# Citizens reporting corruption in South Africa: reports received by Corruption Watch since its launch

*Janine Rauch and Liezemarie Johannes, Corruption Watch South Africa*

## ABSTRACT

This paper will present a description and an analysis of the incoming data reported to new South African non-government organisation Corruption Watch (CW) since its launch in January this year. The description includes type and volume of reports made to CW, the channels which people have used to report to CW, whether people have chosen to remain anonymous or not. The analysis will attempt to provide explanations for the patterns and point out interesting trends (such as the predominance of procurement-related corruption, car-related corruption, and the strong showing of schools as sites of corruption).

## 1. BACKGROUND

New South African non-government organisation Corruption Watch launched on 26 January 2012. It was created on the initiative of national trade union federation COSATU office bearers, who were receiving an increasing number of complaints about corruption from union members and from the general public.

At its launch, Corruption Watch (CW) signalled its intention to provide a "secure portal for evidence-based whistle-blowing activity and a resource for information about corrupt activities in South Africa".

> "By gathering, interpreting and acting on information from the public, the media and other sources," Director David Lewis said, "Corruption Watch will expose the corrupt and the misuse of public money."

Central to Corruption Watch's operation is its electronic 'incident reporter' on the organisation's website, and its SMS hotline (45142) which receives SMS text reports of corruption sent by mobile phone. This paper describes the data received during the first nine months of CW operations and some of the early analysis. In addition to these reporting tools, CW uses social media, so that people can share their experiences of and views about corruption on Facebook, Twitter and on radio talks shows.

The personal details of anyone reporting an incident (a '*reporter*' of corruption, in CW terms) are kept confidential, and reporters may choose to remain anonymous when they report online. The data collected by the organisation is analysed; and that analysis used to as the basis of CW advocacy campaigns. In its launch-day press release, CW explained how it intends to use the data: "from the aggregated information – and occasionally a personal story that is representative of an endemic form of corruption – Corruption Watch will initiate research, commission reports and compile sufficient documentation to refer matters to the appropriate investigative or prosecutorial authority, or engage in policy-based advocacy work".

> "Information from crowd-sourcing offers a clear understanding of what is happening on the ground," said Lewis. "While we won't be in a position to investigate each and every report, the combined knowledge of people coming to our website will provide us with a powerful tool to build alliances with other institutions and NGOs." (David Lewis, CW Exec Director, in launch-day press statement).

Within three days of CW's launch on 26 January, more than seventy reports had been received from across South Africa, among them:

- A report of bribe-seeking by a traffic police officer: "a metro cop said if I did not pay [a bribe] he would have me followed and would rape my wife and kill her. So I paid him".

- A businessman described his interaction with a municipal procurement official: "..it was made clear to me … that the bill of quantities would be adjusted to accommodate R 800 000 which would pay all the relevant municipal officials".

- A report of nepotism accused a senior official, Dr M.A Seakamela, the Deputy Director-General in the North-West Province Department of Education. It offered detailed information about his involvement in corrupt appointments of officials in that Department, with dates, salary grades and the names and positions of the officials concerned. This report was referred by CW to *The Sowetan* newspaper for action[1].

- From Cape Town, "the chefs at a school in Nomzamo are stealing the food that are meant 4 the schoolkids" and "teaching posts being sold to the highest bidder at Sophakama primary [school]".

- From a wealthy suburb of Johannesburg: "You have to bribe the supervisor at the Pikitup garden refuse site in Melrose. The supervisor name is XXX  if u don't bribe him, he will not let u dump."

- From the southern part of KwaZulu Natal Province: "Port Shepstone drivers license testing grounds bribe of R1 500 must be paid by black people to pass their [drivers licence] test."

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[1] After a *Sowetan* investigation which unearthed evidence substantiating the initial report to CW, the newspaper ran an article in June 2012. Three months later, Seakamela was suspended from his post, pending an investigation. http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2012/09/04/official-suspended-for-promoting-wife

- "corruption and drugs are high in pretoria west and those people said 2 us they wont go 2 jail bcos the police in pretoria west are their friends. the police they take bribes."

- "At Durban Central C. R. Swart [police station], two [police] officers from collision unit are suspending public transport vehicles, private-owned local buses, then phoning the owner and asking for a minimum of R1000 to get the license disc back; [they] not submit the suspension on da system."

- In Mpumalanga, "this man working for the government at Standerton provincial hospital when he works night shift, he takes hospital trolleys, beds, crutches, stretchers loads it into the back of the ambulance he then takes the stuff to his home where he cuts the steel and aluminium into pieces, remove all wheels and plastic. He then sell the steel and aluminium to the scrap metal dealers for cash."

- "selling, issuing of illegal driving licenses in exchange for money at greater Tubatse municipality Burgersfort Limpopo province"


## 2. DEFINING 'CORRUPTION' AND 'REPORTS' TO CORRUPTION WATCH


At Corruption Watch, corruption is defined[2] as "the abuse of <u>public resources</u> to enrich or give unfair advantage to individuals, their family or their friends" and the organisation is concerned with <u>any such abuse of power or position</u> by anyone, at any level in government or in business. The definition of "public resources" includes:

- Money, goods, vehicles, buildings and any other resources that belong to government
- Pension funds and medical aid funds
- Trade union money and resources
- Lottery money
- Donations to charities.

