



Freetown, Sierra Leone  
15 September 2020

## News release

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### **MPs are failing at the jobs that Sierra Leoneans want them to do, Afrobarometer survey shows**

Most Sierra Leoneans say their members of Parliament (MPs) are ineffective, rarely visit or help their constituents, and are untrustworthy, a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

Survey respondents' negative assessments add up to a scathing indictment of parliamentary performance. While citizens want MPs to listen to their constituents, represent their needs, and deliver jobs and development to their communities, a majority of survey respondents say their MPs are ineffective at these tasks, as well as at making laws for the good of the country.

Although demand for accountable governance has increased in Sierra Leone, very few citizens believe MPs are effective in holding the president and government accountable.

The study also found that MPs are among the least trusted officials and are widely perceived as corrupt.

The most recent elections saw a high turnover in Parliament, as eight out of 10 parliamentarians elected in 2012 lost their seats in 2018.

### **Key findings**

- Seven in 10 Sierra Leoneans (71%) say it is more important to have a government that is accountable to its citizens than to have a government that “gets things done” (Figure 1).
  - Demand for accountable governance has increased by 28 percentage points since 2012 (43%).
- The two most important responsibilities of MP's, according to Sierra Leoneans, are to listen to constituents and represent their needs (52%) and to deliver jobs or development (26%) (Figure 2).
  - Very few respondents cite making laws for the good of the country (9%) and monitoring the president and government (4%) as the most important responsibilities of MPs.
- Large majorities think MPs are “not very effective” or “not at all effective” at delivering jobs or development to their constituency (79%) and listening to their constituents and representing their needs in Parliament (75%) (Figure 3).
  - About half say they are doing a poor job of holding the president and government accountable (48%) and making laws for the good of the country (49%).
- While almost eight in 10 (78%) want MPs to visit their constituencies at least once a year, only half as many (40%) say MPs do so (Figure 4).

- Similarly, six in 10 citizens (60%) expect MPs to provide financial assistance for individuals in their communities, but only 13% say MPs “sometimes” or “often” give out resources to help community members.
- MPs are among the least trusted public officials. Only one-third (33%) of Sierra Leoneans say they trust MPs “a lot” or “somewhat,” while 64% say they trust them “just a little” or “not at all” (Figure 5).
- Eight in 10 citizens (81%) say “all,” “most,” or “some” MPs are corrupt, second only to the police among key officials (Figure 6).

