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Perceptions of Justice and Security Services Delivery **in Sierra Leone** **October 2019**

*A cross-national examination of justice and security needs and experiences
prepared by the Institute for Governance Reform (IGR) for UNDP Sierra Leone and the JSCO*



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Executive Summary

This study expands empirically the understanding of justice and security in Sierra Leone. It assesses citizens' perceptions of justice and security services delivery, and evaluates the justice and security needs and experiences of citizens around the country. This research informs sectors significantly of current perceptions of justice and security services delivery around the country. Survey data collected in all 16 districts, augmented with qualitative interviews conducted with formal institutional stakeholders gives a comprehensive image of justice and security service delivery in Sierra Leone, from both the 'demand' (citizens or users) and 'supply' (institutional) sides.

According to this research, **the Police** continue to enjoy the highest level of institutional familiarity among citizens (85.1% of respondents report familiarity with the Police). However, they also received the poorest performance (22%) and trust scores (44.7%). Citizens widely hold the Police to privilege politicians, the rich and the powerful, and are considered the most corrupt branch of the formal security sector (64.2% of respondents characterize corruption within the Police as either high or very high). Despite serving as the primary providers of security at the community level, when operating in isolation, the police are ranked as less effective (receiving positive effectiveness scores from 53.9% of respondents) than informal security providers (who are considered effective security providers by 74.4% of respondents). However, when operating alongside and in cooperation with informal security providers, perception scores of police effectiveness increases, with 48.7% of respondents rating the police as their most effective provider of community security (and 27.4% citing informal actors as most effective in communities with cooperating multiple security providers).

Institutions that are highly perceived to be **citizen-oriented** receive the **highest performance ratings** (The Legal Aid Board, with 46.9%, and The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, with 9.7%, specifically). Conversely, institutions that experience high visibility and citizen engagement challenges, receive the highest 'unknown' performance ratings. **Customary informal justice providers** enjoy the highest levels of citizen **trust** (43.4%), with respondents generally reporting that customary informal justice providers are more effective than formal courts (39.1%). Formal court proceedings are frequently characterized as long and complicated, and the cost of justice is widely held to be high. Institutional **capacity** (constraints) in both the justice and security sectors do not significantly determine citizen **trust** or **corruption** levels towards these formal sectors. Rather, corruption is widely held to stem from poverty and money grabbing within the formal sectors (reported by 60% of respondents). Bribery, as a manifestation of corruption that engages citizens directly is widely associated with the Police.

The Police are a **significant justice service provider** across the country. Overwhelmingly, citizens look to the police not only as providers of community security, but also as sources of legal advice, and they are identified as the most frequently used justice path among citizens who take action to resolve their legal problems (40.4%). Citizens who seek legal advice are very likely to take action to resolve their legal problems. Citizens rely heavily on personal networks (with 56.9% of respondents seeking advice from family members), and the Police (34% of respondents seek advice from the Police), for advice.

While 64.3% of respondents who experience legal problems take action to resolve this, some do not (35.7%). Among them, the most frequently reported reason for not pursuing resolution is **power**, with many answering that they took no action because 'the other party is too powerful'.

Customary informal justice paths evidence the most positive procedural performance scores among citizens. For citizens who address their legal problems through a single justice path, informal justice paths perform the best (for example, along the dimension of procedural clarity and capacity, customary informal paths receive a



57.2% very positive rating, followed by institutional paths that receive a 50.1% positive score. Personal networks receive only a 34% positive rating from single path users). Among those who utilize multiple paths to seek resolution for their legal problems, institutional or formal justice actions provide more meaningful access to justice (one again, along the dimension of procedural clarity and capacity, institutional paths receive a very high rating of 59.7% from respondents, while customary informal paths are rated very highly by 41.7% respondents, and personal networks receive a positive rating of only 23.4%. These patterns remain constant across all procedural dimension evaluation measures). Citizens continue to rely heavily on their personal networks for **legal advice** and **action**. However, while personal networks perform well as sources of legal advice, with 41.5% of respondents citing personal networks (family in particular) as their most helpful source of legal advice, they perform very poorly as justice paths, consistently ranking worst among the three types of justice paths available (institutional paths, customary informal paths, and personal networks). Legal empowerment is therefore very effectively pursued through personal networks, though legal action is inappropriately directed to these paths, which provide low resolution rates and little voice and equality to justice users.

Introduction

The justice and security infrastructures of a state together are responsible for two fundamental tenants of governance and human rights: security and accountability. Ensuring equitable access to these sectors as well as their effective service provision is therefore of critical importance to the meaningful democratic character of the State. Since gaining independence in 1961, Sierra Leone has faced persistent governance challenges, that culminated in an 11-year civil war, ending in 2002. In the aftermath of the civil war, the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) determined the lack of public access to justice as both an instrumental cause of the war and a factor that fuelled its longevity. Since the end of the civil war in 2002, laudable reforms in both the justice and security sectors have taken place, illustrated for instance in the establishment of Local Police Partnership Boards (LPPBs), Family Support Units (FSUs), and the constellation of legal reforms dedicated to addressing violence against women and children.

In 2017, a Public Perception Survey on Sierra Leone's justice and security sectors was conducted (PoJS Survey). This survey usefully observed local levels of awareness and knowledge around the formal justice and security sectors in the country. It highlighted that issues of access to formal justice and security services form the biggest challenges that justice users in Sierra Leone face. It revealed that institutional distrust and perceptions of institutional corruption within the formal justice and security sectors remained high among citizens. 52.8% and 49.8% of respondents reported not having trust or confidence in the formal security and justice sectors, respectively. 57% and 59% of respondents held corruption to be primarily responsible for undermining trust in the formal justice and security sectors, respectively. Building from this work, and other research, and in order to avoid repetition, the October 2019 Perceptions of Justice and Security Research broadens and deepens our empirical knowledge on perceptions and experiences of justice and security service delivery in Sierra Leone.

Drawing from extant research on localized perceptions and experiences of justice and security service delivery in Sierra Leone, problems of inequitable access to justice present persistent and formidable barriers to the effective and satisfactory pursuit of redress by users. On the institutional level, resource deficits, human capacity constraints and a lack of effective institutional channels for information-sharing and collaboration together inhibit effective service delivery significantly. Taken together this paints a picture of low institutional trust, poor access and inadequate institutional capacity. Informal actors and institutions have historically played a significant role in the delivery of community security and accountability, and continue to do so, especially in rural areas, where the limited reach of low state institutional capacity is felt most acutely.



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Understanding user perceptions and experiences of justice and security therefore requires both acknowledging and incorporating the hybrid character of governance in Sierra Leone within research and interventions designed to enhance overall justice and security satisfaction. Additionally, the issue of access to justice for women is significant, representing one of the most marginalized segments of the country's population, who face unique challenges in the pursuit of justice and security.

Lending heavily from the Justice Needs and Satisfaction (JNS) research methodology adopted across the globe by The Hague Institute for Innovation in Law (HiIL), this 2019 Perceptions of Justice and Security (PoJR) study expands our empirical understanding of justice and security service awareness, to focus on the justice needs and experiences of users. Questions that drive this research include: *what are the legal and security problems that Sierra Leoneans face? Where and how do they seek redress for these problems? What barriers and challenges do they face in this pursuit? And how satisfied are people with the process and outcomes of their legal journeys?* Through a combination of survey data and qualitative justice and security sector stakeholder interviews this study focuses on both the 'demand' side of justice and security service provision, and its 'supply' side.

Research Design and Methodology

This research employed mixed methods and multi-level research design to generate a robust and comprehensive understanding of the justice and security perceptions, needs, experiences and challenges that Sierra Leone faces today. Quantitative survey data collection across the country has been used to gather 'bottom-up' data on the justice and security needs, experiences and institutional perceptions of citizens, while qualitative interviews with formal institutional stakeholders has been used to complement this data, and identify formal service provision bottlenecks at the institutional level. A desk review of extant literature on research undertaken around justice and security in Sierra Leone specifically, and a review of the broader academic discourse on access to justice and security moreover were undertaken to help inform survey questionnaire, and interview guide, design.

Drawing heavily from the Justice Needs and Satisfaction (JNS) research undertaken by HiIL around the world, this study adopts a bottom-up, national- and multi-level (engaging justice and security users and institutional actors) survey research design for the purposes of measuring empirically perceptions of justice and security in Sierra Leone. The locus of this research is to understand the justice needs of ordinary Sierra Leoneans, their paths to justice, and identify credible, concrete and empirically-based policy recommendations for enhancing justice and security service delivery and user satisfaction in the security and justice sectors.

The research design focuses on people's experiences of justice and security service delivery. This means drawing from HiIL's concept of 'justice journeys' to gain an empirical understanding of the process, outcomes and costs of their justice experiences. The use of the concept of justice journeys is additionally significant for the case of Sierra Leone, as it not only allows for this research to measure experiences of justice in their entirety, but also enables us to investigate the diversity of justice paths, or the diversity of dispute resolution mechanisms for which redress and resolution is sought. In particular, it has allowed for an assessment of both informal and formal dispute resolution mechanisms, as part of the justice journeys employed by justice users.

Data collection for this study includes a combination of large-scale surveys across the country, engaging with a wide and representative demographic of justice and security users that accommodate for important potentially causally significant factors such as gender, youth, education, and income; and key informant interviews with key institutional representatives (such as the SLP, Ministry of Justice, etc.). Through such a mixed methods approach, we assess bottlenecks from both a user and service provider perspective. Gathering data from the perspective of justice and security service providers is an important measure of data validation



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and triangulation and allows us to identify bottlenecks and challenges to justice delivery at the institutional level.

The survey questionnaire, designed to capture citizen perceptions, needs and experiences, employs a combination of different types of survey questions, including dichotomous variables, multiple response questions, and nominal and ordinal scale questions, using predominantly 5 point Likert scales to capture respondent experiences. Semi-structured qualitative interviews with formal sector stakeholders lend robustness and breadth to the research, capturing institutional level bottlenecks, challenges and recommendations for sector service improvement.

Key term definitions:

Justice path: a justice path refers to a 'commonly applied process which users address in order to cope with their legal problem' (HiIL). We operationalize justice paths as a process with an observable beginning, process and end.

Legal problem: a legal problem is a problem that arises in daily life, a dispute, disagreement, grievance or violence of a right, for which there is a resolution in the formal/informal law. Importantly, respondents do not need to frame or understand their 'legal problems' in judicial terms.

Justice users: the term justice users refers to the ordinary Sierra Leonean citizen who identifies a legal problem in their everyday life.

Sampling

The sample in this survey was designed as a representative cross-section of all citizens of voting age in Sierra Leone. The goal was to give every adult citizen an equal and known chance of selection for participation in the survey interview. This was done by;

- a) strictly applying random selection methods at every stage of sampling and by
- b) applying sampling with probability proportionate to population size

Sample Size

A randomly selected sample of 1204 individuals was selected for this survey. This number is in line with national perception surveys of similar characteristics. This number allows inferences to national adult populations with an average margin of sampling error of no more than plus or minus 3 percentage points (2.8 points) at a confidence level of 95%. IGR has used the National Census data of 2015 as the sampling frame for the perception survey and with necessary adjustments to variations between urban and rural settings. Also, the perception survey uses actual population data, which has formed the basis for such stratification and for drawing the sample.

The survey adopts a clustered, stratified, multi-stage, probability sample design. To increase the precision of the estimate, the survey stratified the sample of 1204 respondents by the key social characteristics in the population, by districts. The stratification reduces the likelihood that distinctive types of people were left out of the sample. The proportion of the sample allocated to each stratum is be the same as its proportion in the national population as indicated by the 2015 census data. Also, clustering helps achieve greater logistic efficiency and has lowered the costs of contacting our sample.

In multi-stage sampling, geographically defined sampling units of decreasing size at each stage were selected. There were four stages of the sampling process in urban areas and five stages in rural areas. In the first stages of sampling, random sampling was conducted with probability proportionate to population size. This has



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ensured that larger (i.e., more populated) geographical units had a proportionally greater probability of being selected in the sample.

In sampling rural respondents in the survey, the following steps were followed:

- i. randomly select secondary sampling units (SSUs) in which we subsequently selected all rural primary sampling units;
- ii. In the second stage, we randomly selected two primary sampling units (PSU's) from within each selected SSU.
- iii. In the third stage, we randomly selected sampling start-points (SSPs) within the selected PSUs.
- iv. In the fourth stage, we randomly selected eight households within each selected PSU; and
- v. In the fifth and final stage, we randomly selected an individual Respondent from within each selected household.

For urban respondents, the sampling adopted the following steps;

- i. We randomly selected urban primary sampling units (PSUs).
- ii. In the second stage, we randomly selected sampling start-points (SSPs) within the selected PSUs.
- iii. In the third stage, we randomly selected households within each PSU.
- iv. And in the fourth and final stage, we randomly selected individual Respondents from within the selected households.

Abbreviated Literature review

Hybrid Governance in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, customary systems of governance have long been recognized as feasible alternatives to justice provision, and indeed have 'long enjoyed legitimacy alongside the state, a legitimacy that has even been formally circumscribed in law' (McCormack-Hale). Sierra Leone therefore operates under a bifurcated legal structure, with elements of customary and traditional law alongside a formalized legal system based on English common law (World Bank). According to a 2008 World Bank study, 'traditional systems (of justice) remain the primary avenue for redress of violations of rights or law' (World Bank), a finding which is further reinforced in recent work by McCormack-Hale who cites that at least 70 percent of Sierra Leoneans 'access justice through the network of community-based local courts'. Informal justice systems therefore stand at the frontline of Sierra Leone's justice sector, which is widely attributed to issues of access and legitimacy. However, despite their significant role, justice reforms have 'largely ignored local institutions' (McCormack-Hale). Any study purporting to capture perceptions of justice and security in Sierra Leone must therefore acknowledge and incorporate the hybrid state of governance in these sectors.

Awareness levels

In 2017, the JSCO, with support from the UNDP, conducted a nation-wide Perceptions of Justice and Security Survey (PoJS) in Sierra Leone. The bulk of this research was dedicated to assessing user knowledge and awareness of the country's security and justice sectors. Understanding user awareness and knowledge levels around these sectors is an important first step in the ultimate pursuit and achievement of equitable and effective justice and security provision. Overall, the 2017 PoJS research highlighted high unawareness among Sierra Leoneans about the country's formal justice and security sectors. An overall understanding of the core functions of each was evidenced, but knowledge of the various organs and institutions that constitute each sector was low. With the exception of the Police, institutional familiarity in 2017 stood at less than 10% for all other measured formal justice and security sector institutions. Unsurprisingly, awareness of reforms that have been implemented in the previous five years was also low, with between one third and 84% of respondents



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reporting not to be aware of reforms in either sector. Awareness appears to be a function of two factors: outreach and enforcement. Poor outreach by these sectors to inform and educate the public fundamentally prohibits awareness, and prevents users from exercising rights and pursuing remedies they are not aware of in the first place. Poor enforcement additionally inhibits awareness in several ways. Policy or reform in the absence of enforcement lacks credibility and visibility, and may even serve to further erode institutional trust, especially when enforcement is uneven and perpetuates inequitable access to justice. Enforcement deficits may subsequently further distance the public from these sectors, forming an additional push factor towards the use of informal systems. Finally, the report highlighted that even among respondents who reported a high awareness of these institutions and their recent reforms, that the majority did not feel that reforms address the needs and concerns of average citizens. It was argued that poor, and uneven, enforcement may play a significant contributing role towards this perception.

In this second PoJS research report, we advance the empirical state of knowledge around justice and security sector awareness, examining the potential for change over time in awareness and knowledge levels in comparison to the 2017 PoJS report.

Institutional Trust

The concept of institutional trust is a keystone concept in previous studies on local experiences and perceptions of justice and security in Sierra Leone. Low engagement with both sectors is attributed widely to low institutional trust, and linked to questions of legitimacy, ownership and power. This research evidences that levels of institutional trust in Sierra Leone remain low. The Police receive the poorest institutional trust ratings, with 44.7% of respondents reporting not to trust the police at all, or only a little bit. 28.1% of respondents report not trusting formal courts at all, or only a little.

Despite its significance, the concept of institutional trust remains treated very simply by previous studies, and is generally restricted to low user levels of institutional trust in relation to the formal justice and security sectors. This research disaggregates and problematizes institutional trust more robustly and advances an empirically rigorous understanding of what institutional trust is, how it can be observed and what causes its poor performance.

Corruption

The 2017 PoJS report highlighted corruption in formal justice and security sectors as one of the primary causes of low satisfaction and performance perceptions by users, with 57% and 59% of respondents citing corruption as the dominant cause for low public trust towards the justice and security sectors, respectively. Research from the World Bank similarly argues that poor institutional capacity in the areas of oversight and resource shortages cultivates space for abuse in these institutions, that manifests as corruption. Poor and inconsistent funding for informal justice bodies is similarly highlighted as a breeding ground for money 'grabbing' practices. 22.6% of this study's respondents report having been asked to pay a bribe in the past. Of the 347 respondents who experienced legal problems in the past 12 months, 29.4% report having paid a bribe as part of their efforts to resolve their legal problems. The majority of bribery requests come from members of the Police, accounting for 72.5% of reported responses.

