

4th July 2024

YOUTH PULSE

THE GEN-Z PROTESTS

Young Kenyans reflect on
protests, voting & hopes
for the future



YOUTH PULSE: THE GEN Z PROTESTS

Kenya has a proud history of protests for democratic change, but the scale, speed and impact of the recent Gen-Z demonstrations have taken much of the nation by surprise.

The 2024 Finance Bill was the catalyst for the latest youth protests. But what does this “leader-less, tribe-less and fear-less” campaign mean for young people across the country?

To find out, here at Shujaaz Inc we tapped into our national network of young people to speak with Kenyans aged 18-34 to take a pulse-check of their current sentiments.

The outcome? 249 conversations with young men (53%) and women (47%) averaging 25 years of age held between June 29-30th in 28 counties. Not a scientific or representative study, but opinions from a widespread group of engaged young Kenyans.

As you'll see, a lot of the young Kenyans we spoke to are feeling deeply frustrated – with the Finance Bill and more. Many were protesting in-person and online last week for the first time, and more say they are willing to do so in future – in most cases with the support of their families.

However, it's also clear that the young Kenyans we spoke to still have a strong belief in the country's democracy. More than ever, they're committed to voting for the future they want.

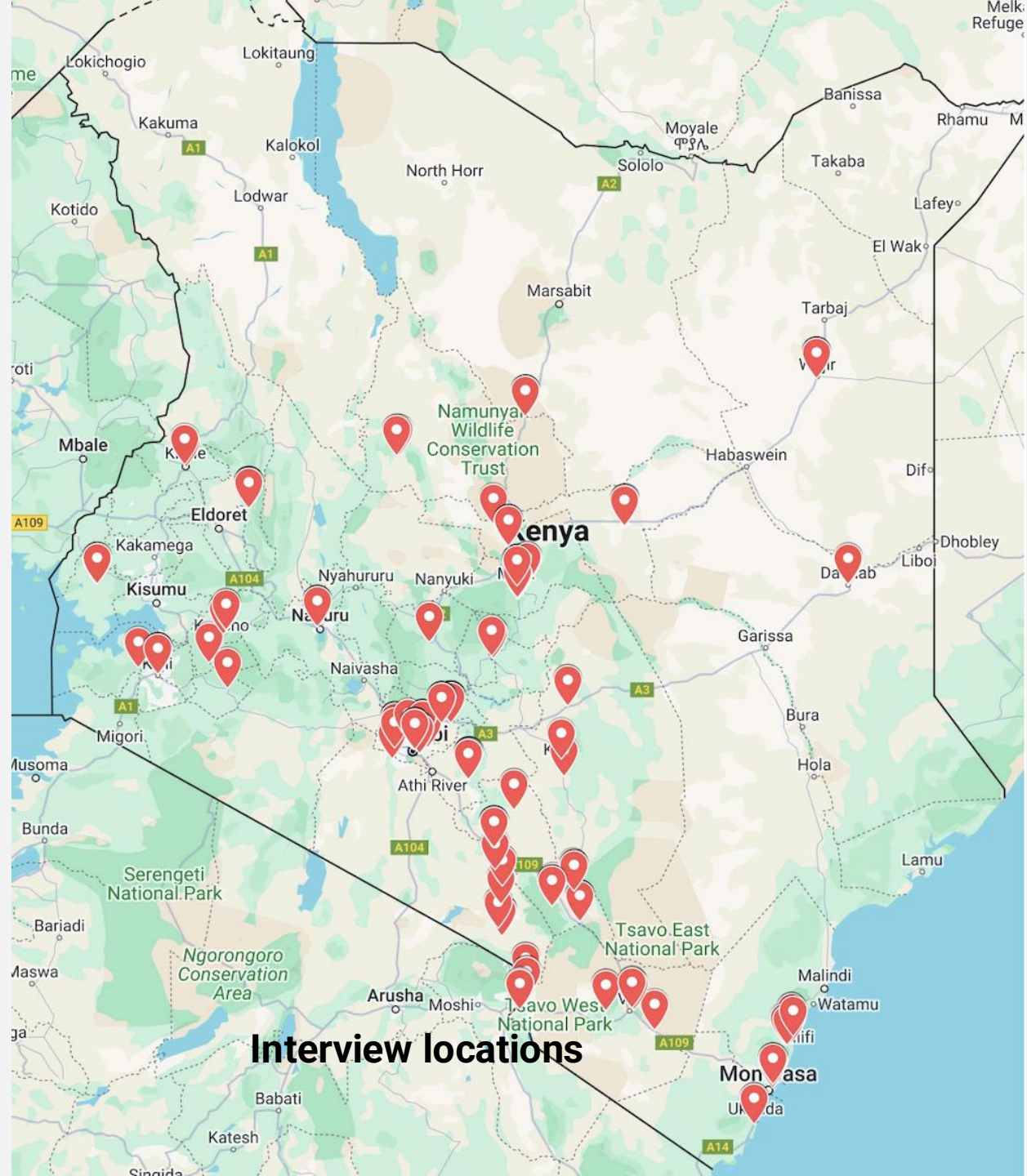
And as you'll also see, the young Kenyans we spoke to want to share clear and practical suggestions for government: where to finding savings and austerity; how anti-corruption may be put on the front-burner; ways leadership can build transformational trust and cooperation with completely new approaches to youth engagement and transparency.

This Youth Pulse builds on the data and insights from our flagship [Young & Kenyan](#) digital report. It's also part of our long-running partnership with the United Nations in Kenya and the UN Futures Lab. Together, we've been mapping the hopes and aspirations of young Kenyans, as the country gears up for an important role in the United Nations' Summit of the Future in New York in September 2024, with a spotlight on “future generations”.