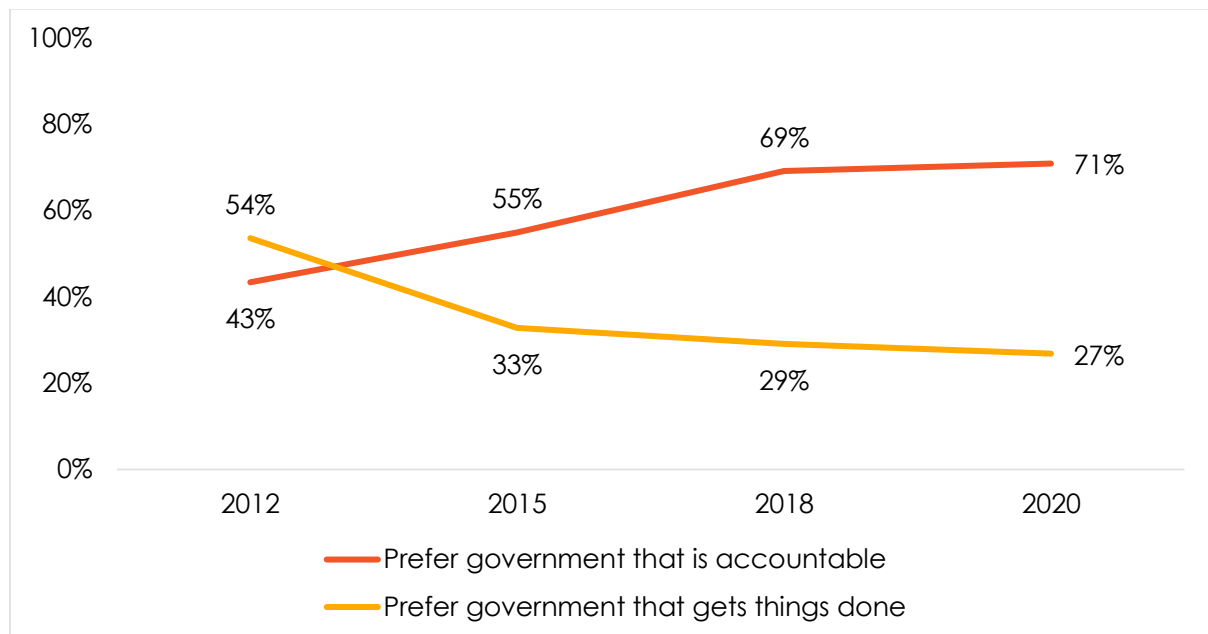
### Afrobarometer surveys

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 completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2021 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 Sierra Leone, led by the Institute for Governance Reform, interviewed 1,200 adult Sierra Leoneans in March 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 Sierra Leone in 2012, 2015, and 2018.

### Charts

**Figure 1: Accountability vs. efficiency** | Sierra Leone | 2012-2020



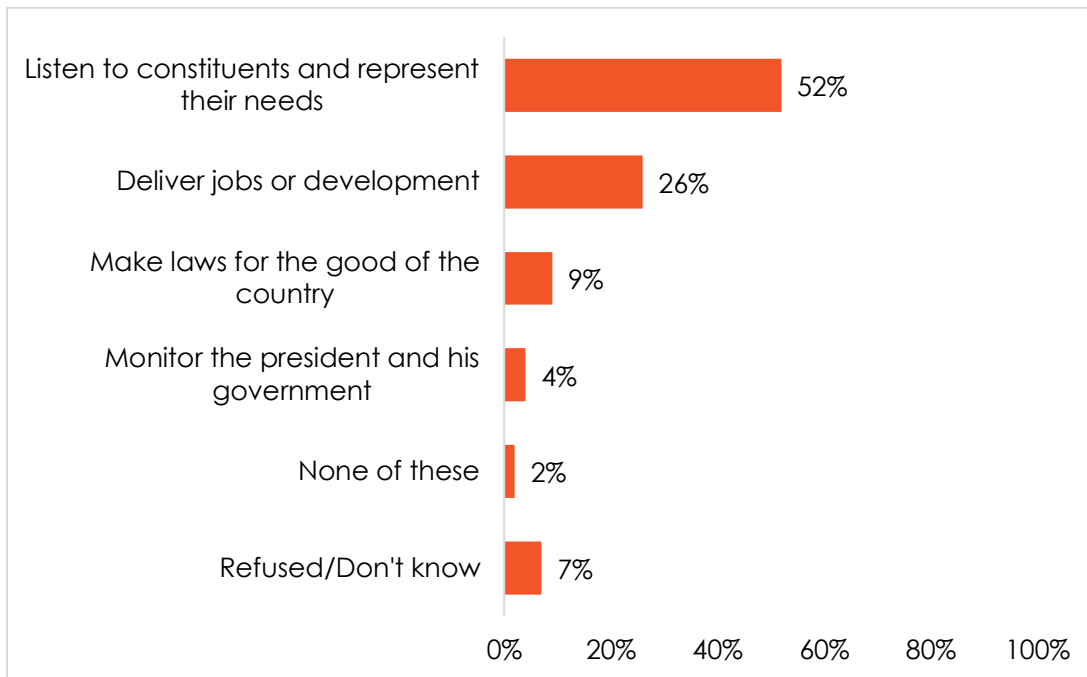
**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

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.

