



## **Disgruntled opposition or disillusioned democrats? Support for electoral law reforms in Uganda**

**Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 107 | Francis Kibirige**

### **Summary**

Reform of electoral laws has been a mainstay of political discourse in Uganda for two decades. Since the issue came to the fore following the 1996 general elections, stakeholders on all sides – opposition political parties, civil-society organisations, election observer missions, government, and the Electoral Commission (EC) – have called for reform to ensure free and fair elections (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 1996; Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda, 2013a).

In 2014, after a countrywide multi-sectoral consultation exercise that reached more than 3,000 local leaders, a variety of stakeholder groups<sup>1</sup> joined in proposing 46 reforms in the Uganda Citizens' Compact on Free and Fair Elections (National NGO Forum, 2014). There was renewed optimism when political organisations, including the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party, worked together to build consensus on the proposed reforms through initiatives such as the Interparty Political Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD), the Interparty Cooperation (IPC), and the National Consultative Forum (NCF).

Ahead of a crucial Parliament debate on reforms, the Cabinet (Otafire, 2015) and the EC made their own reform proposals, which the opposition rejected as inadequate (Solomon, 2015; Deo, 2015) amid calls from some stakeholders to boycott the 2016 elections if reforms proposed in Citizens Compact were not implemented (Reuters, 2015).

The most significant reform proposal that made it into the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2015 was an attempt by the government to address the issue of the Electoral Commission's independence by changing its name to "Independent Electoral Commission" (Parliament, 2015a, p.12). However, many stakeholders rejected the proposed name change as "cosmetic" (Parliament, 2015a; Ortega, 2015; Kemigisha, 2015), and it was dropped (Commonwealth, 2016).

With the 2016 elections now completed, the key question is whether these proposed reforms will be revisited ahead of the next general election cycle in 2021. In his State of the Nation address a month after he was sworn in, President Yoweri Museveni said that Uganda has "already carried out" the "most advanced political reforms" (Museveni, 2016).

Public opinion in Uganda indicates solid support for pursuing reforms to the country's electoral laws. Afrobarometer's 2015 survey shows majority support for four of five proposed reforms that respondents were asked about, including discontinuing the appointment of EC members by the president and requiring that election results be declared at the constituency level.

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<sup>1</sup> Stakeholders include the opposition political parties under the Interparty Political Organization for Dialogue (IPOD), the Citizens' Coalition on Electoral Democracy (CCEDU), the Electoral Commission, the Free and Fair Elections Campaigns, the Cabinet of Uganda/National Resistance Movement, and the National Consultative Forum (NCF).

More generally, survey data from the past two decades suggest that enduring public demand for electoral reforms in Uganda stems from a consistently large disparity between citizen support for elections in general and citizen assessments of the quality of their past elections.

### **Afrobarometer survey**

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 35 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and results of Round 6 surveys (2014/2015) are currently being released. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language preferred by the respondent with nationally representative samples of 1,200 or 2,400 respondents.

The Afrobarometer team in Uganda, led by Hatchile Consult, interviewed 2,400 adult Ugandans in May 2015. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys in Uganda were conducted in 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, and 2012.

### **Key findings**

- Support for elections is strong in Uganda: Almost nine in 10 citizens favour choosing leaders through regular, open, and honest elections (86%) and disapprove of an alternative under which elections and Parliament are abolished (87%).
- But assessments of election quality are less favourable: Only about half of Ugandans believe that elections ensure that elected leaders reflect voters' views (49%), that elections enable voters to remove non-performing leaders (45%), and that votes are usually counted fairly (52%). Sizeable proportions of the population say that the opposition is often prevented from running (20%) and that voters are often bribed (49%) and threatened with violence at the polls (27%).
- Four of five specific electoral law reforms that the survey asked about receive majority support: that candidates convicted of vote-buying be barred from future elections (86%), that election results be declared at the constituency level (80%), that Electoral Commission members no longer be appointed by the president (57%), and that presidential candidates be required to name their running mates during the campaign (55%).
- A majority of Ugandans (58%) say that citizens who require special assistance in order to cast their ballots should not be barred from voting.
- While the demand for electoral reforms is stronger among opposition supporters than among ruling-party members, it runs across party lines and is strongly correlated with dissatisfaction with the quality of elections.

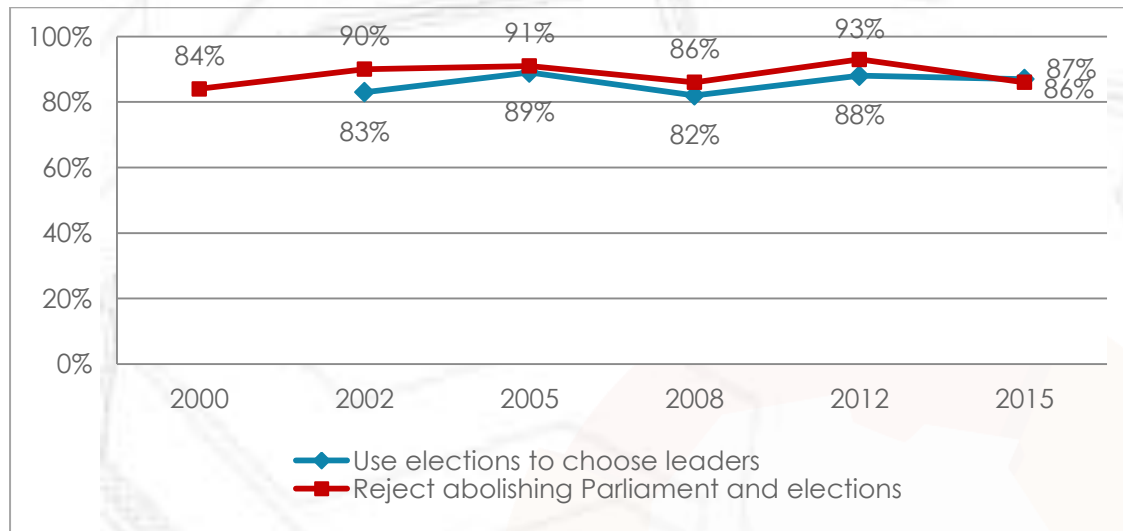
### **Demand and supply of electoral goods**

#### *Support for elections*

Support for regular, open, and honest elections as the best way to choose political leaders has been consistently high in Uganda, averaging 86% since 2000 (Figure 1). Uganda's 87% support for elections in 2015 places the country in the top 10 among 36 African countries surveyed by Afrobarometer in 2014/2015.