Survey Respondent Demographics

A total of 1,204 respondents participated in the survey, with a gender distribution of 638 female respondents (53% of the total respondent population) and 566 male respondents (47% of the total respondent population). 593 of the survey's respondents reside in rural areas (comprising 49.3% of the total survey sample), and 610 respondents reside in urban areas (accounting for 50.7% of the respondent population).



Regional Distribution

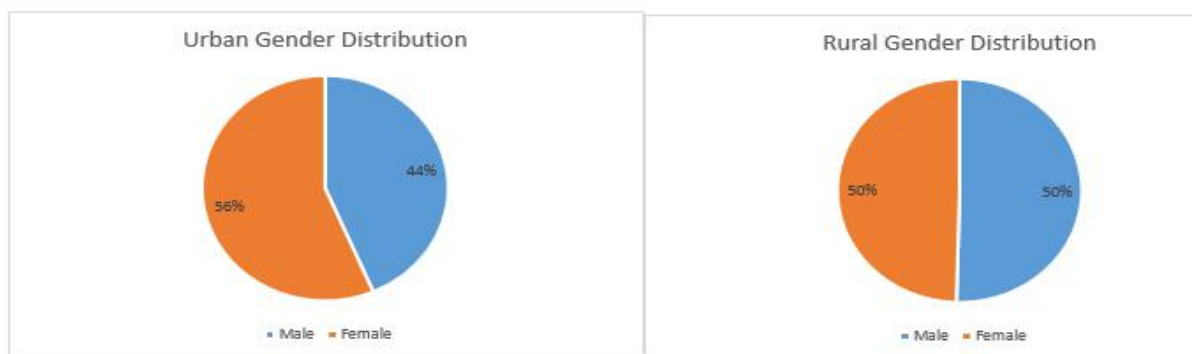
The survey was conducted throughout Sierra Leone, with data collection taking place in all 16 districts.

In descending order, the regional representation of respondents is:

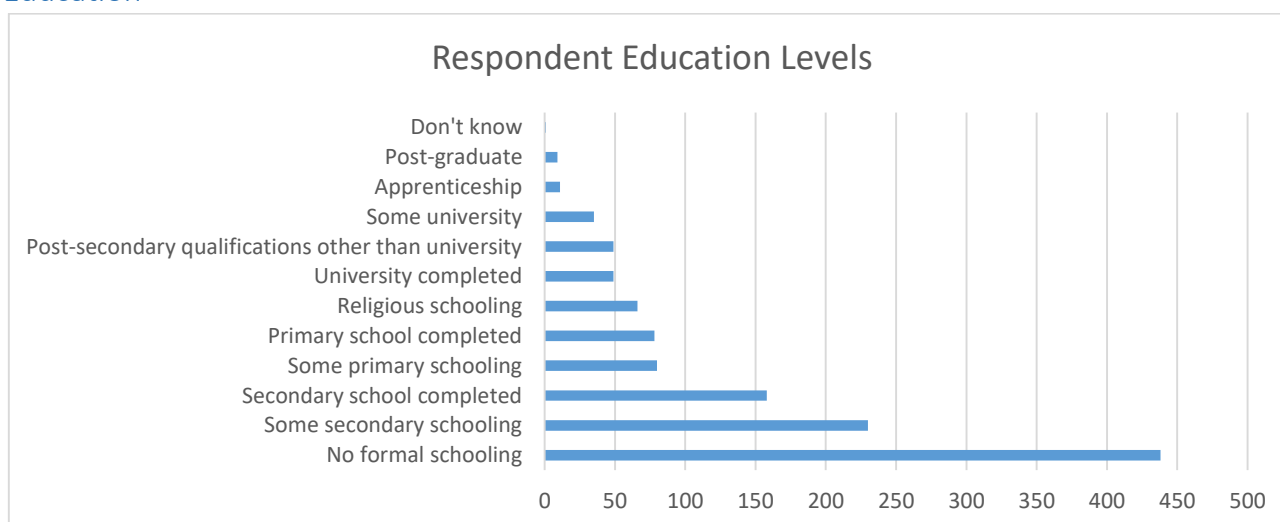
1. West: 23.8% (287)
2. East: 22.7% (273)
3. South: 19.9% (239)
4. North: 17.9% (215)
5. North West: 15.8% (190)

Gender and Geography

The survey was conducted among 294 women residing in rural areas, comprising 49.6% of the total sampled rural population, and 46.1% of the total sampled female respondent population. The survey was conducted among 299 men living in rural areas, comprising 50.4% of the total sampled rural population, and 52.8% of the total sampled male respondent population.



Education



Education levels among respondents are generally low, with 36.4% having no formal schooling, and only 13.1% having completed secondary school. This is unsurprising and reflects the larger problem of access to, and levels of, education within contemporary Sierra Leone, which has been highlighted as a critical area for improvement by its current administration. It is important to note that, fundamentally, access to education is itself a justice issue, and should be treated as such by both the education and justice sectors. Low education levels are



disproportionately evidenced among female respondents, who constitute 62.1% of the total respondent population with no formal schooling, and 63.7% of all respondents who have only completed some primary schooling. Male respondents account for 61.2% of the total respondent population with completed University degrees, and comprise 62.9% of the total number of respondents with some university education.

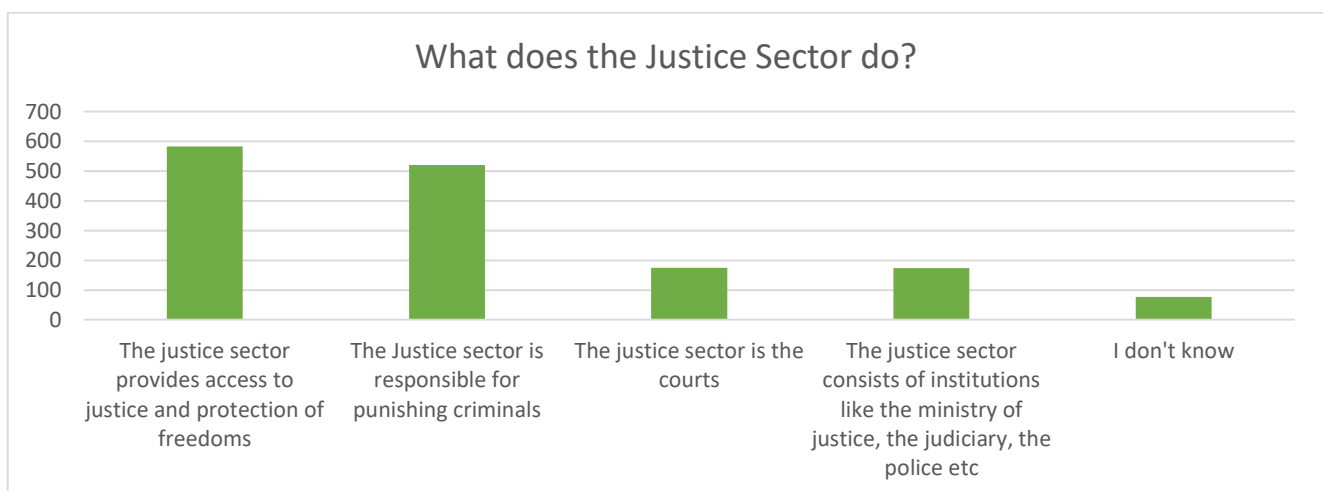
Citizens and Institutions

4 sections of the survey addressed questions of citizen perceptions regarding justice and security in Sierra Leone, to further an understanding of citizen perceptions of the formal justice and security sectors. All 1,204 survey respondents were asked to answer questions belonging to these 4 sections. These sections are: Awareness and Knowledge of Formal Justice and Security Sectors; Community Security; Institutional Trust and Sector Capacity and Effectiveness; and Observing Corruption (and bribery).

Awareness and Knowledge of Formal Justice and Security Sectors

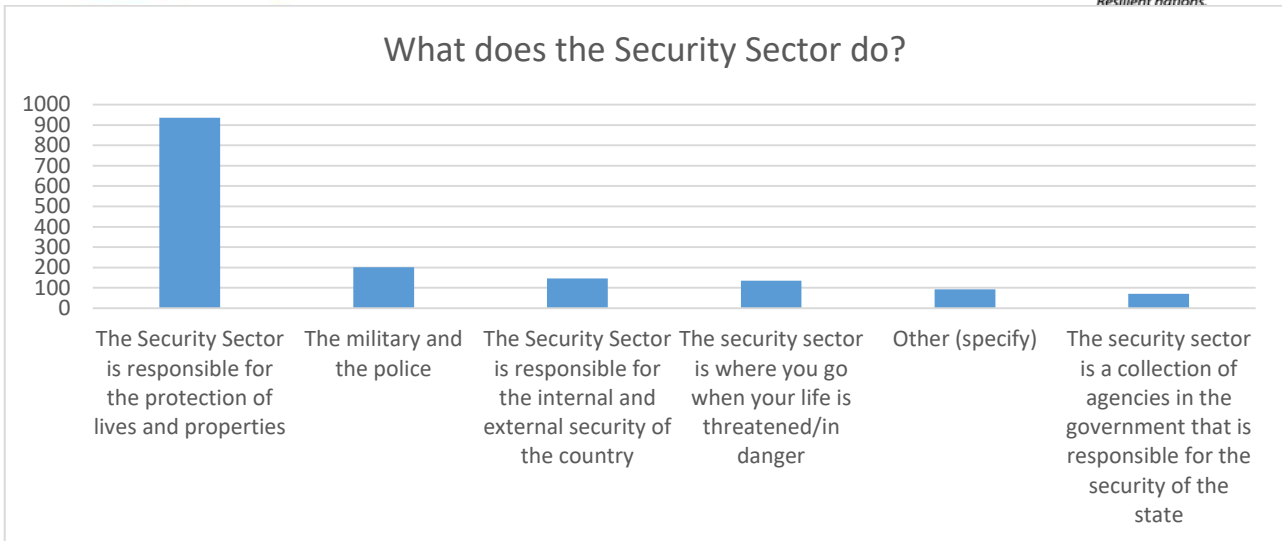
Formal Justice Sector Awareness

Respondents were asked to explain what, according to them, the formal justice sector does. Most respondents, 48.4%, believe that the justice sector provides access to justice and protection of freedoms, followed by 43.3% who believe that the justice sector is responsible for punishing criminals. These findings reinforce those of the 2017 PoJS Survey, which also found that respondents most commonly understand the formal justice sector to be responsible for punishing criminals; to consist of the courts; to consist of institutions such as the Judiciary, Ministry of Justice, the Police, etc.; and to provide access to justice and protection of freedoms. Only 6.4% of respondents report not knowing what the justice sector does. This indicates an overall high level of awareness by respondents of the justice sector and its functions.



Formal Security Sector Awareness

When asked what the security sector in Sierra Leone does, overwhelmingly, respondents report that the security sector is responsible for the protection of lives and properties (77.7% of received responses). This further validates findings from the 2017 PoJS Survey that also found the protection of lives and properties to be the most common associated understanding of the formal security sector among citizens in Sierra Leone. No respondents report not knowing what the security sector does, indicating a very high level of overall security sector awareness among respondents.



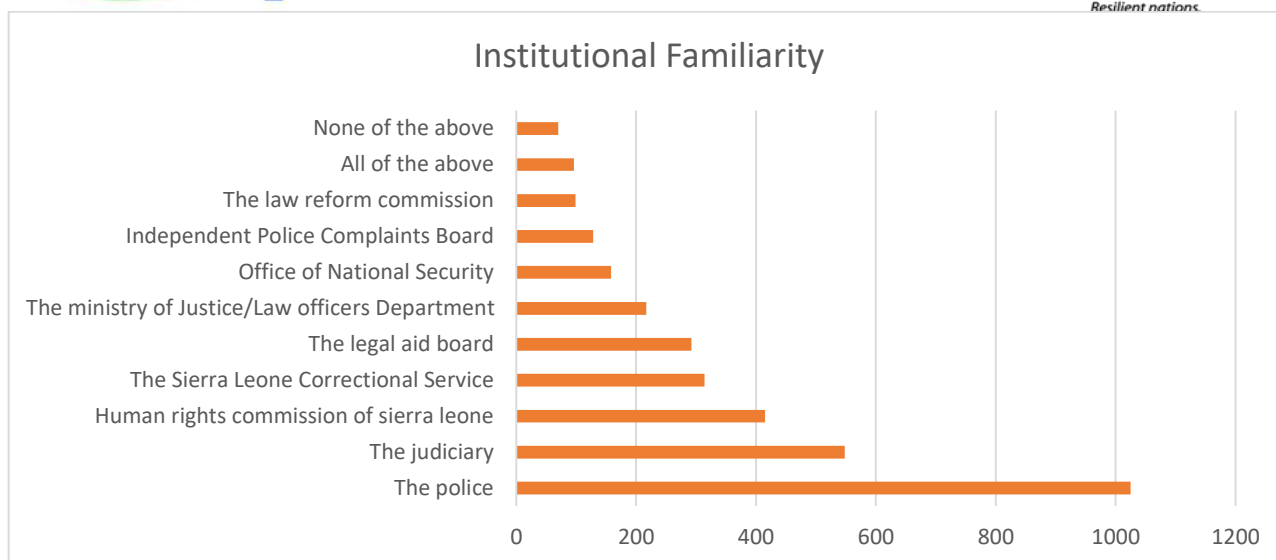
Cooperation between sectors

Respondents were asked whether the formal justice and security sectors worked together. 74.0% report that the justice and security sectors work together, with only 8.5% answering that they do not. 17.5% of respondents (211 respondents) report not knowing whether the two sectors work together. Locality (urban or rural residence) does not impact citizen perceptions that the justice and security sectors work together, with 71.1% of urban respondents reporting that the justice and security sectors work together, and 76.9% of rural respondents similarly answering that the sectors work together.

Levels of perceived cooperation between the sectors by respondents is very high, with most respondents (463, comprising 38.5% of the survey sample) answering that cooperation between the justice and security sectors is very high. 27.2% (328 respondents) of survey respondents report that the justice and security sectors sometimes cooperate, meaning that overall positive perceptions of cooperation between the sectors represents a total of 65.7% of respondent opinions.

Institutional Familiarity

Respondents were asked to select which institutions belonging to the justice and security sectors they are familiar with. 85.1% report being familiar with the police, followed by the judiciary and the Human Rights Commission. The Law Reform Commission (LRC) receives the lowest score, with only 8.0% of answers indicating a familiarity with this institution. This validates qualitative interview findings with formal justice sector stakeholders who report that low visibility and awareness of the LRC impedes its ability to meaningfully engage with citizens. In an interview with the Chairperson of the LRC, a key performance inhibitor for the LRC is reported to be the difficulties that the LRC faces in promoting participation in its citizen consultation activities. Low awareness levels around the LRC, observed through this survey data, offer a salient explanation for why meaningful citizen engagement and inclusiveness is difficult to achieve by this institution.



Institutional familiarity is slightly higher in urban areas than rural areas, and differences in reported familiarity are especially evident for the following institutions:

1. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone: which receives a 39% familiarity score among urban respondents, but only 29.7% among rural respondents’.
2. The Legal Aid Board: receives a much higher familiarity score among urban respondents, with 31.1% reporting to be familiar with it, in comparison to only 17% of rural respondents.
3. The Ministry of Justice/Law Officers Department: receives a much higher urban familiarity rating, with 25.1% of urban respondents reporting a familiarity of this institution, and only 10.6% of rural respondents reporting a familiarity.
4. The Law Reform Commission: familiarity with the Law Reform Commission is low across both urban and rural settings, but much lower in rural settings, where only 2.5% of respondents are familiar with it, as compared to 13.3% of respondents in urban areas.

