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user friendly justice

Justice Needs and Satisfaction in **Uganda**
2024

Crime and Crime Prevention

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Table of contents

Executive Summary

This report is about Ugandans' experiences with crime, safety, and the criminal justice system. In September and October 2024, The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL) and Research World International (RWI), in a project funded by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), conducted interviews with 4.892 randomly selected adults across the country. These interviews covered all regions and focused on topics such as personal experiences with crime, perceptions of safety and crime prevention efforts, as well as public trust in the police and other justice institutions. The result is a unique, people-centred understanding of Uganda's criminal justice landscape.

Perceptions of crime and safety

Just over half (51%) of Ugandans report sometimes feeling unsafe in their area, while 21% often feel unsafe. Around 28% of people state they rarely or never feel unsafe. Regarding perceptions of crime trends, opinions are divided: 41% believe crime has increased in their area in recent years, 30% think it has remained stable, and 25% say it has decreased. While there are no gender differences, older people and people who have actually experienced a crime are significantly more negative about safety and crime levels in their area.

Perceptions of crime levels vary significantly depending on whether people are asked about their immediate environment or the country as a whole. Approximately 35% of respondents believe there is a lot of crime in their local area, while 53% think there is some crime. However, when asked about the entire country, 72% of people perceive a high level of crime, even if they consider their own area relatively safe. This disparity illustrates a significant gap between local and national perceptions of crime, which exists regardless of demographic or regional differences.

Many Ugandans take preventive measures to avoid becoming victims of crime, often adjusting their behavior. Two-thirds of respondents report adopting at least one preventive measure, with the northern region having the highest rate at 78%. Common measures include avoiding going out alone at night and steering clear of certain areas. Other actions, particularly aimed at preventing burglary, include collaborating with neighbors, installing security measures, keeping dogs, or constructing fences.

Experiencing crime

Crime is a common experience for Ugandans, with 73% reporting at least one criminal incident in the past year. This high prevalence is largely driven by crimes such as burglary, theft of crops, and theft of livestock or personal items. Violent crimes, including physical assault, sexual harassment, and rape, are less common but especially sexual offences are often underreported. These crimes often involve known offenders such as intimate partners or family members. Women are more likely than men to experience sexual crimes.

Crime rates are similar in urban and rural areas, though specific crime types vary. Burglary and theft of personal items are more common in urban areas, while theft of crops and livestock predominates in rural areas, with crop theft being the most frequently reported rural crime. Multiple victimizations are common, with 63% of crime victims experiencing more than one type of crime or repeated incidents of the same crime. About half of respondents report experiencing the same crime multiple times within the past year.

Half of all the crimes people experienced are considered very serious, though this assessment varies by crime type. Vehicle-related crimes, while relatively rare, are often deemed very serious, as are thefts involving violence and economically impactful crimes like livestock theft. Rape is consistently rated as highly serious.

	All	Female	Male	18-24	25-39	40-64	65+	Rural	Urban	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	Kampala	Repeat victimisation	Very serious
ALL CRIME	73%	71%	75%	70%	73%	75%	68%	71%	70%	69%	72%	74%	70%	58%	50%	50%
PROPERTY CRIME	60%	57%	63%	56%	59%	64%	62%	61%	58%	59%	60%	65%	60%	48%	50%	55%
(Attempted) burglary	29%	28%	30%	26%	30%	29%	24%	27%	32%	29%	28%	39%	23%	25%	40%	53%
Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)	5%	4%	7%	4%	5%	7%	6%	5%	6%	5%	4%	7%	5%	5%	46%	75%
Theft of crops	28%	26%	29%	22%	24%	35%	41%	32%	19%	24%	30%	27%	36%	5%	78%	43%
Theft of livestock	20%	19%	20%	16%	18%	23%	21%	21%	16%	19%	16%	27%	22%	6%	55%	63%
Theft of personal item	18%	17%	20%	25%	21%	13%	11%	16%	24%	20%	15%	23%	16%	28%	32%	62%
FRAUD	18%	17%	20%	19%	20%	18%	11%	18%	20%	18%	21%	15%	21%	11%	54%	36%
VIOLENT CRIME	20%	20%	19%	24%	21%	18%	12%	19%	22%	16%	18%	29%	20%	18%	46%	53%
Sexual harassment	4%	6%	2%	8%	4%	3%	1%	4%	4%	3%	4%	6%	4%	4%	45%	41%
Rape	3%	4%	1%	3%	3%	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%	58%	59%
Assault / threat	16%	15%	17%	18%	16%	15%	11%	15%	17%	13%	14%	24%	17%	14%	45%	55%
CORRUPTION	17%	14%	20%	13%	19%	17%	11%	16%	18%	13%	21%	12%	21%	15%	54%	30%

	Reported to police	Reported to local council court	Reported to local defence unit	Reported to customary or traditional leader
ALL CRIME	18%	27%	5%	2%
PROPERTY CRIME	22%	35%	6%	2%
(Attempted) burglary	20%	37%	6%	2%
Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)	57%	31%	9%	4%
Theft of crops	10%	38%	4%	2%
Theft of livestock	23%	48%	10%	2%
Theft of personal item	30%	14%	3%	1%
FRAUD	7%	6%	1%	0%
VIOLENT CRIME	20%	24%	3%	5%
Sexual harassment	14%	9%	5%	6%
Rape	19%	15%	4%	11%
Assault / threat	22%	30%	3%	4%
CORRUPTION	4%	2%	1%	0%

Reporting crime

Around 41% of all criminal incidents are reported to one or more authorities, but crimes that are assessed as more serious are much more likely to be reported to authorities. Crimes are most often reported to a local council court, followed by the police. In much fewer cases do people turn to a local defence unit or customary or traditional leader. Most crimes are reported to only one authority, with roughly one in four being reported to multiple authorities. Urban residents are more likely to report crimes to the police, while rural residents prefer local council courts.

Property crimes are reported more frequently to the authorities than violent crimes, with especially sexual offenses having very low reporting rates. Vehicle-related crimes are most often reported to the police, while livestock theft is more commonly reported to local council courts. Many people do not report incidents to the police due to concerns about time, inconvenience, or perceptions that the issue is not serious enough. Distrust in the police, including concerns about bribery, also discourages reporting.

People often turn to alternative authorities for reasons of convenience and proximity.

Satisfaction levels with how crimes are handled differ significantly. Among those reporting incidents, 51% are satisfied with the response from local council courts, compared to only 34% satisfaction with police responses. Dissatisfaction with police handling often stems from unresolved cases, lack of recovery of stolen property, or failure to apprehend offenders.

Perceptions of the criminal justice system and agencies

One in three respondents sought assistance from the police in the past year for various reasons, not necessarily related to being a crime

victim. Of those, a slight majority (54%) found it easy or very easy to obtain the help they needed. While demographic differences are minimal, urban residents are more likely than rural residents to find police assistance very accessible.

Public perceptions of the police were assessed through three key questions. Most Ugandans feel the police perform well in controlling crime, though they are more critical of the police's professionalism and respect for citizens' rights. Responses are evenly divided on whether the police often stop individuals without good reason, with a slight majority believing this is rare or never happens.

The broader criminal justice system was evaluated using four questions to gauge its legitimacy and effectiveness. In general, Ugandans express relatively positive views. More than nine out of ten respondents say they would know where to report a crime if they were victimized, and 72% find it generally easy to report crimes. While 64% believe the government is doing a good job in preventing and addressing crime, only 42% agree that the criminal justice system is effective in prosecuting and convicting offenders.

To gain deeper insights into trust levels, respondents were asked about their familiarity with various justice system agencies. The police and local council courts are the most well-known, with near-universal recognition. Cultural

and traditional leaders, the judiciary, lawyers, and the Uganda Prisons Service also enjoy high levels of familiarity. Among those familiar with specific agencies, the highest trust levels are placed in local council courts (67%) and cultural and traditional leaders (66%), while trust in other agencies, such as the police (48%), judiciary and courts (43%), and lawyers (43%) remains lower.

1

Introduction

This report is about Ugandans' experiences with crime, safety, and the criminal justice system. In September and October 2024, The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL) and Research World International (RWI), in a project funded by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), conducted interviews with 4.892 randomly selected adults across the country. These interviews covered all regions and focused on topics such as personal experiences with crime, perceptions of safety and crime prevention efforts, as well as public trust in the police and other justice institutions. The result is a unique, people-centred understanding of Uganda's criminal justice landscape.

HiiL has been active in Uganda since 2016, publishing a wide range of research on people-centred justice. Our first Justice Needs and Satisfaction (JNS) study was published in 2016, followed by a second study four years

later in 2020 and a third one in 2024. In between we launched several deep dive reports into specific problem categories, such as land problems, divorce and separation, and crime. In 2021 and 2022 we also published two studies into the legal needs of Ugandans at the time of the COVID-19 crisis.[1] As research is only one pillar of HiiL's approach to people-centred justice, we have also organised several rounds of dialogues with justice leaders, organised a Justice Innovation Lab, published a Family Justice Catalogue developed with national experts, trained stakeholders to train others on how to use this guideline, and supported numerous justice innovators working to prevent and resolve the most serious legal problems.[2]

Crime has consistently been identified as one of the most pressing legal issues in Uganda.[3] Criminal activities and people's perceptions of safety significantly impact individual and community well-being, as well

as economic activity. The current report therefore aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence and types of crime in Uganda, people's subjective sense of safety, and their experiences and perceptions of the criminal justice system and its various actors. The findings of the study can guide policymakers, service providers, innovators, and other relevant actors in their work and help to shape more effective criminal justice policies and practices. The report does not provide explicit recommendations, but rather intends to inform and support key stakeholders as they work to develop detailed implications and actionable recommendations.

The report is structured as follows: **Chapter 1** is the introduction; **Chapter 2** discusses the methodology, explaining how we conceptualise, operationalise, and measure justice needs and satisfaction. It also describes

the implementation of the study, including some key statistics of the 4.892 Ugandans included in the sample. **Chapter 3** discusses people's feelings of safety and perceptions of crime, while **Chapter 4** deals with the actual crimes people experienced, and **Chapter 5** focuses on reporting of these crimes, followed by **Chapter 6** exploring people's perceptions of, and trust in, the criminal justice system and its various actors.

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1 For an overview of all research conducted by HiiL in Uganda, see https://www.hiil.org/research/justiceneeds-and-satisfaction-in-uganda/

2 To learn more about HiiL's activities in Uganda, see https://www.hiil.org/programmes/uganda/

3 See HiiL's Justice Needs and Satisfaction Studies from 2024, 2020, and 2016, available at: https://www.hiil.org/research/justiceneeds-and-satisfaction-in-uganda/

2

Methodology and sample

Criminal activity and the fear of crime have far-reaching impacts on individuals and communities, influencing quality of life, well-being, and social stability. The economic burden is equally significant, with costs associated with law enforcement, correctional systems, and preventive measures weighing on both public resources and individual people. Addressing these challenges requires a people-centred justice approach that prioritises understanding the needs and experiences of those directly affected. HiiL's JNS methodology is designed to do just that: mapping the justice needs and satisfaction from the perspective of the people.

The research for this report followed international best practices for Crime Victimisation Surveys (CVS), an essential tool for providing a more comprehensive understanding of crime.[4] Our JNS on Crime and Crime Prevention provides valuable insights into crime prevalence, victimisation patterns, and reporting behaviour, informing policies aimed at reducing crime and ensuring access to justice. It specifically captures incidents often unreported to authorities, filling gaps left by administrative sources such as police or judicial statistics. By complementing these sources, the survey helps governments and the public better understand crime and develop effective responses, playing a key role in monitoring progress toward Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which promotes peace, justice, and strong institutions.

In addition to information about feelings of safety and experiences of crime, we also collect a number of relevant demographic indicators. The data therefore highlights disparities in victimisation across social groups and locations, enabling targeted interventions to improve safety and strengthen institutions. This helps policymakers, justice providers, legal innovators, and development actors to set priorities and focus their attention on improving access to those justice services that are most beneficial for people and society. People-centred data is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of such policies aimed at addressing and preventing crime.

Several existing resources have looked into the prevalence and incidence of crime in Uganda. In 2008, UNODC published a victimisation survey in Uganda, however, the sample primarily captured people in urban areas (69% of 2,147 respondents) with a relatively high level of education.[5] HiiL's Justice Needs and Satisfaction (JNS) studies (published in 2016, 2020, and 2024) measure the prevalence of a wide range of different legal problems, including crime, domestic violence, and corruption.[6] Additionally, every year Uganda's Police Force publishes its Annual Crime Report, providing detailed data about the number and types of crimes reported to the police.[7] Where possible and relevant, the current study builds on these previous resources to contextualise its findings.

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4 UNODC (2008), 'Manual on Victimization Surveys', available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Crime-statistics/Manual_on_Victimization_surveys_2009_web.pdf

5 UNODC (2008), 'Victimization Survey in Uganda', available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/dfa/Victimization_survey_Uganda.pdf

6 For an overview of all research conducted by HiiL in Uganda, see https://www.hiil.org/research/justiceneeds-and-satisfaction-in-uganda/

7 https://upf.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Official-Annual-Crime-Report-2023-web.pdf

Methodology adaptation

To ensure the study's relevance for local realities in Uganda and improve the overall quality of the project, we convened, together with the Governance and Security Programme Secretariat (formerly Justice Law and Order Sector Secretariat), a reference group composed of diverse experts and practitioners from the (criminal) justice and legal sectors in Uganda, which also contributes to ownership of the process and results. In July 2024, we conducted a workshop with members of this reference group, discussing the objectives and structure of the study. The experts also provided feedback on the adaptation of the questionnaire, to

ensure it provides valid and relevant answer choices for the respondents. In that way, the reference group exercised close supervision over the methodology.

Following the completion of data collection, the reference group came together again in November 2024 to discuss the preliminary results of the survey. The session discussed the key data points of the survey and deliberated on the most poignant issues to arrive at possible explanations. The input from the experts has greatly contributed to improving the relevance and quality of the study.

A note on measuring crime victimisation

The survey asked people about fourteen different types of crimes, based on best practices in crime victimisation surveys and adapted to the Ugandan context. Screener questions were used to make sure some of the questions were only asked to people for whom it was relevant.[8] Some of these crimes are at the household level (one to eight); others are measured at the individual level only (nine to thirteen).

1. Theft of car or other vehicle
2. Theft from, or damage to, car or other vehicle
3. Theft of motorbike
4. Theft of bicycle
5. Theft of crops
6. Theft of livestock
7. Burglary
8. Attempted burglary
9. Theft of personal item
10. Sexual harassment
11. Rape
12. Physical assault / threat
13. Fraud
14. Corruption

For analytical and reporting purposes, a number of crimes are subsequently grouped together. The first four crimes are grouped as vehicle-related crime, and burglary and attempted burglary are grouped as (attempted) burglary. A distinction is also made between property crimes (burglary and theft, the first nine crimes) and violent crimes (sexual harassment, rape, and physical assault). We also group theft of cars, theft from cars, theft of motorbike, and theft of bicycle into vehicle-related theft.

The report primarily reports the prevalence of crimes, i.e. the percentage of people who experienced a certain crime at least once in the past year. When grouping crimes together (for example, into violent crimes) we report the percentage of people who have experienced at least one of these crimes at least one time. So a victim of sexual assault and physical assault is counted as one victim of violent crime.

8 For example, only people who indicated they owned a car were asked if they had become the victim of car theft

Limitations

No single source can provide a definitive measure of victimisation in society and victimisation surveys, while valuable, have several limitations. One issue is underreporting, particularly for sensitive crimes like sexual offences, where stigma or fear of judgement may prevent victims from sharing their experiences. Additionally, victimless crimes, such as drug use or consensual offences, cannot be captured by these surveys, as they may not be considered crimes by the respondents or may not be recognised as significant issues. Indeed, victimisation surveys are unable to capture some of the most serious forms of crime, including murder and different types of serious organised crime. Victimisation surveys may not always align with legal definitions of crime, leading to discrepancies in what is reported versus what is officially recognised in the legal system.

One particular limitation of the current study is that, unlike the JNS Uganda 2024, its design does not allow us to

make a proper assessment of the scope of domestic violence. The survey tool that was used for this study did not specifically ask about domestic violence; instead, it asked whether someone experienced forced or unwanted sexual acts and (threats of) physical assault. If a person indicated this happened to them, the survey then proceeded to ask follow-up questions about the offender to determine whether an incident could be classified as domestic or intimate partner violence. As the research was explicitly framed as a study into experiences with crime, it is likely that some respondents did not share incidents they considered as less serious or might not even consider a crime or domestic violence at all.[9] However, the study does provide additional details into some of the most serious forms of domestic violence that complement previous studies into the scope of the issue.[10]

Implementation of the study

To implement this JNS survey on Crime and Crime Prevention in Uganda, HiiL partnered with a Ugandan data collection company to conduct quantitative interviews using the JNS Survey questionnaire. Before data collection began, we organised a training workshop for enumerators from Research World International (RWI). The training covered the content of the questionnaire as well as practical aspects of conducting face-to-face interviews. After the training, a pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire and gather feedback from enumerators on the research tool. The survey instrument

itself was translated and administered in nine different languages to ensure people could understand and share their experiences in the language they are most comfortable in.[11]

In September and October 2024, enumerators from RWI carried out face-to-face interviews with 4,892 adult respondents across Uganda. HiiL supervised the data collection process, conducting periodic quality control checks on both the fieldwork and the final dataset. Regular meetings were held with the RWI team to provide feedback and guidance throughout the data collection process.