In addition, an equally high proportion of Ugandans (87% in 2015, 88% on average over the past 15 years) reject an alternative under which elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president alone can decide everything.

**Figure 1: Support for elections | Uganda | 2000-2015**



**Respondents were asked:**

- Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.  
 Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.  
 Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.  
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree")
- There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternative: Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything? (% who "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove")

**Assessment of election quality**

While Ugandans are nearly unanimous in their view that legitimacy is earned through regular, open, and honest elections, they are critical of the quality of their elections. Half (49%) of survey respondents say that Ugandan voters are often or always bribed during elections, while more than one in four (27%) say that voters are often or always threatened with violence at the polls (Table 1).

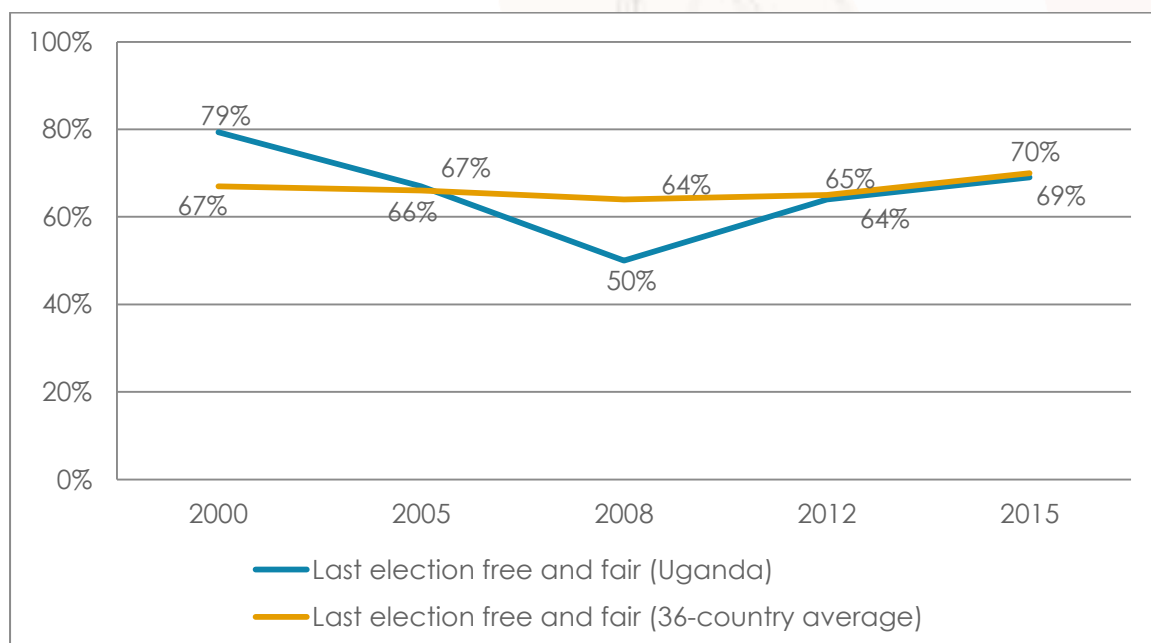
Only about half (52%) of Ugandans think that elections often or always produce a fair count, and one in five respondents (20%) say the opposition is often or always prevented from contesting elections. The proportion of citizens who trust the Electoral Commission "a lot" or "somewhat" has dropped from 76% in 2000 to 53% in 2015, with a low point (20%) in the 2002 survey. And less than half (45%) of Ugandans think that elections enable voters to hold their leaders accountable by removing those who fail to do what the people want.

When asked how free and fair they think the most recent (2011) national elections were, 69% say they were "completely free and fair" or "free and fair, but with minor problems." This is 10 percentage points lower than in 2000, although it is significantly better than the 50% positive rating in the 2008 survey following the 2006 elections, in which local and international observers reported substantial irregularities (European Union Election Observer Mission, 2006; Katureebe, 2007; Mulenga, 2001). Ugandans' perceptions of the freeness and fairness of their most recent elections closely match perceptions across 36 surveyed countries (Figure 2).

**Table 1: Citizens' views on the quality of elections** | Uganda and 36-country average | 2014/2015

Question	Uganda 2015	36-country average
<b>On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election?</b> <i>("Completely free and fair" or "free and fair, but with minor problems")</i>	<b>69%</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>How well do elections ... (Very/fairly well)</b>		
Ensure that representatives to the National Assembly reflect the views of voters?	<b>49%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want?	<b>45%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>In your opinion, how often do the following things occur in this country's elections? (Often/always)</b>		
Voters are offered a genuine choice in the elections	<b>65%</b>	<b>65%</b>
The media provides fair coverage of all candidates	<b>52%</b>	<b>48%</b>
Votes are counted fairly	<b>52%</b>	<b>56%</b>
Voters are bribed	<b>49%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Voters are threatened with violence at the polls	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>
Opposition candidates are prevented from running for office	<b>20%</b>	<b>19%</b>

**Figure 2: Freeness and fairness of elections** | Uganda and 36-country average | 2000-2015



**Respondents were asked:** *On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election? (% "free and fair, but with minor problems" or "completely free and fair")*

While cognizant of Uganda's troubled history with multiparty elections, including disputed 1980 elections that led to a 1981-1986 civil war that claimed more than 300,000 lives (Kafeero,