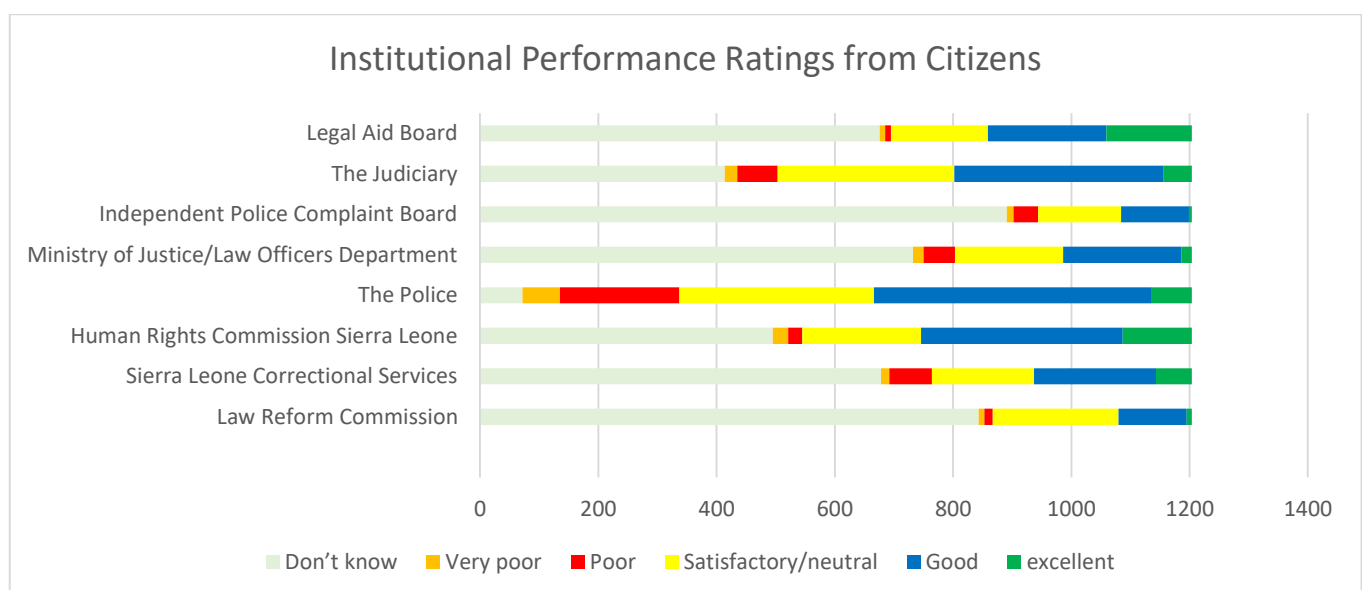
The 2017 PoJS Survey similarly asked respondents to indicate their institutional awareness of different institutions that together constitute the formal justice and security sectors. While the current survey has disaggregated some of the institutions treated as groups by the previous survey, noteworthy patterns and discrepancies around institutional familiarity are nonetheless evident. The 2017 Survey observed that institutional familiarity is most highly associated with the Police, with 43% of respondents indicating familiarity with this institution. This mirrors findings from the current survey, wherein the Police are also observed to be the institution that respondents report the highest frequency of familiarity with. The Police therefore remain a highly visible branch of the formal security sector, in both urban and rural areas. High respondent familiarity with the Police also corroborates the 2017 PoJS Survey indication that this high familiarity is most likely a function of the high presence of the police and levels of direct respondent (citizen) engagement with this particular segment of the formal security sector, relative to the other institutions treated. Out of all institutions that together comprise the formal justice and security sectors, respondents are most likely to come into direct contact and interaction with the police, when compared to other institutions, which strongly explains high frequency of familiarity ratings associated with the Police among them. The institution which received the second highest familiarity score in the 2017 PoJS Survey is the Judiciary, with 6% of respondents reporting familiarity with the Judiciary. The current Perceptions of Justice and Security Survey also finds the Judiciary to be the second most commonly reported institution with which respondents are familiar with, though observes a much higher percentage of familiarity, with 45.5% frequency of familiarity of the Judiciary reported.



While findings around high institutional familiarity for the Police and Judiciary are shared across both surveys, there are a number of significant differences between the two surveys. The 2017 survey indicates a high frequency of respondents reporting to be familiar with all institutions treated in the survey (indeed this category constitutes the second largest familiarity grouping, constituting 15% of respondent answers). The current survey however, finds that familiarity with all institutions in the assessment is very low, with only 8% of respondents reporting to be familiar with all institutions, and ranking near the bottom of answer groupings. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone is the third most frequently reported institution with which respondents are familiar, according to the present Survey (out of 11 possible answer categories, allowing for multiple answers). However, the 2017 PoJS Survey finds much lower familiarity among respondents in relation to this institution, with the HRCSL ranking as the 6th most familiar institution among respondents (out of a possible 13 answer categories). This could indicate a fairly dramatic increase in familiarity with this institution in the two years between surveys and would not also be disconnected with the wrangling that engulfed the institution post general elections in March 2018. Similarly, the Law Reform Commission, appears to have experienced a decline in familiarity among citizens, dropping from ranking 8th (in descending order) out of 13, to 9th out of 11. Within the 2017 Survey, the Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB) receives the lowest familiarity scores, while the current survey ranks familiarity with the IPCB at 8 out of 11, sitting slightly higher than familiarity scores attributed to the Law Reform Commission. This could indicate that the IPCB has also achieved some gains in its familiarity among citizens. However, it must be noted that overall familiarity percentages observed by the current survey are, on average, much higher than those reported by the 2017 survey and that this survey was conducted in isolation from the 2017 survey.

Sector Performance Perceptions

The 2017 PoJS Survey asked respondents to rate the performance of various institutions that constitute the formal justice and security sectors. The current survey asked respondents to rate the performance of the same institutions. Respondents were asked to rate the performance of the following institutions: The Law Reform Commission (LRC); The Sierra Leone Correctional Services (SLCS); The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL); The Police (SLP); The Ministry of Justice (MoJ); The Independent Police Complaint Board (IPCB); The Judiciary; and The Legal Aid Board (LAB).



The LAB receives the highest performance rating, with 46.9% of respondents rating its performance as excellent. The HRCSL receives the second highest performance score, with 9.7% of respondents rating its



performance as excellent. The Police receive the poorest performance rating by respondents, with 5.2% rating its performance as very poor, and a combined 22% rating its performance as either poor or very poor. Many respondents choose to respond to the question of institutional performance rating with 'I don't know', indicating a lack of sufficient individual direct interaction with these institutions. The IPCB and LRC receive the highest 'don't know' responses, reinforcing the low visibility and awareness of these two institutions, as previously revealed. The 2017 PoJS Survey similarly highlighted that 'respondents struggled with rating them (the LRC and IPCB) especially as they have not directly interacted with them'. The police receive the fewest 'Don't Know' answers, in line with the high level of direct citizen engagement with this institution.

The current survey supports findings from the 2017 Survey in several ways: the LAB continues to receive the highest 'excellent' performance rating, followed by the HRCSL. This substantiates the proposition put forward by the 2017 Survey that these institutions are 'accessible, people friendly and provide services of good quality'. Furthermore, this lends support to the argument in the 2017 Survey that high excellent performance scores for these two institutions is likely due to their *citizen-orientation* – meaning that they are seen to work in the interests of citizens, as they 'provide legal aid and are seen publicly defending the rights of both victims and perpetrators'. The current survey also reiterates previous findings around poorly performing institutions, with the Police once more exhibiting among the poorest performance scores. According to the 2017 Survey, the Ministry of Justice receives the highest 'very poor' performance scores (though this is only marginally above the Police, with a 1% difference in ratings), while current survey findings place the Ministry of Justice 4th in very poor performance ratings (but also ranks highly along the rating of 'Don't Know'), indicating some improvements in institutional performance perceptions among respondents for this institution.

Community Security

Overall, respondents rate the level of security in their communities as either good or very good, with these two categories comprising 60.9% of all respondent answers. Comparing these findings to those of the 2017 survey indicate some overall improvement in perceptions of security levels. However, it must be noted that the ability to compare these statistics is limited due to the fact that the 2017 survey asked respondents to rate security on the district level, while the current survey has taken a more disaggregated approach, asking respondents to rate security at the community level. The 2017 survey also used a 3-point scale to measure perceptions of security, while the current survey adopted a 5-point scale, to add depth to findings.

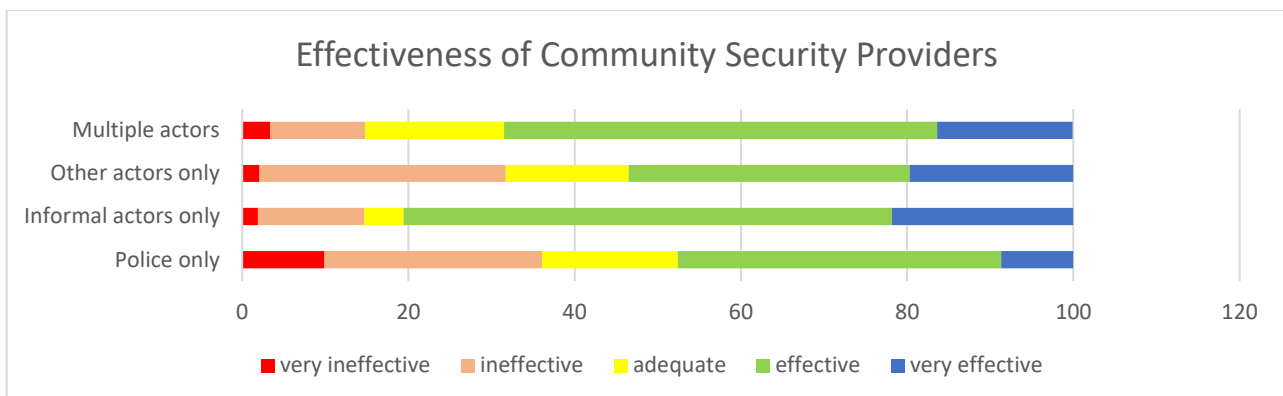
Levels of perceived community security are reported to be higher in rural areas than in urban ones, with 24.5% of rural respondents rating their level of community security as very high, in comparison to 18.2% of urban respondents. Similarly, a higher percentage of urban respondents' rate community security as very poor (11.1%) when compared to rural respondents (of which 3.5% rate their community security as very poor). A possible explanation for higher reported security levels in rural areas is social cohesion. Population density is higher in urban areas, making crime more anonymous, and social control is correspondingly lower. This indicates that presence and density of formal security structures do not fully determine perceived security levels at the community level, where urban areas exhibit higher density of formal security personnel and institutions, but whose work is impeded by the high population density in these areas. Conversely, less formal resources are likely able to exert a higher influence in rural areas with sparse population densities, indicating that presence does not necessarily equal impact. Social control exercised through informal community structures that operate more saliently in rural areas (as evidenced in the higher percentage of informal security provision observed below), with higher homogeneity among inhabitants also offers a contribution the explanation for higher reported levels of community security in rural areas.

Community Security Providers



Majority of respondents (48.8%) report that security is exclusively provided by the Police within their communities, and 17.5% indicate that informal actors provide security in their communities, with 21.9% reporting that security is provided by a combination of formal and informal actors. The provision of community security by informal actors is more highly reported in rural areas than urban ones, where 44% of rural respondents report that security in their community is provided by informal actors. Only 19.8% of urban respondents report the provision of security by informal security actors (in isolation or in combination) in their communities.

While most respondents report that security is provided by the police within their communities, the police are not rated as the most effective security providers. Security provided exclusively by informal actors is rated the most effective, while police receive the lowest effective scores and highest ineffective rankings. However, where multiple actors are reported to provide security (combination of police and informal actors), police are ranked by 48.7% of respondents as the most effective security provider. This evidences that, in isolation, the police are seen as less effective security providers than informal actors, though when providing security with informal actors in communities, they receive more positive effectiveness ratings by citizens. Where multiple security actors provide community security, cooperation between them is generally perceived as good.



Institutional Trust

This research has taken a nuanced approach to expanding current understandings of institutional trust among citizens in relation to the justice and security sectors in Sierra Leone. Respondents were asked, in the first instance, to rate their trust levels in relation to 5 categories of institutions that each constitute justice and security service providers. These categories of service providers are:

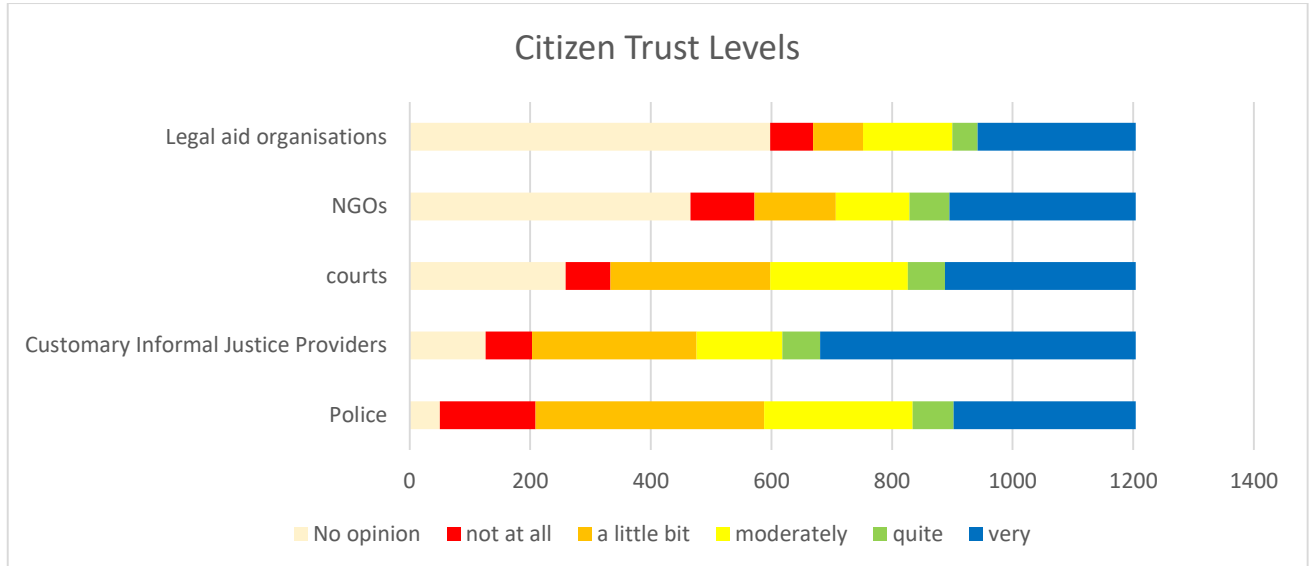
1. The Police
2. Traditional Justice Providers (Customary Informal Justice Actors)
3. NGOs
4. Formal Courts
5. Legal Aid Organisations

In addition to asking respondents to rate their trust levels in relation to these institutions, the survey employed a number of trust statements, which respondents were asked to express their degree of (dis)agreement with.



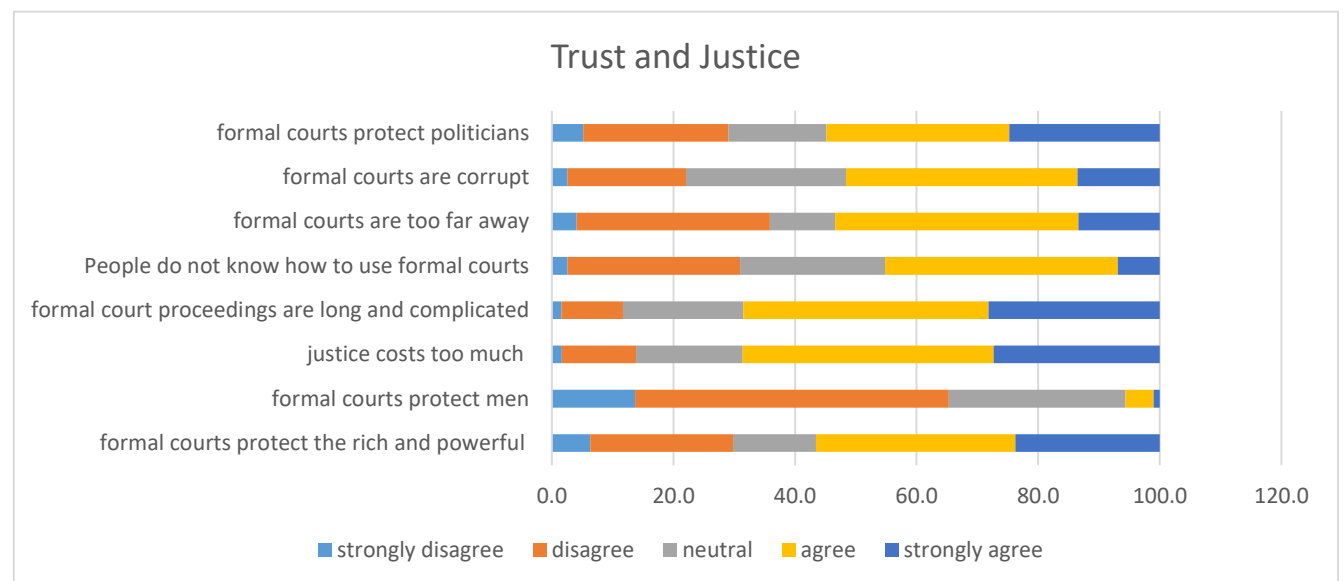
These statements allow the survey to examine in more disaggregate detail, what institutional trust means concretely, and identify nuanced dimensions of this nebulous but critical concept.

Overall Trust Levels



Overall, customary informal justice providers enjoy the highest levels of citizen trust, with 43.4% of respondents reporting very high trust levels for customary informal justice providers. The police receive the lowest trust scores, with 13.2% of respondents reporting not to trust the police at all. This rises to 44.7% when combined with the 31.5% that only trusts the police a little bit. NGOs and legal aid organisations receive the highest ‘no opinion’ ratings, likely resulting from low visibility. Disaggregated institutional trust ratings can be found in Annex 1 of this report.

Trust Statements and Justice



8 trust statements relating to justice and the formal justice sector were presented to respondents who were asked to respond with how much they agreed or disagreed with those statements.

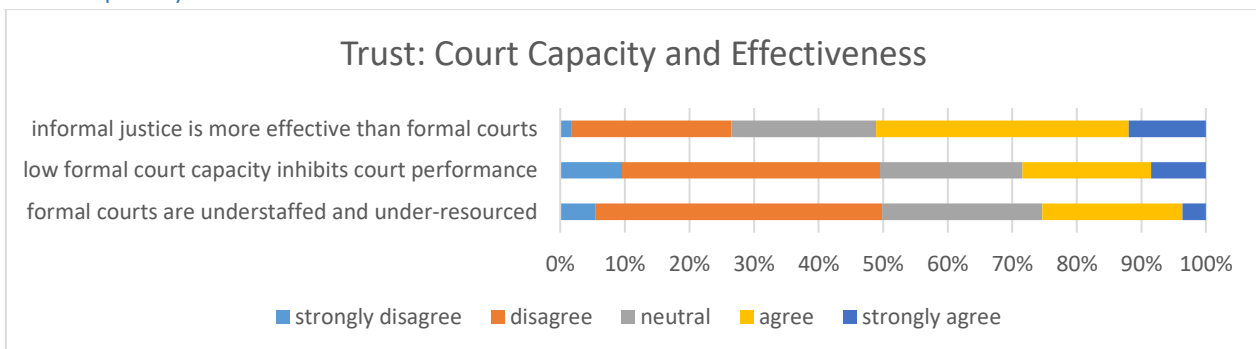


32.8% of respondents agree that courts protect the rich and powerful (and 23.8% strongly agree with this statement). 24.8% of respondents similarly strongly agree with the statement that formal courts generally protect politicians, with a further 30.1% agreeing with this. 38% of respondents agree that courts are corrupt, while 19.5% disagree with the statement that courts are corrupt.