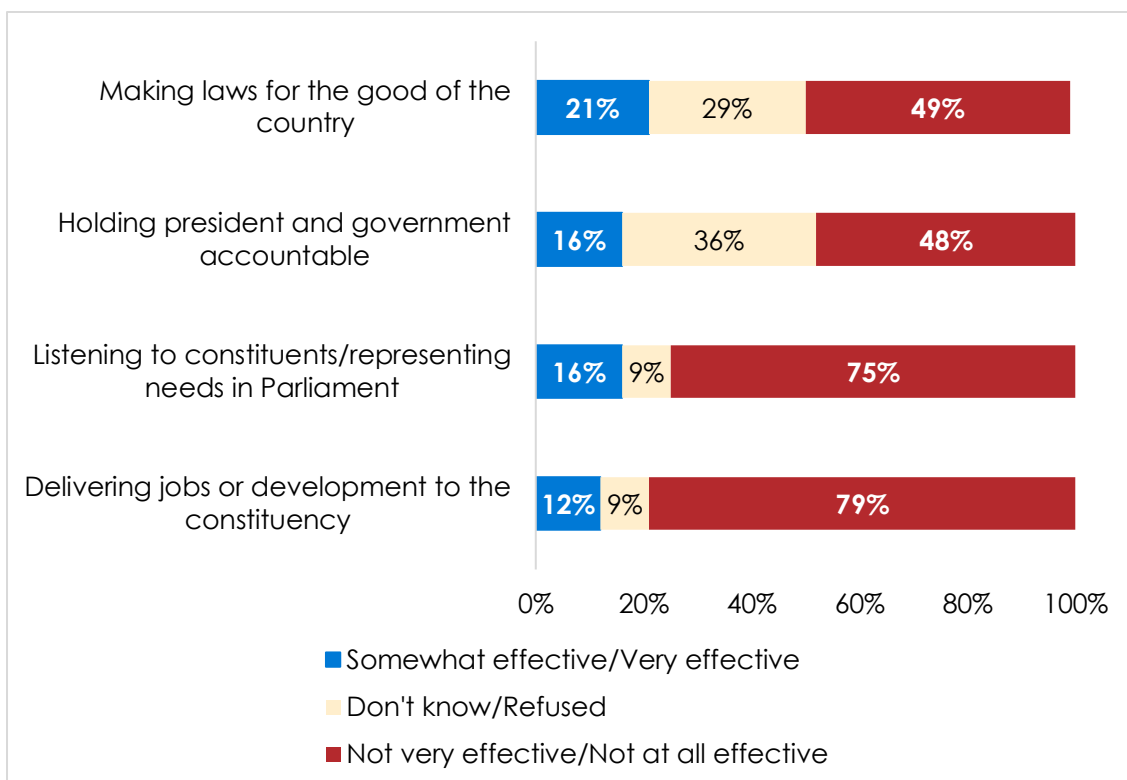
(% who “agree” or “agree very strongly” with each statement)

**Figure 2: MPs' most important responsibility** | Sierra Leone | 2020



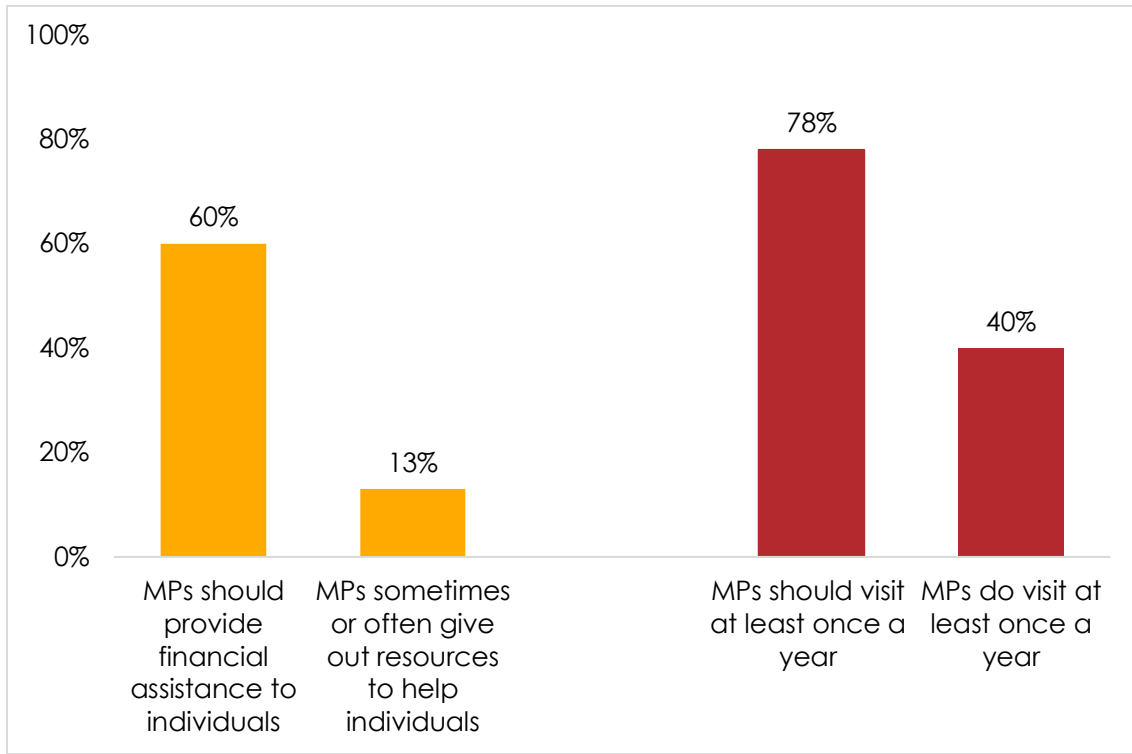
**Respondents were asked:** Members of Parliament have different responsibilities. Which of the following do you think is the most important responsibility of your member of Parliament?

