware of PCCB. And a similar number (69%) say the organisation is performing well or very well in its duties of combatting corruption (not in charts).

#### **Fact 4: Citizens want to combat corruption, but don't know how**

Four out of five citizens (81%) prefer the statement that it is important to combat corruption even if this means slowing down development, over the alternative, that we should not be too strict on corruption as this will hurt the economy. This suggests most citizens are willing to some extent to compromise on development progress if that means there is more justice and integrity in society.

Citizens are highly split, however, on strategies to achieve a reduction in corruption. Asked to choose which approach would be more effective – solving past cases and punishing the perpetrators or making it harder to corrupt acts in the first place – citizens were almost equally



divided between the two options. Slightly more (57%) say it is more important to address grand corruption than petty corruption, compared to 43% who say the opposite.

There is also an even divide between those who see corruption as an unavoidable part of capitalism (46%), and those who say capitalism without corruption is possible (54%).

There is a little more clarity on two contentious issues in current political debate. Two thirds (65%) say that those accused of corruption should have a fair chance to defend themselves, compared to one in three (35%) who say the rights of accused persons should be set aside. Similarly, a clear majority (59%) say that if evidence is found that implicates a former president in corruption, they should receive no special treatment.

**Figure 9: I am going to read to you a pair of statements and please choose a statement which you agree with the most**



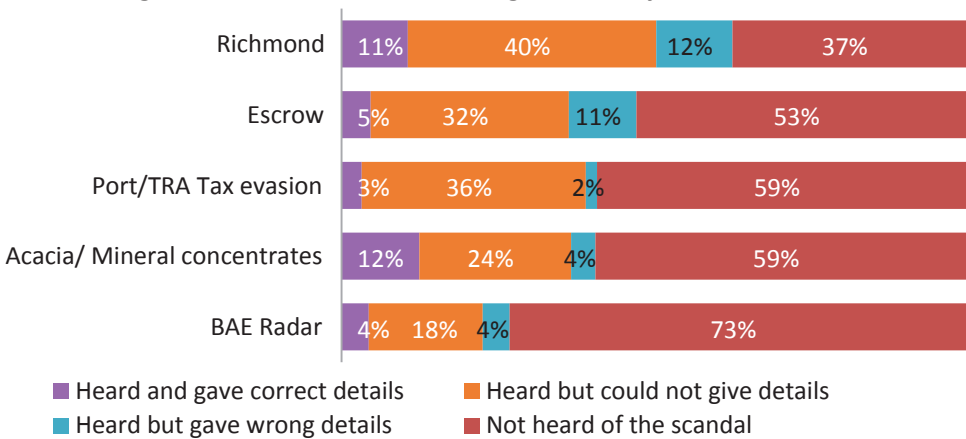
**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

**Fact 5: A majority of citizens have not heard of cases of alleged grand corruption, including the Acacia / mineral concentrates case**

A majority of citizens are not at all aware of alleged corruption cases, even those that have made the headlines on a regular basis. Six in ten (59%) have not heard of the Acacia / mineral concentrates (makinikia/vumbi) case, and a similar number (59%) have not heard of the tax evasion scandal at the ports. Close to half (47%) are aware of the Escrow scandal, and a small majority (63%) are aware of the Richmond case, though this dates from around ten years ago.

Familiarity with these cases is substantially lower than awareness of them. One in ten (12% are familiar with details of the Acacia / mineral concentrates case, and a similar number (11%) know the Richmond case well.

