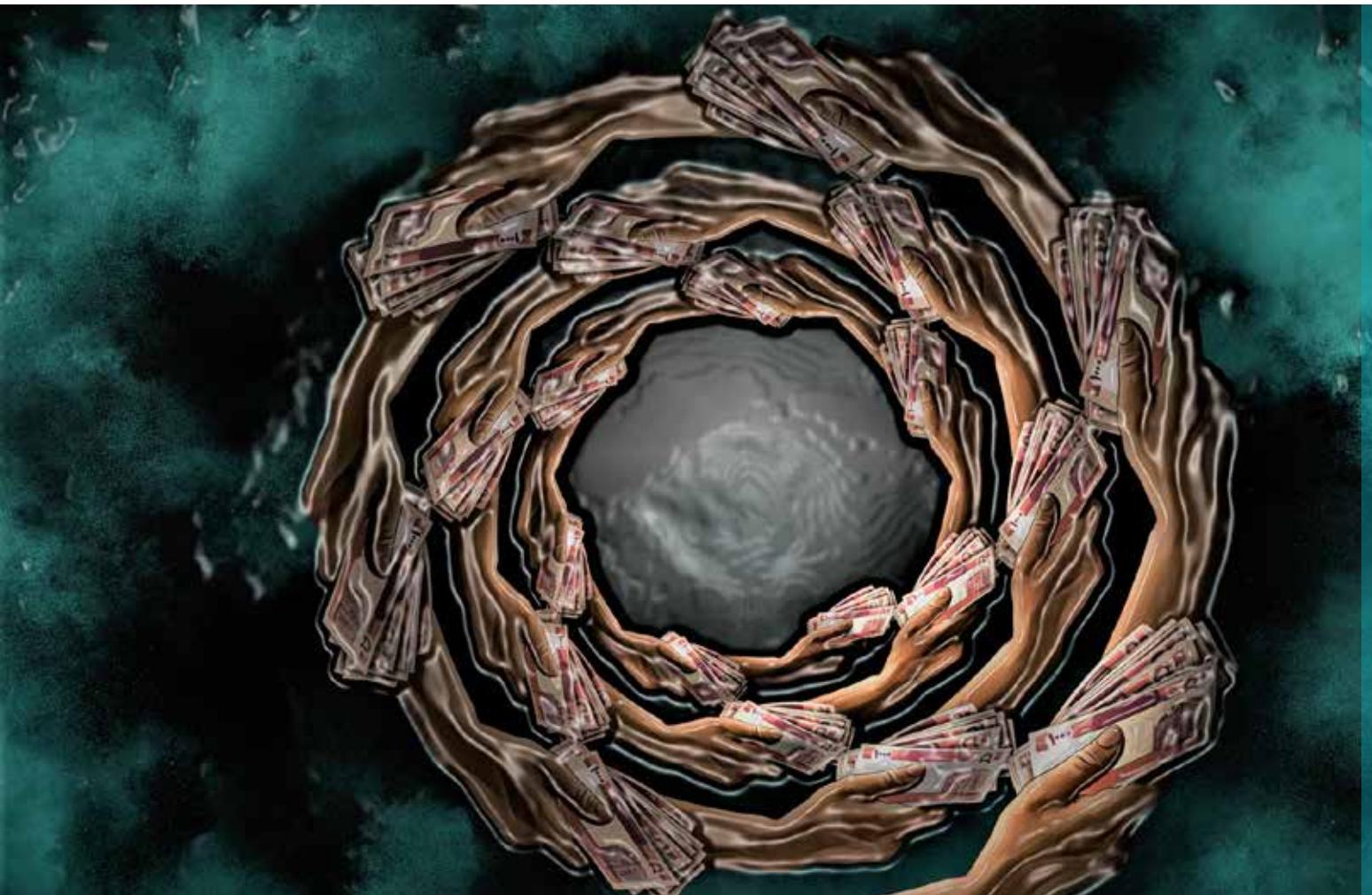




INTEGRITY
WATCH
AFGHANISTAN



NATIONAL CORRUPTION SURVEY 2020

Afghans' Perceptions and Experiences of Corruption

NATIONAL CORRUPTION SURVEY 2020

Afghans' Perceptions and Experiences of Corruption

Integrity Watch Afghanistan
2021

NCS DISCLOSURE ELEMENTS	DETAILS
Survey sponsor	Integrity Watch Afghanistan
Survey/Data collection supplier	Integrity Watch Afghanistan
Population represented	Adults (18+) in Afghanistan
Sample size	8140
Mode of data collection	Standard face-to-face Interviews
Type of sample (probability/non-probability)	Probability
Survey Area	34 Provinces
Start and end dates of data collection	September 27, 2020 to March 30, 2021
Margin of sampling error for total sample	+/- 1.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level
Contact for more information	Communication Department; Integrity Watch Afghanistan Qala-e-Fathullah, #8-3, info.integritywatch.org

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Ezatullah Adib is Head of Research at Integrity Watch Afghanistan. Mr. Adib has an extensive background in leading diverse research projects. He is a researcher, with the ability to design, organize and manage complex qualitative and quantitative researches in extremely challenging environments. He also has high expertise with regard to data treatment, statistical and qualitative data analysis. His research work ranges from studies on public opinion, to public policy and socio-economic surveys.

About Integrity Watch

Integrity Watch is an Afghan civil society organisation committed to increasing transparency, accountability and integrity in Afghanistan. Integrity Watch was founded in October 2005 and registered as an independent civil society organisation in 2006. The head office of Integrity Watch is in Kabul with provincial programmatic outreach in more than a dozen provinces including Balkh, Bamyan, Herat, Kabul, Kapisa, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Parwan, Laghman, Kunar, Jawzjan and Samangan.

Over the last decade, Integrity Watch's work focused on community monitoring, research and advocacy.

Integrity Watch focuses on citizens and community mobilisation. Its most noteworthy work in this area includes the development of community monitoring tools, mobilising and training communities to monitor infrastructure projects, public services, courts and extractives industries.

The organisation's research work focuses on policy-oriented research, measuring trends, perceptions and experiences of corruption covering a wide range of related issues including insecurity and justice sectors, extractive industries, public finances and budget management, and aid effectiveness. The objective is to undertake new, ground-breaking empirical research that would help to set future agendas, influence decision-makers and bring to public attention non-documented and un-explored issues.

Integrity Watch has played a pioneering role in advocating for knowledge-based decision-making and informed public debate on corruption and integrity issues. The advocacy work includes the facilitation of policy dialogue on issues related to integrity, transparency and accountability. Integrity Watch's policy advocacy focuses on examining the accountability of the government and service providers to the communities they serve. Access to information, budget transparency and accountability, aid transparency and effectiveness, effective public service delivery and anti-corruption have been studied to date.

Acknowledgement

Integrity Watch would like to express its appreciation and gratitude to the team responsible for the production of this Seventh biennial National Corruption Survey. Our appreciation could extend to many people but in particular to the report authors, Andrew McDevitt, whose decade of experience in research and anti-corruption enabled him to bring clarity to the issues on which this survey is focused; to Ezatullah ADIB, Head of Research, of Integrity Watch who is the lead researcher responsible for the design and implementation of the extensive nationwide survey, data collection exercise, and undertaking the statistical analysis of the survey.

We would like to acknowledge the Afghan government authorities in Kabul and in all 34 provinces for their cooperation during our weeks of data collection and add our appreciation to Zubaida Karim, Sayed Kamal, and Mahdi Najafi for the administrative and data management support, and the Field Coordinators, Provincial Supervisors, and Enumerators, who were responsible for the critical task of interviewing, recording responses from, more than 8,000 individuals in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

We would also like to thank Sayed Ikram Afzali, Norville Connolly, Mohammad Naser Timory, Dr. Teena Singh and all other reviewers who preferred to stay anonymous for taking their time to review and comment on the initial drafts of this report.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) and The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) for their financial support, without which the production of this report would not have been possible.

Foreword

As we launch the results of the 2020 Afghanistan National Corruption Survey, Afghanistan finds itself at a perilous crossroads. The focus is on what the immediate future holds in store for the nation and whether an elusive intra-Afghan peace can finally be secured.

While survey respondents remained positive about the prospects for peace, as is to be expected given the ongoing conflict and economic hardships, they identified insecurity and unemployment among the three most serious issues facing the country. But as was the case for the 2018 survey, they also include corruption. More worryingly two-thirds of respondents believed that corruption has become more of an issue over the past two years and six in ten respondents believe corruption to be a very serious issue. Fewer respondents felt progress had been made in the fight against corruption or believed the government was doing a good job in tackling the issue. A full 41% of respondents felt that corruption cannot be reduced at all.

These findings are a source of concern at a time when the state more than ever needs to be seen as legitimate in the eyes of the people. This legitimacy is potentially further undermined by the justice sector, which should safeguard the rule of law but is seen by survey respondents to be more corrupt than any other sector.

While these findings may be discouraging, there is also hope in the survey. Close to two-thirds of survey respondents stated that they would not pay a bribe if asked for one. This points to a population willing to stand against pervasive corruption. For them we must not lose sight of the need for deepening all efforts to reduce corruption and the peace process cannot be allowed to become a distraction or justification for not doing more. In fact, significantly reducing corruption and improving service provision should be at the very heart of any efforts hoping to deliver sustainable peace and prosperity for the people of Afghanistan.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the team who worked tirelessly to carry out this survey in a year presenting an unusual number of challenges and wish to acknowledge the report authors Andy McDevitt and Ezatullah Adib, the research team, field staff, Afghan Government and donors including SIGAR and SIDA who provided financial support to the project.



Nils Taxell
Chair
Board of Directors
Integrity Watch Afghanistan

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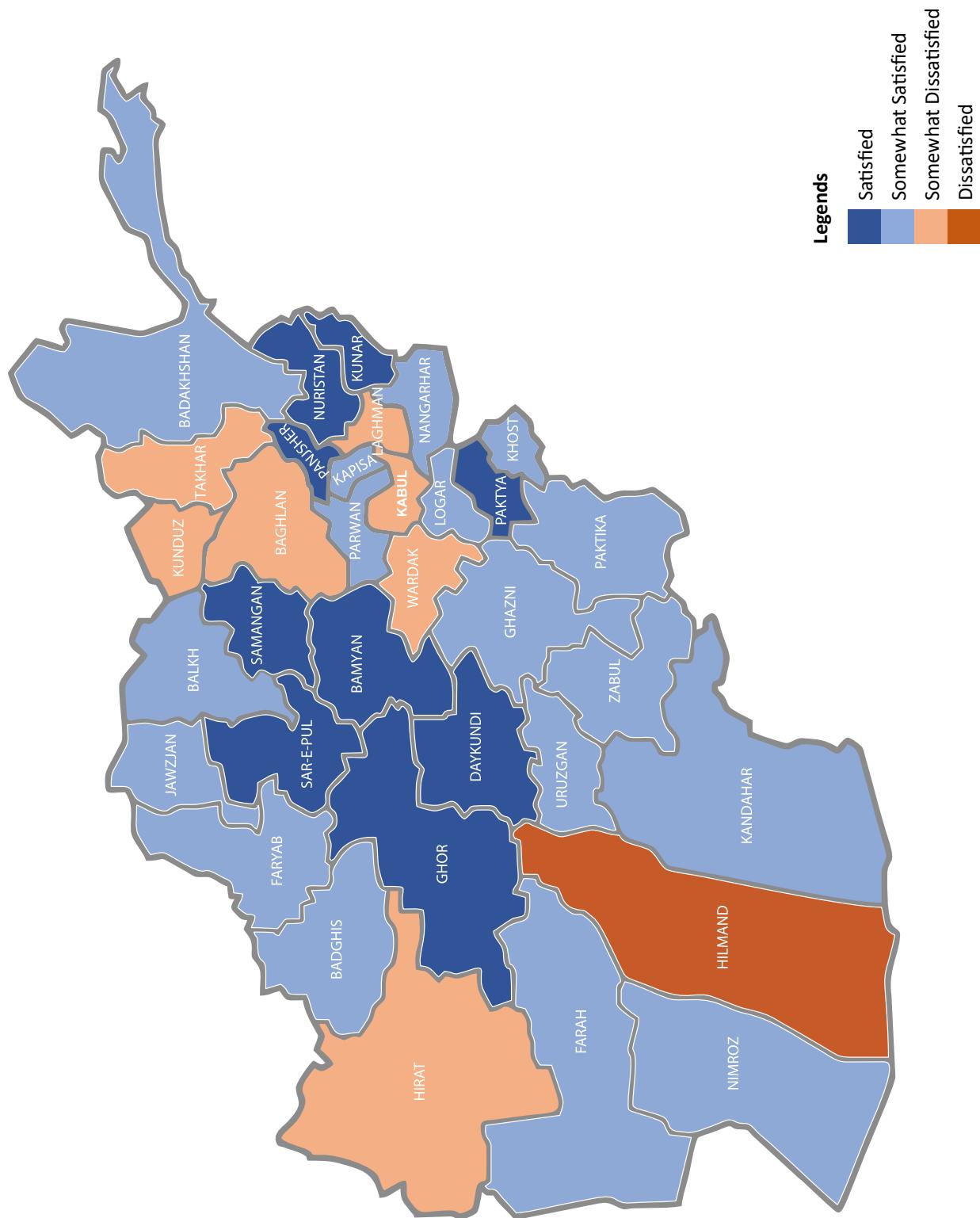
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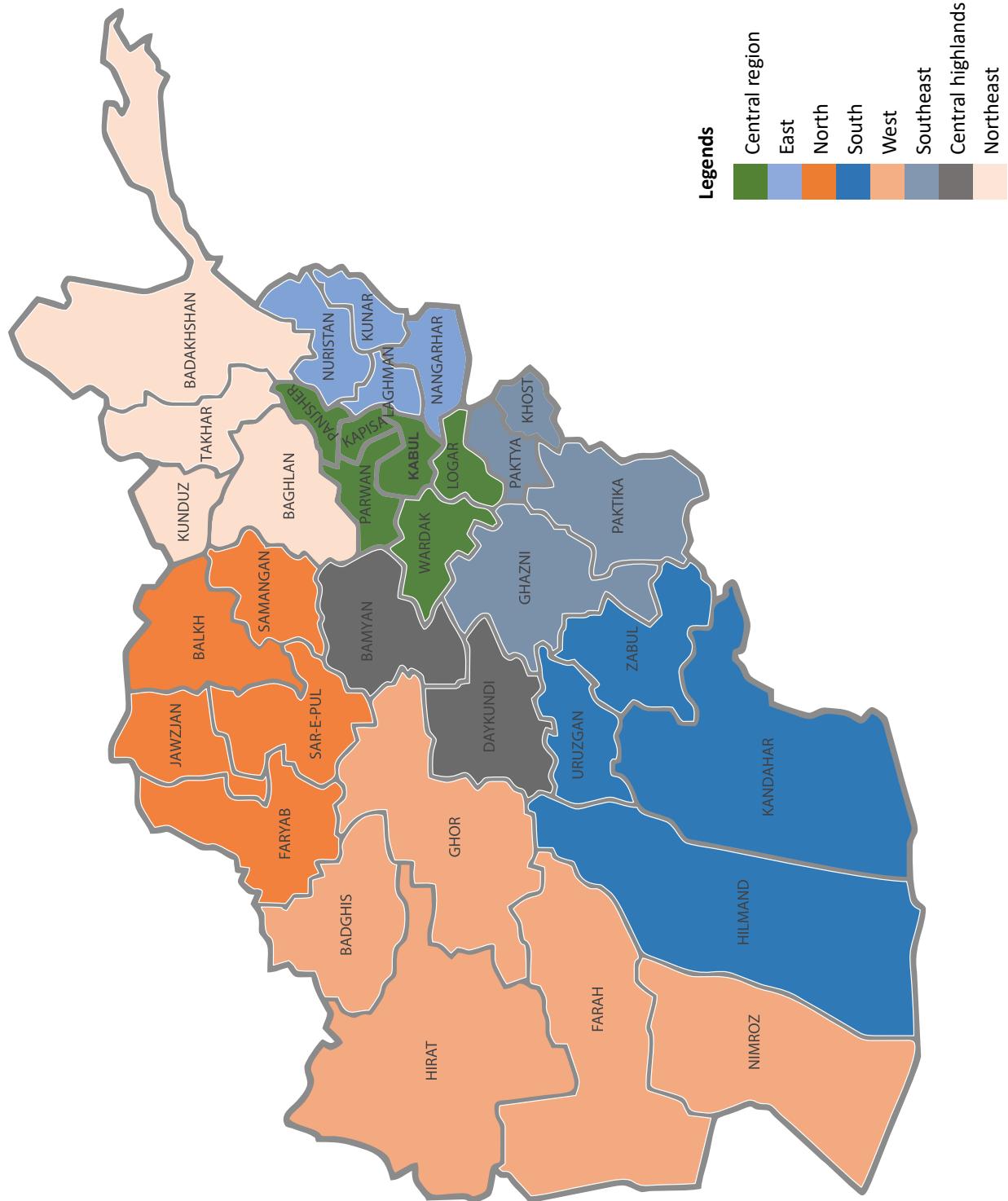
Acronyms

ACC	Anti- Corruption Commission
ACJC	Anti-Corruption and Justice Court
HCRLAC	High Council on Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption
MEC	Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring Committee
MoIA	Ministry of Interior Affairs
NCS	National Corruption Survey
NGO	Non-Government Organizations
NSCC	National Strategy for Combating Corruption
SACS	Special Anti-Corruption Secretariat
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan

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Map 1: Level of satisfaction

Map 2: Regions and provinces' distribution

Executive summary

Since the last National Corruption Survey in 2018, Afghanistan has witnessed limited progress on anti-corruption reforms. As a result, corruption continues to rate as one of the country's three most serious problems while the number of Afghan citizens who have encountered bribery continues to rise.

General trends

A key finding from this year's survey is that insecurity, unemployment, and corruption have become even greater problems in the country. Indeed, insecurity is mentioned by 84% of respondents as one of the top 3 problems in the country, up from an already high figure of 78% in 2018. At the same time, the proportion of citizens who consider that the government has done a good job of addressing these three problems has declined over the past two years.

Citizens consider security and law enforcement officials as the most likely group of public servants to work for the benefit of all people. Confidence in the President also remains relatively high although it has dropped significantly since 2018. At the other end of the spectrum, citizens have the least confidence in the Taliban and other militant groups to act in the interests of all, followed by different political and justice sector actors.

More than half of citizens believe that corruption levels are lower in Taliban-controlled areas than in government-controlled areas. This perhaps surprising result is very worrying as it suggests that citizens generally feel that either the government is likely to be more corrupt than the Taliban, or at the very least is less able to control corruption than the Taliban. It should be noted that, because the survey was carried out largely in government-controlled areas, these findings reflect citizens views in those areas more strongly than in Taliban-controlled areas.

Nevertheless, citizens generally remain confident in the prospect of a peace deal with the Taliban with almost two thirds believing that successful completion of peace talks will result in the strengthening of good governance in Afghanistan, albeit with important regional differences. While overall confidence in the peace process remains high, citizens are more sceptical that progress will be achieved quickly.

Perceptions and experiences with corruption

Two-thirds of Afghan citizens believe that corruption has become a more significant problem over the last two years, and the proportion of citizens who believe corruption to be a very serious issue has risen from 48% in 2018 to 60% in 2020. Men tend to be slightly more pessimistic in this regard than women. Correspondingly, the proportion of citizens who believe that there have been improvements in reducing corruption in any public institution over the previous year has noticeably dropped since 2018.

The justice system is clearly perceived by citizens as the most corrupt sector in Afghanistan, with the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA) now considered the most corrupt institution by almost one-fifth of the population, followed by the Courts/Judiciary and the Attorney General's Office.

Trends in Afghan citizens' personal experience with corruption have remained largely constant over the past decade, with roughly 20% - 25% of citizens reporting that they have experienced corruption over the previous year during that period. Men consistently report having experienced corruption more than women. Nevertheless, the frequency with which an individual is likely to face corruption is on the rise, with the proportion of citizens who have experienced corruption three times or more during the past year having increased from 27% in 2018 to 37%.

In terms of bribery specifically, one particularly worrying trend is the consistent rise over the past decade in the estimated number of Afghan citizens who have paid a bribe, reaching approximately 15% of the country's population in 2020, compared to 5% in 2012. The average number of bribes paid per person has also increased since 2018, while the average amount of a bribe has remained the same. As a result, Afghans reported paying a total of AFN 171 billion (USD 2.25 billion) in 2020, an increase of 37% on the total reported amount in 2018.

Approximately two-thirds of citizens state that they would not pay a bribe if asked to do so, a similar proportion to previous years. However, there is a slight but noticeable decrease in citizens willingness to discuss bribery. By far the most common reason citizens give when stating that they would pay a bribe is the belief, particularly among women, that this is the only way to access a service.

Views on efforts to fight corruption

There has been a worrying decline in the proportion of citizens who say they know where to report corruption, down from 44% in 2018 to 26% in 2020. There has also been a corresponding decline in the proportion of respondents who state that they or someone in their household has reported a corrupt act. The most common reason given for not reporting a corrupt act is the fear of retribution, followed by the belief that no action will be taken to address the issue.

At the same time, Afghans are significantly more critical of the Government's efforts to fight corruption than in previous years, with more than 40% now rating these efforts as ineffective. In terms of the will of different actors to combat corruption, citizens are most positive about the media and the President, and most negative about the Taliban, the Parliament and the Judiciary. With regards to the Taliban, although, as noted above, corruption levels are considered lower in Taliban-controlled areas than in government-controlled areas, this may partly be due to the fact that the Taliban do not see any benefit in helping support control corruption in government-controlled areas since maintaining the status quo helps them to undermine the government. Overall, Afghans remain generally pessimistic about the extent to which corruption in the country can be reduced. 41% of citizens feel that corruption cannot be reduced at all, while only 17% believe that corruption can be substantially reduced or completely eradicated.

Recommendations

- **Anti-corruption strategy:** The Government should invest in developing a well-focussed follow-up to the previous National Strategy for Combating Corruption based on meaningful consultations with all stakeholders. The new strategy should adopt a three-pronged approach focussing on prosecution, prevention, and public engagement and identify a set of targeted priorities and results-oriented benchmarks and avoid spreading resources too thinly.
- **Anti-corruption commission:** The government should implement a number of urgent changes to the proposed Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to avoid political

interference and address the overlap between the ACC and other anti-corruption bodies in line with UNCAC commitments. In short term, the process of selection that went ahead without the civil society should be invalidated and in the long term executive's role in the appointment of commissioners should be removed. The ACC should also be given the power to oversee the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre and facilitate the work of the National High Council for Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption.

- **Intra-Afghan peace talks:** All parties should ensure that any Intra-Afghan peace agreement includes a commitment to good governance at its core, including an inclusive justice system which caters for the co-existence of formal and informal actors and which guarantees equal rights for women and different ethnic and social groups.
- **Security and justice:** As the role of local security and justice institutions becomes ever more important with the gradual withdrawal of international support, the government must ensure that they are protected from political influence and interference in personnel appointments to avoid further undermining trust. The government should also ensure an independent, effective & transparent judiciary free from political influence.
- **Law enforcement capacity:** The government should invest in strengthen the capacity of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute corruption cases, in particular through support to the Anti-Corruption and Justice Centre (ACJC) the Attorney General's Office so that they can take on corruption cases against powerful, well-connected individuals.
- **Attorney general:** The President should ensure a transparent and competitive selection process for the Attorney General through an independent panel made up of civil society representatives and other independent actors
- **Transparency:** The government should commit to publicly releasing data about convictions and sentences of officials involved in corruption and fraud. The government should also commit to publishing all decisions related to the resolution of disputes during future elections
- **Whistle-blower protection:** Given the significant decline in the level of citizen reporting of corruption, it is urgent that the government accelerates efforts to implement the Whistle-blower Protection Law in order to incentivise greater reporting of corrupt acts and to provide protection to those who do report.

- **Anti-corruption hotline:** There is a need to have a credible, reliable, and fully-resourced hotline that receives corruption complaints, investigates and takes quick and effective action, and provides feedback to complainants and the general public on the outcome of investigations. This should replace the plethora of existing hotlines at national, provincial and agency levels, which have proved to be ineffective. The hotline should be accompanied by clear communication to citizens on how to access and effectively use it.
- **Parliament:** The Parliament should contribute to the development of the Anti-Corruption Strategy and should develop its own action plan to curb corruption within the Parliament. It should commit to and expedite the process of prosecuting those MPs who are accused of corruption. The Parliament should also expedite anti-corruption legislation and ensure enforcement of the current laws by strengthening their monitoring role.
- **Open justice:** The judiciary should prioritise the development of an open justice mechanism to ensure access to information and increase attention on the resolution of administrative corruption cases against government officials and high-level public servants, as committed to under Afghanistan's Second Open Government Partnership National Action Plan¹.
- **International support:** The International Community should stand behind independent actors including civil society. They should not give the government a free-pass due to their other political priorities.
- **Civic space:** The media and civil society should continue to advocate for more civic space and coordinate efforts to keep up the pressure on the government and international community to step up their fight against corruption. Civil society and media should also develop collective-action programs for preventing corruption within their organizations.
- **Private sector:** The private sector plays a major role in corruption but can also be a key ally in the fight against corruption. The private sector should push for collective action to prevent corruption within their own organizations by adopting anti-corruption programs including promotion of ethical business conduct.

¹ https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Afghanistan_Action-Plan_2019-2021_EN.pdf



INTRODUCTION

Since the last National Corruption Survey in 2018, Afghanistan has experienced a range of important foreseen and unforeseen events, including protracted and contested parliamentary and presidential elections, the beginning of much anticipated peace talks with the Taliban, and – like the rest of the world - the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, there has been limited progress on anti-corruption reforms and the country still awaits the establishment of fully operational, independent Anti-Corruption Commission.

Politics and elections

In October 2018, Afghanistan held parliamentary elections, with the new parliament sworn in in April 2019 amid allegations of financial corruption and undue political influence². Presidential elections were held in September of the following year, following multiple delays. Turnout for the elections was historically low with only 1.8 million, or 19% of the eligible population casting a vote, less than half the turnout for the 2018 parliamentary elections³. Numerous problems were recorded during the elections, including inaccurate voter lists, unsanctioned election campaigning, delays in opening polling stations, failure to correctly operate the newly introduced biometrics system, security threats, interference of unauthorized persons, and the obstruction of observers⁴. Consequently, the final results were not announced until five months later, with incumbent President Ashraf Ghani declared the winner⁵. However, his rival and former Chief Executive under the former National Unity Government, Abdullah Abdullah rejected the results, alleging fraud and instead declared himself president. The two eventually signed a power-sharing deal in May 2020, with Dr Ghani serving as president and Dr Abdullah tasked with leading the peace talks with the Taliban⁶.

Peace talks

Intra-Afghan peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban officially began on the 12 September 2020. The first round of talks ended in December with an agreed set of procedural rules for further talks. A road map for the future of Afghanistan is part of the agenda for the latest round of talks which began in January 2021⁷. As a precondition for the negotiations, the U.S. had agreed to withdraw all of its troops from Afghanistan by May 2021. As

of February 2021, 2,500 troops remained in the country⁸. At the time of writing, peace negotiations have reached an impasse as both sides await the emergence of the new U.S. administration's strategy under President Biden⁹.

Despite slow progress, Afghan citizens remain optimistic about the prospects for peace, with 54% stating that peace is achievable within the next two years¹⁰. However, citizens do not believe that peace should come at any cost, with the vast majority stating that it is very important that a strong central government (85%), women's rights (85%), and equality among different groups of people (84%) be protected¹¹.

Economic situation and the COVID-19 crisis

Following a period of growth during 2019, the Afghan economy was estimated to have contracted sharply over the first half of 2020, largely due to the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. Wheat production in particular was heavily impacted by lockdowns and border closures¹². According to a 2020 survey conducted by the Asia Foundation, 71% of Afghans said that their financial situation had worsened and 74% reported that employment opportunities for their household had declined in the previous 12 months. Meanwhile, three quarters of citizens reported that the government had provided no support at all to them or their family during the pandemic¹³.

Insecurity

Overall, the number of civilian casualties in 2020 dropped by 15% as compared to 2019, reaching its lowest level since 2013. Nevertheless, there was a marked rise in the last quarter of 2020¹⁴. Attacks against Afghan forces and civilians were 50% higher in the three months to the end of September when

² <https://freedomhouse.org/country/afghanistan/freedom-world/2020>

³ AAN (2020) Afghanistan's 2019 election (28): ECC starts final, decisive phase of complaints procedure, 25 Jan 2020 <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/political-landscape/afghanistans-2019-election-28-ecc-starts-final-decisive-phase-of-complaints-procedure/>

⁴ Free and Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan, "The fourth presidential election preliminary report," Free and Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan (2019):2 and <https://freedomhouse.org/country/afghanistan/freedom-world/2020> and https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistans_fight_against_corruption_crucial_for_peace_and_prosperity_english.pdf

⁵ AAN (2020) Afghanistan's 2019 election (28): ECC starts final, decisive phase of complaints procedure, 25 Jan 2020 <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/political-landscape/afghanistans-2019-election-28-ecc-starts-final-decisive-phase-of-complaints-procedure/>

⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/5/17/afghanistan-ghani-and-abdullah-sign-power-sharing-deal>

⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/12/why-have-the-afghanistan-taliban-peace-talks-stalled>

⁸ <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/us-troop-withdrawal-afghanistan-what-are-bidens-options>

⁹ <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/02/breaking-stalemate-biden-can-use-us-taliban-deal-bring-peace>

¹⁰ https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Afghanistan-Flash-Survey-Wave-1_fullreport.pdf

¹¹ https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Afghanistan-Flash-Survey-Wave-1_fullreport.pdf

¹² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview>

¹³ https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Afghanistan-Flash-Survey-Wave-1_fullreport.pdf

¹⁴ https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_rev3.pdf

compared to the previous quarter¹⁵. This worrying trend is most likely explained by the start of the peace talks, with an increase in violence considered a key negotiating tactic by the Taliban forces¹⁶.

