

ANALYSIS OF CORRUPTION TRENDS (AGT)

2020



CONTENTS

ACT REPORT 2020

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PG 01

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

PG 02

BACKGROUND

PG 03

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE DATA

PG 05

UNPACKING THE TRENDING AREAS

Corruption in the Saps

Corruption in Local Government

Corruption in Schools

Corruption in the Health Sector

PG 09

CONCLUSION



BACKGROUND

If it were truly possible to quantify the devastating impact of corruption as easily as we can tally war casualties, then we would realise that the tragic mayhem brought about by individuals' covetousness in present day South Africa is comparable to a World War III scenario. But the destruction is silent and people observe in morbid fascination as the pockets of kleptocrats are lined with ill-gotten gains and consequently, the healthcare system is strained, schools are empty shells, and police protection is granted to the highest bidders while the poorest in society are brutalised and left for dead in squalor.

That is how we at Corruption Watch understand the deadly effects of graft and, unfortunately, it may have taken a global health crisis for others to reach this depressing conclusion.

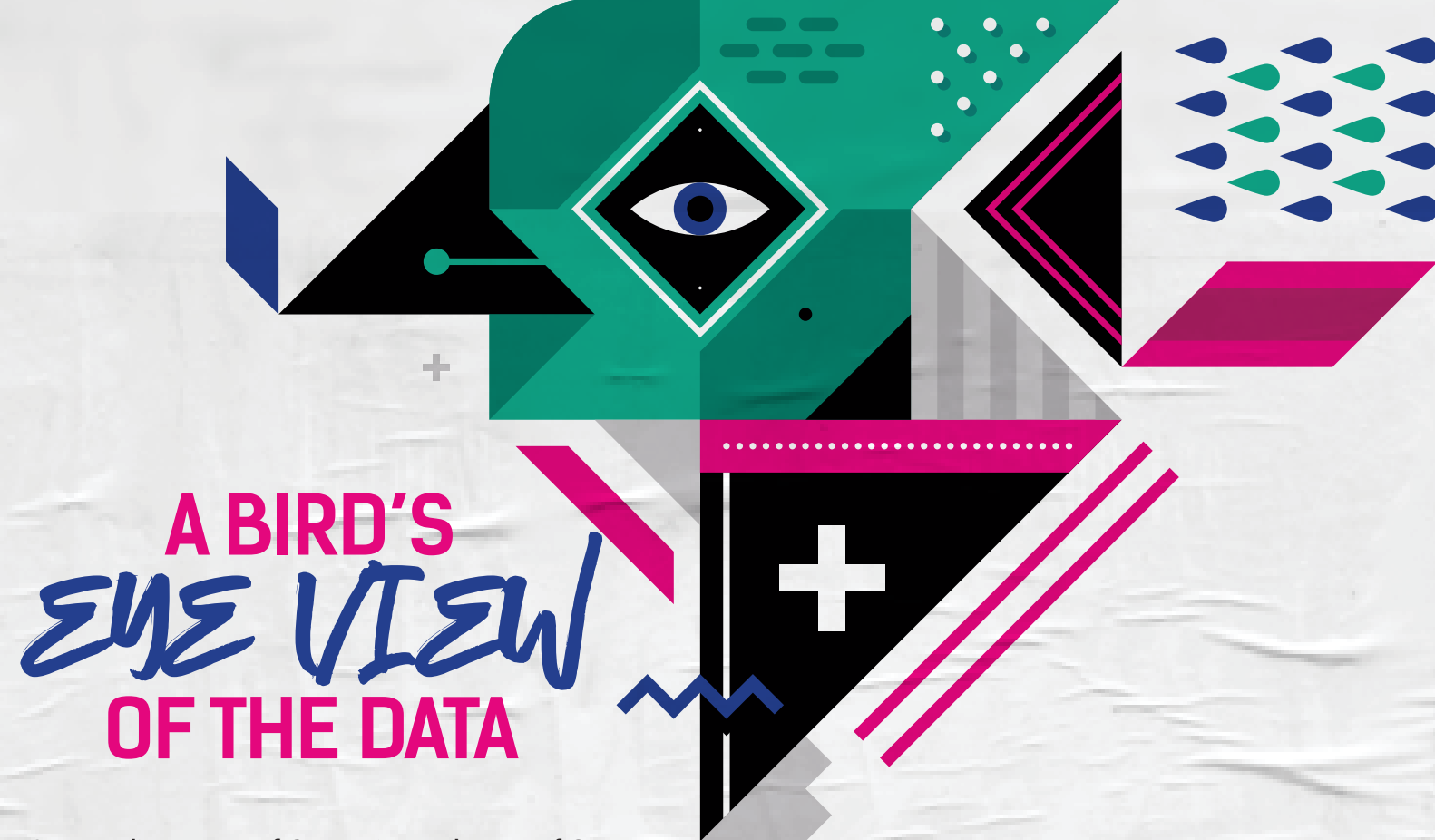
At this important juncture of the country's history, in the annual publication of our Analysis of Corruption Trends (ACT) report, we present half-year data and information as told by 1995 whistle-blowers who approached Corruption Watch during this dark and uncertain period. While understanding that we primarily direct our advocacy efforts at exposing, researching, litigating and investigating a selection of cases, based on limited resources, and also work with stakeholders across multiple sectors, these ordinary men and women from all over the republic confided in the organisation the most harrowing corruption accounts.