**Figure 10: Which of the following cases are you aware of?<sup>2</sup>**



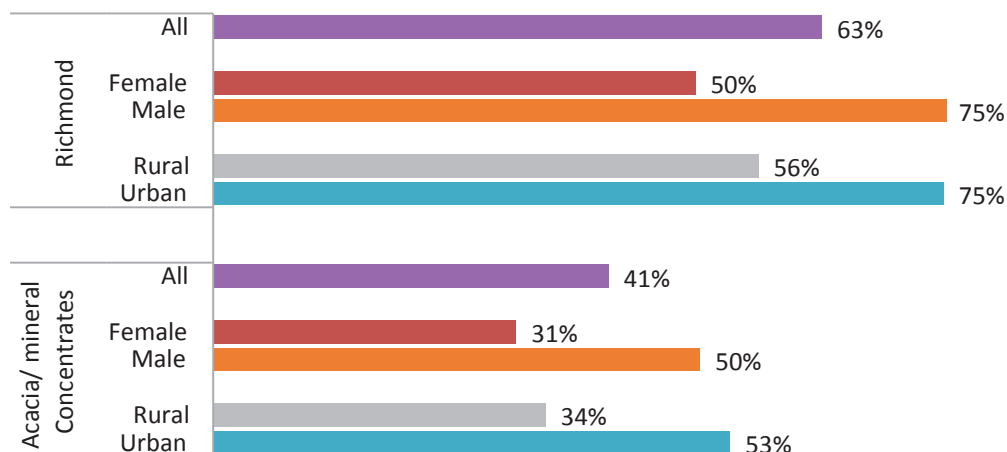
**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

Men are substantially more likely than women to be aware of and familiar with these cases. Three in four men (75%) have heard of the Richmond scandal, compared to 50% of women, for example.

Similarly, residents of urban areas are more likely than their rural counterparts to have heard of both the Richmond and Acacia / concentrates cases.

2 Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**Figure 11: Which of the following cases are you aware of?**

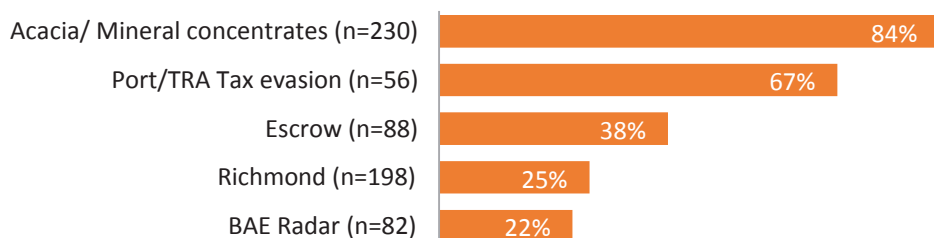


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

Among those who have heard of each case, five in six (84%) think the government is handling the Acacia / mineral concentrates case well, and two in three (67%) feel the same about the government's handling of tax evasion at the ports. Just one in four (25%) think the government has handled the Richmond case well, and four in ten (38%) say the same about the Escrow case.

**Figure 12: How well do you think the government is handling each case?**

*(among those who are familiar with the case; % answering "well")*



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

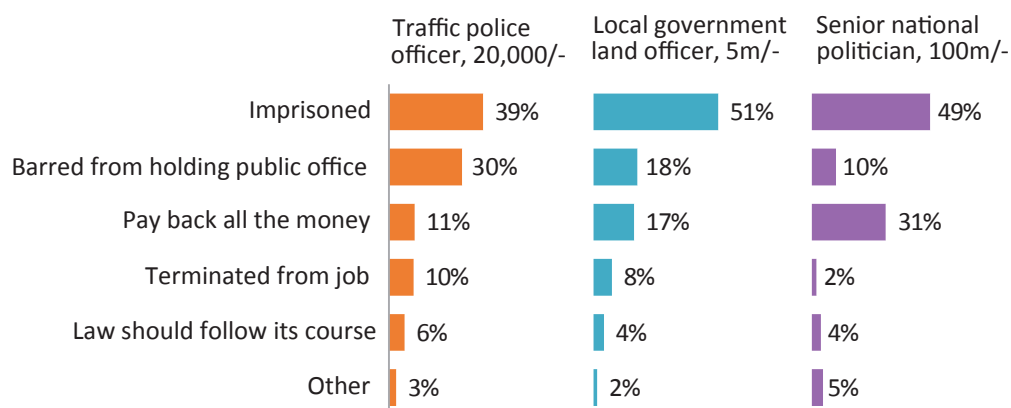
There are at least two possible analyses of this. The two cases where the government's handling is rated highly are also the two cases where the government has itself led the way in uncovering the issues. In the others, the media, civil society and the political opposition set the agenda, with government reluctant to admit to any problem until the evidence became overwhelming. So perhaps the government should conclude that pro-actively seeking out and addressing such cases would be more popular. However, it is also notable that citizens' ratings for government handling are highest for the most recent cases, and lowest for the oldest. So perhaps the conclusion should be that the public notices if old cases never get fully resolved, and perhaps citizens' rating of the government's handling of the more recent cases will drop if they do not reach satisfactory resolution.