When asked about the costs of justice, the majority of respondents agree (41.3%) and strongly agree (27.3%) that justice costs too much. Regardless of urban or rural locality, justice remains understood as too expensive by the majority of respondents. 66.6% of rural respondents agree or strongly agree that justice costs too much, and 70.5% of urban respondents similarly either agree or strongly agree that justice costs too much. The majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that formal court proceedings are long and complicated, constituting 68.6% of all respondent answers. 53.4% of respondents either agree (40%) or strongly agree (13.4%) that courts are too far away. The view that courts are too far away is held more strongly among rural respondents, who constitute 61.4% of the respondent population that agree that courts are too far away. Among rural respondents, 61% either agree (50%) or strongly agree (11%) that formal courts are too far away. In comparison, only 46% of urban respondents agree (31%) or strongly agree (15%) that formal courts are too far away.

Overall, respondents agree most strongly with the statements that formal court proceedings are long and complicated, and that justice costs too much. Respondents also generally agree that formal courts are too far away, that formal courts protect the rich and powerful, and that formal courts protect politicians.

Court Capacity and Effectiveness



44.4% of respondents disagree with the statement that courts are understaffed and under-resourced. 24.8% of respondents provide a neutral response to this question. This is indicative of two things: citizens do not associate poor formal sector performance with capacity problems, highlighting that the previously identified problems of complicated formal court proceedings, the high costs of justice, and bias in formal courts (protecting the rich and power; protecting politicians) are the predominant sources of poor institutional trust among respondents. Secondly this also highlights low citizen awareness of the very real capacity constraints that the formal justice sector faces in effective service delivery. This sentiment is further reinforced with answers to the question of whether respondents agree that low court capacity inhibits their effective justice delivery. 39.9% of respondents disagree that low court capacity constrains formal justice delivery, highlighting once again the general feeling among citizens that formal courts are not inhibited by low capacity constraints.

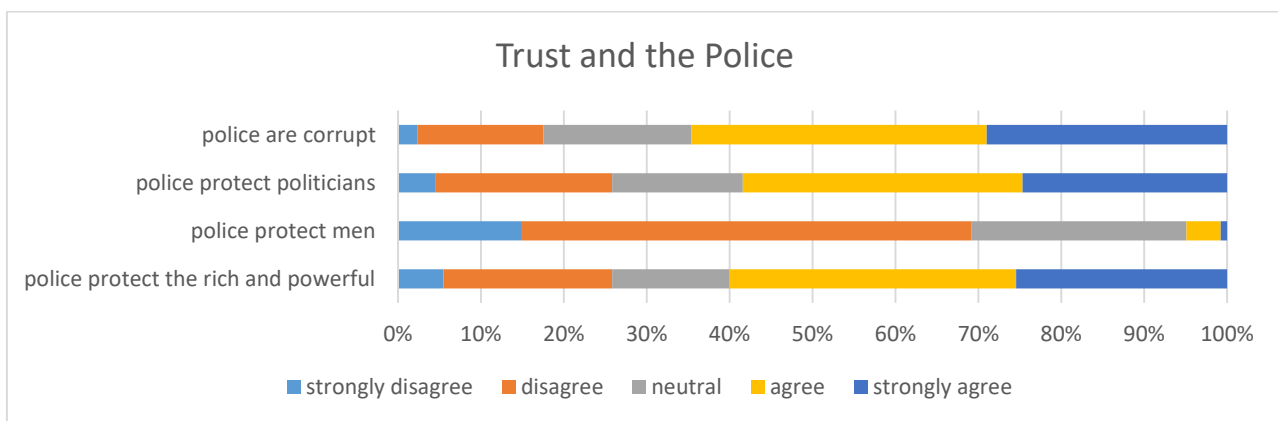
39.1% agree that informal justice is more effective than formal courts. Overall, the data reveals that institutional capacity and trust do not exhibit a significant correlation, indicating poor citizen awareness of the significant capacity constraints that the formal justice sector faces, the absence of an associated link among respondents between capacity and effectiveness, and the predominance of other sources of institutional distrust in relation to formal courts.



Despite the absence of associated links among citizens between capacity and performance within the formal justice sector, institutional stakeholder interviews highlight capacity constraints as a fundamental challenge in effective service delivery. Increasing the depth (quality) and breadth (quantity) of institutional capacity, along financial, human and infrastructural dimensions, is universally held as necessary for the formal justice and security sectors to meet the justice needs and demands of the country.

Trust Statements and Security (the Police)

As above, respondents were given 4 trust statements regarding the Police, and asked to respond using a 5 point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

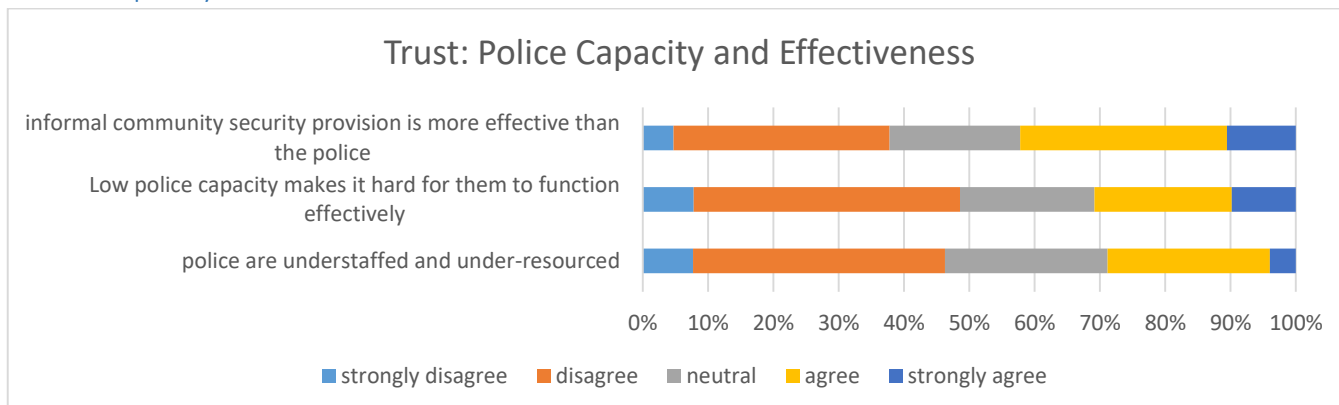


Similar to respondent answers around the justice sector, when asked if the police protect the rich and powerful, 34.6% of respondents agree that the police are biased in favour of the rich and powerful (compared to 32.8% agreement expressed in relation to the justice sector protecting the rich and powerful). Respondents also widely agree that the police generally protect politicians, with 24.7% strongly agreeing with this statement, and 33.7% agreeing that police protect politicians. The sentiment of privileging politicians, and the rich and powerful more broadly, by formal sectors is closely shared across perceptions of the police and formal courts. Respondents also similarly report that the police do not discriminate on the basis of gender, with 54.2% of respondents disagreeing with the statement that police protect men. Even when controlling for gender, responses do not change, with 53.6% of female respondents disagreeing with the statement that the police protect men.

Majority of respondents' (35.6%) agree or strongly agree (29%) with the statement that the police are corrupt. When combining the scores of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' respondents report higher corruption within the police (64.6%) than within formal courts, with 51.5% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that formal courts are corrupt.



Police Capacity and Effectiveness



Most respondents do not feel that the police are understaffed or under-resourced, with a majority 38.5% reporting that they disagree with the statement that the police face capacity constraints. Disagreement over formal sector capacity constraints by citizens is once again evidenced, though not as strongly as with formal courts, where 44.4% of respondents disagree that formal courts in Sierra Leone are understaffed and under-resourced. When asked whether low police capacity inhibits police effectiveness, 40.8% of respondents disagree, once again evidencing the consensus that respondents do not associate formal sector capacity as a primary cause of poor sector performance. The absence of a perceived relationship among respondents between formal institutional capacity (constraints) as associated with institutional trust or perceptions of effectiveness is once again significantly evidenced. This adds weight to findings from the 2017 Survey that identified corruption and political interference as the primary factors undermining public trust in the formal justice and security sectors. Likewise, the 2017 Survey found limited institutional capacity to be rarely reported as a reason for low institutional trust.

Lastly, 33.1% of respondents disagree that informal community security provision is more effective than the police; conversely, 31.6% agree that informal security provision is more effective than the police, producing a fairly even spread of answers. When taken together with previous findings around community service provision, this reinforces the variation in answers around police effectiveness reported by respondents when controlling for single or multiple community service providers.

Observing Corruption

Reported levels of corruption within formal courts and the police are high. To add nuance to respondent perceptions of corruption, a section of the survey dedicated itself to the issue of observing corruption within Sierra Leone’s Justice and Security sectors. Respondents were asked to characterize the level of corruption within the justice and security sectors. Respondents could provide answers along a 5 point Likert scale, ranging from non-existent, low, neutral, high and very high.

Levels of corruption in the Justice and Security Sectors

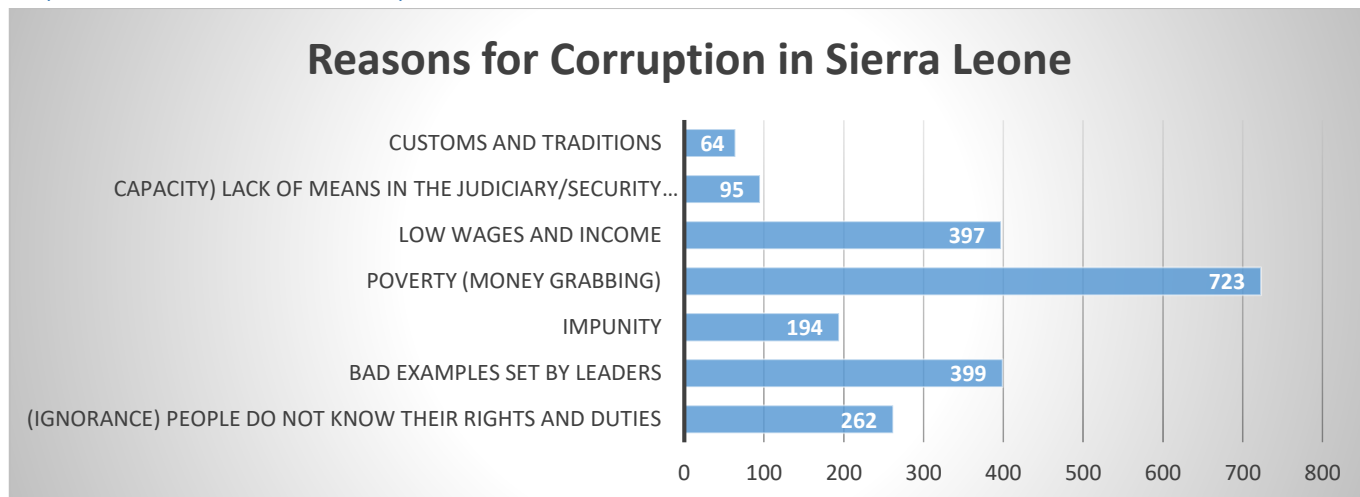
35.7% of respondents perceive corruption in Sierra Leone’s formal justice sector to be high. 17.5% report that corruption in the formal justice sector is very high, while only 2.2% of respondents feel that corruption is non-existent, and 15.0% report it to be low, in the formal justice sector.

25.7% of respondents report the level of corruption within the police as high, which rises to 64.2% when combined with the 38.5% of respondents who characterize corruption within the police as very high. Compared to perceptions of the level of corruption in formal courts, more respondents characterize the police



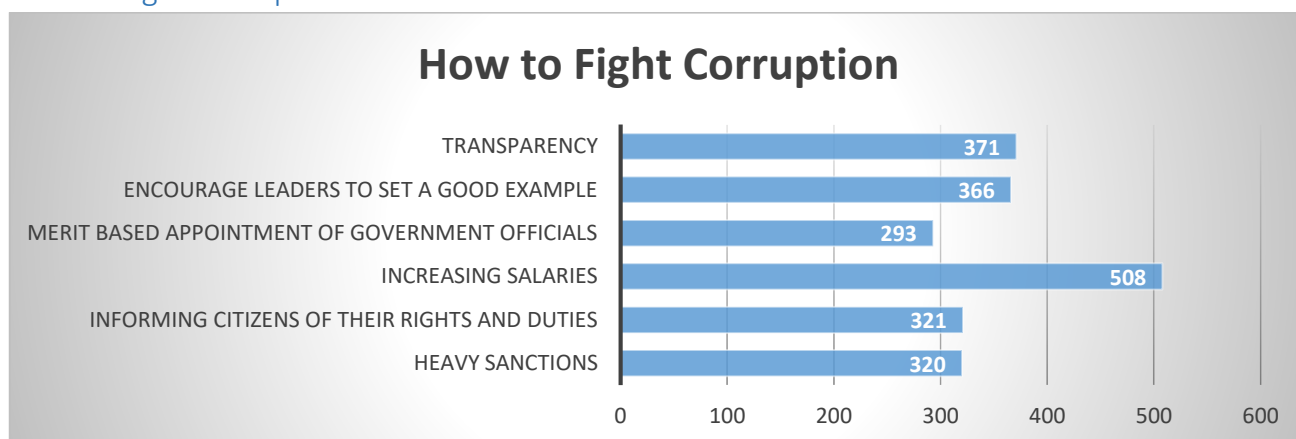
as very highly corrupt than they do formal courts (38.5% compared to 17.5%). Disaggregated institutional corruption scores can be found within Annex 2 of this report.

Reported Reasons for Corruption in Sierra Leone



The two most frequently reported reasons for corruption in Sierra Leone’s formal sectors are reported to emanate from low income levels, poverty and money grabbing among people employed in the justice and security sectors. Poverty (money grabbing) is most frequently cited as the primary reason for corruption, constituting 60% of respondent answers. Bad examples set by leaders, indicating high perceptions of corruption among leaders, is also frequently cited as a reason for corruption. Low capacity of the formal justice and security sectors is rarely cited as a reason for corruption, accounting for 5.3% of respondent answers, and in line with previous findings around perceptions of institutional capacity in these sectors and the (absence of a perceived) link between capacity and service provision. When considering prior trust statements and the high frequency of reported bias within the police and formal courts, associations between corruption and poverty are unsurprising. It follows that poverty and money grabbing incentivizes the privileging of certain populations (rich, powerful, politicians) to accrue particular benefits (financial gains).

How to Fight Corruption



Unsurprisingly, given the high association between poverty and corruption among respondents, the most frequent solution offered to fight corruption is increasing salaries. This constitutes 42.2% of respondent answers to the question of how to fight corruption. Transparency (30.8%) and promoting better examples in leadership (30.4%) are the second and third most frequent responses.



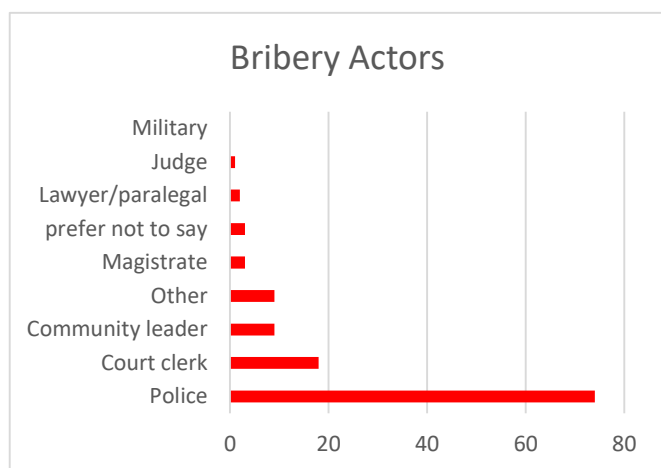
Bribery

One particular manifestation of corruption is the practice of bribery. 347 respondents reported experiencing legal problems in the past 12 months. For these 347 respondents, we asked whether they directly experienced corruption, in the form of bribery, in relation to their experienced legal problems. 29.4% of respondents who experienced legal problems report paying some form of bribe to resolve their legal problems. 26.2% of women who experience legal problems report paying a bribe to resolve their legal problem. Men who experience legal problems report paying bribes to address their legal problems slightly more frequently (32.2%).

Geography and Bribery Practices

Respondents who experience legal problems in urban areas are much more likely to report paying a bribe to resolve their problems, with 71.6% of respondents who pay bribes to resolve their legal problems residing in urban areas.

Actors



Respondents who pay bribes to resolve their legal problems overwhelmingly reporting bribing the police, with 72.5% of bribes going to the Police. Court clerks are the second most frequent actors reported to which respondents pay bribes to resolve their legal problems, accounting for 17.6% of reported bribes among respondents.

