

**PRESS RELEASE**

**8 July 2013**

**Testing our Democratic Health as a Nation**

Sierra Leone has undergone political transformation since 1996 when the first democratic elections were held. Since the end of the war in 2002 the country has witnessed 3 successful elections within this democratic dispensation. However, questions remain as to what election means to citizens, given the country’s recent troubled past, as well as broader concerns about post-conflict state building. Key questions border around the security and health of our democracy; even though the elections have been considered remarkably peaceful and well-organized.

To gain insight on the views of citizens regarding these issues, Afrobarometer survey conducted in June 2012 asked several questions relating to perception of democracy; system of choosing leaders and their responsibilities toward the state and government.

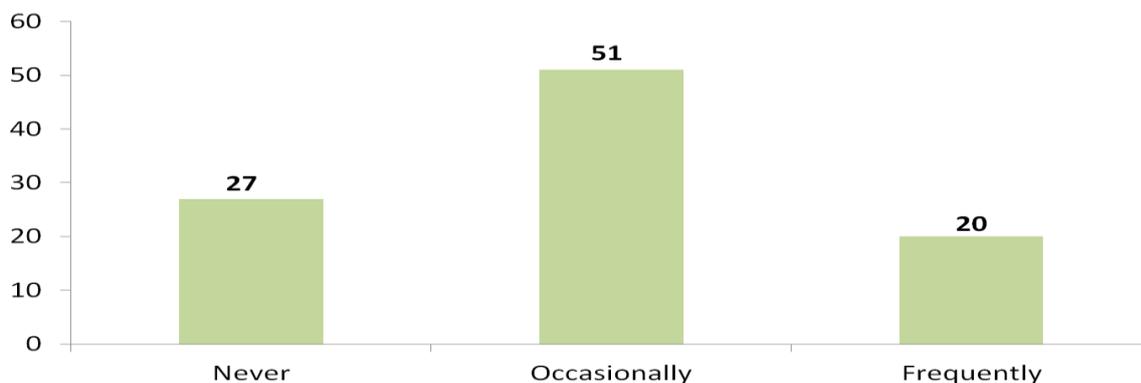
**About the Afrobarometer**

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**

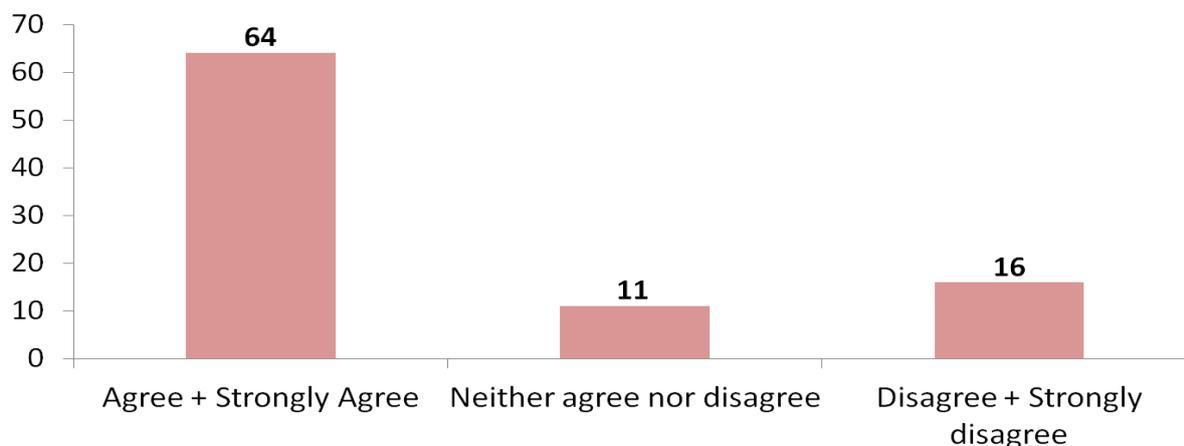
The Afrobarometer research in Sierra Leone was done by ITASCAP Limited and dissemination by Campaign for Good Governance and Lena Thompson. The fieldwork for Round 5 was conducted from 23<sup>rd</sup> June to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012. ITASCAP interviewed a random sample of 1200 adult Sierra Leoneans, yielding results with a margin of sampling error of approximately +/- 3 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

With regards to political awareness and engagement, it was revealed that majority of respondents (**71%**) say they discuss political matters with friends and family members “*occasionally or frequently*”. Just a little over a quarter (**27%**) never engage in political discussion.