As we have done in previous years, in this edition of the ACT report, we provide a snapshot of the acts of graft manifesting in every sphere of government and across a number of sectors in society. We continue to learn of unruly police officials and officers, resources that are lost to greedy officials and teachers at schools, and clinics and hospitals that cannot care for the sick because beds, medical equipment and medication are not provided for or are simply stolen.

Nevertheless, these courageous students, professionals, public servants, activists, mothers and fathers, as well as the elderly, have unequivocally stated that the situation must change. As a result, based on their evidentiary accounts, we all gain more insight into the rot that pervades the institutions, agencies and departments that are occupied by elected and appointed leaders whom we have entrusted with immense power.

HIGHLIGHTS

	2019	2020
Total number of reports	1591	1995
Quarter 1	719	903
Quarter 2	872	1092
Provinces		
Gauteng	47%	44%
KwaZulu-Natal	11%	13%
Western Cape	5%	10%
Municipalities		
City of Johannesburg	27.5%	22.1%
City of Tshwane	9.3%	10.1%
City of Cape Town	4.3%	7.4%
Trending issues		
Corruption in the South African Police Service	9.2%	13%
Corruption in offices of municipalities	6.4%	5%
Corruption in schools	8.4%	5%



A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE DATA

2.1 Trending Forms of Corruption and Areas of Concern

Our working definition of corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for personal or private gain. This understanding cuts through many instances of wrongdoing in all sectors and levels of society. To us, private entities colluding to fix the price of goods and/or services, from the selling of maize to the provision of financial advice, is corruption. Equally detestable, and morally and legally wrong, are the insidious, though at times brazen, acts of impropriety perpetrated by elected officials who somehow fail to appreciate that their responsibility to their constituencies and the state is non-negotiable.

Thus, we look at the reports of corruption received between the first days of this year until the end of June 2020 through this lens. The bulk of these cases, almost 55%, were gathered after the national state of disaster was declared from mid-March to contain the outbreak of novel coronavirus (Covid-19) in South Africa. In this report, whistle-blower allegations of corruption in the South African Police Service (Saps), municipal offices, schools, traffic and licensing centres, and the health sector, count for approximately a third of the reports of corruption.

