

Star Awards
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News release

Botswana's ruling party enjoys strong lead in pre-election survey

In a hypothetical election, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) would enjoy a 2-to-1 lead over the opposition Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC), 44% to 22%, according to an Afrobarometer survey conducted in July/August. But almost one-fourth of respondents did not reveal their voting preference or said they would not vote.

As the country approaches general elections on Oct. 23, the ruling party faces a challenge from opposition parties united under the UDC banner as well as the newly founded Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF), which has formed a loose coalition with UDC under the leadership of former President Ian Khama. At the time of this survey, however, the BPF had yet to gain significant traction among Botswana.

The BDP has ruled the country since independence in 1966, but in hotly contested elections in 2014, it fell short for the first time of a majority of votes cast.

Key findings

- Nearly six in 10 survey respondents (57%) said they feel "close to" a political party, while 40% said they do not.
- Among those who feel close to a party, a majority (56%) identified with the ruling BDP. The UDC came second with 22% (Figure 1).
- In a hypothetical election, 44% of Botswana said they would vote for the BDP, while 22% said they would vote for the UDC (Figure 2). Neither past opposition stalwarts such as the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) (5%) nor the newly formed BPF (2%) registered widespread support. But nearly one-fourth (23%) of citizens said they don't know or wouldn't say how they would vote, or wouldn't vote.

Afrobarometer surveys

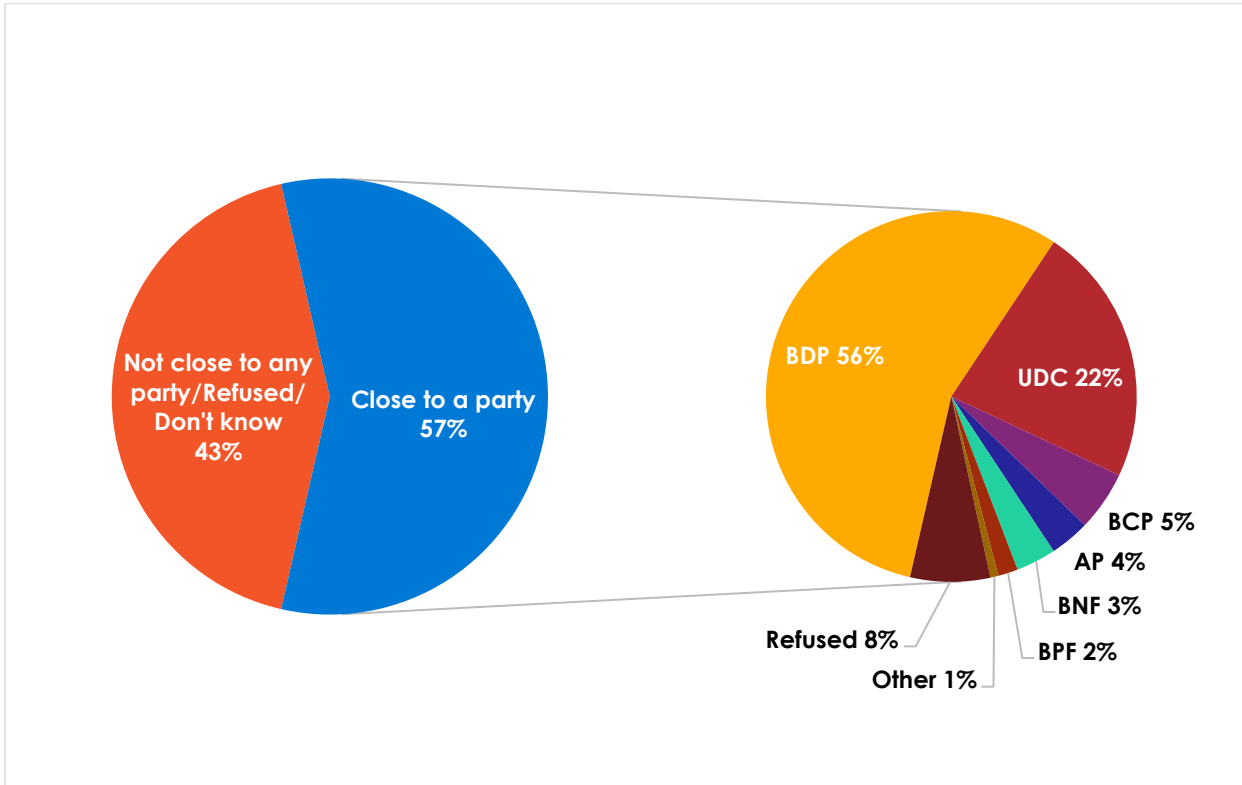
Afrobarometer directs a pan-African, nonpartisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2020 are planned in at least 35 countries.