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9   For example, 62% of Ugandans (and 54% of women) see domestic violence as a private matter instead of a criminal matter. See Afrobarometer (2023), 'Ugandans oppose the use of physical discipline against women, but see gender-based violence as a private matter', available at: https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/News-release-Ugandans-oppose-physical-discipline-against-women-Afrobarometer-stk-bh-18feb23.pdf

10 The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (2024), 'Justice Needs and Satisfaction in Uganda, available at: https://www.hiil.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/HiiL-Uganda-JNS-2024-digital.pdf Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2021), 'National Survey on Violence in Uganda. Module 1: Violence against Women and Girls', available at: https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Africa/Attachments/Publications/2021/12/UBOS%20VAWG%20Report%207122021.pdf

11 In addition to English, the survey was translated into Ateso, Luganda, Lugbara, Lusoga, Luo, Runyankole, Runyoro, and Ngakaramojong. Enumerators were also proficient in other languages the survey tool was not translated in.

Sample composition

The sample was drawn using equal probability of selection, giving every member of the Ugandan population equal probability of being selected. Using Uganda's 2014 national census as the sampling framework, the target population is made up of all Ugandan persons aged 18 years and older in both rural and urban areas. The sampling point is the parish, with no more than ten interviews conducted per parish or division, to make sure the sample is spread out and dispersed widely over the country.

Table 1, sample locations

Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	Kampala
Buikwe	Bugiri	Agago	Bundibugyo	Central
Gomba	Busia	Apac	Bushenyi	Kawempe
Kayunga	Iganga	Gulu	Hoima	Makindye
Kiboga	Jinja	Kitgum	Kabarole	Nakawa
Kyankwanzi	Kapchorwa	Kole	Kasese	Rubaga
Luweero	Katakwi	Lira	Kibaale	
Lyantonde	Kumi	Moroto	Kisoro	
Masaka	Manafwa	Nebbi	Kyegegwa	
Mpigi	Mayuge	Yumbe	Kyenjojo	
Mityana	Mbale	Zombo	Masindi	
Mubende	Sironko		Mbarara	
Mukono	Soroti		Mitooma	
Rakai	Tororo		Rukungiri	
Sembabule				
Wakiso				

Gender and age

The sample consists of an equal distribution between men (50%) and women (50%), both at the national and the regional level. The mean age of the sample group is 38 years old, with the mean age of male participants being 39 and the mean age of female participants being 37. The majority of respondents are between 25 and 64 years old.

GENDER

50%   50%

■ Female
■ Male

n=4892

AGE CATEGORIES

| 15% | 46% | 33% | 6% |

■ 18-24   ■ 25-39   ■ 40-64   ■ 65+   n=4892
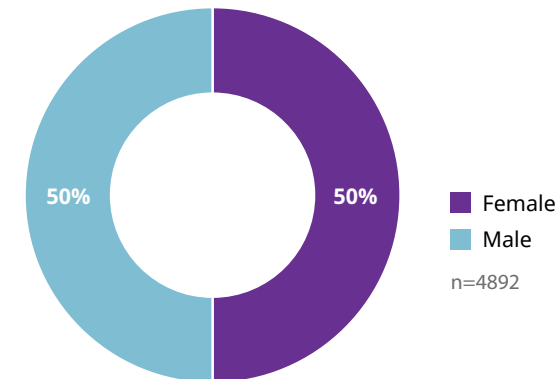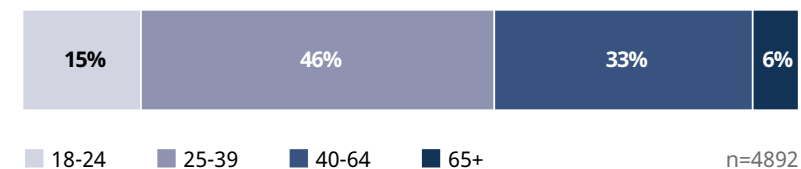
Regional distribution

The majority of interviewees are located in rural areas (68%), rather than urban areas (32%), reflecting the actual population distribution. This is also reflected in the regional distribution of the sample, whereby only 5% of respondents are located in Kampala.

Within each region there is an equal gender split of 50% men and 50% women surveyed. However, people in urban areas are on average younger than people in rural areas, a finding also reflected in the regional distribution, as respondents in Kampala are on average slightly younger than respondents in the other regions.

RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

32%

68%

■ Rural
■ Urban

n=4892

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

29%	26%	17%	23%	5%

■ Central region   ■ Eastern region   ■ Northern region

■ Western region   ■ Kampala

n=4892
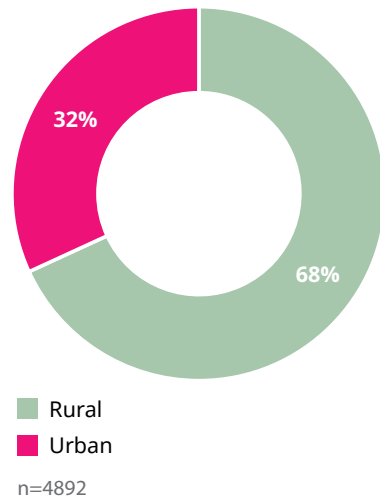
AVERAGE AGE
By location and region

Uganda	Rural	Urban	Central region	Eastern region	Northern region	Western region	Kampala
38	40	35	39	39	36	39	33
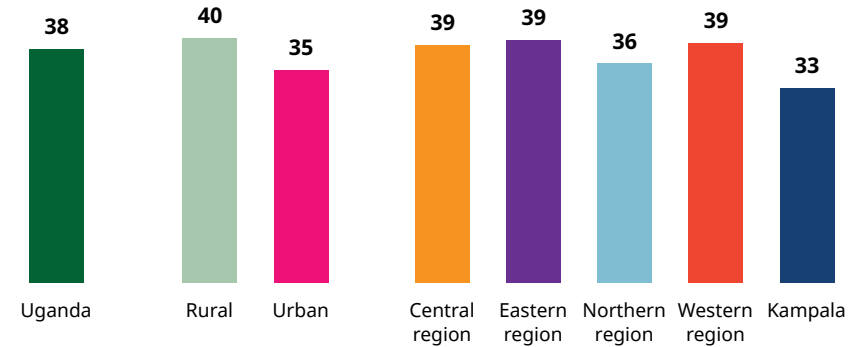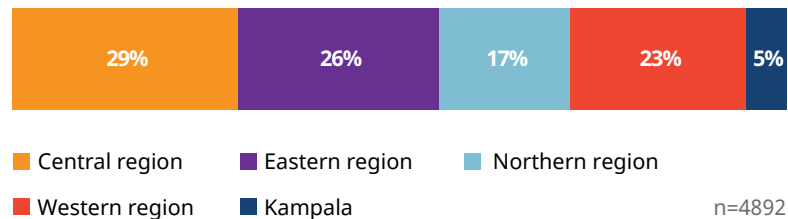
Household composition and housing situation

Occupation and possessions

A number of questions in the survey ask about crime at the household level. Most households are composed of three to six individuals. Around 80% of households have one or more children; 20% are childless.

The vast majority of respondents live in an individual house with either a roof made of iron sheets or a thatched roof. Only 1% of respondents live in a flat or apartment, the vast majority of which are in urban areas.

The most common occupation is farming, followed by some form of self-employed in the informal economy. Men are slightly more likely to be (self-)employed than women,

whereas women are more likely to be a carer or homemaker. Other occupations show limited to no gender differences.

HOUSING TYPE

Housing type	%
Individual house (iron sheets roof)	75%
Individual house (thatched roof)	13%
Villa (bricks or other material)	10%
Flat / Apartment	1%

n=4892

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Size	%
1	8%
2	9%
3	15%
4	14%
5	15%
6	13%
7	9%
8	7%
9	4%
10 or more	7%

n=4892

OCCUPATION

Occupation	%
Agriculture - crop growing	25%
Self-employed (informal economy)	24%
Employed - full time	11%
Self-employed (formal economy)	9%
Unemployed, looking for work	7%
Employed - part time	7%
Keeping home (carer, homemaker, etc)	6%
Student	4%
Retired	3%
Agriculture - cattle raising	1%
Other	2%

n=4892

POSSESSIONS

To determine whether people should be asked about potential theft of different items, we asked them whether they or anyone in their household owned a vehicle, land (for agricultural purposes), or livestock. Around 7% of households owned one or more cars, whereas this goes up to 23% for motorbikes and 27% for bicycles. Around 61% of households owned some land and a similar percentage (60%) owned livestock. Among the households who owned livestock, the most common types are chicken or other poultry (77%), goats (52%), cows (31%), and pigs (26%).

	Car	Motorbike	Bicycle	Land	Livestock
	8%	23%	27%	61%	60%

n=4892
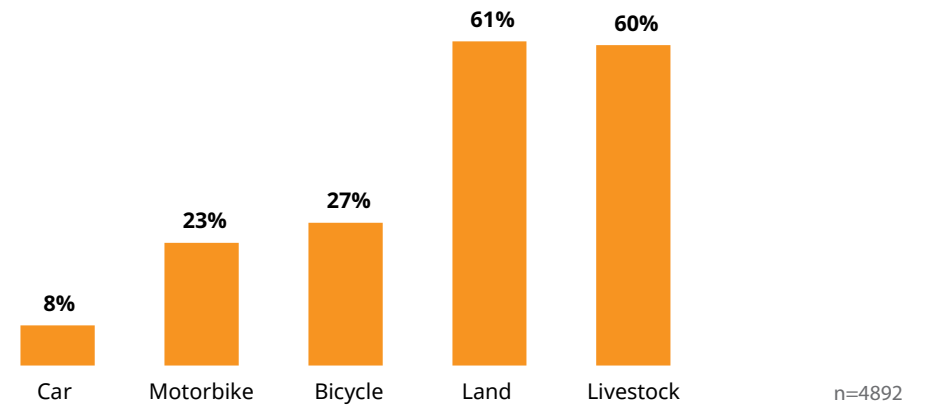
3

Perceptions of crime and safety

Most people feel unsafe in their area from time to time

This chapter explores Ugandans' perceptions of safety and crime, both in their direct surroundings and the country as a whole. It explores whether people feel safe in their area, what their perceptions are of the prevalence of crime, and how likely they believe it is that they could become a victim of a crime in the future. Importantly these are people's perceptions, not objective truths. Nonetheless, such perceptions have real meaning to people and can influence both their wellbeing and their actual behaviour.

Just over half of Ugandans feel sometimes unsafe in their area, while another 21% often feel unsafe. Around 28% of people never, or almost never, feel unsafe.

When it comes to assessing the development of crime in their area, people are divided. While around 41% of people believe crime has gone up in the last few years, 30% think it has remained stable, and 25% say it has gone down. Available data suggest that in the longer term crime is relatively stable, but that in recent years (especially since the Covid-19 crisis) there has been a small uptick in certain types of crimes.[12] Unsurprisingly, people who feel more unsafe in their area are also more likely to believe that crime has increased in recent years.

FEELING UNSAFE IN AREA

Respondents were asked: *In general, how often do you feel unsafe in this area?*

14%	14%	51%	21%

n=4892

■ Never   ■ Almost never   ■ Sometimes   ■ Often   ■ Do not know
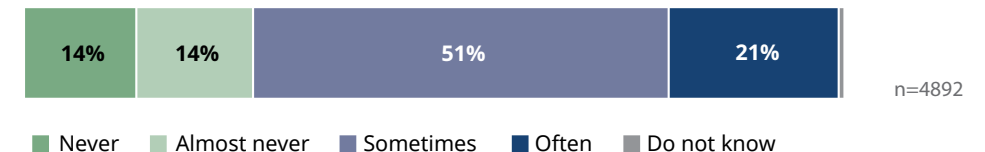
EVOLUTION OF CRIME

Respondents were asked: *Do you think in the last few years, crime in your area has gone up, remained the same, or has gone down?*

25%	30%	41%	4%

n=4892

■ Gone down   ■ Remained the same   ■ Gone up   ■ Do not know
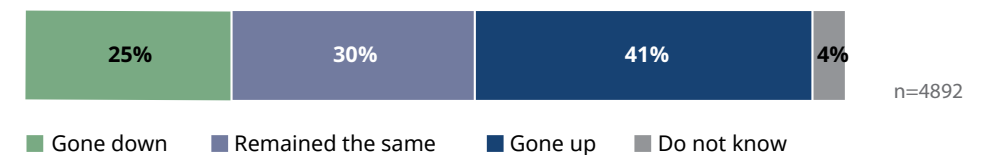
12 For example, HiiL's JNS studies from 2016, 2020, and 2024 show a stable rate of people reporting experienced one or more crimes. However, Ugandan police data on reported crimes does show a modest increase in reported crimes in 2022 and 2023 compared to the years before, mostly due to more reported thefts and breakings. This might be a 'return to normal' after a lower number of crimes were reported in 2020 and 2021 because of the Covid-19 situation.

People believe there is some crime in their area, but a lot of crime in Uganda

People's perceptions of the prevalence of crime differ widely depending on whether they are asked about their direct environment or the entire country. When it comes to their direct environment, around 35% of people believe there is a lot of crime, while the majority of people (53%) think there is some crime. Very few believe there is no crime at all in their area.

When it comes to Uganda as a whole, the majority of people believe there

is a lot of crime, even when they say that in their area there is only some crime or almost no crime at all. Indeed, 65% of people who say that in their area there is only some crime, think that in the rest of the country a lot of crime exists. The same goes for 46% of people who say that in their area there is almost no crime at all. These two data points illustrate a wide gap between the perception of crime levels in the local area and those in the rest of the country. This gap exists regardless of

demographic differences and across the different regions, although it is particularly large in the Central region and Kampala.

Such a perception gap is by no means unique to Uganda, but rather a well-documented phenomenon in many countries around the world. Studies have pointed at the influence of (social) media on people's idea that crimes are more common than they actually are, especially violent and sensational ones.

People might also perceive a certain 'hometown bias', relying on personal experiences and local interactions to assess their neighbourhood or village as relatively safe.[13]

ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF CRIME
In area and Uganda

Respondents were asked: *Do you believe that [in this area / in Uganda as a whole], there is a lot of crime, some crime, or no crime at all?*

Area	11%	53%	35%	2%
Uganda	3%	21%	72%	5%

- 🟩 Almost no crime at all
- 🟦 Some crime
- 🟦 A lot of crime
- ⬜ Do not know

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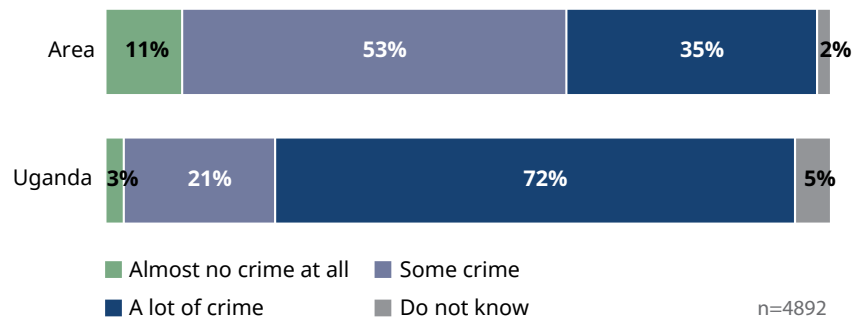
13 See for example Ipsos (2008), 'Closing the gaps. Crime and Public Perceptions'. Available at: https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/closing-gaps

Experiencing a crime is the biggest predictor of feeling unsafe

To assess demographic differences between people's perception of safety and crime, we created a crime and safety perception score that combines answers to three questions about crime levels and safety in people's area.[14] The score ranges from zero to one, where zero means people feel very safe and believe there is almost no crime at all, and one means people feel very unsafe and believe there is a lot of crime.

Whereas there are no differences between women and men when it comes to these perceptions, age categories do show significant differences. In particular, as people get older, they are more likely to be negative about the safety and amount of crime in their area. People are especially more likely to believe that crime is increasing as they become older. Regionally speaking, people in the Eastern region are most concerned about safety and crime in their area, whereas people in Kampala are most positive.

The biggest factor in determining people's perceptions of safety and crime is whether the person experienced a crime in the past twelve months. In particular, people who experienced a burglary or rape are very negative about the safety and amount of crime in their area.