AREAS OF CONCERN	2019	2020
South African Police Service	9.2%	13%
Municipalities	6.4%	5%
Traffic and licensing centres	3.4%	5%
Schools	8.4%	5%
Health	3.6%	4%

In all the reports received, the trending forms of corruption during this six-month period are:

(a) Maladministration – the mismanagement and deliberate delaying and bundling up of legal and official government processes. This form counts for 19% of the corruption cases;

(b) Misappropriation of resources – the theft, misuse, abuse and wasteful spending of state vehicles, equipment, time and funds. These corruption cases account for 14% of reports received and;

(c) Procurement irregularities – typically relating to the flouting of the awarding of tenders and related processes, these account for 14% of corruption cases.

TRENDING FORMS OF CORRUPTION	2020
Maladministration	19%
Misappropriation of resources	14%
Procurement irregularities	14%
Bribery and extortion	13%
Employment irregularities	13%

2.2 Geographical Breakdown

The organisation receives reports of corruption from all nine provinces as well as municipalities countrywide. Gauteng, the province with the densest population, is where the highest number of claims originates – 44%. These whistle-blower accounts are mainly drawn from the City of Johannesburg (22.1%), City of Tshwane (10.1%), and Ekurhuleni Municipality, fourth on the chart at 7.1%.

KwaZulu-Natal, the second largest province in terms of population figures, follows Gauteng with 13% of corruption reports. The province's figures largely come from eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, counting for 5.8%.

The Western Cape province completes the top three. From the 10% of complaints collected from this province during the first half of 2020, the City of Cape Town contributes 7.4% as the municipality with the third highest number of corruption reports.

PROVINCIAL BREAKDOWN	2019	2020
Gauteng	47%	44%
KwaZulu-Natal	11%	13%
Western Cape	7%	10%
Limpopo	7%	6%
Mpumalanga	6%	6%
North West	6%	6%
Eastern Cape	6%	5%
Free State	6%	5%
Northern Cape	1%	2%
Unspecified	3%	3%

MUNICIPAL BREAKDOWN	2019	2020
City of Johannesburg	27.5%	22.1%
City of Tshwane	9.3%	10.1%
City of Cape Town	4.3%	7.4%
City of Ekurhuleni	6.3%	7.1%
eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality	7.2%	5.8%



UNPACKING THE TRENDING AREAS

3.1 The Prevalence of Corruption in the South African Police Service

For the second consecutive year, this focus area, at 13%, leads in terms of complaints received by the organisation. Whistle-blowers express their despondency and consternation with the police service in an assortment of allegations, which principally highlight the brutality, inconsiderateness and inhumanness toward the public, and lack of regard for law and order that officials and officers display.

In relation to the bribery allegations that account for 31% of police corruption cases, we understand that police officers solicit bribes from suspects and victims of crimes alike, and sometimes from small businesses as well as ordinary members of the public. These demands for bribes are to allow alleged criminals, generally drug dealers, to operate with impunity or to 'make dockets disappear'. Small businesses, mostly informal traders, have their goods confiscated only to have them returned should the owners be willing to pay whatever amount of money is asked for. In other instances, should a public member wish to remain unbothered and hassle-free, officers allude to the fact that they have the power and means to make a person's life 'very difficult' should he or she be unwilling to co-operate (i.e. to part with their money). Such cases were common during the lockdown period. During this time, it was alleged, in a few incidents from the 54.1% of the Saps corruption cases received, that officers would conduct random stop and searches and raids. People who complied with the regulations were told that they must pay a fee to ensure the security of their belongings and to avoid arrest.

This kind of behaviour also manifested itself in the 29% of allegations relating to abuse of power. In these cases, where bribery was not evident, the information that we received pointed at officers subjecting members of the public to merciless beatings. We are informed that such sporadic acts of violence occurred when the officers accused persons of not complying with lockdown rules and regulations.

Ironically, other abuses of power that the police are said to have committed involve the selling of banned goods, mostly alcohol and cigarettes, and allowing unauthorised businesses to trade during the very same period.

