

Kampala, Uganda  
12 January 2021

## News release

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### **Many Ugandans sceptical, apprehensive heading in toward Election Day, Afrobarometer survey shows**

Many Ugandans were doubtful about the fairness of the general election campaign and apprehensive about possible violence as they approached Election Day on Thursday, a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

In a survey in late December and early January, fewer than half of respondents considered the campaign a level playing field for all candidates, and a majority said that opposition parties and supporters were often silenced by the government.

Most citizens expected inaccurate vote counts and a disputed election outcome, and fully half expressed fear of political intimidation or violence, although most were confident that Uganda's security agencies would be able to prevent large-scale outbreaks of violence.

For more survey findings on Uganda's upcoming election, please visit [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org).

#### **Key findings**

- As of December-January, fewer than half of Ugandans described the election environment as free and fair with regard to media coverage of all candidates and parties by private (48%) and government (33%) outlets, opportunities for all candidates and parties to hold political meetings and rallies (34%), and treatment of all candidates and parties by election officials (36%) and police and other security agencies (29%) (Figure 1).
- Six in 10 Ugandans (61%) said opposition parties and supporters are “often” or “always” silenced by the government, a 25-percentage-point increase since 2015 (Figure 2).
- Half (51%) of respondents said they feared political intimidation or violence “somewhat” or “a lot” during the current election campaign, a level of fear similar to that recorded in 2015 but 14 percentage points higher than in 2011 (Figure 3).
- Fewer than half (44%) of citizens expected the 2021 election to be “completely free and fair” or “free and fair with minor problems” (Figure 4).
  - While three-fourths (76%) said they thought the tallying of election results would be at least “fairly accurate” at their own polling station, only one in three (34%) expressed confidence in vote counting at the national tally centre in Kampala.
  - Eight out of 10 Ugandans (80%) considered it “somewhat” or “very” likely that the losing side in the 2021 election would refuse to accept the official election results.
  - But a strong majority (73%) also thought that Uganda's security agencies would be able to prevent large-scale outbreaks of violence.

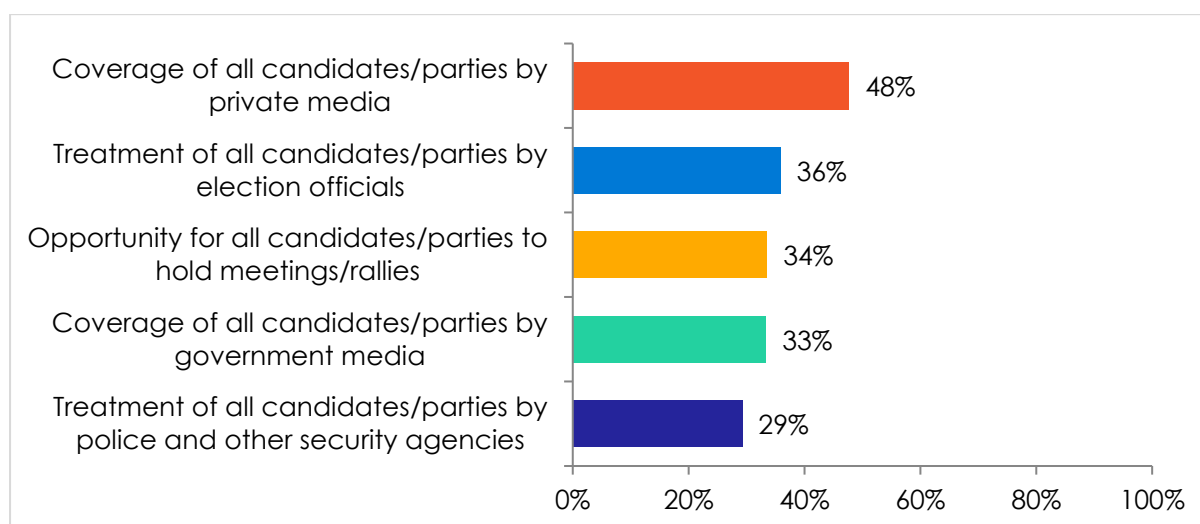
## Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that has provided reliable data on experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life in 38 African countries since 1999. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

With financial support from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Uganda, the Afrobarometer team in Uganda, led by Hatchile Consult Limited, interviewed 2,400 adult Ugandans between 22 December 2020 and 7 January 2021 in 300 enumeration areas across 110 districts. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. This was the 11<sup>th</sup> Afrobarometer survey in Uganda since 1999.