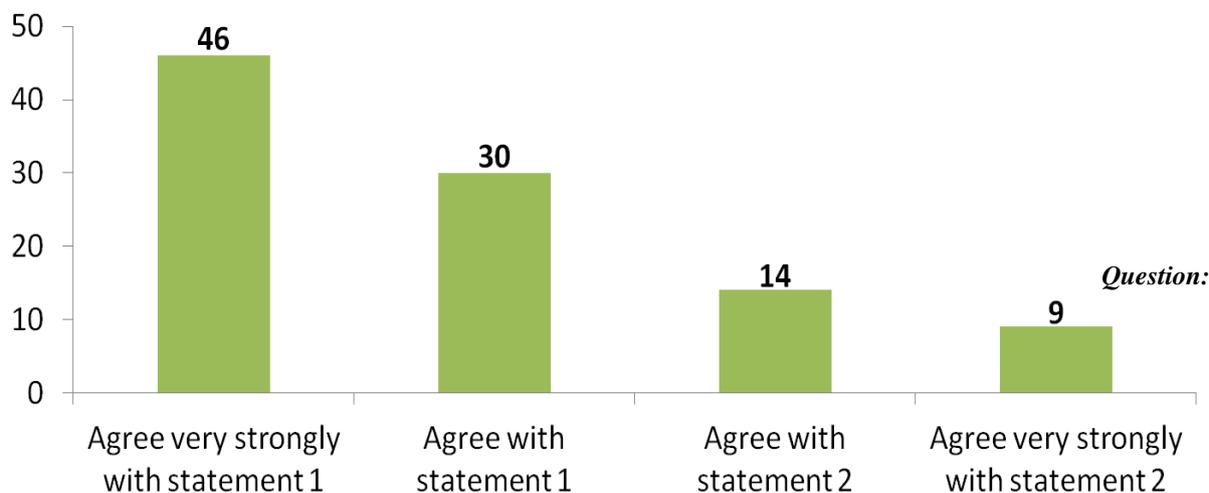
**Question:** *When you get together with your friends or family, would you say you discuss political matters?*

Additionally, the findings show that majority of Sierra Leoneans (**64%**) “agree or strongly agree” that politics and government seem too complicated at times and cannot be easily understood. However, **16%** “disagree or strongly disagree”.



**Question:** Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on.

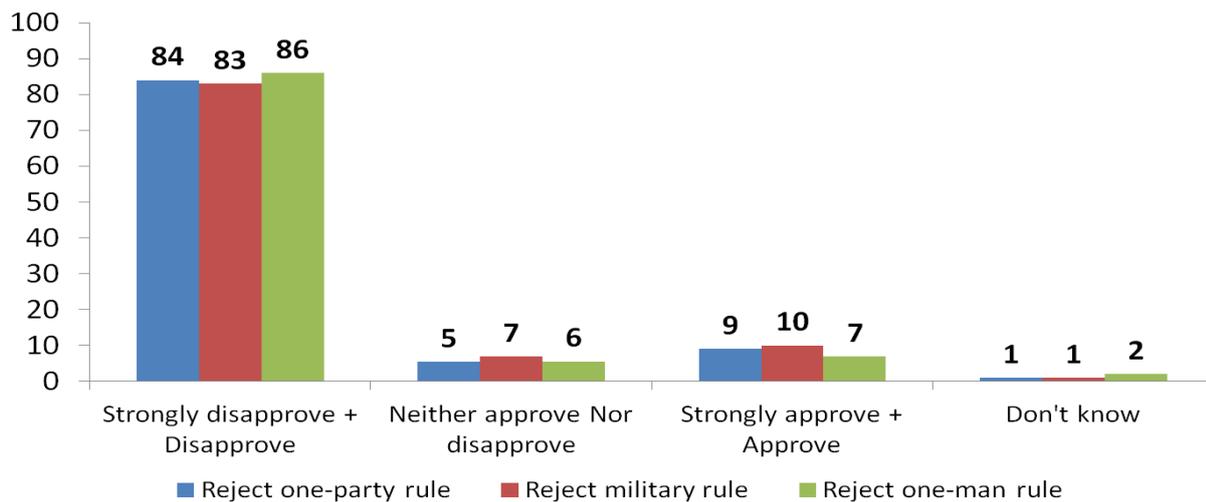
A large majority of Sierra Leoneans (**76%**) prefer choosing their leaders through regular, open and honest elections. About a quarter (**23%**) prefers other methods to be used in choosing leaders. *This finding is very important for strengthening and consolidating our democracy.*



