

DAILY NATION

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Most Kenyans want individuals who have committed economic crimes punished without being given amnesty.

Graph showing results of the survey, with a sample of 2,400 respondents. They also want stolen money returned to the country and would like to elect a president who is committed to fighting corruption.

It is for this reason that a half of Kenyans views ODM's Raila Odinga as the most ideal president.

Fifty per cent of those interviewed by research organisation Infotrak, on behalf of Africa Centre for Open Governance (Africog) in October, said they believed the outgoing Lang'ata MP was the most committed to end corruption.

President Kibaki, seeking re-election on PNU, is the second most preferred candidate to fight the evil at 33 per cent, with ODM Kenya presidential aspirant Kalonzo Musyoka coming third at 17 per cent.

The question asked was "Who among the presidential candidates do you feel will be most committed to fight corruption?"

Choosing a candidate

The 2,400 Kenyans polled in the study responded by choosing a candidate they perceived was best suited to tackle corruption.

The sampling was done using Population Proportionate to Size and defined by age, area and gender. Only those above 18 were interviewed.

Mr Odinga got most of his support from people aged between 18 and 44 years, while President Kibaki is the favourite for senior citizens.

The ODM torch-bearer's lead was attributed to Kenyans' thirst for change since 2002, and youth disappointment with the performance of the Kibaki administration.

Mr Odinga's supporters, the report showed, were however, disappointed with his promise of amnesty for those involved in past crimes, as opposed to his earlier statement to firmly deal with them and ensure they answered for their crimes.

The findings indicated that corruption was a main issue of concern in this year's elections (89 per cent) followed by unemployment (78) and food, poverty and

insecurity (each 76).

Other issues include high taxes and prices of commodities, poor infrastructure, tribalism, lack of a proper constitution and gender inequality.

Most voters felt corruption was entrenched in the country and that there was high impunity. Corruption was mainly an issue for those aged between 18 and 44.

Eighty-two per cent said little had been done to bring to book those involved in graft, showed the report launched at The Stanley hotel in Nairobi Tuesday.

A majority of Kenyans further believed that corruption was still rampant in government institutions and that sacred cows abound.

Fifty-four per cent want those guilty to be prosecuted while 22 per cent want stolen assets returned. Only six percent of Kenyans want past economic crimes forgiven and forgotten.

The respondents said those involved in graft should be sacked and banned from holding public office.

The next government was also put on notice: It will have six months to implement tough measures against corruption or lose Kenyans' confidence.

Most of Mr Odinga's supporters (63 per cent) want the full force of the law applied against corrupt persons, President Kibaki (46) and Mr Musyoka (39).

Most of Mr Musyoka's supporters are against his call for forgiveness of those involved in past crime, saying they should instead pay back and apologise.

Enjoying the loot

"This shows the people are aware of the opportunity costs of corruption. They want those who stole from them not to be allowed to continue enjoying the loot. They want the resources returned," said Ms Gladwell Otieno, who heads Africog.

Kenya National Human Rights Commission chief Maina Kiai said the Kibaki administration had the best chance to ensure accountability in 2003 "but nothing happened".

"The Government started losing its path when it started doing what (former President) Moi did. Raila should keep the reform agenda otherwise he will suffer the same fate...," said Mr Kiai.

Kenyans should keep the next government on its toes to tackle corruption starting from January 2 after inauguration, Mr Kiai said.