



MONTHLY TRANSPARENCY WATCH

VOL. 06 AUG. 2024

A publication of the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity



Welcome to another edition of our Monthly Transparency Watch

As we relish the July 11 Supreme Court judgment which granted financial autonomy to local government, it goes without saying that the judgment opens both a huge opportunity and a proportionate challenge.

This landmark decision means not just the direct disbursement of federal allocations to LGAs, but also a critical assignment: ensuring that funds are prudently managed for the good of local communities that have been neglected over the years.

In this edition, we focus on how the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity, alongside other critical players in the accountability ecosystem including Agora Policy, Yiaga Africa, Budgit, Premium Times, and The Cable, with support from MacArthur Foundation, is working to strengthen accountability in the management of local government resources.

We believe that empowering citizens and local actors is vital in entrenching transparency and accountability in the management of local resources. Our workshop in Zaria LGA was also timely in this regard, as it afforded us the opportunity to interact and build the capacity of community journalists and lawyers to enhance their capacity to demand accountability from local authorities.

We invite you to join us in this effort at enhancing transparency and accountability in the management of local government resources.

Hoping that you will find this edition insightful!

Thank you.

Victor Agi
Public Relations Lead

CENTER BUILDS CAPACITY OF JOURNALISTS, LAWYERS TO ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE POST-SUPREME COURT RULING

In response to the July 11 Supreme Court ruling granting financial autonomy to Nigeria's 774 local government areas (LGAs), the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity organized a capacity-building workshop at the Zaria Local Government Area. This initiative targeted members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Zaria Branch, to equip them with the tools and knowledge to bolster the fight against corruption.

The workshop was conceived out of concern that financial autonomy, while a significant step towards decentralized governance, also brings the critical responsibility of ensuring that allocated funds are managed transparently and judiciously.

As the inaugural edition of this program, which will be extended to other regions and LGAs, the workshop focused on enhancing the participants' ability to utilize the Transparency and Integrity Index. This Index is a powerful tool designed to promote access to information as a fundamental human right and to empower citizens and professionals to

demand transparency and accountability from local government authorities.

Participants were also introduced to the Center's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Monitoring Mechanism, an innovative tool that tracks Nigeria's adherence to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). This mechanism serves as a critical resource for advocacy, enabling CSOs to monitor and influence the implementation of anti-corruption measures effectively.

The session underscored the vital role of journalists and legal professionals as accountability advocates in their communities. It emphasized their responsibility to hold government officials accountable, ensure efficient governance, and promote transparency at the grassroots level.

The Center remains committed to supporting these professionals in their ongoing efforts to enhance public integrity and fight corruption across Nigeria.



Scenes from Zaria Local Government Workshop for Journalists and Lawyers



LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL AUTONOMY: CENTER, PARTNERS CONVEY DIALOGUE TO ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY



Following the landmark July 11 ruling by the Supreme Court which authorized direct disbursement of the federation allocations to the local government, and also affirmed the illegality of running LGAs by caretaker committees appointed by state governors, which ultimately grants financial autonomy to the local government council, the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity has partnered with Agora Policy, alongside Yiaga Africa, Budgit, Premium Times and the Cable to convey dialogue on how to enhance accountability in LG resource management.

The policy dialogue supported by the MacArthur Foundation was designed to reflect on the operations of LGAs and recommend practical ways of ensuring transparency and accountability in the management of the funds that will now be available for local councils.

Stakeholders at the dialogue bemoaned the opacity, distrust and lack of accountability in managing resources accrue to local councils over the years despite their enormous and critical constitutional roles in driving societal development.

In his remarks, the Founder of Agora Policy, Dr. Waziri Adio, noted that the conversation on enthroning accountability in LG in Nigeria was timely and a critical touchpoint required to renew interest and empower stakeholders to demand accountability as a major step in reforming the "most important" tier of government.

The conversation also touches on the need to reform the electoral process, with Dr. Otive Igbuzor, the Founding Executive Director of the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD) remarking that credible LG polls remain the first step to reaping the gains of financial autonomy for LG. Dr. Otive further identified the following steps crucial to enthroning accountability in LG governance including the need to strengthen internal budgeting systems, improved legislative oversight, independent monitoring mechanism, media oversight and active citizen participation.