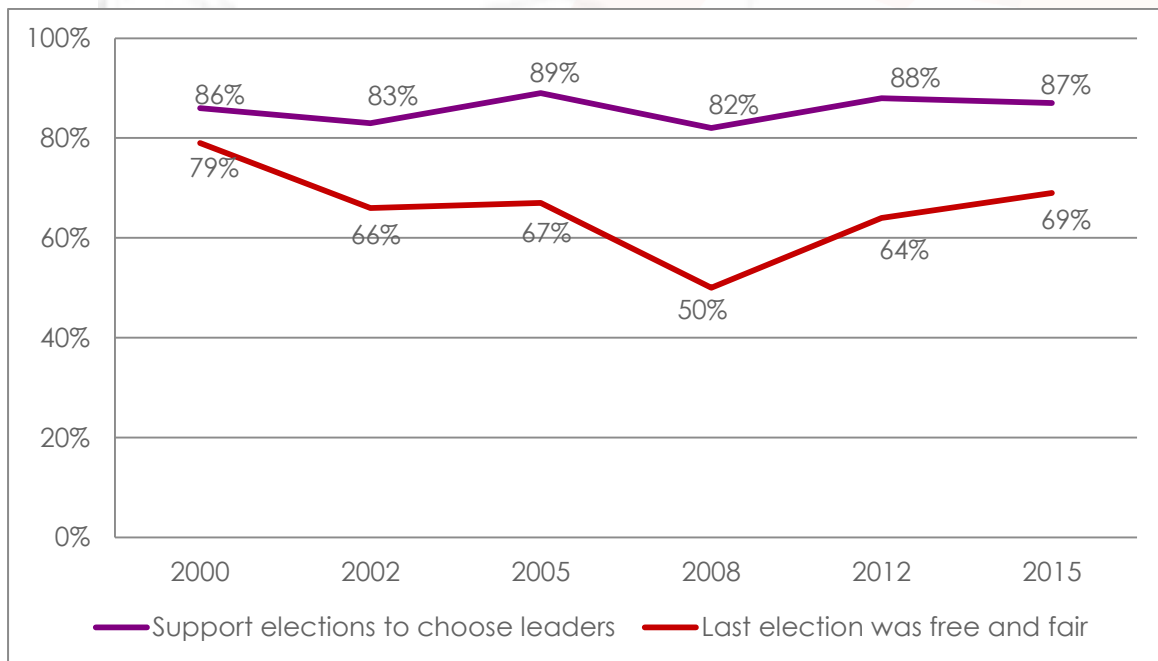
2015), observers argue that there has been progress in managing elections (European Union Election Observer Mission, 2006), especially in the enactment of electoral laws and adherence to a regular schedule of national and local government elections, with election disputes referred to a formal court process rather than violence.

However, as the numbers above suggest, Ugandans simply want more from the electoral process.

### Need for electoral reforms

Ugandans' assessments of the quality of their elections may shed light on calls for electoral reforms. The gap between public demand for electoral goods (i.e. support for elections as the best way to choose leaders) and supply of electoral goods (the perception that elections are free and fair) has grown from 6 percentage points in June 2000 to 18 percentage points in May 2015 (Figure 3), after a record gap of 32 points in 2008 following the 2006 elections.

**Figure 3: Gap between demand and supply of electoral goods | Uganda | 2000-2015**



**Respondents were asked:**

- Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.  
 Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.  
 Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.  
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with Statement 1).
- On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of last national election? (% who say "free and fair, but with minor problems" or "completely free and fair")

Although citizens' perceptions that elections are free and fair have increased since the 2008 survey, the 2015 result (69%) is still well below the 2000 level (79%). Reform proponents argue that Uganda's elections have fallen short of international standards and that reforms are needed to ensure that future elections are openly competitive, with results that are acceptable to all stakeholders (Perrot, Makara, Lafargue, & Fouéré, 2014).

Their argument is supported by legal and observer findings. In response to two petitions seeking to nullify the 2001 and 2006 presidential election results, the Supreme Court ruled that in both cases the electoral process was marred by “non-compliance with electoral laws,” including “bribery,” “intimidation,” “violence,” “multiple voting,” and “ballot box stuffing” (Mulenga, 2001; Katureebe, 2007; European Union Election Observer Mission, 2006, pp. 4-7 and 39).

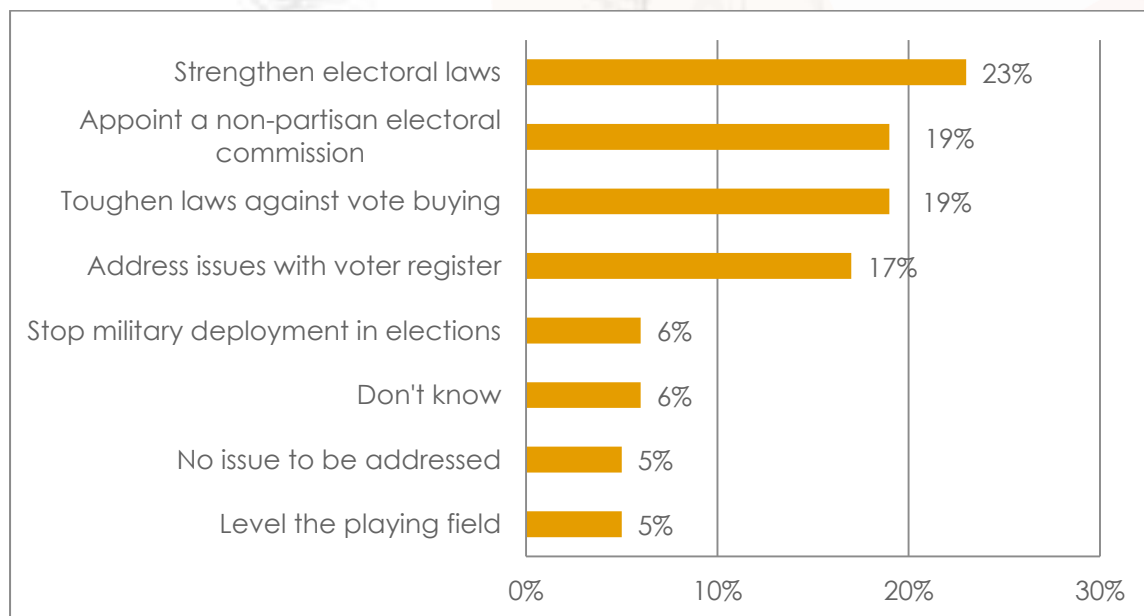
Even earlier, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) noted in its 1996 “long-term” election observer report that election malpractices and irregularities in the 1996 vote process “can only be remedied by a future IEC (Independent Electoral Commission) initiative of building up an independent electoral staff” (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 1996, pp. 46-47). Many foreign and local election observer missions<sup>2</sup> have echoed this observation, leading to reform proposals contained in the Citizens’ Compact on Free and Fair Elections (National NGO Forum, 2014).

Public calls for reforms are calls to bridge the gap between support for elections and satisfaction with elections in Uganda.

### Public views on specific electoral reform proposals

When asked which of six election-related issues was the most important to address ahead of the 2016 general elections, nine in 10 respondents (89%) could identify with at least one issue. Survey results indicate that the most common issue was strengthening electoral laws (cited by 23% of respondents), followed by appointing a non-partisan EC (19%), toughening laws against vote-buying (19%), and addressing issues with the voter register (17%) (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Most important electoral issue ahead of 2016 elections | Uganda | 2015**



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following do you see as the most important issue that should be addressed ahead of the 2016 general elections?