249 CONVERSATIONS

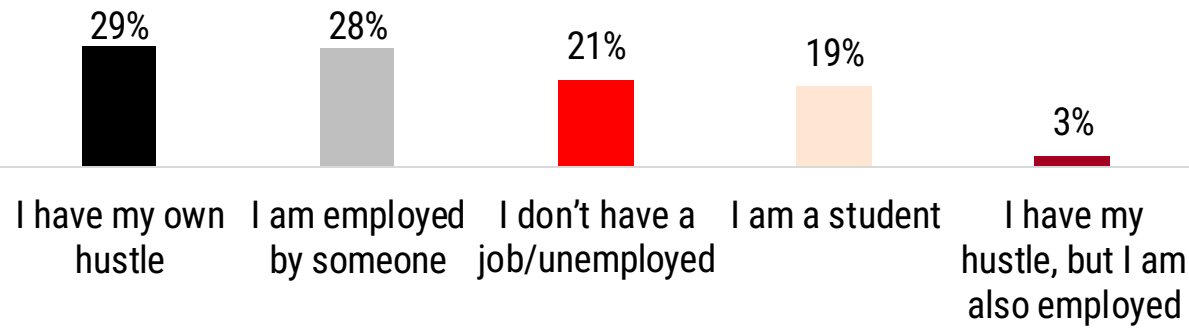
- **249** Kenyans aged 18-34
- Average **25** years old
- **53%** men / **47%** women
- **June 29-30th**
- **28** counties



