



Lusaka, Zambia
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News release

Amidst gloomy views on the economy and the country's direction, Zambians voice dissatisfaction with the way democracy is working

A majority of Zambians are pessimistic about the country's direction and dissatisfied with the way their democracy is working, a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

Most citizens say the country's economic condition and their personal living conditions are bad, and the country is headed in the wrong direction. Only about one-third expect things to get better during the coming year.

Zambians overwhelmingly support democracy and reject authoritarian alternatives. But a majority say they are dissatisfied with the way democracy is working in their country.

These findings are particularly relevant ahead of the country's upcoming national elections on 12 August 2021.

Key findings

- More than three-quarters (77%) of Zambians say the country is going in the wrong direction (Figure 1). This view is particularly common among citizens with primary schooling or less (80%) and those experiencing moderate or high lived poverty (80%-84%).
- Most Zambians (80%) say economic conditions in the country are "fairly bad" or "very bad," and almost two-thirds (64%) say the same about their personal living conditions (Figure 2).
 - Only about one in three (35%) think the economic situation will get better during the coming year (Figure 3).
- More than eight in 10 Zambians prefer democracy to any other form of government (84%) and reject non-democratic alternatives such as one-party rule (83%), military rule (90%), and one-man rule (91%) (Figure 4).
 - But only about half (51%) of citizens consider Zambia "a full democracy" or "a democracy with minor problems" (Figure 5).
 - And six in 10 (59%) say they are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in the country (Figure 6).

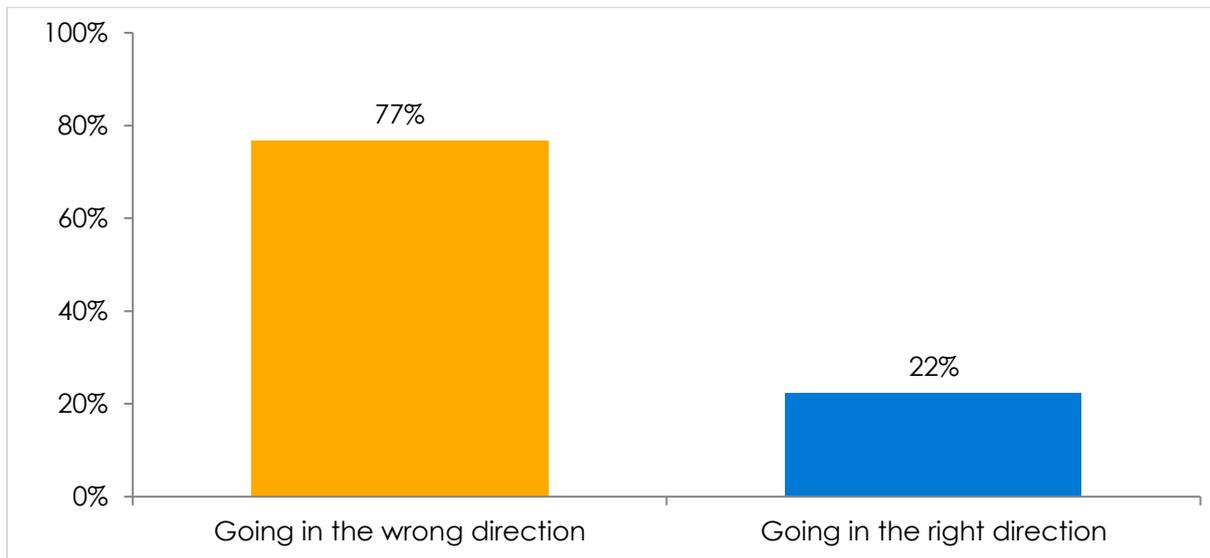
Afrobarometer surveys

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, and Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) are currently underway. 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