Corruption is a notoriously difficult problem to measure; and most of it remains un-reported and un-recorded. For this reason, CW has created new opportunities for people to report corruption in South Africa, and engages in awareness-raising work with residents of South Africa to encourage them to report and speak out about corruption.

Their reports – the data described in this paper - tells us only where corruption was observed / experienced by the people who reported to CW: it does <u>not</u> tell us anything about the trends in corruption in South Africa! In order for people to have reported to Corruption Watch during the first 9 months of its existence, they must have been aware of the existence of the organisation, and more specifically of its report-collecting function; and they must have had access to a method of

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[2] CW website http://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/content/mission

reporting – post, fax, email, internet or SMS. None of these methods is entirely cost-free; and they all require a degree of literacy. Some of these methods are technologically advanced (like the online reporting tool on the organisation's website) and hence may not be within the reach of many South Africans. These are factors which will limit the potential number of reports that can be received by CW, and the organisation is aware of, and trying to overcome these limitations.

CW received 945 reports alleging corruption in the first nine months of its operation: it is <u>not</u> possible to extrapolate from this group of reports and make generalisations about corruption trends in South Africa.

## 3. METHOD OF REPORTING TO CORRUPTION WATCH

In this section we describe the ways in which people reported their experience of corruption to CW during the first nine months of operation.

- <u>Internet – reporting on the CW website</u>

The largest proportion of corruption reports (50%) during the nine-month period was received via the internet-based incident reporting tool on the CW website. Over the 9-month period, there has been a steady increase in the use of web-based reporting, as CW and its website become more well-known. End-2011 research[3] put internet use at 20% of the South African population, (but rapidly-increasing) so this method of reporting is still limited to those people who have access to the internet. An area of likely growth is the changing nature of internet access via smart phones in South Africa – and CW's website is increasingly accessed by people using mobile devices: at present around 7% of users access the CW website from phones/tablets.

- <u>Reporting by SMS</u>

37% of the corruption reports were received by SMS. Over 80% of South African adults use a mobile phone[4] and this was initially the most-common method of reporting to CW. Due to the fact that the brevity of SMS reports can deliver only small amount of information, and therefore the quality of reports made by SMS can be poor, SMS reports demand a large amount of labour-intensive follow-up work by CW staff. (CW has encouraged reporters to use the website reporting tool rather than SMSs in order to ensure a higher quality of incoming information about corruption, though of course this only applies to people who can access the internet).

- <u>Email – reporting by email</u>

8% of corruption reports arrived at CW via email – mainly using the email address *info@corruptionwatch* which is provided on the CW website 'contact us' page.

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[3] http://www.worldwideworx.com/mobile-pushes-internet-to-the-masses/ but according to forthcoming data from the *South African Network Society Survey* at Wits University, one in three South Africans uses the Internet.

[4] Op cit South African Network Society Survey, Media Observatory, Journalism School, Wits University.

- Smart Mobile Phones - reporting on the CW  mobi site

1.2% of the corruption reports via CW's new mobi site (which was launched on 20 May).  CW launched its mobi site anticipating that use of the mobi site will escalate as more South Africans will begin to use smartphones and access the internet from their phones. At present, 20% of South Africans own a smartphone[5], (South Africa's smartphone market penetration is 17% for males and 14% for females[6]) but two-thirds of these[7] do *not* use their smartphones as a primary device for accessing the Internet (probably because of the high costs of mobile data in South Africa[8]).

- Telephone – calling CW office to report corruption

1.3% of corruption cases are reported by telephone calls. This low use of phone calls is due to the fact that, during the start-up period described in this report, CW did not encourage reporting by telephone calls nor widely publicise the organisation's office phone number. By contrast, the government's National Anti Corruption Hotline (NACH) receives its reports almost entirely by telephone calls.  In the comparisons made later in this paper between the reports received by the NACH and Corruption Watch, it is striking to notice many similar trends and challenges, particularly in respect of report quality.

- Other reporting methods

Some people are referred to us after they have made initial reports to other organisations: referred reports most commonly came from COSATU or its affiliate unions.

Fax, post and facebook were the less-used channels of reporting; with less than 3% of all corruption incidents reported using these methods during the first 9 months.

 Among the one-third of South Africans who use the internet, by far the most popular uses are social network services – there are currently estimated to be 6.5million facebook users in South Africa[9]. CW puts a significant effort into its facebook and twitter presence[10], in the belief that these will grow in significance[11], though perhaps more as fora for public dialogue around corruption, rather than as channels for lodging reports of corruption.

- Language of reporting

English is the language used in over 95% of the corruption reports, and this is likely a response to the fact that the majority of CW's public communication efforts were in English during the period

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[5] Lauren Granger: Social media and smartphones in South Africa: by the numbers http://memeburn.com/2012/09/social-media-and-smartphones-in-south-africa-by-the-numbers-infographic/

[6]  Mkhulu William Seyama blog at  http://enitiate.me/2012/06/18/south-african-females-trail-their-male-counterparts-in-smartphone-usage/

[7]  infographic by Strategy Worx  at http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/south-africa-social-media_b27585

[8] Mkhulu William Seyama blog at  http://enitiate.me/2012/06/17/future-of-south-african-smartphone-market-holds-promise-for-mobile-advertising/

[9] Social Bakers at http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/south-africa

[10] By end of September 2012, CW had 2 826 fans on facebook and 6085 followers on twitter.

