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News release

Liberians demand accountability from government but see corruption on the rise, Afrobarometer survey shows

Liberians want an accountable government but say that corruption is increasing in the country, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Nearly two out of three citizens prefer an accountable government over one that can get things done without being answerable to its citizens. But most Liberians say some key elected officials “never” or “only sometimes” listen to their constituents.

And counter to their aspirations for accountable governance, a majority of Liberians say the level of corruption in the country increased during the previous year, with high levels of corruption perceived among the police, members of the House of Representatives and senators, and other officials.

Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Liberia among the world's worst-performing countries (137th out of 180).

Key findings

- Almost two-thirds (63%) of Liberians say it's more important to have an accountable government than an efficient one on which citizens have no influence, even if citizens have no influence over what it does. The preference for accountable governance has remained consistently high since 2012 (60%) except for a dip in 2015 (53%) (Figure 1).
- Almost three-fourths (72%) of citizens say the level of corruption in the country increased “somewhat” or “a lot” during the previous year. Only 7% say it decreased (Figure 2).
- About two-thirds of Liberians think “most” or all” police (67%), members of the House of Representatives (65%), and senators (64%) are corrupt, and about half of citizens say the same about the Presidency (51%), judges and magistrates (49%), and county superintendents (48%). Almost all citizens think that at least “some” of these officials are corrupt (Figure 3).
- Nine in 10 citizens say senators (92%), members of the House of Representatives (92%), and local government councillors (86%) officials “never” or “only sometimes” do their best to listen to ordinary people (Figure 4).

Afrobarometer surveys

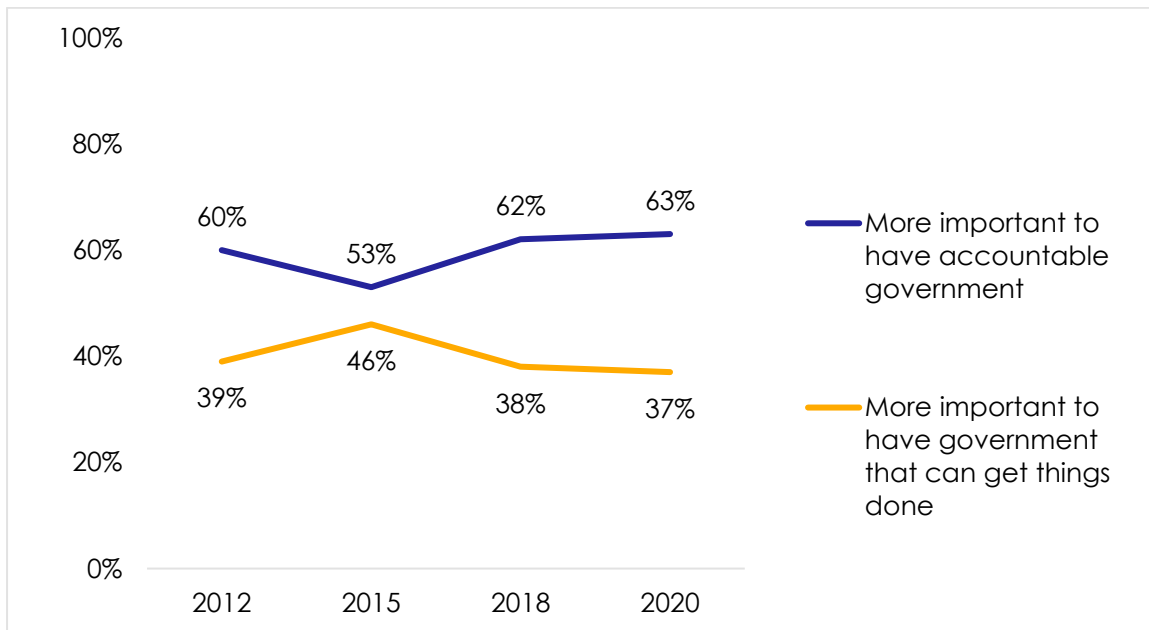
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were conducted in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018, and Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) covering 34 countries are close to completion. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Liberia, led by the Center for Democratic Governance, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 adult

Liberians between October and December 2020. 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 Liberia in 2008, 2012, 2015, and 2018.