By 2020, the Taliban controlled more territory in Afghanistan than at any time since the U.S.-led invasion in 2001. The group has captured large parts of rural Afghanistan and has increasingly begun to encroach on more populated areas. The Taliban insurgency has also been a unifying cause for some smaller foreign militant groups, with around 20 foreign militant groups now active in the country¹⁷. As a result of ongoing insecurity, the displacement crisis in the country persists, with the number of conflict-induced Internally-Displaced People increasing from 369,700 in 2018 to 462,803 in 2019¹⁸. The humanitarian crisis has also worsened owing to ongoing insecurity and violence, natural disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic, with a total of 18.4 million people estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021, up from 14 million in mid-2020¹⁹.

Anti-corruption progress

Despite a number of important legislative initiatives, including the introduction of an Anti-Corruption Law (2018), a Whistleblower Protection Law (2018), and a new Penal Code (2018), the period since 2018 has seen limited anti-corruption progress. Firstly, the fact that these laws were introduced by Presidential decree rather than through parliamentary approval has caused uncertainty about their exact status²⁰. Secondly, the implementation period for Afghanistan's National Strategy for Combating Corruption (NSCC) 2017-2019 came to an end without a successor²¹. According to an independent assessment of the strategy by Integrity Watch Afghanistan, although the overall implementation rate was high, few of the actions achieved any meaningful results. The Special Anti-Corruption Secretariat (SACS), responsible for the development, coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

of the NSCC has largely been unsuccessful in incentivizing meaningful implementation of the strategy for various reasons, including political interference²².

There has also been little progress with the establishment of the long-awaited Anti- Corruption Commission (ACC), the centrepiece of the 2018 Anti-Corruption law. The proposed commission is not sufficiently independent from the Executive and there have been allegations of political interference in the selection of ACC Commissioners²³. Meanwhile, the High Council on Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (HCRAC), established in 2016 with a mandate to reform and reinforce the justice system, improve the legislative framework and fight corruption has been hampered by lack of coordination and limited meaningful stakeholder engagement. It has been used by the President to centralize decision-making and ultimately undermine the formation of the ACC²⁴. Meanwhile, the Anti-Corruption and Justice Court (ACJC), also established in 2016 to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate major corruption cases has been slow off the mark. Despite the large number of prosecutors, the output of the ACJC in terms of cases proceeding to trial remains low, while the average rank of those investigated by the ACJC has declined over the years.²⁵

Stepping up anti-corruption progress has become a matter of even greater urgency since the 2020 Afghanistan Conference in Geneva, when donor countries committed 12 to 13 billion US\$ in financial aid for the period 2021-24, but made these commitments contingent on maintaining human rights, improving governance and reducing corruption²⁶.

¹⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/5/afghanistan-violence-jumps-50-percent-amid-peace-talks-watchdog>

¹⁶ https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.rferl.org/a/taliban-government-islamic-state-who-controls-what-in-afghanistan-/30644646.html>

¹⁸ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview>

¹⁹ https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg_report_on_afghanistan_december_2020.pdf

²⁰ https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistans_fight_against_corruption_crucial_for_peace_and_prosperity_english.pdf

²¹ https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistans_fight_against_corruption_crucial_for_peace_and_prosperity_english.pdf

²² <https://iwaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NSCC-Report-1-1.pdf>

²³ <https://iwaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NSCC-Report-1-1.pdf> and <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/economy-development-environment/unamas-new-report-on-anti-corruption-more-backsliding-from-government-and-growing-frustration-from-donors/>

²⁴ <https://iwaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NSCC-Report-1-1.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/economy-development-environment/unamas-new-report-on-anti-corruption-more-backsliding-from-government-and-growing-frustration-from-donors/>

²⁶ <https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/Afghanistan+Partnership+Framework+2020.pdf/6875b99d-0223-b5e1-360d-614420af-2a90?t=1606127229249>



PART 1

GENERAL TRENDS

Part one of this report focusses on Afghan citizens' views on the overall situation and level of progress in their local area as well as what they consider to be the most serious problems facing the country. It also explores people's perceptions of whether a range of key actors in the country are most likely to work for the benefit of all people or only for a few. Finally, it discusses the role of corruption in facilitating the expansion of the Taliban and explores Afghans' views on the prospects for peace and reconciliation. These last questions are of particular relevance this year with the launch of peace talks between the government and the Taliban in September 2020. This introductory analysis thus offers some important context to the more specific findings on peoples' perceptions of, and experiences with, corruption later in the report.

As with other sections of the report, many of the findings are disaggregated according to gender and geographical region in order to provide a more granular understanding of the key issues facing different groups of people in the country.

1.1. General perceptions of the direction the country is taking

On the whole Afghans remain surprisingly satisfied with the overall situation and level of progress in their local areas, albeit slightly less so than in 2018. Women tend to be more positive than men in this regard. However, there are important regional differences, with citizens in the Central Highlands, Southeast, and Northern regions the most positive and those in the Northeast and Central regions the least positive.

Afghans' overall level of satisfaction with the situation in their province remains roughly the same as it has been in previous years. Currently, 58% state that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall situation in their province. This is a slight decrease on 2018 (61%) but an increase on 2016 (54%). The results of our survey also suggest that women tend to be more positive than men in this regard, with 64% of women expressing some level of satisfaction with the situation in their province, as compared to 53% of men.

Figure 1: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall situation in your province?

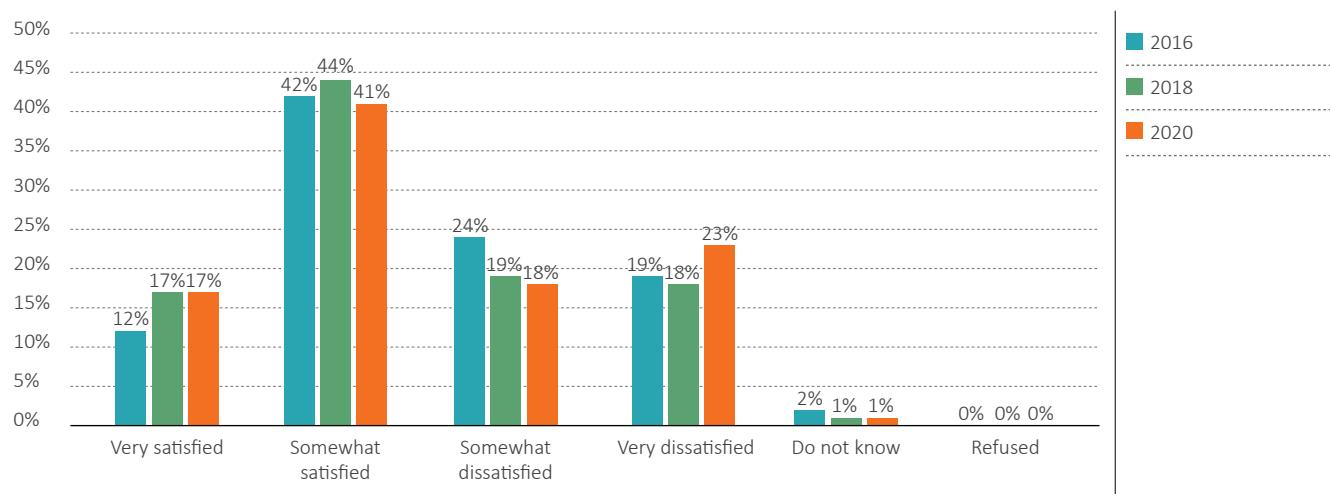
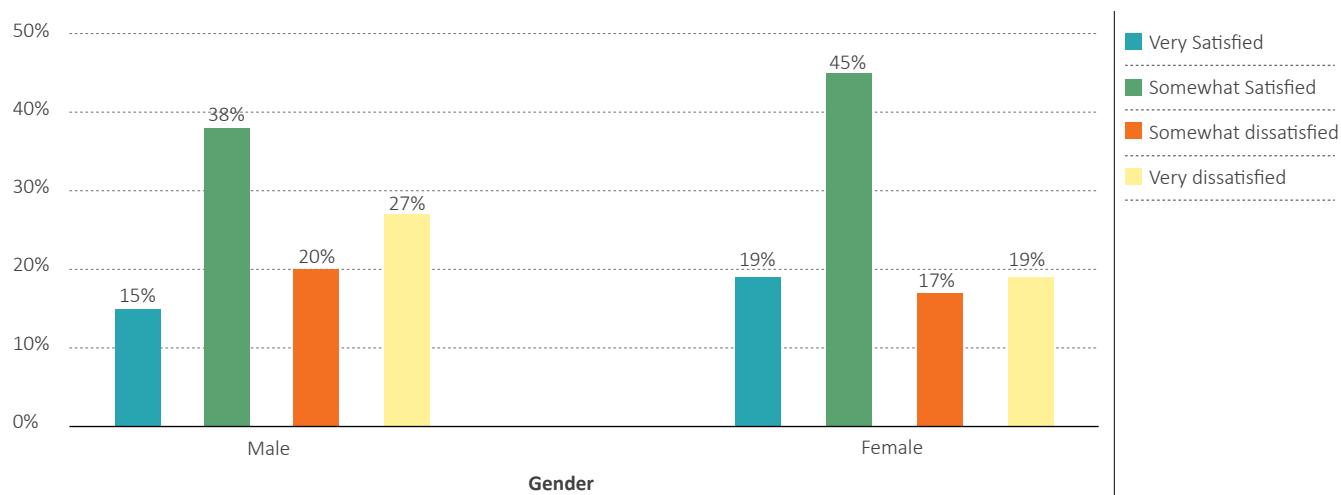


Figure 2: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall situation in your province?



Meanwhile, 43% of citizens report that they have seen very significant or somewhat significant progress over the past year. This is almost the same proportion as the 44% who felt the same in 2018. 33% say they have seen no progress at all. Consistent with their views on the overall situation in

their province, women tend to be more positive than men, although the difference is smaller, with 45% of women seeing very significant or somewhat significant progress, compared to 42% of men.

Figure 3: Generally speaking, how much progress, if any has been made in your area within the last 12 months?

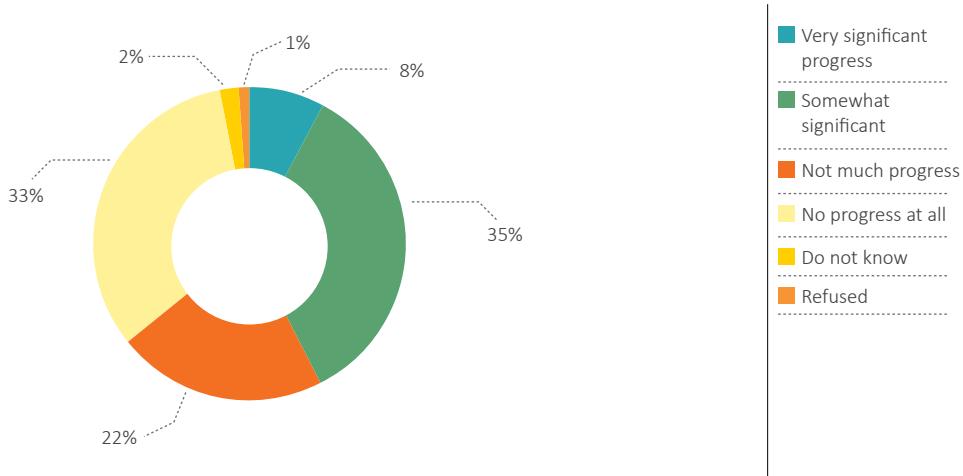
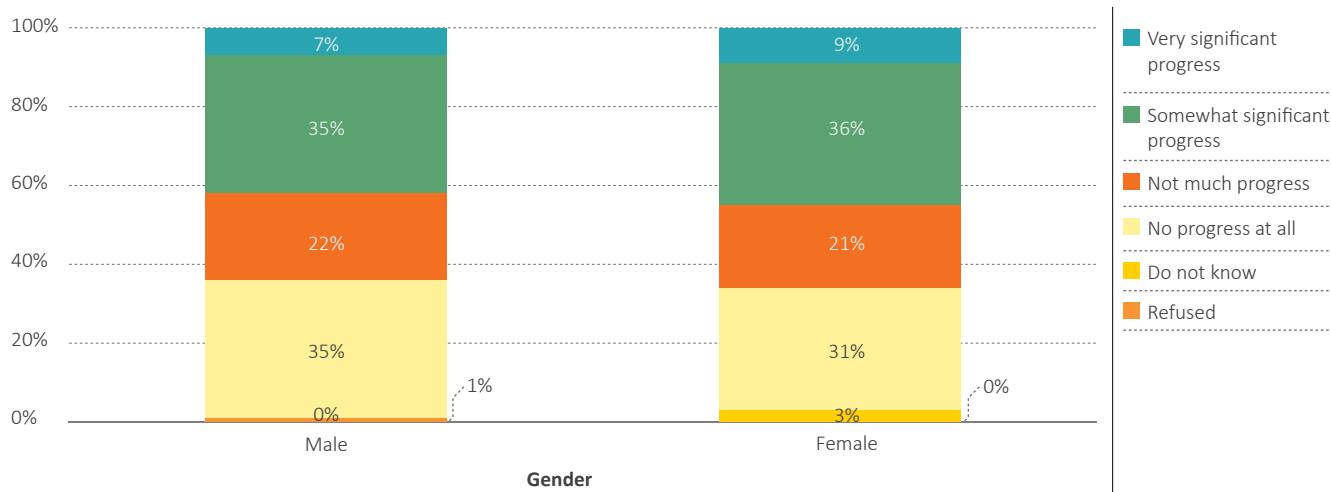


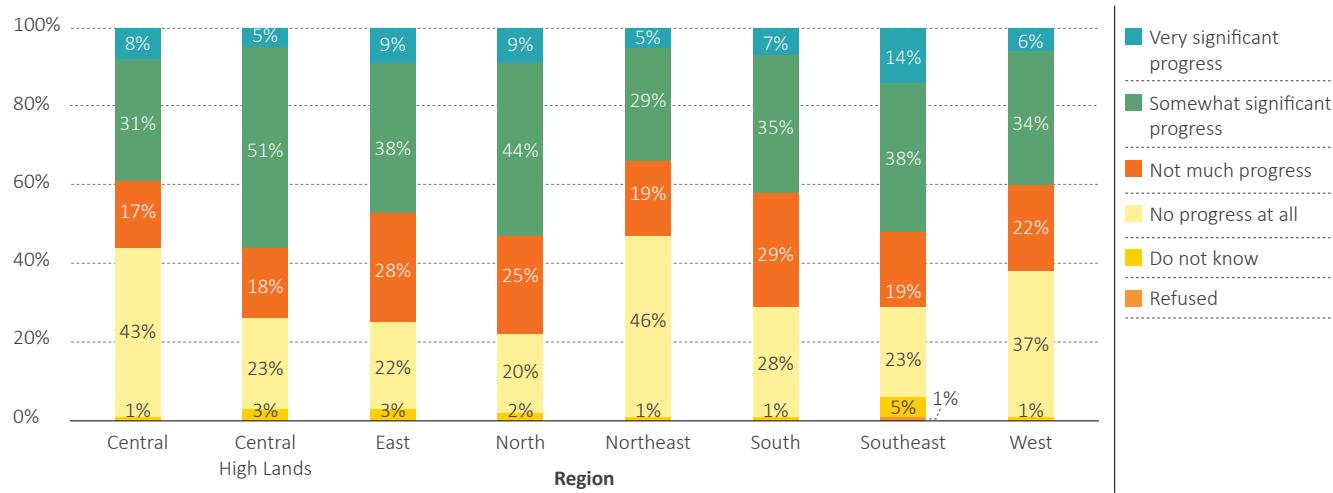
Figure 4: Generally speaking, how much progress, if any has been made in your area within the last 12 months?



While women and men have similar perspectives on the level of progress in their areas, the results vary quite significantly across the different regions of Afghanistan. Most notably, more than half of respondents in the Central Highlands (56%), Southeast (52%), and North (52%) reported very significant or somewhat significant progress. In contrast as many as 46% and 43% of citizens in the Northeast and Central regions respectively saw no progress at all. These regional

differences are difficult to interpret given that regions with similar results display very different characteristics in terms of the extent of government influence and levels of insecurity. Nevertheless, the distribution of results is similar to those from 2018, suggesting that this is not an isolated phenomenon but rather an ongoing trend which might warrant further analysis.

Figure 5: Generally speaking, how much progress, if any has been made in your area within the last 12 months?



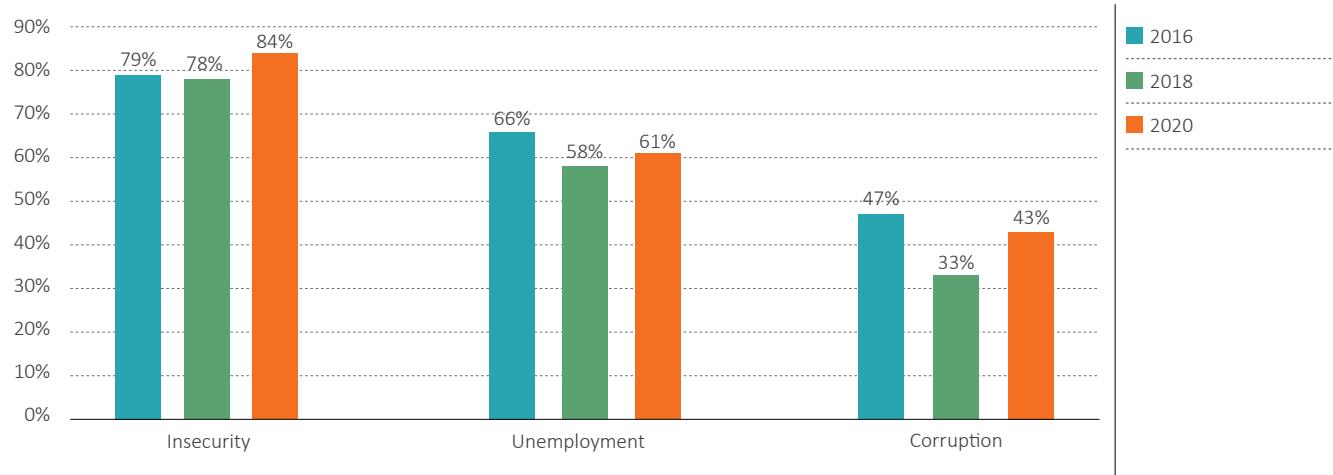
1.2. Major problems facing Afghanistan

Afghan citizens see insecurity as the most serious concern facing the country, to an even greater extent than they did in 2018. The proportion of those who feel that either unemployment or corruption are among the three most serious problems has also risen since 2018. At the same time, the proportion of citizens who consider that the government has done a good job of addressing these three problems has declined over the past two years.

Insecurity remains top of the list of serious concerns of Afghan citizens. Indeed, insecurity is mentioned by 84% of respondents as one of the top 3 problems in the country, up from an already high figure of 78% in 2018. This worrying increase may be a result of the significant surge in violence in the country during the second half of 2020²⁷. It may also be driven by the fact that security has been particularly high on the political agenda in 2020 in the lead up to the much-anticipated peace talks in September.

The proportion of those who feel that either unemployment or corruption are among the three most serious problems has also risen since 2018, from 58% to 61% and from 33% to 43% respectively.

Figure 6: In your opinion, what are the most serious problems facing Afghanistan as a country today?



²⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/5/afghanistan-violence-jumps-50-percent-amid-peace-talks-watchdog>

Significantly, the proportion of citizens who consider that the government has done a good job of addressing these three problems has dropped from 26% in 2018 to 19% in 2020. This is a significant decrease and is all the more concerning given that confidence in the government's efforts was already so low. While this may seem to run counter to the fact that citizens' overall level of satisfaction with the situation in their country has not changed, as noted above, it may be a reflection of their dissatisfaction with the government's handling of specific issues such as the protracted presidential selection process or the response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The proportion of men and women who believe that the government has done a good job of addressing the country's three most significant problems is almost identical (20% and 19%, respectively). However, a higher proportion of women (14%) than men (6%) say they do not know whether this is the case, suggesting that women are more likely to

express uncertainty with regards to the level of progress in the country than are men.

While the differences between regions is not as apparent as it was in previous years, it is nevertheless noteworthy that citizens in the more insecure Western, Southern and South-eastern regions appear to have slightly more confidence in government efforts to tackle the country's most serious problems than citizens in areas where the government has more control. This apparent discrepancy, which was even more apparent in 2018, may be partly a reflection of the uneven coverage of the survey, which was only carried out in government-controlled and contested areas. But it may also be reflective of the growing influence of the Taliban which has continued to spread to parts of the country which were previously under stronger government control, such as the Northern, Eastern and Western regions (see further discussion below).

Figure 7: Do you think the government of Afghanistan has done enough to address these problems over the last two (2) years?

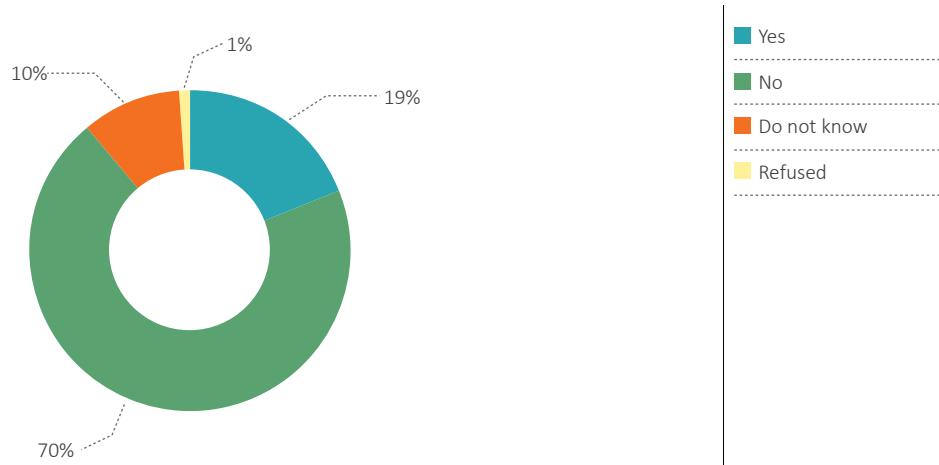


Figure 8: Do you think the government of Afghanistan has done enough to address these problems over the last two (2) years?

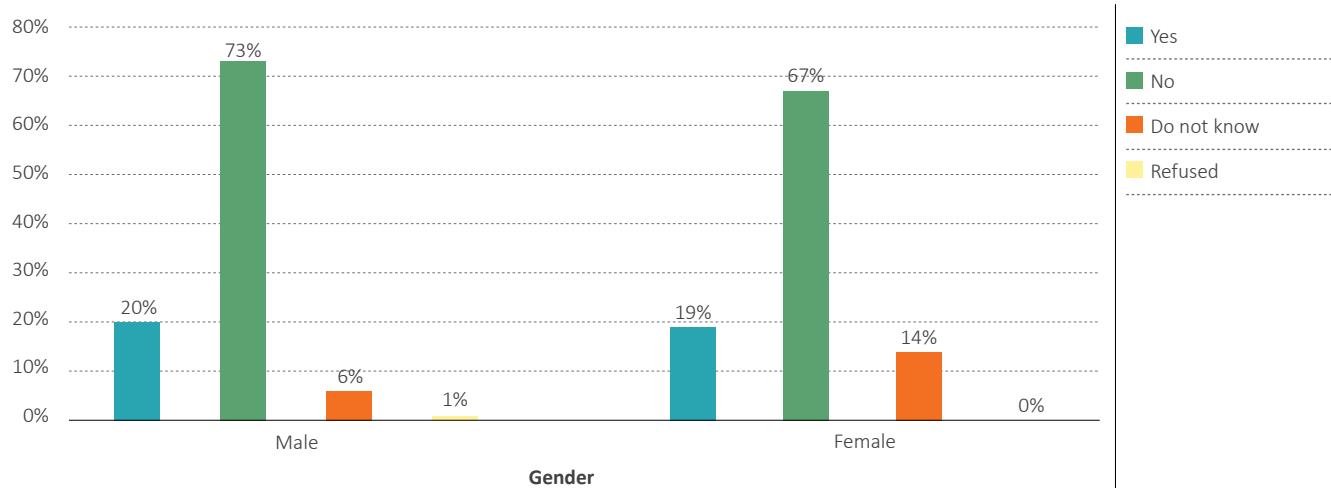
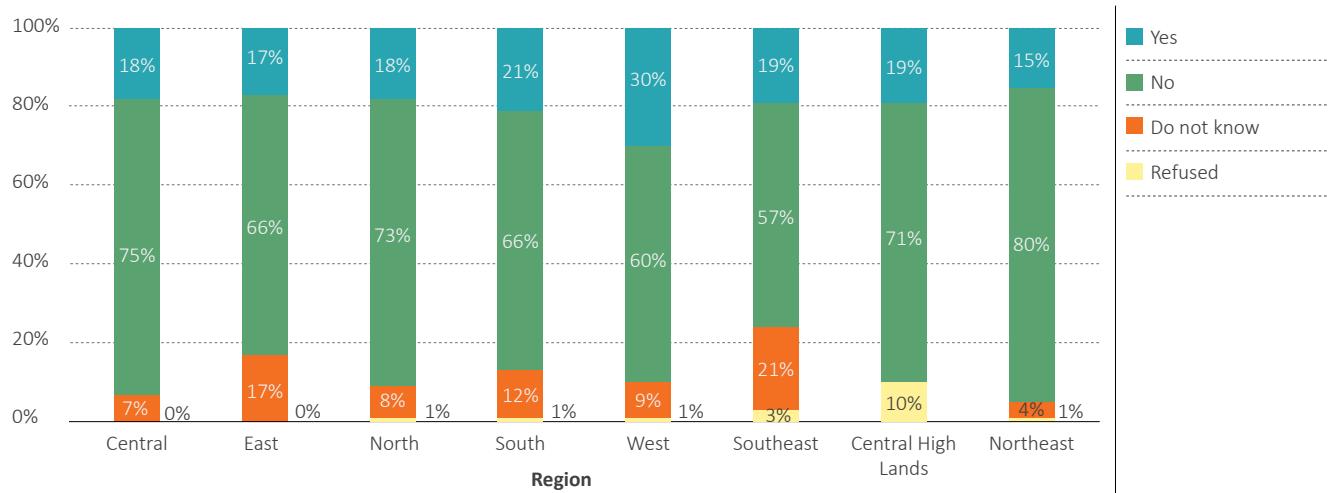


Figure 9: Do you think the government of Afghanistan has done enough to address these problems over the last two (2) years?



1.3. Perceptions of public and civil institutions in society

Citizens consider security and law enforcement officials as the most likely group of public servants to work for the benefit of all people. Confidence in the President remains relatively high compared to other actors although it has dropped significantly since 2018. At the other end of the spectrum, citizens have the least confidence in the Taliban and other militant groups to act in the interests of all, followed by different political and justice sector actors.

Citizens are most positive about the motivations of national army officers and national police officers to work for the benefit of all people. 73% and 58% respectively believe that these groups act for the benefit of all people, which is almost the same response rate as in 2018 (74% and 61% respectively). This may suggest that Afghan's citizens trust in their security forces remains largely unshaken despite ongoing insecurity, although it is important to note that the survey was only carried out in more secure areas. Continued confidence in security forces is especially critical given the gradual withdrawal of international forces from the country, with only 2,500 US troops remaining on the ground as of January 2021²⁸, and the corresponding increasing dependence on local law enforcement and military personnel for ensuring security in the country.

Although still ranked third, citizens' confidence in the President of Afghanistan to act in the interests of all people has seen a significant drop from 50% in 2018 to 37% in 2020. Whether this is due to the stalling of peace talks, the protracted presidential

election process which saw President Ghani finally confirmed for a second term in February 2020 following allegation of vote-rigging²⁹, or indeed for any other reason, it is clear that Afghan citizens are becoming increasingly disillusioned with politics at the highest level in the country. This is confirmed by the fact that political leaders, ministers and members of parliament are among the least trusted members of society, with only 12%, 14%, and 15% of these three groups respectively viewed by citizens as working for the benefit of all people. Indeed, only the Taliban (5%) and other militant groups (6%) command less confidence than political leaders, although once again, citizens views in the insecure areas of the country are not captured by our survey and may vary.