CRIME SAFETY PERCEPTION SCORE
Demographic differences

Female	0.56
Male	0.56
18-24	0.49
25-39	0.55
40-64	0.61
65+	0.61
Central region	0.57
Eastern region	0.60
Northern region	0.57
Western region	0.54
Kampala	0.48
One or more crimes experienced in last year	0.60
No crime experienced in last year	0.45

14 1) In general, how often do you feel unsafe in this area? / 2) Do you think in the last few years, crime in your area has gone up, remained the same, or has gone down? / 3) Do you believe that in this area, there is a lot of crime, some crime, or no crime at all? Only people who provided answers to all three questions (so people who did not answer 'do not know' on any of the three questions) are included.
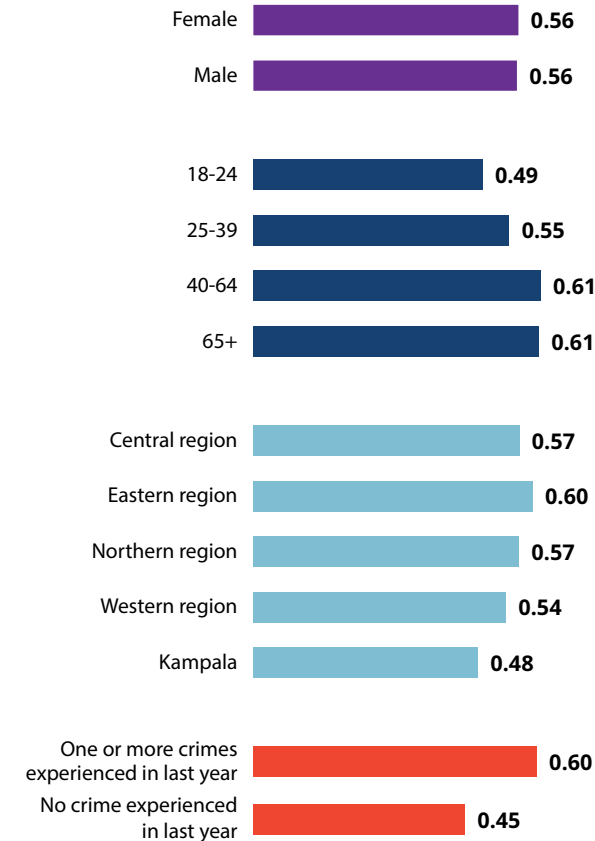
People believe theft and burglary to be the biggest risks

Besides questions about their perception of safety and crime levels, we also asked people how likely they thought it would be that they would become a victim of different types of crime in the next twelve months. People believed it most likely they would become the victim of theft or burglary, with 43% and 36% of people saying

they thought the likelihood is large or very large. At the same time, 42% and 44% of people respectively said the likelihood is small or very small.

People find it least likely they would become a victim of physical assault, while chances of online fraud were assessed as slightly bigger (but still

less than theft and burglary). Overall people are more likely to say there is a (very) small likelihood than that there is a (very) large likelihood they would become a victim of a crime in the next year.

Based on how many people said they actually experienced one or more of these four crime types (see following chapter), we can compare the percentage of people who believe there is a (very) large likelihood they will experience a crime in the next twelve months with the percentage of people who actually experienced such a crime in the last year. This comparison reveals that for all four crime types, people generally overestimate the likelihood of this happening to them. The discrepancy is particularly large for theft of a personal item, although it is possible people think of theft in a much broader sense than what is measured by theft of personal item. If we include theft of crops and livestock (which are measured separately in the following chapter), the perceived likelihood actually nearly matches the actual victimisation rate. For all of the other three crime types, the perceived risk does appear to be higher than the actual risk.

LIKELIHOOD OF BECOMING A VICTIM IN THE NEXT YEAR

Respondents were asked: *What would you say the chance is that you become a victim of the following crimes in the next year?*

	Very small	Small	Neither	Large	Very large	Do not know
Theft of personal item	16%	26%	10%	27%	16%	5%
Burglary	18%	26%	12%	24%	13%	6%
Physical assault	27%	27%	12%	18%	6%	9%
Online fraud	30%	21%	10%	16%	13%	9%

■ Very small ■ Small ■ Neither
■ Large ■ Very large ■ Do not know

n=4892

Experiencing a crime leads to fear of crime

PERCEIVED VICTIMISATION CHANCE AND ACTUAL VICTIMISATION
By crime type

■ Very large chance   ■ Large chance   ▬■▬ Actual victimisation rate

VICTIMISATION RISK PERCEPTION SCORE
Demographic differences

Female	0.43
Male	0.43
18-24	0.41
25-39	0.42
40-64	0.45
65+	0.42
Central	0.42
Eastern	0.43
Northern	0.49
Western	0.41
Kampala	0.37
One more crimes experienced in last year	0.47
No crime experienced in last year	0.33
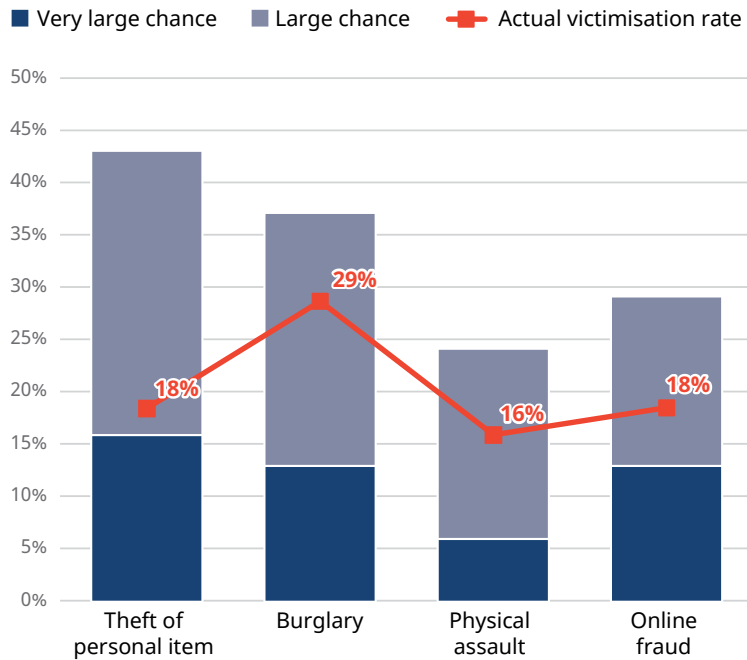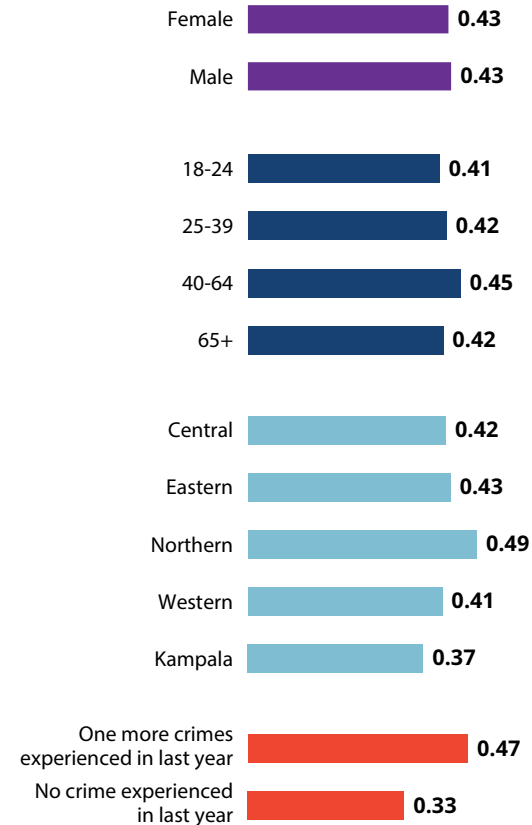
Similar to the crime safety perception score above, we created a victimisation risk perception score that combines answers to the four questions about risk of victimisation. Whereas the crime safety perception score measures people's perception of the level of crime and unsafety in their area, the victimisation risk perception score measures how likely people find it they become a victim of one or more crimes. The score ranges from zero (very small likelihood on all crimes) to one (very large likelihood on all crimes). These combined measures allow for easier comparisons between different demographic groups.

People adapt their behaviour to avoid becoming a victim of a crime

As with perceptions of safety and crime, there are no differences between men and women; this is the case for all four crimes asked about. Different age categories also show relatively little variance, with only the age group 40-64 scoring slightly higher.

In terms of regional differences, the Northern region stands out for having a relatively high score. People in this region are especially more likely to believe they have a high chance of experiencing physical assault, as well as theft and burglary, although with less pronounced differences.

Finally, having experienced an actual crime in the past twelve months makes it significantly more likely that someone believes there is a high chance they will become a victim of a crime again. This correlation exists across the board, but is especially high for similar crimes. In other words: someone who experienced physical assault is especially likely to think there is a high chance they become a victim of assault again, but also (albeit to a lesser extent) of theft or burglary.

PREVENTION MEASURES

Respondents were asked: *Have you taken one or more of the following measures to prevent becoming a victim of crime?*

Measure	%
Avoid going out at night (alone)	29%
Avoid certain places or areas	21%
Made arrangements with neighbours to watch each other's houses	19%
Installed anti burglary measures at home	16%
Got a dog	13%
Built a fence around property	7%
Participated in a neighbourhood watch group	7%
Taken a self-defence course	5%
Avoid carrying or wearing expensive items	4%
Hired a caretaker or security guard	4%
Obtained a firearm or other weapon	3%
Other	7%
Not taken any prevention measures	33%

n=4892

People take different measures to avoid becoming a victim of a crime, including changes in behaviour. Around two out of three people have taken at least one prevention measure to avoid becoming a victim of a crime. Prevention measures are most common in the northern region, where 78% of people have taken one or more such measures.

The most common prevention measures are avoiding going out alone at night and avoiding certain places or areas. Other common prevention measures are mostly to avoid burglary, by making arrangements with neighbours to keep an eye out, installing anti-burglary measures, getting a dog, or constructing a fence. Whereas avoiding certain places or not going out at night alone are more popular strategies in urban areas than in rural areas, the other options are roughly equally popular in both.

Many prevention measures are taken directly in response to a crime, especially anti-burglary measures such as installing a system at home or hiring a caretaker or security guard. On the other hand, making arrangements with neighbours and participating in neighbourhood watch groups are less often a direct response to an actual crime someone experienced.

Behavioural adaptations, such as avoiding certain places or not going out alone at night, are also less often a direct response to an actual crime someone experienced and more a general precaution people take.

PREVENTION MEASURES TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO A CRIME

Respondents were asked: *Which of these measures did you take because of an actual crime you experienced?*

Measure	Percentage
Installed anti burglary measures at home	83%
Hired a caretaker or security guard	79%
Taken a self-defence course	73%
Got a dog	71%
Built a fence around property	66%
Avoid certain places or areas	62%
Made arrangements with neighbours to watch each other's houses	57%
Avoid going out at night (alone)	57%
Participated in a neighbourhood watch group	54%
Avoid carrying or wearing expensive items	51%
Obtained a firearm or other weapon	36%
Other	60%

4

Experiencing crime

This chapter discusses the experiences of people in Uganda with different types of crimes. It covers different types of offences, including property crimes like theft and burglary, violent crimes such as assault and sexual violence, and incidents of fraud and corruption, examining their prevalence, seriousness, and other details. It also looks at demographic and regional variation in the prevalence and types of crimes experienced. Whether people report crimes to the police or other authorities is discussed in the next chapter.

Theft and burglary are the most common forms of crime

Crime is a common experience in Uganda, but there are some important nuances. Around 73% of people experienced at least one criminal incident in the past twelve months. However, this is heavily influenced by high rates of a few crime types; in particular, burglary, theft of crops, as well as theft of livestock and of personal items.[15]

The JNS Uganda 2024 found that around 61% of people had experienced crime, domestic violence, or corruption in the past year. The reason the percentage is somewhat higher in this study is probably because of the inclusion of more specific crime types (such as theft of crops and theft of

livestock) and the more direct way of asking about people's experiences.[16] Excluding theft of crops and livestock results in 61% of people having experienced at least one crime in the last year.

Property crimes are more common than violent crimes. In particular, (attempted) burglary and theft of crops are among the most common forms of crimes people experienced, followed by theft of livestock and theft of a personal item, such as pickpocketing or robbery. Around 18% of people have become victims of one or more forms of fraud, while 17% of people directly experienced corruption in the past twelve months.

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15 In the graphs in this chapter, we show both the broader categories (the orange bars) and the specific crime types (the blue bars). As explained in chapter 2, we report the prevalence of crimes, i.e. the percentage of people who experienced a certain crime at least once in the past year. When grouping crimes together (for example, into violent crimes) we report the percentage of people who have experienced at least one of these crimes at least one time. So a victim of both sexual assault and physical assault is counted as one victim of violent crime.

16 For example, in the JNS Uganda 2024 we provided people with a showcard listing over one hundred legal problems and asked whether they had experienced any of these in the past twelve months. Taking the example of corruption, this was one of fourteen different problem categories people could select. In the current study (which measures a lot less issues), we asked directly "Since September 2023, has any government official, such as customs officers, police officers, or county officials, asked you or expected you to pay a bribe for their services?" This can probably explain why in this study 17% of people said they experienced corruption, compared to 11% in the JNS Uganda 2024.

CRIME VICTIMISATION RATES

Category	%
ALL CRIME	73%
PROPERTY CRIME	60%
(Attempted) burglary	29%
Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)	5%
Theft of crops	28%
Theft of livestock	20%
Theft of personal item	18%
FRAUD	18%
VIOLENT CRIME	20%
Sexual harassment	4%
Rape	3%
Assault / threat	16%
CORRUPTION	17%

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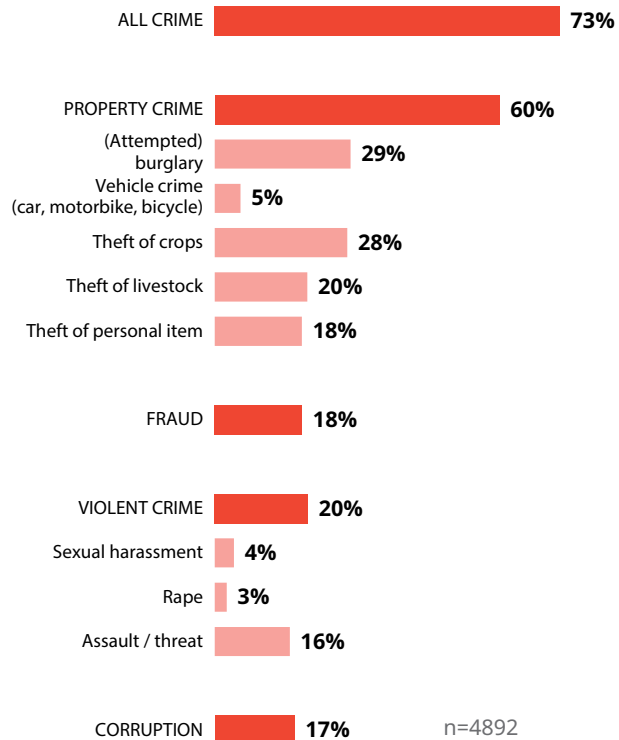
In terms of violent crimes, (threatening with) physical assault is most common[17], followed by sexual harassment and rape.[18] However, as detailed below, there are important gender differences in these experiences. It is also important to remember that sexual crimes are most likely underreported, because of unwillingness to share and discuss such matters with a stranger.

Although the categorisation is different, the overall tendencies match the findings of the latest Annual Crime Report of the Uganda Police Force, which showed theft being the most common type of cases reported, followed by assault, sex-related offences, and domestic violence.[19] Compared to UNODC's victimisation survey conducted in Uganda in 2008, we find similar rates of thefts of personal items, vehicle-related crimes, and sexual offences.[20] However, we find higher rates of livestock theft and (attempted) burglary (the 2008 study did not measure theft of crops) and lower rates of consumer fraud and corruption. This is likely a result of the 2008 study heavily sampling people in urban areas, whereas the current study more accurately reflects the rural-urban divide of the Ugandan population.

17 Among those reporting (threatening with) physical assault, 34% experienced actual physical assault while 66% experienced serious threats of such assault.

18 All of these categories include violence from an intimate partner, family member, or other person known by the victim.

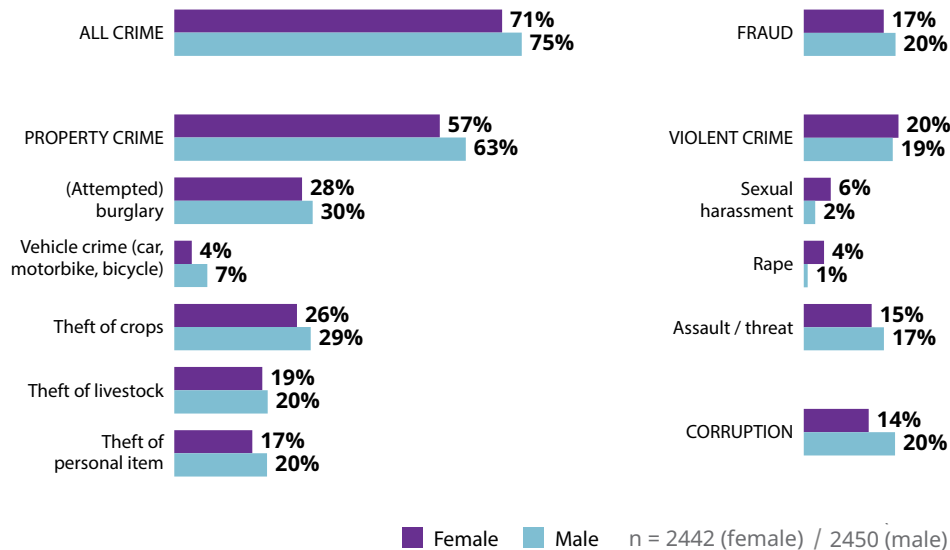19 https://upf.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Official-Annual-Crime-Report-2023-web.pdf

20 UNODC (2008), 'Victimization Survey in Uganda', available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/dfa/Victimization_survey_Uganda.pdf

Crime victimisation differs with gender and age

The overall differences in crime victimisation rates between men and women are relatively small, but there are nonetheless some important differences. In particular, women are significantly more likely to experience sexual crimes. On the other hand, men report slightly more often being the victim of a property crime, although in most cases these differences are almost negligibly small.