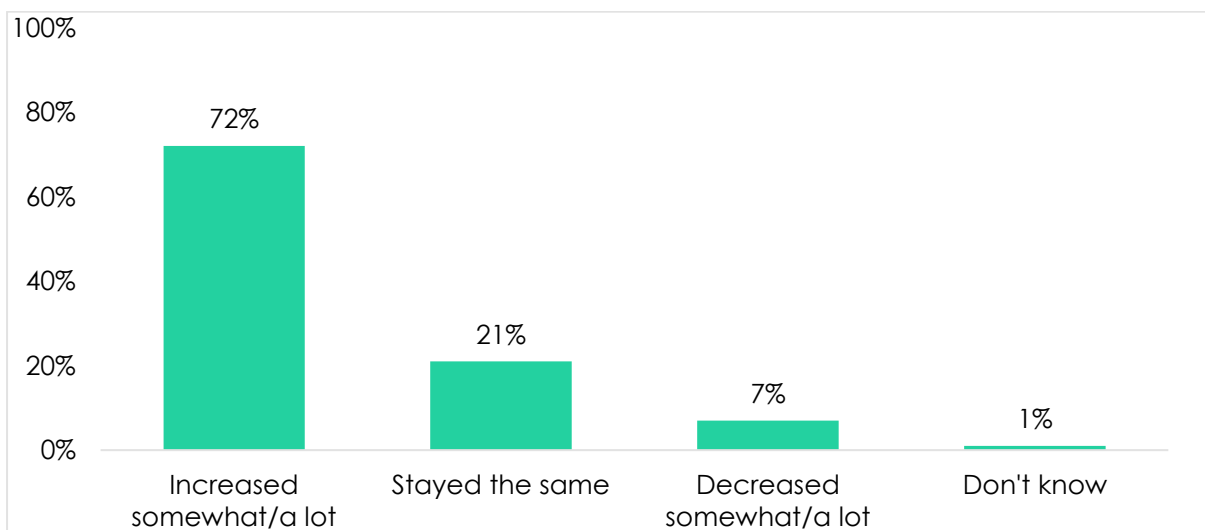
Charts

Figure 1: Demand for accountable governance | Liberia | 2012-2020



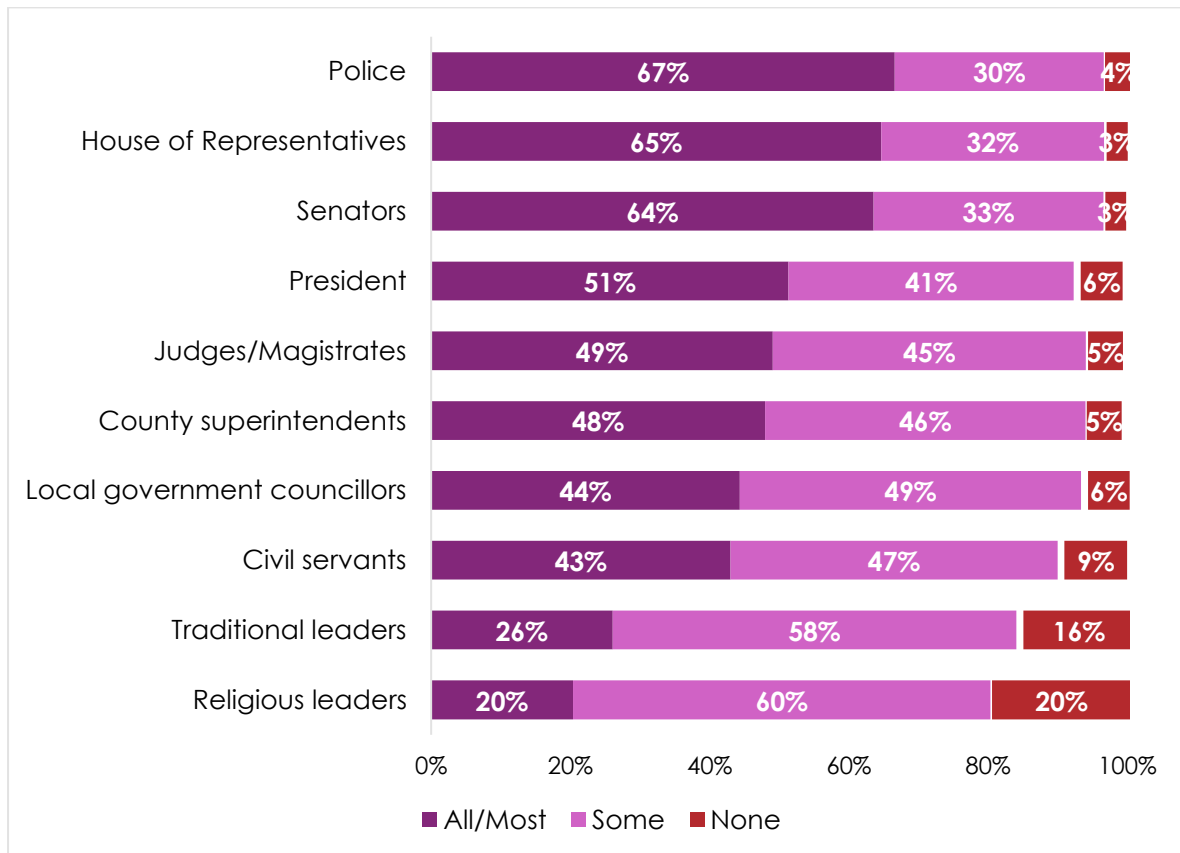
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your own view?
 Statement 1: It is more important to have a government that can get things done, even if we have no influence over what it does.
 Statement 2: It is more important for citizens to be able to hold government accountable, even if that means it makes decisions more slowly.
 (% who “agree” or “strongly agree” with each statement)

