

South Africans fed up with corruption

The latest analysis of SA's corruption trends released by Corruption Watch shows that most South Africans are fed up with corruption and are blowing the whistle against it loud and clear, reports **Legalbrief**. According to the analysis, the number of corruption complaints received in the first half of this year went up by 9.5% compared with last year, notes a **Cape Argus** report. David Lewis, the executive director of Corruption Watch, said the report indicated that there was an escalating intolerance to corruption across all sectors of society. 'Corruption cannot be effectively tackled without an active citizenry willing to blow the whistle. **Our reporting data is evidence of a courageous, committed and outraged public. This is a good portent for the future.**' The report quotes Gareth Newham, the head of the Justice and Violence Prevention Programme at the Institute of Security Studies, as saying that corruption had always been a problem in SA, but had become much worse under President Jacob Zuma. Newham said that when the most powerful politicians and business people were corrupt, corruption became endemic throughout the system.

The highest levels of corruption reported occur in schools, representing 9.9% of the total, followed by corruption in the SAPS, which comes in at 7.6%, reports **The Times**. And, the analysis found, the types of corruption most commonly experienced are bribery, embezzlement of funds, irregularities in procurement, and irregularities in employment. Corruption Watch said the number of corruption complaints received in the first six months of 2017 – at 2 744 – **represents a significant 9.5% increase over the same period last year, pointing to a positive trend of whistleblowing around the country** and a greater willingness by the public to join the fight against corruption. Since Corruption Watch was launched in January 2012, more than 20 000 reports have been received from the public. 'This growing outrage at the unacceptable levels of corruption in South Africa also relates to its widening impact on the lives of ordinary people, particularly those who rely on publicly provided goods and services,' the organisation said. The three metropolitan municipalities yielding the largest volume of corruption reports are those of Johannesburg, Tshwane and Cape Town. Of these three, only Tshwane has shown a decrease since 2016.

Corruption Watch says many civil servants are committed to rooting out corruption. But Lewis says that there is little evidence of this commitment at the top. He says in an **Eyewitness News** report: 'We deal with a lot of public servants all the time who really want to root out corruption in their institutions. **The problem is there is no willpower at the top.**' Lewis says proper steps should be taken to deal with corruption in the private and public sectors.

Corruption costs the SA gross domestic product at least R27bn annually as well as the loss of 76 000 jobs that would otherwise have been created. **News24** reports that this is according to a recent exercise by the Department of Economic Development to quantify the cost of corruption in the public sector, based on just a 10% increase in price in infrastructure projects as a result of corruption. **Collusion increases the costs of doing business, stunts the dynamism and competitiveness that is needed and has a negative impact on growth and jobs,** Minister of Economic Development Ebrahim Patel said at the Competition Law, Economics and Policy Conference at the Gordon Institute of Business Science. He said that the culture of 'rampant acquisition is spreading so widely that the professional standards of integrity which are a hallmark of functioning institutions are under enormous pressure. There are some troubling matters to address in looking at corruption and the collusion therewith by professional firms, from auditors to lawyers and others.'

In East Africa, meanwhile, corruption is a hurdle in accessing justice, with the Kenyan and Ugandan judiciaries taking the highest bribes to influence decision-making, compared with other public institutions. **The East African** reports that according to the 2017 East African Bribery Index released recently by global anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International, Kenyan and Ugandan judiciaries receive the biggest share of bribes paid by citizens to either influence the outcome of lawsuits or fast-track decision-making. **But the index places the police at the top as the most corrupt institution across the region,** with the law enforcers being the highest bribe-takers, save for Rwanda where utilities top the list. The report says the least probability was recorded at medical and health services at 0.5%. This was also the lowest probability of paying a bribe recorded at any institution across the region.