<sup>2</sup> Local and foreign election observer missions in Uganda in 2011 included the European Union, African Union, Commonwealth, Citizens Election Watch–IT, Democracy Monitoring Group, Citizens’ Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda, East African Community, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and Inter-Governmental Authority on Development.

The following section looks at public views on five specific electoral reform proposals and attempts to explore associated factors to shed some light on possible programming interventions for improving the quality of elections.

### *Appointment of Electoral Commission (EC) members*

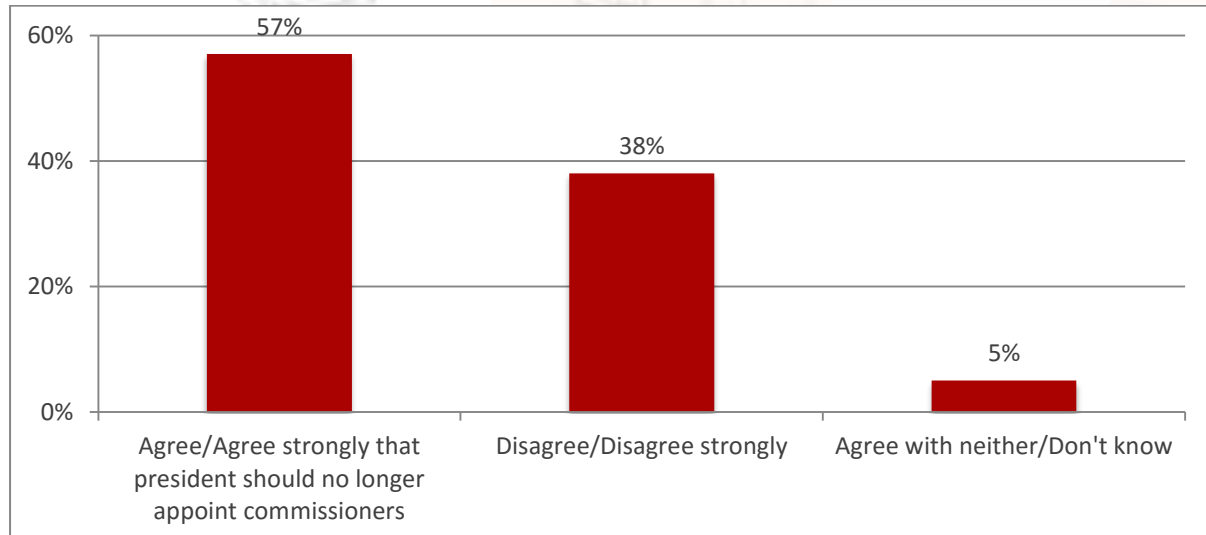
Under the Constitution of Uganda, the president has the power to appoint and fire the EC's seven members. A proposed reform seeks to ensure an impartial EC by subjecting the appointment of commissioners to a "process of open application, public hearings and scrutiny conducted by the Judicial Service Commission" (National NGO Forum, 2014, p. 3; KcK, 2014. P 11), followed by vetting by Parliament and appointment by the president. The proposal also details grounds for the removal of commissioners.

Following the 2006 elections, international election observer missions made similar recommendations to "strengthen the independence of the Electoral Commission" and to "adhere to international conventions and political party rights" (European Union Election Observer Mission, 2006, p. 41).

The proposed reform seeks to similarly regulate the process of selection, approval, and appointment of members of all independent commissions, agencies, regulatory bodies, and independent offices in Uganda to address the country's "entrenched system of patronage" (National NGO Forum, 2014; Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda, 2013b).

In the 2015 Afrobarometer survey, a majority (57%) of respondents "agree" or "agree strongly" that the president should no longer appoint EC commissioners (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Should the president appoint EC members? | Uganda | 2015**



**Respondents were asked:** Do you agree or disagree with the following suggestions for electoral reforms ahead of the 2016 general elections in Uganda: The president should no longer have the power to appoint members of the Electoral Commission?

Support for this reform is stronger among opposition supporters,<sup>3</sup> citizens who frequently use the news media, employed and better-educated citizens, men, and those who believe that the last election was not free and fair. In addition, support for this reform is negatively related

<sup>3</sup> Party affiliation is estimated based on responses to the questions "Do you feel close to a political party? [if yes:] Which party is that?"

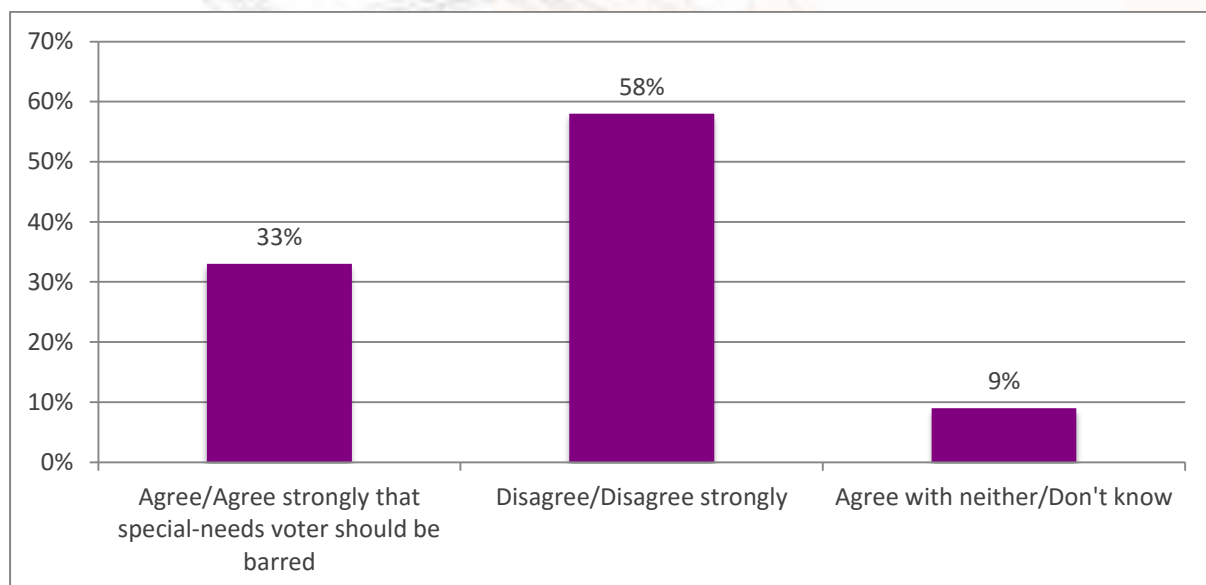
with trust in state institutions such as the EC, Parliament, police, and the courts, as well as with living in Western region (a stronghold of the ruling NRM party).<sup>4</sup>