**Question:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. [1] We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections. [2] Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.

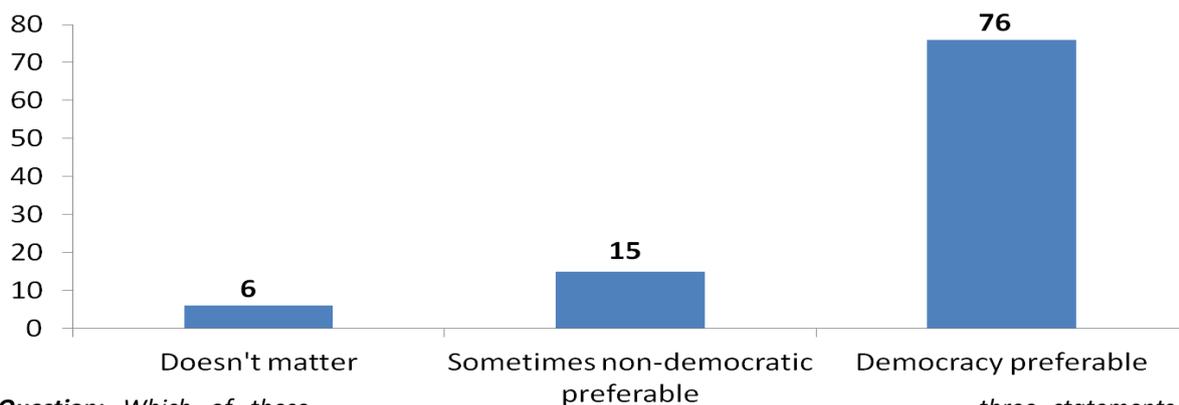
Sierra Leoneans were asked which way they want their country governed. They were asked to choose from the many options offered: [1] only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office. [2] The army comes in to govern the country. [3] Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the President can decide everything.

Sierra Leoneans overwhelmingly reject one-man rule (**86%**), one-party rule (**84%**) and military rule (**83%**), which strikingly reveals that bad governnace should not be encouraged as the citizenry will not tolerate this.



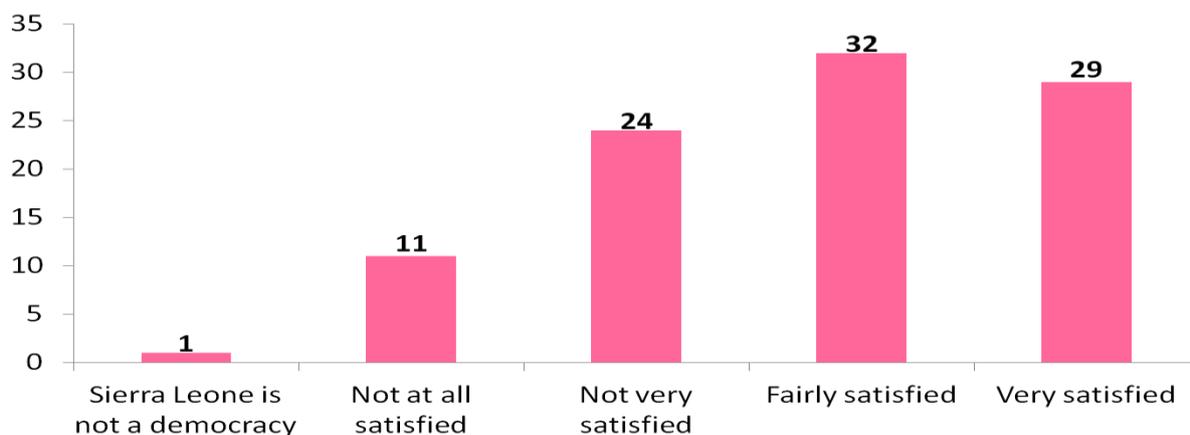
**Question:** *There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives [1] Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office. [2] The army comes in to govern the country. [3] Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the President can decide everything.*