In terms of age, property crimes are slightly more common among older people, although this is entirely caused by big differences in theft of crops and (to a lesser extent) theft of livestock. People in these age categories are simply a lot more likely to own land for cultivation or livestock. If we correct for these differences, the difference in victimisation rates either becomes a lot smaller (theft of crops) or completely disappears (theft of livestock).

CRIME VICTIMISATION RATES
By gender

	Female	Male
ALL CRIME	71%	75%
PROPERTY CRIME	57%	63%
(Attempted) burglary	28%	30%
Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)	4%	7%
Theft of crops	26%	29%
Theft of livestock	19%	20%
Theft of personal item	17%	20%
FRAUD	17%	20%
VIOLENT CRIME	20%	19%
Sexual harassment	6%	2%
Rape	4%	1%
Assault / threat	15%	17%
CORRUPTION	14%	20%

■ Female ■ Male   n = 2442 (female) / 2450 (male)

CRIME VICTIMISATION RATES
By age

	18-24	25-39	40-64	65+
ALL CRIME	70%	73%	75%	68%
PROPERTY CRIME	56%	59%	64%	62%
(Attempted) burglary	26%	30%	29%	24%
Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)	4%	5%	7%	6%
Theft of crops	22%	24%	35%	41%
Theft of livestock	16%	18%	23%	21%
Theft of personal item	25%	21%	13%	11%
FRAUD	19%	20%	18%	11%
VIOLENT CRIME	24%	21%	18%	12%
Sexual harassment	8%	4%	3%	1%
Rape	3%	3%	2%	1%
Assault / threat	18%	16%	15%	11%
CORRUPTION	13%	19%	17%	11%

■ 18-24 ■ 40-64   n = 525 (18-24) / 1616 (25-39)
■ 25-39 ■ 65+   / 1230 (40-64) / 190 (65+)

Other property crimes show no differences between age groups or are more common among younger people. Especially theft of a personal item, ranging from pickpocketing to robbery, is significantly more common among younger age groups. Violent crime is also more common among younger people.

Overall crime rates are similar in the four regions, but differ for specific crime types

Crime rates in rural and urban areas are similar, but there are some significant differences for specific crime types. Burglary and theft of a personal item is more common in urban areas, whereas theft of livestock and especially theft of crops is signi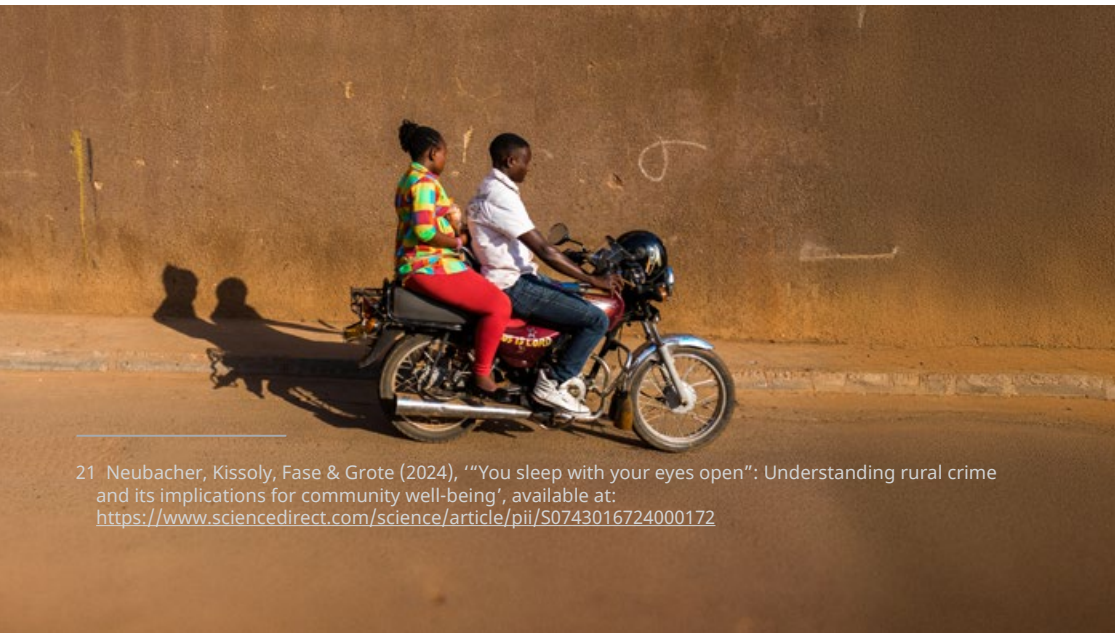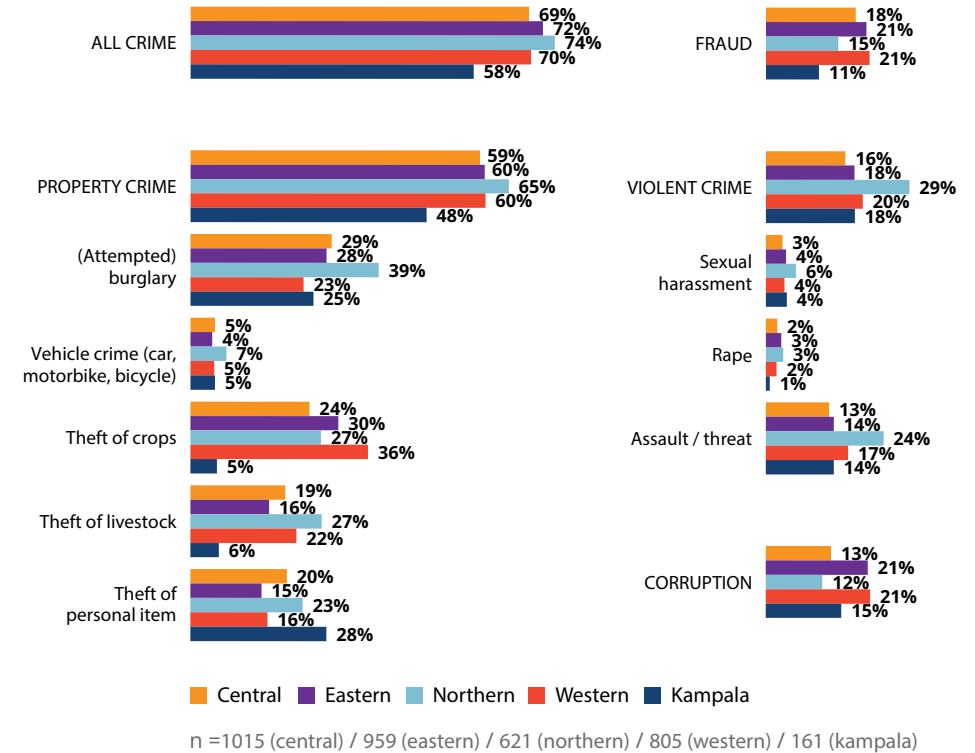ficantly more common in rural areas. Indeed, theft of crops is by far the most common crime reported by people in rural areas. A recent study in neighbouring Tanzania equally revealed that in rural areas theft of crops and livestock are the most common forms of crime, significantly affecting people's food security and economic livelihood.[21]

The differences between rural and urban crime are reflected in regional differences. Overall, there are little differences in crime rates between Uganda's regions. Crime in Kampala is lower than in the four regions, but this is only because of the near absence of theft of crops and theft of livestock.

21 Neubacher, Kissoly, Fase & Grote (2024), '"You sleep with your eyes open": Understanding rural crime and its implications for community well-being', available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0743016724000172

CRIME VICTIMISATION RATES
By region

ALL CRIME
Central 69%
Eastern 72%
Northern 74%
Western 70%
Kampala 58%

FRAUD
Central 18%
Eastern 21%
Northern 15%
Western 21%
Kampala 11%

PROPERTY CRIME
Central 59%
Eastern 60%
Northern 65%
Western 60%
Kampala 48%

VIOLENT CRIME
Central 16%
Eastern 18%
Northern 29%
Western 20%
Kampala 18%

(Attempted) burglary
Central 29%
Eastern 28%
Northern 39%
Western 23%
Kampala 25%

Sexual harassment
Central 3%
Eastern 4%
Northern 6%
Western 4%
Kampala 4%

Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)
Central 5%
Eastern 4%
Northern 7%
Western 5%
Kampala 5%

Rape
Central 2%
Eastern 3%
Northern 3%
Western 2%
Kampala 1%

Theft of crops
Central 24%
Eastern 30%
Northern 27%
Western 36%
Kampala 5%

Assault / threat
Central 13%
Eastern 14%
Northern 24%
Western 17%
Kampala 14%

Theft of livestock
Central 19%
Eastern 16%
Northern 27%
Western 22%
Kampala 6%

Theft of personal item
Central 20%
Eastern 15%
Northern 23%
Western 16%
Kampala 28%

CORRUPTION
Central 13%
Eastern 21%
Northern 12%
Western 21%
Kampala 15%

■ Central ■ Eastern ■ Northern ■ Western ■ Kampala

n =1015 (central) / 959 (eastern) / 621 (northern) / 805 (western) / 161 (kampala)

Other crime types are more or less similarly experienced in Kampala as elsewhere. Moreover, many people living in the Central region spend considerable time in Kampala, for example for work; it is possible that at least some of the crimes they report happened in the capital.

There are some regional differences when it comes to specific types of crime. Burglary, theft of livestock, and threats and assaults are reported most often by people in the Northern region. Theft of crops is most common in the Western region, while theft of personal items happens most often in Kampala.
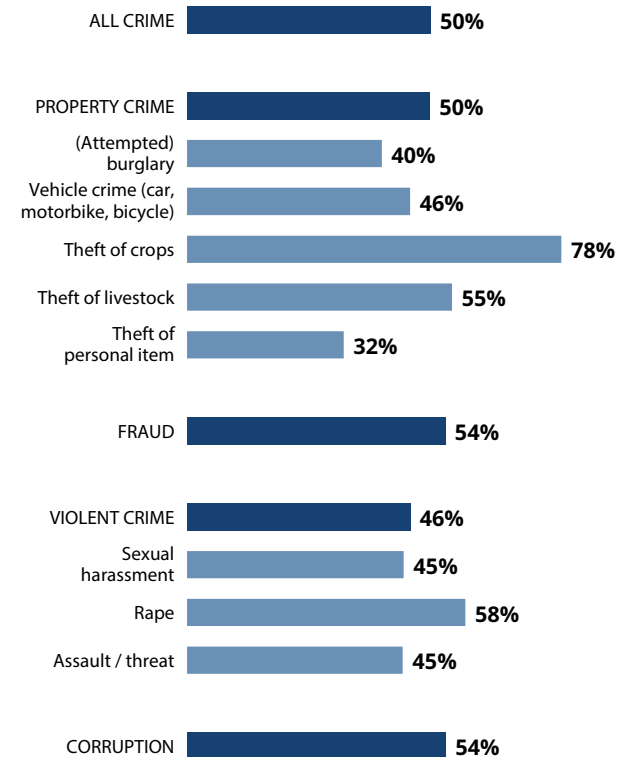
Repeat victimisation
is common

It is common for people to experience more than one type of crime or to become a victim of the same crime multiple times. Around 63% of people who experienced at least one crime in the past year report more than one crime type. Many people also report experiencing one crime type multiple times. In half of the cases, people indicate they experienced a certain type of crime multiple times in the past twelve months. However, there are large differences between crime types.

In terms of property crimes, multiple victimisations are particularly common for theft of crops and (to a much lesser extent) theft of livestock. Repeat victimisation is also common for rape victims. As further explained below, this often involves an intimate partner and thus a high likelihood of

such incidents happening multiple times. Indeed, a high number of repeat victimisations (four times or more in the last year) is particularly likely when the offender is a (former) intimate partner, something particularly common among female victims of physical assault and rape.

REPEAT VICTIMISATION
By crime type

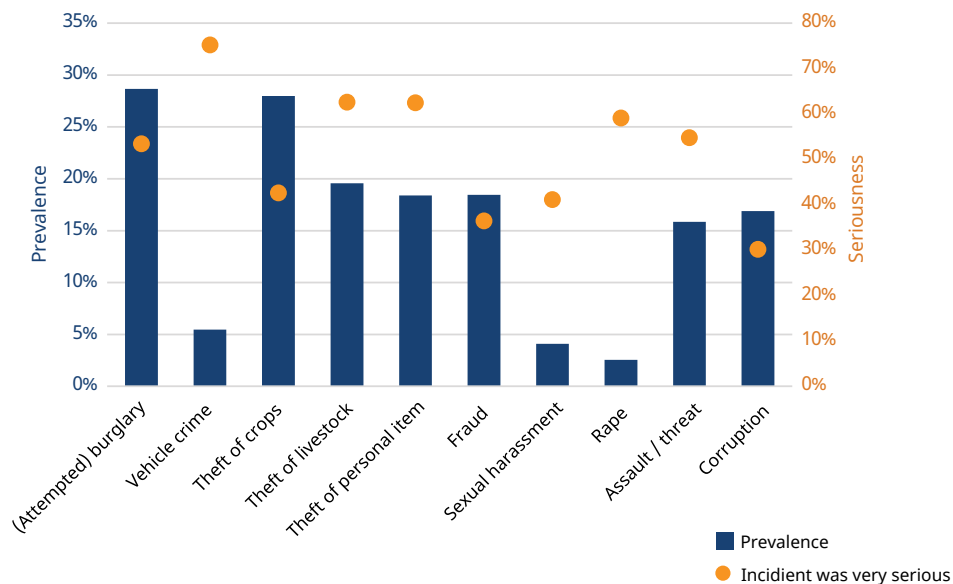| Crime type	%
ALL CRIME	50%
PROPERTY CRIME	50%
(Attempted) burglary	40%
Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)	46%
Theft of crops	78%
Theft of livestock	55%
Theft of personal item	32%
FRAUD	54%
VIOLENT CRIME	46%
Sexual harassment	45%
Rape	58%
Assault / threat	45%
CORRUPTION	54%

Not all crimes are equally serious

Prevalence of crime types is only one indicator that can be used to measure and understand people's experiences with crime. Another indicator is how serious an incident is and how much impact it has on people's lives. For every crime people reported, we therefore asked them how serious

they considered it to be, ranging from 'not serious at all' to 'very serious'. The graph below shows both the prevalence of different crime types and the percentage of people who indicated the incident was very serious.

PREVALENCE AND SERIOUSNESS
By crime type

■ Prevalence
● Incidient was very serious

Of all the crimes reported, exactly half of them are considered very serious, but there are big differences between crime types. Vehicle-related crimes are most often considered very serious, but this crime type is not very common and therefore the results could be distorted. However, motorbike and bicycle theft relatively often involve violence, which is an important predictor for a crime being assessed as more serious. Other crime types that are often assessed as very serious include theft of a personal item (again especially when there is violence involved), theft of livestock (which rarely involves violence, but can represent big economic impact), and rape.[22]

It is worthwhile taking a closer look at the characteristics of some of these crime types to better assess the seriousness of the incidents. For example, successful burglaries (breaking and entering) are assessed

as very serious in 63% of the cases, whereas attempted burglaries (where the offender did not manage to enter the house) are assessed as very serious in only 39% of the cases. Similarly, physical assault is assessed as very serious in 68% of cases, making it one of the most serious crime types, whereas threatening with physical assault is assessed as very serious in 49% of cases.

Only 30% of people who experienced corruption indicate the incident was very serious, the lowest percentage of all crime types. However, this should not be seen as an indicator that Ugandans see corruption as a minor issue. Even as the specific individual incidents people experience are relatively often considered as not too serious, previous research has clearly established that Ugandans see corruption as one of the major problems facing the country.[23]

22 Theft of personal items is assessed as very serious in 79% of the cases where there is violence involved (robbery), compared to 62% when there is no violence involved (pickpocketing or similar).

23 Afrobarometer (2023), 'Ugandans see corruption as a growing problem, fear retaliation if they report', available at: https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/R9_News-release-Ugandans-see-corruption-as-a-growing-problem-Afrobarometer-bh-1march23.pdf
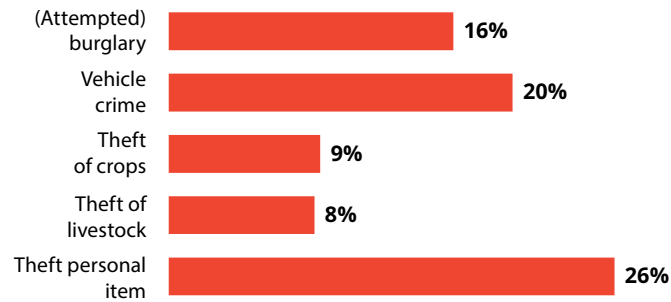
Burglaries and theft can involve violence

Although in this report we make a distinction between burglaries and thefts on the one hand and violent crimes on the other hand, this distinction is not so clearcut. In many cases of theft and burglaries, victims encounter the offender and sometimes experience violence. People are most likely to face the offender in burglaries, vehicle-related crimes, and thefts of personal items. In cases of theft of crops and theft of livestock, this is less likely.