53.9% of respondents who pay bribes to resolve their legal problems report that their legal problems were resolved. 46.1% who pay bribes to resolve their legal problems report that their legal problems were not resolved. Bribery does not appear to be a significantly

effective means of resolving legal problems.

Overall Bribery Patterns and Histories

All 1,204 survey respondents were asked whether they had been asked to pay a bribe or perform another favour by someone in the past. 22.6% of respondents report having been asked to pay a bribe in the past, while 77.4% report not having ever been asked to pay a bribe. When controlling for location (urban or rural) and gender, once again urban respondents comprise the largest population of respondents asked to pay a bribe in the past. 62.1% of respondents who report being asked to pay a bribe in the past are urban residents. Additionally, men report higher instances of being asked to pay a bribe in the past, comprising 54.8% of respondents who have been asked to pay a bribe in the past.

Actors

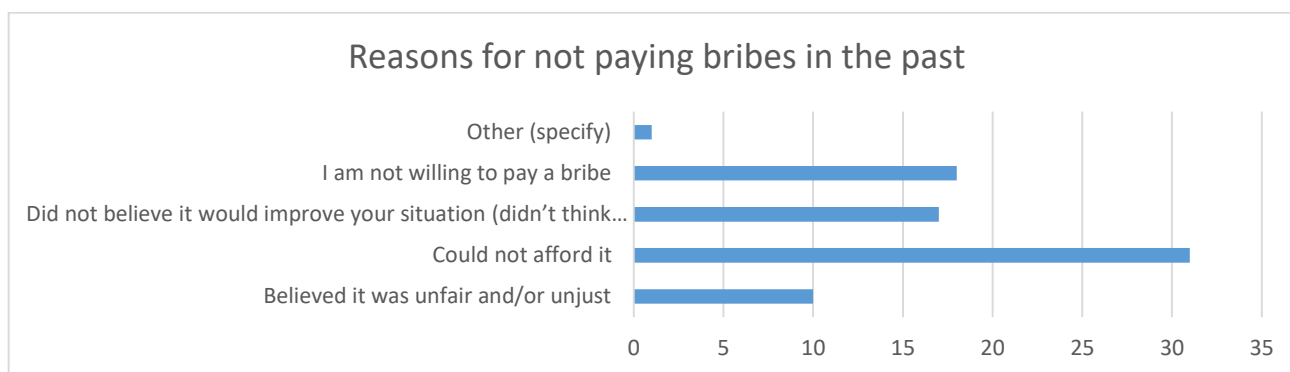
Overwhelmingly, respondents report being asked to pay bribes by members of the police (53.3%). Several respondents (27.9%) select 'other' actors when indicating who they have been requested to pay a bribe to in the past. An analysis of the actors reported by respondents within this category of 'others' reveals the following salient categories (in descending order of reported frequency):

1. Healthcare providers
2. Education providers
3. Friends and Family
4. Government Officials



- 5. Employers
- 6. Community Leaders

71.7% of respondents who were asked to pay a bribe in the past, report complying with the request for bribery. Hope or expectations that this would produce a positive result or lead to service provision are the most commonly stated reason for complying with bribery requests, constituting 59.9% of respondent answers. 28.3% (77 respondents) of respondents who have been asked to pay a bribe in the past, report not complying with the request for a bribe. 40.2% report that their reason for non-compliance was because they could not afford the bribe. Unwillingness to pay a bribe accounts for 23.4% of non-compliance with past requests for bribes, and the belief that being asked for a bribe was unfair or unjust accounts for a mere 13% of non-compliance actions.



Legal Problems

347 (28.8%) respondents report experiencing at least 1 legal problem in the past 12 months. 69.9% of respondents (841) report not having experienced any legal problems. 1.3% (16) respondents prefer not to disclose whether they have experienced any legal problems.

Gender and legal problems

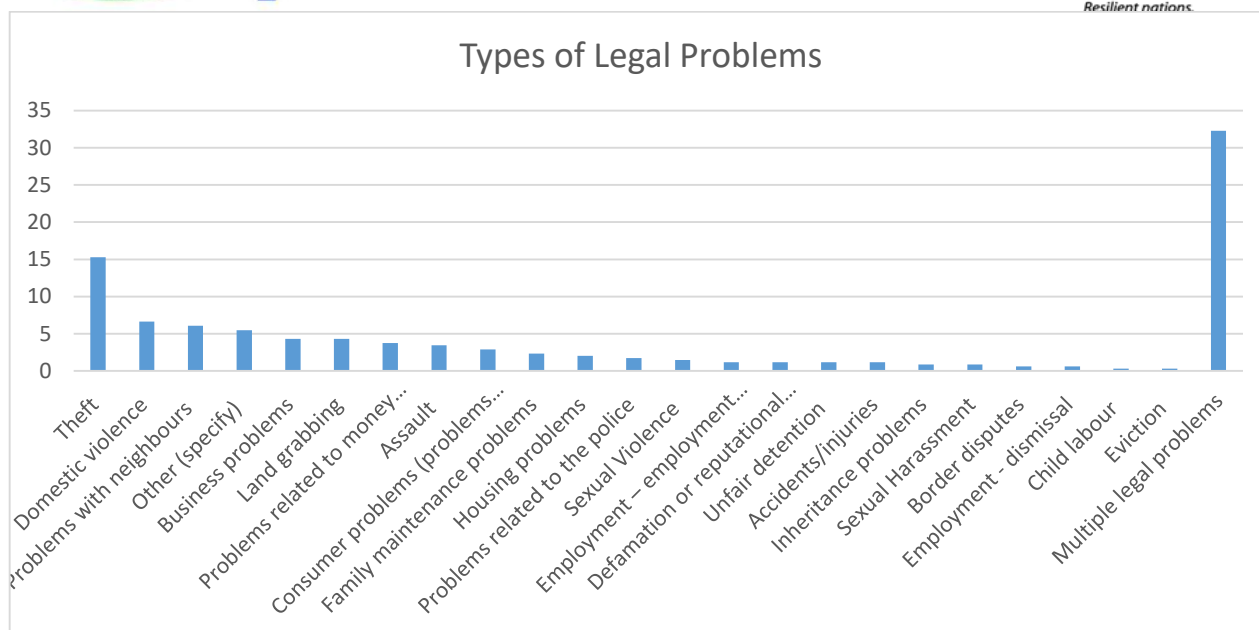
164 women report having experienced legal problems, comprising 47.3% of respondents who report experiencing legal problems. 183 men report having experienced legal problems, constituting 52.7% of respondents who report experiencing legal problems. Men therefore report experiencing legal problems slightly more frequently than women. 24.7% of sampled female respondents report experiencing legal problems, with 1.4% preferring not to disclose this. 32.3% of sampled male respondents report experiencing legal problems, with 1.2% of men preferring not to disclose this. Based on survey findings, men are therefore more likely to (report to) experience legal problems than women.

Legal Problems and Education

Legal problems are most frequently experienced by respondents with no formal schooling. 28.8% of respondents who experience legal problems have no formal schooling. This is unsurprising, as this is the largest education grouping among the sample, and reflects once more the challenges that Sierra Leone continues to face in providing access to education, which requires attention as a matter of fundamental human rights and access to justice moreover.

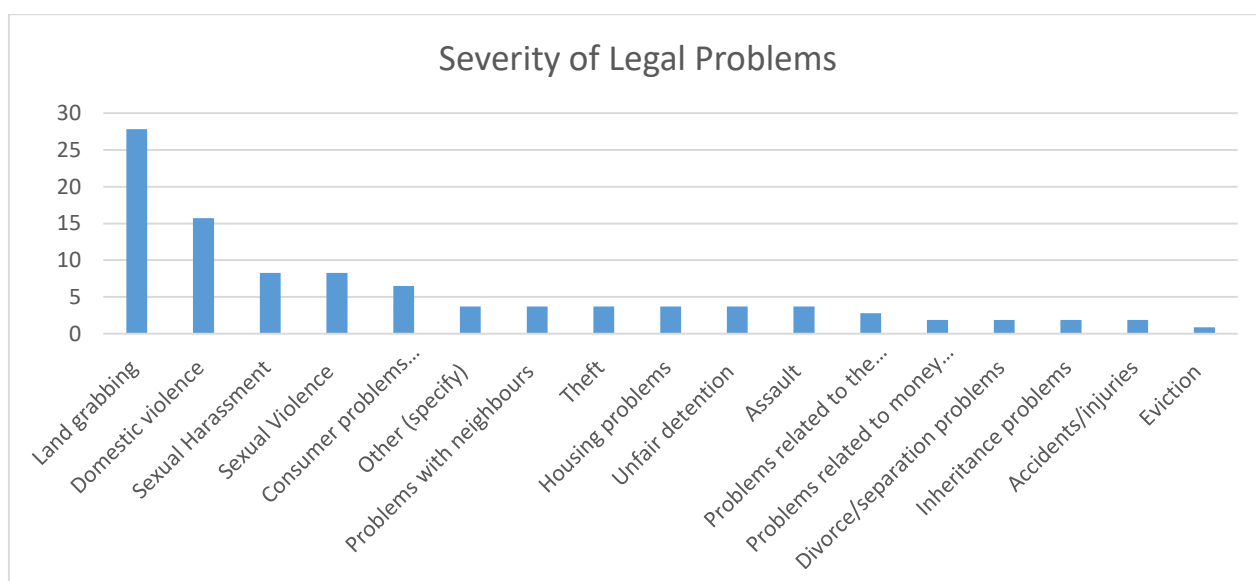
Types of Legal Problems

Over 30% (32.3%) of respondents who experience legal problems report experiencing multiple legal problems in the past 12 months. The most commonly experienced legal problems are: **theft, domestic violence and problems with neighbours.**



Severity of Legal Problems

Respondents who experienced legal problems were asked to specify which legal problems impacted them the most. The most serious legal problems experienced by respondents are: **land grabbing, domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence and consumer problems.**



Domestic violence stands out as a legal problem that is both experienced frequently (the second most frequently cited legal problem, constituting 6.6% of experienced legal problems) and with high severity (the second most severe legal problem, constituting 15.7% of severe legal problems experienced by respondents). Women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence: 54% of respondents who report experiencing domestic violence are female, and domestic violence comprises 20.7% of the legal problems reported among female respondents who have experienced legal problems in the survey. Domestic violence is more frequently experienced in urban areas, with 60.3% of such cases being reported in urban areas.



Geography and Legal Problems

64% of respondents who report experiencing legal problems reside in urban areas. This supports survey findings that perceived levels of security are generally lower in urban areas than in rural areas.

Severity of Legal Problems and Willingness to Pay

Majority of respondents who experience legal problems report being very negatively affected by their legal problems (42.4%). Among respondents who report experiencing at least one legal problem, 59.1% report a willingness to pay to resolve their problem(s).

Did you seek legal advice?

Most respondents who experience legal problems seek legal advice. 72.9% (253 respondents) seek legal advice to address their legal problems. Men seek legal advice slightly more frequently than women do, with 74.9% of men who experience legal problems seeking legal advice, and 70.7% of female respondents seeking legal advice.

Education and Advice

When comparing seeking advice against levels of education, legal advice is most frequently sought by respondents with no formal schooling, comprising 25.3% of all respondents who seek legal advice. Respondents with some or completed secondary schooling comprise the next two largest categories who seek legal advice. This reflects the overall distribution of education levels within the survey data. More telling is the frequency of legal advice sought within education categories. 100% of respondents with post-graduate levels of education seek legal advice, though the sample size for this category is small. Respondents with some level of university education who experience legal problems are also very highly likely to seek legal advice, with 92.9% seeking advice. Thirdly, 89.5% of respondents with religious schooling seek advice. Relative to their education category, respondents with some primary schooling (58.1%) and those with no formal schooling (64%) are the least likely to seek legal advice when faced with legal problems. This indicates that education and advice seeking are linked, with higher levels of education corresponding to higher levels of legal advice seeking among respondents who experience legal problems.

Among respondents who experienced legal problems but did not seek legal advice, the most common reasons for not seeking legal advice are:

- they did not believe the advice would help
- they did not have enough money to seek legal advice
- they did not have the time to seek legal advice
- they did not know where to look for information

Most Helpful sources of Legal Advice

Family are reported to be the most helpful source of legal advice, followed by the Police and then Friends. With the notable exception of the Police, who are the second most helpful cited source of legal advice, respondents rely heavily on personal networks for legal advice. Of note is that the three most helpful sources of legal advice are also observed to be the three most frequently used sources of legal advice (family, the police, and friends).

Public sources of information as legal advice

Majority of respondents who experience legal problems do not seek legal advice from public sources of information. Only 32.6% of respondents who experience legal problems seek legal advice from such sources.



Among respondents who utilize public sources of information for legal advice, the most popular public sources of information are: **radio, TV, social media, and the internet.**

Taking Action

Most respondents who experience legal problems report taking action to resolve their problem(s). 64.3% of respondents report taking some form of action after experiencing legal problems. Seeking Legal advice and taking action exhibit a strong correlation, with respondents who seek legal advice indicating much higher rates of pursuing action to address their legal problem(s). 70.7% of respondents who experience legal problems and seek legal advice go on to take action to address their legal problems (and constitute 80.3% of the total sample of respondents who take action for their legal problems). 53.2% of respondents who do not seek legal advice report not taking action to address their legal problems. Seeking legal advice therefore plays a formative role in the decision to take action to address legal problems. Most respondents who take action to resolve their legal problems do so in order to realize/exercise their rights. Recovering property and punishing someone for wrongdoing are the second and third most frequently reported reasons for taking action.

No Action

Among the 124 respondents who experienced legal problems but did not take any action to address this, the most common reasons for not taking action are:

1. Other party was more powerful
2. Problem was not serious enough
3. Not enough money

25.8% of responses for not taking action are due to power asymmetries between the respondent and other party. This supports survey findings that justice remains a biased undertaking, with powerful populations (i.e. the rich, the powerful, and politicians) privileged. Expectations of preferential treatment in favour of the other party, as a significant deterrent to taking action, highlight the need to alleviate the uneven and inequitable application of justice services that respondents experience. Significantly, high expected financial costs associated with taking action vastly outweigh the expected time costs associated with taking action, as a deterrent to taking action. Only 4 out of 347 respondents who experienced legal problems cite time costs as a deterrent to taking action.

Legal Problems and Taking Action

Survey response analysis allows us to address the question of *which types of legal problems are respondents most likely to take action for?* Most respondents who experience these particular legal problems report taking action to address them:

1. Defamation or reputational assault (insults)
2. Employment (dismissal) problems
3. Border Disputes
4. Child Labour
5. Housing problems
6. Assault
7. Problems with neighbours
8. Theft
9. Land grabbing

When compared against the most frequently reported types of legal problems, taking action and frequency of reported legal problems exhibit the following overlap (among the top 9 of each):



1. Theft
2. Problems with neighbours
3. Land grabbing
4. Assault

Theft, problems with neighbours, land grabbing, and assault crimes therefore are both experienced with high frequency and high action rates. Notably, when compared to the severity of experienced legal problems, it is clear that severity of legal problems does not strongly determine the decision to take action. **Land grabbing, theft, housing problems and problems with neighbours** both rank highly in terms of severity and action taken to resolve them, while other legal problems that rank highly in terms of severity do not similarly exhibit high action rates. This indicates gaps in access to justice for legal problems that seriously impact respondents.

Gender, Geography, and action

Men and women are almost equally likely to take action when faced with legal problems. 64.6% of women who report experiencing legal problems take action to resolve them, and 63.9% of men who experience legal problems take action. 58.3% of respondents who take action are urban residents. However, 74.4% of rural respondents who report experiencing legal problems report taking action to resolve their legal problems (compared to 58.5% of urban respondents who experience legal problems). Taking legal action is therefore more frequent in urban areas, though more likely among rural residents who experience legal problems.

Education and Action

Higher education and taking action appear to correlate somewhat, with high levels of action being taken by respondents who experience legal problems and have either completed a university degree or a post-graduate level of education. Some or completed secondary schooling also exhibits high action rates. Respondents who have completed primary school levels of education are also highly likely to take action to address their legal problems. Respondents with some primary schooling only or who have religious schooling are the least likely to take action to resolve their legal problems. Access to quality education does appear to hold some potential explanatory power for taking action to resolve legal problems. Studies by HiIL point to the link between education, legal empowerment and taking action to resolve legal problems, and further qualitative investigation into this relationship in Sierra Leone warrants attention. While no strong conclusions can be drawn based on the current data, patterns sufficiently indicate the value in exploring this further, and supports the previous link outlined between access to education and access to justice.

Justice Paths

The Police are, overwhelmingly, the most common justice path pursued by respondents, constituting 40.4% of all legal actions taken. Justice paths have been grouped into three categories: personal networks and individual action, customary informal justice providers, and institutional paths. 37.9% of respondents use personal network justice paths in their justice journeys, relying most heavily on family members (however, personal networks perform very poorly along all procedural evaluation measures, as justice paths, and the primary explanation for their high frequency is due to their use in multiple justice path journeys). Institutional paths are the second most frequently used type of justice paths, accounting for 37.5% of justice actions. This statistic drops to 16.8% however, when controlling for the high outlier reliance on the Police. Customary informal justice paths are the least frequently reported justice path, though perform well along procedural evaluation dimensions, and constitute 25% of justice action frequency.