[11] According to Shea Bennet, almost seven in ten of all internet users in South Africa (69.7 percent) are now on Facebook. http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/south-africa-social-media_b27585

January-September 2012; and the CW website (the major reporting tool) is in English only. As CW began to communicate in other South African languages[12] in the second part of the year, non-English reports of corruption increased. A small number of reports were received in isiZulu (1.8%) and isiXhosa (1.4%) followed by even fewer reports in Afrikaans (0.8%), isiSwati (0.2%), and SeSotho (0.2%).

By comparison, the majority of calls[13] to the government's National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH) between 2004 and 2010 were in English and IsiZulu. Despite considerable effort to solicit reports in other South African languages, the NACH data shows that 53% of calls were received in English, 11% in IsiZulu, Afrikaans (9%), isiXhosa (6%), Sepedi (5%), Sesotho (4%), Tshivenda (3%), IsiNdebele (3%), isiSwati (2%), SeTswana (2%) and Xitsonga (2%).

## 4. VOLUME AND RATE OF REPORTS RECEIVED IN FIRST 9 MONTHS

A total of 945 reports of corruption were received by Corruption Watch between 1 January[14] and 30 September 2012. This averages at around 100 reports per month, or more than 3 reports received by Corruption Watch per day.

Although there are few comparable databases, we will also look at the corruption matters reported by South Africans to the government's National Anti Corruption Hotline (NACH) in its first six years of operation[15] between 2004 and 2010. The NACH during that period received 7922 reports of alleged corruption - an average of 141 reports per month, or 4.7 corruption reports received per day. This rate is understandably faster than the rate at which CW received calls in its first nine months of operation; because the NACH has been in existence for many years and is a relatively well-known service; as compared with Corruption Watch which is a new entity. The NACH also has large amounts of resources with which to do nationwide marketing and publicity; whereas CW has limited resources and focussed much of its initial publicity and campaign work in Gauteng province.

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[12] There are 11 official South African languages

[13] Public Service Commission (2011) *Measuring of the Effectiveness of the National Anti-Corruption Hotline: Third Biennial Report* RP: 269/2011 page 10 [Henceforth *PSC 2011 Hotline Report* ]

[14] Even though the organization was only publicly-launched and website went live on 26 January, some incidents were reported to CW staff prior to the launch.

[15] PSC 2011 Hotline report p9

| Calls received[16] by Govt National Anti Corruption Hotline (NACH) over 6 years from September 2004 to August 2010 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total reports | 106799[17] | |
| All corruption reports (clear and unclear) | 10 200 | Corruption reports 9.55% of total reports received |
| Rate: All corruption reports received per month | 141 | |
| Rate: Clear corruption reports received per month | 110 | |

| Reports received by NGO Corruption Watch (CW) over 9 months years from January to August 2012 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total reports | 2540 | |
| All corruption reports (clear and unclear) | 945 | Corruption reports 37.2% of total reports received |
| Rate: All corruption reports received per month | 105 | |
| Rate: Clear corruption reports received per month | 65 | |

The number of corruption reports received by CW in its first 9 months is already larger than the 600 reports which the government's National Anti Corruption Hotline (NACH) received in its first <u>year</u> of operation.[18]  This reflects the remarkable public impact and recognition that Corruption Watch has created in its first few months of existence. It may also reflect reporters' enthusiasm for a new channel for reporting their corruption experiences, when perhaps they are disillusioned about the usefulness of reporting to state channels like the NACH, the Public Protector or the Presidential Hotline. The NACH saw a gradual increase in reporting in each of the early years of its existence. In its first few months, by contrast, CW experienced an initial 'burst' of reporting in the first few months and a slowdown in pace in the later part of the period.

We also take into consideration the findings of the 2011 National Victims of Crime Survey, which presented its findings on corruption in terms of the percentage of households who were asked by a government or public official *to pay a bribe* (money, a favour or present). In the Victims Survey, South African households were asked whether any government or public official had asked them for money, favours or a present for a service that the official was legally required to perform. This differs from CW, which asks people to report *any type of corruption,* not solely bribery.

Reporters who used the website to make their report to CW (about half the reports) were asked whether they had reported the incident to any other agency before reporting it to CW.  17% of them had not reported elsewhere – these could be described as CW's "unique" reports; and the other 83% had reported to at least one other body (Public protector, Presidential Hotline, NACH, police, departments). The large majority of the website reporters were therefore using Corruption Watch's web portal as a 'last resort' and this is evidenced in the frustrations expressed in the narrative text submitted with so many of the reports.

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[16] PSC 2011 Hotline Report p8

[17] These 106 799 calls include calls meant to add-on information to previous calls, requesting advice, children playing on the phones, dropped calls, making enquiries, requesting feedback on cases reported, test calls and wrong number dialled. (PSC 2011 Hotline Report p vi).

[18] See PSC 2011 Hotline Report p8 Figure 1 which provides annual statistics on the cases of alleged corruption reported to the NACH each year between 2004 and 2010.

## 5. SECTORS ABOUT WHICH CORRUPTION WAS REPORTED

In an attempt to understand the spheres of life ('sectors) where corruption was most often reported to CW, we studied all the reports and identified where most of the corruption had been observed / experienced by the people who reported to CW. The 'sectoral' analysis provides key strategic information for Corruption Watch, informing the organisation of sectors which are of most concern to the reporting population. The analysis allows CW to focus its anti-corruption efforts on particular spheres of South African life (in 2012, a major focus was on traffic police bribery, for example).