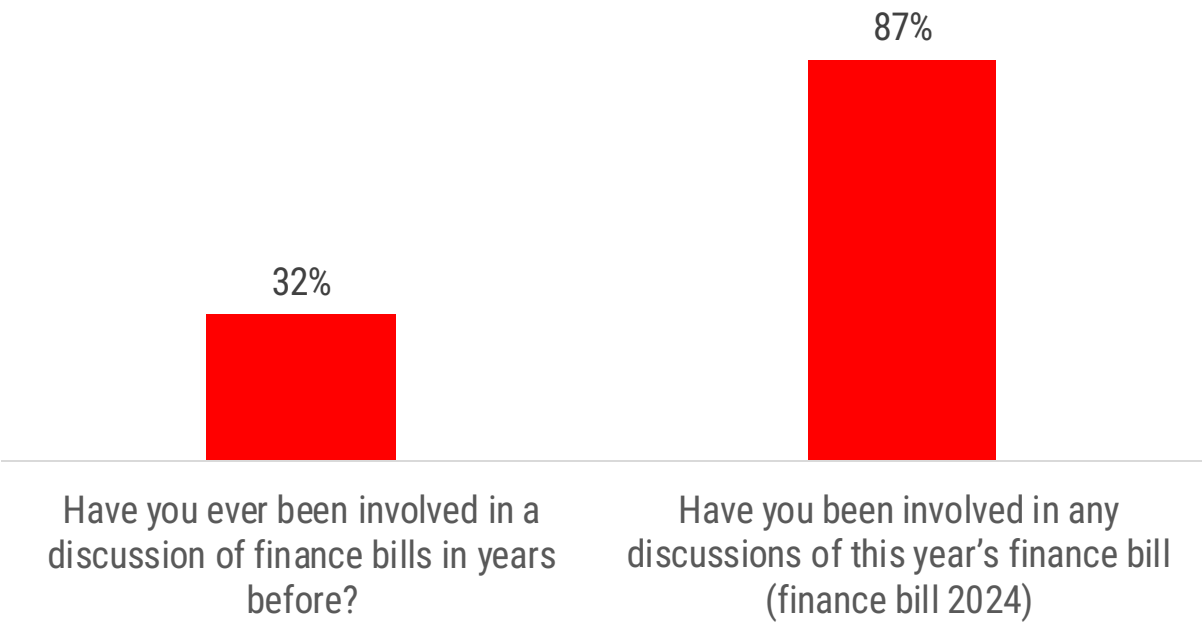
249 CONVERSATIONS

- Occupation
- Past and present engagement with finance bills

What do you do for a living? N=249



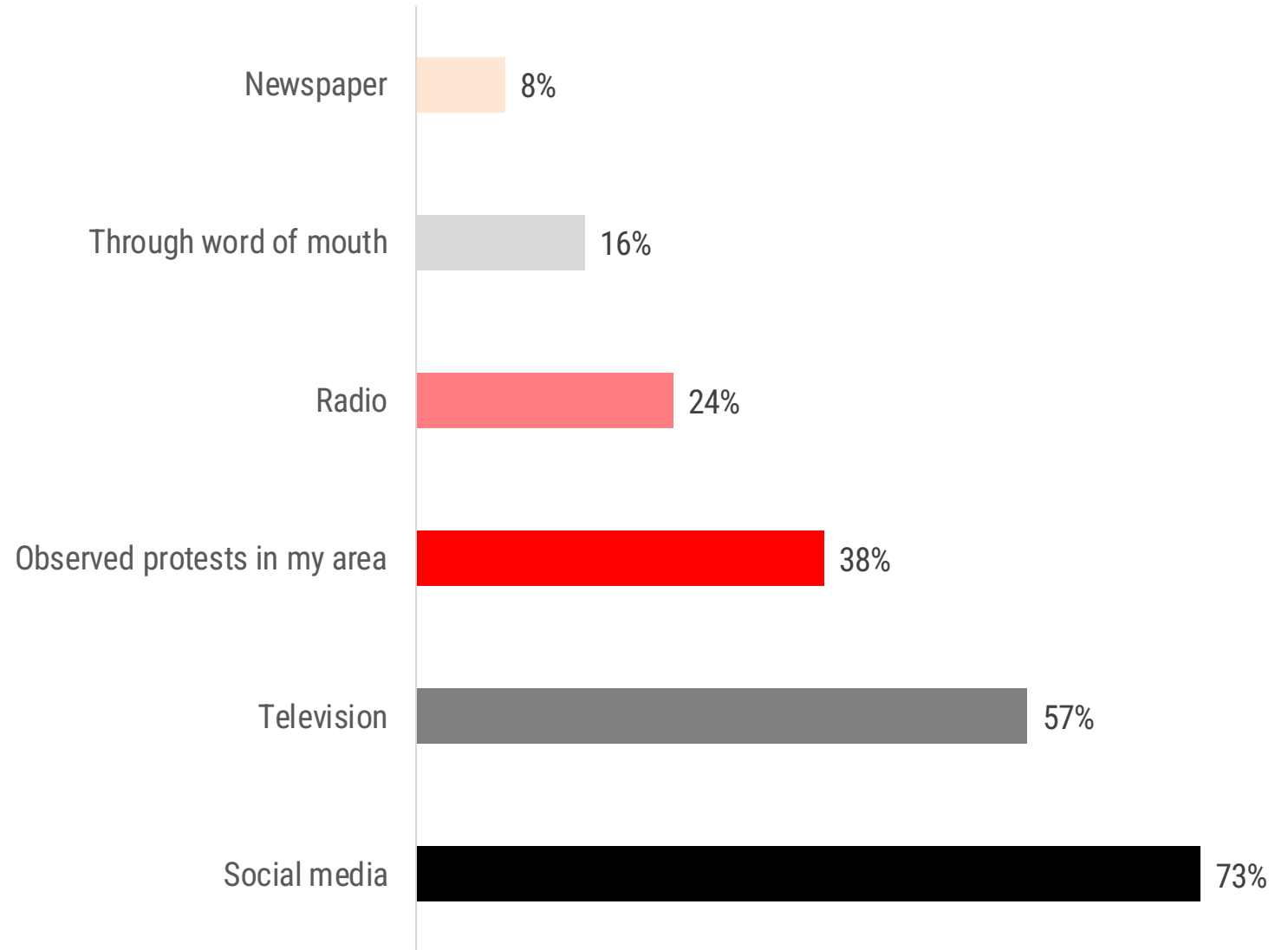
Percentage of people who say they have been involved in discussions of financial bills either before or in 2024



The Gen Z Protests

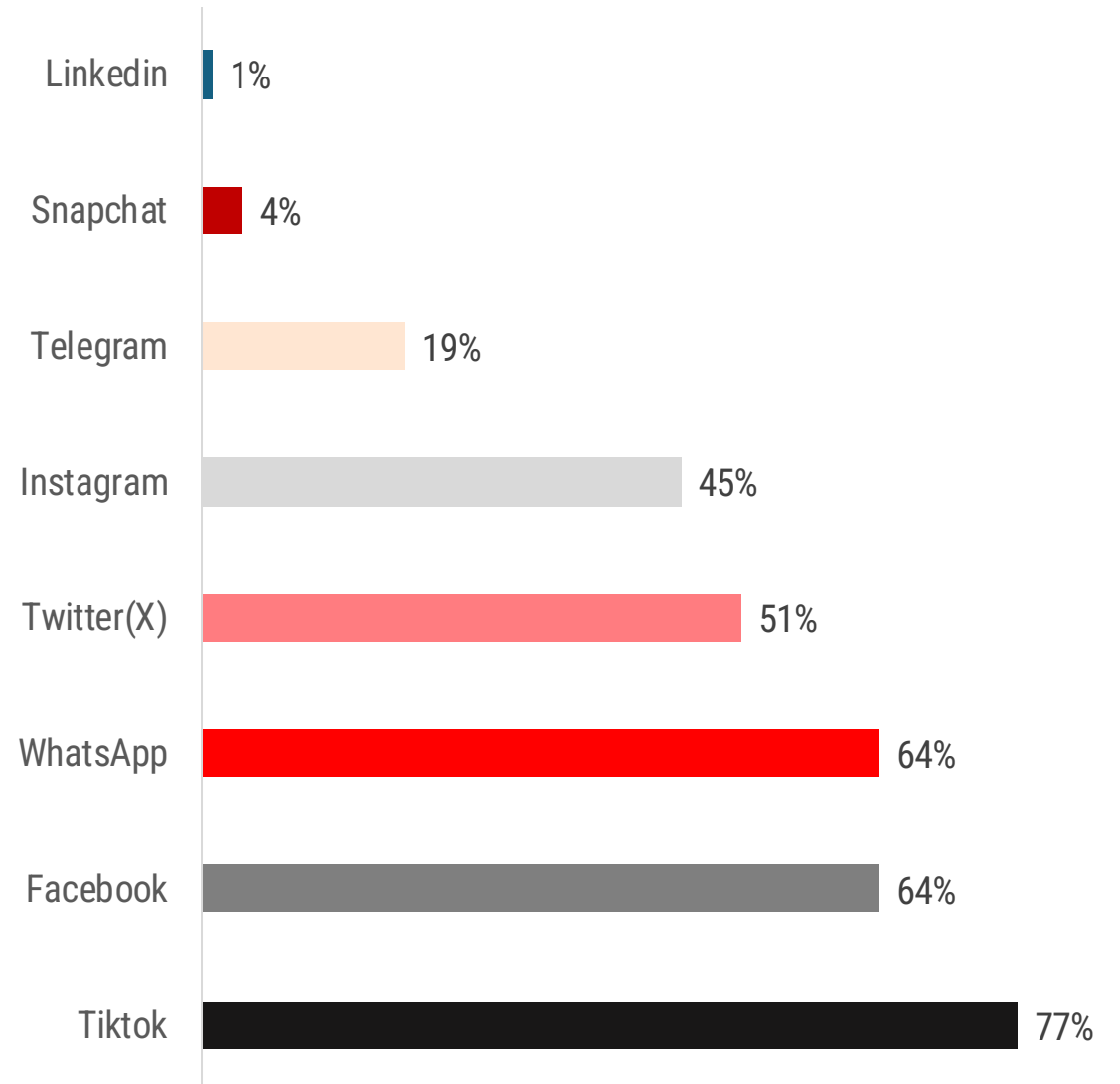
THE GEN Z PROTESTS

How did you hear
about the recent
protests?
(N=249)