Personal Network and Individual Action	Customary/Informal Justice Providers	Institutions
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Contact the other party	Paramount chief	NGOs/Human Rights Organisations
Gather evidence	Informal court barrays	Paralegal
Contact witnesses	Contact religious leader	Court of law
Contact Family	Contact community leader	Arbitrator
Contact Friend	Chair lady	Legal Aid Board
Contact neighbour	Mammy queen	Mediator
Contact Colleague	Section/Town chief	Public Authority
Contact employer	Sowei/Digba	Police
	secret society	Lawyer
	Native court administration (local court)	Other

Respondents who take action to address their legal problems commonly pursue multiple actions in their pursuit for justice (comprising 46.6% of individual justice journeys). 17 out of an identified 28 possible justice paths are sometimes pursued in isolation, with the remaining 11 only pursued as part of a combination of justice paths. Justice Paths that are only used as part of a multiple path justice journey are:

Personal Network and Individual Action	Customary/informal Justice Providers	Institutions
Gather Evidence	Contact Religious Leader	Arbitrator
Contact Witnesses	Chair Lady	Mediator
Contact Neighbour	Mammy Queen	
Contact Colleague	Sowei/Digba	
Contact Employer		

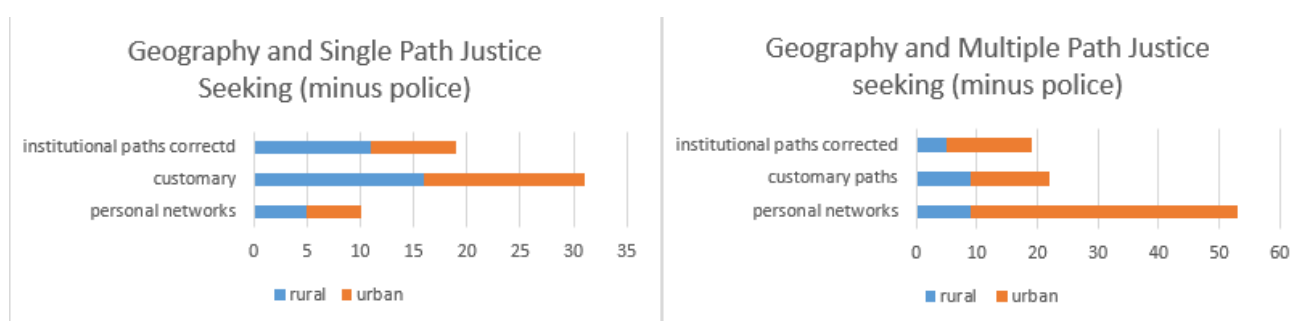
When respondents use only one justice path to pursue redress for legal problems, they most commonly use the police, followed by paramount chiefs, local courts (native administrations), section/town chiefs and family members. For single path users, institutional paths are the most commonly used justice path. 61.7% of these respondents rely exclusively on institutional justice paths. Customary informal justice paths account for 29% of single path justice journeys, and 9.3% of respondents rely exclusively on single personal network paths. 62.5% of single justice paths pursued by rural respondents are institutional paths. Similarly, 60.8% of single justice paths pursued by urban respondents are institutional paths. The police account for a vast majority of single institutional justice path action taken in both urban and rural settings.



For multiple justice path users, the frequency distribution of justice paths changes slightly, though still shows that the police remain the most frequently used justice path. For respondents who utilize more than one justice path to address their legal problems, the most frequently reported justice paths (in descending order) are contacting: the police, family member(s), friend(s), local courts (native administrations), and section/town chiefs. Personal network paths are the most frequently utilized type of justice path, accounting for 51% of justice paths identified as most helpful by multiple path users. Personal network justice paths are more frequently pursued by urban respondents, who account for 83% of the total population of respondents who indicate that personal networks were the most helpful when using multiple justice paths.

Most respondents who use multiple justice paths to address their legal problems are urban residents (73.1%). 58.5% of urban respondents who experience legal problems and take action, utilize multiple actions. Conversely, 30.1% of rural respondents who take action to address their legal problems use multiple actions to address their legal problems. 57.9% of urban respondents who use multiple legal actions report personal networks to be their most helpful justice path, while rural respondents rate institutional paths the highest (35.7%).

Customary informal justice paths, contrary to expectations, do not constitute the majority justice path category among respondents, in either rural or urban settings. This would appear to contradict conventional wisdom around the prevalence of the use of customary informal justice paths. However, these statistics, need to be observed in context. The very high frequency of utilizing the police as a justice path, which belongs to the category of institutional paths, skews the statistics towards institutional paths, in urban and rural settings. When removing the police as a justice path (due to its high outlier frequency), the justice seeking landscape dramatically changes. For single path justice users, customary informal justice paths emerge as the most frequently utilized justice path, with no meaningful difference across urban (48.4%) and rural settings (51.6%). For multiple justice path users, customary informal justice paths increases to 23.4% of multiple justice paths identified as most helpful by respondents. Personal Networks continue to dominate multiple path justice seeking. However, personal networks score consistently low in justice journey evaluations, as the following section shall reveal, evidencing much room for improvement in enhancing meaningful access to justice for citizens in Sierra Leone.



Helpfulness of justice paths

Given that respondents frequently use multiple justice paths to address their legal problems, the survey asked respondents who pursued multiple paths to express which path was the most helpful in addressing their legal problem(s). Among respondents who used multiple paths to pursue their legal problems, the most helpful paths are reported to be: **contacting family and contacting friends**. Engaging **the police** is the third most helpful justice path that respondents report, when using multiple justice paths. This indicates that while engaging the police is both the most common justice path, in isolation and as part of combination approach to resolving legal problems, they are not considered the most helpful justice path for respondents who engage multiple justice paths, ranking third, below family and friends.



Helpfulness of justice paths used in isolation

For respondents who used only one justice path, the survey asked them to rate the helpfulness of that particular justice path. Generally, respondents report high levels of helpfulness for their chosen justice path. The four most commonly used single justice paths are: the Police, Paramount Chiefs, local courts (native administrations) and Section/Town Chiefs.

For the police, as the most commonly used justice path in isolation, 70.2% of respondents report the police as being either quite (19.1%) or very helpful (51.1%). 29.8% of respondents rate the police as either not helpful at all (17.0%) or only a little bit helpful (12.8%) in addressing their legal problems.

Overall, respondents who utilize paramount chiefs report high levels of helpfulness associated with paramount chiefs. 61.5% of respondents who use paramount chiefs to address their legal problem(s) rank this justice path as very helpful. 23.1% rank the use of paramount chiefs as not helpful at all.

Local courts (native administrations) are the third most commonly pursued single justice path. Again, most respondents report the use of this justice path as helpful, with 75% ranking such courts as very helpful (41.7%), or quite helpful (33.3%). 16.7% of respondents characterize local courts as either not helpful at all or only a little bit helpful.

100% of respondents who rely on Section/Town Chiefs report them as being very helpful (63.6%) or quite helpful (36.4%) in addressing their legal problem(s). Among single justice path users, section/town chiefs receive the highest relative helpfulness score, followed by paramount chiefs, the police, and lastly local courts (native administrations).

Resolution rates

Most respondents who have experienced at least one legal problem report that their legal problem has been completely resolved.

Resolution Rates for Multiple Path Users

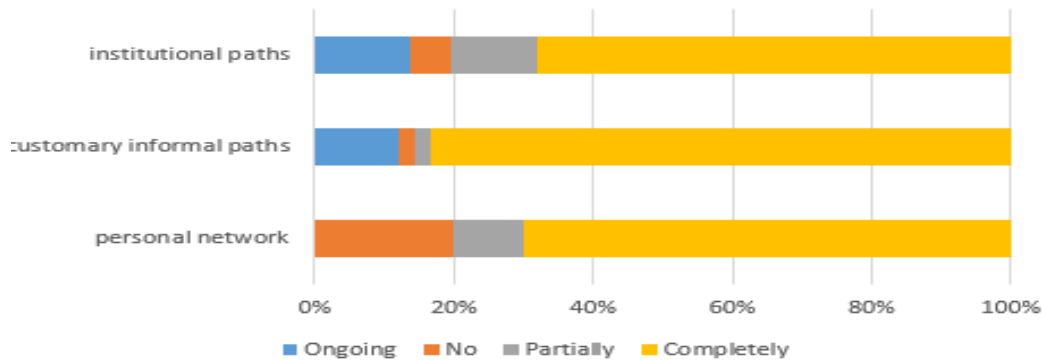
For respondents who pursue multiple justice paths to address their legal problems, 36.2% report that their legal problems have been completely resolved. However, 34.3% report that their legal problems have not been resolved at all. 18.1% report that their legal problems are still in the process of being addressed.

Single Justice Paths and Resolution Rates

Respondents who pursued a single justice path report much higher resolution rates, with 73.7% reporting that their legal problems have been completely resolved. 11.9% of respondents who use single justice paths report that their legal problems are ongoing, and only 5.9% report that their legal problems have not been resolved at all. This indicates that respondents pursue multiple justice paths when single justice paths do not provide adequate resolution for their legal problems. High resolution rates for single path users indicate no need for further actions. This further implies that personal networks, as the most frequently cited helpful justice path in multiple path journeys, do not provide high resolution rates for respondents who experience legal problems. This shows a need to enhance access to justice paths that provide meaningful resolution for legal problems that citizens encounter. The Police are observed to exhibit the highest complete legal problem resolution rates, though this is largely attributed to their frequent use by respondents as a justice path.



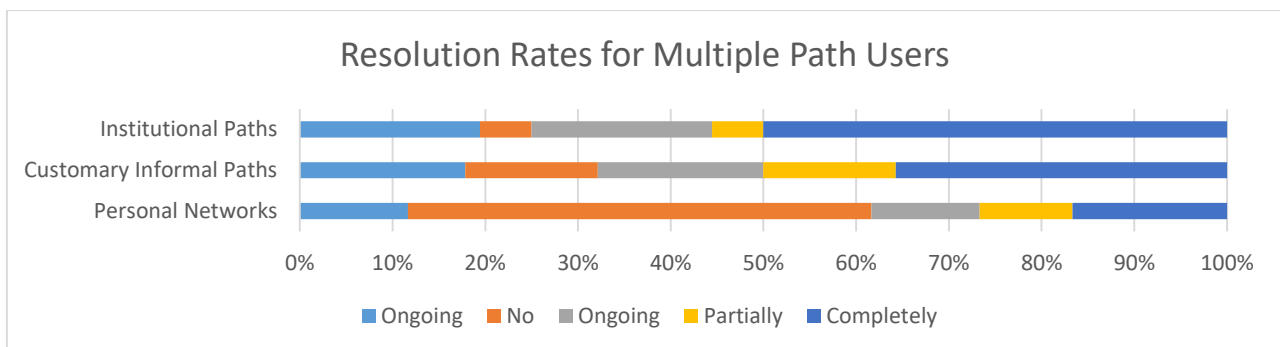
Resolution Rates for Single Path Users



When examining relative resolution rates, section/town chiefs showcase the highest complete resolution rates, with 90.9% of respondents reporting that their legal problems have been completely resolved. Paramount chiefs perform second best in resolving legal problems, with 76.9% of respondents reporting that their legal problems have been fully resolved. 75% of respondents who use local courts (native administrations) report complete resolution of their legal problems. The police therefore, while most frequently used, as a justice path in isolation and as part of a combined justice journey, exhibit much lower complete resolution rates than other commonly used justice paths. Customary informal paths exhibit the highest relative resolution rates for single justice path users.

Multiple Paths and Resolution Rates

50% of multiple path users that use institutional paths report complete resolution for their legal problems. In second place, 35.7% of multiple path users that use customary informal paths report complete resolution for their legal problems. The lowest resolution rates are attributable to personal network justice paths.



Among respondents who took action for their legal problems but who chose not to use formal courts, the most common reasons for not involving formal courts are:

1. Financial costs
2. Preference for non-institutional dispute settlement
3. Did not believe courts would treat them fairly
4. Distance

Once again, bias in the application of justice prevents use of formal justice paths. Perceived high costs of justice are the primary deterrent for involving formal courts. The high frequency of responses indicating a preference for non-institutional paths, reinforces the need to acknowledge the significant role that informal justice plays in addressing and resolving legal problems that citizens face. Rather than pushing reforms that address enhancing the formal justice sector exclusively, access to justice needs to be reframed in terms of 'appropriate



and meaningful justice spaces' and recognize the important and positive role that the informal justice sector, as a legitimate and widely used justice service provider category, does and can play.

Gendered Justice: Female Justice Journeys

64.6% of women who experience legal problems take action to resolve them. The Police are the most frequently used justice path among female respondents, comprising 20.5% of justice actions undertaken. Contacting family accounts for 13.7% of female justice actions, followed by contacting friends (9.8%).

Only 21.7% of women who experience legal problems and seek legal advice use public sources of information as a source of legal advice. However, despite its low use generally, 78.7% of women who experience the SGBV crimes of sexual violence and harassment use public sources of information as a source of legal advice, relying most heavily on the radio.

Women are far more likely to seek justice in informal courts than men, accounting for 80% of actions brought before informal courts. Female respondents who take action for their legal problems also utilize NGOs and Human Rights Organisations more than men, with 62.5% of all NGO/HRO legal action attributable to female respondents.

Female respondents most frequently pursue justice through personal network paths (40.5%), followed by formal institutional paths (35.1%), and lastly customary informal paths (24.4%). As already highlighted, the high reliance on the Police (regardless of gender), biases institutional path frequency ratings. When eliminating the Police (that alone account for 20.5% of female justice actions), institutional paths drop to last place. When controlling for the police, personal networks remain the most common type of justice action reported, followed by customary informal justice paths, and lastly institutional paths, which then only comprise 18.4% of female justice actions. It is also relevant to note that the high frequency of personal networks emerges largely as a result of the frequent use of these paths as part of multiple justice path journeys.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

30 female respondents reported having experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months, and 17 reported experiencing sexual violence. 53.3% of women who experienced sexual harassment describe being very negatively affected by this violation, and 70.6% of women who experienced sexual violence similarly report being very negatively affected by this crime. This reinforces the extreme severity of SGBV crimes against women.

86.7% of women who report experiencing sexual harassment seek legal advice. 88.2% of women who experience sexual violence seek legal advice. Overall, female respondents who experience SGBV crimes widely seek legal advice. The most common sources of legal advice for women who experience sexual harassment are: community leaders, family members, the police, and friends. The most common sources of legal advice for women who experience sexual violence are: family, community leaders, the police and friends. Overall, women who experience different SGBV crimes rely most heavily on the same sources of legal advice.

41.2% of women who experience sexual violence take action, while 60% of women who experience sexual harassment take action. In total, 53.2% of women who experience SGBV crimes take action, with women who experience sexual harassment exhibiting a higher likelihood of taking action.

71.4% of women who experienced sexual violence and took action were asked or required to seek medical treatment or obtain a medical evaluation. Most were asked to seek medical by a doctor. 100% of women who were asked to seek a medical evaluation report pursuing this, and 80% report being successful in obtaining this. 100% of women who successfully obtained a medical evaluation were asked to pay for this. 75% of women



report being treated very respectfully by their healthcare professional. However, while 50% of women indicate that the procedure was very thoroughly explained, 50% also report receiving only a little explanation.

57.1% of women who experience sexual violence and take action report that their problem has been completely resolved; the remaining 42.9% report that it has not been resolved. Conversely, 55.6% of women who experience sexual harassment and take action, report that their problem has not been resolved. Overall, 52% of women who experience either of these SGBV crimes report no resolution for their problems. 44% report complete resolution.

The most frequently used justice paths for women who experience sexual harassment are friends, family and the police. The most frequently used justice paths for women who experience sexual violence are family and the police (both exhibiting equal frequency of use), followed by friends. When taken together, friends and family emerge as the top two most frequently cited justice actions, with equal frequency (of 13 actions), followed by the police (comprising 12 actions).

77.8% of women who take action to address experiences of sexual harassment report that they were not fairly compensated at all. Similarly, most women who take action to address experiences of sexual violence feel they have not been fairly compensated at all (71.4%). In total, 76% of women who experience either sexual violence or sexual harassment and who take action, report no fair compensation at all.

42.9% of women who take action after experiencing sexual violence feel that rules were unequally applied in their justice journeys, reporting that the same rules were 'not at all' equally applied between them and other parties. 66.7% of women who take action after experiencing sexual harassment also feel that the same rules were 'not at all' equally applied in their justice journeys. Together, 60% of women who experience either form of SGBV and who take legal action, feel that they were very unequally treated in their justice journeys.