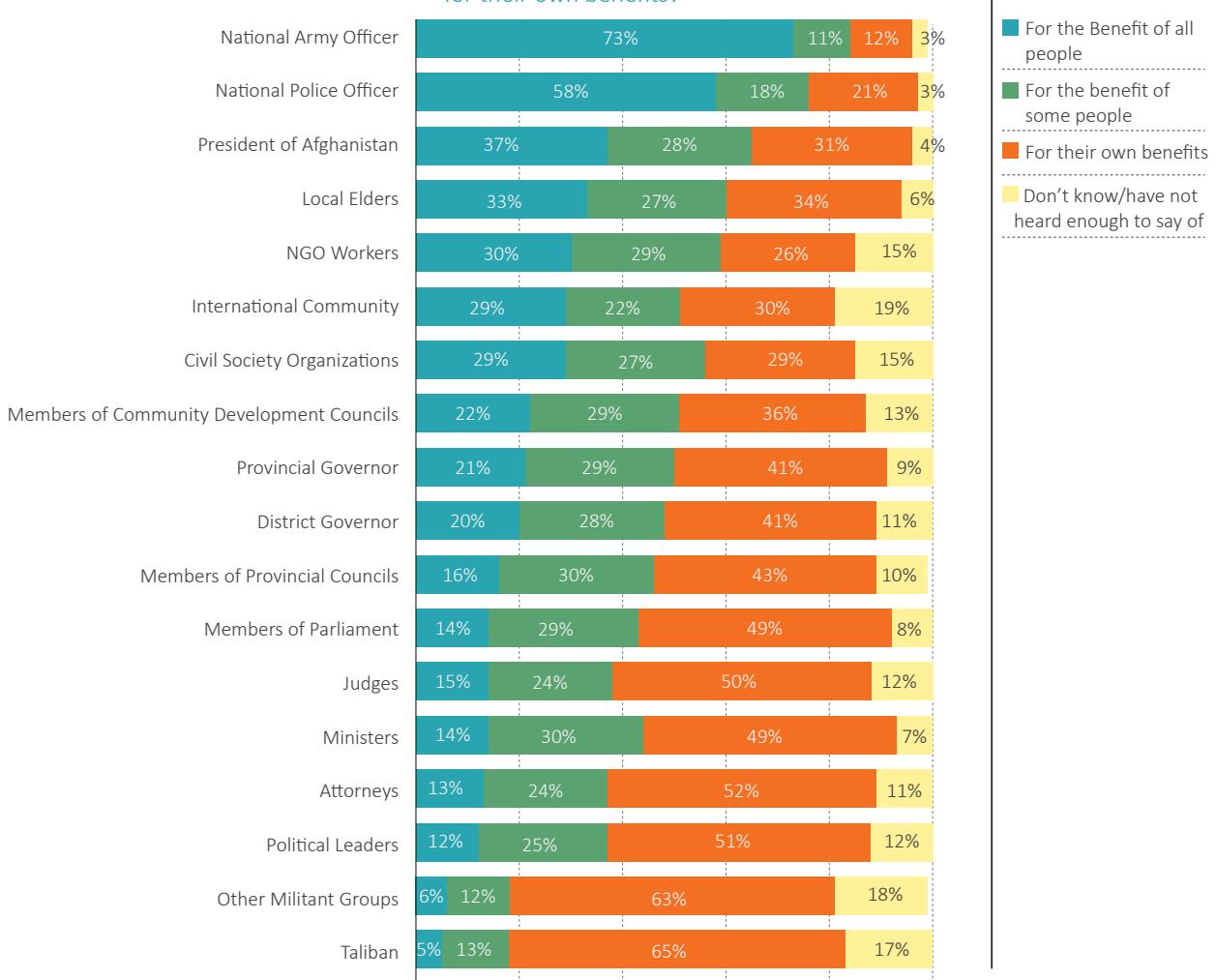
Another concerning finding is the continued lack of trust that Afghans appear to have in the justice sector with only 13% and 14% of respondents believing that attorneys and judges respectively work for the benefit of all people. This is echoed by our findings in Part 2 which show that Afghans perceive the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA), the Courts and the Attorney General's Office to be the three most corrupt government institutions.

Afghan's appear somewhat ambivalent about the motivations of national and international civil society, with these groups being considered almost equally likely to work in the interests of all people as they are to work in the interests of only some people or in their own interests. Although the level of confidence in NGO workers to work for the benefit of all people has increased slightly from 25% in 2018 to 30% in 2020, it would appear that non-state actors still have a lot of work to do to build trust among their beneficiaries across the country.

28 [https://www.state.gov/u/s-relations-with-afghanistan/](https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-afghanistan/)

29 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-51547726>

Figure 10: In your opinion, do the people mentioned here work for the benefit of all people, for the benefit of some, or only for their own benefits?



1.4. Perceptions of the Taliban

Afghans are less likely to believe that corruption in the state is facilitating the expansion of the Taliban than they were in 2018. Among those who do believe this to be the case, the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA) is most often considered to be the primary culprit. At the same time, more than half of citizens (and more than 60% of men) believe that corruption levels are lower in Taliban-controlled areas than in government-controlled areas.

The number of citizens who feel that corruption in the state is facilitating the expansion of the Taliban has decreased significantly from 62% in 2018 to 42% in 2020. While some of this change can be attributed to the proportion of respondents who state that they do not know (up from 7% in 2018 to 18% in 2020), it is nevertheless a significant change.

This is despite the fact that, by the middle of 2020 the Taliban were believed to control more territory than at any time since the U.S.-led invasion in 2001³⁰. It seems plausible therefore that this apparent shift in attitudes may be connected to the ongoing peace talks, despite the fact that progress is slow.

Nevertheless, there is still a significant proportion of people (38%) who do feel that state corruption is facilitating expansion of the Taliban. Among those who hold this view, the institution that was considered most responsible, by a large margin, is the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA), which is responsible for law enforcement in Afghanistan. While, as noted above, the national police are generally viewed more favourably, the political leadership and management of the MoIA are often accused of corruption. Indeed, many people see police officers and army officers as themselves victims of MoIA corruption.

30 <https://www.rferl.org/a/taliban-government-islamic-state-who-controls-what-in-afghanistan-/30644646.html>

Figure 11: In your opinion, is corruption within the state facilitating the expansion of the Taliban?

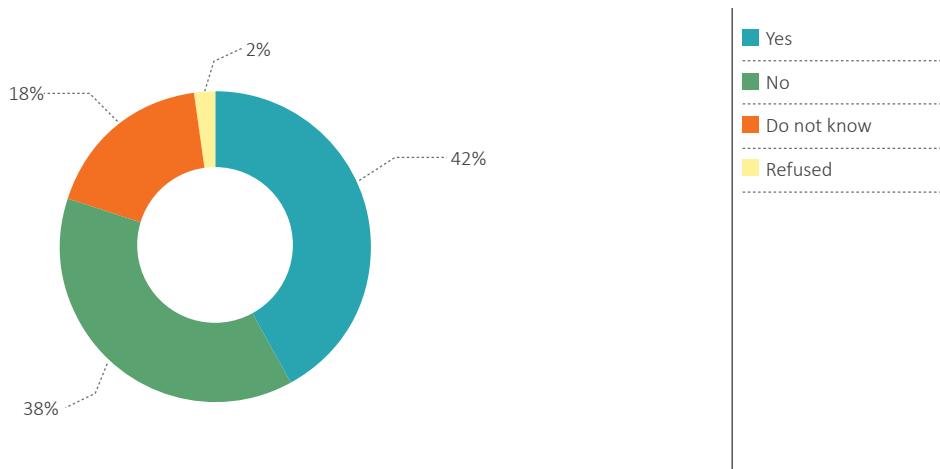
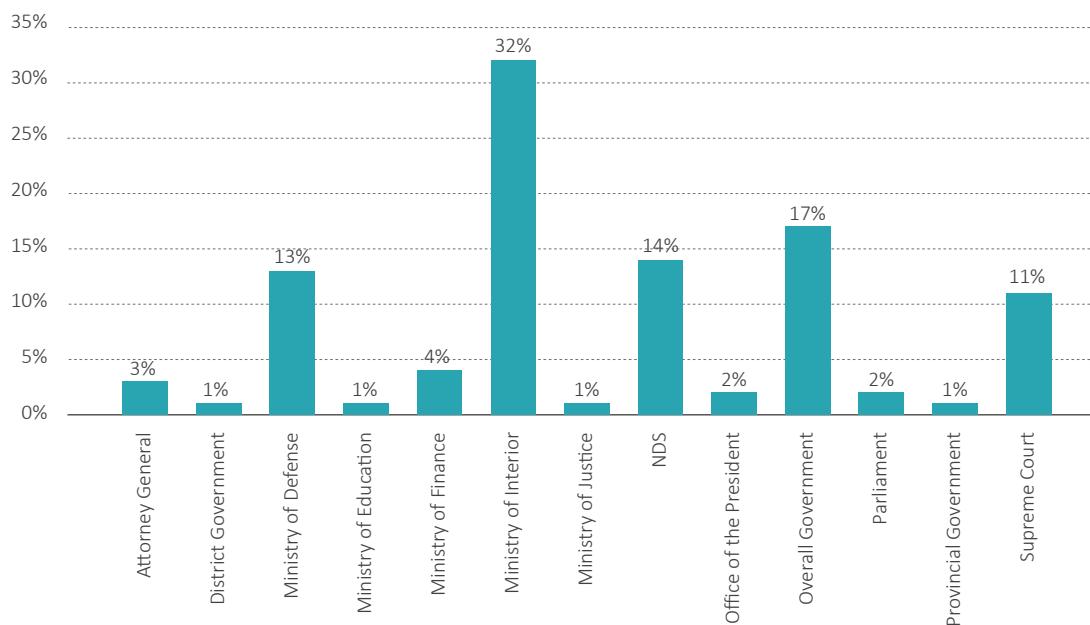


Figure 12: If yes, corruption within which institution is helping the most expansion of the Taliban?



For the first time this year, we asked respondents whether they felt that corruption in Taliban-controlled areas was higher or lower than in government-controlled areas. A significant majority, more than 50%, believe that it is in fact lower in Taliban-controlled areas, while one quarter think it is the same and another quarter believe it is lower in government-controlled areas. The results are even starker among men, with 62% of male respondents believing that

corruption is lower in Taliban-controlled areas. This perhaps surprising result is very worrying as it suggests that citizens generally feel that either the government is more likely to be corrupt than the Taliban, or at the very least is less able to control corruption than the Taliban. It should be noted however, that this may partly be a reflection of the coverage of the survey which was largely conducted in government-controlled areas of the country.

Figure 13: What do you think about corruption in Taliban control areas?

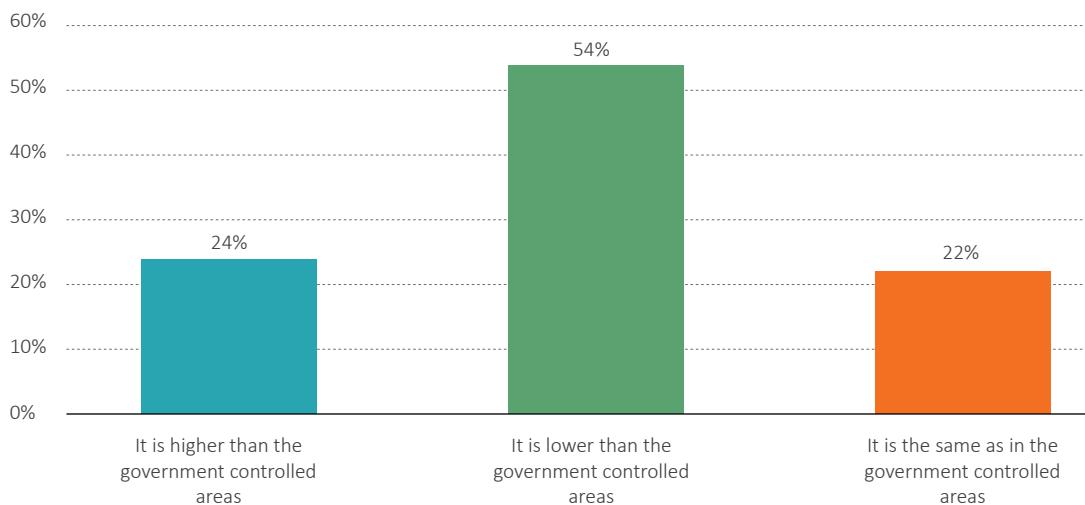
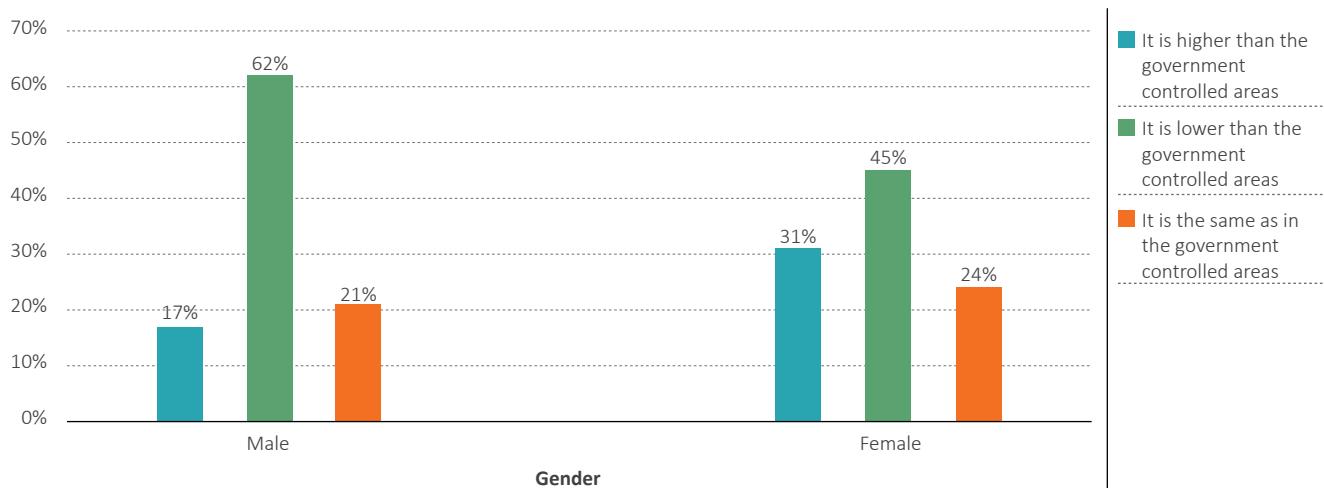


Figure 14: What you think about corruption in Taliban control areas?



1.5. Perceptions of peace talks and reconciliation

Overall, citizens remain confident in the prospect for peace with almost two thirds believing that successful completion of peace talks will result in the strengthening of good governance in Afghanistan, albeit with important regional differences. Men are more optimistic about the prospects for peace and stability than women.

64% of citizens believe that successful completion of peace talks will result in the strengthening of good governance in Afghanistan. This is a slight decrease on the proportion

of people who felt the same in 2018 (71%), but still demonstrates a strong sense of optimism among the population that peace can be achieved and can lead to a better governed state.

However, the regional disparities are quite large. Citizens are most optimistic in the more stable Central Highlands region, where 79% hold this view, followed by the less secure Western (71%) and Southern (70%) regions. Indeed, the West and Central Highlands are the only two regions where optimism has increased in this regard since 2018, by 12% and 9% points respectively. In contrast, citizens are least optimistic in the Northern and Southeastern

regions where only 52% and 54% respectively feel that the successful completion of peace talks will result in the strengthening of good governance.

Overall, although women are more satisfied that men with the situation and level of progress in their area, as discussed above, men were more optimistic about the prospects

for peace and stability than women, with 68% believing the successful completion of peace talks will result in the strengthening of good governance, compared to 61% of women. A similar trend was observed in 2018, suggesting that women have greater satisfaction than men in the status quo, but less confidence in what the future might bring.

Figure 15: Do you believe that the successful completion of peace talks will result in the strengthening of good governance in Afghanistan?

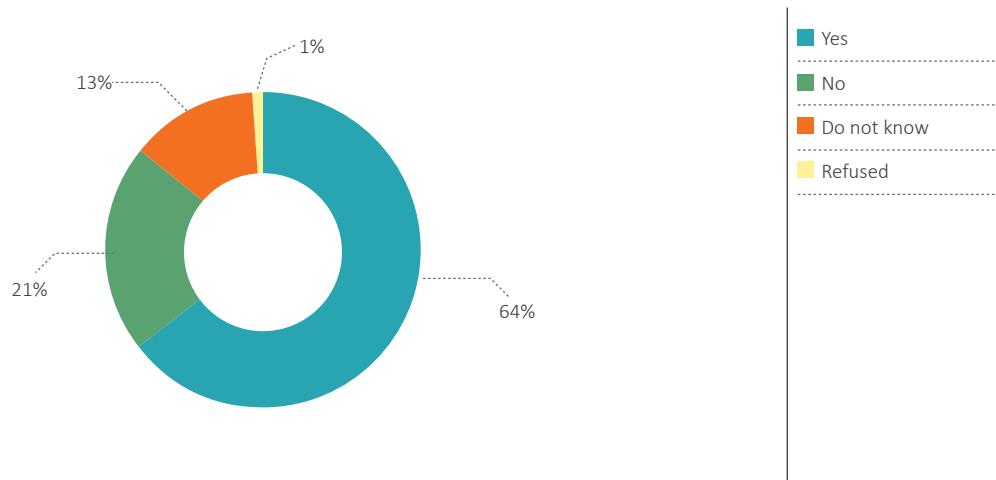


Figure 16: Do you believe that the successful completion of peace talks will result in the strengthening of good governance in Afghanistan?

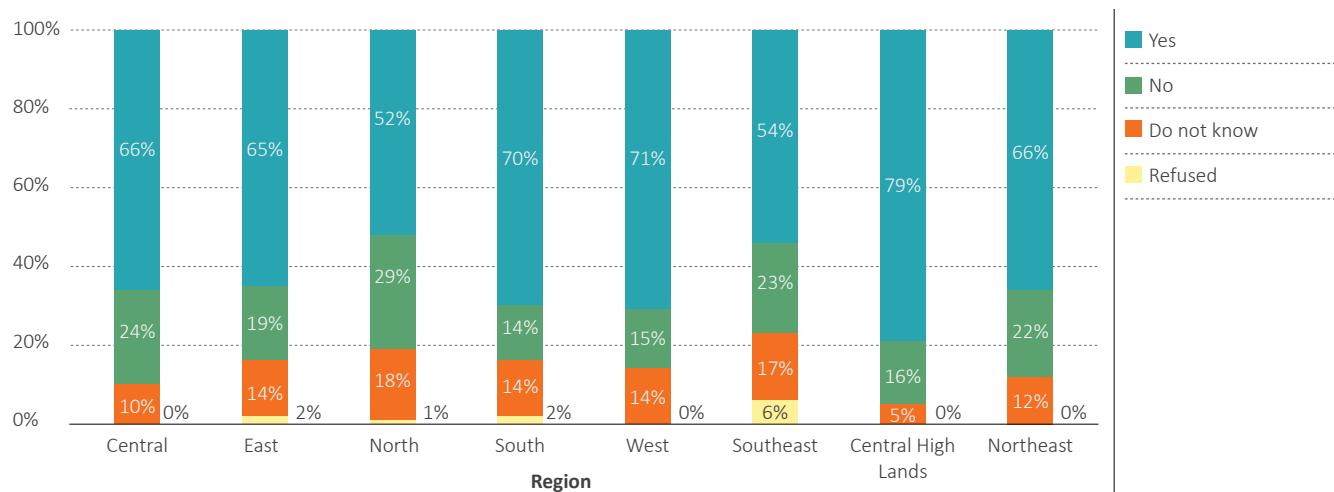
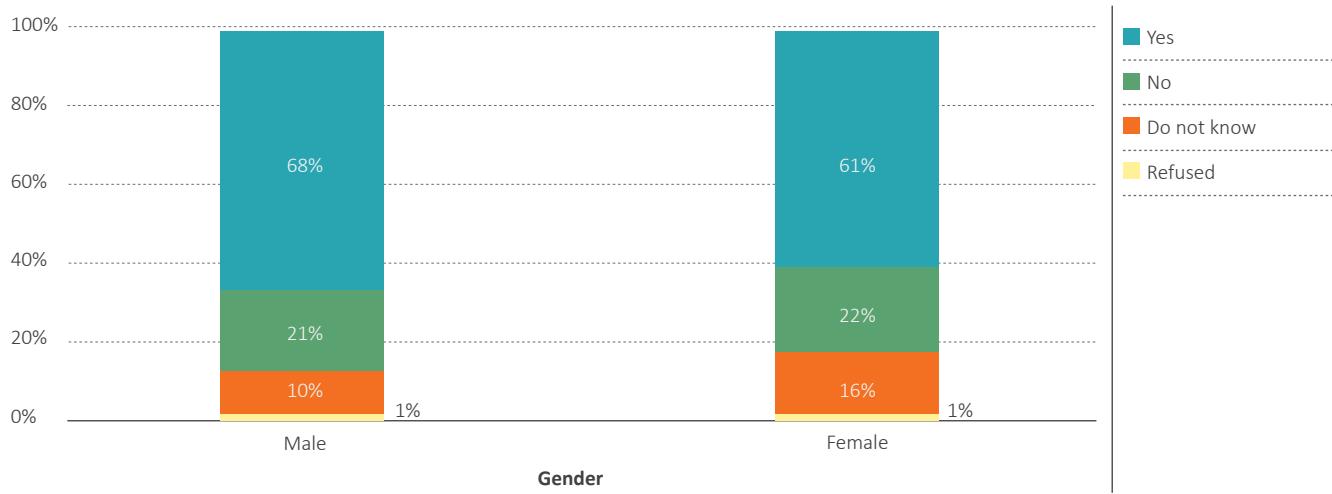


Figure 17: Do you believe that successful completion of peace talks will result in the strengthening of good governance in Afghanistan?

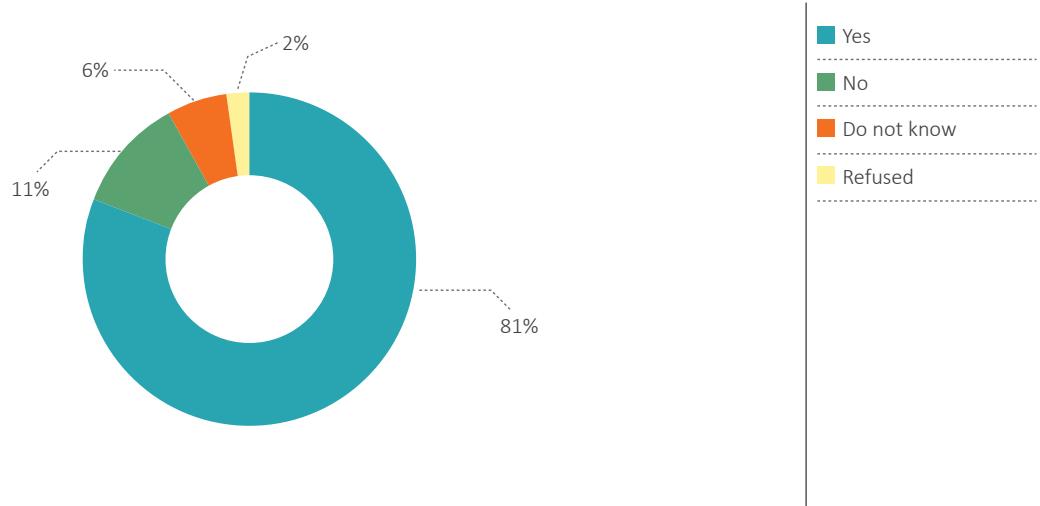


Citizens are even more optimistic about the prospect of reconciliation efforts between the government and Taliban to bring about greater stability in the country. In fact, the results are almost identical to those in 2018, with 81% expressing optimism, compared to 80% in 2018. Once again, men (83%) were slightly more optimistic on the prospects for stability than women (79%).

This sustained level of optimism is echoed by a 2019 survey conducted by the Asia Foundation, according to which 64% believed that reconciliation with the Taliban was possible.

Here again men (70%) were more optimistic than women (59%) by more than 10 points. The survey also found that an overwhelming majority of people strongly or somewhat support efforts to negotiate peace with the Taliban³¹. A flash survey in 2020, also by the Asia Foundation, found that just over half (54%) of citizens were confident that peace is achievable in Afghanistan within the next two years³². This would suggest that, while overall confidence in the peace process remains high, citizens are more sceptical that progress will be achieved quickly, a sentiment that appears justified given the slow progress in peace talks to date.

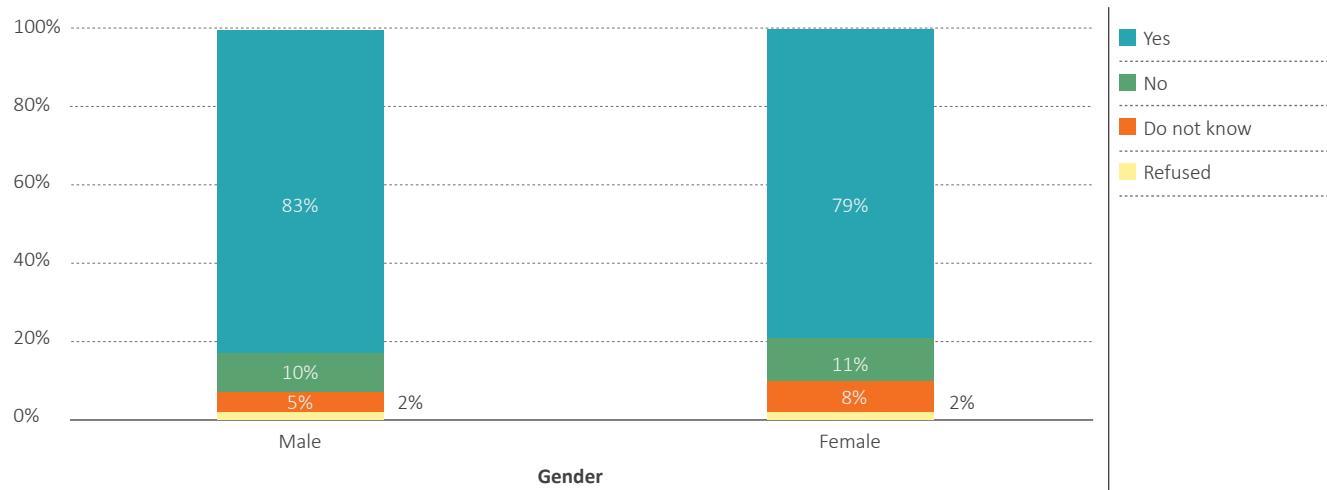
Figure 18: Do you think reconciliation efforts between the Afghan Government and Taliban can bring stability to the country?



³¹ https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2019_Afghan_Survey_Executive-Summary.pdf

³² https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Afghanistan-Flash-Survey-Wave-1_fullreport.pdf

Figure 19: Do you think reconciliation efforts between the Afghan Government and Taliban can bring stability to the country?





PART 2

ATTITUDES TOWARDS, AND EXPERIENCES WITH CORRUPTION

Part Two of this report focusses in on perceptions of and experiences with corruption in the public sector in Afghanistan, including reported levels of bribery. It explores citizens' perceptions of corruption, what drives it, and progress made in reducing corruption generally, as well within specific state institutions. It also discusses in some detail citizens' actual experiences of administrative corruption and bribery when dealing with public services as well as their willingness to pay a bribe and their views on the issue of nepotism.

2.1. Perception of corruption generally

Two-thirds of Afghan citizens believe that corruption has become a more significant problem over the last two years, while the proportion of citizens who believe corruption to be a very serious issue has risen from 48% in 2018 to 60% in 2020. Men tend to be slightly more pessimistic in this regard than women. Correspondingly, the proportion of citizens who believe that there have been improvements in reducing corruption in any public institution over the previous year has noticeably dropped since 2018.

Citizens in Afghanistan consider corruption to be an increasingly serious problem. The proportion of citizens who believe corruption to be a somewhat serious or very serious issue has risen from 77% in 2018 to 84% in 2020. The rise is particularly evident when we consider those who believe corruption is a very serious problem, up from 48% in 2018 to 60% in 2020. At the same time, those who consider corruption to be not at all serious is now a minuscule 4%, down from 11% in 2018. Men tend to be slightly more pessimistic in this regard than women with 88% seeing corruption as a serious or very serious issue, compared to 82% of women.

Figure 20: In your opinion, how serious is the issue of corruption in Afghanistan?