**Figure 3: Effectiveness of MPs** | Sierra Leone | 2020



**Respondents were asked:** Members of Parliament have different responsibilities. How effective do you think your MP is in fulfilling each of the following responsibilities, or haven't you heard enough to say?

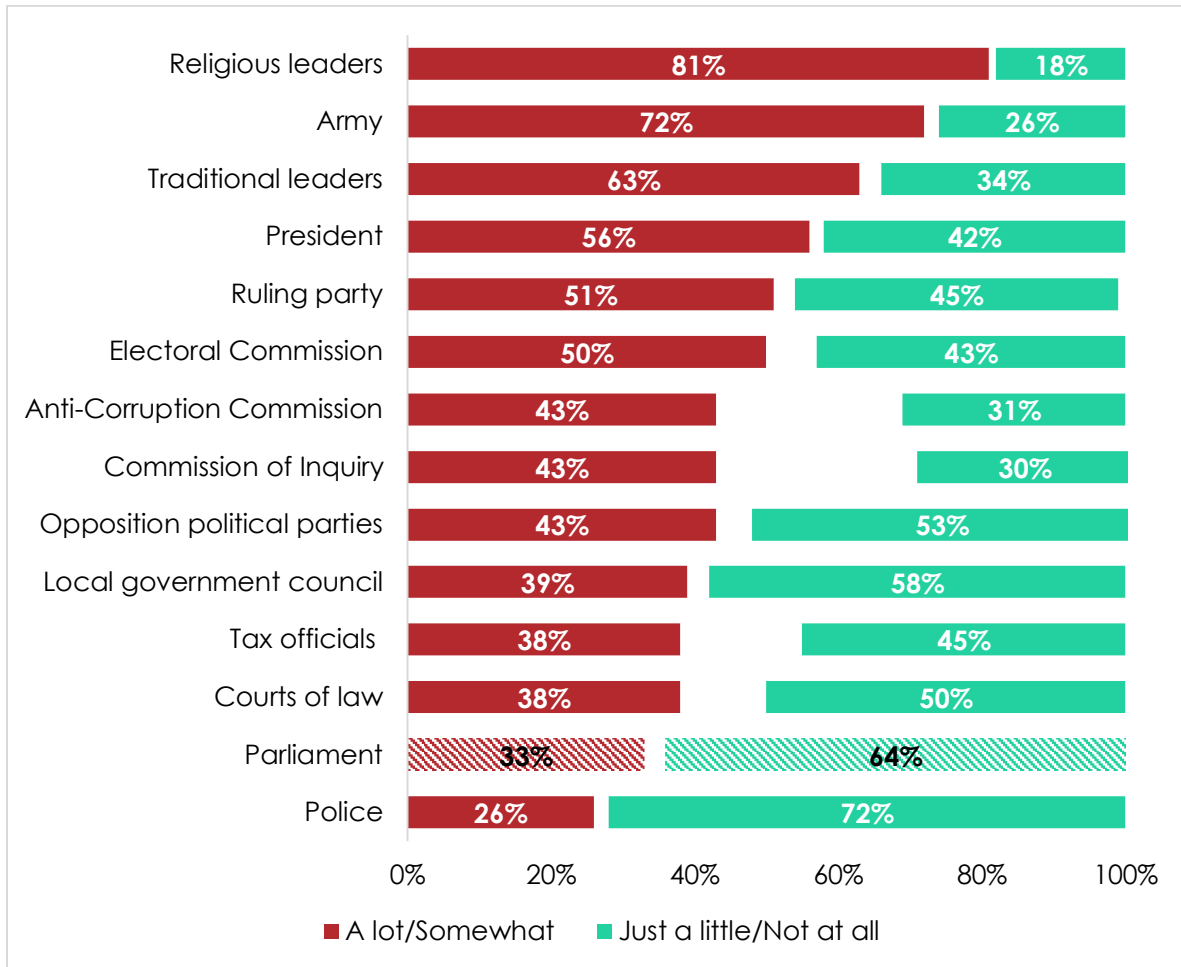
**Figure 4: Constituents' expectations of MPs vs. reality | Sierra Leone | 2020**