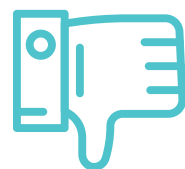
TOP POLICE CORRUPTION TRENDS



BRIBERY
2019 30.6%
2020 31%



ABUSE OF POWER
2019 35.7%
2020 29%



DERELICTION OF DUTY
2019 15.3%
2020 23%

3.2 Corruption at the Local Level of Government

In this focus area, which makes up 5% of all reports received from January 2020 to the end of June, we also look at the 5% of these specific corruption cases that relate to traffic incidents and licensing centres, all of which take place at the local level of government.

In municipal offices, the most prevalent form of corruption is the misappropriation of resources, which accounts for 35% of these corruption cases. We have learnt from whistle-blowers that officials and employees at municipalities have embezzled and mismanaged funds meant for service delivery and development in communities. In some cases, it is reported that tens of millions of rands are unaccounted for and these funds were allocated to the construction of sport facilities, roads and houses.

Going hand-in-hand with misappropriation of resources are the 19% of corruption cases detailing procurement corruption. Reporters claim that businesses, at times organised in groupings similar to cartels, pay kickbacks to counsellors who in turn ensure that tender projects are exclusively awarded to them. The practice is so entrenched and commonplace that some municipalities have abandoned long-term community projects without any explanation to residents. Additionally, these businesses are repeatedly awarded tenders.

A disturbing trend that has emerged during the Covid-19 crisis is the theft of food parcels. South Africa's efforts to combat the pandemic has indirectly resulted in an increase in food insecurity for large groups of our population. A recent survey by the Human Sciences Research Council found that 34% of its respondents were going to bed hungry, whilst medical scientists are predicting an increase in malnutrition cases due to a lack of access to food.

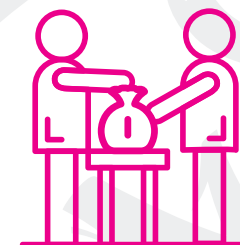
The theft of food parcels exposes corruption in its most basic form – the greediness of those in power who literally steal food out of the mouths of the most vulnerable in our society. Since the start of the lockdown until the end of June 2020, Corruption Watch received 67 reports of corruption relating to the provision of food parcels:

- Members of the public have been asked to pay money or exchange favours in order to receive a food parcel or voucher;
- Food parcels have been distributed using systems of patronage. Reporters have indicated that only friends, supporters and family members of ward councillors were receiving food parcels; and
- Some ward councillors / elected officials have allegedly stolen the contents of food parcels and resold it back to their communities.

TOP MUNICIPAL CORRUPTION TRENDS	2019	2020
Misappropriation of funds	18.1%	35%
Procurement irregularities	35.5%	19%
Employment irregularities	11.8%	12%

In terms of the allegations of corruption at traffic and license centres, the most general form of corruption is bribery, which counts for 63% of these corruption cases. Regarding traffic incidents, motorists maintain that officers solicit bribes at roadblocks. If a motorist is unwilling to pay a bribe or if they claim to have no money, their vehicles and/or other belongings are confiscated on the basis of a bogus offense. Meanwhile, at licensing centres, prospective drivers still allege that officials refuse to issue licenses without an accompanying brown envelope worth thousands of rands.

TOP TRAFFIC CORRUPTION TRENDS



BRIBERY
2019 82.3%
2020 63%



OTHER
2019 17.7%
2020 27%

3.3 Corruption in Schools

Even after our long-running campaign exposing acts of corruption in South African schools, we continue to receive complaints about graft perpetuated by administrators and educators in this focus area. In the 5% of schools corruption cases collected, misappropriation of resources accounts for 19% of the cases. This is deeply troubling. Whistle-blowers describe how principals, assisted by school governing body members, mismanage and steal funds meant for obtaining resources and buying supplies for the National Schools Nutrition Programme. A recurring theme is the flouting of procurement processes when officials purchase goods from suppliers. It is claimed that the process is flawed as principals and other officials with power of attorney privileges return the purchased goods and request refunds, in the form of hard cash, from suppliers.