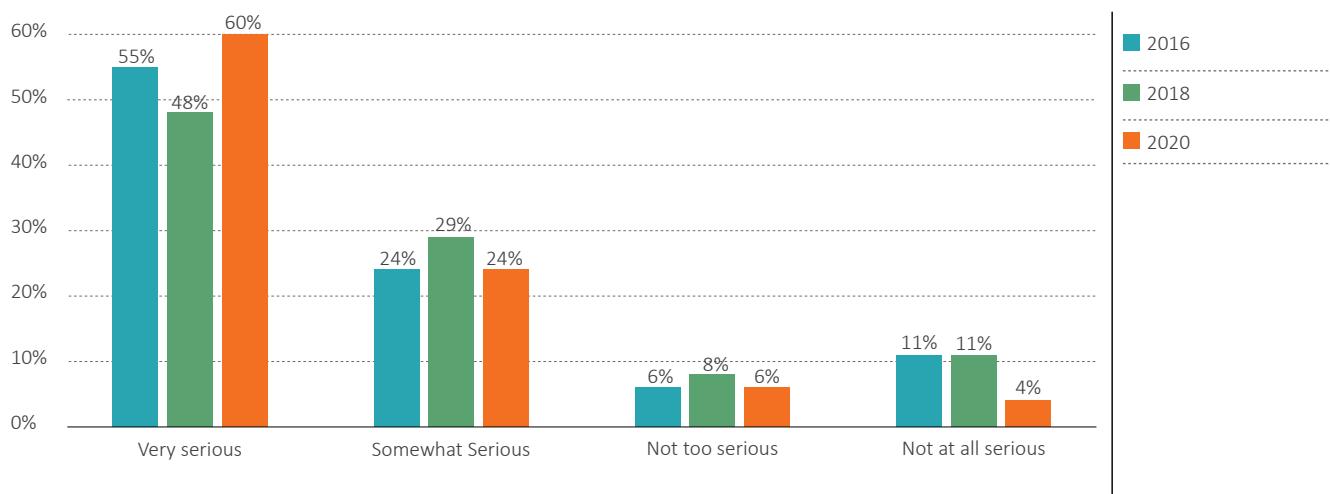
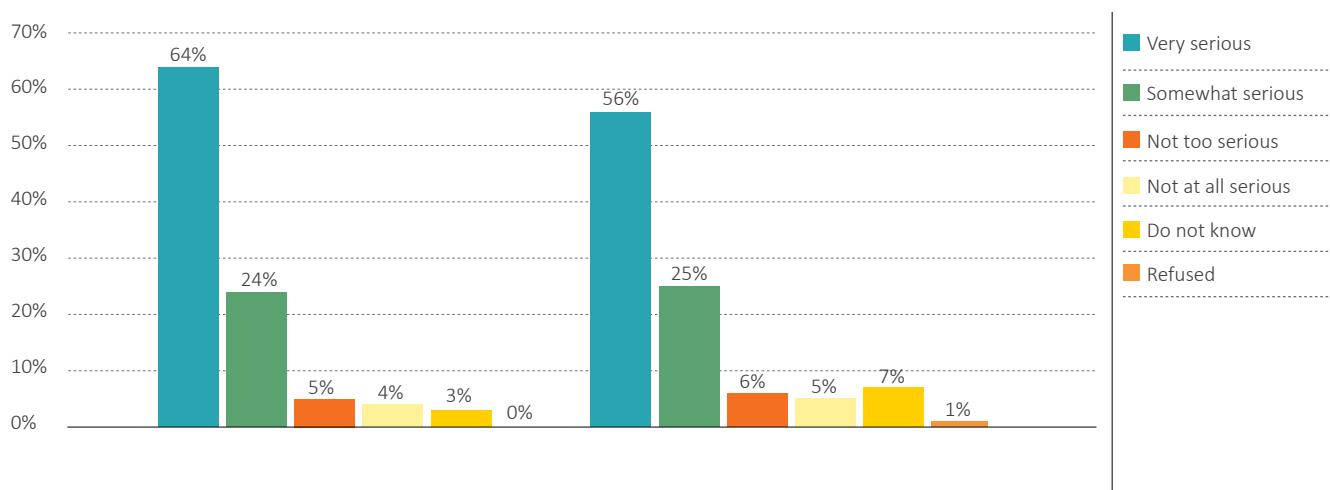


Figure 21: In your opinion, how serious is the issue of corruption in Afghanistan?



Two-thirds of citizens (67%) agree that corruption has become a more significant problem since the last survey in 2018. While this is slightly down on the proportion who felt the same in 2018 (72%), the percentage of citizens who feels that corruption was *not* a more serious problem has also declined, from 21% to 18%. This apparent discrepancy can be explained by the fact that a larger proportion of respondents state that they are unsure whether corruption has become a more or less significant problem, 14% in 2020, compared to 6% in 2018. Once again, men are more likely to believe that corruption has become a more serious issue (71%) than women (63%).

Regionally, it is interesting to note that citizens in the Central Highlands, Central and North-eastern regions have a more negative view than those in other parts of the country with 79%, 73% and 73% respectively believing that corruption has worsened. This is despite the fact that these are some of the more secure regions in the country in which the government has greater control. While this may seem surprising, it is consistent with our findings in Part One of this report that citizens in the more insecure Western, Southern and South-eastern regions have more confidence in government efforts to tackle the country's problems than those in government-controlled areas.

Figure 22: In your opinion, has corruption become a more significant problem over the last two years?

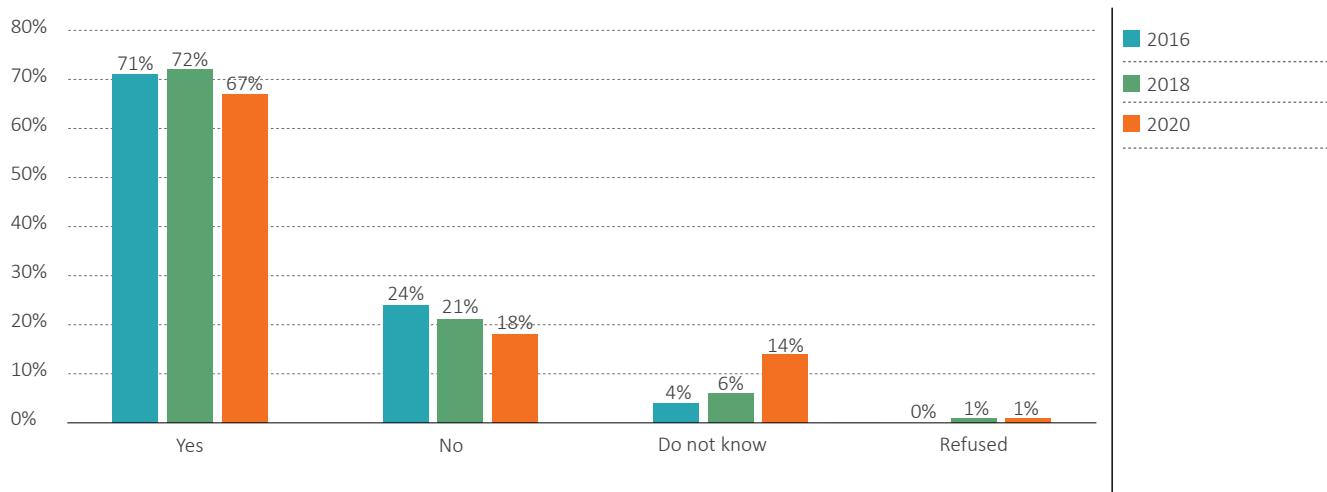


Figure 23: In your opinion, has corruption become a more significant problem over the last two years?

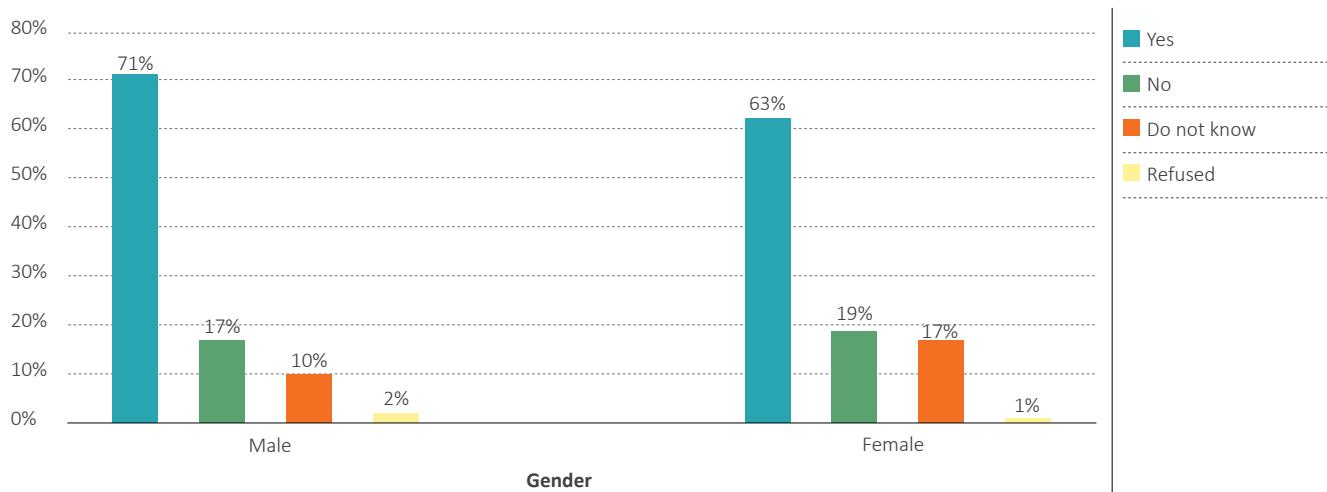
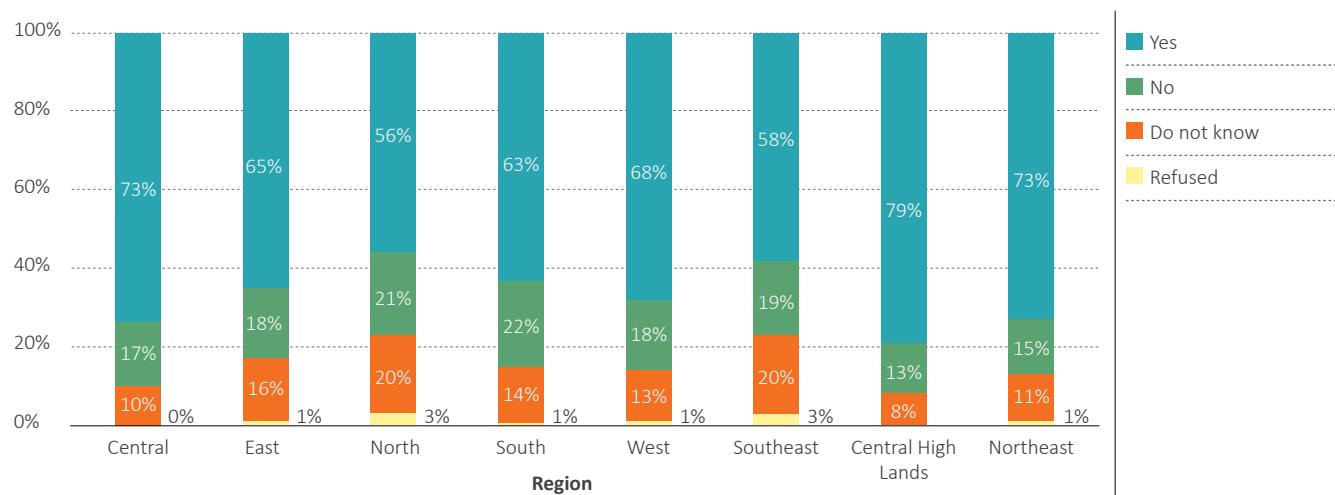


Figure 24: In your opinion, has corruption become a more significant problem over the last two years?



In a context where two-thirds of citizens believe corruption has become a more serious problem in recent years, it is to be expected that perceptions of efforts to reduce corruption in the public sector are likely to be negative. This is indeed the case. Only 14% of citizens believe that there have been some improvements in reducing corruption in any public institution over the previous year, down from 25% who believed the same in 2018. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the proportion who feel that there hasn't been any progress in this regard has also dropped from 60% in 2018 to 51% in 2020. As with the previous question, the proportion of those who say they do not know has increased significantly from 14% to 31%, which helps account for the drop in both positive and negative responses.

While the results are very similar across most regions, with the rate of positive responses fluctuating between 11% and 16%, there is one notable exception: As many as 29% of respondents in the Central Highlands region believe that there have been some improvements in reducing corruption in a public institution in the past 12 months. This is interesting especially given that the Central Highlands is the region where citizens are most likely to believe that corruption has become a more significant problem over that period. The implication here is that while this group of citizens sees corruption worsening overall, they may not consider the public sector to be the main culprit, or at least not the same extent as citizens in other regions of the country.

Figure 25: Do you believe there have been some improvements in reducing corruption in any public institutions during the last 12 months?

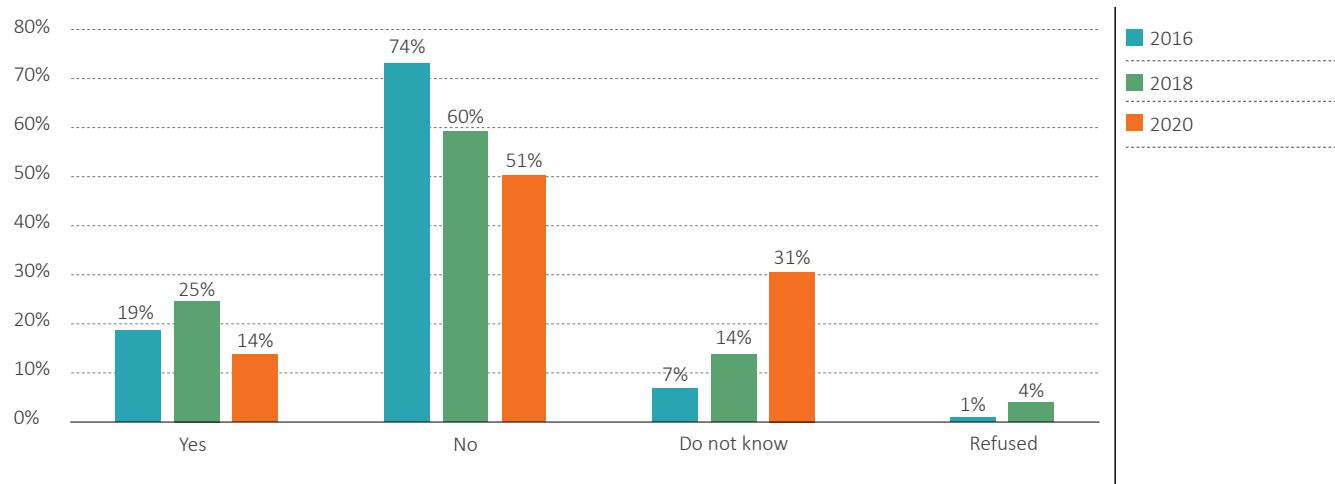


Figure 26: Do you believe there have been some improvements in reducing corruption in any public institutions during the last 12 months?



2.2. Perception of corruption within specific institutions

The justice system is clearly perceived by citizens as the most corrupt sector in Afghanistan, with the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA) now considered the most corrupt institution by almost one-fifth of the population. On the other hand, a quarter of citizens perceive the Ministry of Education to be the least corrupt government institutions, which marks a significant turnaround from 2018 despite limited progress in addressing corruption risk within the Ministry.

Among government institutions, Afghans perceive the Ministry of Interior (19%), the Courts (16%) and the Attorney General's Office (14%) to be the most corrupt. This is a sad indictment of the state of the justice system in the country, but it is no

surprise. Despite the fact that the government adopted a five-year National Justice Sector and Judicial Reform Plan (NJSRP) in 2016, President Ghani went on record a year later stating that "(t)he ministry of interior is the heart of corruption in the security sector"³³. A recent UNAMA report, meanwhile, found that all stages of procurement within the Ministry of Interior were vulnerable to corruption and that a lack of technological facilities paved the way for misuse in human resource management³⁴. The US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) also recently reported that nearly half of all police forces in the southern regions of Afghanistan were using drugs, while between 50% to 70% of police positions were "ghost soldiers"³⁵, while the Asia Foundation's 2019 survey found that only 66% of respondents considered state courts to be fair and trusted³⁶.

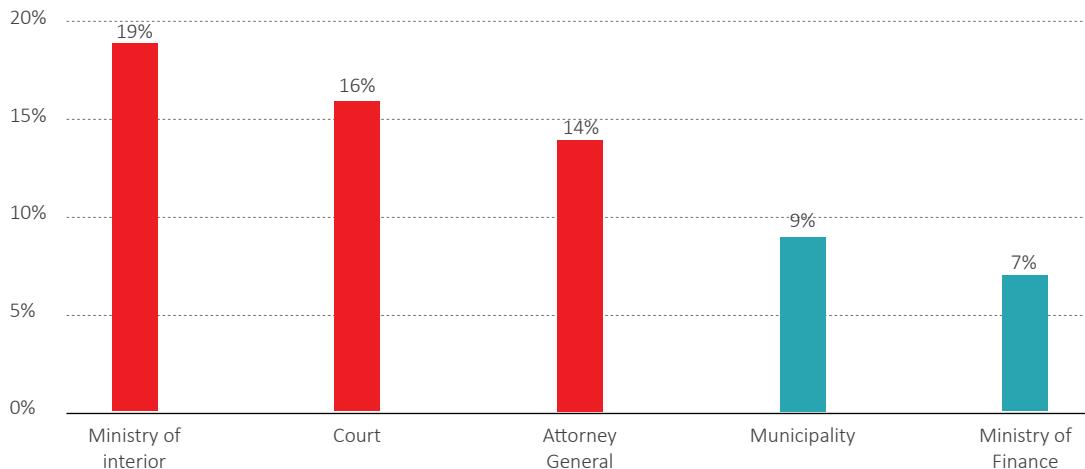
33 <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/ghani-vows-reform-moi-eu-un-warn-against-corruption>

34 <https://mec.af/ministry-wide-vulnerabilities-to-corruption-assessment-of-the-ministry-of-interior-moi/>

35 <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/sigar-50-police-south-use-drugs-50-70-ghost-soldiers>

36 https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2019_Afghan_Survey_Full-Report.pdf

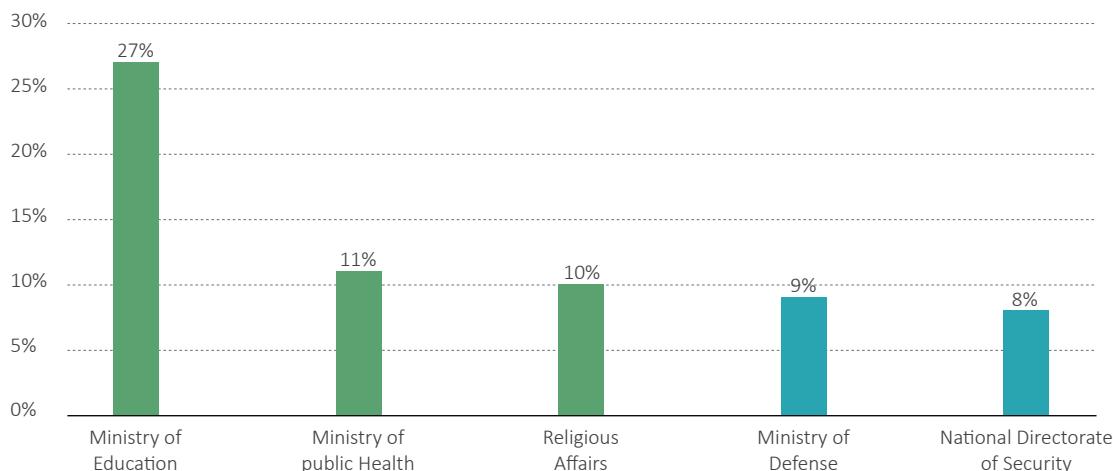
Figure 27: Which government institutions do you think are the most corrupt?



On the other hand, citizens consider the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Religious Affairs as the least corrupt government institutions. In the case of the Ministry of Education, this is a significant turnaround from 2018 when as many as 10% of respondents rated it as the most corrupt institution, second behind only the Courts. At the time, the Ministry of Education was found

to be highly vulnerable to corruption, with numerous cases of bribery, corruption in school construction and textbook distribution and nepotistic appointment of teachers³⁷. A recent follow-up report by the MEC found that there has not been significant progress in addressing these issues³⁸, making this year's more positive rating among citizens ever the more surprising.

Figure 28: Which government institutions do you think are the least corrupt?



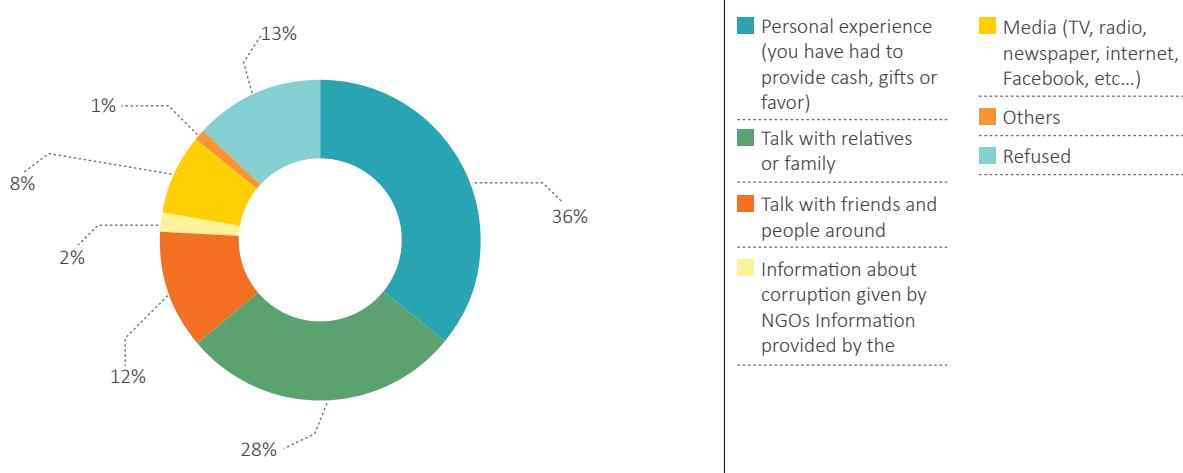
It is interesting to note which sources citizens use to make their assessments of government institutions. This year, more than one-third (36%) base their responses on personal experience. This compares to 20% in 2018. Meanwhile, only 8% state that they took the media as their main source

of information, compared to 32% who said the same in 2018. Thus, citizens' perceptions of corruption in public institutions are increasingly based on what they witness and experience themselves, rather than information from news sources.

³⁷ MEC (2017) Ministry-wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment of the Ministry of Education http://www.mec.af/files/2017_23_10_moe_english.pdf

³⁸ <https://mec.af/press-release-moe-sixth-follow-up-report/>

Figure 29: On which information source do you base your assessment of the level of corruption in the institution mentioned above?



2.3. Drivers of administrative corruption

Almost three-quarter of citizens see corrupt leaders and employees as the main culprits behind public sector corruption in Afghanistan, while financial need weak governance are considered the most important drivers of corruption nationally.

Largely consistent with findings from our 2018 survey, the vast majority of citizens believe that the main drivers of corruption in the above-mentioned institutions are corrupt leadership (52%) or corrupt employees (21%). Men are more likely to believe that leadership is the main driver. 54% of men hold this view as compared to 46% of women. On the other hand, women are more likely to see corrupt employees as an important part of the problem. 25% of

women believe that these institutions are corrupt because of corrupt employees, compared to 19% of men. For the remaining categories, the differences between women and men are negligible.

In terms of what motivates people to engage in corruption, almost one third (32%) see financial need as the main driver (the need to make a living or the fact that salaries are too low), while a similar proportion (29%) consider that the security context (weak rule of law and instability) as the most important factor, followed by the desire to become rich quickly (20%). Other factors such as the weakening of ethics or morals (4%) or a culture of impunity (4%) feature less prominently, suggesting that cultural factors are less important than is often believed, with weak governance playing a more important role in the perpetuating systemic corruption.

Figure 30: Why do you think these institutions are corrupt?

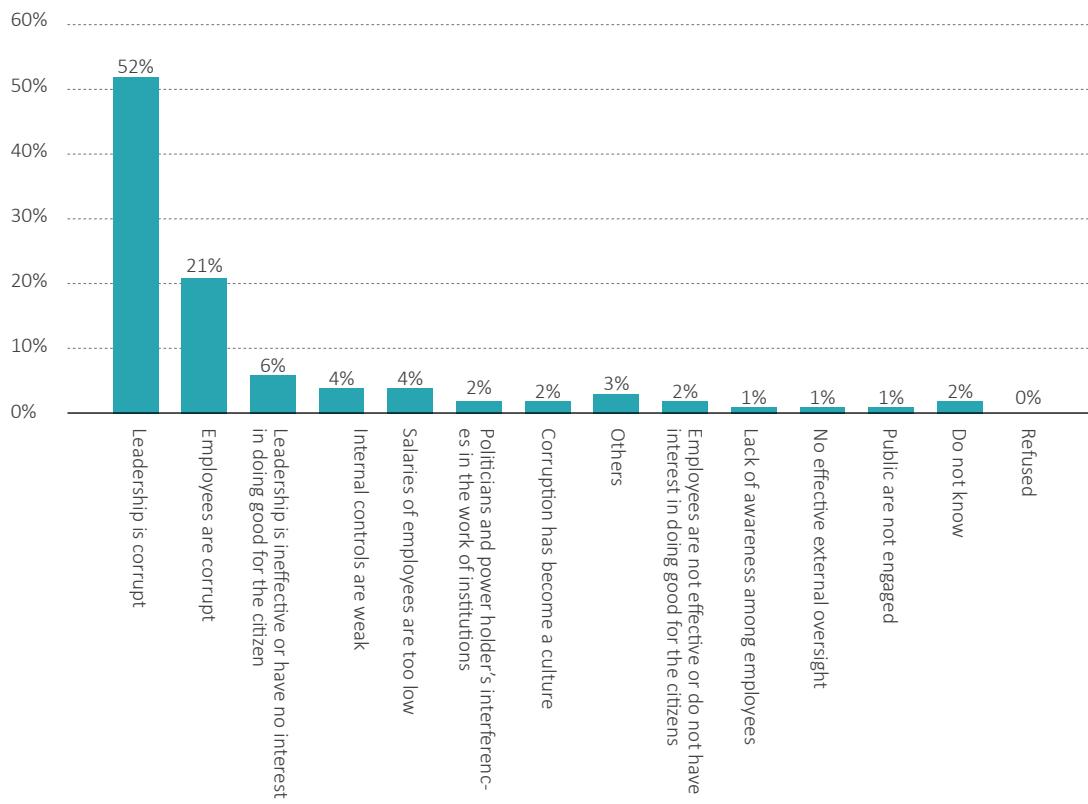


Figure 31: Why do you think these institutions are the most corrupt once?

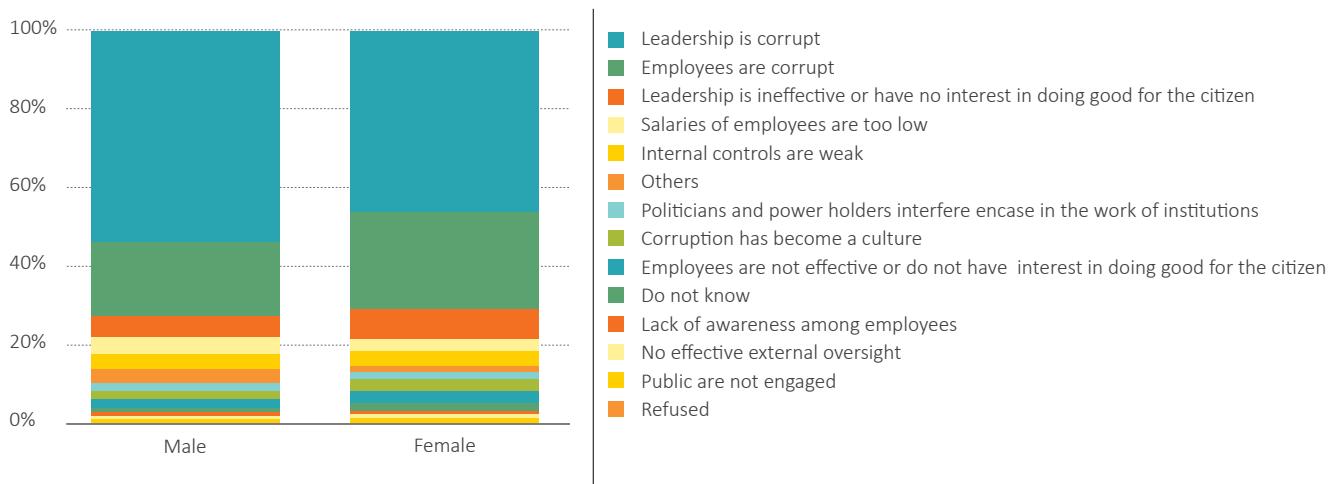
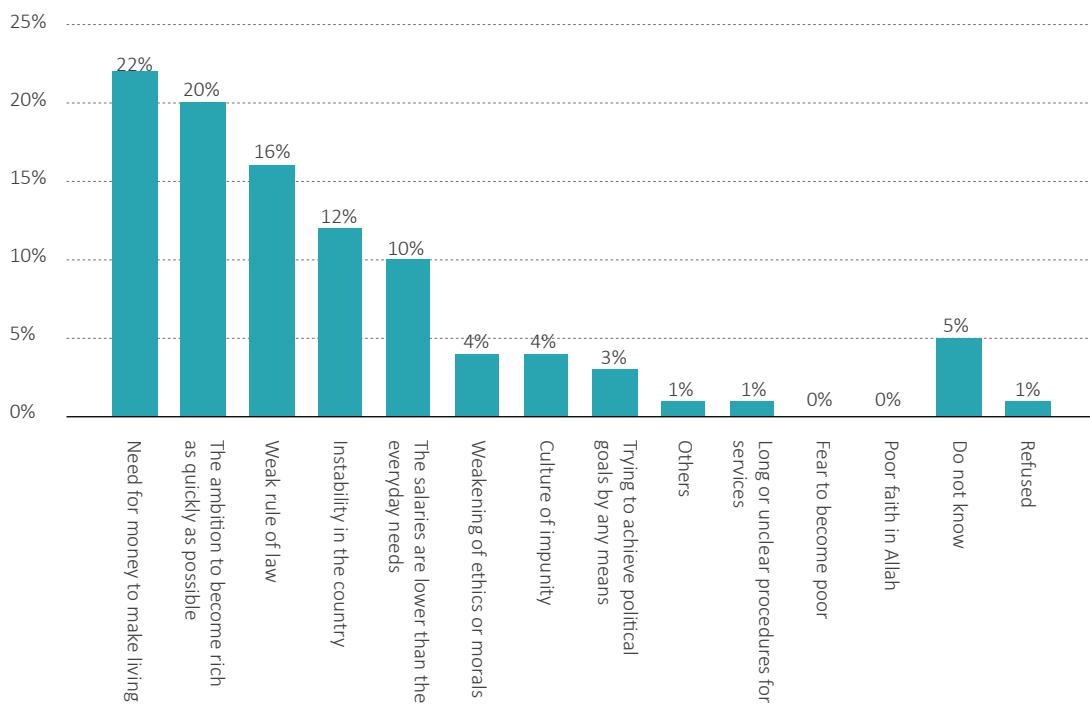


Figure 32: What do you think are factors causing corruption in Afghanistan?



