



Star Awards
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News release

Batswana skeptical of electronic voting but favour other reforms

A majority of Batswana are not convinced of the benefits of switching to electronic voting machines for the 2019 elections and say the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has not sufficiently consulted the public on the issue, a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

The IEC and Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) supporters have argued that the move to electronic voting is needed to improve election management. But their arguments have sparked controversy, including unanimous rejection by opposition parties concerned that electronic voting machines fail to provide a paper trail and could be manipulated to steal the election.

While a majority of Batswana are not satisfied with the IEC's reasons for introducing electronic voting, most favour two other proposed reforms that would give the IEC the power to determine election dates and require that members of Parliament (MPs) who resign from their political parties vacate their parliamentary seats.

Key findings

- Only a slim majority (52%) of Batswana trust the IEC "somewhat" or "a lot." This proportion has declined by 18 percentage points over the past decade.
- More than half (53%) of respondents say they are not satisfied with the reasons advanced by the IEC in favour of using electronic voting machines in 2019.
- More than two-thirds (69%) say the IEC did not consult adequately with the public on whether electronic voting machines should be used.
- Despite declining popular trust, more than two-thirds (68%) of respondents say the IEC should have the power to determine national/local election dates.
- Eight in 10 Batswana (81%) say MPs who leave their political party should have to vacate their seat in Parliament.

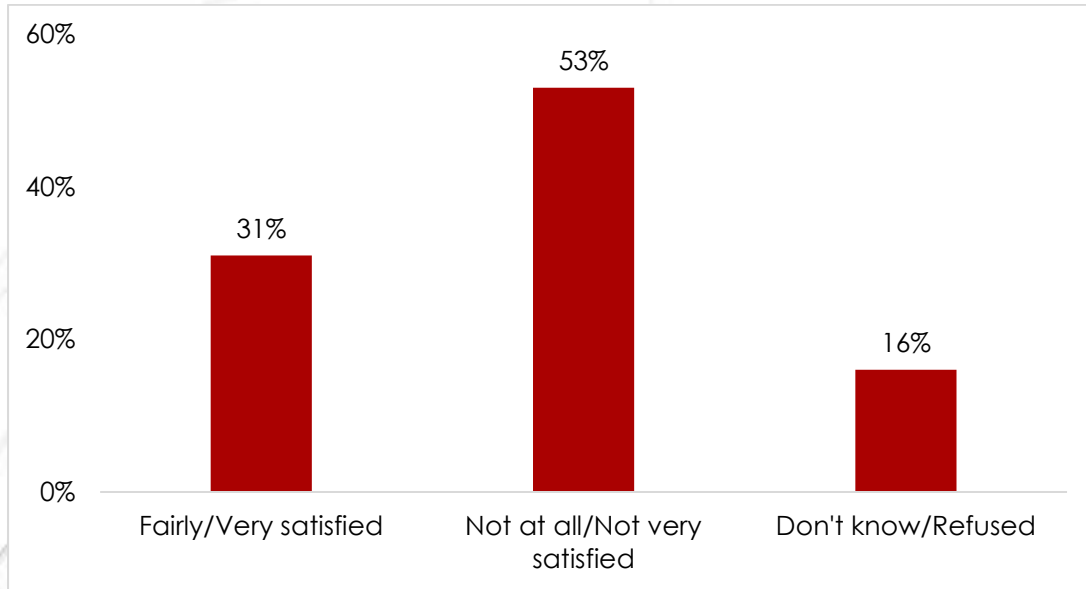
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Six rounds of surveys were conducted in up to 37 countries between 1999 and 2016, and Round 7 surveys are currently underway. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Botswana, led by Star Awards Pty Ltd, interviewed 1,200 adult Batswana in July 2017. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Botswana in 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, and 2014.

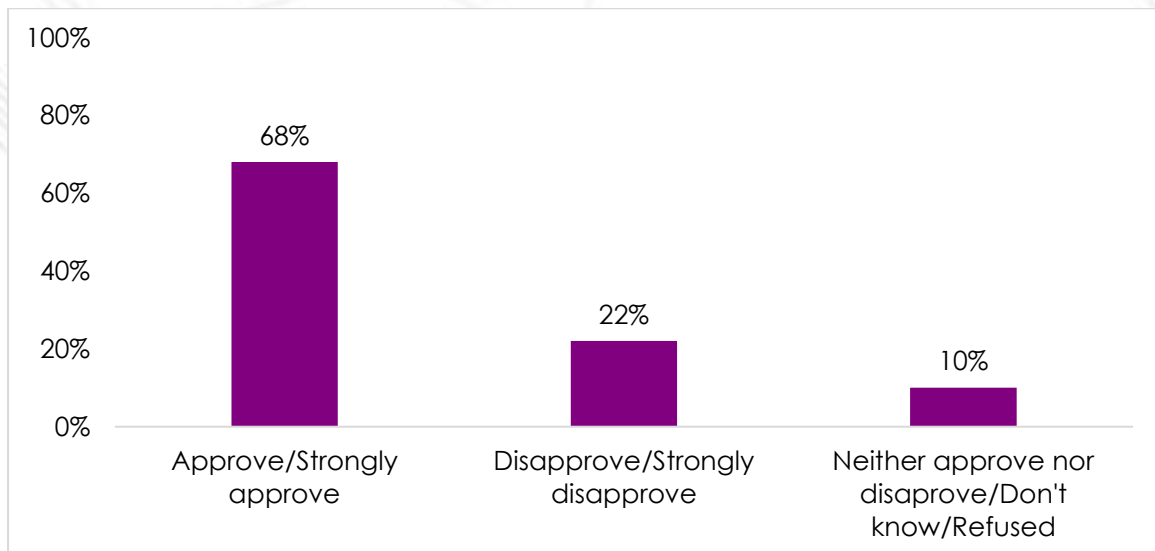
Charts

Figure 1: Satisfaction with reasons for electronic voting machines | Botswana | 2017



Respondents were asked: As Botswana prepares for the next general elections in October 2019, a number of suggestions have been made aimed at improving the quality of our elections. I would now like to ask whether you approve or disapprove of the following suggested changes: Overall, how satisfied are you with the reasons advanced by the Independent Electoral Commission for introducing electronic voting machines?

Figure 2: Should IEC set election dates? | Botswana | 2017



Respondents were asked: As Botswana prepares for the next general elections in October 2019, a number of suggestions have been made aimed at improving the quality of our elections. I would now like to ask whether you approve or disapprove of the following suggested changes: The Independent Electoral Commission should have the power to independently determine the dates of national and local elections?

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