Figure 2: Level of corruption | Liberia | 2020



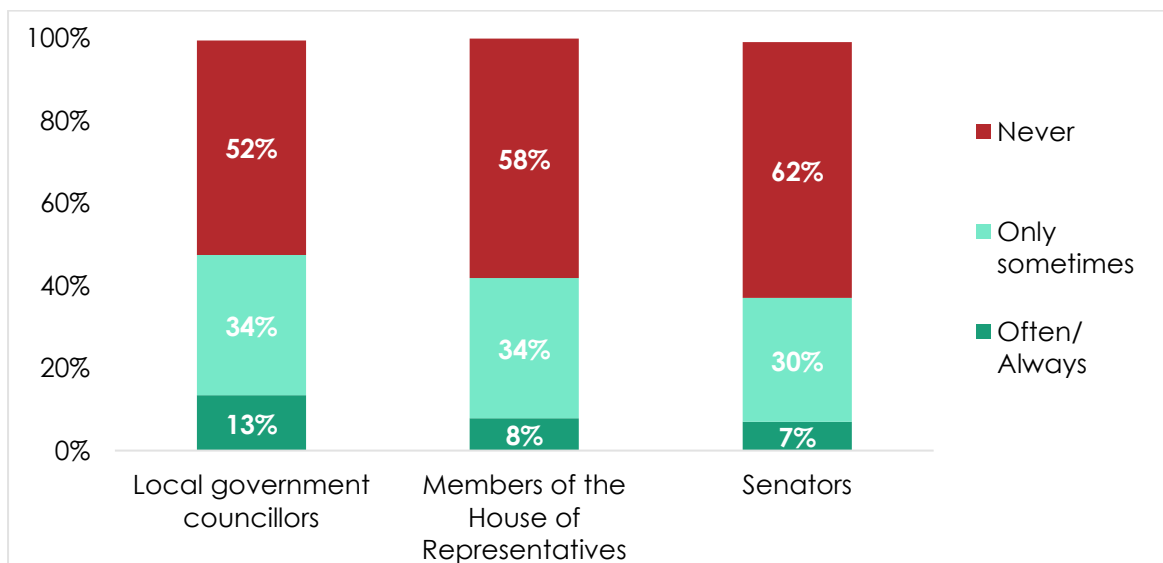
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Figure 3: Perceived corruption in institutions | Liberia | 2020



Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

Figure 4: Do officials listen? | Liberia | 2020



Respondents were asked: How much of the time do you think the following try their best to listen to what people like you have to say?

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