



Lusaka, Zambia  
18 August 2021

## News release

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### Zambians' support for democracy, clean elections set stage for third transfer of power

Zambia's third transfer of presidential power via elections occurred against a backdrop of overwhelming popular support for democracy, clean elections, and multiparty competition, an analysis of recent Afrobarometer findings shows.

A survey in late 2020 found that even though a majority of Zambians are not satisfied with the way their democracy is working, most reject authoritarian alternatives to democracy and say the country should choose leaders through regular, open, and honest elections.

A majority of respondents also say the country needs many political parties to make sure that citizens have real choices in who governs them.

Zambia joined a small group of African countries to experience three transfers of power via elections when last week's general election, the country's seventh since the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in 1991, resulted in a clear victory for the opposition United Party for National Development. Sixteen political parties participated in the election.

According to the Christian Churches Monitoring Group, while specific processes require improvement, the Electoral Commission of Zambia delivered an election that reflects the will of the people.

#### Key findings

- Most Zambians (84%) prefer democracy to any other form of government and reject non-democratic alternatives such as one-party rule (83%), military rule (90%), and one-man rule (91%) (Figure 1).
  - Six in 10 citizens (59%) say they are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in the country (Figure 2).
- Three-quarters (76%) of Zambians say leaders should be chosen through regular, open, and honest elections, while just 22% would prefer to adopt other methods for choosing the country's leaders (Figure 3).
- More than seven in 10 Zambians (74%) say many political parties are needed to make sure that citizens have real choices in who governs them. Only one-fourth (25%) of citizens say political parties create division and confusion, and Zambia doesn't need to have many of them (Figure 4).

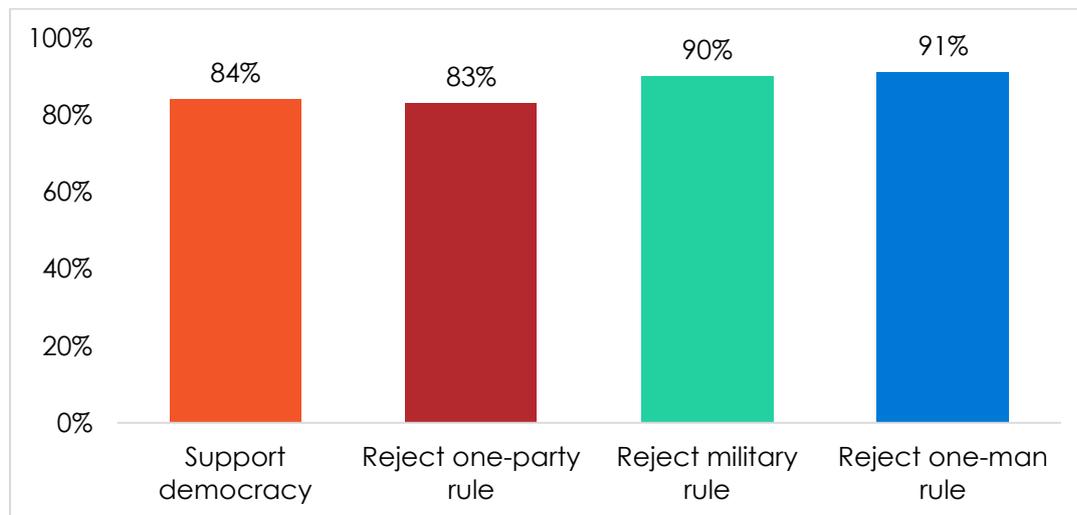
#### Afrobarometer surveys

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 completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) cover 34 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Zambia, led by the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), a research wing of the University of Zambia, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 Zambian adults in November-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 Zambia in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2014, and 2017.

**Charts**

**Figure 1: Support for democracy and rejection of non-democratic alternatives**  
 | Zambia | 2020



**Respondents were asked:**

Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?

Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.

Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.

Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.

(% who select Statement 1)

There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives:

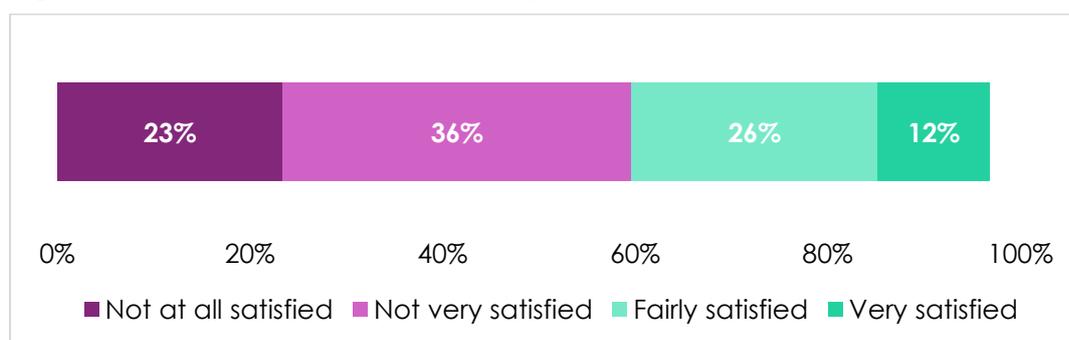
Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office?

The army comes in to govern the country?

Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything?

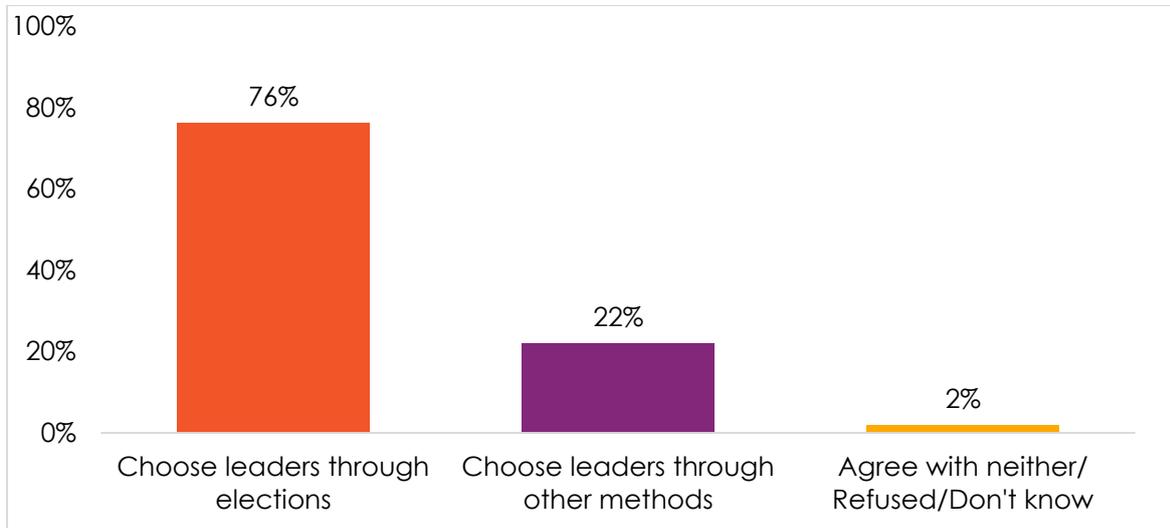
(% who "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove")

**Figure 2: Satisfaction with democracy** | Zambia | 2020



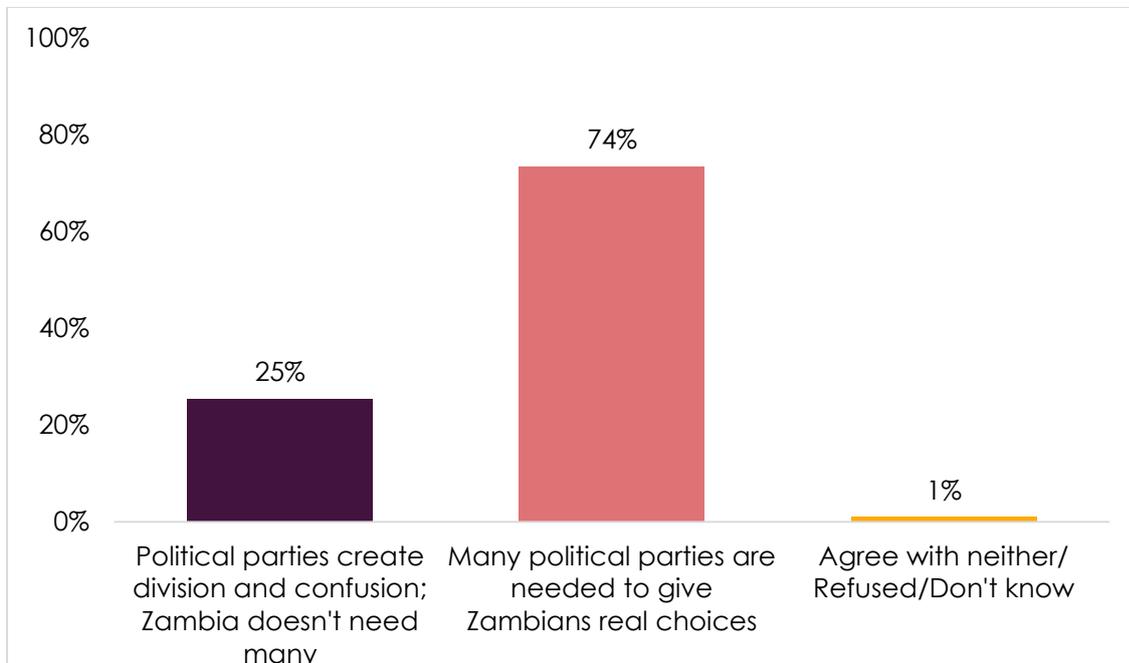
**Respondents were asked:** Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Zambia?

**Figure 3: Choose leaders through elections or other methods? | Zambia | 2020**



**Respondents were asked:** Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?  
 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 "agree very strongly" with each statement)

**Figure 4: Is it necessary to have many political parties in Zambia? | Zambia | 2020**



**Respondents were asked:**  
 Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?  
 Statement 1: Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in Zambia.  
 Statement 2: Many political parties are needed to make sure that Zambians have real choices in who governs them.  
 (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

**For more information, please contact:**

Edward Chibwili  
Institute of Economic and Social Research, University of Zambia  
Email: edward.chibwili@unza.zm

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