2.4. Personal experience of corruption

Trends in Afghan citizens' personal experience with corruption have remained largely constant over the past decade, with roughly 20%-25% of citizens reporting that they have experienced corruption over the previous year during that period. Men consistently report having experienced corruption more than women. While there have been some changes from year to year, these are most likely attributable to changes in citizens' willingness to report rather than any substantive change in corruption levels per se. In terms of bribery specifically, one particularly worrying trend is the consistent rise since 2012 in the estimated number of Afghan citizens who have paid a bribe, reaching almost 6 million in 2020, or approximately 15% of the country's population. More than one quarter of the total volume of public sector bribes are now paid to the National Police.

The proportion of citizens who say they have not personally experienced corruption over the previous year has consistently oscillated between 70% and 74% during the period 2012 - 2020. The proportion of those who state they have experienced corruption has fluctuated slightly more (between

18% and 27% during the same period). While it would appear that personal experience of corruption has seen an important decline in the last two years, from 26% in 2018 to 20% in 2020, at least some of this change may be attributed to the rise in the proportion of respondents who answered "don't know" or did not answer (up from 3% in 2018 to 9% in 2020). Indeed, changes in levels of corruption experience mirror very closely changes in reporting levels (ie the percentage of respondents who do not respond or do not know), suggesting that it perhaps changes in citizens' willingness to report corruption which accounts for most of the year-on-year changes rather than any substantive change in corruption levels *per se*.

In terms of gender differences, as was the case in previous years, men (26%) report having experienced corruption more than women (15%). One possible explanation for this difference is that men tend to have more day-to-day interaction with public officials than women, giving them greater exposure to administrative corruption³⁹. However, it could also be because many women cannot afford to pay bribes for necessary basic services due to a lack of resources, which may also make them less interesting targets for public officials who extort bribes⁴⁰.

³⁹ Seligson, M. A. 2006. "The Measurement and Impact of Corruption Victimization: Survey Evidence from Latin America." World Development 34 (2): 381–404 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305750X05001683>

⁴⁰ Sierra, E and Boehm, F. 2015 "The gendered impact of corruption: Who suffers more – men or women?", U4 Brief 2015:9, Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute <https://www.u4.no/publications/the-gendered-impact-of-corruption-who-suffers-more-men-or-women/>

Figure 33: Personal experience of corruption in the last decade

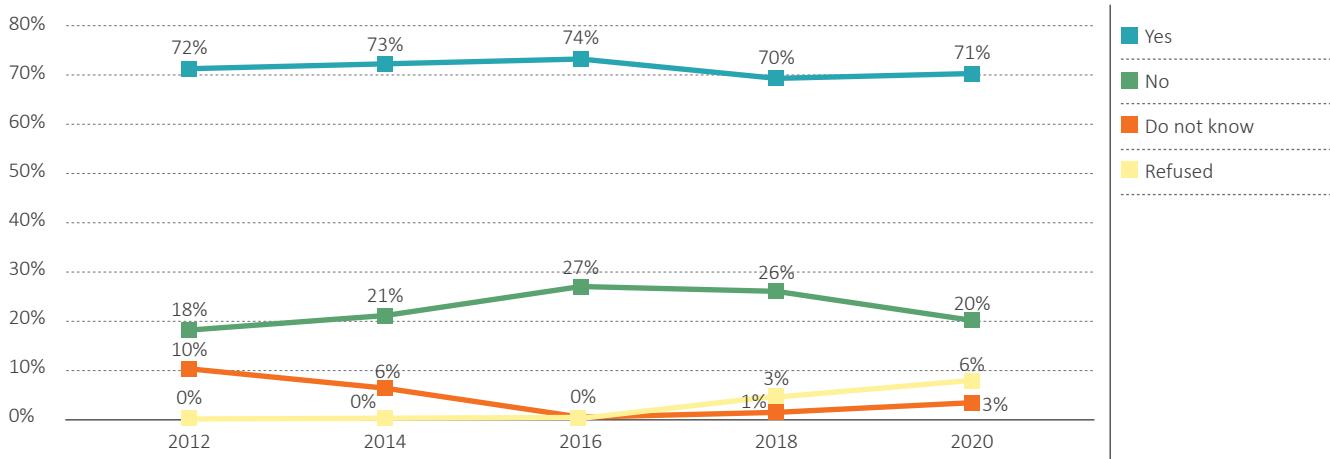
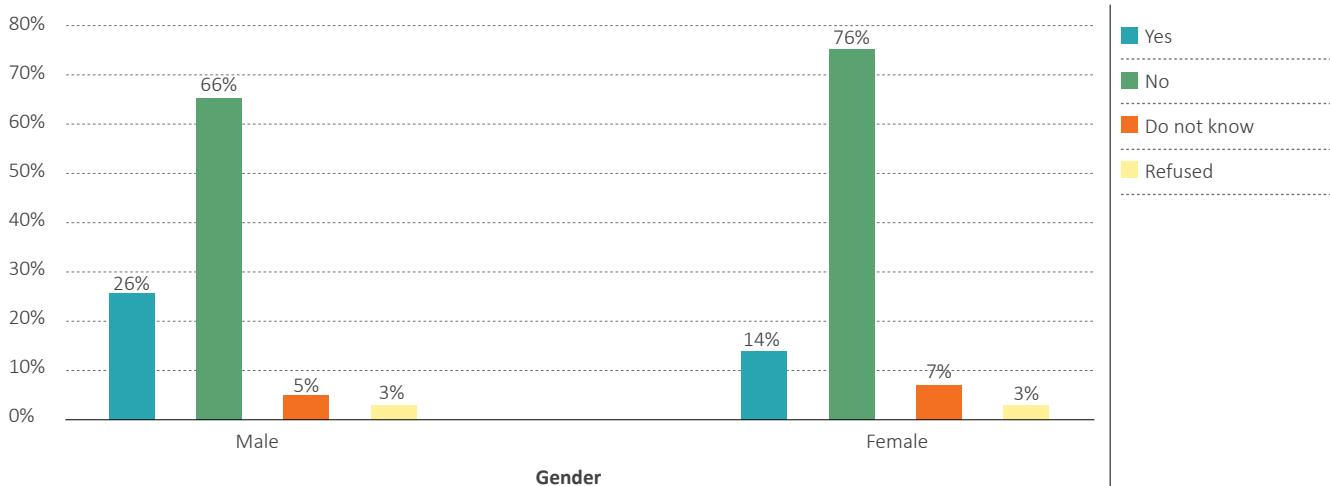


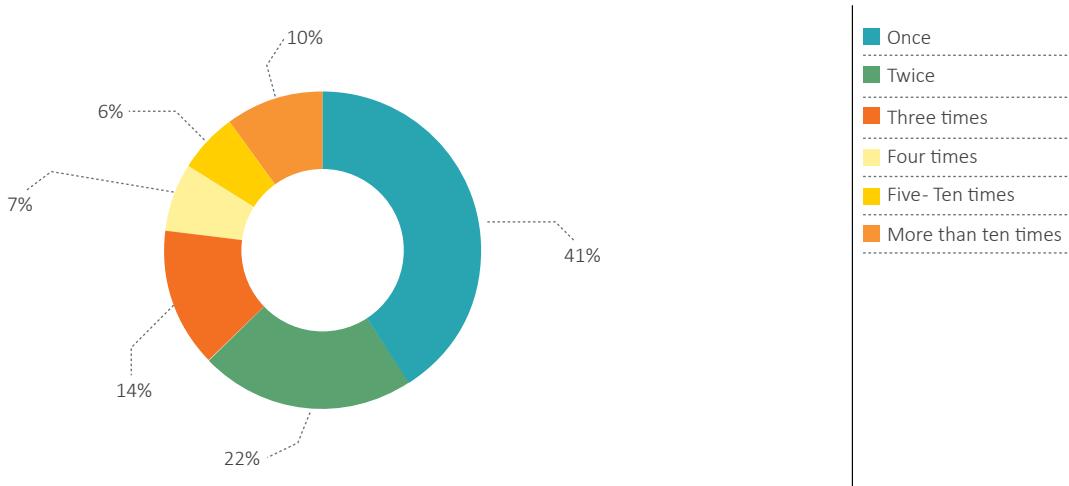
Figure 34: Have you personally as an individual experienced corruption over the last 12 months?



In terms of frequency, 42% of those who have experienced corruption in the last year have encountered it only once during that period, while a further 23% have experienced it twice. The proportion of citizens who have experienced corruption three times or more during the past years has increased from 27% of the total in 2018 to 37% of the total in 2020, suggesting that the frequency with which an individual is likely to face corruption is on the rise. Indeed, more than 15% of those who have experienced corruption have done

so at least five times, with 10% having experienced it more than ten times. This means that for a small but nevertheless significant number of those who have faced it, corruption represents an insidious and recurring phenomenon in their day-to-day experience. Whether this is because these individuals are more exposed to corruption due to the nature of their occupation or because they have been particularly unfortunate, the burden of corruption on their lives is significant.

Figure 35: If yes, how many times have you personally faced corruption over the last 12 months?



Overall, the average number of bribes paid per person per year has risen from 2.75 in 2018 to 3.48 in 2020. This is closer to 2010 – 2016 levels during which period the average number of bribes fluctuated between 3.36 and 4.05.

While the average *number* of bribes has increased since 2018, the average *size* of bribes has remained almost the same, and in fact slightly decreased from AFN 8,944 (USD 116) to AFN 8,388 (USD 108)⁴¹. This is considerably lower than the average bribe paid in 2016 (AFN 14,115 or USD 183).

Of most concern, however, is the fact that the estimated number of Afghan citizens who have paid a bribe has continued to rise year-on-year since 2012, reaching an all-time high of 5.9 million in 2020 (an increase of 26% on 2018 estimates). This represents approximately 15% of the country's population. As a result, Afghans reported paying a yearly total of AFN 171 billion (USD 2.25 billion) in 2020, an increase of 37% on the total reported amount in 2018.

Table 1: Number of citizens who have paid a bribe, average size of bribes and total amounts paid

Year	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
Number of Afghan adults who paid bribe	1,677,319	1,621,800	1,992,698	3,449,588	4,638,909	5,865,618
Average paid (AFS)	9,582	9,528	13,080	14,115	8,944	8,388
Average number of bribe paid in bribes	3.36	4.05	4.05	4.02	2.75	3.48
Total amount of Afghani paid in bribes	54,002,157,411	62,582,667,120	105,646,837,150	195,791,227,740	113,949,221,750	171,330,609,311
Total amount of USD paid in bribes	1,079,669,660	1,254,543,390	1,942,037,448	2,879,282,761	1,651,437,996	2,254,350,123

⁴¹ The average here is calculated as the mean rather than the median

Figure 36: Total amount paid in US Dollar by Afghans

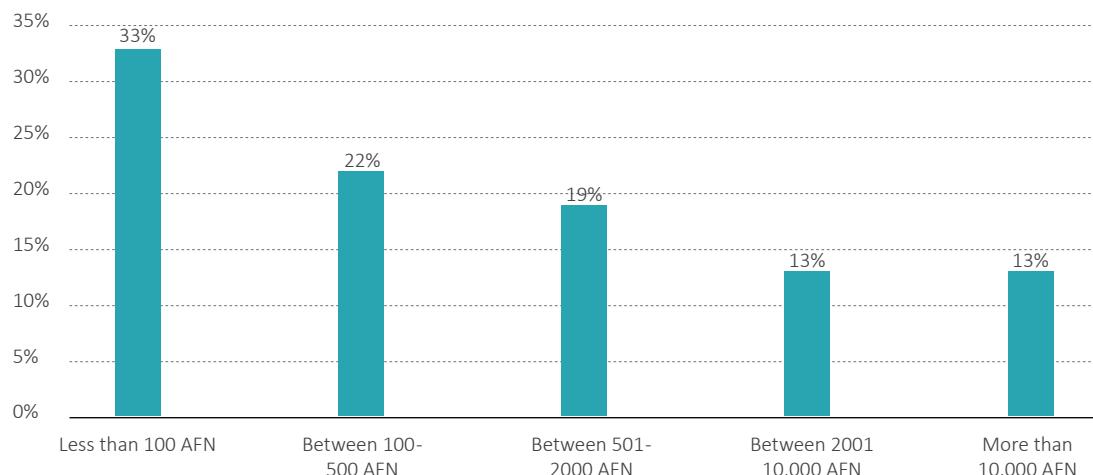


More than half (55%) of those who report paying a bribe paid less than AFN 500 (USD 6.50) on the last occasion they did so, compared to 43% in 2018. At the other end of the spectrum, roughly the same proportion (13%) report paying more than AFN 10,000 (USD 130) in 2020, compared to 14% in 2018. This would suggest that the increase in the overall amount paid in bribes witnessed over the last two years is largely

attributable to an increase in the number of small bribes rather than large ones.

Overall then, there is little room for optimism in terms of the volume of experienced bribery in Afghanistan, with the number of people paying bribes and the average number of bribes paid per person having both increased since 2018.

Figure 37: What was the amount of the bribe the last time you personally paid?



2.5. Attitudes towards bribery

Approximately two-thirds of citizens state that they would not pay a bribe if asked to do so, similar to previous years. However, there is a slight but noticeable decrease in citizens willingness to discuss bribery. By far the most common reason citizens give when stating that they would pay a bribe is the belief, particularly among women, that this is the only way to access a service. More than 80% of respondents state that they feel either guilty, sinful or sad

when paying a bribe, while less than 1% of citizens report feeling honoured or powerful.

22% of citizens state that they would give a bribe if asked to pay it, compared to 33% who said the same in 2018. While this might seem like a considerable decrease, the number of people who state that they would *not* pay a bribe has remained largely stable (64% in 2020 compared to 62% in 2018). The discrepancy can largely be accounted for by the proportion of respondents who answered "don't know" or did not answer in the 2020 survey (in total 13% as compared

to 5% in 2018). This would seem to suggest that citizens have become less open about discussing whether they would pay a bribe than in previous years, rather than any substantial decrease in actual willingness to pay. As with previous

years, there is little difference between women's and men's willingness to pay, although men do report slightly greater willingness (24%) than women (20%).

Figure 38: How would you react if you were asked to pay a bribe?

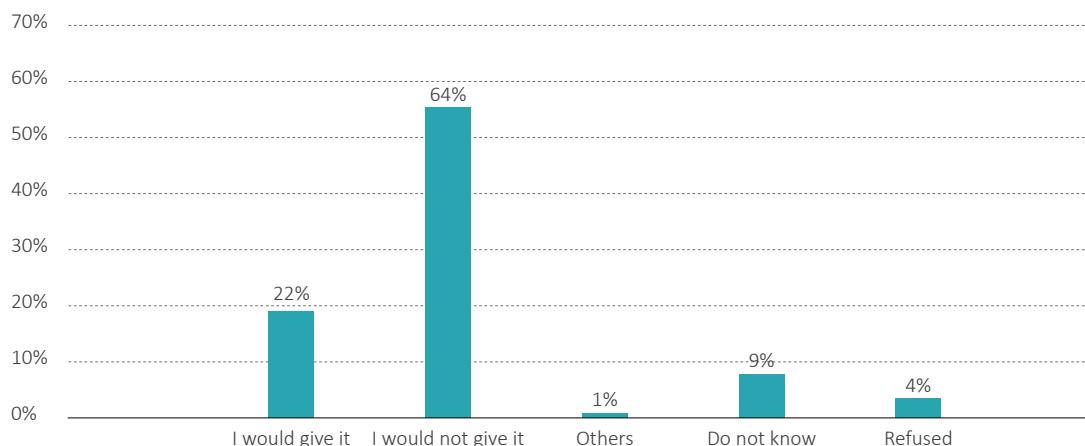
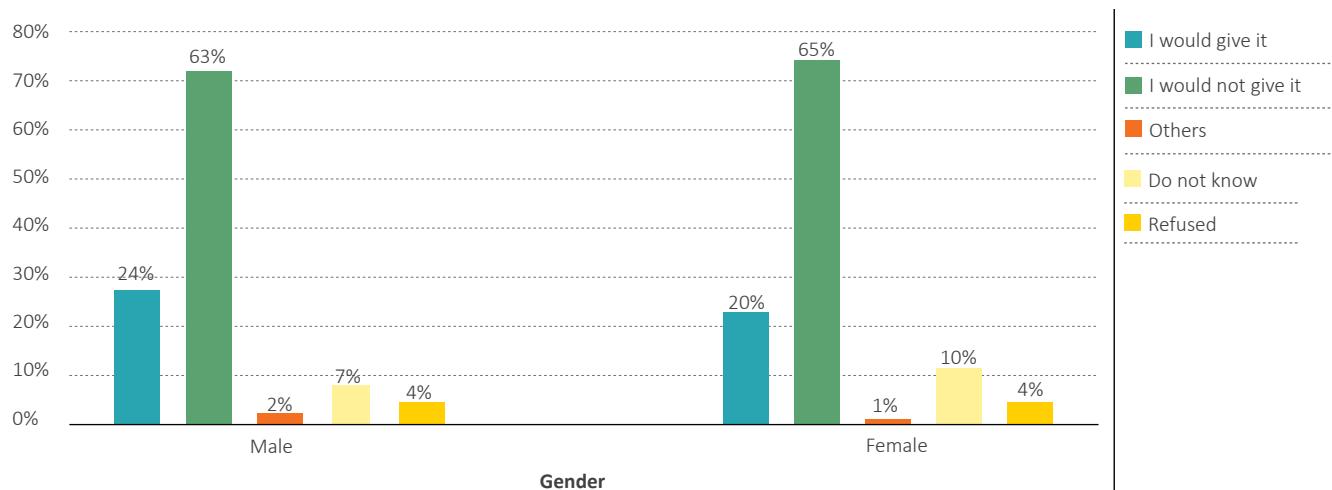


Figure 39: How would you react if you were asked to pay a bribe?



70% of those who say they would pay a bribe would do so because they believe there is no other way to access a service. This increase on the already high figure of 63% in 2018 is a sobering indictment on Afghan citizens' confidence in public administration and the sense of powerlessness they feel in the face of bureaucratic corruption. The figure is even

higher for women, three-quarters of whom hold this view. Other common reasons which are given for (hypothetically) paying a bribe include the fact that everyone else is doing it or to speed up a process, although the rates are significantly lower, 11% in both cases.

Figure 40: Why would you give it?

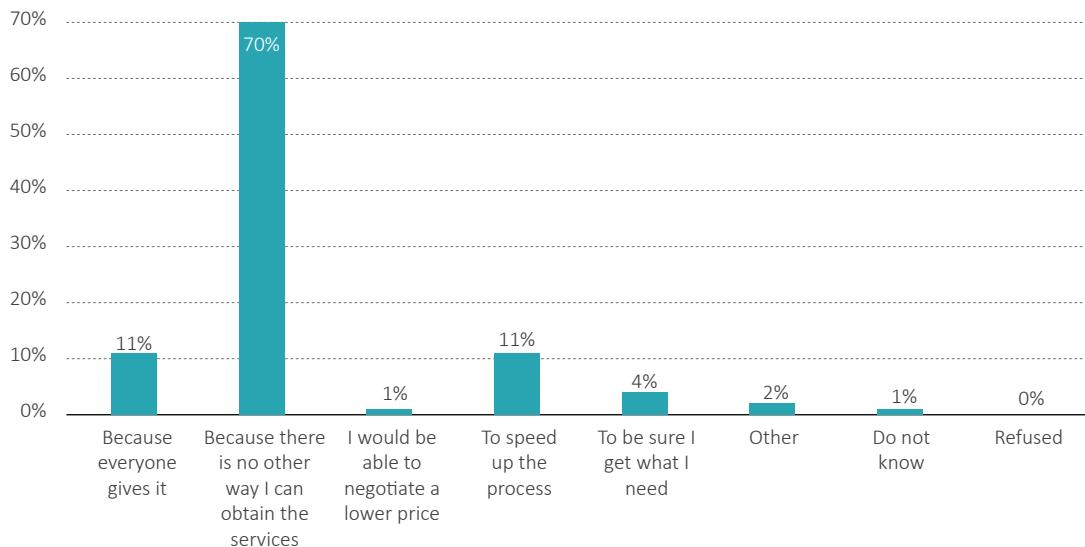
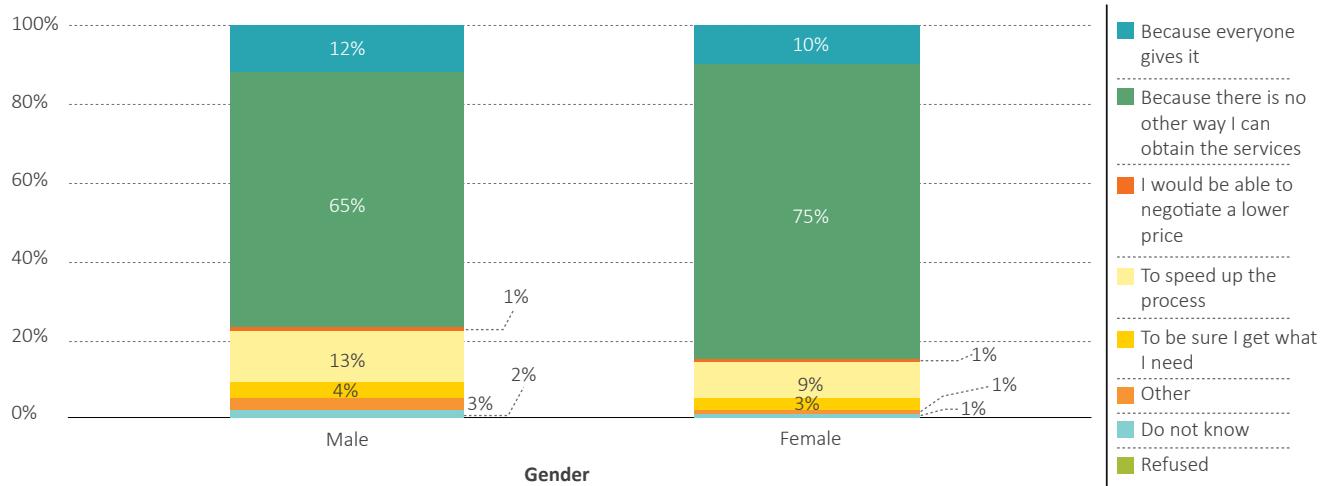


Figure 41: Why would you give it?



As well as feeling powerless, paying bribes elicits other overwhelmingly negative feelings among citizens. In fact, 81% state that they feel either guilty, sinful or sad when paying a bribe. In contrast, less than 1% of citizens report feeling honoured or powerful. Much the same can be said of how Afghan citizens view corrupt individuals. The most common responses are "sinful" (38%), "venal" (21%) and "guilty" (15%), while only a small minority see them

as "powerful" "or clever/smart" (3%). It is clear then, that corruption has an overwhelmingly negative psychological effect on those who are faced with it, and negates the view sometimes expressed that corruption is largely a "cultural" phenomenon. Such a situation is only likely to further weaken citizens' already fragile trust in authorities.

Figure 42: How do you feel when you pay bribe?

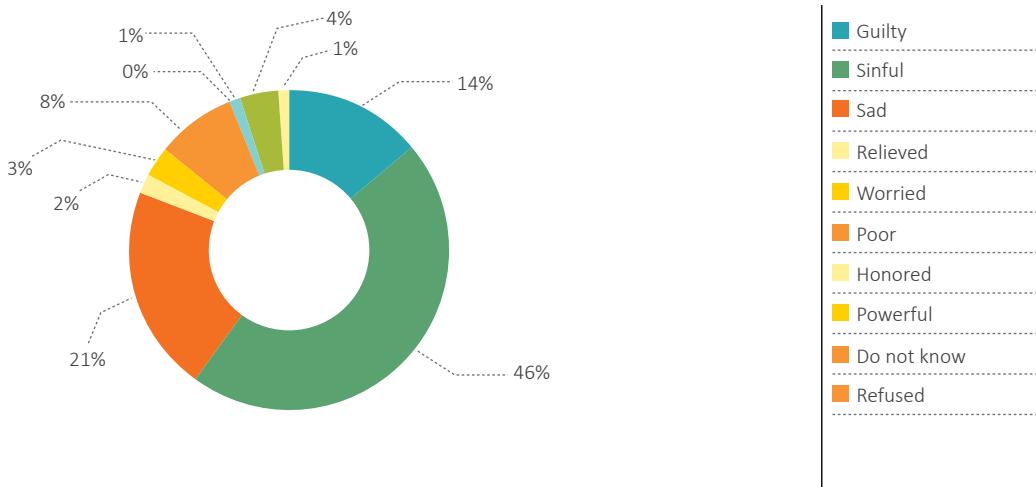
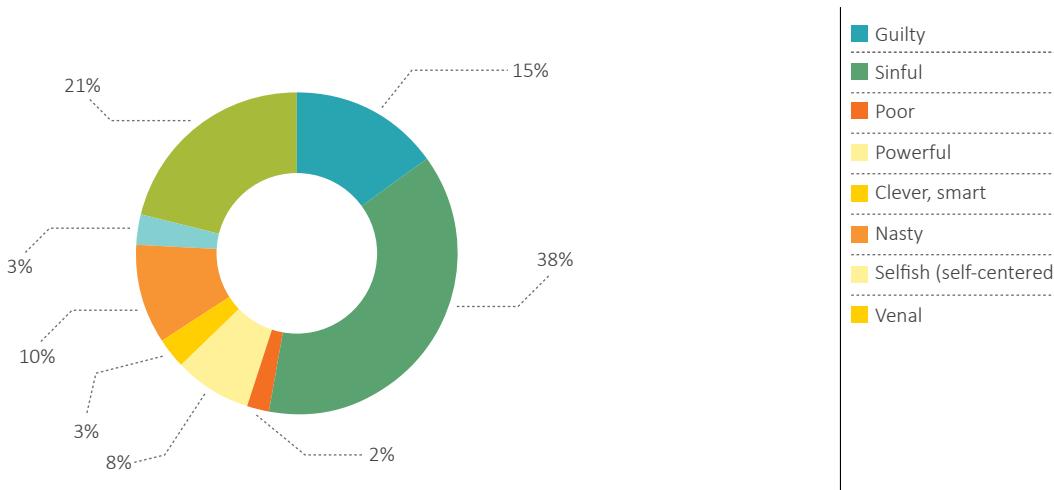


Figure 43: In your opinion, how is a corrupt person perceived in the Afghan society?



2.6. Personal experience of nepotism

While the proportion of citizens who state that they have been a victim of nepotism has decreased since 2018, it also appears that citizens are less willing to openly discuss the issue. Citizens report facing nepotism to a much greater degree in the public sector than in the private sector. Women report being slightly more willing to rely on nepotism to secure a job than men, although across the country, the proportion of both women and men who expressed uncertainty as to whether they would engage in nepotism is high.

The issue of nepotism, defined as a “form of favouritism based on acquaintances and familiar relationships” is well recognised in Afghanistan. For example, a wide-ranging review of Civil Service Reform in 2016 noted that:

“long-standing practices of cronyism, nepotism, and hiring on the basis of ethnicity are common. A merit-based recruitment system has not yet been institutionalised in many ministries and agencies. This means that the “best and brightest” are often discounted in favour of those who are “known,” thus contributing to an attitude of resignation and a lack of motivation to work hard for advancement.”⁴²

42 <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/590701744.pdf>

According to our survey, 14% of people say they have been a victim of nepotism over the last 12 months. Although this is down from 25% in 2018, the proportion of people who answered “don’t know” or didn’t answer has gone up from 5% to 12%. Rather than suggesting a substantive decrease in levels of nepotism, this suggests that people are perhaps

less willing to openly discuss it. Of those who have been a victim of nepotism, the vast majority (78%) encountered it in the public sector, with the remaining 22% coming across it in the private sector. This would seem to confirm that nepotism is indeed a serious and pervasive problem in Afghanistan’s public sector.

Figure 44: Have you or a member of your household been a victim of nepotism during the last 12 months?