**Respondents were asked:**

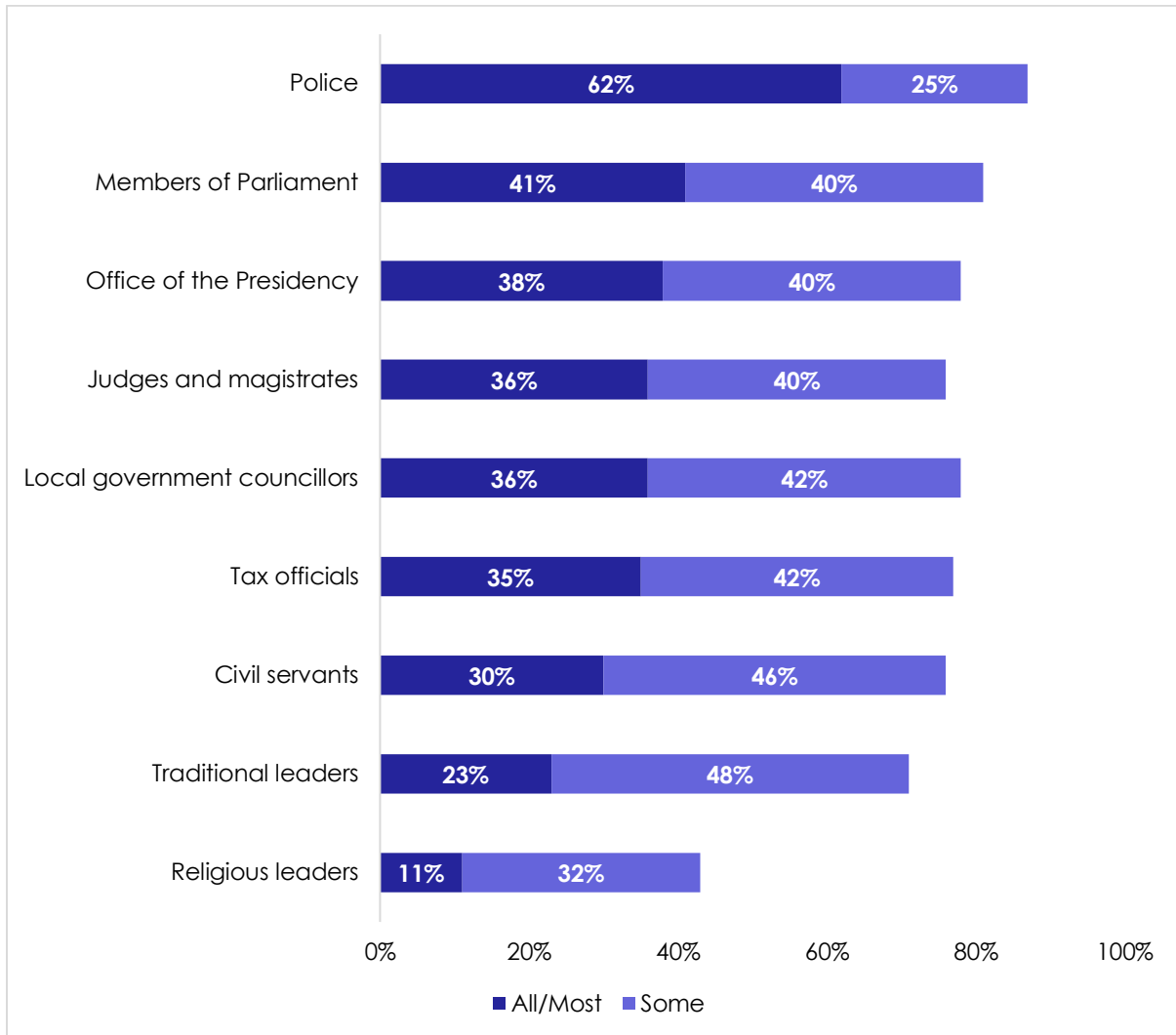
- How important do you think it is for MPs to provide financial assistance to individuals in their communities? (% who say "somewhat important" or "very important")
- What about your MP? How often does he or she give out resources to help individuals in your community with their personal needs, like school fees or hospital fees, or haven't you heard enough to say?
- How much time:  
 Should your member of Parliament spend in this constituency to visit the community and its citizens?  
 Does your member of Parliament spend in this constituency? (% who say "almost all the time," "at least weekly," "at least once a month," or "at least once a year")

**Figure 5: Trust in parliamentarians vs. other leaders** | Sierra Leone | 2020



**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

**Figure 6: Perceived corruption among officials** | Sierra Leone | 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?

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