### Voters who need special assistance

Concerns about election fraud divide public opinion over how best to realize free and fair elections. In an effort to reduce opportunities for fraud at the polling station, stakeholders proposed to bar voters who need special assistance, such as citizens who are illiterate or physically unable to cast their ballots, from asking other persons present at the polling station to assist them in voting. Currently, the law provides that such voters should be allowed to choose somebody present at the polling station to help them cast their votes, and even allows one person to assist more than one special-needs voter. Reform proponents argue that the law has suffered abuse, e.g. by vote-buyers who accompany their “clients” to the voting booth to ensure that they vote as agreed, by election fraudsters who gain access to the voter register and vote in place of real people who are likely to be absent from the polling station, and by assistants who smuggle pre-marked ballots into the ballot box.

While the proposed reform would bar the use of assistants, the Afrobarometer survey asked more broadly whether respondents think that citizens who require special assistance in order to cast their ballots should be barred from voting. A majority (58%) of Ugandans say such citizens should not be barred from voting, while one-third (33%) say they should be barred (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Should voters who require special assistance be barred from voting?**  
 | Uganda | 2015



**Respondents were asked:** Do you agree or disagree with the following suggestions for electoral reforms ahead of the 2016 general elections in Uganda: The law should bar persons who require special assistance from voting?

<sup>4</sup> Chi-square tests of statistical significance confirm the strong relationship between these sociodemographic factors and support for reforming presidential appointment of EC commissioners: for opposition supporters,  $X^2=94.00$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; for media use,  $X^2=56.28$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; for employment,  $X^2=12.29$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; for trust in state institutions,  $X^2=95.44$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; for gender,  $X^2=19.96$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; for education,  $X^2=29.78$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; for residing in the Western region,  $X^2=13.50$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; and for assessment of the last election as free and fair,  $X^2=33.45$ ,  $p < 0.000$ .



Support for barring voters who need special assistance is strongly associated with residing in Western region, with having employment, with media use, and with trust in state institutions.<sup>5</sup>

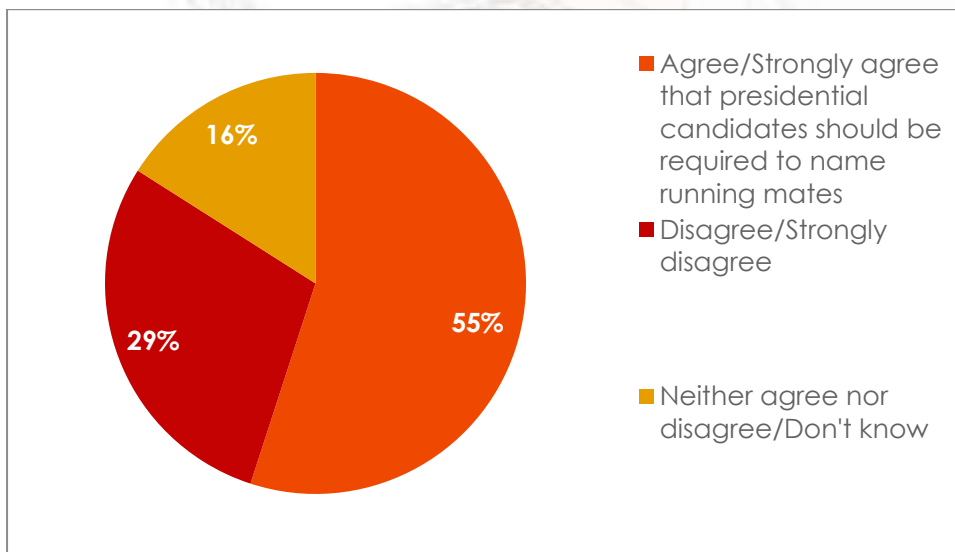
In programming terms, the majority viewpoint suggests a need for improved election management and respect for electoral law in order to discourage voting fraud at the polling station, rather than for disenfranchising voters who may genuinely need assistance to cast their ballots.

### Presidential candidates to name running mates

The Constitution and presidential election act do not require presidential candidates to name their running mates during campaigns. Critics argue that this insulates the vice presidential position from citizen scrutiny and further strengthens the already very powerful president (KcK, 2014; Deo, 2015; Parliament, 2015b). Of Uganda's eight vice presidents since independence in 1962, none has been subjected to public scrutiny in their appointment or removal.

Survey data show that a majority (55%) of Ugandans prefer that presidential candidates name their running mates during campaigns, while about three in 10 (29%) disagree (Figure 7). Citizens with employment are more likely to support this reform, as are opposition supporters.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 7: Should presidential candidates be required to name running mates during the campaign? | Uganda | 2015**



**Respondents were asked:** Do you agree or disagree with the following suggestions for electoral reforms ahead of the 2016 general elections in Uganda: Presidential candidates should be required to name their running mates before the elections?

<sup>5</sup> Chi-square tests of statistical significance confirm the relationship between these factors and support for barring voters who need special assistance: for residing in western Uganda,  $X^2=66.43$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; for employment,  $X^2=25.73$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; for media use,  $X^2=30.12$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; and for trust in state institutions,  $X^2=59.91$ ,  $p < 0.000$ .

<sup>6</sup> Chi-square tests of statistical significance confirm the relationship between these factors and support for naming presidential running mates: for residing in Western region,  $X^2=16.44$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; and for employment,  $X^2=30.08$ ,  $p < 0.000$ .