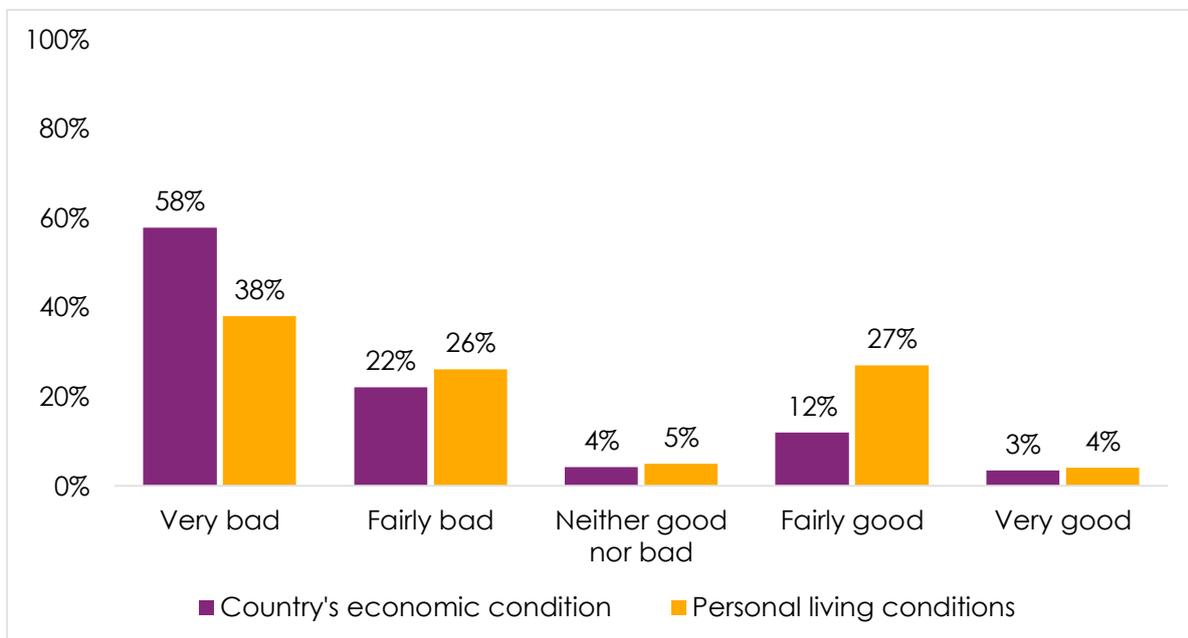
percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Zambia in 2012, 2015, and 2017.

Figure 1: The country's direction | Zambia | 2020



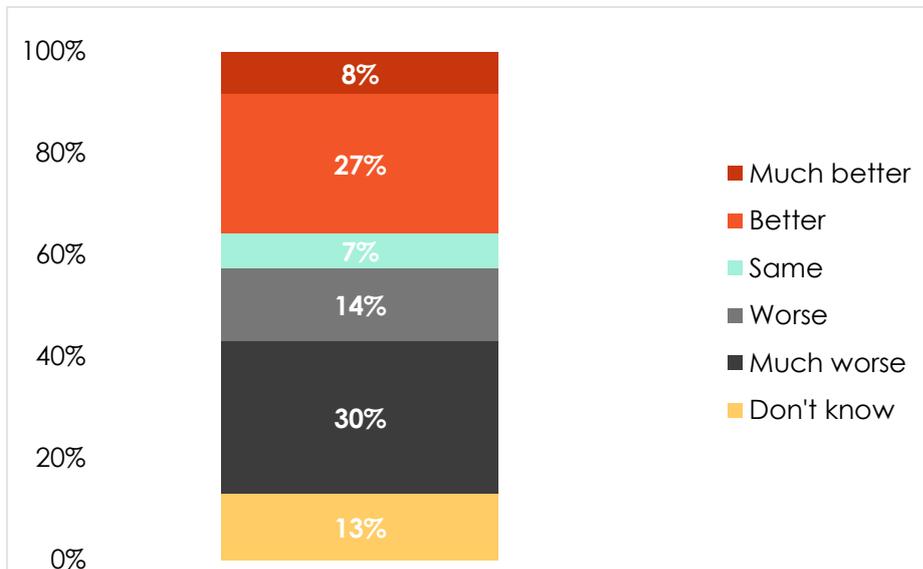
Respondents were asked: Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?

Figure 2: Country's economic condition and personal living conditions | Zambia | 2020



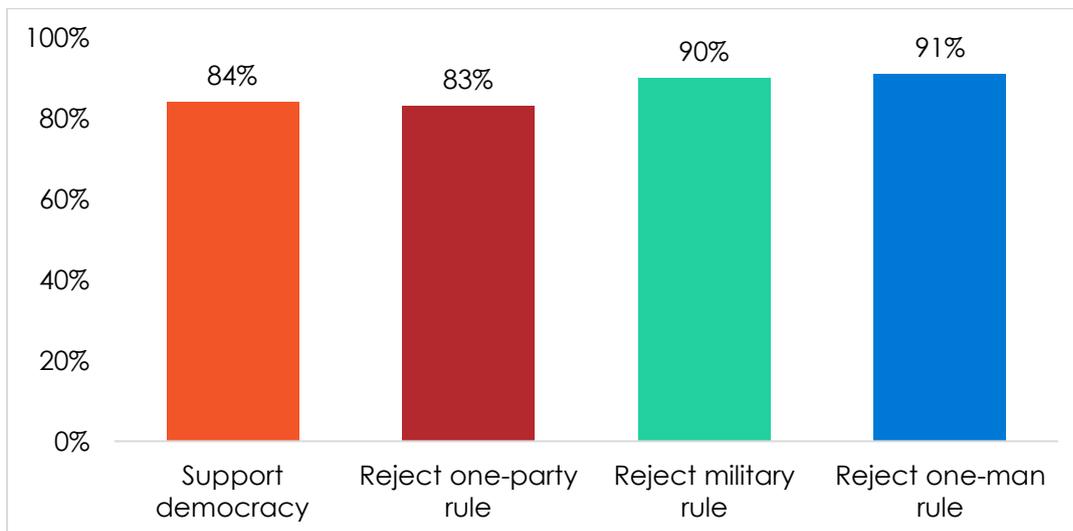
Respondents were asked: In general, how would you describe: The present economic condition of this country? Your own present living conditions?