Justice Journey Evaluation

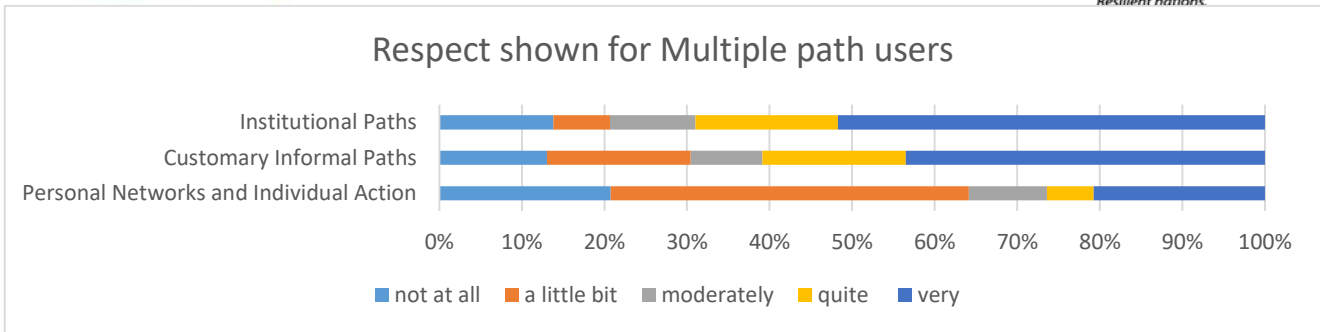
The survey evaluated respondent justice journeys along three dimensions: respect, voice and neutrality, and procedural clarity and capacity. Respondents were also asked to evaluate the quality of their justice journey outcomes, looking at the issues of damage restoration, problem resolution and outcome explanation. Finally, respondents evaluated the costs of their justice journey, responding to questions around time and money.

Quality of Procedure

Respect

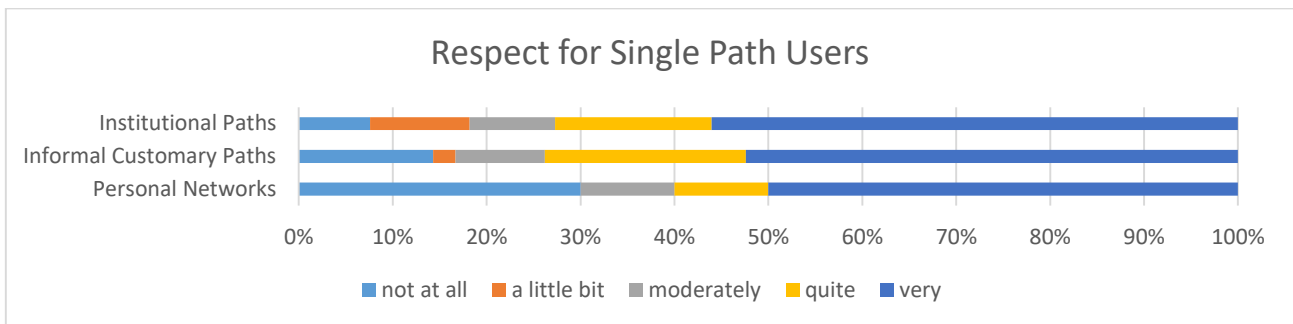
Respect for Multiple Path Users

The highest levels of respect are reported by multiple path users who used formal courts to address their legal problems (100%). Respondents who used the Police, lawyers and paramount chiefs all report experiencing high levels of respect by these paths, with answers in the upper two categories (of quite and very) constituting 80% of respondent respect rankings for all three justice paths. When grouping justice paths according to the categories of personal networks, customary informal justice paths, and institutional justice paths, the following is evidenced. The highest levels of respect are experienced by multiple path users who utilize institutional justice paths, and the lowest levels of respect are reported by those who use personal networks.



Respect and Single Path Users

Levels of respect for single path users are highest for section/town chiefs (63.6%). Among the most popular justice paths used in isolation, contacting friends receives a low respect rating, with only 20% of respondents reporting being treated very or quite respectfully, and 60% of respondents reporting experiencing no respect at all. When categorizing single justice paths, institutional justice paths show the highest respect rankings by respondents, with personal networks exhibiting the poorest respect rankings.



Voice and Neutrality

Respondents were asked how much they were able to express themselves and whether the same rules were applied equally to them and other parties, within their chosen justice paths. These questions generate insight into justice user experiences of procedural fairness, impartiality and individual agency.

Expression (voice)

Expression for Multiple Path Users

Institutional paths exhibit the highest relative positive ratings around respondent abilities to express their views and feelings, for respondents who take multiple justice actions. Personal networks once again exhibit the lowest ratings.

Expression and Single Paths

Institutional paths receive the highest views and expression ratings, when looking at each of the 5 possible answers in isolation. When combining the upper two high expression ratings, customary informal justice paths receive the highest scores, with personal networks once again exhibiting the lowest procedural expression rates.

Neutrality (Fairness and Impartiality)

Neutrality and multiple paths

Institutional paths are reported to provide the highest degree of neutrality, treating parties equally, by multiple path users. Though customary informal paths remain the second most neutral category of justice paths for multiple path users, the discrepancy between institutional paths and customary informal ones



increases significantly along the dimension of neutrality, with institutional paths exhibiting far higher fairness and impartiality ratings. Personal networks continue to perform poorly (with 78.9% of respondents who contact family reporting no fair or impartial treatment, and 90.9% of respondents who contact friends reporting no fair or impartial treatment at all).

Neutrality and Single path users

For single path users, customary informal justice paths show the highest neutrality scores. Personal networks perform poorly once again. Local courts (native administrations) receive the highest fairness and impartiality ratings, with 66.7% of respondents rating the equal application of rules as very high. This is followed by Section/Town Chiefs (54.5% highly positive neutrality scores), and Paramount Chiefs (53.8%).

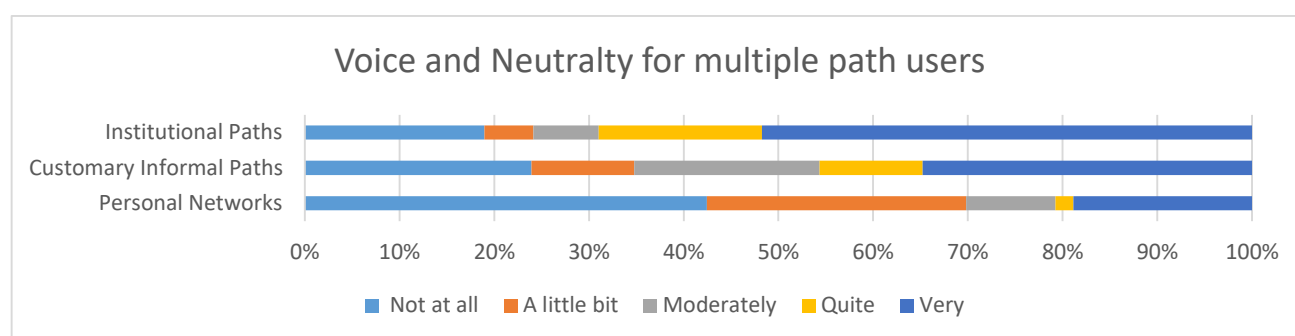
Contacting friends continues to exhibit poor procedural performance, with 60% of respondents reporting to experience no neutrality at all. Rankings for the police also demonstrate some decline along this dimension, with 25.5% of respondents who rely exclusively on the police to address their legal problems reporting to experience no neutrality or equality of rules application at all. Similarly, 25% of respondents who rely on formal courts for legal problem redress also report low neutrality by courts, a number that rises to 50% when combining the lower two possible neutrality scores. For single path users, neutrality is ranked higher for contacting friends than for formal courts (which is given a 25% high neutrality rating). Conversely, among multiple path users, formal courts are ranked as the most neutral justice path. Paramount chiefs rank highly regarding neutrality for single and multiple justice path users.

Combining voice and neutrality scores

Voice and Neutrality together constitute one evaluative procedural dimension of an individual’s justice journey, that captures justice user agency when taking action to address legal problems, and experiences of justice path fairness and impartiality.

Voice and Neutrality for Multiple Path Users

When combining scores for voice and neutrality, for multiple path users, the Police perform best along the category of ‘very’ neutral and ‘very’ high expression, with an average score of 75%. However, when combining the two upper ranking scores of ‘very and quite’, formal courts overshadow the Police, achieving a positive combined and average score of 91.6%. Contacting family and friends continues to score poorly, with 43.4% and 45.5% of respondents, respectively, reporting experiencing no voice or neutrality at all therein.



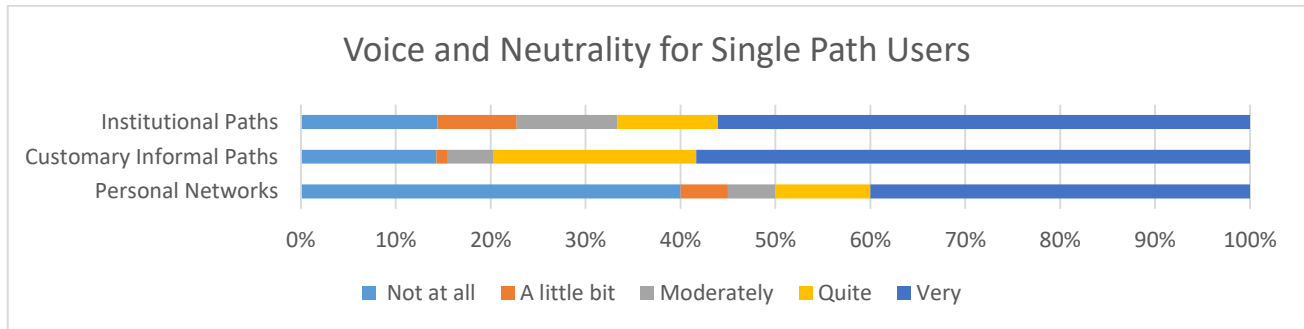
Grouped into path categories, institutional paths perform the best along the combined axes of voice and neutrality for multiple path users, revealing a markedly higher positive evaluation by respondents along the combined axis of voice and neutrality, than either customary informal paths or personal networks.

Voice and Neutrality for Single Path Users

For single path users, local courts (native administrations) demonstrate the highest overall combined rating, with 70.8%. When combining the average scores across voice and neutrality, across the ‘high’ and ‘quite’ high



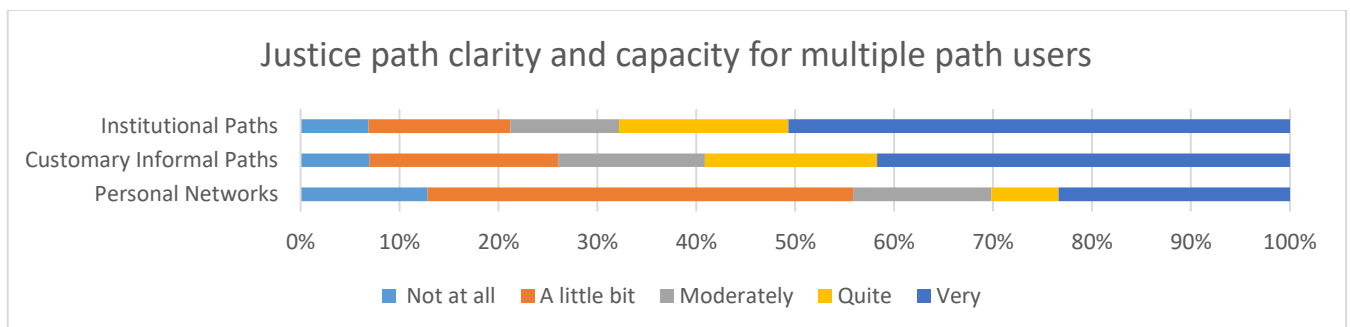
ranking categories, section/town chiefs achieve an average high score of 90.9%, with local courts (native administration) falling slightly behind, at 83.3%. When grouping justice paths into categories customary informal paths evidence the highest positive combined voice and neutrality ratings, and personal networks perform poorest.



Procedural Clarity and Capacity

Procedural Clarity and Capacity for Multiple path users

For multiple path users, paramount chiefs receive the highest satisfaction scores along this dimension, with 76% of respondents ranking them as exhibiting very high clarity and capacity, on average. Lawyers and the police, on average, also receive very high clarity and capacity rankings by multiple path justice users, achieving an average score of 72% and 70% respectively.

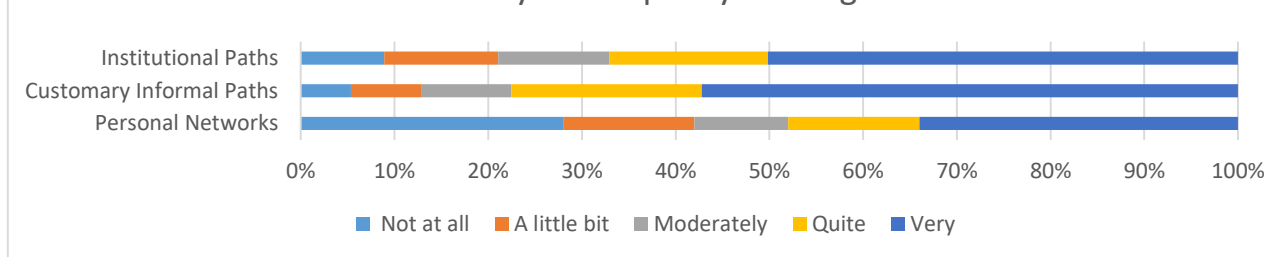


Satisfaction with procedural clarity and capacity are highest within institutional paths, for multiple path users, in line with findings from the previous two procedural evaluation dimensions. Once again, customary informal paths rank second highest, while personal networks evidence the lowest satisfaction scores.

Procedural Clarity and Capacity for Single path users

For single path justice users, local courts (native administrations) receive on average, the highest levels of satisfaction regarding procedural clarity and capacity (71.7%). Section/town chiefs are ranked second highest, with a 'very' high satisfaction score of 61.8% on average. Formal courts rank third, at 55%, followed by paramount chiefs (53.8%). No respondents who rely exclusively on contacting friends to address their legal problems report this path as having very high procedural clarity or capacity. Contacting friends remains very poorly scored, receiving very low satisfaction scores.

Justice Path Clarity and Capacity for Single Path Users



Again, customary informal paths rank highest among single path users regarding procedural evaluation scores. Institutional paths continue to stand in second place, with personal networks firmly occupying last place.

Outcome Evaluation

Satisfaction levels for respondent justice journeys were assessed along the dimensions of damage restoration satisfaction, problem resolution rates (enforcement) and satisfaction with outcome explanations.

Damage Restoration

Most respondents who take action to address their legal problems report not being fairly compensated at all (43.9%). Men report poor compensation levels slightly more frequently than women, with 47% of men reporting no fair compensation at all, compared to 40.6% of women. Satisfaction with damage restoration is therefore very poor.

Damage Restoration and Multiple Paths

Most respondents who use multiple justice paths report receiving no fair compensation at all (59%). 17% report that their dispute resolution process is still ongoing (no resolution yet).

Single Path Users

Damage restoration satisfaction is much higher among single path justice users. 30.5% of respondents report not being fairly compensated at all, while 33.9% report being very fairly compensated. Respondents who rely on a single justice path also report lower rates of ongoing resolution procedures, with only 11.9% stating that their legal problem is still in process (no resolution yet). This lends support to findings around resolution rates and the frequency of multiple actions by respondents. Similar to the logic that complete legal problem resolution through single path action prevents further actions (multiple actions), it follows that where single justice paths provide satisfactory damage restoration, that further action is unlikely.

Respondents who rely exclusively on personal networks to resolve their legal problems report very low levels of damage restoration, with 70% stating that they were not fairly compensated at all. 30.8% of respondents who rely exclusively on institutional paths report very fair compensation for their legal problems, with 13.8% reporting that their legal problem is currently ongoing. Respondents who rely exclusively on customary informal justice paths report higher levels of damage restoration, with 40.5% of respondents reporting to be very fairly compensated. 9.5% of respondents relying exclusively on informal customary justice paths report that their legal problems are still being addressed (no resolution yet). Overall, respondents who rely on customary informal justice paths report higher levels of fair compensation, and lower levels of ongoing dispute settlement proceedings. This follows the same pattern of high positive ratings for customary informal justice paths among single path users, followed by institutional paths, and lastly personal networks.



Problem Resolution (Enforcement)

Enforcement and Multiple Path Users

Most multiple path users report that their legal problem has not yet been resolved, amounting to 40.9% low enforcement satisfaction. 24.8% report very or quite (4.8%) high enforcement satisfaction. 7.6% of multiple path users state that the decision made around their legal problems has not been enforced at all, and a further 8.6% report only 'a little bit' of enforcement. Once again, enforcement rates are higher among institutional paths, followed by customary informal justice paths, and lastly personal networks.

Enforcement and Single Path Users

Single path users who use customary informal justice paths again report high enforcement satisfaction, with 76.2% indicating that decisions are very (59.5%) or quite (16.7%) highly enforced. Only 9.5% report that their problem has not yet been resolved. 59.1% of respondents who use institutional paths report either very high (50%) or quite (9.1%) high decision enforcement. 6.1% report no enforcement at all. For those who rely on personal networks, 30% report that their legal problems have not yet been resolved. 40% report that decision enforcement is very high, while the remaining 30% report that enforcement is moderate. Satisfaction with enforcement through personal networks is therefore low. Overall, customary informal justice paths evidence the highest enforcement satisfaction rankings, and the lowest unresolved disputes among single justice path users. Enforcement rates and satisfaction levels are higher for single path users than multiple path users.

Outcome Explanation

Multiple Paths

Overall outcome explanation satisfaction scores for multiple path justice users is low. 38.1% report that outcomes were either not explained at all or only explained a little bit (3.8%). 19% of multiple path users indicate that their legal problems have not yet been resolved through the use of multiple paths.