In this analysis, we look only at sectors in which *more than 20 cases* were reported. There are many other sectors in which smaller numbers of reports were received, but the following were the most-reported to CW[19]:

| SECTOR in which the reported corruption took place | | Number of reports of corruption received by CW | % of total corruption reports received |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unknown location/sector – insufficient information provided | | 157 | 17% |
| #1 Corruption at municipalities (metro, district and local) | | 233 | 25% |
| Corruption involving traffic police officials | #2 Corruption on the roads= 133 | 74 | 14% |
| Corruption related to licensing of drivers or vehicles | | 59 | |
| Corruption at schools | #3 Corruption in the Education Sector = 104 | 56 | 11% |
| Corruption in the Education Dept & in Education Institutions which are *not schools* | | 48 | |
| #4 Corruption in the housing sector and in obtaining housing | | 53 | 6% |
| #5 Corruption involving SAPS police officials | | 43 | 5% |
| Corruption at Hospitals & Clinics | #6 Corruption in the Health Sector | 31 | 6% |
| Corruption in the Health Depts | | 22 | |
| Other sectors with less than 20 reports per sector | | 169 | 18 |
| **TOTAL CORRUPTION REPORTS RECEIVED** | | **945** | |

- **#1: Corruption at municipalities**

CW received 233 reports alleging corruption at municipalities (excluding traffic policing, housing administration and licensing activities at municipal level, as these are covered in separate categories below). This makes municipal-level corruption (25% of all corruption reported) the largest single group of corruption incidents reported to CW during the nine-month period. Significantly, these reports were made in the absence of any specific CW campaign calling for people to report

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[19] And, coincidentally, also to the National Victims of Crime Survey

corruption at municipalities (unlike bribery on the roads, which was the subject of a concerted CW effort to encourage reporting).

The high number of reports about corruption at municipalities suggests that either people are aware (have knowledge) of corruption taking place at local government level; or they may suspect that such corruption is taking place. Importantly, they feel sufficiently-strongly about it to have made the effort to report it to Corruption Watch.  Local government is one of the arms of government that is understood to be 'closest to the people' (like the social grants system) and is also the channel through which a large amount of government spending is effected (for instance on infrastructure for sanitation, water reticulation, housing delivery and some roads); these may be factors which explain the high levels of municipal-level corruption reported to CW.

- **#2: Bribery on the roads: traffic police and license testing**

Taken together, corruption involving traffic law enforcement officials and licensing officials (mainly drivers licensing) comprise 133 (14%) of the total incidents of corruption reported to CW before the end of September. In addition to 74 reports of traffic police seeking bribe payments, CW also received 59 reports of corruption at vehicle-testing or driver-testing licensing stations in various parts of the country.

Bribery involving traffic police officials is one of the most common forms of corruption that South Africans experience, and this is reflected both in the reports received by CW to date and in the findings of the official 2012 National Victims of Crime Survey (The Victim Survey or VOCS). This survey found that more than half of the people who had been asked for a bribe in South Africa were asked to pay a bribe to a traffic officer; most frequently in Gauteng, the Free State and Mpumalanga.[20] CW sees fewer 'unclear' reports in this category than in all the other categories of corruption listed in this section, perhaps because bribery on the roads and in licensing stations is fairly straightforward, unashamed and highly recognisable. The reality of corruption at licensing offices was echoed by the findings of the Victim Survey, which found that 13.2% of the bribes reported to the Survey in 2011 involved driver's licensing services.

A contributing factor to the dominance of bribery reports related to roads and vehicles is the fact that CW's main advocacy campaign during 2012 was the *No More Tjo Tjo* campaign[21] which focussed on bribery on South Africa's roads. CW's first target was bribery involving the Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD), and a great deal of effort was put into soliciting reports of this type of corruption. While the traffic police bribe reports were concentrated in Gauteng (in line with CW's campaign focussed on Johannesburg), the licensing corruption reports came from a range of provinces

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[20] Statistics South Africa *Victims of Crime Survey 2012* page 3
[21] *Tjo-tjo* is South African slang for bribery

| Province where bribery on the roads took place | Combined Traffic & Licensing Corruption Reports | Traffic Corruption Reports by Province | Licensing Corruption Reports by Province |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gauteng | 47% | 84% | 47% |
| KwaZulu Natal | 13% | 6% | 14% |
| Limpopo | 10% | 3% | 10% |
| Eastern Cape | 8% | 1% | 7% |
| Free State | 8% | 0% | 7% |
| Western Cape | 5% | 3% | 5% |
| Mpumalanga | 3% | 0% | 3% |
| Northern Cape | 2% | 1% | 2% |
| North West | 2% | 1% | 2% |
| Unknown | 3% | 1% | 3% |

- **#3: Corruption in schools and in the education system as a whole**

CW received 56 reports alleging corruption *at schools*.  Most of these involved corrupt behaviour, misconduct or mismanagement by staff, principals and School Governing Body (SGB) members in the procurement of goods or services or in the appointments of staff.

The most-common types of corruption reported in schools were:

- members of staff (particularly principals) and members of the SGBs who are accused of theft of funds, goods and equipment from school.

- allegations of corrupt awarding of tenders by principals or by SGBs to companies in which they have a vested interest, or procurements in which there are irregularities in the tender allocation processes.