It is not surprising that these types of crimes are also most likely to involve (the threat of) violence, especially vehicle-related crimes and thefts of personal items. This also explains why these types of crimes are deemed more serious.

The graph below shows for different types of property crimes how often the incident involved an offender either threatening with violence or actually being violent. Around 10% of all incidents of theft of a personal item involve (the threat of) violence and could therefore be classified as robbery.

OFFENDER SEEN
Burglary and theft

(Attempted) burglary	16%
Vehicle crime	20%
Theft of crops	9%
Theft of livestock	8%
Theft personal item	26%

VIOLENCE AND THREAT OF VIOLENCE
Burglary and theft

	Actual violence	Threat of violence
(Attempted) burglary	1%	3%
Vehicle crime	5%	3%
Theft of crops	1%	1%
Theft of livestock	1%	
Theft personal item	4%	6%

■ Actual violence   ■ Threat of violence
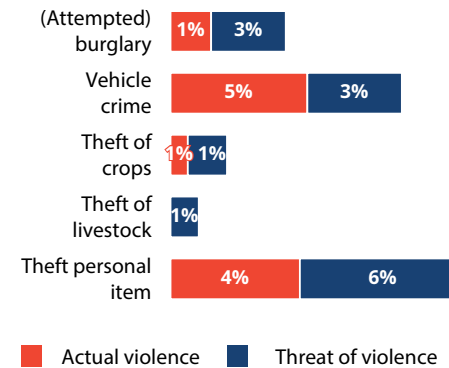
Electronics, cash, and clothes are stolen in most burglaries

Around 29% of Ugandans experienced an (attempted) burglary in the past year, but in many cases nothing gets stolen. In 42% of all reported cases, someone attempted to enter the house unsuccessfully, visible by for example damage to locks, doors or windows. In 17% of

cases, the offender(s) did manage to enter the house but did not actually steal anything, while in 41% of the cases the offender(s) did steal one or more items. This translates into around 15% of all Ugandans experiencing a burglary where something was actually stolen.

The most common item stolen in a burglary are electronics, such as televisions, computers, and phones. This is followed by cash and things like clothing and bags. The list of other items includes a wide range of many different things, including food items, mattresses, and utensils.

STOLEN ITEM(S)
Burglary

Item	%
Electronics	45%
Cash	37%
Clothing, bags, etc	34%
Furniture	13%
Personal/ identification documents	4%
Jewelry	3%
Medication	1%
Home or car keys	0%
Other	37%
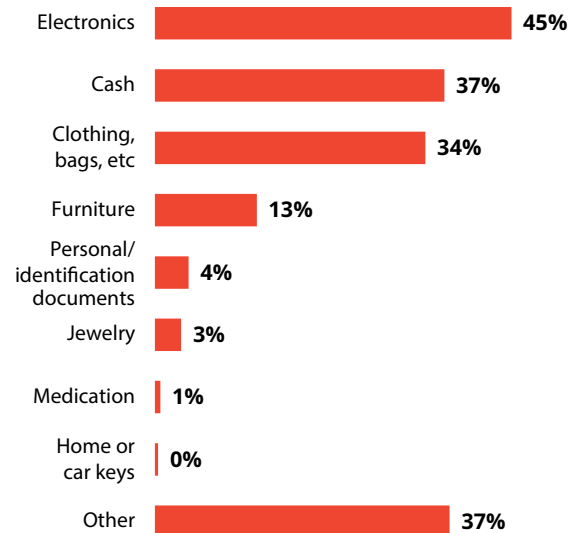
n = 751 incidents

SUCCESS RATE
Burglary

42%	17%	41%
Attempted entry	Successful entry, nothing stolen	Successful entry, items stolen
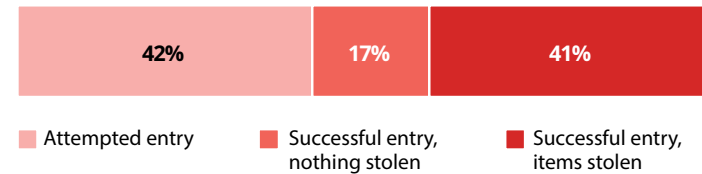
n = 1836 incidents

Cellphones are a popular target of thieves

Thefts of personal items involve all cases of theft that do not concern burglary, vehicle-related crimes, theft of crops, and theft of livestock. Most of these incidents take place somewhere outside, either in the street, on public transport, or in a bar, restaurant, or club. Around one in four incidents occur at or near someone's home, but without someone unlawfully entering the house. For example, things are stolen from the garden or another area outside the house.

The most common item that is stolen in these cases is a cellphone, followed by money, and a bag or backpack. The list of "other" items mentions clothes relatively often, especially when the location of the theft is at someone's house.

LOCATION OF INCIDENT
Theft of personal item

- In the street — **35%**
- At home — **24%**
- On the bus / public transport — **11%**
- At school or work — **10%**
- In a bar / restaurant / club — **9%**
- In a shop — **4%**
- Other — **7%**
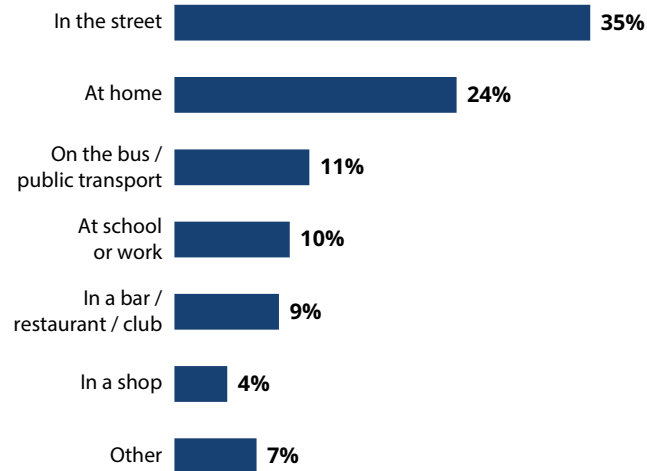
n = 904 incidents

STOLEN ITEM(S)
Theft of personal item

- Cellphone — **62%**
- Wallet or money — **38%**
- Bag or backpack — **20%**
- Passport or ID card — **6%**
- Computer or laptop — **3%**
- Jewelry — **2%**
- Other — **17%**
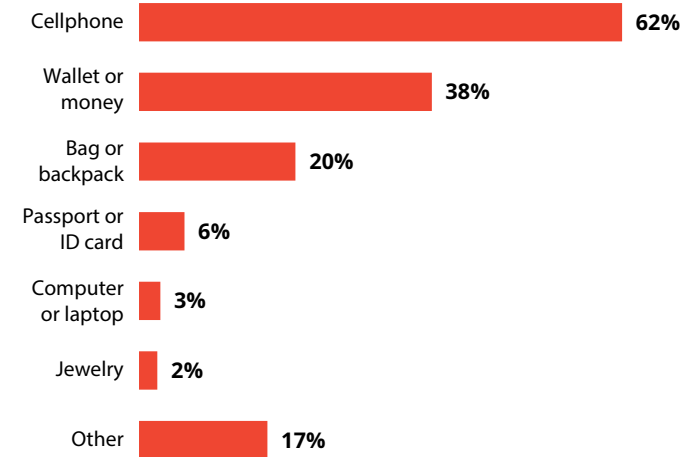
n = 806 incidents

Most fraud happens offline

Around 18% of Ugandans indicate they have been the victim of some form of fraud in the past twelve years. Despite the growth in internet usage and online shopping, most of these still occur either in person or over the phone. Only around 7% of fraud incidents are reported to have happened online.

Of the many different types of fraud, consumer fraud seems relatively common, with people being cheated on quantity or quality of products. Other scams that are reported relatively often involve people being told someone accidentally sent them money on their account and asking them to return it, or that they have won a prize and need to confirm it by either sending money or putting in their pincode.

MODUS OPERANDI
Fraud

48%

44%

7% 1%

- In person
- By phone
- Online
- Other

n = 903 incidents

Violent crimes are rarely committed by strangers

Victims of violent crimes often know the offender by name, especially in the case of rape and (threatening with) physical assault. Around 66% of rape victims and 60% of victims of (threats of) physical assault know their offender personally.

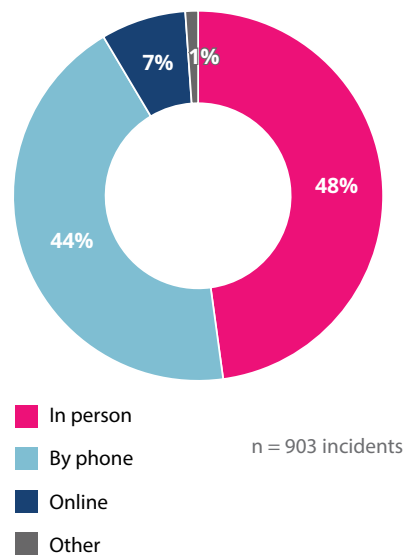The percentage is even higher for women, who personally know 71% of offenders in the case of rape and 74% in the case of (threatening with) assault. For sexual harassment the percentage is lower, but still almost half of the women know their offender by name.

KNOW OFFENDER
Violent crimes

Sexual harassment

Female	34%	18%	48%
Male	47%	26%	26%

Rape

Female	15%	15%	71%
Male	26%	16%	58%

Assault

Female	12%	13%	74%
Male	22%	19%	60%

- Did not know offender
- Knew offender by sight
- Knew offender by name
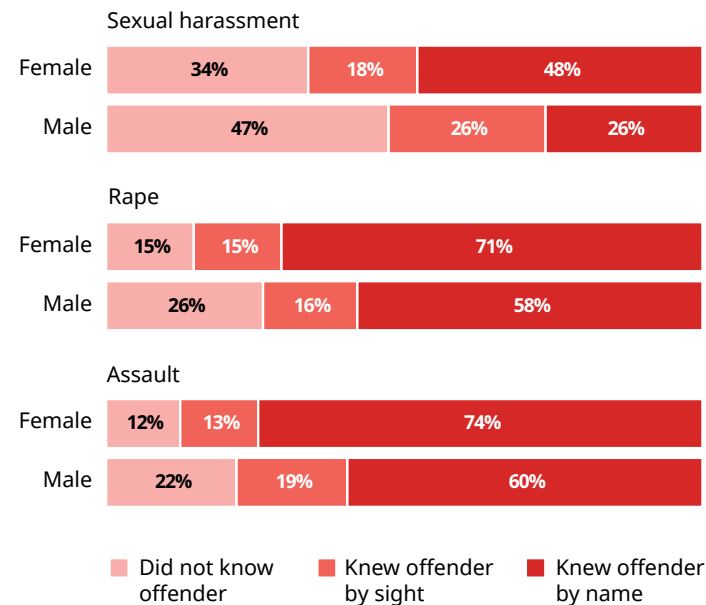
In the majority of rape cases where people know the offender, it is a current or former intimate partner; for women this is 77%. The most likely offender of actual physical assault is a (former) intimate partner as well, although family members are almost equally as common. The relatively high percentage of other known offenders (see "other" in the following chart) mostly comprises neighbours or people from the area.

The finding that especially female victims of rape and assault are likely to be the victim of a (former) intimate partner is a reflection of the prevalence of crimes against women often referred to as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, or gender-based violence. Indeed, 63% of female victims of physical abuse and 74%
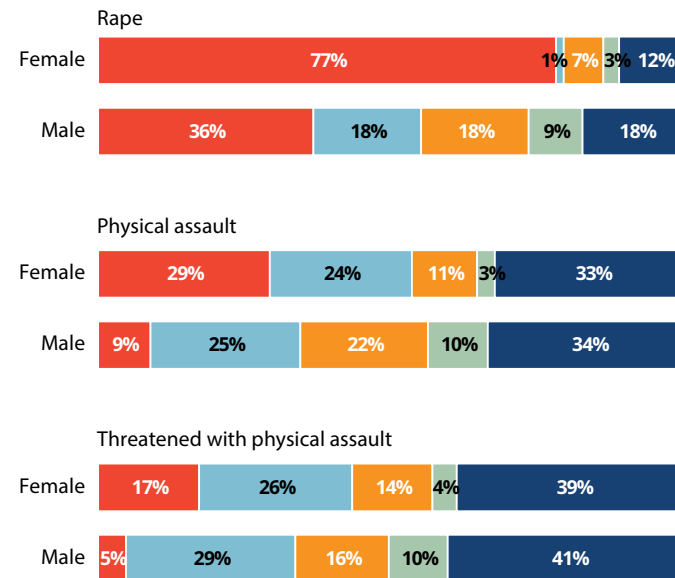
of female victims of rape indicate the incident happened at home. It confirms a recent study from UN Women that stated that home is the most dangerous place for women and girls.[24]

Domestic violence is notoriously difficult to measure, as people may either not recognize it as a problem (and especially not as a crime) or are unwilling to discuss such sensitive matters with a stranger. In the JNS Uganda 2024, we estimated that on an annual basis, 39% of women experience some form of domestic violence (including emotional abuse and economic deprivation), with more than half of them (21% of all Ugandan adult women) experiencing physical or sexual abuse, a finding in line with previous research.[25]

OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP
Rape and physical assault

Rape

	(Former) intimate partner	Family member	Friend	Colleague	Other
Female	77%	1%	7%	3%	12%
Male	36%	18%	18%	9%	18%

Physical assault

	(Former) intimate partner	Family member	Friend	Colleague	Other
Female	29%	24%	11%	3%	33%
Male	9%	25%	22%	10%	34%

Threatened with physical assault

	(Former) intimate partner	Family member	Friend	Colleague	Other
Female	17%	26%	14%	4%	39%
Male	5%	29%	16%	10%	41%

- ■ (Former) intimate partner
- ■ Family member
- ■ Friend
- ■ Colleague
- ■ Other

24 UN Women (2024), 'Femicides in 2023: Global estimates of intimate partner/family member femicides', available at: https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/11/femicides-in-2023-global-estimates-of-intimate-partner-family-member-femicides
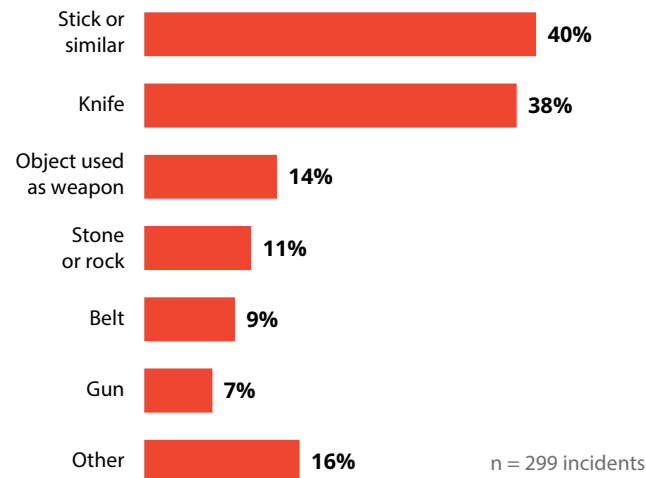
25 Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2021), 'National Survey on Violence in Uganda. Module 1: Violence against Women and Girls', available at: https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Africa/Attachments/Publications/2021/12/UBOS%20VAWG%20Report%207122021.pdf

Weapon used

Whether it is a violent property crime, physical assault, or rape, use of weapons is relatively rare for most of the crimes people experienced. Use of a weapon is most common for physical assault (32% of cases), rape (16%), threatening with physical assault (16%), motorbike theft (13%), and theft of a personal item (4%). For other types of crime the use of a weapon is extremely rare (mainly because these crimes generally do not involve the threat or actual use of violence).

When a weapon is used to threaten or physically harm the victim, the most common options are sticks and knives, regardless of the crime type. Victims of rape also relatively often report the use of a belt. Guns are rarely used, except for a few cases of assault and a handful of property crimes. The most common type of weapon recorded as "other" is a panga or machete.

WEAPON USED
All crime types

Stick or similar	40%
Knife	38%
Object used as weapon	14%
Stone or rock	11%
Belt	9%
Gun	7%
Other	16%

n = 299 incidents

Corruption involves most often the police

Around 17% of Ugandans say that in the past year a government official has asked them for a bribe for their services. In more than half of these cases, the official involved was a police officer. This makes sense considering the police is generally the government

actor most people are likely to engage with, whether they have experienced a crime or not. Around 20% of incidents involved a general government official (for example, when requesting a permit) and 11% involved a local council member.