## Fact 6: Half of all citizens think corrupt politicians should be imprisoned

One in two citizens (49%) think a hypothetical senior national politician found to have stolen TZS 100 million from the government should be punished with a prison sentence. This judgement is largely consistent across two other hypothetical cases – a traffic police officer who accepted a bribe of TZS 20,000 to overlook a traffic offence and a local government officer found to have accepted a bribe of TZS 5 million. In each case, imprisonment is the popular response – even for receiving a TZS 20,000 bribe, where four in ten (39%) prefer this option.

Three in ten (31%) think it is sufficient to require the politician to return the stolen money (10 million/), but for the relatively smaller thefts (20,000 and 5 million), returning the money is not seen as a suitable punishment. Fewer citizens (10%) are of the opinion that the politician (who stole the most money) should be barred from holding public office, compared to the land officer (18%) and traffic police officer (30%) who stole less.

**Figure 13: What do you think should be done in the event that the following individuals were found guilty of such corruption?**



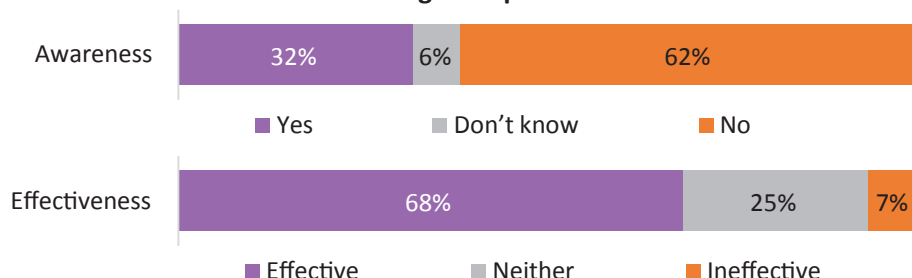
**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

## Fact 7: One in three citizens are aware of the anti-corruption court; two in three think it will be effective

One out of three citizens (32%) have heard of the newly established anti-corruption court (which formally commenced operations in September 2016)<sup>3</sup>, and two out of three think it will be effective at combatting corruption. For those who did not know about the court, it was described to them so they could rate its potential effectiveness.

3 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201609080140.html>

**Figure 14: Are you aware of the existence of an anti-corruption court? How effective will this court be in curbing corruption in Tanzania?**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

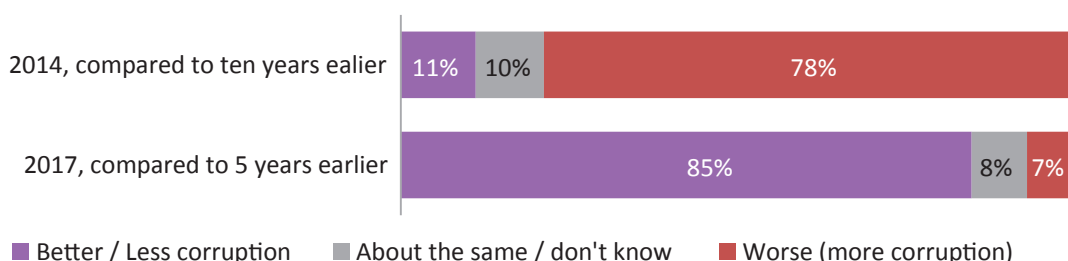
At the same time, earlier in 2017, citizens expressed doubt as to whether powerful people would be punished according to the law if they committed a crime; two out of three citizens think that public servants (68%), police officers (69%), senior government officials (72%) and rich people (74%) would rarely or never face legal consequences.<sup>4</sup>

## Fact 8: A large majority of citizens think the level of corruption has fallen in recent years

Overall, five in six citizens (85%) think there is now less corruption in Tanzania than was the case five years earlier. Just one in twenty (7%) think corruption has increased in the past five years.