Concretely, most Sierra Leoneans (**76%**) prefer democracy to any other form of government.



**Question:** *Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion [1] Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. [2] In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable. [3] For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.*

Most Sierra Leoneans (**61%**) are “*very or fairly satisfied*” with the way democracy works in Sierra Leone. A little over a third (**35%**) are “*not at all or not very satisfied*”.

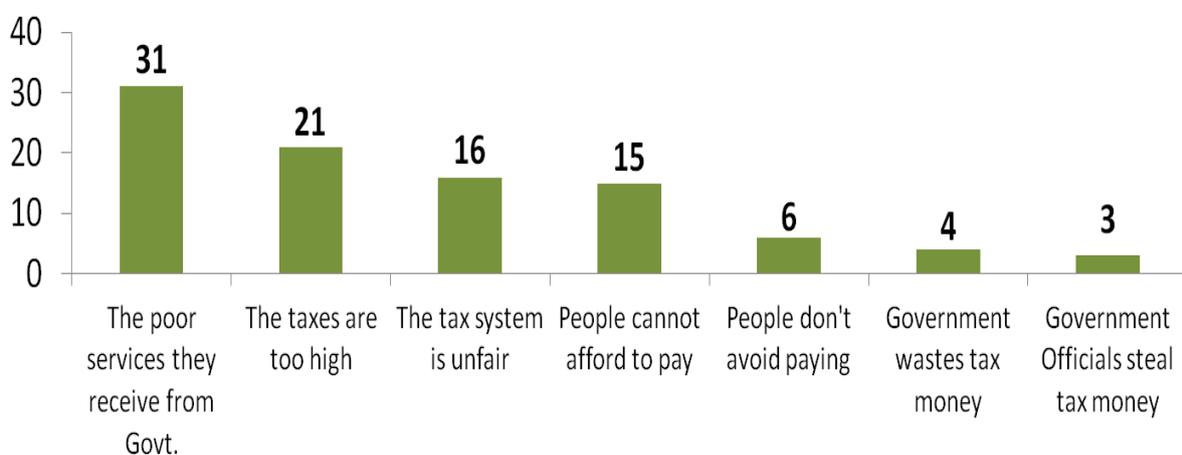


**Question:** *Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Sierra Leone?*

To Sierra Leoneans, most citizens evade taxes and fees owed the state mainly because of the following reasons:

- Poor services receive from government (31%)
- Taxes being too high (21%)
- Tax system being unfair (16%)
- People cannot afford to pay (15%)
- People don't avoid paying taxes (6%)
- Government wastes tax money (4%)
- Government officials steal tax (3%)

Significantly, taxes and monies owed to the state are the oxygen of development and prosperity. Without taxes a state/ government is unable to provide the essential service delivery.



*Question: What do you think is the main reason that some people avoid paying government taxes and fees that they owe?*

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For further information, please contact:

**MONICA TIMBO**

Campaign for Good Governance (CGG)  
11A Old Railway Line  
Tengbeh Town  
Tel: (+232) (0)76 949 580; (0)33 622 063  
Email: [mtimbo@slcgg.org](mailto:mtimbo@slcgg.org)  
[cgg@slcgg.org](mailto:cgg@slcgg.org)

**LENA THOMPSON**

University of Sierra Leone  
Department of Political Science  
Fourah Bay College  
Mount Aureol  
(+232) (0)76 607 418