



AFR/20/2010/BoT

Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa

Campaigners against corruption in the public and private sectors

Campaigners against corruption in the public and private sectors

Registration No. 045-923-NPO (South Africa) and Registration No. MA147/2004 (Zimbabwe)

MINI-ASSESSMENT REPORT: CORRUPTION BY TRAFFIC POLICE OFFICERS AND VEHICLE DRIVERS IN BOTSWANA, NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE.

Head-Quarters

18 Liliencron Street
P. O. Box 1148
Windhoek
Namibia
Tel: +26461 308841
Mobile: +264811223356
Fax: +26488613678

Legal and Research Unit

Kutlwanong Democracy Centre
Cnr Prinsloo and Visagie Street
Pretoria 0001
South Africa
Tel: +27123226969
Mobile: +27726393795
Fax: +27123226969

Contact e-mails

info@actsouthernafrica.org
actsouthernafrica@gmail.com
gabmrech@gmail.com

CONTACTS FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES

The Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa
Kutlwanong Democracy Centre
Cnr Prinsloo and Visagie Street
Pretoria 0001
South Africa

Tel: +27123226969
Mobile: +27726393795
Fax: +27123226969
E-Mail: info@actsouthernafrica.org;
actsouthernafrica@gmail.com or
gambrech@gmail.com

Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. METHODOLOGY	4
3. LIMITATIONS	4
4. ELABORATION OF THE FINDINGS	4
A. DRIVERS' INITIATED TRANSACTIONS	4
B. POLICE OFFICERS' INITIATED CORRUPT TRANSACTIONS	5
C. OBSERVED INCIDENTS IN NAMIBIA	6
D. OBSERVED INCIDENTS IN BOTSWANA	6
E. OBSERVED INCIDENTS IN ZIMBABWE	6
5. CONCLUSION	6
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	6

Mini-Assessment Report: Corruption by traffic police officers and vehicle drivers in Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe

11 November 2010.

1. Introduction

A researcher from the Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa (ACT-Southern Africa) travelled by road in a public transport from Namibia (Windhoek) to Zimbabwe (Harare) via Botswana through the Mamuno border post. The journey to and fro Zimbabwe was an eye-opener on the nature and extent of corruption bedeviling traffic police officers in the three countries.

In a nutshell, the following findings were made:

- a. Zimbabwean traffic police officials are more corrupt than their counterparts in Botswana and Namibia.
- b. The governments of Namibia and Zimbabwe could be losing significant amounts of revenue due to corruption in which police officers are involved.
- c. Transport business operators are losing income due to bribes paid to traffic police officers.
- d. There were no indications of corruption by traffic police officials in Botswana.

2. Methodology

The researcher strategically positioned himself at the front seat close to the driver in order to clearly listen, hear and record conversations between drivers and police officers. Drivers were also briefed about the researcher's intention and were supportive through out the trip. In most cases, drivers recorded conversations on behalf of the researcher when he did not want police officers to be suspicious.

3. Limitations

The researcher passed through Botswana during the night and resultantly there were a limited number of road blocks. In Namibia, between Windhoek and Mamuno border post, there was only one road block and this limited greater access to contact with the police.

4. Elaboration of the findings

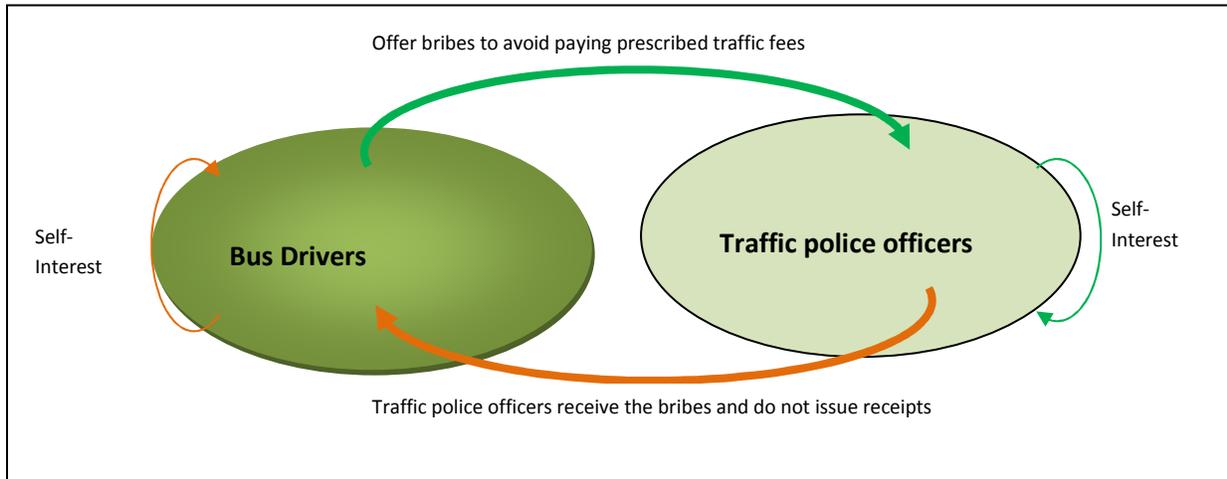
The assessment found out the following on the nature of the transactions between traffic police officers and drivers.

a. Drivers' initiated transactions

In many incidents, drivers offered to pay bribes which police officers received without any shame. The nature of the conversations between the drivers and the police officers showed that they knew each other and have been paying and receiving bribes for a long time.