Details here:
<https://www.fiscaltransparency.org/local-government-financial-autonomy-center-partners-convey-dialogue-to-enhance-accountability/>

Scenes from Dialogue to Enhance Transparency in Local Governance



INFOGRAPHICS CORNER



TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY INDEX 2024 Local Government Areas (LGAs) Assessment Variables

Fiscal Transparency

Open Procurement

Human Resources

Control of Corruption

Citizens Engagement

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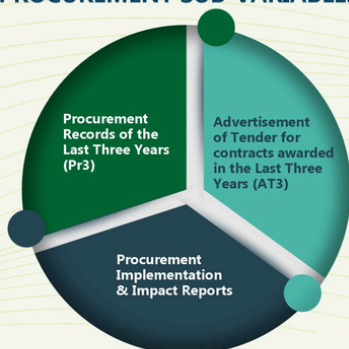
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TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY INDEX 2024 Local Government Areas (LGAs) Assessment Variables

PROCUREMENT SUB-VARIABLES



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TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY INDEX 2024 Local Government Areas (LGAs) Assessment Variables

HUMAN RESOURCE SUB-VARIABLES

Recruitment Information of The Last Three Years (R3)	Recruitment Policy (RP)
Number of Personnel (NP)	Sex Distribution (SD)
Disability (D)	Updated Organizational Chart (UOC)
Information and Date of Promotion Exercises of Last Three Years (P3)	

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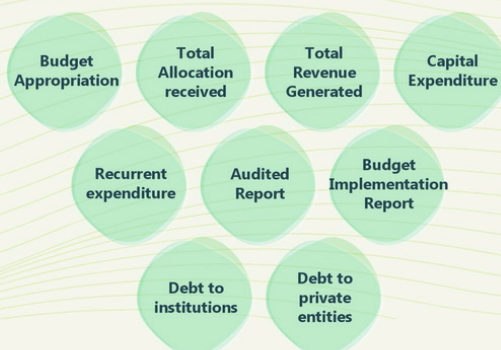
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TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY INDEX 2024 Local Government Areas (LGAs) Assessment Variables

FISCAL TRANSPARENCY SUB-VARIABLES



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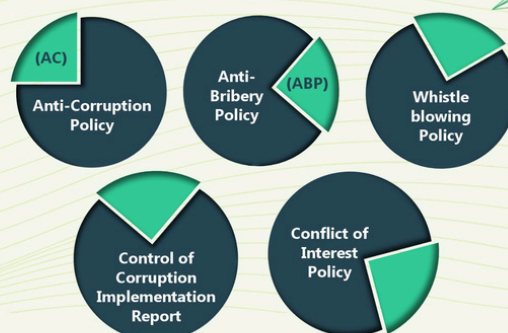
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TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY INDEX 2024 Local Government Areas (LGAs) Assessment Variables

CONTROL OF CORRUPTION SUB-VARIABLES



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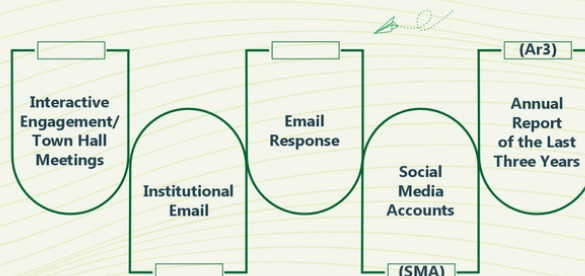
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TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY INDEX 2024 Local Government Areas (LGAs) Assessment Variables

CITIZENS ENGAGEMENT SUB-VARIABLES



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Ladies and gentlemen, gather around for the latest episode of "Who's the Boss?", featuring none other than our beloved Nigerian state governors and their unrelenting grip on local government funds.

The Supreme Court has recently delivered a thunderous verdict that said, "Local governments, you are now free! No longer shall you be the paupers in the castles of state governors, begging for the crumbs from their high tables."

The verdict decreed that all funds meant for local governments must go directly to them. It's like giving a teenager their allowance directly rather than through their notoriously spendthrift elder sibling.

For decades, our state governors have played the role of the overbearing elder sibling, taking the local governments' lunch money and promising to buy them something nice with it later. Spoiler alert: "later" never comes, and that promised bicycle remains a distant dream. But fear not, the Supreme Court has come to the rescue, wielding the Constitution like a superhero's shield.

The Attorney General, Lateef Fagbemi, had been on a crusade worthy of a medieval knight, fighting for the autonomy of our 774 local governments. His battle cry? "No more joint accounts!" Because let's face it, joint accounts don't appear to work well in the murky waters of Nigerian politics.

So, here's to a new era where local governments might finally get to taste the fruits of their labour, rather than just the bitter rind left by their elder siblings. Cheers to the Supreme Court for giving local governments the financial independence they deserve.