TOP SCHOOLS CORRUPTION TRENDS	2019	2020
Maladministration	12%	21%
Misappropriation of funds	30.6%	19%
Employment irregularities	15.9%	17%

3.4 Corruption in the Health Sector

In our second edition of the sectoral report published in July 2020, we addressed corruption in this focus area primarily because health is a critical aspect of every human’s right to life, but also, because of the worldwide chaos brought about by Covid-19. In that report we highlighted almost 700 cases of healthcare corruption and we emphasised that those who have been entrusted with our well-being failed to heed to the call for action. As a result, the country’s health system is under immense pressure.

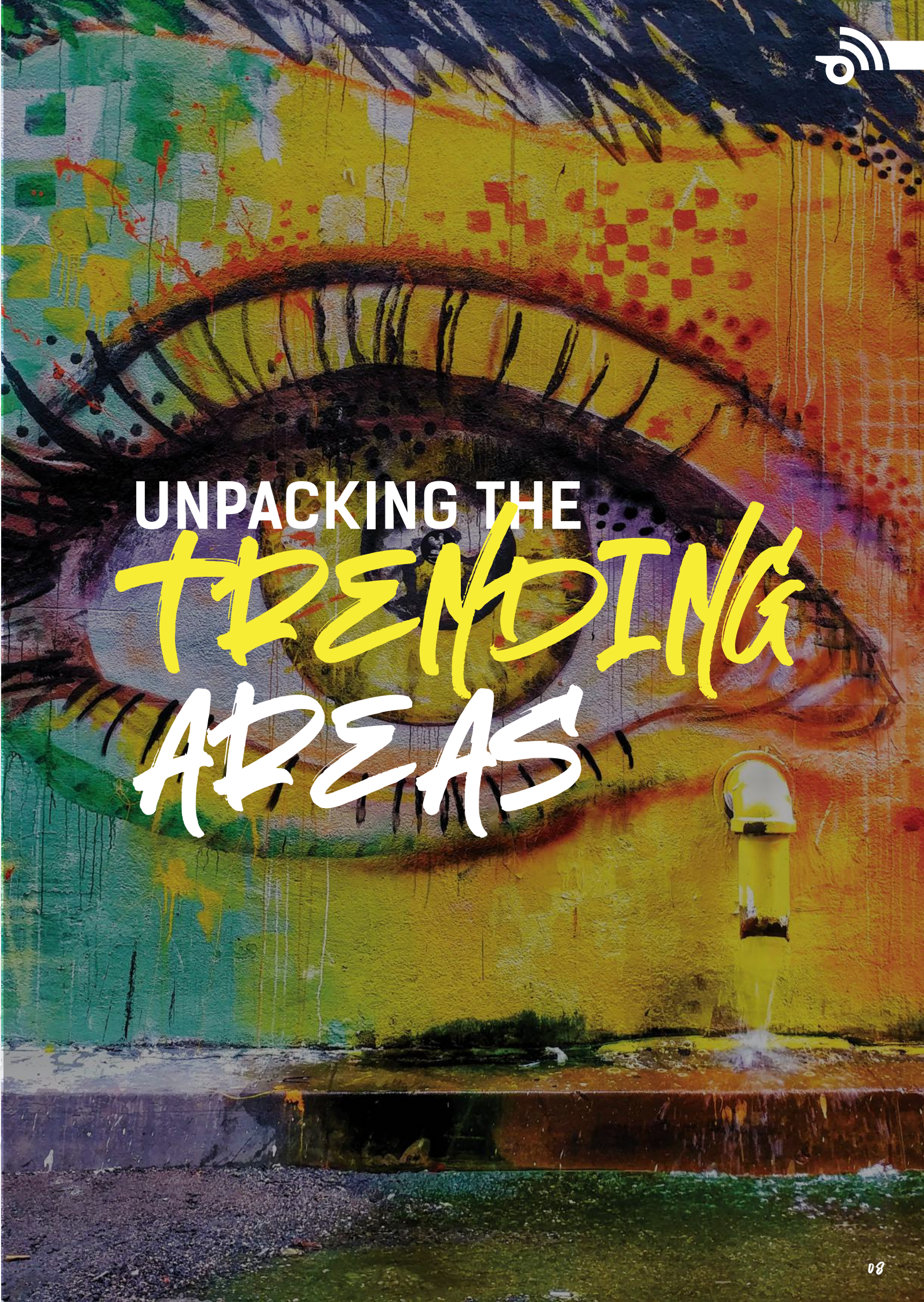
Corruption in the health sector is among the trending areas of concern in this ACT report, counting for 4% of reports of corruption received. Corruption in this sector is perceived to still be a major problem, and at 39%, employment irregularities top the list. Whistle-blowers purport that vacancies are designed to favour officials’ preferred candidates. These individuals are friends, family members and members of political parties. In one case,