THE GEN Z PROTESTS

For those who knew
about the protests
from Social Media:
From which channel?
(N=177)



THE GEN Z PROTESTS

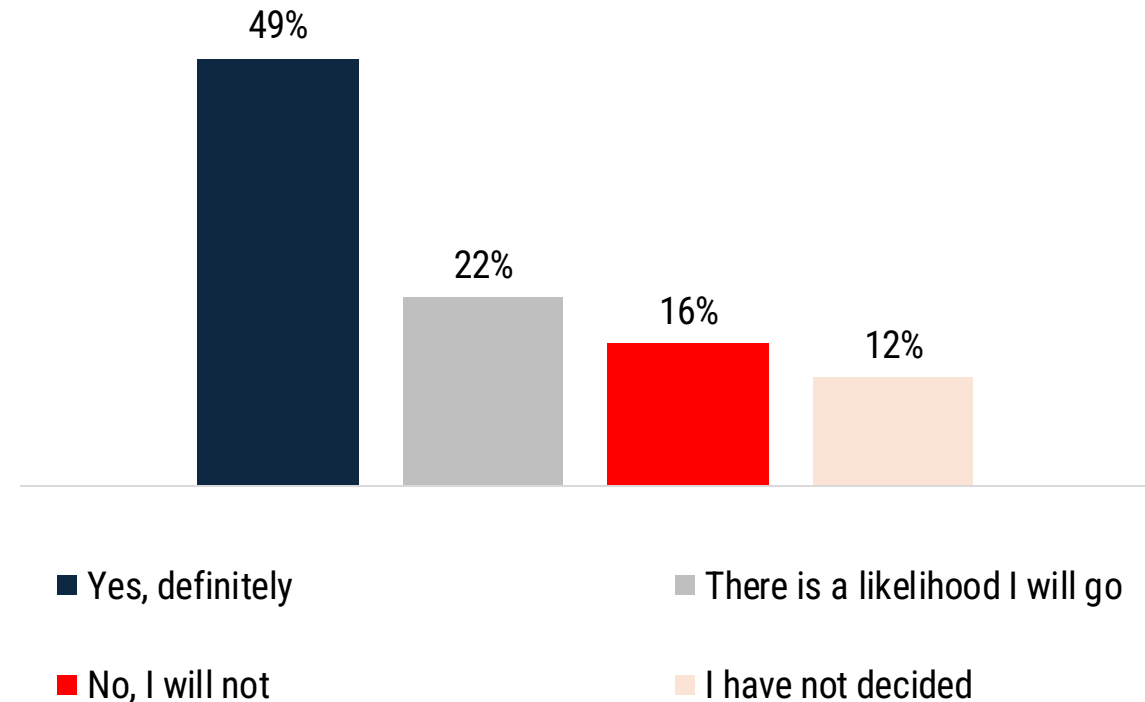
**DID YOU EVER TAKE
PART IN A PROTEST
BEFORE?**

26%

**DID YOU TAKE PART
IN THE RECENT
PROTESTS?**

40%

If there is another protest in your hood because of the challenges related to livelihoods and/or concerns related to the elected officials' response to the current economic situation in Kenya, are you likely to take part in it? N=249