Now, let's see if they can handle their newfound freedom without turning into spendthrift teenagers. So, pass the popcorn, as this is going to be a show to remember.

As recently revealed by BudgIT's GovSpend in July 2024, the Nigerian presidency has pulled off a billion-naira bonanza, spending a staggering N16.06 billion on foreign currencies for international trips in just one year. Yes, you heard that right: N16.06 billion

It's almost as if President Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his entourage have been on a year-long world tour, with stops at every glamorous hotspot and diplomatic gala imaginable. One might wonder if they've earned enough frequent flyer miles to circle the globe several times over. And who can blame them? When you're spending N10.93 billion just on the president's trips, you've got to make sure you're getting the most out of every private jet.

The Vice President, not to be outdone, chipped in a modest N101.68 million for his excursions. It seems even the second-in-command needs a break from the rigors of governance, preferably somewhere in the Swiss Alps, where N426.88 million could get you a hot chocolate and a room with a view.

But let's not forget the First Lady, whose globetrotting adventures cost a cool N623.05 million. Whether it's Paris, Mozambique, or London, the First Lady's itinerary reads like a travel blogger's dream, each trip dripping with diplomatic necessity and, of course, high-end shopping sprees.

Even the Chief of Staff got in on the action, with N59.24 million allocated for international engagements. One might speculate that the Chief of Staff's travels are akin to a VIP scouting mission for upcoming UN assemblies, ensuring every detail is as polished as the silverware at the banquet.

And who could overlook the Presidential Air Fleet? With N4.97 billion spent to keep those engines roaring and the champagne flowing at 35,000 feet, one can only admire the dedication to ensuring that the sky truly is the limit for our esteemed leaders.

Now, in the spirit of fairness, it's important to note that the naira has recently taken quite a nosedive, plummeting over 70% against the dollar. So perhaps it's not entirely the presidency's fault that a trip that used to cost N464.5 million now requires N1.56 billion. After all, even leaders need their international pitstops, though at a discount rate, one would hope.

So, as we marvel at these astronomical expenses, let's tip our hats to the Nigerian presidency for setting a new benchmark in extravagance. Who knew that international diplomacy could be so delightfully decadent? Cheers to another year of luxurious travel, as the rest of us hold our breaths and our wallets a little tighter!



POST IACC ENGAGEMENT: MACARTHUR FOUNDATION CRIMINAL JUSTICE COHORT REFLECTS ON OUTCOMES, WANTS IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICIES



The International Anti-Corruption Conference in Lithuania with the theme: Confronting Global Threats: Standing Up for Integrity, was a turning point in global efforts to combat corruption and tackle all forms of criminality. Following its participation at this year's conference, the MacArthur Foundation Criminal Justice Cohort has conveyed a workshop to reflect on the outcomes, calling on all stakeholders to strengthen the implementation of anti-corruption policies.

The workshop which had members of the cohort and media practitioners focused on identifying strategies to combat corruption and bolster accountability mechanisms, as well as the urgent need for a unified approach to address the nation's corruption challenges.

A central theme that emerged was the need to strengthen interagency collaboration, as participants underscored how fragmented efforts and siloed operations among anti-corruption bodies often hamper the effectiveness of their initiatives.

They called for an integrated approach where agencies share intelligence, resources, and best practices to form a more cohesive and potent force against corruption.

The roles of CSOs and the media were also emphasized as critical in the fight against corruption. CSOs and media were enjoined to hold public officials accountable through their works by embracing, among others, digital tools that enable accurate and impactful advocacy against corruption.

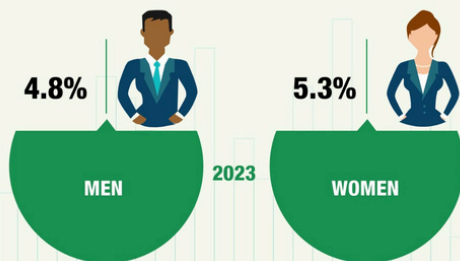
Importantly, the workshop called on citizens' involvement in the fight against corruption as a means of strengthening transparency and accountability in the governance process.

Participants also acknowledged that outdated regulations and bureaucratic loopholes provide safe havens for corrupt practices; calling for reforms that reflect current realities that ensure the swift prosecution of corruption in Nigeria.