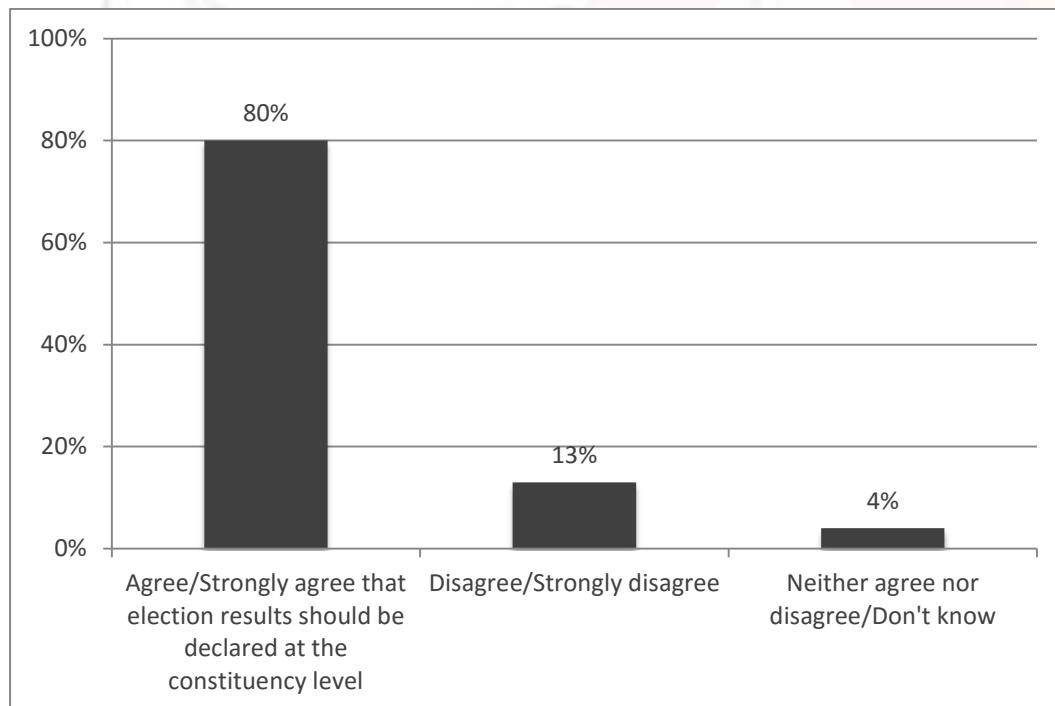
## Election results declared at constituency level

The presidential and parliamentary elections act allows the EC to declare election results at the national level, following tallying and announcing of results at each polling station. Stakeholders, candidates, and their representatives are encouraged to attend the entire election process, including tallying and announcing of election results at the polling station and at the national tally center.

Critics, however, argue that mismanagement and interference with election results occur in the transmission of election results from the polling station to the national tally center. The proposal to declare results at the constituency (parliamentary seat) level aims at reducing opportunities for irregularities between the first announcement of results at the polling station and the national tally center (Kafeero & Nalugo, 2015).

Eight in 10 Ugandans (79%) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the proposal to declare results at the constituency level, while only 14% disagree (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Should election results be declared at the constituency level? | Uganda | 2015**



**Respondents were asked:** Do you agree or disagree with the following suggestions for electoral reforms ahead of the 2016 general elections in Uganda: All election results should be declared at the constituency level?

This popular reform has broad appeal, especially among older citizens and opposition supporters,<sup>7</sup> and could help alleviate election irregularities if no additional management problems are introduced by declaring results at the constituency level.

<sup>7</sup> Chi-square tests of statistical significance confirm the relationship between these factors and support for declaring election results at the constituency level: for ruling-party support,  $\chi^2=4.13$ ,  $p < 0.042$ ; and for age,  $\chi^2=100.71$ ,  $p < 0.025$ .

## Bar candidates convicted of vote-buying from future elections

Uganda's law against vote-buying is strong, but critics say its implementation is constrained by other provisions in the electoral law. The biggest challenge lies in separating money spent on legitimate election activities from money spent on illegal electioneering (Democracy Monitoring Group, 2011).

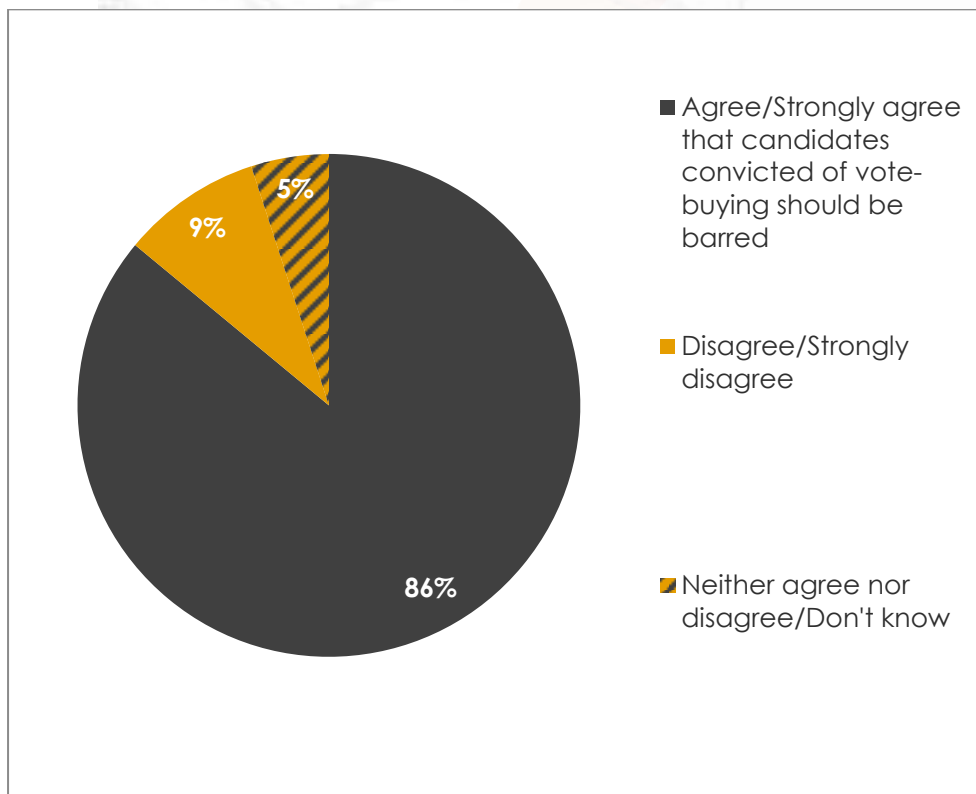
To further explore this data, please visit Afrobarometer's online data analysis facility at [www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis](http://www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis).