- allegations of nepotism and favouritism and a lack of transparency around employment decisions made at/by the school.

A striking feature of the reports received about corruption in schools – many of which had previously been reported to Departments of Education – was the reporters' strong sense that  little or no action was taken by the Education Departments in response to these problems. 25% of the education sector corruption reported to CW on its website had previously been reported to other bodies such as the Public Protector, the Presidential Hotline, the NACH or a Department of Education office – these could be referred to as 'last resort' complainants, who have tried reporting the corruption at many other places, and have come to CW as a 'last resort'. The remaining 75% of education sector corruption reports (made via the website) were made by first-time reporters.

Apart from corruption in schools, CW also received a further 48 reports of corruption in *other parts of the education system*, ranging from SETAs to Provincial Departments of Education.

Taken together, corruption in schools and elsewhere in the education system accounted for 104 (11%) of the 945 reports of corruption received by CW, with 6% of these reporting corruption at schools.

There is other reliable research which confirms that corruption is a problem in South Africa's education system, and in particular in schools:

- In the Public Service Commission's study of corruption reported to the government's Anti Corruption Hotline between 2004 and 2010, 17% of the cases categorised as 'mismanagement of government funds by public officials' alleged the mismanagement of school funds by teachers and school principals[22].

- In the 2011 data collected for the National Victims of Crime Survey, 4.5% of South African households reported that they had were asked for a bribe[23] (money, favours or a gift) by a government official in the preceding year. Of the people who had been asked for a bribe, 1.6% reported that the request had come in respect of education or schooling services.

- Transparency International[24] surveyed primary school principals in three provinces in South Africa while conducting research about corruption in primary schools in 2011. One third of the principals believed that the highest risk of corruption was related to the embezzlement of funds at the *provincial government level*, for example when provincial departments procure textbooks, remunerate staff and construct school buildings. (This was the perception of the principals, and was not based on any actual or reported corruption data).

- ### #4: Corruption in housing

CW received 53 reports alleging corruption in the field of housing. The allegations of corruption at provincial housing departments often allege *corruption in the allocation of tenders* for construction of RDP houses and for supply of building materials. In most of these reports, corrupt public official are alleged to have awarded tenders to companies to which they have some form of personal connection, although a number of reports indicate that the awarding of tenders may also involve bribes being paid to official by private commercial companies.

The other type of corruption commonly-reported about provincial government department is that housing department officials abuse or misappropriate funds in a number of ways, for example the allegation that housing funds are used to fund lavish parties or other activities within the department; or that such funds are diverted to the personal bank accounts of government officials.

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[22] PSC Hotline Report 2011, p 17

[23] Households were asked if any government or public official asked for money, favours or a gift for a service that the official was anyway legally required to perform.

[24] http://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/20110727_south_african_primary_education_at_risk

At the local community level, reports received by CW indicate that people find the *allocation of RDP houses* to be fraught with corrupt (or at least unfair[25]) practices. The reports received by CW include allegations that houses are allocated to those loyal to certain councillor/s; or to people who have paid bribes to local officials. Officials are accused variously of manipulating the RDP housing list; renting out RDP houses to which they do have the deeds and pocketing the rental income, illegally evicting people from houses and either demanding a bribe to remain in residence or using these spaces for personal gain.

In the National Victims of Crime Survey, of the people who had been asked for a bribe in 2011, 7% reported that the request had come in respect of housing.

RDP Housing corruption accounted for 4% of the genuine (clear) corruption cases reported to the Govt National Anti Corruption Hotline (NACH) over the period September 2004 to August 2010.

- **#5: SAPS Police Corruption**

CW received 43 reports alleging corruption on the part of SAPS officers.  These describe three main types of corruption:

- Reports of police officers using intimidation to solicit bribes from people. In most cases these reports involve police officials intimidating people from vulnerable groups, such as informal traders, foreigners and women, who are threatened with fake 'criminal charges' unless a bribe is paid.

- The second type of report describes police officers who are willing to accept bribes to make real criminal charges 'disappear' or to allow criminal activities to continue. Some reports indicate that police officers may have links to officials in justice sector, whereby bribes are solicited on behalf of administrative staff in courts to make dockets which are already inside the justice process 'disappear'. Reports indicate that police officers have asked for bribes upward of R2000 for 'getting rid of' dockets or criminal charges.

- The third type of report commonly alleges nepotism and bribery in the appointment of police officers to certain positions, including gaining access to the SAPS at basic recruit entry level.

- Other abuses of power by SAPS members reported to CW include the use of vehicles and other police equipment for personal purposes.

Police bribe-seeking was the second-most common type of bribery reported by South African households to the National Victims of Crime Survey: of the people who reported to the Crime Survey that had been asked for a bribe in 2011, 23% reported that the request had come from a SAPS police

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[25] This may be related to changes in policy criteria for housing allocation and the fact that eligibility for housing varies in different places and shifts over time

official.  In the VOCS survey, 29.5% of corruption victims in Gauteng had paid bribes to police officers, and SAPS corruption was also common in Free State (24.7%) and Northern Cape (23.7%).[26]

In an interesting anomaly[27], despite reporting significant experiences of bribe-seeking by the police; the Victim Survey found that 62% of all South African households were satisfied with the way police performed their duty in their area of residence[28]. Those who were *not satisfied* with police in their areas gave the main reasons for their dissatisfaction as the slow response time of the police, the belief that the police are lazy, and, only thirdly, the belief that the police are corrupt[29].