INFOGRAPHICS CORNER

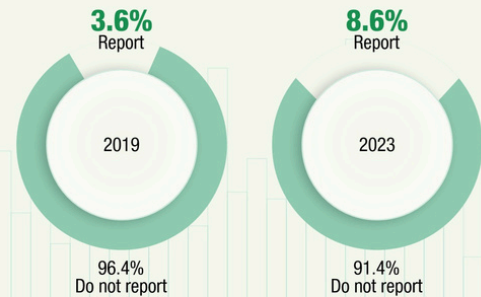
A slightly larger share of women interacting with public officials are asked for **SEXUAL FAVOURS**



Data Source: NBS/UNODC Anti-corruption Survey 2024 www.fiscaltransparency.org

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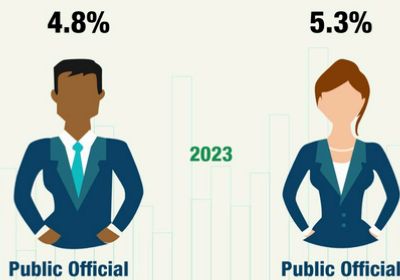
In 2023, **8.6 PER CENT** of people who paid a bribe actually reported it to official authorities



Data Source: NBS/UNODC Anti-corruption Survey 2024 www.fiscaltransparency.org

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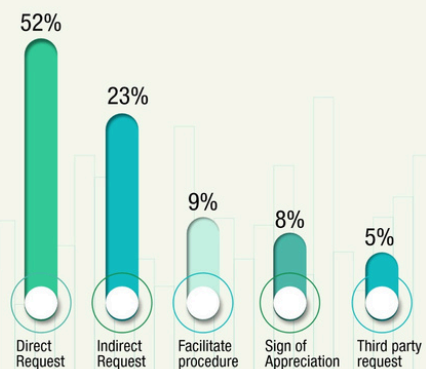
The share of male public officials who solicit or **TAKE A BRIBE** when interacting with the public is nearly twice that of female public officials



Data Source: NBS/UNODC Anti-corruption Survey 2024 www.fiscaltransparency.org

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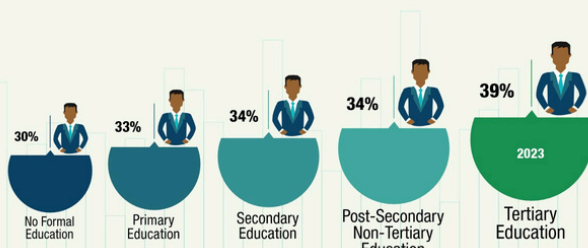
In 2023, more than a half of all **BRIBES PAID TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS** were requested directly by those officials



Data Source: NBS/UNODC Anti-corruption Survey 2024 www.fiscaltransparency.org

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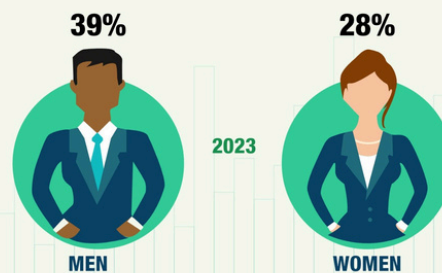
People with the highest level of education are **1.3 TIMES** more likely to pay bribes than people with no formal education



Data Source: NBS/UNODC Anti-corruption Survey 2024 www.fiscaltransparency.org

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Men are 1.4 times more likely than women to pay or asked to **PAY A BRIBE** when interacting with public officials



Data Source: NBS/UNODC Anti-corruption Survey 2024 www.fiscaltransparency.org

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In December, 2022, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) began an investigation into over N200 billion contract approved during Abdul'aziz Abubakar Yari's Administration as Zamfara State Governor, it is **1542 days** and counting, the probe is ongoing with no outcome in sight

In January, 2020, an Ad hoc Committee of the House of Representatives chaired by Hon. Francis Uduyok commenced a probe into the actual fund released by President Muhammadu Buhari and his predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan for constituency projects; it's **1504 days** and counting, the outcome of the probe is unknown



In June 2020, House of Representatives Public Account Committee chaired by Hon. Wole Oke frowned at the failure of the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCRMIDP) to properly account for the utilization of N25 billion appropriated between 2015 and 2019 fiscal years; it's **1353 days** after the investigative hearing, actions taken are not known.

In May 2020, a Senate Ad hoc Committee chaired by Sen. Olubunmi Ayodeji Adetumbi commenced a probe into alleged N40 billion act of corruption by the Interim Management Committee (IMC) of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), it's **1400 days** and counting after the investigative hearing, not much is known about the alleged misappropriation.





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