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 Botswana in July and August 2019. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Botswana in 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2017.

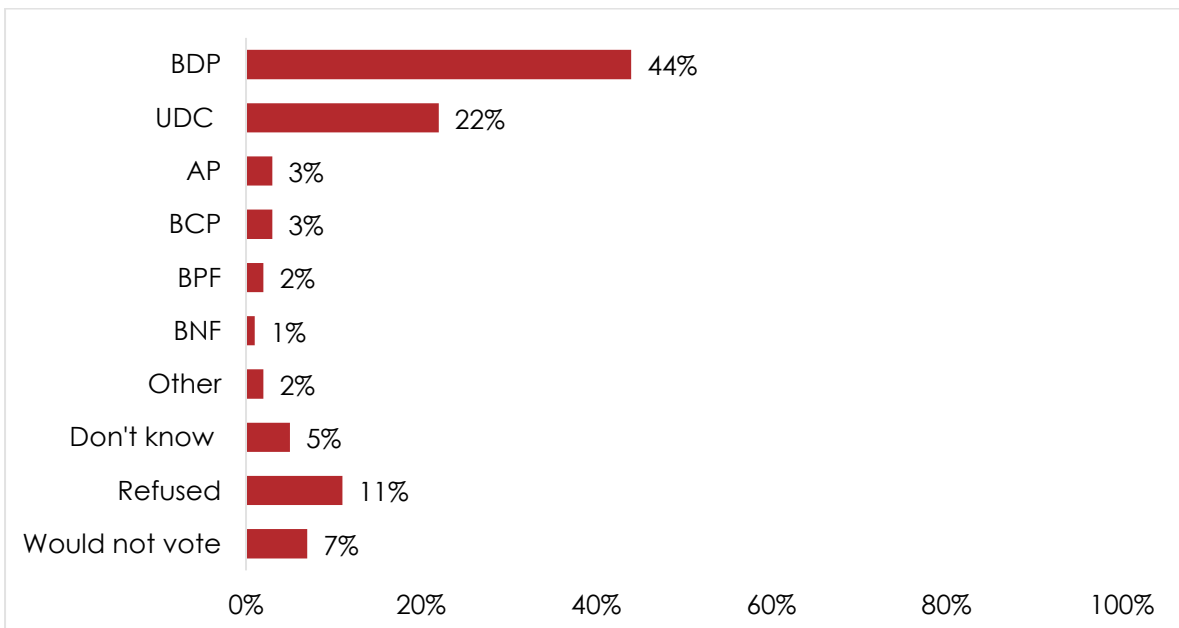
Charts

Figure 1: Party affiliation | Botswana | 2019



Respondents were asked: Do you feel close to any particular political party? [If yes:] Which party is that? (Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.)

Figure 2: Voting intentions | Botswana | 2019



Respondents were asked: If national elections were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
Note: The results in Figure 2 include an unknown proportion of respondents who are not registered to vote. Projections of election outcomes should be based on the intentions of registered, likely voters.

For more information, please contact:

Star Awards (Pty) Ltd
Prof. Mogopodi Lekorwe/Lucky Mokgatlhe
Telephone: 7131 2942
Email: lekorwem@gmail.com

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