CORRUPTION
Type of official involved

Police officer	55%
Government official	20%
Local council member	11%
Court personnel	2%
Customs officer	1%
Traditional leader	1%
Inspector	1%
Judge or magistrate	0%
Other	9%
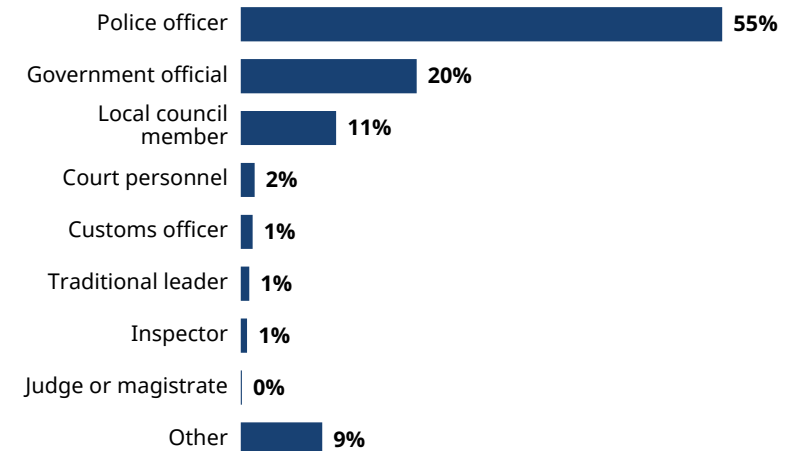
n = 817 incidents

5

Reporting crime

Many crimes go unreported, especially if they are less serious

This chapter explores whether people report the crimes they experienced to the police or other actors, such as local council courts. It examines how often different types of crimes get reported, who are more likely to report crimes, and the reasons why people decide not to report a crime. It also discusses to what extent people who reported crimes are satisfied with how authorities handled the matter.

Around 41% of all crimes are reported to one or more authorities. Crimes are most often reported to a local council court, followed by the police. In much fewer cases do people turn to a local defence unit or customary or traditional leader. Most crimes are reported to only one authority, with roughly one in four being reported to multiple authorities. Indeed, around half of the incidents that are reported to the police are also reported to another authority, most often a local council court. The data does not make it clear where people go first.

41%

of all crimes are reported to one or more authorities

CRIME REPORTING

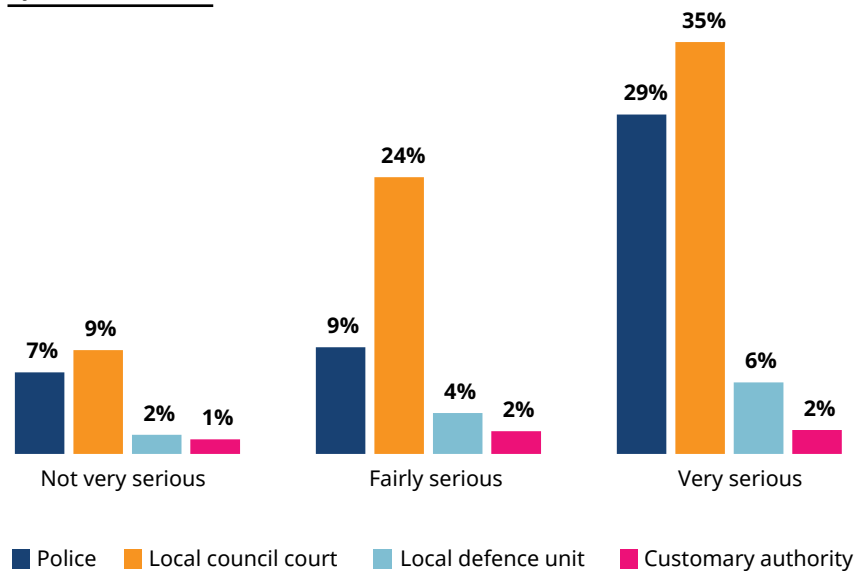|			
18%	27%	5%	2%
Police	Local council court	Local defence unit	Customary authority

n = 8178 incidents
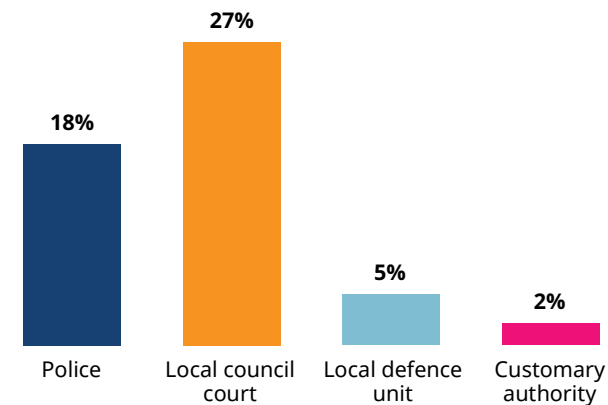
People in the Central region and Kampala are most likely to report incidents to the police

There are significant differences between levels of crime reporting depending on the seriousness of the incident. Crimes that are assessed as more serious are much more likely to be reported to authorities. Around 55% of all crimes that are considered very serious are reported to one or more authorities, compared to 33% of crimes that are considered fairly serious, and

only 13% of crimes that are considered not very serious.

The difference is especially large when it comes to reporting to the police, with very low reporting rates of crimes that are not considered very serious. Crimes that are considered fairly serious are still relatively often reported to local council courts.

Not everyone is equally likely to report criminal incidents to the police or other authorities. Men are slightly more likely to report incidents to the police or a local council court than women, but the difference can mainly be explained by reporting differences of theft of crops and theft of livestock; other crime types show minimal reporting differences between men and women. In terms of age, the youngest age group is least likely to report a criminal incident to the authorities. As people get older, reporting to the police remains relatively stable but reporting to local council courts continues to increase.

People are more likely to report to the police in urban areas than they are in rural areas. For all other authorities, the reverse is true: People are more likely to go to a local council court, customary or traditional authority, or local defence unit in rural areas. Regional differences indicate people in Kampala and the Central region are most likely to report an incident to the police, whereas people in the Northern region are least likely. For local council courts the pattern is inversed. Finally, local defence units and customary and traditional authorities pretty much only play a role in the Northern region and even there only a small percentage of crimes are reported to these actors.

CRIME REPORTING
By seriousness

- Police
- Local council court
- Local defence unit
- Customary authority

Burglaries and thefts are more often reported than violent crimes

CRIME REPORTING
Demographic and regional differences

Uganda
- Police: 18%
- Local council court: 27%
- Local defence unit: 5%
- Customary or traditional authority: 2%

Female
- Police: 16%
- Local council court: 26%
- Local defence unit: 4%
- Customary or traditional authority: 2%

Male
- Police: 20%
- Local council court: 28%
- Local defence unit: 5%
- Customary or traditional authority: 2%

18-24
- Police: 13%
- Local council court: 21%
- Local defence unit: 5%
- Customary or traditional authority: 2%

25-39
- Police: 18%
- Local council court: 26%
- Local defence unit: 4%
- Customary or traditional authority: 2%

40-64
- Police: 20%
- Local council court: 31%
- Local defence unit: 5%
- Customary or traditional authority: 2%

65+
- Police: 19%
- Local defence unit: 3%
- Customary or traditional authority: 2%

Central
- Police: 20%
- Local council court: 20%
- Local defence unit: 4%
- Customary or traditional authority: 0%

Eastern
- Police: 18%
- Local council court: 30%
- Local defence unit: 2%
- Customary or traditional authority: 2%

Northern
- Police: 16%
- Local defence unit: 10%
- Customary or traditional authority: 5%

Western
- Police: 17%
- Local council court: 25%
- Local defence unit: 3%
- Customary or traditional authority: 1%

Kampala
- Police: 21%
- Local council court: 14%
- Local defence unit: 2%
- Customary or traditional authority: 0%

Legend:
- ■ Police
- ■ Local council court
- ■ Local defence unit
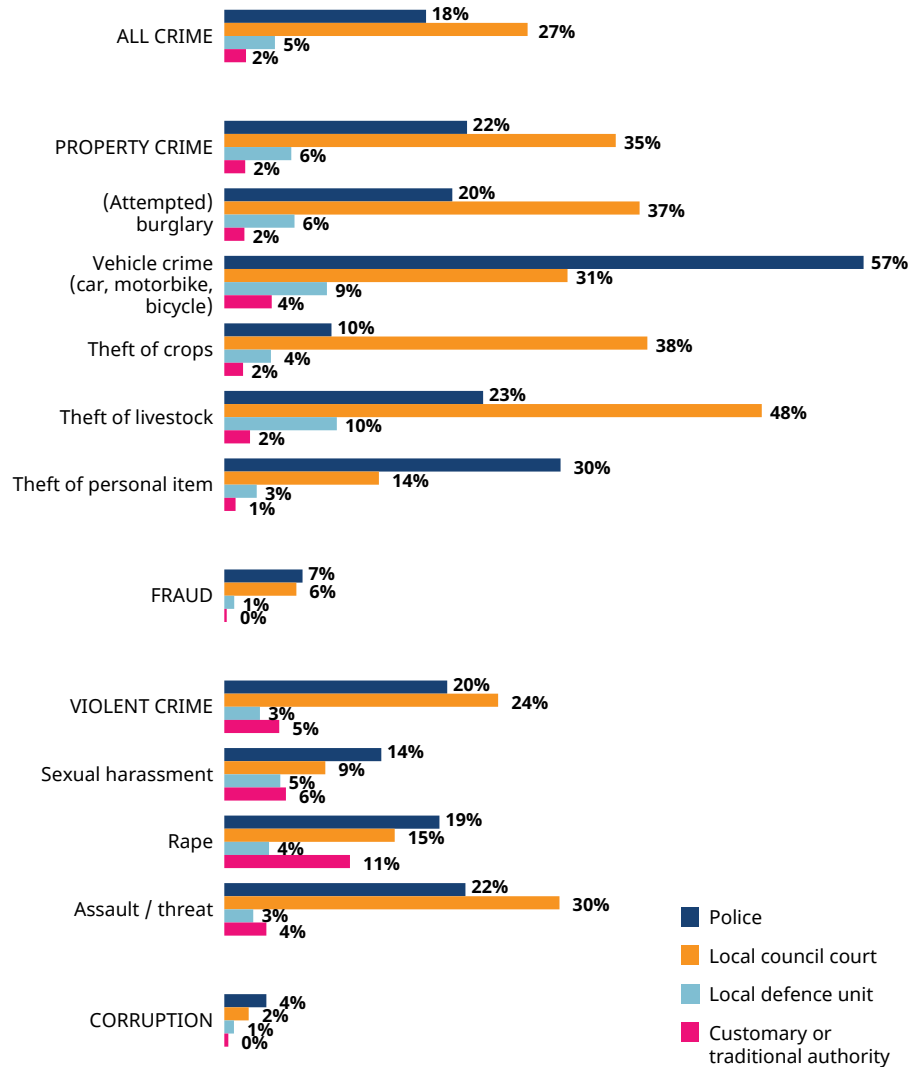- ■ Customary or traditional authority

Some types of crime are reported more often than others. In general, property crimes are more often reported than violent crimes, especially sexual offences. Some types of crimes are more often reported to the police, whereas others are more commonly reported to a local council court. The two types of crime that are reported most often are vehicle-related crimes and theft of livestock, with the distinction that the first is most often reported to the police, the second is more often reported to a local council court.

CRIME REPORTING
By crime type

ALL CRIME
- 18%
- 27%
- 5%
- 2%

PROPERTY CRIME
- 22%
- 35%
- 6%
- 2%

(Attempted) burglary
- 20%
- 37%
- 6%
- 2%

Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)
- 57%
- 31%
- 9%
- 4%

Theft of crops
- 10%
- 38%
- 4%
- 2%

Theft of livestock
- 23%
- 48%
- 10%
- 2%

Theft of personal item
- 30%
- 14%
- 3%
- 1%

FRAUD
- 7%
- 6%
- 1%
- 0%

VIOLENT CRIME
- 20%
- 24%
- 3%
- 5%

Sexual harassment
- 14%
- 9%
- 5%
- 6%

Rape
- 19%
- 15%
- 4%
- 11%

Assault / threat
- 22%
- 30%
- 3%
- 4%

CORRUPTION
- 4%
- 2%
- 1%
- 0%

Legend:
- ■ Police
- ■ Local council court
- ■ Local defence unit
- ■ Customary or traditional authority

Thefts of crops and (attempted) burglaries are also relatively often reported to the local council courts, whereas thefts of personal items and sexual crimes are more often reported to the police. The fact that some of these crimes are more common in urban or in rural areas most likely plays an important role here.

Engagement of local defence units and customary and traditional authorities is generally low for crimes. The only exception is a relatively high percentage of rape cases (but still only 11%) that are reported to a customary or traditional authority. These are nearly all cases from the northern region involving an offender that is known to the victim.
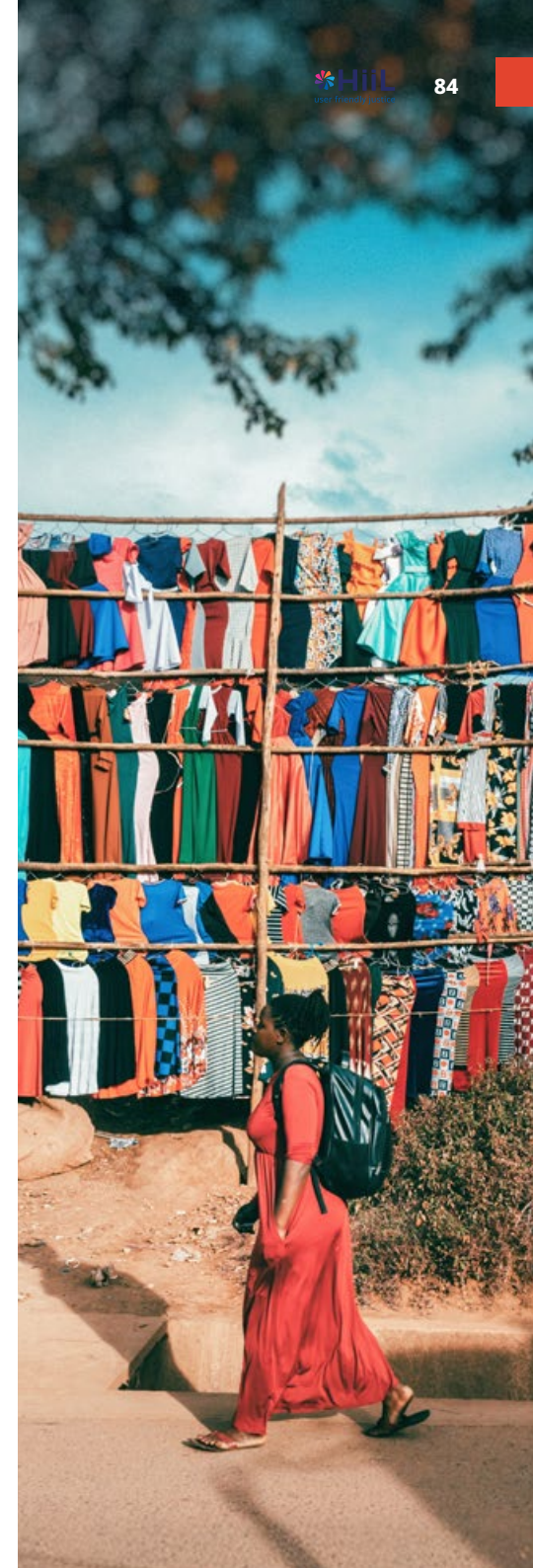
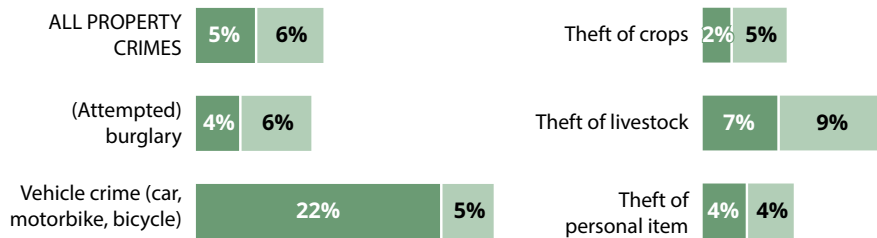# Some crime types are more likely to get resolved than others

Not only do many crimes go unreported, they also overwhelmingly remain unresolved. Only in 8% of the crimes people experienced is the offender apprehended, while in 11% of the property crimes the victim's personal belongings are partially or fully recovered.