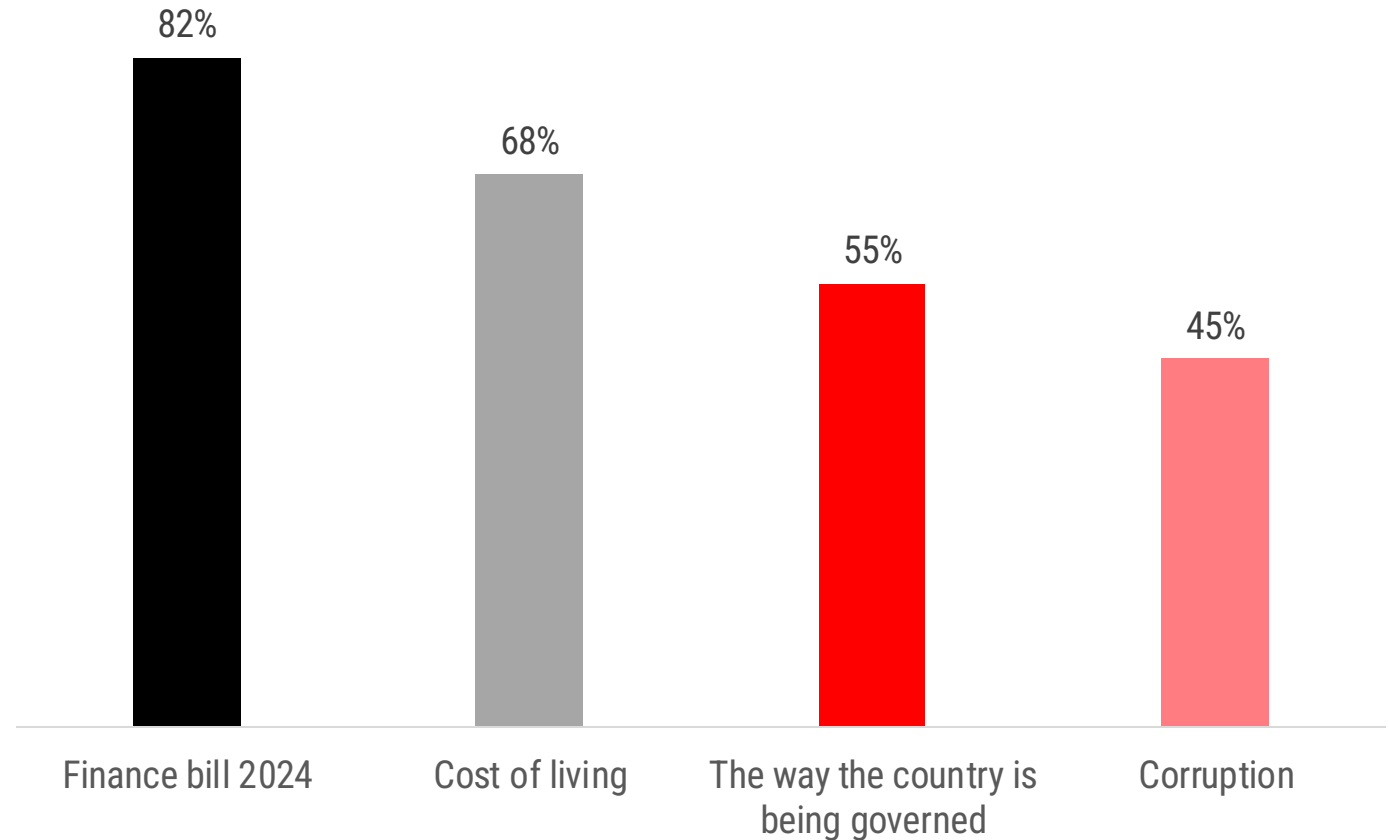
THE GEN Z PROTESTS

Where was the **in-person** protest you joined?



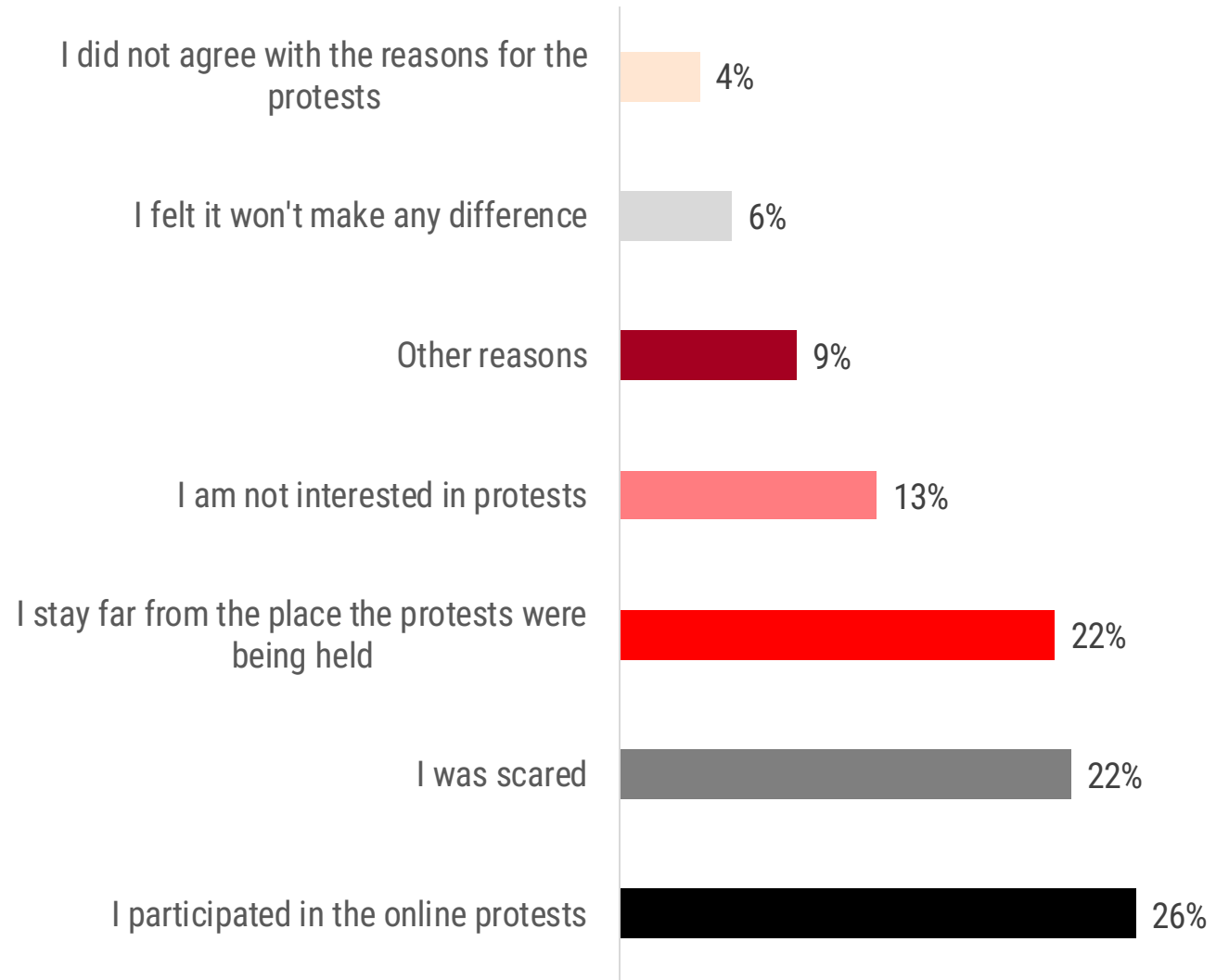
THE GEN Z PROTESTS

You said you went out to participate in the recent protest, **why did you join the protests?** You can give more than one reason
(N=98)