- ### #6: Corruption in clinics, hospitals and elsewhere in the health sector

CW received 31 reports of corruption at hospitals and clinics – where health services are delivered to people – and a further 22 reports of corruption in other parts of the health system, predominantly at Provincial Government Departments of Health.

- The largest group of reports describe corruption in procurement processes, mainly in Provincial Departments of Health.

- The second-most-common type of corruption reported in the Health Sector was in the appointment and remuneration of staff – allegations of nepotism in appointments, of doctors running concurrent private practices in a manner not permitted; and payment to staff members who either do not exist or have not rendered services due to perpetual and continual absenteeism. These types of corruption were most commonly reported at hospitals and seem to involve medical staff (such as doctors and nurses) rather than administrative staff.

- CW received a number of reports of theft of hospital supplies - such as food, cleaning materials, hospital equipment – by hospital employees.

Of the people who reported to the National Victims of Crime Survey that they had been asked for a bribe in 2011, only a very small proportion (2.1%) reported a request for a bribe in respect of medical/health services. Similarly, CW has not yet received any reports of bribe-seeking by professionals (doctors, nurses, pharmacists or others) in the health sector.

## 6. GEOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN REPORTED CORRUPTION

The CW reporting tools do not require the people making the report to disclose their location; and only the website and mobi site make it mandatory for reporters to describe *the place where the*

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[26] Victims of Crime Survey op cit p 45

[27] Pointed out by Gareth Newham at ISS

[28] Victims of Crime Survey op cit p 31

[29] Victims of Crime Survey op cit Fig 39 page 32

*corruption incident took place*. In some reports (10%), reporters neglect to provide any geographic location data.

Of the reports which do give geo-location information, there is a heavy concentration of reporting (more than 40% of all reports) about corruption incidents in Gauteng province; and approximately the same number of report about each of the other provinces. Table left below shows distribution of the corruption reports by the location of the corruption described in the report.

| Provincial location of the CW's reported corruption Jan-Sept 2012 | | Provincial share of South Africa's population[30] |
|---|---|---|
| Unknown | 8.78% | |
| Gauteng | 41.38% | 22.39% |
| KwaZulu Natal | 8.89% | 21.39% |
| Eastern Cape | 7.94% | 13.5% |
| Mpumalanga | 7.83% | 7.23% |
| Free State | 7.30% | 5.46% |
| Limpopo | 6.77% | 10.98% |
| Western Cape | 4.44% | 10.45% |
| North West | 4.44% | 6.43% |
| Northern Cape | 2.22% | 2.17% |

The concentration of reports to CW about corruption in Gauteng is likely the result of a number of factors:

- Gauteng is the most populous province;

- CW is located in Gauteng and most of its communications efforts (including efforts to solicit reports) have targeted the residents of Gauteng;

- More institutions of government[31] – national, provincial and local – as well as the public service and state-owned entities are based in Gauteng than in any other province.

In the 2012 National Victim Survey, (table right hand side above) the incidents in which people had been asked for <u>bribes</u> (money, favours or a gift) by a government official were also reported most-frequently in Gauteng (10.1%), followed by North West (4.9%) and Free State (4.7%). The lowest number of incidents of bribery were reported in KwaZulu-Natal (2.3%), Western Cape (1.5%), and Eastern Cape (1.1%) respectively[32]. Even though bribery cannot be compared to all corruption, it is interesting to note the predominance of Gauteng in both sets of data.

What is particularly interesting about the geographic spread of corruption reported to CW is how much corruption in *small towns and small cities* has been reported. CW is working with a rough definition of 'small towns' (which includes what others might call 'small cities') to mean urban

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[30] Statistics SA Mid-year population estimates 2011 p 0302

[31] The vast majority of reports to CW described corruption involving government bodies

[32] Statistics South Africa *Victims of Crime Survey 2012* p45

centres outside of the metropolitan municipal areas and the provincial capitals. 41% of the reports of corruption come from these 'small towns'.
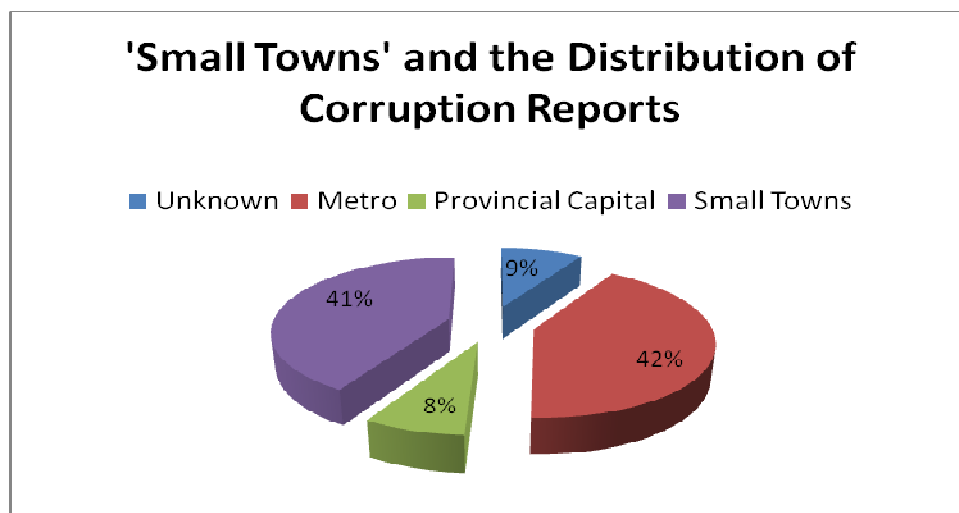