In line with the IFES 1996 post-election report recommending stiffer penalties for vote bribery (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 1996), critics propose that candidates convicted of vote-buying

be barred from running for elective positions for five years (KcK, 2014; Kafeero & Nalugo, 2015), typically one electoral cycle.

An overwhelming majority (86%) of Ugandans agree with this proposal (Figure 9). Support is particularly strong among the employed and among opposition supporters.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 9: Should candidates convicted of vote-buying be barred from future elections?** | Uganda | 2015

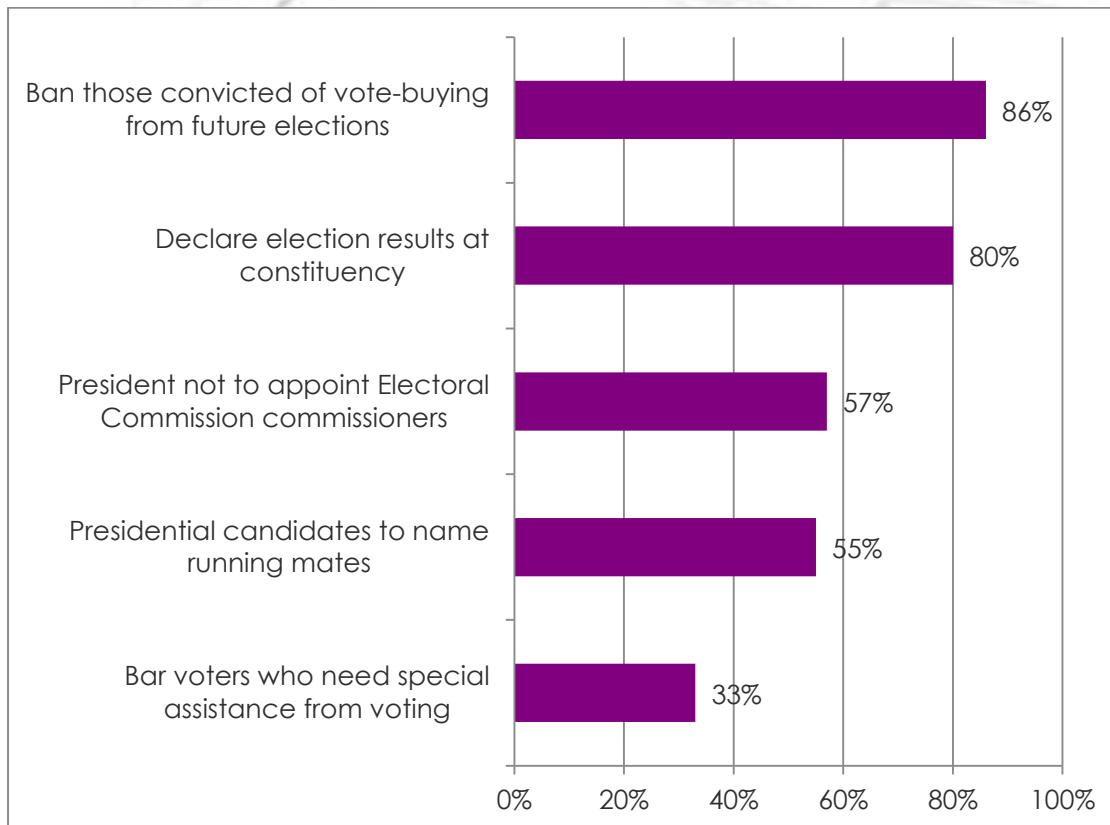


**Respondents were asked:** Do you agree or disagree with the following suggestions for electoral reforms ahead of the 2016 general elections in Uganda: Candidates convicted of vote-buying should be banned from contesting any elections for at least five years?

<sup>8</sup> Chi-square tests of statistical significance confirm the relationship between these factors and support for barring candidates convicted of vote-buying from future elections for a period of five years: for those in employment,  $X^2=5.04$ ,  $p < 0.025$ ; and for opposition supporters,  $X^2=6.53$   $p < 0.011$ .

As Figure 10 below summarizes, a majority of Ugandans support four of these five proposed electoral law reforms. Their popularity ranges from very high (for banning candidates convicted of vote-buying and declaring results at the constituency level) to low (for barring people with special needs from voting).

**Figure 10: Support for electoral reforms ahead of the 2016 elections | Uganda | 2015**



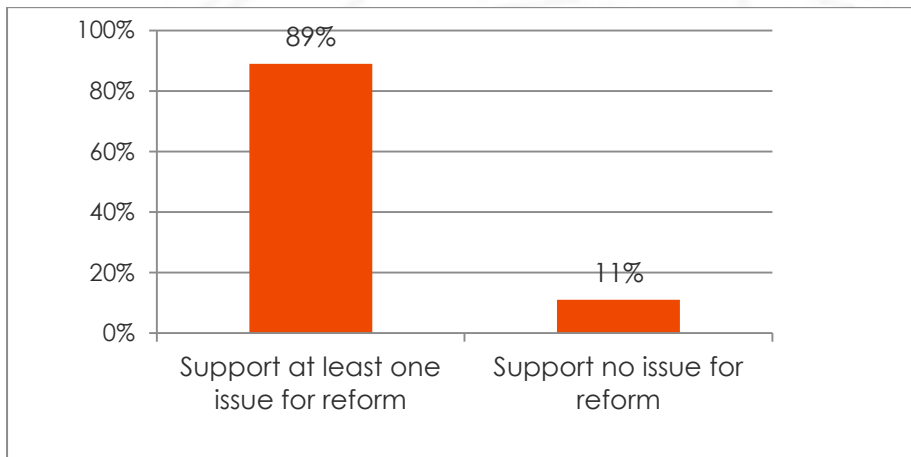
**Respondents were asked:** *In preparation for 2016 general elections, political parties and civil society organisations have suggested a number of electoral reforms. We would like to hear your views on a number of the proposed electoral reforms. Do you agree or disagree with the following suggestions<sup>1</sup> for electoral reforms ahead of the 2016 general elections in Uganda?*

### Support for electoral reforms across the political divide

As a starting point, we examine public support for addressing six key electoral issues ahead of the 2016 elections: strengthening electoral laws, appointing a non-partisan electoral commission, addressing issues with the voter register, leveling the playing field for all political players, stopping the deployment of military forces during elections, and toughening laws against vote-buying.