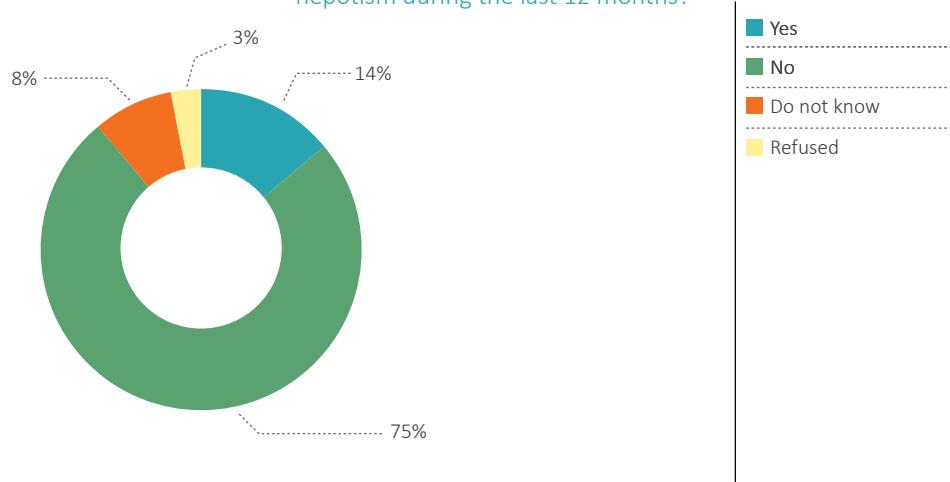
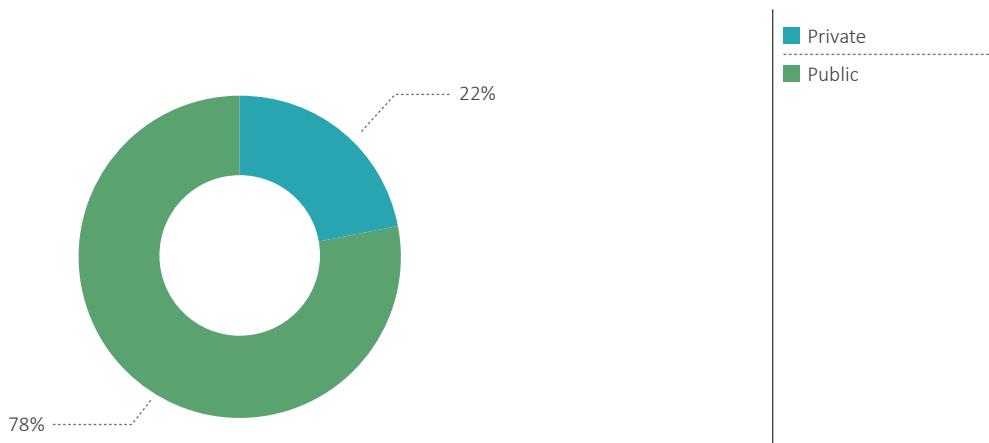


Figure 45: In which institution did you face nepotism?



Afghan citizens’ experience of nepotism would appear to mirror quite closely how they themselves say they would react if they were to find themselves in a position to use connections to gain an advantage. 18% of respondents say they would rely on nepotism if it were necessary to secure a job. Interestingly, women (21%) appear slightly more likely to rely on this kind of favouritism than men (16%). At the same, a significantly larger portion of women (23%) state they do know whether they would take this action as compared to men (14%), suggesting

that the actual gap between women and men in this regard may in fact be larger. In terms of regional differences, respondents in the East and Southeast regions report being the least likely to engage in nepotism to secure a job (10% in each case), whereas those in the southern and central regions would appear to be the most likely to do so (23% and 24% respectively). Across all regions, however, the proportion of those who expressed uncertainty as to whether they would engage in nepotism is high (on average 19%).

Figure 46: Would you rely on nepotism if this is necessary to secure a job?

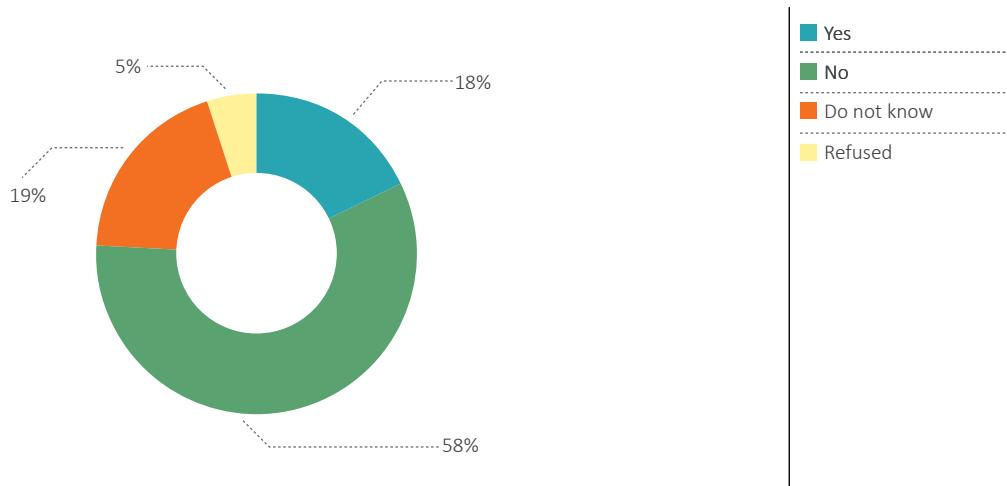


Figure 47: Would you rely on nepotism if this is necessary to secure a job?

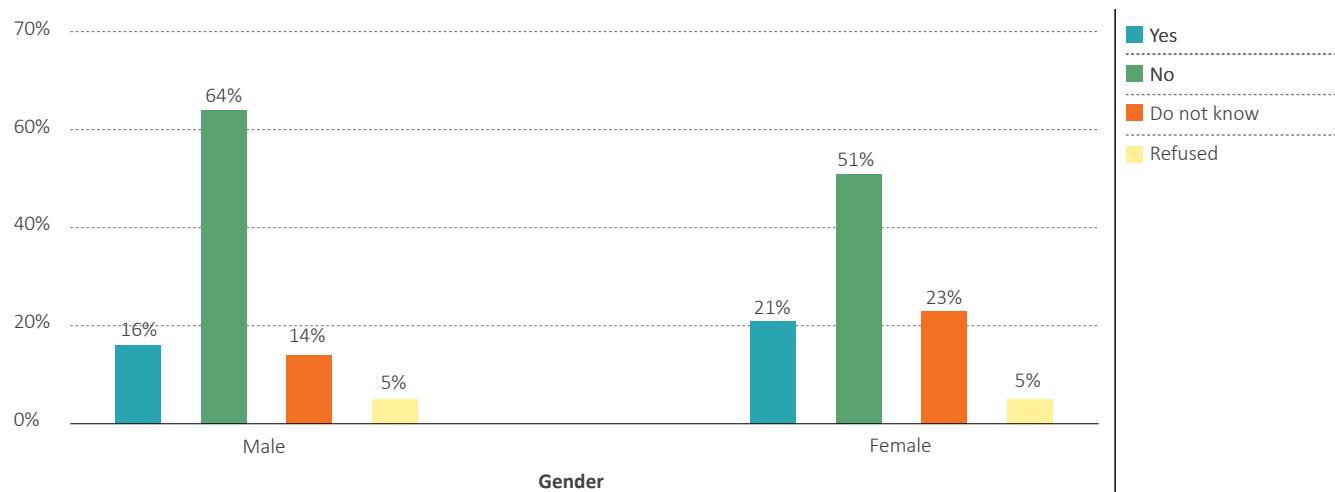
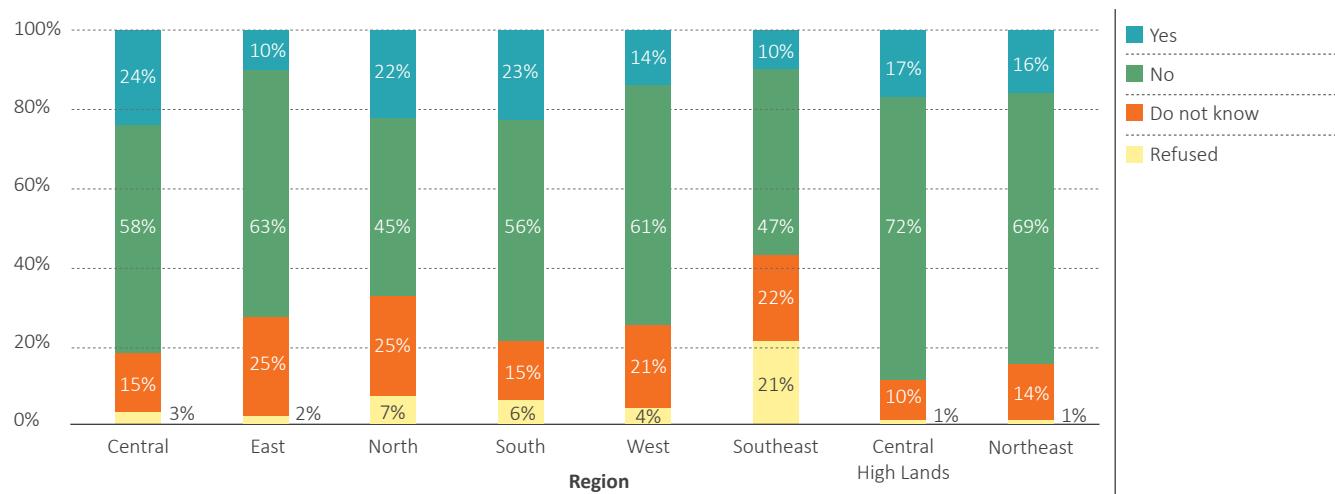


Figure 48: Would you rely on nepotism if this is necessary to secure a job?





PART 3

IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON PUBLIC SERVICES AND ON THE PERCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT

Part Three of this report briefly explores the impact of corruption on the everyday experiences of Afghan citizens, including their trust in public services. It also looks specifically at whether citizens believe corruption is encouraging people to turn away from the Government in favour of the Taliban.

3.1. Impact of corruption on society and on public service delivery

Afghan citizens' views on the impact of corruption on life in their area and on their trust in public services remains as pessimistic as it was in 2018, with an overwhelming majority believing that it is having a negative effect. Women and men are equally likely to hold these views. People are increasingly likely to believe that corruption is leading people to trust the Taliban over the Government with almost half of respondents - and more than half of men - now taking this view.

The vast majority of Afghan citizens believe that corruption has negatively affected the life of people in their area. Specifically, 45% of respondents strongly agree with this statement while 39% agree. While the proportion of citizens who strongly agree has declined from 54% in 2018, the proportion who agree has increased from 29%. The net result is that proportion of citizens who either strongly agree or agree that corruption has negatively affected the lives of people in their area remains as high in 2020 (84%) as it was in 2018 (83%), and significantly above the rate of 72% in 2016. Overall, the results are largely the same for men as for women, although men (46%) are slightly more likely to strongly agree with the statement than women (43%).

Figure 49: Corruption has negatively affected the life of our people?

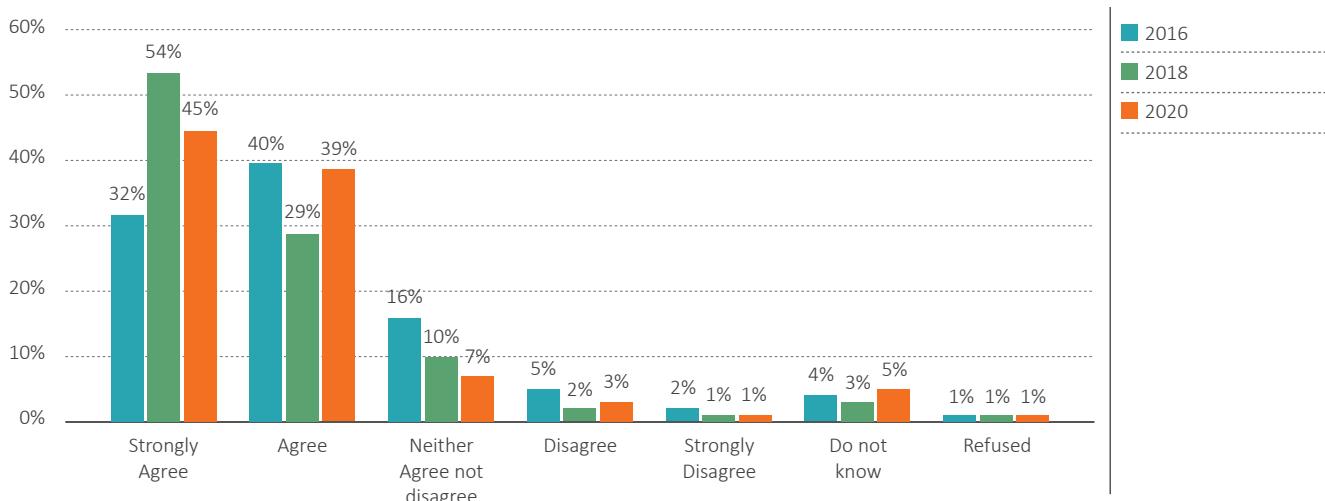
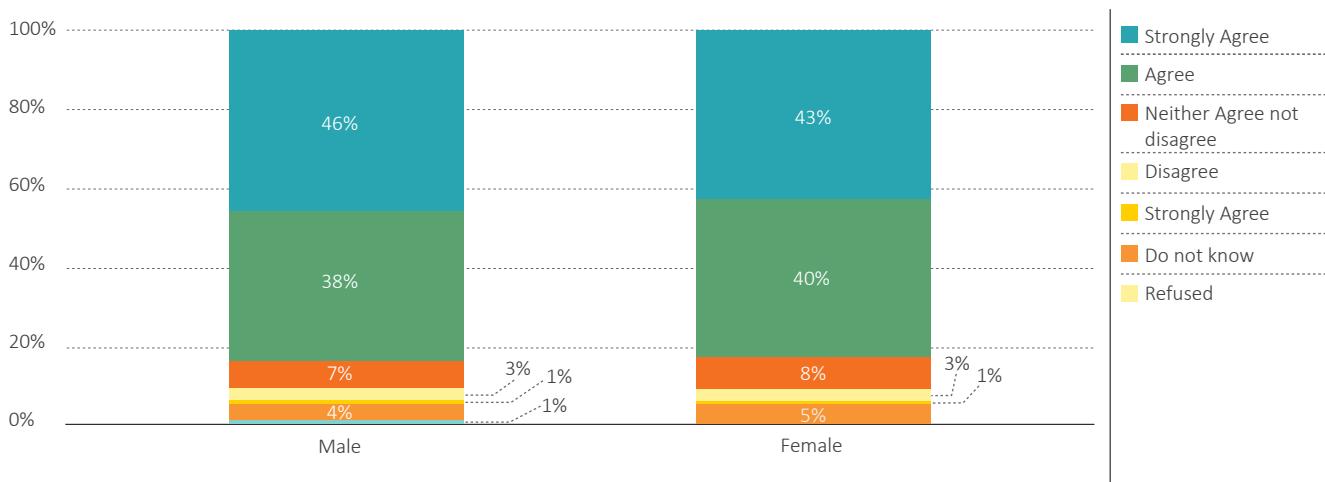


Figure 50: Corruption has negatively affected the life of our people?



This situation is mirrored when we consider how people view the impact of corruption on service delivery. While the proportion of citizens who strongly agree with the statement that “because of corruption I do not trust local public services anymore” has declined slightly from 32% in 2018 to 30% in 2020, the proportion of those who agree has increased by the same margin (from 41% to 43%), giving the same net result across the two years (73%). Once again, differences between men and women are very small.

These results are consistent with the fact that, as discussed in Part Two, Afghan citizens’ personal experiences of corruption have seen no improvement over the past decade. The fact that almost three quarters of citizens do not trust public services is no doubt a reflection of the large number of Afghans who have paid a bribe, reaching a high of almost 6 million in 2020, with the vast majority of these bribes paid when accessing public services or interacting with local government.

Figure 51: Because of corruption I do not trust local public services anymore?

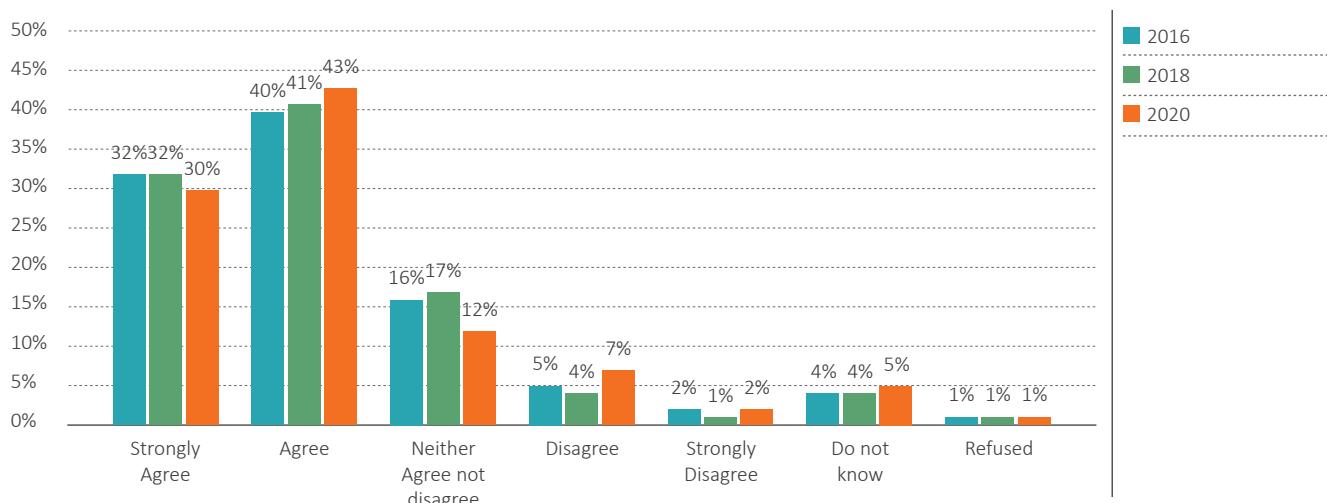
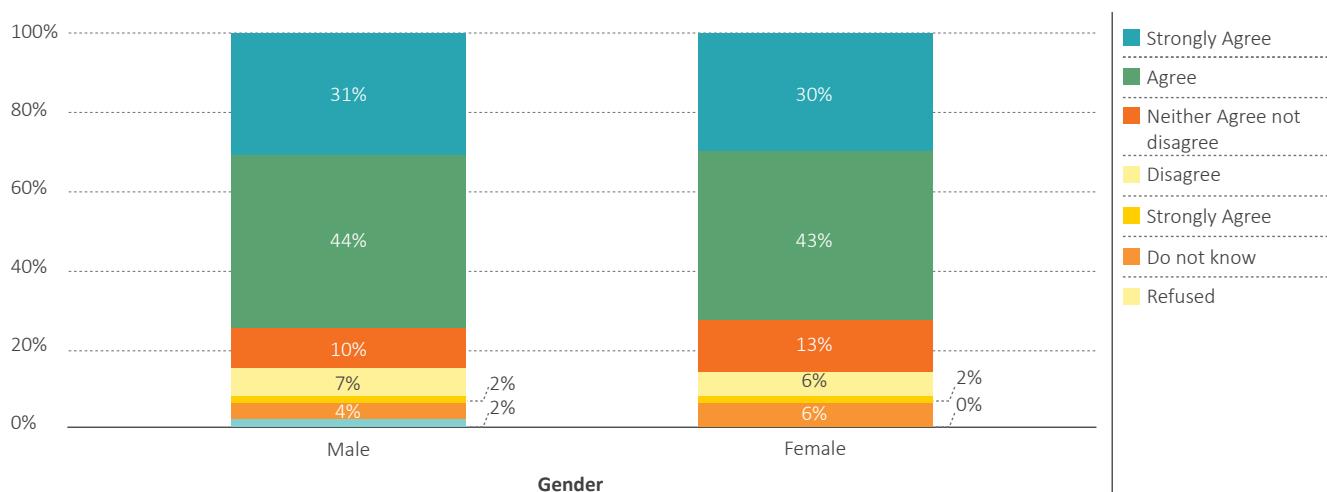


Figure 52: Because of corruption I do not trust local public services anymore?



Afghan citizens are increasingly convinced that corruption is leading people to place their trust in the Taliban over the Government. This could be explained by the limited trust which people have in government-run services. It may also be to do with the fact, as discussed in Part One, citizens feel

that the corruption is higher in government-controlled areas than Taliban controlled areas (although this may partly be a reflection of the coverage of the survey which was largely conducted in secure areas of the country). Whatever the reason, the result is that almost half of respondents (49%)

now either strongly agree or agree with the statement that “because of corruption people refer to the Taliban”, up from 43% in 2018 and 39% in 2016. This view is held more strongly among men (54%) than among women (45%).

It is also instructive to note that, in contrast to most other areas of the survey, the proportion of those who answered

“don’t know” has declined over time - from 17% in 2016, to 15% in 2018 to 12% in 2020. This would seem to confirm that not only do citizens increasingly see corruption as driving citizens towards the Taliban, but that they are also more certain about their views in this regard than was previously the case.

Figure 53: Because of corruption people in our area refer to Taliban.

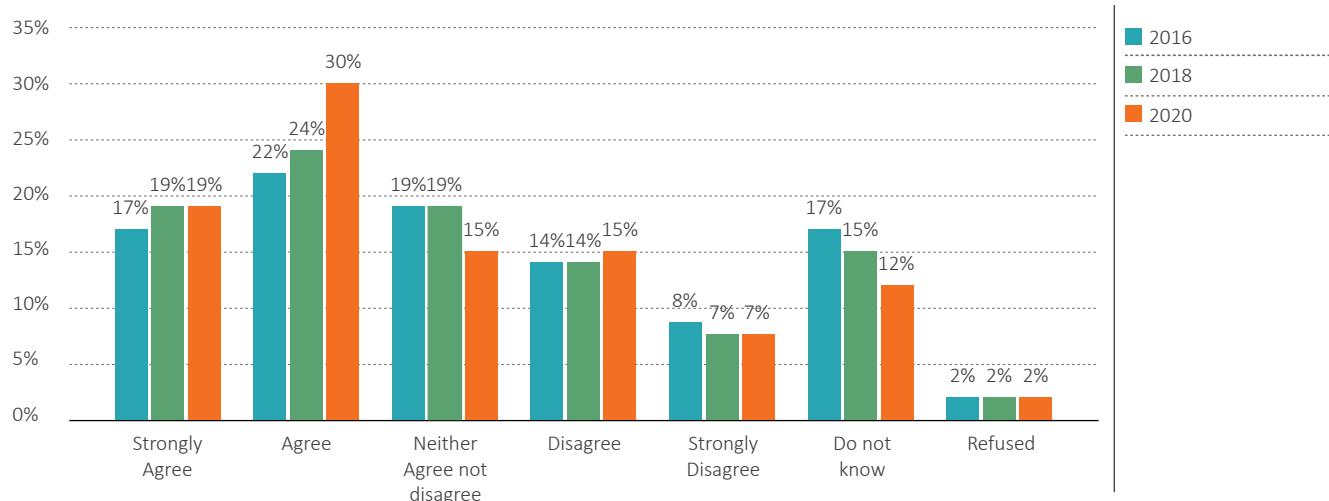
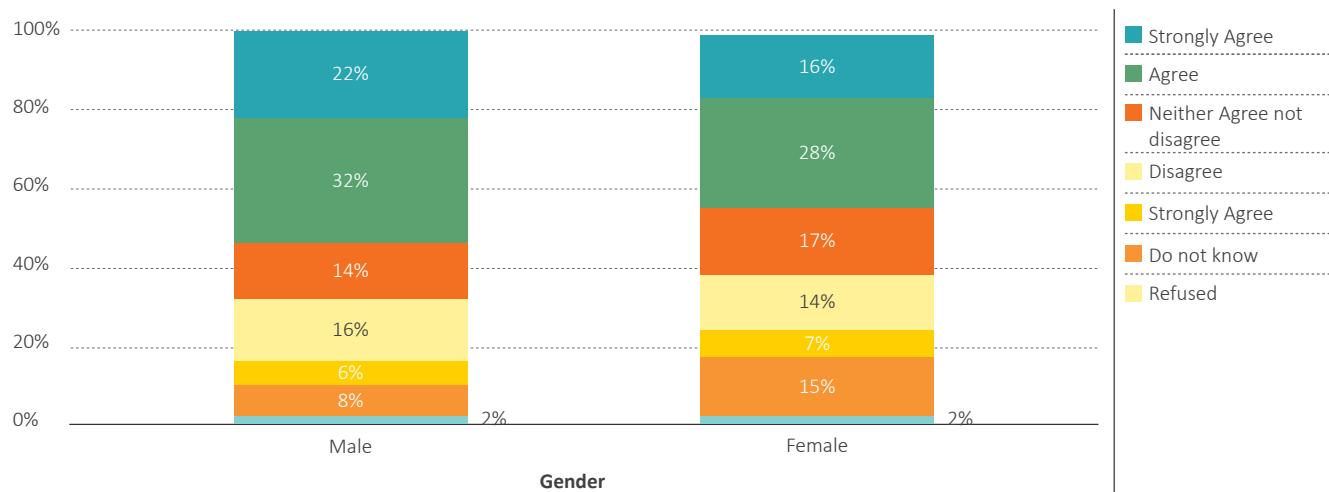


Figure 54: Because of corruption people in our area refer to Taliban?





PART 4

VIEWS ON EFFORTS TO FIGHT CORRUPTION

The final part of this report discusses Afghan's views on the efforts and political will of different actors to fight corruption in the country. It begins by looking at citizens' experiences with reporting corruption. This is followed by a discussion of the extent to which Afghans believe that corruption can be addressed, as well as the performance of the government as a whole and the perceived commitment of other actors in the fight against corruption.

4.1. Process of reporting corruption

The share of people who say they know where to report corruption has declined significantly from 44% in 2018 to 26% in 2020. Citizens in government-controlled areas are more likely to know where to report corruption than in other parts of the country. There has also been a significant decline in the proportion of respondents who state that they or someone in their household has reported a corrupt act and a noticeable drop in levels of satisfaction with the feedback received. The most common reason given for not reporting a corrupt act is the fear of retribution, followed by the belief that no action will be taken to address the issue.

One quarter (26%) of citizens say that they know where to report a corrupt act taken by a public official. Levels of awareness are similar among men (27%) and women (25%) but there are important regional differences. Citizens in the

Central (40%) and Central Highlands (31%) regions are more likely to say they know where to report corruption, whereas as those in the Southeast are least likely (14%). This is perhaps not surprising given that the former are among the most strongly government-controlled areas, while the Southeast is increasingly volatile.

These results are comparable to the rates reported in 2016, but a significant decrease on the 44% of respondents which stated they knew where to report corruption in 2018. It is difficult to know whether the 2018 results were an anomaly or whether the decrease represents a substantive change in awareness. Either way, it is clear that there is much work to be done to ensure that citizens know where to report corruption when they encounter it. This is especially important given the consistent year-on-year rise of the number of citizens who report having paid a bribe, as discussed in Part Two.

Figure 55: Do you know where to report a corrupt act of an official?

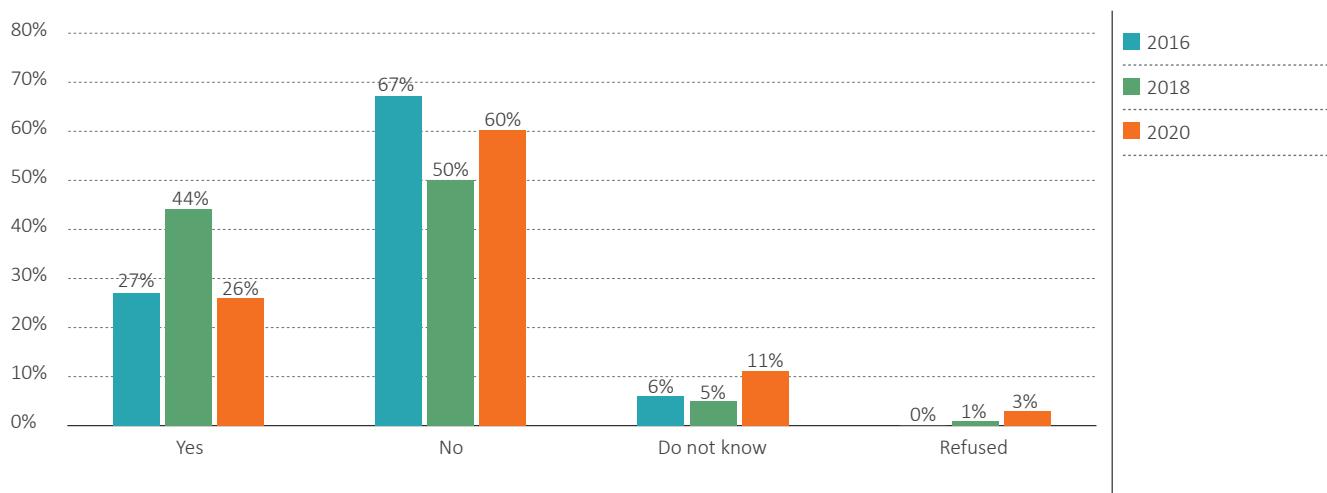


Figure 56: Do you know where to report a corrupt act of an official?