In contrast, when asked similar question in 2014, three in four citizens (78%) felt corruption was higher than it had been in 2004.

**Figure 15: How would you compare the level of corruption in Tanzania today with the level of corruption a few years ago?**

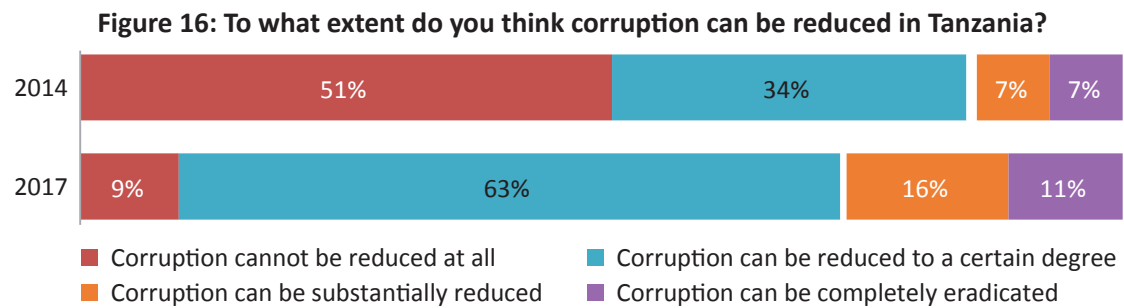


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Panel 1 Round 19 (June 2014) and Panel 2 Round 21 (July-August 2017)

Similarly, citizens are now more positive about the possibility of reducing corruption in Tanzania. In 2014, half (51%) said corruption cannot be reduced at all; now just one in ten (10%) feel this

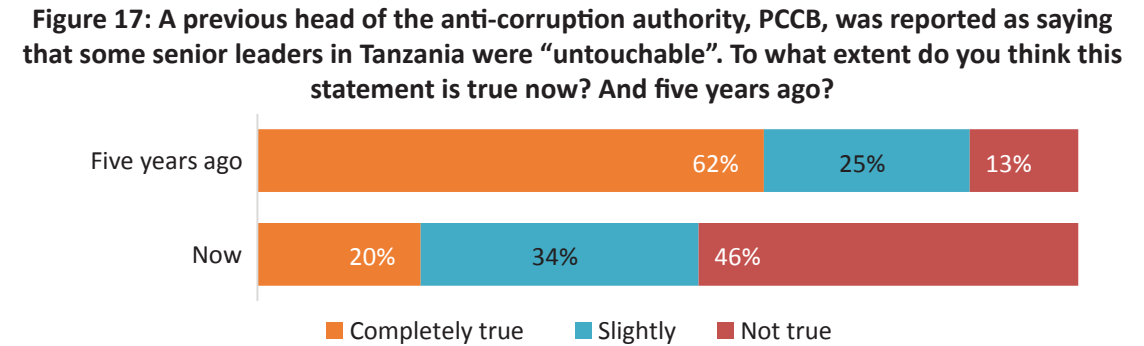
<sup>4</sup> Safety first? Security, policing and justice in Tanzania – *Sauti za Wananchi* brief, July 2017

way. However, even with this increased optimism, still just one in four (27%) think corruption can be either eradicated or substantially reduced in Tanzania, with the majority (63%) saying it can only be reduced to a certain degree.



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Panel 1 Round 19 (June 2014) and Panel 2 Round 21 (July-August 2017)

Further, asked specifically about the reported statement of a previous head of PCCB / TAKUKURU that some figures in Tanzania were “untouchable”, just under half the population (46%) think the statement is now “not true”. A majority (62%) say it was “completely true” five years ago, but just one in five (20%) feel that way now.



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, mobile phone survey, Round 21 (July-August 2017)

Citizens do not see electing the opposition as an effective means of reducing corruption. Just one in five (18%) say that if the opposition was in power they would do a better job than the current government in fighting corruption in Tanzania, compared to three in four (73%) who disagree (not shown in charts).