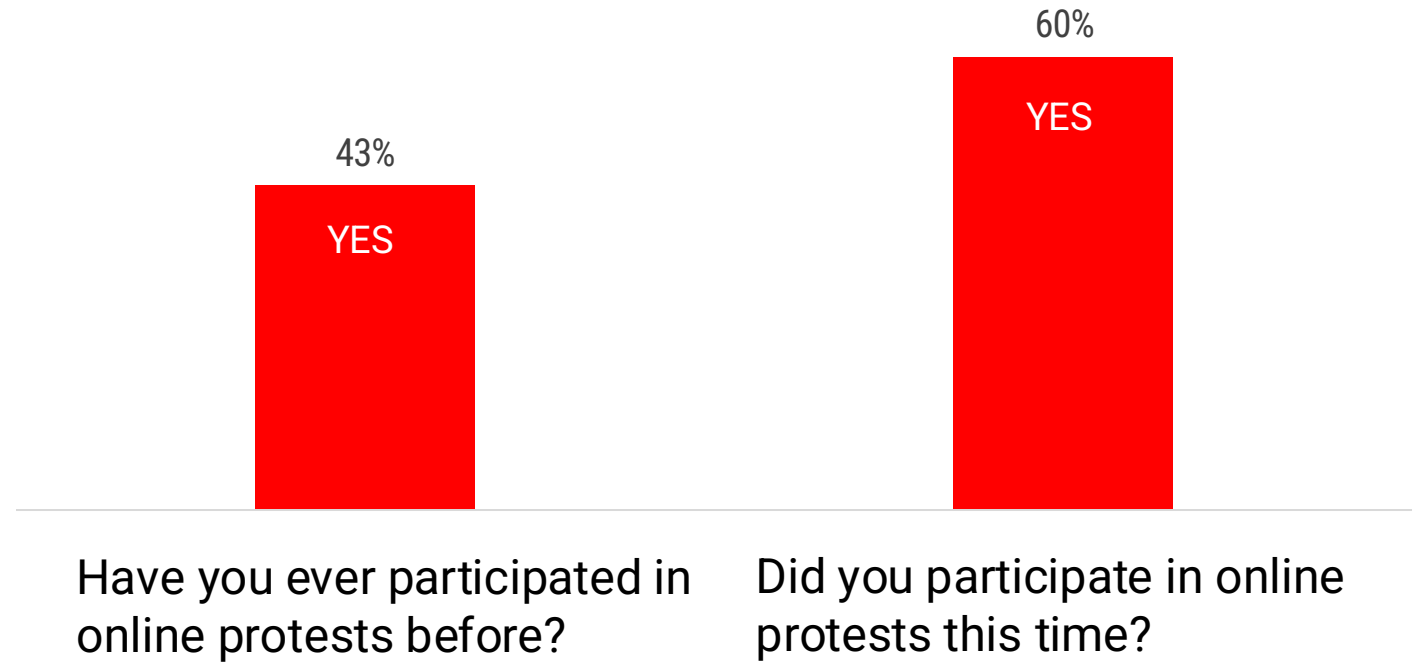
THE GEN Z PROTESTS

You said you
did **NOT** go out
to protest in
person, **why**
not? (N=125)



THE GEN Z PROTESTS

Participation in
**online
protests?**
(N=249)



THE GEN Z PROTESTS

**Community
support for
protests?**

**DID YOU FEEL SUPPORTED BY
YOUR COMMUNITY (FRIENDS,
FAMILY, RELATIVES) REGARDING
YOUR DECISION TO ATTEND THE
PROTESTS IN PERSON?**