Some crimes are significantly more likely to have some sort of resolution. Stolen vehicles (such as cars or motorbikes) have the highest likelihood of being recovered and also the highest

rate of offender apprehension. As seen above, people are also most likely to report this type of crime to the police. Recovery rates are lowest for theft of crops, theft of personal items, and burglaries. Apprehension rates are slightly higher for violent crimes than for property crimes, but still overall low.
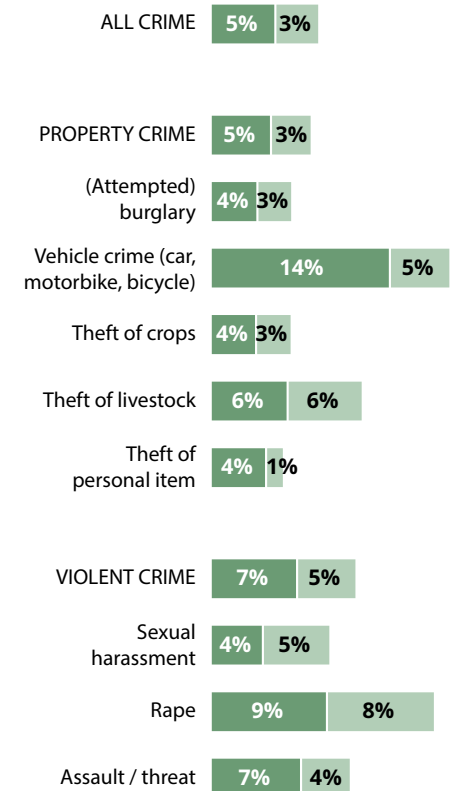
STOLEN ITEMS RECOVERED
Property crime

	Completely recovered	Partially recovered
ALL PROPERTY CRIMES	5%	6%
(Attempted) burglary	4%	6%
Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)	22%	5%
Theft of crops	2%	5%
Theft of livestock	7%	9%
Theft of personal item	4%	4%

■ Completely recovered
■ Partially recovered

OFFENDER(S) APPREHENDED

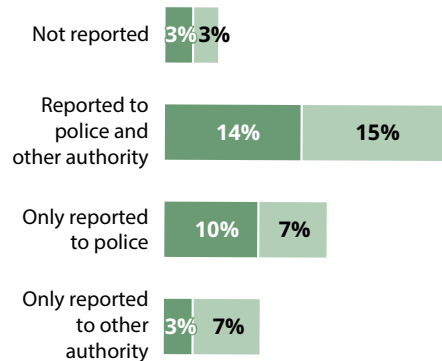|	All offenders apprehended	Some offenders apprehended
ALL CRIME	5%	3%
PROPERTY CRIME	5%	3%
(Attempted) burglary	4%	3%
Vehicle crime (car, motorbike, bicycle)	14%	5%
Theft of crops	4%	3%
Theft of livestock	6%	6%
Theft of personal item	4%	1%
VIOLENT CRIME	7%	5%
Sexual harassment	4%	5%
Rape	9%	8%
Assault / threat	7%	4%

■ All offenders apprehended
■ Some offenders apprehended

Reporting crimes increases the likelihood they are resolved

People have a variety of reasons to not report a criminal incident to the police

Resolution percentages are significantly higher for crimes that are reported to the police or another authority. Especially crimes that are reported to the police have a much higher rate of recovered property and apprehended offenders. There is a certain logic to this: it is improbable to apprehend an offender of a crime that
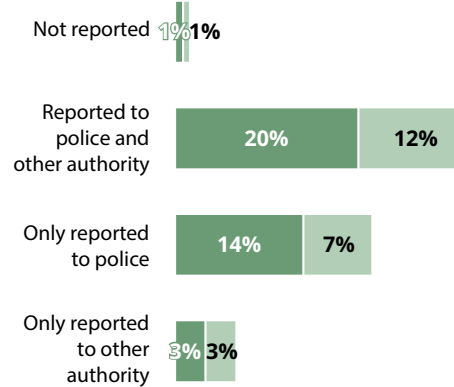
is never reported anywhere. There are too many potential factors at play to claim a clear casual relationship, but it nonetheless seems that reporting a crime to the police or another authority increases the likelihood of a satisfying outcome. These differences are apparent for every crime type.
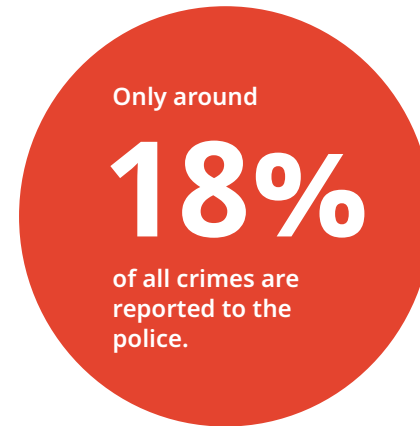
STOLEN ITEMS RECOVERED
By reporting

Not reported   3% 3%

Reported to police and other authority   14%   15%

Only reported to police   10%   7%

Only reported to other authority   3%   7%

■ Fully recovered
■ Partially recovered

OFFENDER(S) APPREHENDED
By reporting

Not reported   1% 1%

Reported to police and other authority   20%   12%

Only reported to police   14%   7%

Only reported to other authority   3%   3%

■ All offenders apprehended
■ Some offenders apprehended

Only around

18%

of all crimes are reported to the police.

Most people who do not go to the police do not report the incident anywhere at all; others do report it to a local council court or, much less often, to a local defence unit or customary or traditional authority.

REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING A CRIME TO THE POLICE

Thought reporting would be too time consuming or complicated	23%
The incident was not serious enough	20%
Police will ask for money / are corrupt	19%
Solved the incident myself	16%
Reported it to other authorities instead	15%
Police won't do anything about this kind of incident	15%
Did not realise this was a reportable crime	14%
Do not trust / do not want to deal with the police	8%
My family and/or friends resolved the incident	6%
The nearest police station is too far away	6%
Did not dare (for fear of reprisal / fear of the offender)	4%
Other	15%

n = 6663 incidents (3302 persons)

Convenience is an important reason to report an incident to another authority than the police

People provide a variety of reasons why they did not report a criminal incident to the police. Many people believe reporting would take up too much time and the issue is not serious enough to warrant police attention, leading them to report the issue somewhere else or solve the incident themselves or with the help of family or friends. Some people (19%) also believe the police will ask them for money in order to help them.

People experiencing sexual assault and rape (mostly women) frequently say they did not realise it was a reportable crime and that they were afraid of reprisals from the offender. In many cases they indicate that they resolved the incident themselves, sometimes with the help of family or friends. It highlights the challenges of getting issues of domestic violence to reach the criminal justice system.
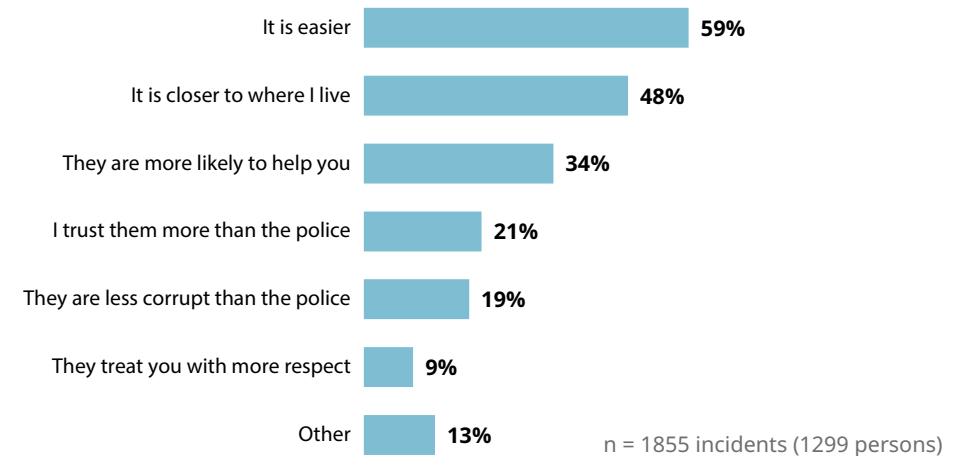
Regionally, people in the Northern region are most likely to give answers signalling the nearest police station is too far away and reporting would take up too much time, even though they rarely indicate the issue was not serious enough. People in the northern region are also most likely to report to other authorities instead or have family members or friends help them address the issue and often believe the issue was not a reportable crime. People in Kampala, on the other hand, are significantly more likely than people in other regions to say that reporting would be too complicated or time consuming and that the police would not do anything to help them.

Many people report criminal incidents to other authorities, either in addition to going to the police or instead of going to the police. The engagement of other actors than the police is most common in the northern region, followed by the eastern region, and the western region. Older people are more likely to take a criminal incident to another actor than the police than younger people.

The two most common reasons people give why they prefer reporting

REASONS FOR REPORTING A CRIME SOMEWHERE ELSE THAN THE POLICE

Reason	Percentage
It is easier	**59%**
It is closer to where I live	**48%**
They are more likely to help you	**34%**
I trust them more than the police	**21%**
They are less corrupt than the police	**19%**
They treat you with more respect	**9%**
Other	**13%**

n = 1855 incidents (1299 persons)

People tend to be more satisfied with other authorities than with the police

a criminal incident to another actor than the police are about convenience: people perceive it as being easier and it is closer to where they live. The latter answer is especially common in the northern region.

One in three people also say another actor is more likely to help you than the police, especially when it concerns a violent crime. Less common reasons are about issues of trust, corruption, and respect, although these answers are somewhat more common when it concerns a violent or sexual crime.

When reporting an incident to the police or another authority, people are either satisfied or very satisfied in nearly half of the instances (46%). However, there are significant differences between the different

authorities. In general, people are more satisfied with how any of the more informal justice providers handled the matter than how the police handled the matter.

SATISFACTION WITH HOW MATTER WAS HANDLED

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
Police	8%	26%	15%	28%	22%
Local council court	10%	41%	20%	20%	8%
Local defence unit	11%	40%	21%	24%	24%
Customary or traditional authority	17%	50%	16%	11%	11%
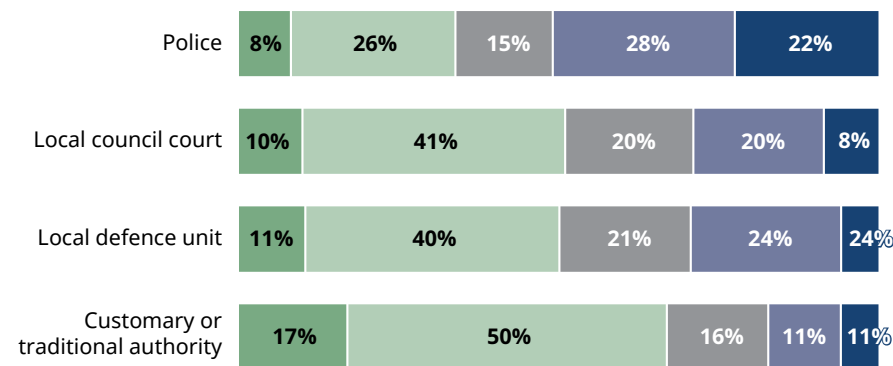
n = 1471 (police) / 2213 (local council court) / 370 (local defence unit) / 158 (customary or traditional authority) incidents

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

People are unsatisfied with the police because their matter is unresolved

Around 51% of people who reported a criminal incident to a local council court or a local defence unit are (very) satisfied with how the matter was handled, compared to only 34% of people who reported it to the police. Customary and traditional authorities are most often positively assessed (67% positive or very positive), but overall engagement of these actors is very low.

People are most positive about how the police handled their matter in the western (45%) and northern (42%) regions, while they are less satisfied in Kampala (34%), the eastern (30%) and

central region (25%). Satisfaction with other actors is relatively similar across different regions.

Satisfaction rates are higher for violent and sexual crimes than for property crimes, a difference that exists with all providers. One major exception is rape cases, one of the crime types that is more often reported to the police than elsewhere. Although overall numbers are too low to draw any firm conclusions, the data suggests that victims of rape who reported the incident to the police are much less satisfied with how the matter was handled than victims who reported the incident to another authority.

The main reasons why people are unsatisfied with how the police handled the matter have to do with outcomes. As noted earlier, people are most often unsatisfied with how their matter is handled when it concerns property crimes, such as burglary and theft of personal items. As a result, the main

reasons why people are unsatisfied with how the police handled the matter are that they did not recover their property, did not catch the offender, or simply did not do enough. As shown above, even though reporting a crime to the police increases the likelihood of the offender being apprehended and

REASONS FOR BEING UNSATISFIED WITH POLICE

Did not recover my property	55%
Did not do enough	52%
Did not catch the offender	52%
Did not keep me properly informed	15%
Were not interested / did not listen to me	12%
Did not treat me with respect / were impolite	8%
Were slow to arrive	6%
Other	21%
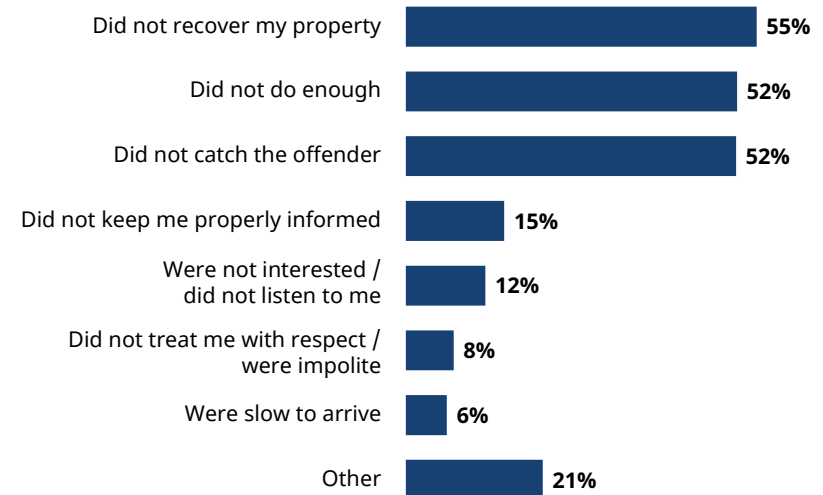
n = 746 incidents (586 persons)

the stolen property being recovered, this still happens only in around one out of four cases.

A lack of respect and listening are much less common reasons for people to be unsatisfied with the police. The main exception is again victims of rape, for whom these are among the most common reasons for their dissatisfaction. Although overall numbers are low, around 60% say the police were not interested and did not listen to them and 30% said they were impolite and did not treat them with respect.

6

Perceptions of the criminal justice system and agencies

Requesting police assistance is easier in urban areas than in rural areas

This final chapter explores Ugandans' perception of the criminal justice system and key agencies, in particular the police. Understanding public attitudes towards these institutions is a critical component of evaluating their legitimacy, accessibility, and perceived effectiveness. This chapter therefore helps to understand whether the people in Uganda believe the criminal justice system is actually working for them.

Around one in three people have turned to the police for some assistance in the past year. This could be assistance for all kinds of reasons, not necessarily only because they had become a victim of a crime. For example, people might turn to the police because of a dispute with a noisy neighbour or after a traffic accident. Men are more likely to have sought police assistance than women, and people in the middle age categories are more likely to have done so than people in the youngest and oldest age groups.
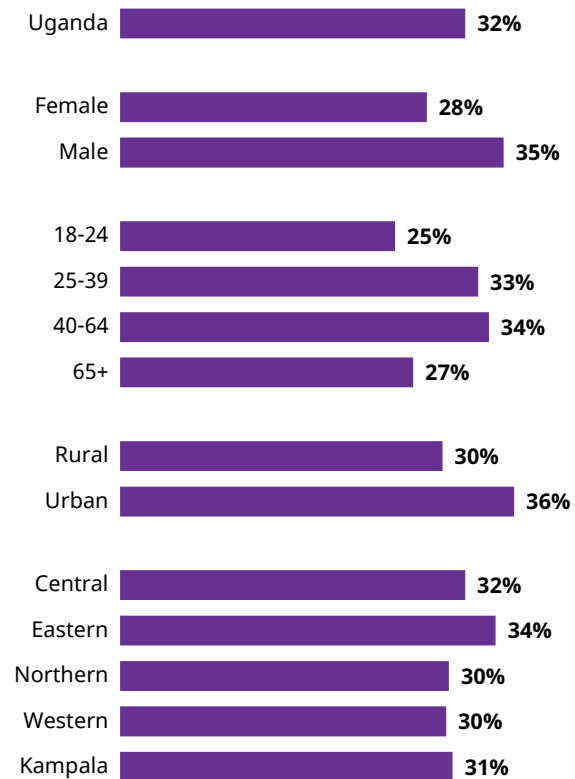
Regionally speaking, people in urban areas are more likely to have requested police assistance than people in rural areas. The differences between the various regions are minimal.
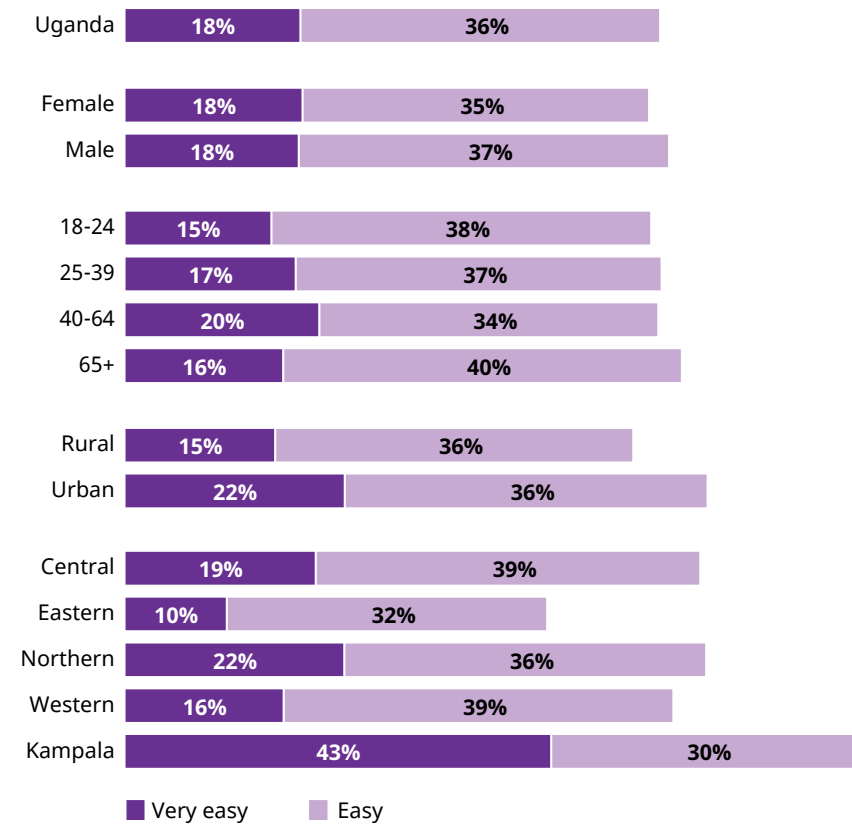
A slight majority of people (54%) who requested police assistance found it easy or very easy to get the assistance they needed. There are no demographic differences, but people in urban areas find it more often very easy than people in regional areas. This is primarily a result of people in Kampala indicating much more often that it was very easy to get the assistance they needed. People in the eastern region are least likely to say it was very easy.