Drivers indicated that they prefer to pay bribes to avoid paying more money in line with prescribed traffic fines. In this case, the bribes they pay are less than the prescribed traffic fines. Figure 1 below depicts this form of relationship and transactions between the two parties.

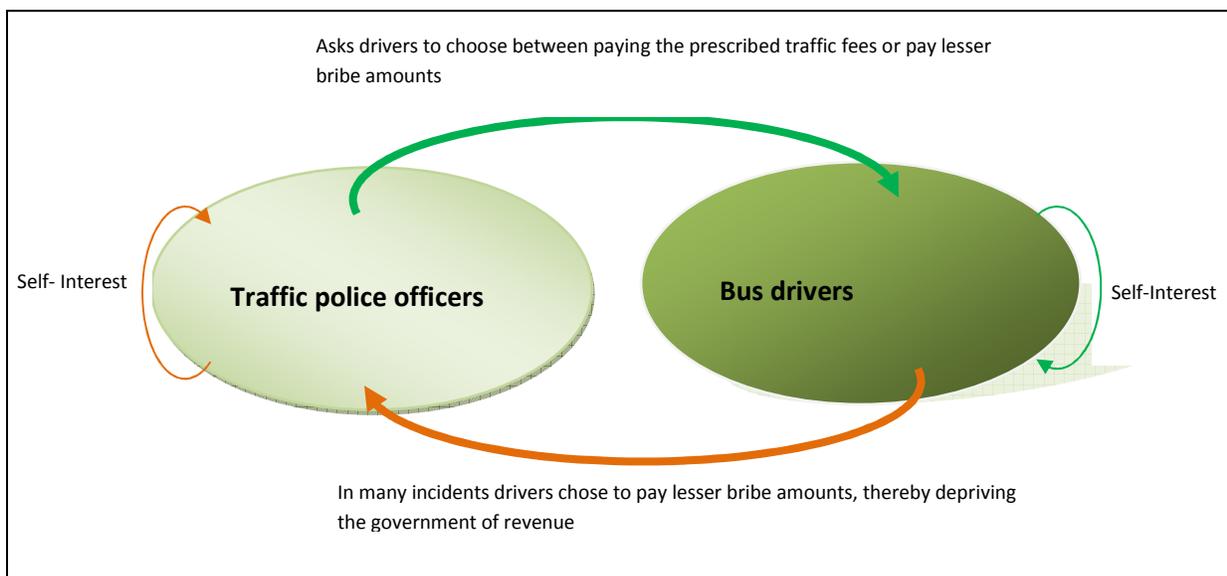
Figure 1: Nature of the transactions between traffic police officers and drivers



b. Police officers' initiated corrupt transactions

There are many incidents in which police officers demanded bribes. Some police officers demanded money in return for not issuing tickets without any sign of fear or compunction. However, some of them did not present their cases in a straight forward fashion. These started by asking drivers to choose between paying more in line with prescribed traffic fines or paying a lesser amount for a police officer's drink. In other scenarios, they asked the driver to off-load luggage, which would be a cumbersome process since some of the vehicle would be heavily loaded. At the end, police officers were given money for which no receipts were given.

Figure 2: Nature of the transactions between traffic police officers and drivers



c. Observed incidents in Namibia

On the way to Zimbabwe, the bus was not stopped at any road block in Namibia. Resultantly, no acts of corruption were observed. However, on the way back from Zimbabwe to Namibia and between Hosea Kutako International Air Port and Windhoek, the bus was signaled to stop, which the driver did. The driver disembarked and gave N\$100 to a traffic police officer. No receipt was given. Upon receipt of the money the police officer signaled the bus to proceed. This clearly showed that traffic police officers are receiving bribes from motorists.

d. Observed incidents in Botswana

In Botswana, there were no cases in which traffic police officers were paid money. The researcher passed through Botswana during the night and this could have affected the assessment since there were few road blocks.

e. Observed incidents in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe immediately after leaving the Francistown Border Post, the bus was stopped by police officers. After they signaled the bus to pull up, the police officers were given US\$20 in full view of the passengers. No receipt was given to the driver. A few kilometers after the first road block, there was another one, and again a police officer was given US\$10. At this point the researcher risked and demanded a receipt. The panicking police officer indicated that he had no receipt book. Realizing that he had been caught red-handed he threw the money back to the driver and asked the bus to proceed. At all road blocks the bus driver paid significant amounts to traffic police officers. The same trend was observed on the way back from Harare to Windhoek.

5. Conclusion

The mini-assessment revealed that the culture of corruption is deep-seated with the ranks and file of the police force. In Namibia and Zimbabwe, police officers received bribes. In the process, the Namibian and Zimbabwean governments are losing revenue through these acts. Transport operators are equally losing income.

6. Recommendations

1. The respective governments are urged to monitor their traffic police officers on a constant but irregular level to ensure that those involved in corrupt activities are caught and exposed.
2. Whenever possible, governments are encouraged to lay traps and all those caught should be prosecuted and dismissed from the police service.
3. Anti-Corruption bodies should be established and empowered to deal with these kinds of offences to ensure that they augment the police, which in many instances cannot fairly investigate itself.
4. Finally, laws, policy and practice should be established that encourage whistleblowers to come forward and report corruption, especially those that feel tempted to pay bribes.

End