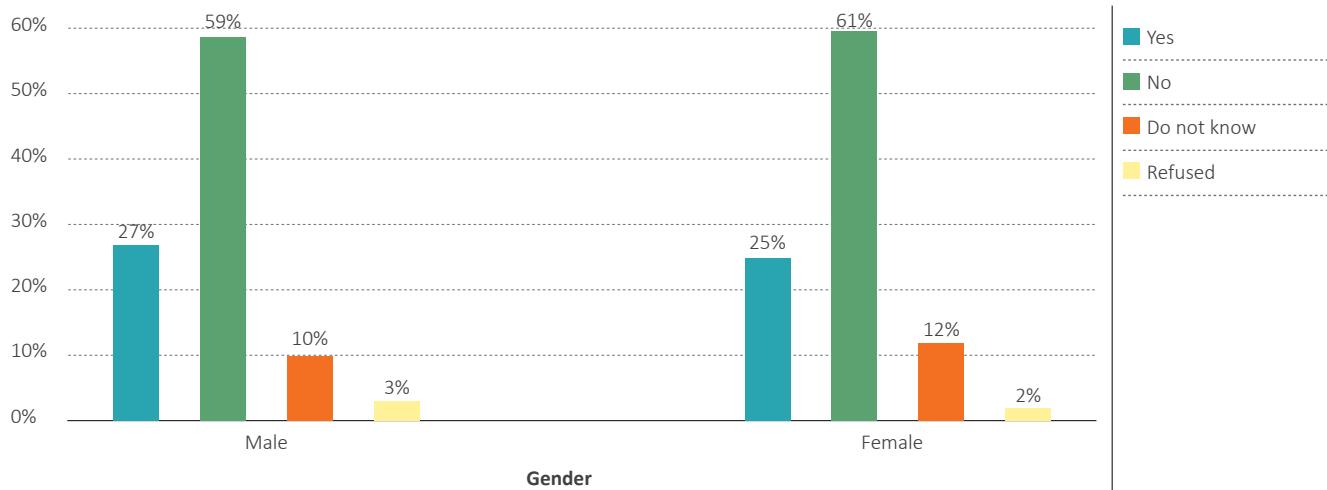
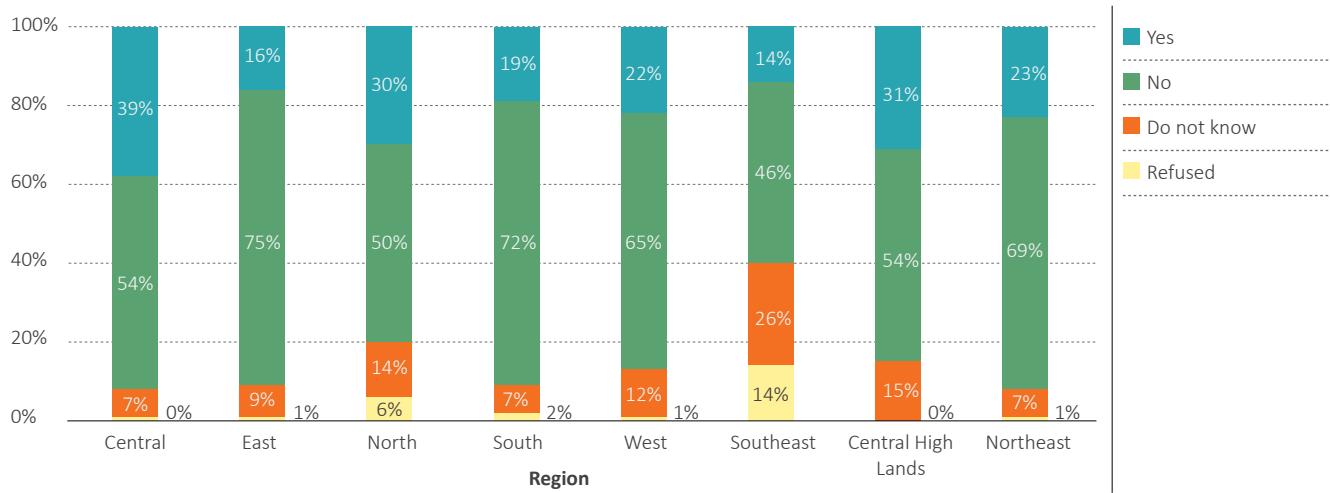


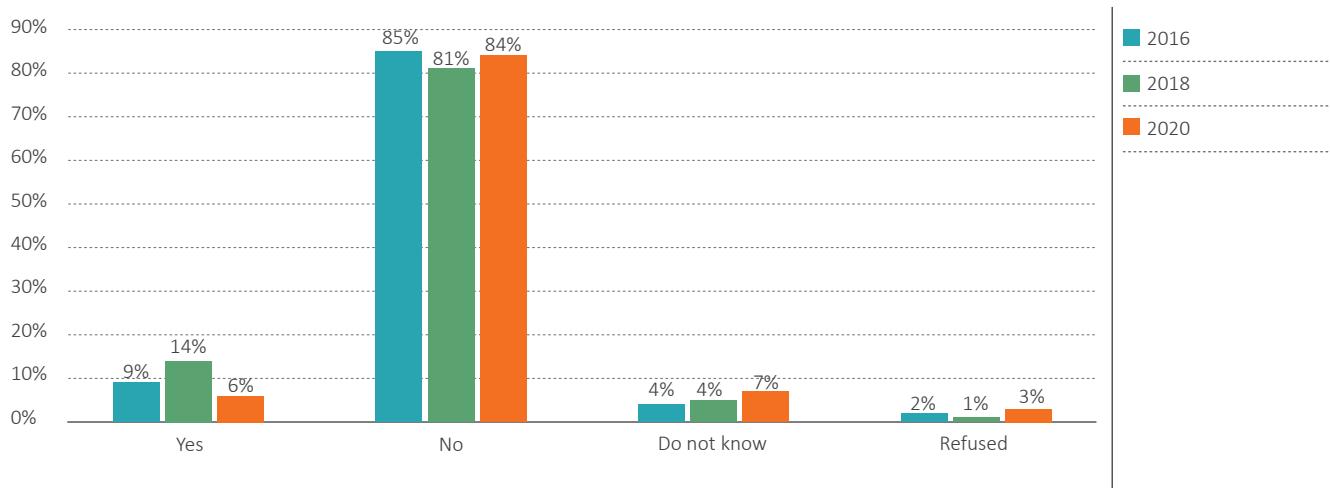
Figure 57: Do you know where to report a corrupt act of an official?



The apparent drop in awareness of where to report corruption is reflected in a drop in reporting in practice. The proportion of respondents who state that they or someone in their household has reported a corrupt act in the last 12 months has declined from 14% in 2018 to 6% in 2020. This is a significant decrease given the already very low level of

reporting. It is also a very low rate considering that as much as 15% of the population report paying a bribe and 14% report being a victim of nepotism, let alone witnessing any other form of corruption (see Part Two for further details). Overall, this suggests that the majority of corrupt acts in Afghanistan go unreported.

Figure 58: During the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household reported a corrupt act by a public official?



As we have seen, levels of reporting have declined significantly since 2018, while the number of citizens who have experienced corruption has remained largely the same or, in the case of bribery, has actually increased. It is therefore useful to explore the reasons people give for not reporting corruption. The most common response, given by more than a third of citizens (37%) is that those who report

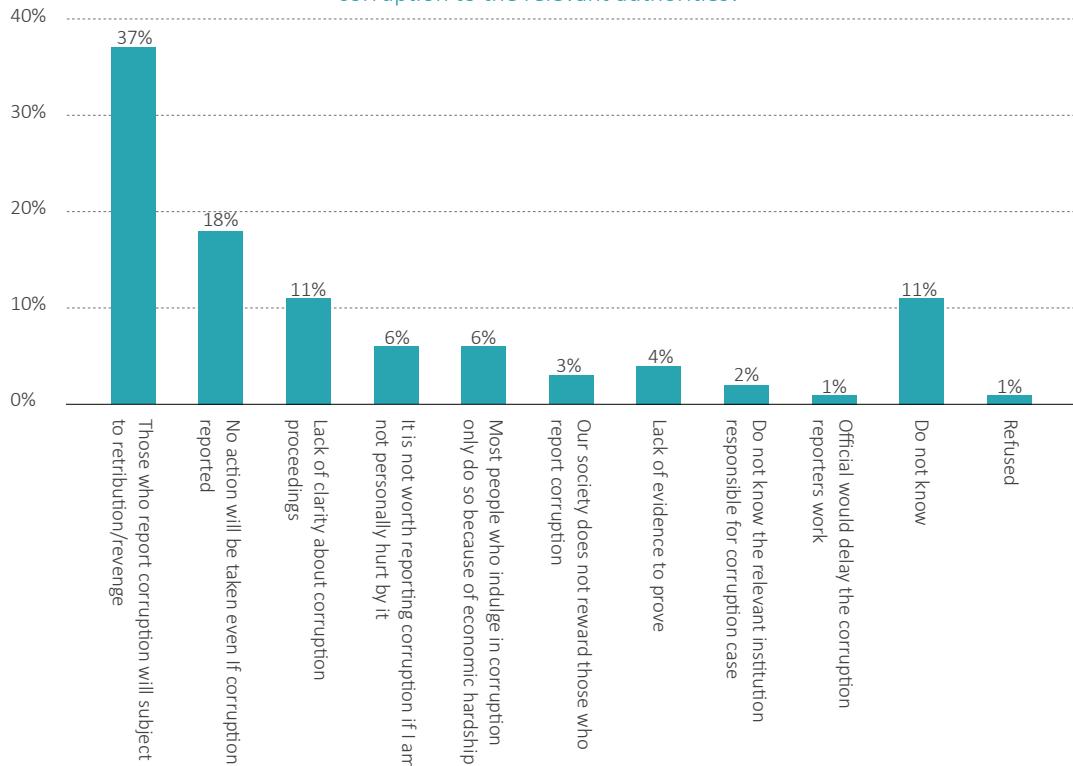
corruption will be subject to retribution/revenge. This is a very worrying situation as the fear of retribution can act as a strong disincentive to reporting. It is all the more urgent therefore that the country accelerates its efforts to actively enforce the Whistleblower Protection Law which was enacted through a legislative decree in 2016⁴³, to provide this protection.

⁴³ See: UNAMA (2020) AFGHANISTAN'S FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: Crucial for Peace and Prosperity https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistans_fight_against_corruption_crucial_for_peace_and_prosperity_english.pdf and Transparency International (2018)

Other common reasons given for not reporting are the belief that no action will be taken to address the issue (18%) or the lack of clarity about how to do so (11%). Thus, the lack

of confidence that reporting will actually make a difference and confusion about how to actually make a report are two further disincentives to reporting that require urgent action.

Figure 59: Please tell me which of the following you personally consider as a reason for not reporting corruption to the relevant authorities?



4.2. Level of confidence that corruption can be addressed

41% of citizens feel that corruption cannot be reduced at all, while only 17% believe that corruption can be substantially reduced or completely eradicated. These results are similar to those reported in 2018. While men and women are equally pessimistic, citizens in the South, East and Southeast regions tend to be less pessimistic than their compatriots. Respondents are significantly more critical of the Government's efforts to fight corruption than in previous years, with almost half of men now rating these efforts as ineffective. In terms of the will of different actors to combat corruption, citizens are most positive about the media and the President, and most negative about the Taliban, the Parliament and the Judiciary. Nevertheless, more citizens have heard the Taliban denouncing corruption in the Afghan state than have heard any member of the

international community speaking against corruption over the last year, possibly a reflection of the growing influence of the former and diminishing role of the latter in Afghanistan's anti-corruption discourse.

We saw in the last section that the levels of reporting on corruption are very low. One possible reason for this is that citizens generally remain very pessimistic about whether corruption can be reduced in the country. Indeed, the proportion of those who feel that corruption cannot be reduced at all is 41%, similar to the 40% who reported the same in 2018. Meanwhile only 17% of the population believes that corruption can be substantially reduced or completely eradicated.

While men and women are equally pessimistic, attitudes across the different regions of Afghanistan diverge quite significantly. Citizens in the Northeast and North appear most pessimistic, with 63% and 54% respectively believing

that corruption cannot be reduced at all, compared to 25% in the South, 26% in the East and 27% in the Southeast who share that view. The fact that citizens tend to be more optimistic about whether corruption can be reduced in

those areas where Taliban influence is strongest is consistent with our findings in Part One that citizens are more likely to believe that corruption is lower in Taliban-controlled areas than government-controlled areas.

Figure 60: To what extent do you think corruption can be reduced in Afghanistan?

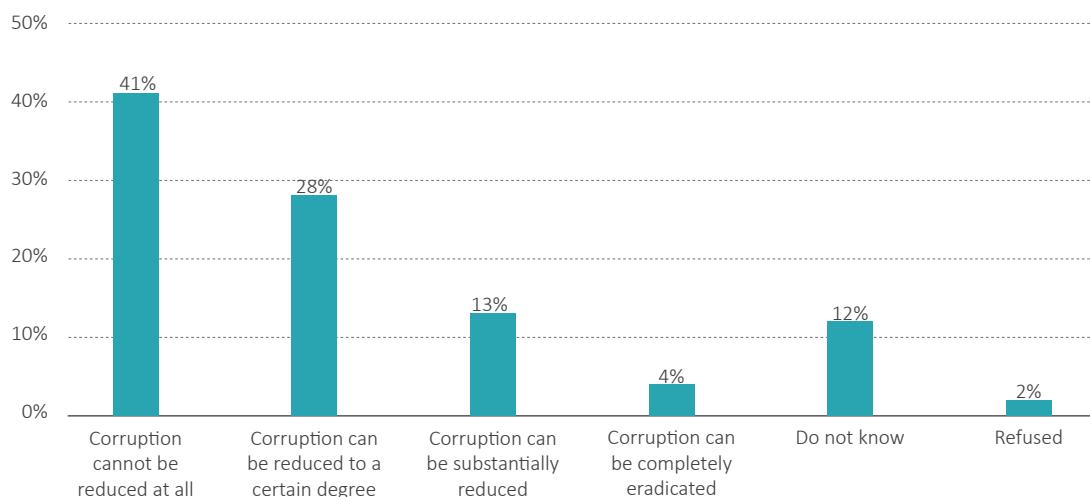
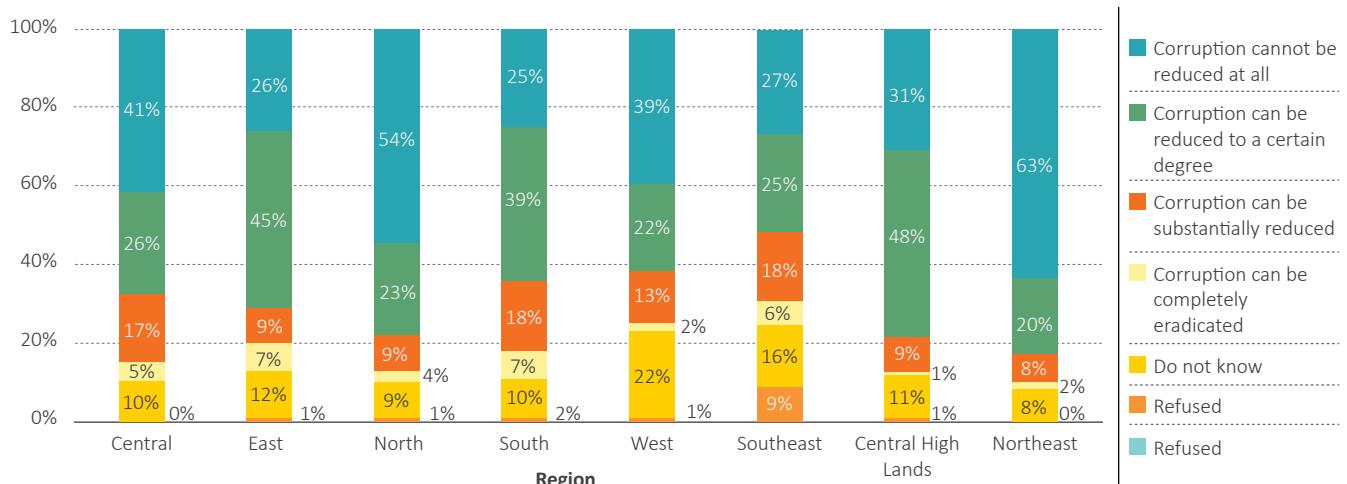


Figure 61: To what extent do you think corruption can be reduced in Afghanistan?



Limited confidence about whether corruption can be addressed is mirrored by citizens' appraisal of their government's efforts to fight corruption. In fact, respondents are now more significantly more critical of government efforts than in previous years, with only 36% rating them as very effective or somewhat effective in 2020, compared to 66% in 2018 and 65% in 2016. While some of this drop can be attributed to the increase in the proportion of respondents who answered "don't know" or did not answer, the proportion who stated that the Government's

efforts to fight corruption are not effective has also increased, from 30% in 2018 to 41% in 2020. Overall, men are less positive about these efforts than women, with 47% of men and 35% of women rating them as not effective. At the same time, women (24%) are also more likely to say that they do not know how their government is doing in the fight against corruption than men (16%).

Figure 62: How is the government doing in the fight against corruption?

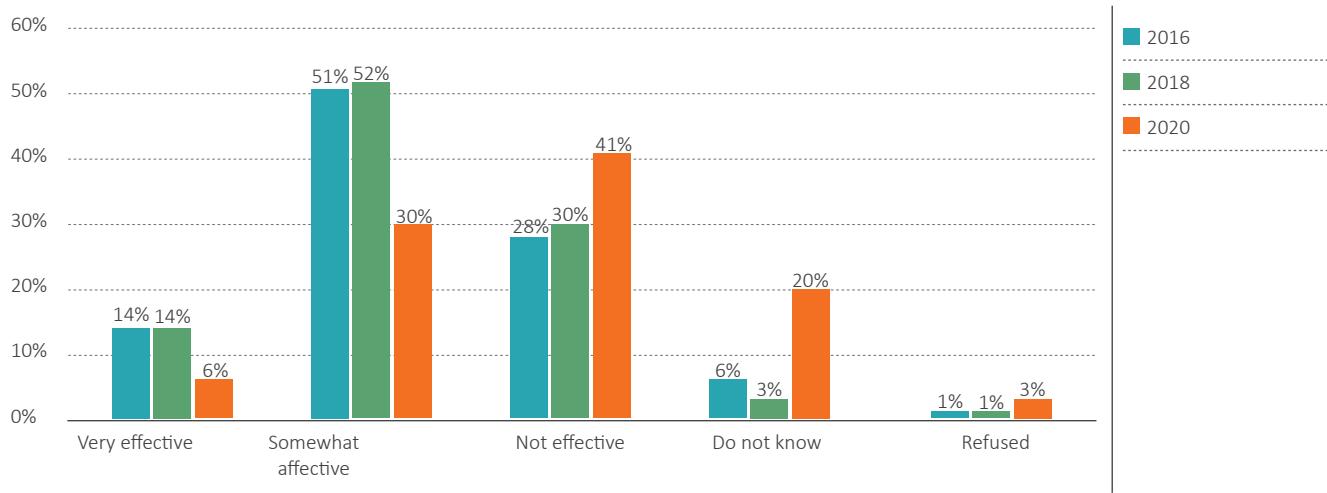
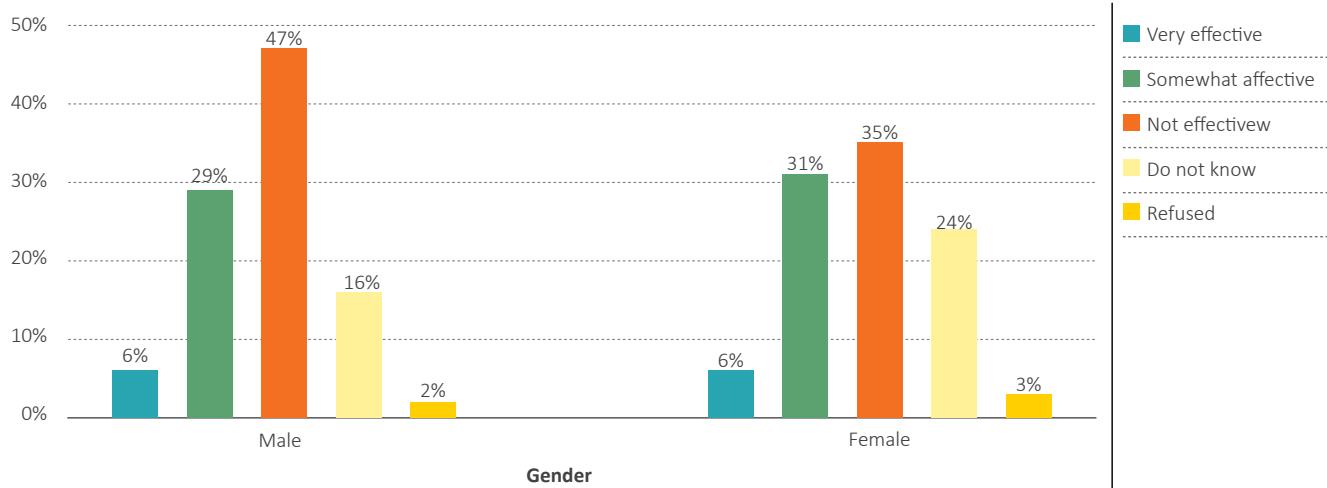


Figure 63: How is the government doing in the fight against corruption?



Looking at the fight against corruption in more detail, it is revealing to note how citizens rate different actors in terms of their will and desire to genuinely address the problem. Respondents were clearly most positive about the media and President's motivations to fight corruption, with 60% and 51% respectively either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that these two actors "have a strong will and desire to combat corruption". In the case of the media, despite the threat of harassment and attack by militants, the Taliban and government-related figures, Afghanistan is recognised as having a vibrant media sector, which is generally free from censorship and hence able to speak freely on issues of corruption⁴⁴. Likewise, as noted in Part One, the President of Afghanistan is still considered by many to act in

the interests of all people, although the proportion of citizens who feel that way has seen a considerable drop since 2018.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Taliban, the Parliament and the Judiciary are considered to be among the institutions which are least committed to the fight against corruption. This is consistent with the fact that citizens consider these actors more likely to work for their own benefit than for the benefit of all, as described in Part One. In the case of the Taliban this is despite the fact that Taliban-controlled areas are more likely to be seen as having less corruption than government-controlled areas. It may be that the Taliban do see any benefit in helping support control corruption in government-controlled areas since maintaining the status quo helps them to undermine the government.

⁴⁴ Freedom House (2020) Freedom in the World 2020 - Afghanistan <https://freedomhouse.org/country/afghanistan/freedom-world/2020>

Figure 64: Do these intuitions have a sincere desire to combat corruption?

The media has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption

The president of Afghanistan has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.

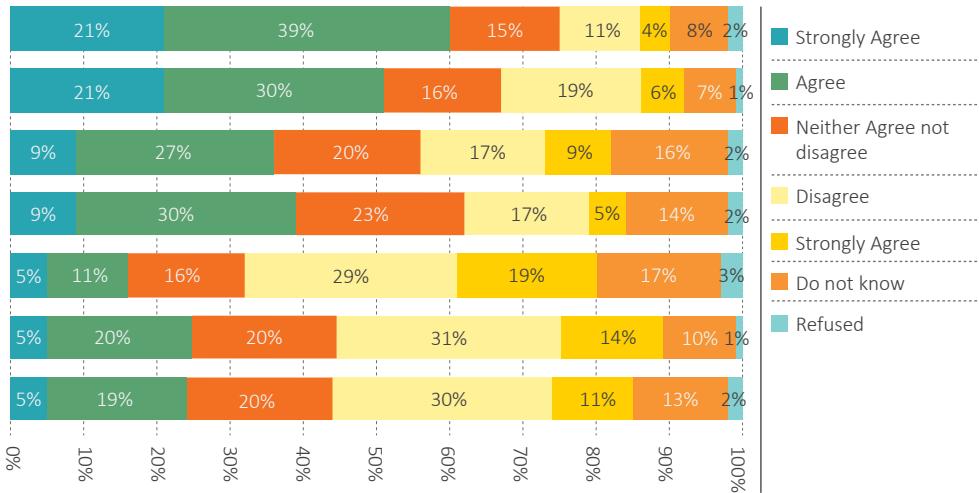
The international community has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.

Civil society has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.

The Taliban has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.

The parliament has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.

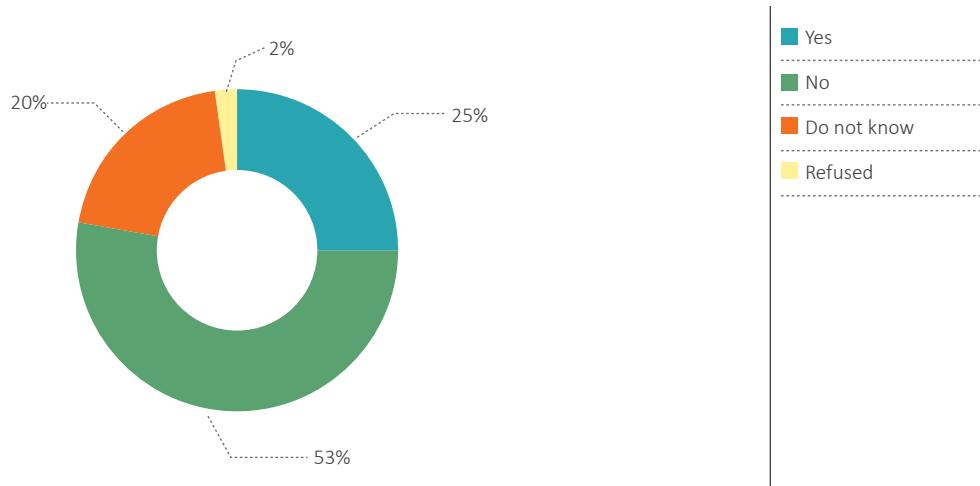
The judiciary has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.



Indeed, as many one quarter of citizens state that they have heard the Taliban denouncing corruption in the Afghan state in the previous year. In contrast only 17% of respondents say they have heard any member of the international community speaking against corruption over the same period, possibly a reflection of the diminishing

role of international actors in Afghanistan's fight against corruption, in part as a result of the gradual withdrawal of US forces from the country⁴⁵. Of those who have heard from the international community on the subject of corruption, almost one half say they have heard from UN officials, while around one quarter make reference to US officials.

Figure 65: Have you heard the Taliban denouncing corruption in the Afghan state?



⁴⁵ Boot, M. (2021) U.S. Troop Withdrawal From Afghanistan: What Are Biden's Options?. Council on Foreign Relations <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/us-troop-withdrawal-afghanistan-what-are-bidens-options>

Figure 66: Have you heard any member of the international community speaking against corruption in Afghanistan over the last 12 months?

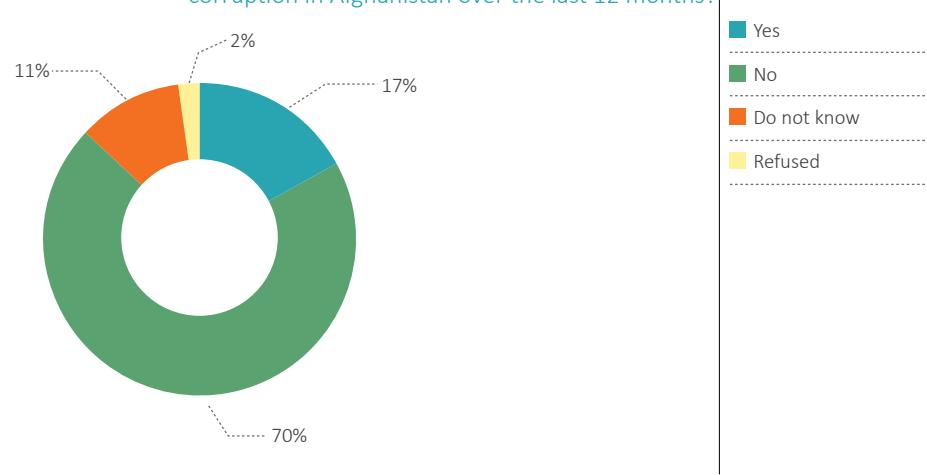
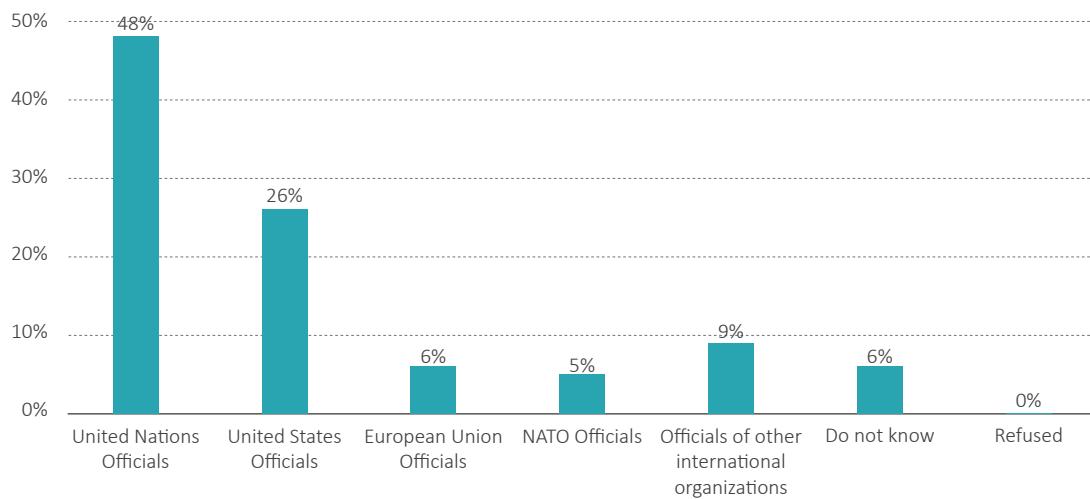


Figure 67: If yes, who have you often heard speaking?