YES

61%

**DID YOU FEEL SUPPORTED BY
YOUR COMMUNITY (FRIENDS,
FAMILY, RELATIVES) REGARDING
YOUR DECISION TO PROTEST
ONLINE?**

YES

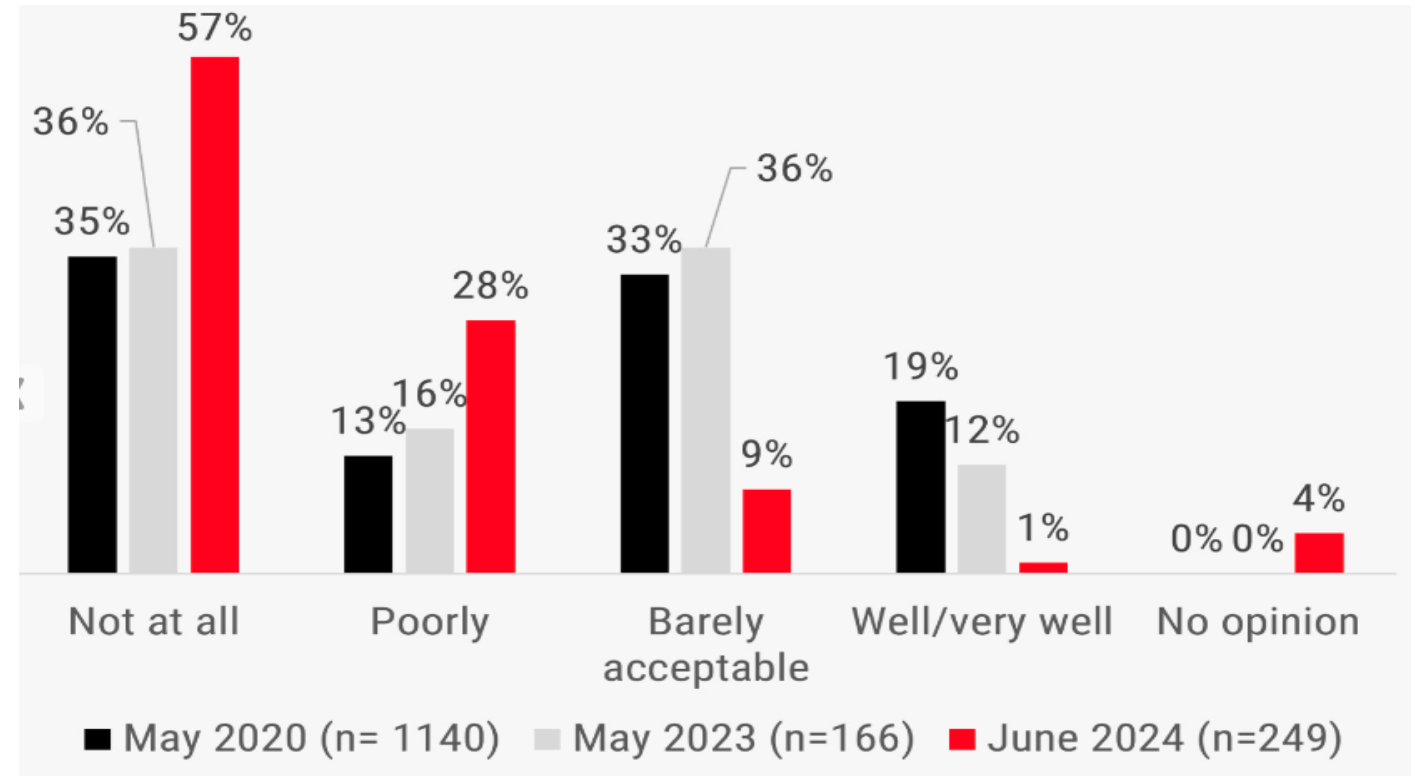
75%

THE GEN Z PROTESTS

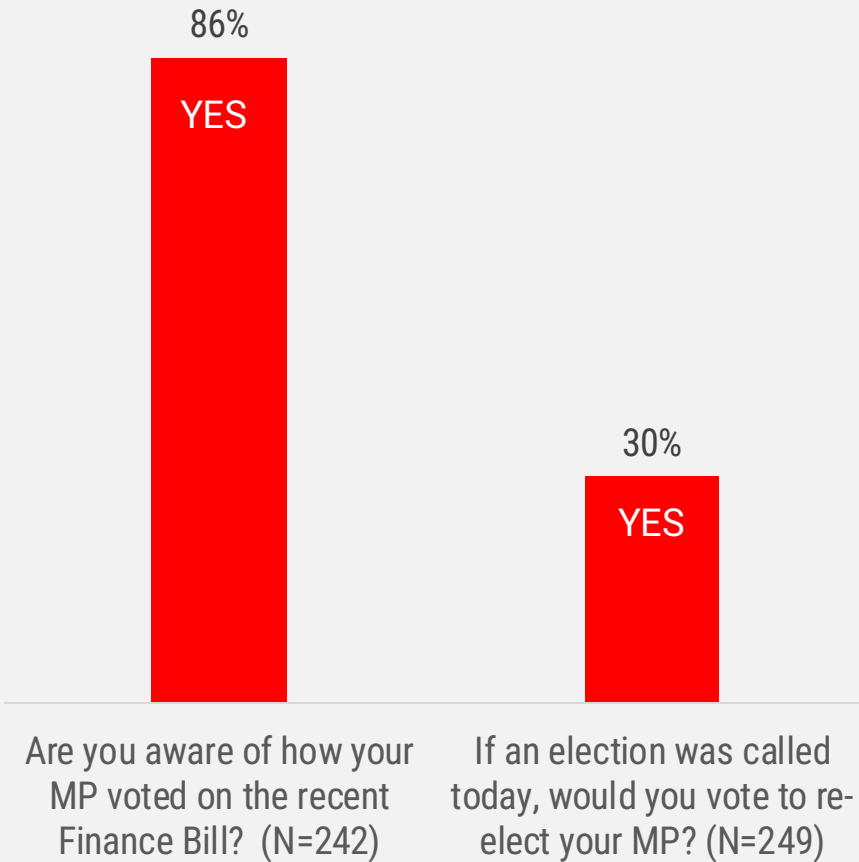
How well, in your opinion, are the youth **voice, struggles and hopes** reflected by the current government policies and regulations?

(N=249)