Figure 3: Country's economic conditions 12 months from now | Zambia | 2020



Respondents were asked: Looking ahead, do you expect economic conditions in this country to be better or worse in 12 months' time?

Figure 4: 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:

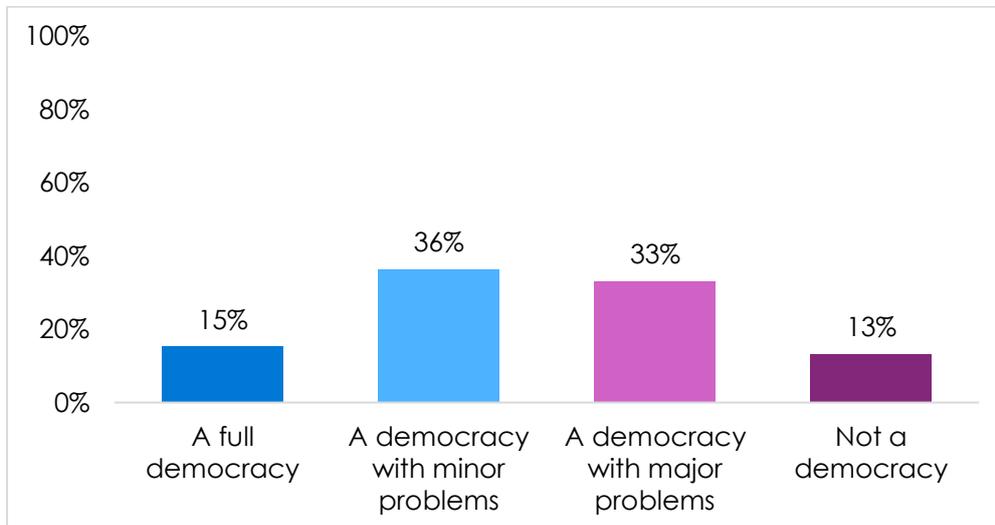
Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office?

The army comes in to govern the country?

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

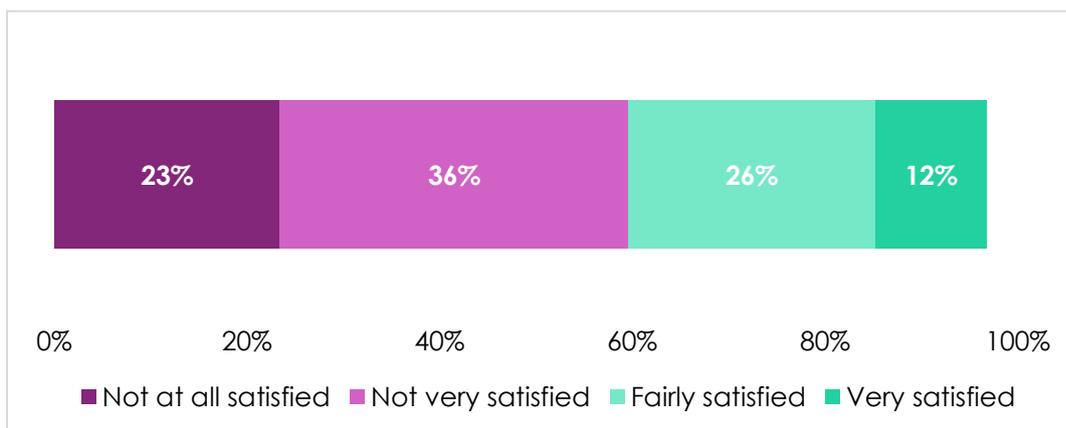
(% who "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove")

Figure 5: Extent of democracy | Zambia | 2020



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Zambia today?

Figure 6: Satisfaction with democracy | Zambia | 2020



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

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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