Conclusion

This year's Afghanistan National Corruption Survey comes at a time when the world's attention is on the country, with high expectations for the intra-Afghan peace talks between the government and the Taliban. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that citizens express a good deal of confidence and hope about the prospect for peace, albeit tinged with the realism that progress is likely to be slow.

The same cannot be said for citizen's confidence in the fight against corruption. This year's survey has once again demonstrated that corruption remains a serious and pervasive problem in the country and that citizens do not consider that the government is doing enough to address it. Corruption in the security and justice sector (including the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the Courts and the Attorney General's Office) is highlighted as a particular concern this year. Not only are these institutions supposed to play an important role in fighting corruption by detecting, investigating and prosecuting corruption but their role in maintaining security is likely to become even more central to the country's prospects as the presence of international forces diminishes. Addressing justice sector corruption should therefore be a priority of the coming years.

While confidence in the government's efforts to tackle corruption is low across the country, there are nevertheless some interesting gender and regional differences which are worth highlighting. For example, citizens in the more secure Central Highlands, Central and North-eastern regions are more likely to believe that corruption has worsened than those in other parts of the country. On the other hand, citizens in the less secure Western, Southern and South-eastern regions appear to have slightly more confidence in government efforts to tackle the country's most serious problems than citizens in areas where the government has more control. These apparent paradoxes may be partly due to the growing influence of the Taliban which has continued to spread to parts of the country which were previously under stronger government control. Indeed, overall, not only do citizens believe that corruption is lower in Taliban-controlled areas than government-controlled areas, but they also tend to be more optimistic about whether corruption can be reduced in those areas where Taliban influence is strongest. This suggests that tackling corruption in the country is not only an important end in itself, but is also critical for strengthening the legitimacy of the Government as the country enters what is likely to be an challenging and uncertain period in its political history.

In terms of gender differences, consistent with previous surveys, while women tend to be more satisfied than men

with the overall situation and level of progress in their area, men are more optimistic about the prospects for peace and stability. In contrast, men are more likely to see corruption as an increasingly serious issue than do women, possibly because men tend to have more direct experience of corruption than women. Men are also less positive about government efforts to fight corruption than women, although women are more likely to say that they do not know how their government is doing in the fight against corruption.

Indeed, increased levels of uncertainty is another noticeable trend of this year's survey. Across many survey questions, the proportion of respondents who responded "don't know" or who did not answer is higher than in previous years. Furthermore, consistently across the survey, respondents in the Southeast region tended to demonstrate a much higher "don't know/refused" response rate than other regions. (This was also the case with the 2018 results). While these trends may indicate that people are increasingly reluctant to openly discuss issues around corruption, they also suggest that large changes in positive or negative response rates as compared to previous years should be treated with some caution, especially where such changes may be attributable to increased levels of uncertainty overall.

Recommendations

- **Anti-corruption strategy:** The Government should invest in developing a well-focussed follow-up to the previous National Strategy for Combatting Corruption based on meaningful consultations with all stakeholders. The new strategy should adopt a three-pronged approach focussing on prosecution, prevention, and public engagement and identify a set of targeted priorities and results-oriented benchmarks and avoid spreading resources too thinly.
- **Anti-corruption commission:** The government should implement a number of urgent changes to the proposed Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to avoid political interference and address the overlap between the ACC and other anti-corruption bodies in line with UNCAC commitments. In short term, the process of selection that went ahead without the civil society should be invalidated and in the long term executive's role in the appointment of commissioners should be removed. The ACC should also be given the power to oversee the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre and facilitate the work of the National High Council for Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption.

- **Intra-Afghan peace talks:** All parties should ensure that any Intra-Afghan peace agreement includes a commitment to good governance at its core, including an inclusive justice system which caters for the co-existence of formal and informal actors and which guarantees equal rights for women and different ethnic and social groups.
- **Security and justice:** As the role of local security and justice institutions becomes ever more important with the gradual withdrawal of international support, the government must ensure that they are protected from political influence and interference in personnel appointments to avoid further undermining trust. The government should also ensure an independent, effective & transparent judiciary free from political influence.
- **Law enforcement capacity:** The government should invest in strengthen the capacity of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute corruption cases, in particular through support to the Anti-Corruption and Justice Centre (ACJC) the Attorney General's Office so that they can take on corruption cases against powerful, well-connected individuals.
- **Attorney general:** The President should ensure a transparent and competitive selection process for the Attorney General through an independent panel made up of civil society representatives and other independent actors
- **Transparency:** The government should commit to publicly releasing data about convictions and sentences of officials involved in corruption and fraud. The government should also commit to publishing all decisions related to the resolution of disputes during future elections
- **Whistle-blower protection:** Given the significant decline in the level of citizen reporting of corruption, it is urgent that the government accelerates efforts to implement the Whistle-blower Protection Law in order to incentivise greater reporting of corrupt acts and to provide protection to those who do report.
- **Anti-corruption hotline:** There is a need to have a credible, reliable, and fully-resourced hotline that receives corruption complaints, investigates and takes quick and effective action, and provides feedback to complainants and the general public on the outcome of investigations. This should replace the plethora of existing hotlines at national, provincial and agency levels, which have proved to be ineffective. The hotline should be accompanied by clear communication to citizens on how to access and effectively use it.
- **Parliament:** The Parliament should contribute to the development of the Anti-Corruption Strategy and should develop its own action plan to curb corruption within the Parliament. It should commit to and expedite the process of prosecuting those MPs who are accused of corruption. The Parliament should also expedite anti-corruption legislation and ensure enforcement of the current laws by strengthening their monitoring role.
- **Open justice:** The judiciary should prioritise the development of an open justice mechanism to ensure access to information and increase attention on the resolution of administrative corruption cases against government officials and high-level public servants, as committed to under Afghanistan's Second Open Government Partnership National Action Plan⁴⁶.
- **International support:** The International Community should stand behind independent actors including civil society. They should not give the government a free-pass due to their other political priorities.
- **Civic space:** The media and civil society should continue to advocate for more civic space and coordinate efforts to keep up the pressure on the government and international community to step up their fight against corruption. Civil society and media should also develop collective-action programs for preventing corruption within their organizations.
- **Private sector:** The private sector plays a major role in corruption but can also be a key ally in the fight against corruption. The private sector should push for collective action to prevent corruption within their own organizations by adopting anti-corruption programs including promotion of ethical business conduct.

⁴⁶ https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Afghanistan_Action-Plan_2019-2021_EN.pdf



ANNEXES

ANNEX I: METHODOLOGY

This survey was a countrywide survey of the Integrity Watch Afghanistan on Afghans' perceptions and experiences of corruption and assessment of how corruption impacts their lives and communities. Since 2007, this is the Seventh biennial survey of its kind by Integrity Watch. The survey offers insights to the high-level government authorities, political leaders, CSOs, think tanks and public officials about Afghans' perception of corruption and their expectations from the state and political leaders of the country.

The data for the survey is collected through Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) tools with an internet connected Tablets supported by GPS tracking system. The data is being synchronized on the spot during the interview and a team of quality control with the system is monitoring the quality of the work.

The target population for this survey was Afghans age 18 years or over the age of 18. According to population data from Central Statistics Organization (CSO) of Afghanistan (Settled Population by Sex and Age Groups -2019-20), around 48 percent of provincial population is 18 or over the age of 18. That number will be the target population for this research project (total population 18/+ = 14,024,456. In this study, the sampling frame was list of villages or *nahias*, using different village database, in each of the selected districts as research location. The representative sample villages were drawn at random process from the list in each district.

Sample size calculation

Integrity Watch Afghanistan administered a country level public opinion survey in all thirty-four (34) provinces of Afghanistan. The sample size for the whole country was calculated to obtain 1.1% margin of error at 95% confidence level with an estimate of 50 percent response distribution (among male and female). The total surveys accounting to 8140. To increase demographic variation and taking into account the budget considerations, research team distributed 10 surveys per sampling point which accounts for a total of 813 sampling points in all one hundred and thirty-seven districts of thirty-four provinces.

Province and district selection

Integrity Watch arrived out a security assessment of all 34 together with the security committee and research team, considering the security permissibility and based on a four-part, color-based security ranking system. The system/classifications outline the level of access survey teams can achieve and the relevant survey methodology, including clustering and possible bias, at each level. Security classifications were determined through consultation with field coordinators and provincial networks.

- **Green:** Green districts were completely open to survey teams. All villages were included in sampling lists.
- **Amber:** In amber districts, all villages within approximately two hours of the district center were surveyed. Travel times beyond two hours from the district center meant that survey teams had to make multiple trips to each remote village. In semi-permissive districts, making repeated visits to the same area increases the risk that survey teams could be intercepted by anti-government elements. Therefore, sampling points in these districts were clustered within two hours of the district center.
- **Red:** Red districts were highly insecure, meaning surveys could only conduct survey in the district centers. This can consist of household surveys of residents of the district center and villages surrounding the district center. The higher degree of clustering in red districts introduces a correspondingly higher degree of selection bias than was the case with amber districts

- **Black:** Black districts were those where the absence of GIRoA control made even district centers too dangerous for survey teams. Moreover, extensive Anti-Government elements checkpoints in these districts made it impossible to transport survey materials to the district centers, even when survey teams travel in separate vehicles. In this research districts with Black color were not covered and no one from our team traveled for survey purposes to this class of the districts.

Urban-rural stratification

According to the municipality administration, populations living within municipal boundaries are classified as urban, and those living outside municipal boundaries are classified as rural. In some provinces, municipal boundaries are not clearly defined. According to the CSO population yearbook for 2014-15, urban populations are mostly oriented in provincial centers and very rarely in a few major districts. However, not necessarily all parts of the provincial centers and districts are within the municipal boundaries. Even in the provincial capital/city, some villages lie out of the municipal boundary. Urban areas are divided into *nahias* by the municipality administration, and in this study urban participants were representative of *nahias* and were drawn from *nahias* within the municipal boundaries. The sample is distributed proportionally to urban-rural population size of each district using population data from the CSO 2016-17.

Settlement-village/sampling point selection

In this survey a village in rural area and a *nahia* in urban area are called a sampling point. At this stage, within districts the sampling frame was the list of all villages in rural area and list of all *nahias* in urban area. Sampling point selection for urban areas: As described earlier, urban areas are divided into *nahias* within municipal boundaries. Because there was no population data available about *nahia* sizes within the municipal boundaries, the survey distributed equally among *nahias*.

Sampling point selection for rural areas: Within districts, villages were assigned a number on a serial number list. Using a simple random-sampling generator (Random.org), the village numbers are chosen at random until the desired sample size reached. Because the CSO lacks accurate population counts for rural villages, villages/sampling points cannot be drawn proportionally.

Gender stratification

The research team stratified gender breakdown in each province proportionally to male/female ratio in the population. According to the CSO population yearbook 2016-17 this ratio is 51:49. In each province, equal number of female and male respondents are allocated per sampling point. In order to meet the gender-split in each sampling point and to minimize gender gap, equal number of male and female enumerators were deployed at each sampling location.

Household selection

In order to randomly select the households in a sampling point, a Systematic Random Sampling (SRS) method is used. Information on the list of households at the sampling point level were not available with the CSO, households are selected according to the following systematic random procedure. For each sampling point, interviewers assigned a starting point. Generally, for both urban and rural areas, a recognizable location such as Masjid, basic health centers, bazaars or schools were selected as a starting point. In urban areas, the interviewer moved to the assigned direction from the starting point and stops at the fifth street/lane on the right hand side of his/her route and start interviewing at one randomly selected livable household which was within the first five households on the right from the beginning of the street/lane. From then on, each fifth inhabitable household was interviewed. In blocks-of-flats, the selection routine was each fifth apartment. In rural areas, the interviewers started from a Masjid or the bazaar which were usually located in the center of the village and moved through the village from right to the left interviewing each fifth inhabitable wall in a compound (qala), in these compounds; households are counted in an anti-clock wise direction starting from the gate to the qala.

Training and field work

For this survey, only those enumerators were selected who had extensive experience of research and familiarity with the field methodology in quantitative survey methods. All enumerators were recruited from the same districts where field work was taking place. This was because of three reasons; first, the local interviewers may be familiar with local issues so they could administer the instrument more effectively. Second, participants on occasion would feel more comfortable with local interviewers than those coming from Kabul. Third, local enumerators and facilitators were more insulated from potential security threats.

In order to meet the representative sex ratio at each sampling point, couples or a team including persons of both genders were recruited from each district.

The enumerators, supervisors and field coordinators were selected on a written test from our nationwide network of field staff across the country who had passed successfully at least ten research and survey projects. They had worked in different survey projects with different research areas such as gender, governance, health, socioeconomic, public opinion and security. They were already familiar with basic technical and practical issues of a survey. The criteria for the selection of enumerators is follow;

- They should be from the local area/province where the survey is taking place.
- They must have prior experience in survey work and higher education background.
- They should not be under the age of 18.
- They must be able to travel to villages/district far from the district/provincial center.
- They must not be a member of the police, provincial council, or any other element of local government.
- They must not be relatives of the managerial staff of the project and of the HQ staff of Integrity Watch.

A two-step training program was conducted to prepare the field staff prior to the fieldwork. As a first step, a task-specific methodology (TSM) training session was conducted to train eight (8) field coordinators for two days by the research manager. Field coordinators were from the various parts of the country familiar with the culture norms and geographical situation of the research locations. They were briefed on the nature of the study and were trained in topics ranging from the specific sampling methodology to interview techniques.

As second step, research manager and field coordinators from the headquarter travelled to the provinces to conduct training of 120 local male and female enumerators for the two-days period in eight (8) zonal locations including 1) Kabul, 2) Nangrahar, 3) Paktia, 4) Bamyan, 5) Kandahar, 6) Herat, 7) Mazar-e-Sharif and 8) Kunduz provinces. The surveyors were training in the main and predominant languages of the areas in which they were sent to conduct the fieldwork. The research manager and field coordinators conduct the training sessions which were designed to contribute the following skills set;

- Day 1: Basic concepts of survey and interviews, introduction and rapport-building, sampling techniques, and sampling-point and respondent selection;
- Day 2: Familiarization with each question, using follow-up questions, recording data, consistency in interview technique, and role-playing, Quality-control discipline, including supervision of surveys, spot-checking, and back-checking.

Security issues

The field work was conducted with prior permission from the local provincial governments. The field coordinators prior to data collection shared a letter from Integrity Watch and sectorial government departments for the field work permission. The safety of the field staff was the highest priority. Integrity Watch security committee and research team assessed the security situation from all available sources before field team were deployed to the locations

of the study. The team analyzed on-the-ground situation before teams were deployed to the field and in each district, facilitators were required to check in with field coordinators or provincial supervisor if cell phone connections are available. Each field coordinator reported to the Research department every day during the field work.

Confidentiality

Ensuring respondents and field team confidentiality is a top priority to Integrity Watch. All staff members were trained on the ethics involved in survey research. Integrity Watch personal including local researcher and survey team are abide by the highest standards of the World Association of Public Opinion Research (WAPOR). Under the guidelines of the WAPOR, disclosure of the projects data without the managers and client's permission, and use of respondent-identifiable data beyond the specific survey, is prohibited.

Annex II: questionnaire

General

1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall situation in your province?

- 1. Very satisfied
- 2. Somewhat satisfied
- 3. Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4. Very dissatisfied

98) Do not know

99) Refused

2. Generally speaking, how much progress, if any has been made in your area within the last 12 months?

- 1. Very significant progress
- 2. Somewhat significant progress
- 3. Not much progress
- 4. No progress at all

98) Do not know

99) Refused

3. In your opinion, what are the most serious problems facing Afghanistan as a country today? [multiple answer: accept 3, do not read the list]

- 1. Insecurity
- 2. Lack of access to education services
- 3. Corruption
- 4. Lack of access to health services
- 5. Illegal drugs
- 6. Lack of access to justice
- 7. Presence of armed groups
- 8. Poor access to water and electricity
- 9. Lack of development
- 10. Lack of political freedoms
- 11. Unemployment
- 12. Other, please specify _____

98) Do not know

99) Refused

4. Do you think the government of Afghanistan has done enough to address these problems over the last two (2) years?

1. Yes
2. No

98) Do not know

99) Refused

5. In your opinion, do the people mentioned here (in the table below) work for the benefit of all people, for the benefit of some, or only for their own benefit?

No	People	For the benefit of all people	For the benefit of some people	For their own benefits	Don't know / Haven't heard enough to say of
1	President of Afghanistan				
3	Ministers				
4	Provincial Governor of your province				
5	Governor of your district				
8	National Police Officers				
9	National Army Officers				
10	Members of Parliament				
11	Members of Provincial Councils				
12	Members of Community Development Councils				
13	Attorneys				
14	Judges				
15	Political Leaders				
16	Civil Society Advocates				
17	Local Elders (Malik, Arbab, Wakel Guzar)				
18	NGO workers				
19	International community				
20	Taliban				
21	Other Militant Groups				

Corruption [Ask all]

6. In your opinion, how serious is the issue of corruption in Afghanistan?

1. Very Serious
2. Somewhat Serious
3. Not too Serious
4. Not at all Serious

98) Do not know

99) Refused

7. In your opinion, has corruption become a more significant problem over the last two years?

- | | |
|--------|-----------------|
| 1. Yes | 98) Do not know |
| 2. No | 99) Refused |

8. What do you think, are factors causing corruption in Afghanistan? [do not read the options]

1. Need for money to make living
2. The ambition to become rich as quickly as possible
3. The salaries are lower than the everyday needs
4. Weakening of ethics or morals
5. Weak rule of law
6. Culture of impunity
7. Trying to achieve political goals by any means
8. Instability in the country
9. Long or unclear procedures for services
10. Others: _____

98) Do not know

99) Refused

9. How would you compare the level of corruption in your local area and in Afghanistan generally, today with the level of corruption past years? Is the current level of corruption...? [choose from the options]

1. Much higher than past years
2. Somewhat higher than past years
3. Same as the past years
4. Somewhat lower than past years
5. Much lower than past years

98) Do not know

99) Refused

10. Do you believe there have been some improvements in reducing corruption in any public institution during the last 12 months?

1. Yes
2. No

98) Do not know

99) Refused

11. If yes, which public institutions have improved?

12. If not, Why?

13. Which Government institutions do you think are the MOST corrupt? [select three (3) most corrupt institutions]

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. None
- 98) Do not know 99) Refused
- [Go to Q15](#)

14. Why do you think these institutions are the most corrupt? [do not read the options]

1. Leadership is corrupt
2. Employees are corrupt
3. Leadership is ineffective or have no interest in doing good for the citizens
4. Employees are not effective or do not have interest in doing good for the citizens
5. Lack of awareness among employees
6. Salaries of employees are too low
7. Internal controls are weak
8. No effective external oversight
9. Public are not engaged
10. Politicians and power holders' interferences in the work of institutions
11. Corruption has become a culture
12. Other, please specify _____

98) Do not know

99) Refused

15. Which Government institutions do you think are the LEAST corrupt? [select three (3) Least corrupt institutions]

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. None
- 98) Do not know
99) Refused

- 16. On which information source do you base your assessment of the level of corruption in the institutions mentioned above? Please choose top three resources, ranking the most important first.** [Interviewer: prompt respondents to rank top 3 sources by importance]

Reasons	Importance		
	1 st important	2 nd important	3 rd important
Personal experience (you have had to provide cash, gifts or favor)	1	2	3
Talk with relatives or family	1	2	3
Talk with friends and people around	1	2	3
Information about corruption given by NGOs	1	2	3
Information provided by the media (TV, radio, newspaper, internet, Facebook, etc...)	1	2	3
Other, please specify _____	1	2	3
98) Do not know			
99) Refused			

Personal experience

- 17. Have you personally as an individual experienced corruption over the last 12 months?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No [Go to Q19]

98) Do not know

99) Refused

- 18. If yes, how many times have you personally faced corruption over the last 12 months?**

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Once | 4) Four times |
| 2. Twice | 5) Five to ten times |
| 3. Three times | 6) more times |

19. In the last 12 months, have you or anyone in your family, had contact with the following institutions? If yes, did you have to pay a bribe? What was the amount, gift or Shereeni? [read each institution name and fill in the columns]

Institutions / organizations / individuals	Contacted services in last 12 months (Yes / No)	If contacted, asked to pay bribe? (Yes / No)	If paid bribe, then how much?	
			[interviewer: if DK or refused, use codes 98 & 99 in a circle]	
Population registration and Tazkira				
Public Health (Clinics, Hospitals)				
Education (Schools)				
Higher Education (Institute and University)				
Municipality				
Brishna, Afghanistan Electricity				
Provincial Government of your province				
District Government of your district				
National Police				
Provincial council				
Parliament				
Courts				
Prosecution Office				
Bank				
Tax and Custom				
Taliban				
Other anti-government military groups				
National/International NGOs				
International Organizatio				
Local Elders (Malik, Arbab, Wakel Guzar)				
Community development Councils				
Other, please specify				

20. You said that you or a member of your household has had to pay a bribe, which form of bribe have you experienced? [multiple responses]

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Paid cash | 98) Do not know |
| 2. Offered a gift or Shereeni | 99) Refused |
| 3. Paid in livestock (goat, cow, sheep etc) | |
| 4. Paid in harvest (wheat etc) | |
| 5. Exchange of favor or service | |
| 6. Other, please specify _____ | |

21. What was the amount of the bribe paid the last time you personally paid a bribe??

1. Less than 100 Afs
2. Between 100 Afs and 500 Afs
3. Between 501 Afs and 2,000 Afs
4. Between 2,001 Afs and 10,000 Afs
5. More than 10,000 Afs

22. Whenever you have contacted officials in the public sectors, government institutions, how often did the following happen? Did this happen in all cases, most cases, rare cases or no cases at all? [read all categories]

	All Cases	Most Cases	Rare Cases	No Cases at all	Has not contacted officials	DK	Refused
The official directly demand cash, gift or favor	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
The officials did not demanded directly but showed that they expect a cash, gift or favor	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
You give cash to the officials	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
You give a gift to the officials	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
You do the official a favor	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
You are asked to do a favor to relatives of the official	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
You use personal connections to get the issue done	1	2	3	4	5	98	99

23. Have you or a member of your household been victim of nepotism during the last 12 months?

[definition of nepotism: the practice among those with power or influence of favoring relatives or friends, especially by giving them jobs for which outsiders might be better qualified]

1. Yes 98) Do not Know
2. No 99) Refused [Go to Q25]

24. In which institution did you face Nepotism?

1. _____
98) Do not know
99) Refused

25. Would you rely on nepotism if this is necessary to secure a job?

1. Yes 98) Do not know
2. No 99) Refused

26. How would you react if you were asked to give a bribe? Would you give the bribe or would you not give it?

1. I would give it 98) Do not Know
1. I would not give it [Go to Q28] 99) Refused
1. Other, please specify _____

27. Why would you give it? [do not read pre-coded responses options]

1. Because everyone gives it
2. Because there is no other way I can obtain the service
3. I would be able to negotiate a lower price
4. To speed up the process
5. To be sure I get what I need
6. Other, please specify _____
98) Do not know
99) Refused

28. How do you feel when you pay bribe? [do not read pre-coded responses options]

1. Guilty
2. Sinful
3. Sad
4. Relieved
5. Worried
6. Poor
7. Honored
8. Powerful
9. Other, specify _____
98) Do not know
99) Refused

29. In your opinion, how is a corrupt person perceived in the Afghan society?*[do not read pre-coded responses options]*

1. Guilty
 2. Sinful
 3. Poor
 4. Powerful
 5. Clever, smart
 6. Nasty
 7. Selfish (self-centered)
 8. Venal
 9. Other, specify _____
-

Individual behavior [Ask all]**30. In your opinion, what can you personally do to reduce corruption in Afghanistan? List concrete actions you would be willing to undertake to help combat corruption. [multiple responses; do not read responses]**

1. Not paying bribes for public services
 2. Reporting corruption to media
 3. Refuse to do favors to officials or to their relatives
 4. Reporting corruption CSOs
 5. Reporting corruption to public bodies
 6. File a case against corrupt officials
 7. Participate in awareness campaigns against corruption
 8. Monitor Public Services
 9. There is nothing I can do
 10. If other, please specify _____
-

98) Do not know

99) Refused

31. Do you know where to report a corrupt act of an official?

1. Yes
2. No [Go to Q33]

98) Do not know

99) Refused

32. What channel would you contact to report a corrupt act or to file the complaints? [do not read the options; Accept all possible responses]

1. CSOs
2. Media
3. Ministers or deputy ministers
4. Police
5. The attorneys or the attorney general
6. District courts, provincial courts or the Supreme court
7. The special commissions of upper or lower house (Meshrano or Wolesi Jirga)
8. Taliban
9. Other, please specify _____

98) Do not know

99) Refused

33. During the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household reported a corrupt act by a public official?

- | | |
|--------|--------------------|
| 1. Yes | 98) Do not know |
| 2. No | <i>[Go to Q35]</i> |
| | 99) Refused |

34. To which organization/s was the complaint reported? [do not read the pre-coded options - multiple answers]

1. CSOs
2. Media
3. Police
4. The attorneys or the attorney general
5. District courts, provincial courts or the Supreme court
6. The special commissions of upper or lower house (Meshrano or Wolesi Jirga)
7. Ministers or deputy ministers
8. Taliban
9. Informal / Tribal leaders
10. Other, please specify _____

98) Do not know

99) Refused

35. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the feedback you received as a result of your corruption report?

1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Somewhat dissatisfied
4. Very dissatisfied
5. No feedbacks received

98) Do not know

99) Refused

36. Some people in Afghanistan are unwilling to report corrupt actions because of various reasons. I will list some of these possible reasons, please tell me which of the following you personally consider as a reason for not reporting corruption to the relevant authorities.

[Do not read the options, single answer only]

1. Those who report corruption will be subject to retribution/revenge
2. No action will be taken even if corruption reported
3. It's not worth reporting corruption if I am not personally hurt by it
4. Most people who indulge in corruption only do so because of economic hardship
5. Our society does not reward those who report corruption
6. Lack of evidence to prove
7. Lack of clarity about corruption proceedings
8. Do not know the relevant institution responsible for corruption cases
9. Official would delay the corruption reporters work
10. Other, please specify _____

98) Do not know

99) Refused

37. Now I would like to read you a list of statements, based on your experience, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree.

[Interviewer: please read each statement and circle the appropriate number]

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	disagree	Strongly disagree	DK	Refused
Corruption has negatively affected the life of the people in this area	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
Because of corruption I do not trust the local public services anymore	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
Because of corruption people in our area refer to Taliban	1	2	3	4	5	98	99

Anti-corruption [Ask all]

38. To what extent you think corruption can be reduced in Afghanistan?

[Read the options select only one]

1. Corruption cannot be reduced at all
 2. Corruption can be reduced to a certain degree
 3. Corruption can be substantially reduced
 4. Corruption can be completely eradicated
- 98) Do not know
99) Refused

39. Are you aware of any anti-corruption measures being taken by the Government of Afghanistan?

1. Yes
 2. No
- 98) Do not know
99) Refused

40. Please state which one?

41. How is the government doing in the fight against corruption?

1. Very effective
 2. Somehow effective
 3. Not effective
- 98) Do not know
99) Refused

- 42. Now I would like to read you a list of statements, based on your experience, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree.**

[Interviewer: please read each statement and circle the appropriate number]

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	disagree	Strongly disagree	DK	Refused
President of Afghanistan has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
Parliament of Afghanistan has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
Judiciary of Afghanistan has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
Civil Society has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
Media has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
International community has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption.	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
Taliban has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in Afghanistan.	1	2	3	4	5	98	99

- 43. Which institution/agency do you think is effective in the fight against corruption in Afghanistan?**

- 44. Have you heard any member of the international community speaking against corruption in Afghanistan over the last 12 months?**

- 1. Yes 98) Do not know
- 2. No [Go to Q46] 99) Refused

- 45. If yes, who have you often heard speaking? [do not read the options, select one]**

- 1. United Nations officials
- 2. United States officials
- 3. European Union officials
- 4. NATO Officials
- 5. Officials of other international organizations
- 6. Others, please specify _____

98) Do not know

99) Refused

- 46. What do you think about corruption in Taliban Control areas?**

- 1. Its higher than the government controlled areas
- 2. its lower than the government controlled areas
- 3. it is the same as in the government controlled areas

47. Have you heard the Taliban denouncing corruption in the Afghan state?

1. Yes
2. No

98) Do not know

99) Refused

48. In your opinion, is corruption within the state facilitating the expansion of the Taliban?

- | | |
|--------|--------------------|
| 1. Yes | 98) Do not know |
| 2. No | <i>[Go to Q50]</i> |

99) Refused

49. If yes, corruption within which institutions is helping the most expansion of the Taliban?**50. Do you believe that the successful completion of peace talks will result in the strengthening of good governance in Afghanistan?**

1. Yes
 2. No
- 98) Do not know
99) Refused

51. Do you think reconciliation efforts between the Afghan Government and Taliban can bring stability to the country?

1. Yes *[Go to Q53]*
 2. No
- 98) Do not know
99) Refused

52. If not, why? [open ended question]**53. Do you have a family member or close relative who works for...?**

	Yes	No	DK	Refused
District Government	1	2	98	99
Provincial Government	1	2	98	99
Police	1	2	98	99
National Army	1	2	98	99
NDS	1	2	98	99
Attorney General Office	1	2	98	99
Supreme Court	1	2	98	99
International Organization	1	2	98	99
NATO	1	2	98	99
Other: _____	1	2	98	99

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