## 7. INSTITUTIONAL LOCATIONS OF THE REPORTED CORRUPTION

In approximately 95% of the corruption incidents reported to CW, the type of 'institutional location' was discernible – in only 5% of reports was it impossible to indentify the type of institution where the incident took place.

| Institution where reported corruption took place | | No. of Reports | | % of Total Reports | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unknown Institutional Location | | 52 | | 5.5% | |
| Municipalities | Metropolitan Municipality | 332 [33] | 152 | 35.1% | 19.0% |
| | Local Municipality | | 180 | | 16.1% |
| Provincial Government Dept / Agency /Function | | 326 | | 34.5% | |
| National Government Department /Agency /Function | | 156 | | 16.5% | |
| Private Sector Company/Business | | 31 | | 3.3% | |
| State-Owned Enterprise (SOE or MOE) | | 29 | | 3.1% | |
| Non-Government Organisation | | 12 | | 1.3% | |
| Trade Union | | 7 | | 0.7% | |
| Total | | 945 | | 100% | |

The largest group of CW's corruption reports (35%) describe corruption in municipal institutions. This is unsurprising if one agrees that local government is the tier of government closest to the people, which more people will have sight of. If corruption happens at municipal institutions, then it

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[33] CW received a 180 reports involving corruption in Local Municipalities and 152 reports involving corruption in Metropolitan Municipalities. These figures include reports on metro police as well as municipal housing. For the purposes of the sectoral analysis, metro police and housing reports had been removed.

is more likely to be observed there, than corruption which happens at a location more removed from the citizenry - such as a private commercial business, or an institution of national government like a prison or court, where fewer people have access and therefore fewer people are likely to observe corruption and report that might be occurring there. It is also important to note that a large proportion (22%) of the corruption reported at municipalities was corruption/bribe-taking on the roads by municipal traffic officials. The other similarly-significant sphere of reported corruption in municipalities was in the housing sector which accounts for 16% of the corruption reports in municipalities.

The second-largest group of reports (34%) describe incidents of corruption in services delivered or administered by Provincial Governments. The categorisation rests on which functions or services which CW has defined as falling under the responsibility of Provincial Government. The provincial government corruption reports are made up largely of reports about corruption in licensing (mainly vehicle licensing), health (mainly clinics and hospitals, but also some at Provincial Departments of Health) and education (mainly at schools, but some at Provincial Departments of Education).

To compare with the NACH dataset, the government's National Anti Corruption Hotline found that 51% of the corruption cases it wanted government departments to respond to in the first six years of its operation, were matters that were the responsibility of Provincial governments

Corruption reported in national government departments/functions/services makes up the third-largest category (16%); with the bulk of these describing incidents in the SAPS, courts and Home Affairs (mainly immigration) offices.

The fourth-largest group (5%) was made up of reports which have no location data and therefore it is not possible to identify the institution in which the corruption took place.

Corruption in private sector businesses comprised 3% or reported incidents; and corruption at NGOs and Trade Unions approximately 1% each.


## 8. ANONYMITY OF THOSE WHO REPORT TO CORRUPTION WATCH


The people who reported corruption by email, SMS, Facebook and by visiting CW office (46% of reporters)  did not have the option of remaining anonymous – their chosen method of reporting involved disclosing some identifying information (such as their mobile phone number, facebook name, or email address) to CW when they submitted their report. CW assumes that they did not desire anonymity and that they were happy to share contact information or identifying information with CW.

However, people who reported corruption using the post, telephone, fax, website or the mobisite (together these comprise 54% of all the people who reported incidents to CW) have the option of remaining anonymous in order to protect their identity. The online incident reporter tool on the CW website explicitly offers reporters the option of remaining anonymous and  68% of the people who used this method to report corruption chose to remain anonymous.

This is similar to the trend experienced by the government's National Anti Corruption Hotline which reports that 65% of the phone calls alleging corruption made to the hotline between 2004 and 2010 were reported by anonymous callers[34].

Anonymous reports pose two challenges to Corruption Watch: it is more difficult to clarify the contents of the reported incident and obtain more information; and it is more difficult to communicate back to the reporter about what action has been taken in response to the report.

## 9. TYPES OF CORRUPTION REPORTED

CW is still in the process of refining a useful typology of corruption in South Africa: this is no easy exercise, and one of the key topics of a process of organisational learning. CW is constantly-evolving its conceptualisation of corruption and its list of types of corruption.  In this paper, we have chosen to compare CW data with that of the National Anti Corruption Hotline (NACH), even though the NACH only deals with corruption in the public service, whereas CW deals with abuses of public resources and public power in any sphere of South African life (for example, CW receives many reports of procurement-related corruption which involve private sector companies; and a small number of reports of corruption at NGOs and charities). For the purpose of this paper, we have selected some types of corruption which enable useful comparison between the CW and NACH data. These do not reflect all the types of corruption which CW receives or works with.

The following two tables highlight the categories (types) of corruption most commonly reported to the NACH and, more recently, to Corruption Watch. Although the names (and perhaps definitions) of the types are not exactly the same, they combine to provide a strong sense of which types have been most-frequently reported by concerned members of the public. However, levels of reporting in each category can be influenced by a range of variables, not least the news coverage, general topicality of certain types of corruption, and campaigns to solicit certain types of reports. Future trends may show the impact of CW solicitation efforts more clearly.