REQUESTED POLICE ASSISTANCE IN LAST YEAR

Respondents were asked: *In the past twelve months, have you requested any assistance from the police?*

Uganda	32%
Female	28%
Male	35%
18-24	25%
25-39	33%
40-64	34%
65+	27%
Rural	30%
Urban	36%
Central	32%
Eastern	34%
Northern	30%
Western	30%
Kampala	31%

EASE OF GETTING POLICE ASSISTANCE

Respondents were asked: *How easy or difficult was it to obtain the assistance you needed?*

	Very easy	Easy
Uganda	18%	36%
Female	18%	35%
Male	18%	37%
18-24	15%	38%
25-39	17%	37%
40-64	20%	34%
65+	16%	40%
Rural	15%	36%
Urban	22%	36%
Central	19%	39%
Eastern	10%	32%
Northern	22%	36%
Western	16%	39%
Kampala	43%	30%

■ Very easy   ■ Easy

Ugandans believe the police are good at controlling crime, but do not always operate in a professional manner

Most people say that in the past twelve months they encountered the police either once or twice, or a few times. Only 15% of people indicate they encountered the police often, while 29% do not know. People in urban areas (especially Kampala) are most likely to say they encountered the police often in the last year. How often people encounter the police does not have a significant relationship with people's feelings of safety and their perception of police performance.

We assessed people's perceptions of the police through a set of three questions. Most Ugandans find the police are doing a good job at controlling crime, but people are slightly more critical about the extent to which they operate in a professional manner and respect the rights of all citizens. People are more or less evenly divided on the question of whether the police often stop people without good reason, with a slight majority of people believing this is rarely or never the case.

HOW OFTEN ENCOUNTERED POLICE IN LAST YEAR

Respondents were asked: *In the past twelve months, how often have you encountered the police in other situations, like at checkpoints, during identity checks or traffic stops, or during an investigation?*

25%	31%	15%	29%

■ Once or twice ■ A few times ■ Often ■ Do not know
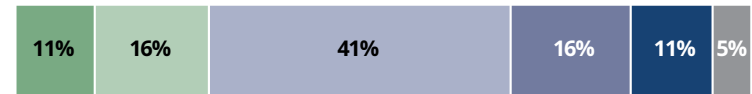
n = 4892

HOW GOOD IS POLICE AT CONTROLLING CRIME

Respondents were asked: *Taking everything into account, how good do you think the police in your area are at controlling crime?*

14%	52%	17%	11%	6%

■ Very well ■ Fairy well ■ Fairy badly ■ Very badly ■ Do not know

POLICE OPERATES IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER

Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, does the police in Uganda operate in a professional manner and respect the rights of all citizens?*

11%	16%	41%	16%	11%	5%

■ Always ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes
■ Rarely ■ Never ■ Do not know

n = 4892

POLICE STOPS PEOPLE WITHOUT A GOOD REASON

Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how often does the police in Uganda stop people without good reason?*

15%	21%	33%	14%	7%	10%

■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Sometimes
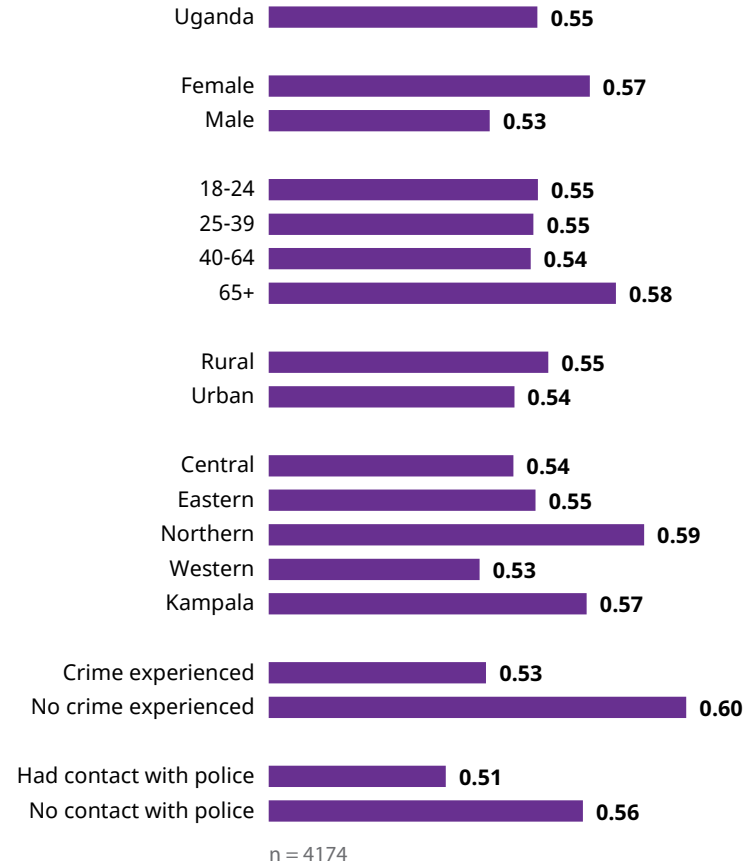■ Most of the time ■ Always ■ Do not know

n = 4892

Combining the answers to these three questions into a police perception measure (ranging from zero to one, where one is most positive) allows for an easy comparison of demographic and regional differences of police perceptions. It shows that women are generally more positive about the performance of the police than men and the oldest age group is more positive than the three other age groups. Differences between rural and urban areas are small, whereas regionally speaking people in the northern region and Kampala are most positive.

The most important factors whether people are positive about the police is whether they experienced a crime or not and whether they contacted the police or not. People who experienced a crime and people who requested general assistance from the police (not necessarily in response to a crime) are significantly less positive about the performance of the police than people who did not.

POLICE PERCEPTION MEASURE

Uganda	0.55
Female	0.57
Male	0.53
18-24	0.55
25-39	0.55
40-64	0.54
65+	0.58
Rural	0.55
Urban	0.54
Central	0.54
Eastern	0.55
Northern	0.59
Western	0.53
Kampala	0.57
Crime experienced	0.53
No crime experienced	0.60
Had contact with police	0.51
No contact with police	0.56

n = 4174

People are relatively positive about the criminal justice system's performance

To assess peoples' perception of the criminal justice system as a whole, we asked a set of four questions that give some indications about the legitimacy and effectiveness of the system. In general, Ugandans seem relatively positive about how the government and criminal justice system function.
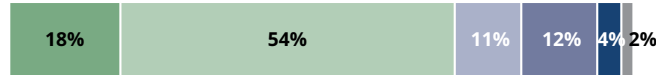
PERCEPTIONS OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

If I became a victim of a crime, I would know where to report it

| 30% | 61% | 4% 4% |

The government is generally doing a good job in preventing and addressing crime in Uganda

| 12% | 52% | 16% | 11% | 5% | 4% |

It is generally easy to report a crime when you become a victim

| 18% | 54% | 11% | 12% | 4% | 2% |

The criminal justice system in Uganda is effective in prosecuting and convicting criminal offenders

| 6% | 36% | 20% | 16% | 6% | 16% |

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither
■ Disagree   ■ Strongly disagree   ■ Do not know   n = 4892

More than nine out of ten people think that if they became a victim of a crime, they would know where to report it. A large majority of people (72%) also believe that it is generally easy to report a crime when you become a victim. A smaller percentage of people, but still a majority (64%), says the government is generally doing a good job in preventing and addressing crime in Uganda. The only statement a majority of people do not agree with is that the criminal justice system in Uganda is effective in prosecuting and convicting criminal offenders. This matches the main reasons why people are unsatisfied with the police after reporting their crime, as highlighted in the previous chapter.[26]

Similar to the police perception measure discussed above, a criminal justice perception measure (made up of answers to the four questions above) allows for easy demographic and regional comp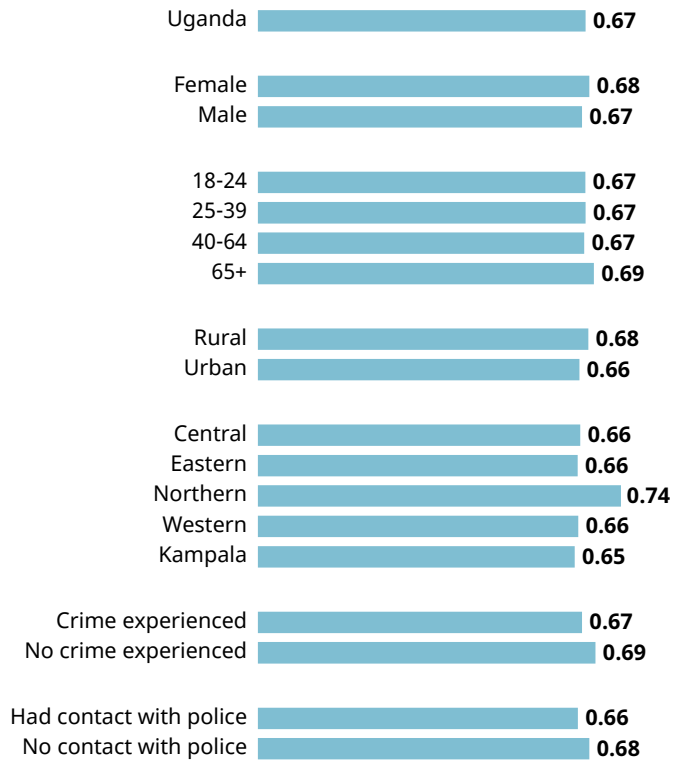arisons of Ugandans' perceptions of the criminal justice system. Overall, these differences are smaller than when it comes to people's perceptions of the police. Gender and age differences are rather minimal, as are the differences between people in rural areas and people in urban areas. Even the effects of experiencing a crime or contacting the police are small.

The only real significant difference is in the regional comparison, where the northern region stands out for being much more positive than the other parts of the country. People are especially much more positive about how good a job the government is doing in preventing and addressing crime and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

26 Primarily that the police did not catch the offender or recover their property.

Ugandans have particularly high levels of trust in local council courts
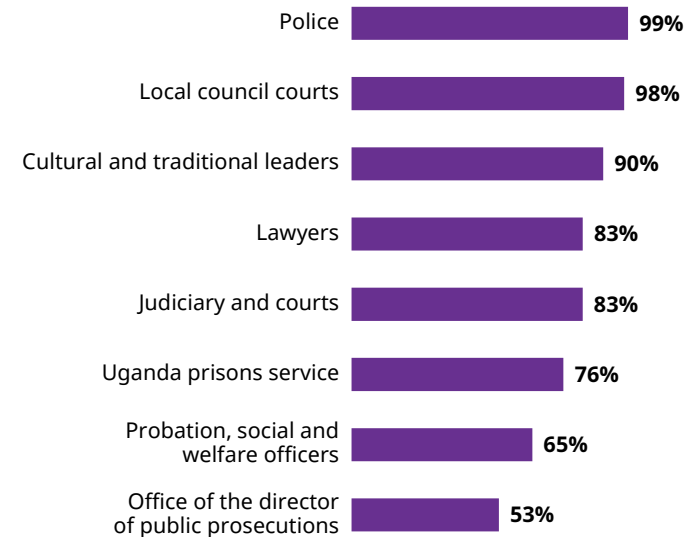
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM PERCEPTIONS MEASURE

Uganda	0.67
Female	0.68
Male	0.67
18-24	0.67
25-39	0.67
40-64	0.67
65+	0.69
Rural	0.68
Urban	0.66
Central	0.66
Eastern	0.66
Northern	0.74
Western	0.66
Kampala	0.65
Crime experienced	0.67
No crime experienced	0.69
Had contact with police	0.66
No contact with police	0.68

To get a more detailed understanding of Ugandans' perceptions of the criminal justice system, we asked people about their levels of trust in a range of different agencies that operate within the system. As people could also indicate they had not heard enough about an agency to say, we can estimate how well-known different agencies are to the public. The highest rates of familiarity are for the police and local council courts, which are both nearly unanimously known. After that, most people are also familiar with

FAMILIARITY WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES

Respondents were asked: *How much do you trust each of the following in Uganda, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?*

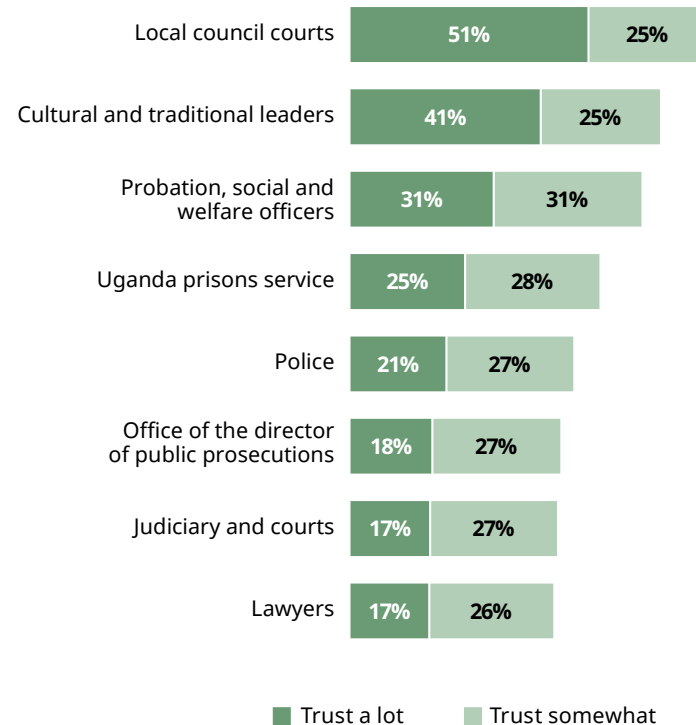|	
Police	99%
Local council courts	98%
Cultural and traditional leaders	90%
Lawyers	83%
Judiciary and courts	83%
Uganda prisons service	76%
Probation, social and welfare officers	65%
Office of the director of public prosecutions	53%

cultural and traditional leaders, the judiciary and courts, lawyers, and the Uganda prisons service. The least known agencies are probation, social and welfare officers and the office of the director of public prosecutions, although the specific wording might play a role in this.[27]

For those agencies people are familiar enough with, the highest levels of trust are expressed in local council

courts and cultural and traditional leaders. More than three out of four people (67%) indicate they trust local council courts somewhat or a lot; for cultural and traditional leaders the percentage is 66%. Most other agencies are trusted by less than half of the people who indicated they had heard enough about them to say, with the exception of Uganda prisons service and probation, social and welfare officers.

TRUST IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES
Among people who are familiar with them

Respondents were asked: *How much do you trust each of the following in Uganda, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?*

Agency	Trust a lot	Trust somewhat
Local council courts	51%	25%
Cultural and traditional leaders	41%	25%
Probation, social and welfare officers	31%	31%
Uganda prisons service	25%	28%
Police	21%	27%
Office of the director of public prosecutions	18%	27%
Judiciary and courts	17%	27%
Lawyers	17%	26%

■ Trust a lot   ■ Trust somewhat

27 For example, people might not recognise the relatively formal name 'office of the director of public prosecutions', but would have recognised a more colloquial name.

About the JNS

Justice is not just about the number of reported crimes. Nor is it about courts and laws. It is about common people. Their daily lives, their pain and frustration – and the justice outcomes that they get or do not get.

That is why we listen to people in each country to measure their satisfaction. We collect the voices of thousands with our Justice Needs & Satisfaction Survey (JNS) tool. It is the state of play that reveals people's actual legal problems, experiences and access to justice.

Adjusted to the specific context of the country it provides in-depth understanding for people working in the justice sector. Where possible, it is tailored to measure the experiences of specific demographic groups or a subset of legal problems.

We also make the data available to policy-makers through clever interfaces, so they can work with the findings. The responsible use of this data leads to knowledge, creates empowerment, and builds accountability.

The countries we have worked in since 2014 include Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ethiopia, Honduras, Kenya, Iraq, Mali, Morocco, the Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Ukraine, and the United States. In 2025, we plan to publish reports on Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Zambia. For more information, data, and insights, visit:
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