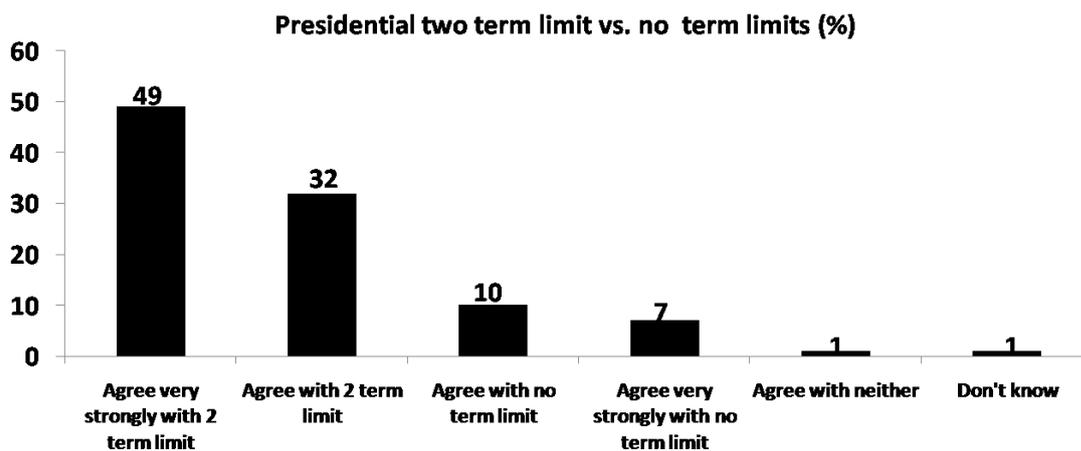


PRESS RELEASE

Sierra Leoneans’ views on governmental accountability and responsiveness.

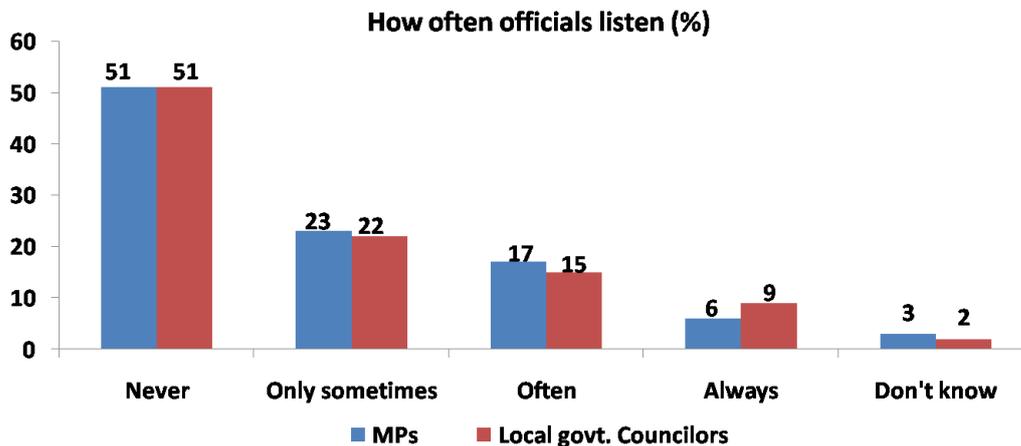
Instituting the principles of accountability and transparency in the state is a solid step towards democratic consolidation. Without accountability and transparency, democracy cannot be viable and the quality of good governance would deteriorate. In their absence, elections and the notion of the will of the people would be meaningless, and in such instances governments have the potential to become arbitrary and self-serving. Undeniably, Sierra Leone’s history has been marred by poor governance, economic mismanagement and war. The democratic and decentralized system that used to exist prior to independence was progressively dismantled. Nepotism, corruption and rent-seeking by the political class battered the conditions necessary for national development. This goes to show that a lot needs to be done in the political and economic front for democracy and accountability to be consolidated in Sierra Leone.

Drawing from data in Round 5 of Afrobarometer survey, Sierra Leoneans express their views on a host of issues including term limits of elected presidents, elections, transparency and accountability. An absolute majority of Sierra Leoneans (81%) “agree very strongly or agree” that the Constitution should limit the President to a maximum of two terms in office. Only 17% want the President to seek re-election without any term limit.



Furthermore, majority of Sierra Leoneans (76%) prefer leaders to be selected through regular, open and honest elections though it is important to note the relatively low levels of confidence reposed in elected

officials. Generally, Sierra Leoneans do not think national and local officials listen to them. Fifty-one percent of those interviewed said Parliamentarians and Local government councillors never listen to what ordinary people have to say. Whilst only 6 and 9 percent respectively respond that their MPs and Local Councillors always listen to them. However, 23 and 22 percent say that their MPs and their Local Councillors listen to them only sometimes.



In assessing levels of inducement required to access social services, a fourth or more of Sierra Leoneans report paying a bribe “once/twice, few times or often” in the past year to

- Obtain treatment in a local health clinic or hospital (40%);
- Avoid problem with police (36%);
- Secure government document or permit and primary school placement for ward (34% each); and
- Procure water or sanitation service (24%).

	Never	Once or Twice + A few times + Often	No experience in past year
Bribe to get treatment at a local health clinic or hospital	39	40	19
Bribe to avoid a problem with the police	39	36	24
Bribe to get a document or a permit	36	34	29
Bribe to get a place in a primary school for a child	44	34	20
Bribe to get water or sanitation services	50	24	25

Also, Sierra Leoneans perceive “most and all” officials in every sector of the country to be involved in corruption; the Police being the worst (69%) followed by tax officials (57%). Also sizeable proportions (from 25% to 53% see “some” public officials of specific state institutions to be involved in corruption.

	None Corrupt	Some of them Corrupt	Most of them Corrupt	All of them Corrupt	Don't know/ Haven't heard
The President and Officials in his Office	10	47	33	7	2
Members of the National Assembly	5	53	34	7	1
Judges and Magistrates	6	40	36	14	4
Police	5	25	40	29	1
Local government councilors	5	43	39	13	1
Government officials	4	44	43	8	1
Tax Officials (e.g. NRA/Local Govt. tax officials)	6	34	43	14	4

To conclude state effectiveness and capacity depends on the extent to which public officials are answerable to the demands of citizens. The viability of the institutions and how they are able to address corruption is important. Regular free and fair elections with the required constitutional term limits are steps towards the consolidation of democracy.

About the Afrobarometer

The Afrobarometer is a comparative series of public opinion surveys produced by an independent network of African social scientists. Now covering up to 35 African countries, the Afrobarometer measures the views of the electorate on democracy and its alternatives, the quality of governance and economic performance, and critical political issues of the day. The survey's standard instrument – used for four previous rounds of surveys (1999 – 2008) and the current Round 5 (2011 – 2013) – allows comparisons across countries over time.

About the Round 5 Survey in Sierra Leone

The Afrobarometer survey fieldwork (data collection) in Sierra Leone was undertaken by ITASCAP Limited and dissemination by Campaign for Good Governance and Lena Thompson. The fieldwork for Round 5 was conducted from 23rd June to 18th July 2012. ITASCAP interviewed a random sample of 1190 adult Sierra Leoneans, yielding results with a margin of sampling error of approximately +/- 3 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

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