Another prevalent form of corruption is employment irregularities, which counts for 17% of schools corruption cases received. In this regard, we have been informed that teachers with fraudulent qualifications and certifications are employed and earning a salary commensurate with that of legitimate professionals. Meanwhile, in other instances, processes are apparently flouted in the recruitment of administrators, and cleaning and maintenance staff. In these cases, we have heard that friends and relatives of officials are often given preferential treatment at the expense of qualified persons.

we learned about a maintenance post that was advertised twice because officials wanted their favourite candidate to reapply after issues with the person’s application made them ineligible for the post.

With regards to the 14% of cases relating to healthcare procurement irregularities, whistle-blowers have reported that senior officials in health facilities are involved in every facet of procurement, thereby ensuring that companies that they have ties with are awarded lucrative tenders. One report went as far as to claim that an executive officer was so heavy-handed in the management of a hospital that they dismissed employees who questioned tender irregularities. Having replaced key supply chain personnel, it is alleged that the officer has since specified which companies must be awarded cleaning, catering and maintenance contracts.

TOP HEALTHCARE CORRUPTION TRENDS	2019	2020
Employment irregularities	33.3%	39%
Maladministration	30%	15%
Procurement irregularities	15.1%	14%





This report, like several others before it, illustrates to us all that the call to act against corruption is incumbent upon everyone. Our failure to do so does not only leave us vulnerable and ill-prepared for the worst set of circumstances, but it cripples our attempts to survive during trying times, such as the current global Covid-19 crisis. In an ailing society such as ours where the gap between the haves and the have-nots is incredibly vast, we find ourselves pedalling in much deeper, wilder and murkier waters. Inequality and poverty increase, leaving tens of millions of people unprotected, without adequate health care, education and shelter – exactly what our reporters are experiencing.

Therefore, ours is to take heed from the 1995 whistle-blowers who take issue with the abuse of power by those whom we have entrusted with our lives and resources. We too must be troubled by the brazenness shown by perpetrators of criminal and corrupt acts. In our fight against corruption, we must demand leadership that is principled, values-orientated and ethical, as well as conduct that is transparent and accountable.

Though sad but true, the call to act has never been more urgent for we are living through some of the darkest, ugliest and most frightening times of democratic South Africa.



END ALL TYRANNY & CORRUPTION ←
WE CAN'T WATCH HELPLESSLY AND DO NOTHING
ABOUT THIS PLAGUE. WATCH OUR PUBLIC RESOURCES
GO TO WASTE. WE CAN FIGHT OUR WAY BACK TO LAW
& ORDER. IT ALL COMES DOWN TO WHAT
WE DO TODAY



REPORT CORRUPTION ONLINE

REPORT AN INCIDENT ONLINE ON OUR WEBSITE NOW.
THE COMMUNICATION IS SECURED AND YOUR INFORMATION
WILL BE TREATED WITH UTMOST CARE AND SECURITY.

REPORT VIA WHATSAPP

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