Compares with previous
Shujaaz Inc research

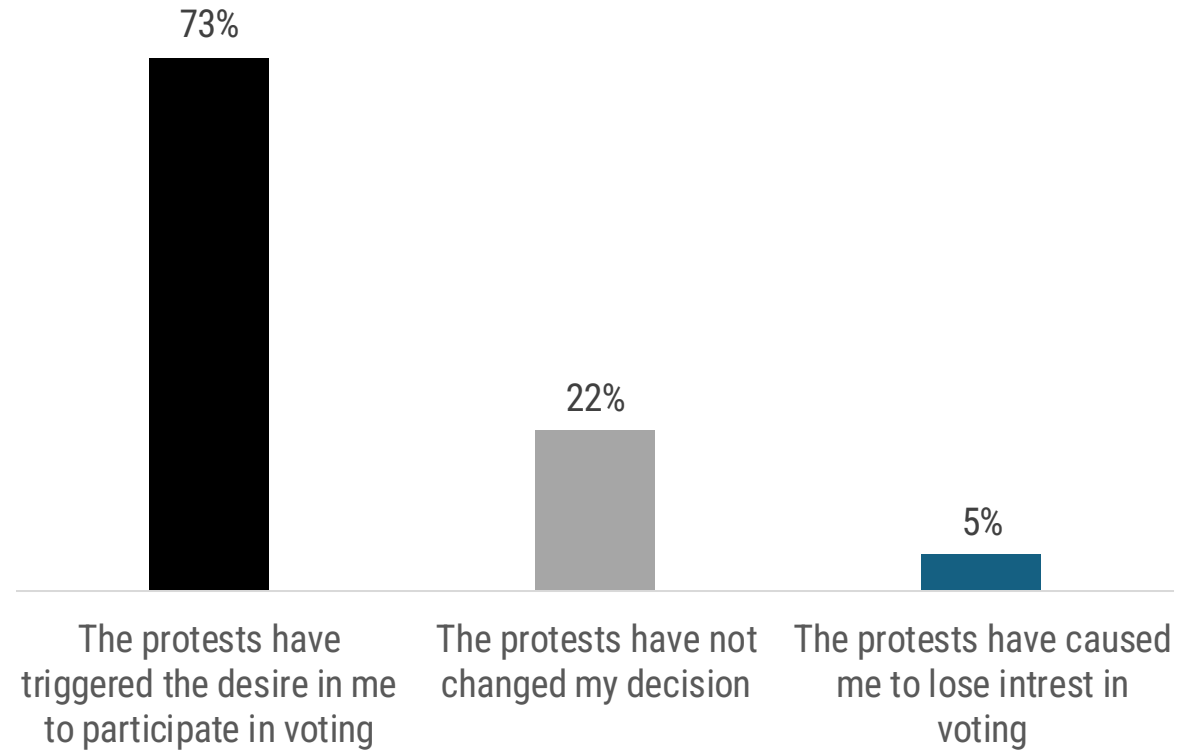


THE GEN Z PROTESTS



Note: Among those who said they are aware of how their MPs voted on the finance bill (N=207), 25% say they will re-elect their MP.

As a result of the recent/ongoing protests, do you think you will vote in the next elections? (N=249)



Gen Z's ideas for the future

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

PREFERRED WAYS TO ENGAGE 1/3

In your opinion, how can the government **involve you and other young people in discussions about the future?**

N=249 (open ended question)

PREFERRED ENGAGEMENT CHANNELS:

60% are open to action-led dialogue with the following engagement recommendations:

- **Digital and Online Engagement: 25%**
- **Active Listening to youth-led forums: 20%**
- **In-person Dialogue and Communication: 15%**

"Waite vijana kwa mikutano na wasikize na wasikuje na options zao wasikie maoni zao"

(Call youths to meetings and listen to them without bringing their own options, listen to their opinions)

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

PREFERRED WAYS TO ENGAGE 2/3

In your opinion, how can the government **involve you and other young people in discussions about the future?**

N=249 (open ended question)

MOST COMMON COMMENTS:

20% are neutral about dialogue but prefer to see action quickly:

"Punguza corruption, jail corrupt people, tengeneza job opportunities" (Reduce corruption, jail corrupt people, create job opportunities)

20% are skeptical and don't trust the government

"Wanajua shida zetu ata online ziko shared, nothing kudiscuss" (They know our problems, they are even shared online, nothing to discuss)

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

PREFERRED WAYS TO ENGAGE 3/3

In your opinion, how can the government **involve you and other young people in discussions about the future?**

N=249 (open ended question)

MOST COMMON RECOMMENDATIONS:

Focus on Tangible Outcomes: Actively address pressing issues to build trust.

"Remove sit zenye haziko kwa constitution" (remove unconstitutional seats)

Build Trust: Demonstrate sincerity and commitment to addressing the existing concerns raised by the youth by taking action.

"I dont think gava inaeza solve anything. Hapa wanataka kubuy time" (I don't think the government can solve anything. Here, they just want to buy time)

Utilize Digital Platforms: Leverage digital tools to facilitate open, accessible public dialogue, hold regular meetings, report on progress.

"Social media. Hatutaki representatives, akuje live Facebook, tikok" (Social media. We don't want representatives, come live on Facebook, TikTok)

Ensure Active Listening: Incorporate youth feedback in decision-making processes, and report on progress frequently.

"Wakuje waongea na vijana Kwa ground" (Come and talk to the youth on the ground)

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE FIGHTING CORRUPTION 1/2

In your opinion,
what should the
government do to
fight corruption?

N=249 (open ended question)

MOST COMMON RECOMMENDATIONS:

46% Remove and Prosecute Corrupt Officials

"Take all the corruption cases seriously and if found guilty, give a big jail term ndio watu waogope (so that people fear) ..the system is too easy on corruption"

"Hold those corrupt behind bars"

10% Finance Bill and Government Expenditure

"Wapunguze hizi ushuru zimekua kwa kila kitu"
(They should reduce these taxes that are now in everything)

10% Transparency and Accountability

"Kukua accountable na finances." (be accountable with finances)

**IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE
FIGHTING CORRUPTION 2/2**

In your opinion,
what should the
government do to
fight corruption?

N=249 (open ended question)

MOST COMMON RECOMMENDATIONS:

12% Strengthening Laws and Institutions

"Kuweka Sheria Kali dhidhi ya corruption" (enforce laws against corruption)

8% Public Involvement and Listening to Citizens

"Watu wako gava waache kupea watu wao tenders, na waache kupea watu wao pekeake kazi" (Government people should stop giving tenders and jobs to their friends)

14% Skepticism, Doubts, Lack of Trust

"Sioni gava ikiweka hiyo ahadi" (I don't see the government keeping its promise)

"Hakuna kitu hii serikali itafanya, wanadanganya raia" (There is nothing this government is doing, they are lying to the citizens)

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

AUSTERITY MEASURES 1/1

In your opinion,
how should the
government **save
money?**

N=249 (open ended question)

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Reducing Wasteful Government Expenditure:** 46.1%
- **Fighting Corruption:** 12.3%
- **Managed Taxation:** 11%
- **Creating Job Opportunities:** 6.5%
- **Investing in Development:** 6.5%
- **Reducing Extravagant and Unnecessary Spending:** 7.8%.
- **Public Involvement and Listening to Citizens:** 5.2%
- **Skepticism and Doubts:** 4.5%

"Extravagant spending of public money should not be tolerated, Expenditures za ufala (useless expenditure) like furniture ya (for) 1 Billion!! Hio ni pesa inafaa kutumika place ingine (this money should be used elsewhere). Flashy lifestyle from tax-payers money shouldn't be tolerated."

"Shida ya kenya ni tunalipa tax zinaibiwa. Corruption ikiisha tutakua poa" (The problem with Kenya is that we pay tax and it gets stolen. When corruption ends, we will be fine.)

**With thanks to participating members of the
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