Single Path Users

64.3% of respondents who use customary informal justice paths report very high outcome explanation ratings. This rises to 81% when combined with quite high ratings (16.7%). 57.6% of respondents who rely exclusively on institutional justice paths report very high levels of outcome explanation. This rises to 66.7% when combined with the 'quite' high positive rating category. 30% of respondents who rely exclusively on personal networks and individual action are very satisfied with their outcome explanations. Overall, customary informal justice paths once again evidence the highest outcome satisfaction levels. Respondents who use customary informal justice paths also report low rates of unresolved legal problems. Overall positive enforcement and outcome explanation ratings are higher for single path users than multiple path users.

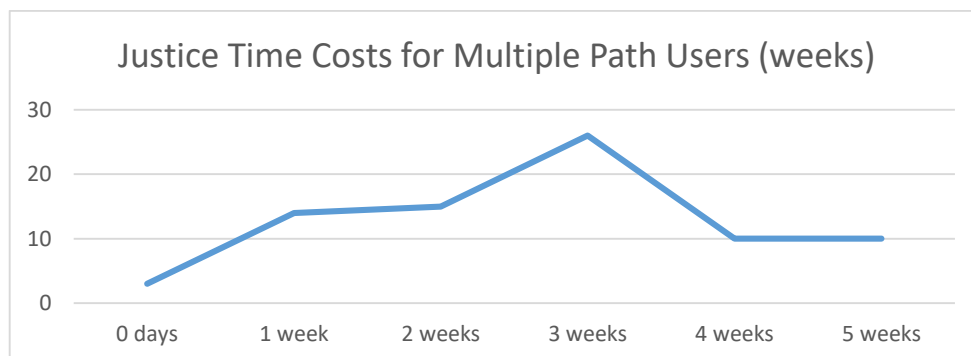
Costs of Justice

Past research has identified the high and varied costs of justice as a significant deterrent to pursuing legal action. Trust statements have already revealed that 41.3% of respondents think that the costs of justice in Sierra Leone are too high. Justice costs can be financial, as well as time costs.



Time

Multiple Path Users



Most multiple path justice users spend between 15 to 21 days resolving their legal problems (a frequency of 26 statements). Generally, respondents spend a maximum of 13 weeks (85 to 91 days) resolving legal problems when using multiple paths, with 2 respondents reporting taking up to 13 weeks to resolve their justice problems. Longer time costs are very rare.

Single Paths and Time Costs



Time costs for single path users are much lower than for multiple path users. Most (40.2%) single path justice users address their legal problems within 1 to 7 days (1 week). 72.3% of respondents resolve their legal problems within 3 weeks (up to 21 days). 5 respondents (comprising 4.5% of the total single justice path population from the survey sample) report excessive time costs for resolving their legal problems.

Financial costs of justice seeking

11.2% of respondents who take action to address their legal problems report not spending any money to address their legal problems. 8.5% of respondents who took action to address their legal problems spent over 1 million Leones to address their legal problems (frequency of 19).

Most respondents who take action to address their legal problems spend less than 250,000 Leones addressing their legal problems. 57% of respondents who take legal action spend less than 250,000 Leones to resolve their legal problems. When controlling for the 11.2% of respondents who take action but do not pay anything to resolve their legal problems, this rises to 64.1% of respondents who take action and pay to resolve their legal problems. Out of this majority, most (17.3%) spend 250 Leones.

33.3% of respondents who take action but do not pay to address their legal problems report using institutional paths, with 50% of that category relying on the police. 29.2% of respondents who take action but do not spend money in the process report using multiple actions. Customary informal justice paths constitute 25% of the justice paths chosen by respondents who take action but do not pay to address their legal problems.



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11.1% of respondents who take action and pay to address their legal problems report spending 1 million Leones or above in addressing their legal problems. 68.2% of this category of highest paying justice seekers report using multiple justice paths to address their legal problems. Multiple paths therefore account for the highest level of spending in addressing an individual's legal problems. For respondents that spend high amounts of money (1 million Leones or above) and pursue single justice paths, institutional justice paths account for the majority of high spending, with 57.1% of respondents who spend 1 million Leones or more on justice seeking relying exclusively on formal courts and lawyers. 42.9% of high justice spending takes place in local courts (native administrations), where respondents report spending between 1 and 1.8 million Leones to address their legal problems. Among institutional paths, high expenditures on lawyers is reported at either 1 or 2 million Leones, while high expenditures in formal courts is reported at the levels of 3.6 and 27 million Leones. High justice expenditures (of 1 million Leones and above) are rare, but more frequent among respondents who rely on institutional paths exclusively.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Increasing citizen trust towards, and performance of, the police is critical. While the Police enjoy the highest institutional familiarity ratings among survey respondents (85.1%), they also receive the poorest performance and trust scores (22% and 44.7%, respectively). They are widely held to privilege the rich, the powerful, and politicians, and are overwhelmingly considered to be the most corrupt branch of the formal security sector (64.2%). They remain the poorest performing component of the formal security sector, while also its most visible and directly engaging one. Enhancing cooperation between the Police and informal service (justice and security) providers in communities where a combination of formal and informal actors exist is one significant way to address poor performance and low institutional trust. As revealed through this survey, perceptions of police effectiveness rise when they are part of a combination of security providers in communities, and where multiple actors provide security, cooperation is generally perceived as positive by respondents.

Enhancing the visibility of formal institutions such as the Law Reform Commission and Legal Aid Board can significantly enhance overall institutional trust within Sierra Leone's formal Justice Sector. Customary Informal justice providers enjoy the highest levels of citizen trust (43.4%), with respondents frequently characterizing formal court proceedings as long and complicated (68.6%), and describing the costs of justice as too high (41.3%). Formal courts too, are seen to privilege the rich, the powerful and politicians. The formal justice sector therefore has much to learn from the informal justice system, which is widely seen to be more effective than formal courts (39.1%). Addressing issues of complex formal court proceedings and bias linked to corruption based on money grabbing and poverty can significantly enhance both the performance, and perceptions, of the formal justice system. Greater collaboration between formal and informal justice and security providers can significantly increase overall institutional performance and trust.

Corruption is widely held to stem from poverty and money grabbing (60%), and respondents frequently put forward increasing salaries of justice and security providers as an effective means to fight corruption (42.2%). A particular manifestation of corruption that affects citizens is bribery. Most respondents who encounter requests for bribery report being asked to provide bribes to members of the Police (72.5% of respondents who have experienced legal problems in the last 12 months, and 53.3% of all survey respondents). Once again, the links between institutional trust and corruption intersect along the dimension of poverty, where low wages and money grabbing can be linked to formal sector bias towards the rich and powerful, the prevalence of bribery and the frequency of increasing wages as a solution to counter corruption.

The police emerge as a significant actor and provider of both security and justice in Sierra Leone. Overwhelmingly, respondents look to the police not only as providers of community security, but as sources of legal advice, and importantly also identify them as the most frequently used justice path when pursuing action for experienced legal problems (40.4% of all justice actions). This reinforces qualitative interview findings with institutional stakeholders that show that members of the police, due to their high presence, visibility, levels of direct citizen engagement, and capacity constraints in the justice sector, are disproportionately relied upon by citizens in their justice journeys. However, qualitative stakeholder interviews also reveal that members of the police are inadequately prepared to take on justice provision roles. Introducing and enhancing some form of legal training for members of the police can significantly contribute to meaningfully increasing access to justice for citizens across Sierra Leone.

Respondent satisfaction with customary informal justice paths is very high. This reinforces the need to acknowledge the informal justice sector in justice service provision. Access to justice needs to be reframed in terms of 'appropriate and meaningful justice spaces' and recognize the important and positive role that the



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informal justice sector, as an appropriate and widely used justice service provider, does and can contribute to access to justice in Sierra Leone.

Consolidating actions taken to resolve legal problems by citizens stands to improve overall resolution and satisfaction rates. Respondents who use single justice paths report higher resolution rates and damage restoration, while also spending less time resolving their legal problems. Given also the high performance of customary informal justice paths for respondents who employ single justice actions, it is evident that enhanced collaboration between the formal justice sector and customary informal justice paths can decrease the costs of justice and increase procedural and outcome satisfaction levels for users.

Personal networks perform very well as sources of legal advice, but rank very poorly when used as justice paths. Nonetheless personal networks emerge as the most frequently cited helpful path for multiple path users (51%), but also exhibit very low procedural evaluation scores. This indicates that legal empowerment, to be effectively enhanced, must take place at the citizen level. Greater education on rights and remedies for citizens will enhance not only individual legal empowerment, but has the potential for cascading impacts, across the personal networks of individuals, who rely highly on personal networks as a source of action to resolve their legal problems. Enhancing legal empowerment on the citizen level also has the potential to decrease the number of actions that people take, by enhancing the procedural quality of personal networks through legal empowerment at the citizen level.

Customary informal justice paths perform on par with institutional paths in terms of resolution rates, and provide the highest resolution rates for single path users. Institutional paths perform better for multiple path users, but the difference is small. Personal networks perform very poorly regarding resolution rates, indicating low citizen capacity to resolve legal problems themselves. Institutional and customary path capacity needs to be enhanced to promote their use as justice paths by citizens, given their high effectiveness in providing complete resolution for legal problems. Institutional and customary paths clearly emerge as the appropriate spaces for citizens to satisfactorily and completely resolve their legal problems, and capacity within these two categories requires augmentation.

The government of Sierra Leone has taken laudable steps in addressing the persistent justice and security gaps that continue to form a critical source of fragility and inequality in Sierra Leone. However, persistent problems in equitable access to justice and deficits in security provision remain, as highlighted in this report. Institutional trust between citizens and the formal sectors remains low and perceptions, and experiences, of corruption are high. Informal service providers are significantly relied upon and viewed as more effective, impartial and trustworthy than their formal counterparts. They contribute significantly to filling the vacuum of justice and security service provision that the State is constrained in providing, due to a combination of corruption and capacity constraints. While this research takes important steps to fill the data gap in our knowledge and understanding of the justice landscape and user needs in Sierra Leone, more is needed to identify, and govern, concrete justice solutions. This study therefore strongly recommends the establishment of the Justice Innovation Center (JIC) in Sierra Leone, an initiative that is currently being developed, in partnership between the Ministry of Justice, the Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI), and IGR. The JIC, as a structure dedicated to iterative data collection (undertaken along similar but expanded lines to this research), concrete justice innovation incubation, and strategic reform recommendation, and premised on the pillars of independence and sustainability, holds true transformative and catalytic justice enhancement potential for Sierra Leone.



Annexes

Annex 1: Disaggregated Institutional Trust Ratings

The Police

44.7% of respondents do not trust the police at all (13.2%) or only trust them a little bit (31.5%). 30.7% of respondents report high trust ratings, of either 'quite' or 'very' high trust in the police. 20.4% of respondents report moderately trusting the police, and 4.2% report no opinion around the question of trust and the police. Overall, trust for the police, is fairly low, and this institution exhibits the poorest trust ratings among respondents, out of all 5 categories of institutions examined.

Customary Informal Justice Providers

Respondents report high levels of trust for customary informal or traditional justice providers. 43.4% of respondents have very high trust in informal justice providers, and only 6.4% report not trusting customary justice providers at all. Customary Informal Justice providers receive the highest overall institutional trust ratings among sampled respondents.

Formal Courts

26.2% of respondents report very high levels of trust in relation for formal courts. 22% of respondents trust formal courts only a little bit, and 6.1% do not trust formal courts at all.

NGOs

38.7% of respondents' report holding no opinion with regards to trusting NGOs (receiving the second highest 'no opinion' ratings out of all 5 categories). 25.7% respondents report very high trust for NGOs. 8.8% report not trusting NGOs at all.

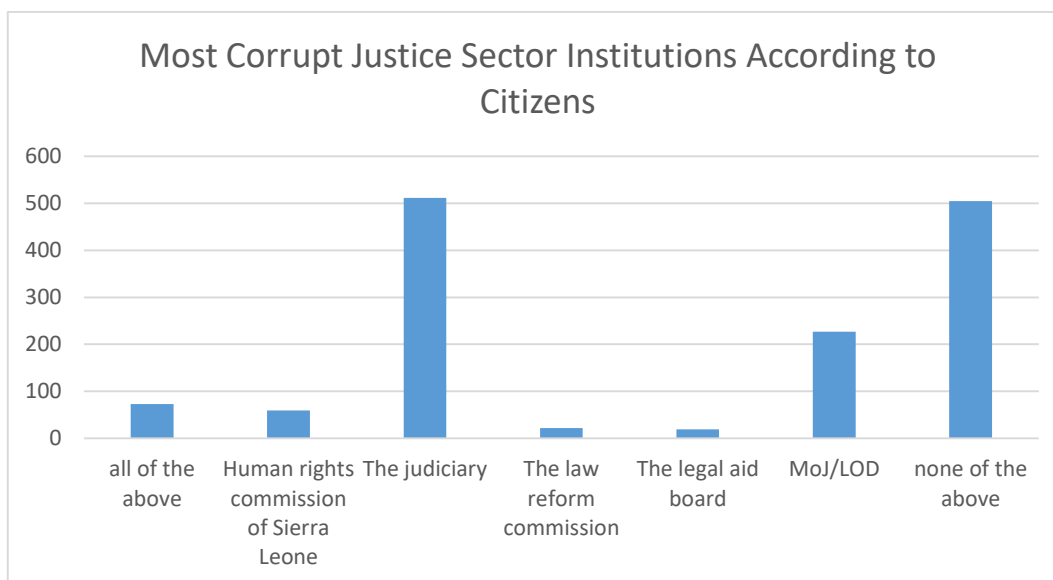
Legal Aid Organisations

Most respondents (49.7%) report no opinion when asked how much they trust legal aid organisations, and they receive, overall, the highest 'no opinion' ratings among respondents. 21.8% report very high trust for legal aid organisations, and 5.9% report not trusting legal aid organisations at all.



Annex 2: Disaggregated Institutional Corruption in the Formal Justice and Security Sectors

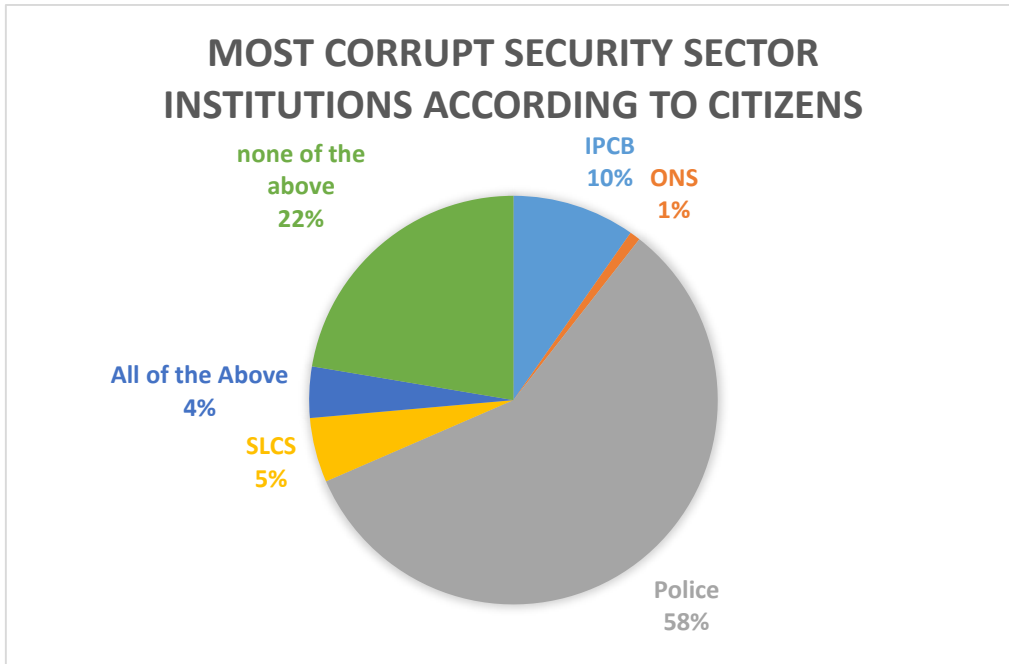
Corruption in Justice Sector Institutions



Respondents were asked to identify which institutions in the justice and security sectors they feel are the most corrupt. The judiciary is most frequently cited as the most corrupt institution in the country’s formal justice sector, displaying a frequency of 36.1%. Noteworthy is that the second most frequent response to the question of which institutions respondents consider the most corrupt in the justice sector, is that 35.6% of respondents report ‘none of the above’, contrary to previous respondent statements on the overall level of corruption associated with the formal justice sector. This discrepancy may be explained by the variation in levels of awareness of the various organs that constitute the formal justice sector, together with (and flowing from) low direct engagement between citizens and most of the institutions that comprise the formal justice sector. 16.0% of respondents report the Ministry of Justice/Law officers Department to be the most corrupt institute within the formal justice sector.



Corruption in Security Sector Institutions



The police receive the highest corruption score within the formal security sector, accounting for 58% of respondent answers. Perceived corruption within the police far exceeds reported corruption levels for any other formal sector institution, across both the justice and security sectors. While this finding is significant, it must be noted that questions of visibility and direct engagement likely inform such high respondent perceptions of police corruption. It has already been established that the Police are the most visible branch of either the formal justice and security sectors, and the institution with which respondents are most likely to engage directly with. 22% of respondents report that none of the assessed security institutions belong to the category of the most corrupt components of the Security Sector, with a further 10% categorizing the IPCB as the security sector’s most corrupt institution.