As Figure 11 shows, nine in 10 survey respondents (89%) cite at least one key election-related issue that they believe should be addressed. Moreover, only 5% of respondents support none of the five proposed electoral reforms included in the survey, while 71% support three, four, or all five electoral reforms mentioned in the survey (Figure 12).

**Figure 11: Support for addressing key issues | Uganda | 2015**



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following do you see as the most important issue that should be addressed ahead of the 2016 general elections? (% who provided substantive response)

**Figure 12: Support for specific electoral reforms | Uganda | 2015**

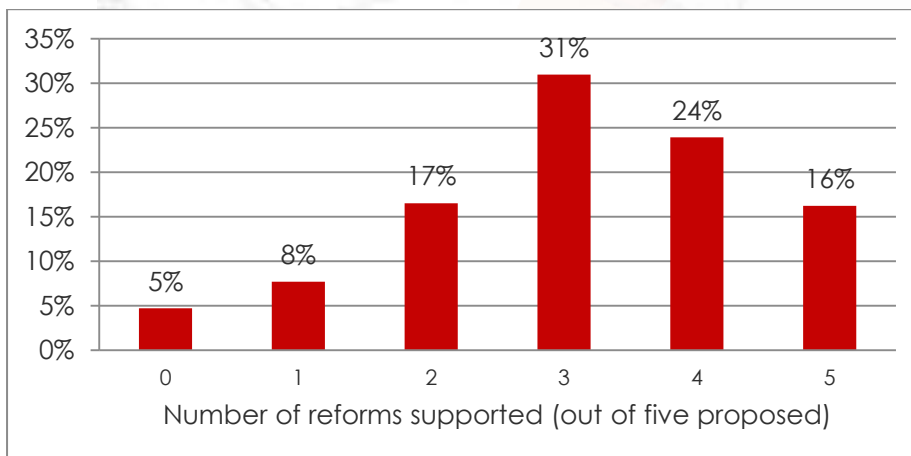


Figure shows the proportion of survey respondents who support one, two, three, four, or all five electoral law reform proposals covered in the survey.

These results suggest that the concerted civil-society campaign to gather public views on electoral reforms worked, filtering awareness down to the public and producing popular support for the proposed reforms. Critics of proposed electoral reforms have argued that would-be reformers are largely “bad losers” affiliated with the political opposition. As Figure 13a shows, opposition supporters are indeed more likely to express high support for reform (defined as supporting three or more of the five proposed reforms) than NRM supporters, 81% vs. 69%. Nonetheless, as more than two-thirds support for three or more reforms among NRM supporters indicates, a desire for reform cuts across Uganda’s political divide.

In addition, support for reforms is higher among citizens who express high demand for democracy (based on their preference for democracy over other forms of government and their rejection of one-party rule, military rule, and one-man rule). Respondents who express high demand for democracy are more likely to favour at least three proposed reforms (75%) than those who express low levels of support for democracy (60%) (Figure 13b).

**Figure 13: Support for electoral reforms | Uganda | 2015**

**13a: By political party affiliation**

**13b: By support for democracy**

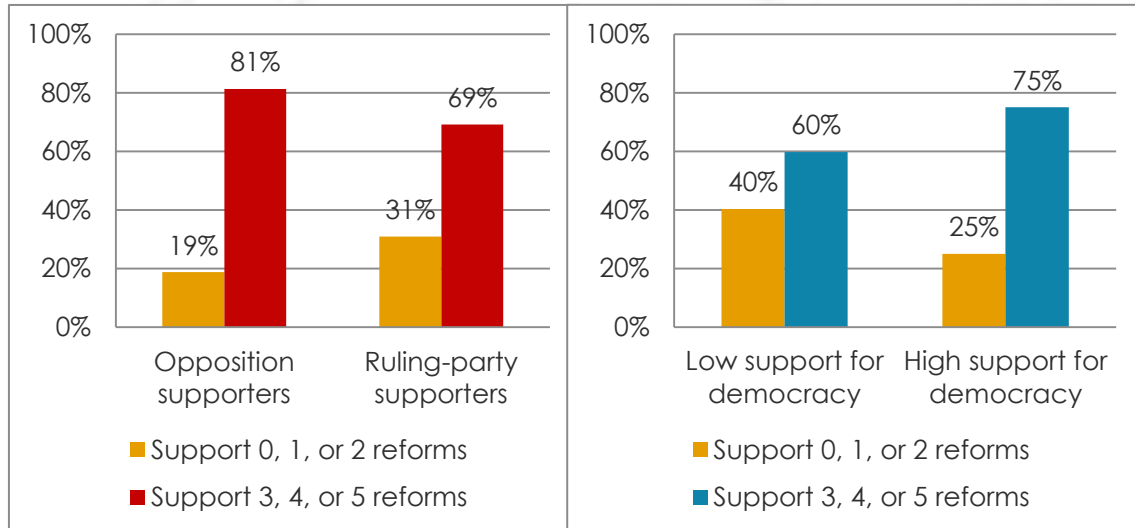


Figure 13a shows proportion of respondents who support 0-2 proposed electoral reforms vs. 3-5 proposed electoral reforms, disaggregated by political party support (ruling party vs. opposition). Figure 13b shows proportion of respondents who support 0-2 proposed electoral reforms vs. 3-5 proposed electoral reforms, disaggregated by support for democracy (low support vs. high support).

**Conclusion**

Popular demand from all sides for electoral reform appears to reflect the sizeable gap between public support for elections and the perceived quality of elections in Uganda.

While specific levels of support vary by political party affiliation, cognitive ability, news consumption, trust in the EC, and other factors, overall the demand for electoral reform crosses ideological and demographic lines.

Reforms that have the best chance of being passed thus might be changes aimed at improving electoral management and the institutional independence of the EC.

Findings show that Ugandans' satisfaction with the quality of their elections is in part driven by public trust in the EC. Thus, efforts to lessen the logistical burden of managing elections – the organisation, supervision, and execution of the electoral mandate – will go a long way toward improving public satisfaction with elections in Uganda. This satisfaction will be further cemented by an EC that the public perceives as independent and professional.

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Afrobarometer is produced collaboratively by social scientists from more than 30 African countries. Coordination is provided by the Center for Democratic Development (CDD) in Ghana, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi in Kenya, and the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IREEP) in Benin. Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) provide technical support to the network.

Core support for Afrobarometer Rounds 5 and 6 has been provided by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Bank.

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**Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 107 | 30 June 2016**