### 3. Conclusion

The findings of this brief are in some ways an endorsement by citizens of the fifth phase government's anti-corruption strategy. Most obviously, citizens now report experiencing less corruption in their regular interactions with government (and other) institutions than they did in 2013, and perceive corruption to be less common across almost all institutions. Further, they say the level of corruption in Tanzania as a whole is lower than five years ago, while in 2014 the majority reported that the level had increased. And they are now substantially more positive about the possibility of achieving a reduction in corruption than they were in 2014.

These are considerably achievements, and should be applauded. However, they should also be accompanied by several notes of caution.


First, there can be a big difference between public perceptions of corruption (and even their reported experiences of corruption) and the reality. In other words, people can feel like corruption has declined, whether or not this decline has not really happened, particularly where anti-corruption activities have attracted a lot of headlines and other publicity. It is very hard to measure actual levels of corruption with any accuracy, and this brief does not claim to do so. Further, citizens' perceptions could be based on their experiences of so-called "petty" corruption, at the front-line of public services where most interactions between government and the public take place. Citizens' perceptions are much less likely to offer any comment on "grand" corruption that occurs at the highest levels of government in a way that requires significant subversion of the political, legal and economic systems especially when there is no policing of corruption.

Second, there are signs that citizens are not fully supportive of the government's current strategy of solving corruption. Majorities say that it is important to fully respect the rights of accused persons and that former presidents should not have impunity if evidence is found that implicates them. In both cases, this contrasts with the public statements of senior government leaders. And citizens are very evenly divided on whether corruption is best addressed by solving past cases and holding the perpetrators to account or by putting in place mechanisms that make it harder for people to commit wrongdoing in the first place. While the government has focussed most of its energy on the former, it has arguably taken several steps backwards on the latter, by tightening controls on the media and restricting the activities of opposition politicians, for example. It should also be remembered that it was very recently found that a large majority of citizens still think powerful individuals in Tanzania are beyond the reach of the law.<sup>5</sup>

Third, citizens awareness of high profile cases of alleged corruption is instructive. Large numbers are essentially unaware of most cases, including those that have dominated headlines in the past few months (such as the Acacia / mineral concentrates case) and in the past 3-4 years (such as the Escrow case). Where awareness is so low, it is unlikely that many are able to accurately judge

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5 Safety first? Security, policing and justice in Tanzania – *Sauti za Wananchi* brief, July 2017



whether there are still any so-called “untouchable” figures, for example, or whether corruption really has declined.

Nevertheless, even a perceived improvement in levels of corruption is significant. Where citizens think improvements are taking place, and are now more confident that it is possible to reduce corruption, this can help to build trust in government and to show others that integrity is something worthwhile. This can also give citizens more confidence to report instances of corruption. Perceptions and confidence can have concrete effects on behaviour and can help to shift social norms.

Indeed, the biggest challenge that emerges from this brief is arguably for critics of the government, particularly those who have been trying for years to persuade the government to take corruption more seriously and who now find themselves criticising a government that is doing so for doing it “the wrong way”. For this group, the low levels of awareness of past cases is a serious concern. For some, their political momentum was built largely around bringing such cases to public attention. Similarly, among those who are familiar with the cases that have emerged since the 2015 elections, the public largely approve of the government’s handling of such cases. And a clear majority do not think the opposition would handle corruption better than the current administration is doing. In short, there may be less room in future for the opposition to build public support on an anti-corruption platform.

Nevertheless, we should not fall into the trap of concluding that being tough and suspending due process for those accused of corruption has led to a reduction in corruption. There is no evidence here that supports this view. Indeed, there are many good reasons to protect and strengthen adherence to due process when combatting corruption – to ensure only the truly guilty are punished, to discourage malicious false accusations, and to build trust among public servants, to name just three. Anti-corruption witch-hunts and show trials are a sign of autocratic government, as is the mistaken argument that the-ends-justify-the-means. Such approaches and arguments appeal to public popularity in order to conceal a lack of confidence and possibly also a lack of evidence.

There is no reason at all why a government cannot be tough on corruption and adhere to proper procedures at the same time. And while we’re at it, there’s no reason why it cannot encourage vibrant public debate and criticism as well.