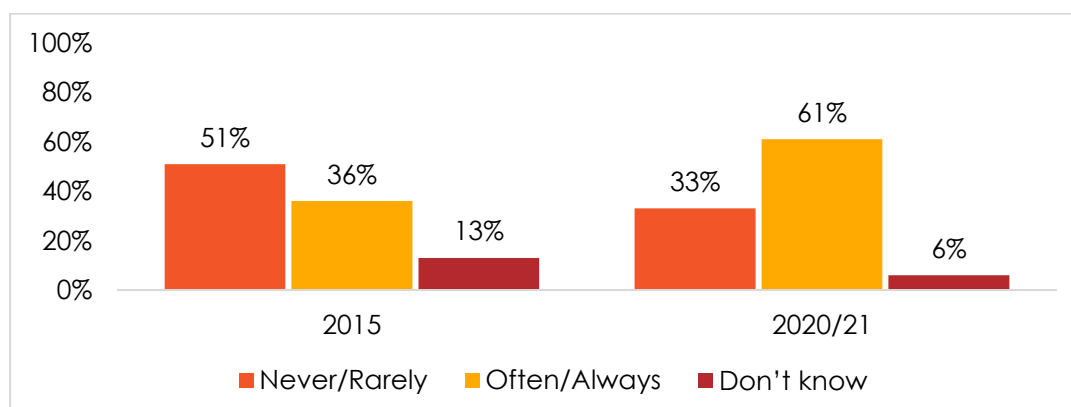
## Charts

**Figure 1: Freeness and fairness of the campaign environment | Uganda | 2020/2021**



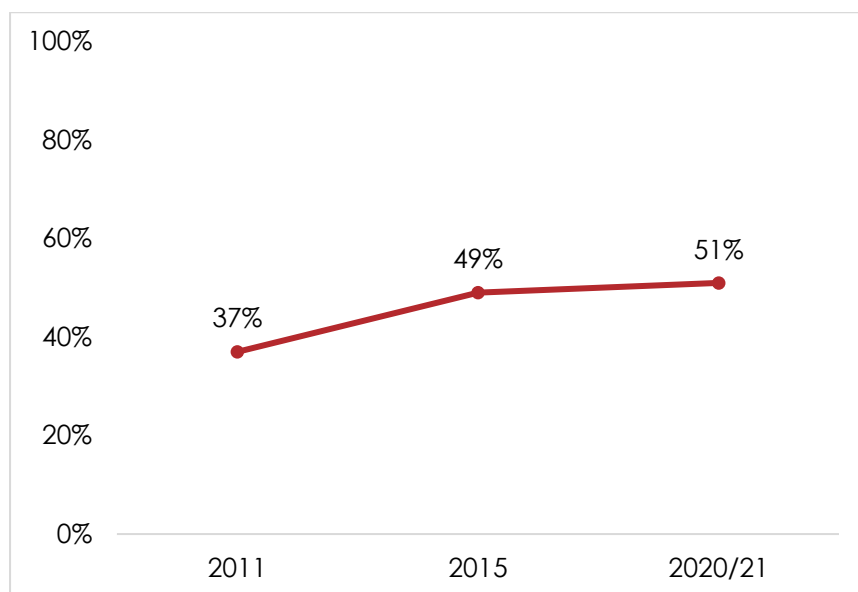
**Respondents were asked:** How free and fair do you think the campaign environment has been with regard to each of the following? (% who said "completely free and fair" or "Free and fair with minor problems")

**Figure 2: How often is the opposition silenced? | Uganda | 2020/2021**



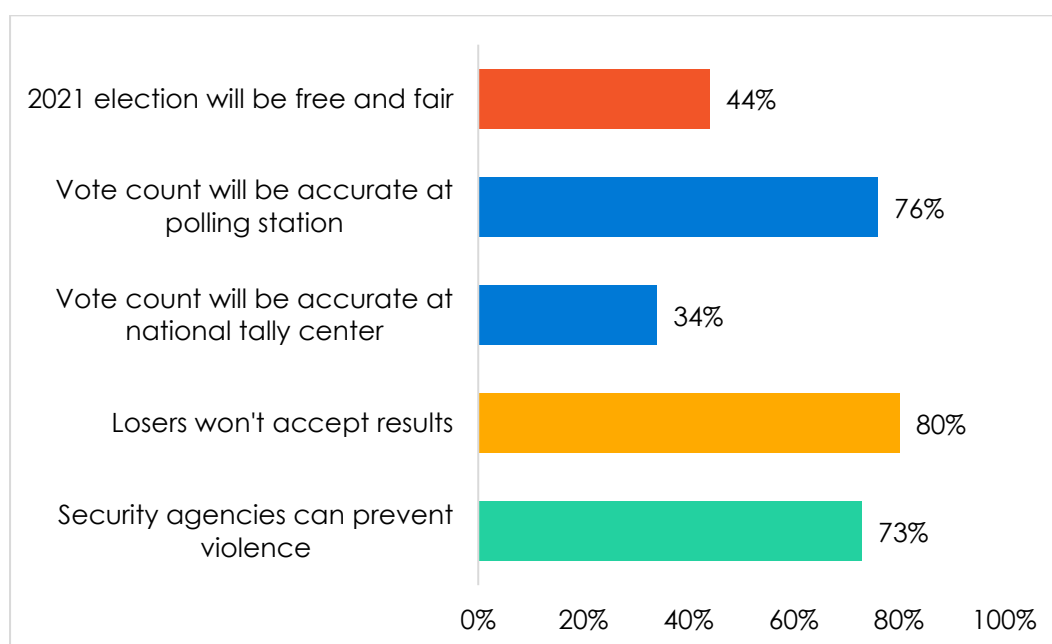
**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, how often, in this country, are opposition parties or their supporters silenced by the government?

**Figure 3: Fear of political intimidation or violence** | Uganda | 2015-2020/2021



**Respondents were asked:** During the current election campaign, how much do you personally fear becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence? (% who said "somewhat" or "a lot")

**Figure 4: Expectations for Election Day** | Uganda | 2020/2021



**Respondents were asked:**

On the whole, how free or fair do you expect the forthcoming 2021 general elections to be? (% who said "completely free and fair" or "free and fair with minor problems")

How accurate or inaccurate do you expect the following counting and tallying of election results in the 2021 general elections to be at: Your own polling station? At the national tally centre in Kampala? (% who said "fairly accurate" or "very accurate")

In your view, how likely is it: That the losers of the elections will refuse to accept the official election results? That Uganda's security agencies will be able to prevent large-scale outbreaks of violence? (% who said "somewhat likely" or "very likely")

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