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[34] PSC Hotline Report page 9

| CORRUPTION WATCH CORRUPTION TYPES 2012 | % | NACH CORRUPTION TYPES 2004-2010 | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| General abuse of government resources / general corruption by a public official | 29.1% | Abuse of Government resources (incl vehicles); and mismanagement of Government funds; and unethical behaviour and criminal conduct | 28.7% |
| Procurement Corruption – where public resources are affected | 21.8% | [Public Sector] Procurement Irregularities | 6.7% |
| Bribery – abuse of public power | 19.9% | [Public Sector] Fraud and Bribery | 14.2% |
| Corruption in Employment / Hiring (Nepotism) – where public resources/power are involved | 10.8% | [Public Sector] Appointment irregularities | 5.9% |

The data above suggests that the most-frequently reported corruption in SA is that which involves public officials/employees; and 'procurement-related corruption' which would also involve commercial private sector companies as participants in the corruption. In addition, Corruption Watch has received a few reports of corruption in NGOs, Unions and charitable organisations. CW also received a number of reports of 'threat against whistleblower' which is a category of corruption-related behaviour not captured by the NACH typology.

## 10.    CONCLUSION: THE CHALLENGE OF OBTAINING DETAILED INFORMATION

The analysis of the CW reports was hindered by the following characteristics of the 945 corruption reports:

- 38% of the corruption reports received by CW and analysed in this paper were classified as 'unclear': that is, the report suggested that an incident of corruption had taken place, but there was insufficient information about the incident to enable understanding about what type of corruption, where it took place, the people involved, and the value of the public resources involved.  For example, an SMS report which said only "corruption in Alexandra township" does not provide sufficient information for CW to classify or react meaningfully to the report, yet it does indicate that the reporter has observed, or knows about, some act of corruption.  The large percentage (38%) of 'unclear' corruption reports has a significant impact on CW's workload; as it limits what kinds of action can be taken by the organisation in response to these reports, and it creates work for CW staff who must attempt to follow up with the reporter in order to obtain more information and clarify the report.

- Nearly 10% of reports made to CW did not contain any geographic location information – these were usually very brief SMS reports which failed to provide useful information about the corruption.

- 41% of the reports (390 cases) the information provided by the reporters was insufficient to determine the sector in which the incident took place.

Despite these obstacles, a comparative examination of the reports received by Corruption Watch and by the government's National Anti Corruption Hotline (NACH) shows that Corruption Watch is doing comparatively-well at obtaining reports that are clearly about corruption – over 20% of the reports it has received are clearly describing corruption incidents. The reports to the NACH over many years, on the other hand, contain only around 7% of clear corruption.

The comparison between the NACH reports and the CW reports is dangerous in many respects; the NACH has been in existence for 8 years, and CW for just more than 8 months; the NACH is a state project which has massive government resources behind it and many fulltime staff, whereas CW is a small NGO with few staff and impermanent financial resources. But the comparison is useful in that it offers CW another experience from which to learn. In the table below, we examine the proportion of useful corruption reports received by each organisation:

| Calls received[35] by Govt National Anti Corruption Hotline (NACH) over 6 years from September 2004 to August 2010 | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| total | 106799[36] | |
| All corruption reports | 10700 | 10 % of total reports |
| Unclear whether or not corruption | 2278[37] | 2.13% |
| clearly corruption | 7922 | 7.42% of total reports |

| Reports received by NGO Corruption Watch (CW) over 9 months years from January to August 2012 | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Total | 2540 | |
| All corruption reports | 945 | 37.2% of total reports |
| Unclear whether or not corruption | 356 | 14.02% |
| clearly corruption | 589 | 23.2% of total reports |

The pressure on CW to improve the percentage of accurate corruption reports exists because the reports provide the basis for much of CW's action in the public political space – a detailed and accurate report of an incident of corruption provides CW with a range of potential responses – the report might be investigated for eventual prosecution/disciplinary sanction; or it might be investigated in order to expose the perpetrators on the CW news website; it might become the

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[35] PSC 2011 Hotline Report p8

[36] These 106 799 calls include calls adding information to previous calls, requesting advice, children playing on the phones, dropped calls, making enquiries, requesting feedback on cases reported, test calls and wrong number dialled. (PSC 2011 Hotline Report p vi).

[37] The 2278 cases were either outside the mandate of the Public Service; cases of a frivolous/ vexatious/ tactical nature; or cases, there were cases where critical factual gaps exist, rendering the likelihood of a successful conclusion doubtful or impossible (e.g. no or inadequate description of person(s) involved). (PSC 2011 Hotline Report p vi)

subject of legal action; it might provide fruitful basis for an advocacy campaign to change a problematic policy; or it might enable CW to mobilise partner organisations to act on the information provided. It is therefore essential that CW aims to improve the proportion of detailed, actionable reports it receives from members of the public; particularly because of very high public expectations that CW will *act* against corruption. At this time, the expectations of CW are perhaps higher than the expectations of the NACH or of other state agencies.

[END]

*Janine Rauch and Liezemarie Johannes are part-time employees at Corruption Watch. This paper is not an official Corruption Watch document but reflects the analysis of the authors.*

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