



Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI)
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News release

Who will heal Zimbabwe? Public opinion points to steps toward nation-building

Though polarized and distrustful of political adversaries, Zimbabweans would welcome a wide range of specific actions to help heal the country in the wake of its disputed election, a new analysis from Afrobarometer suggests.

Public opinion survey data from 1999 through July 2018 document **Zimbabwe's deep divisions**, including:

- High levels of social and political distrust, especially among supporters of opposition political parties.
- A political divide deeply embedded in demographic structures (gender, urban vs. rural residence, age, education levels) as well as differences in preferred information sources and views of traditional leaders.
- An ever-widening Partisan Trust Gap that leaves Zimbabwe more polarized than any other African country surveyed by Afrobarometer.

But the data also affirm **popular support for steps by actors at all levels** – from the president to the opposition to civil society to religious leaders – **to move the country toward reconciliation**, including:

- Presidential action that allays fears that “Mnangagwa will govern the same as Mugabe” by reaching out to the opposition and inviting talented technocrats into an inclusive Cabinet.
- Toned-down rhetoric by an opposition focused on putting its divided house in order and leveraging its minority position in Parliament to push for meaningful reforms.
- A reversal of the trend toward militarization of political and administrative institutions.
- Effective devolution of powers and responsibilities to adequately resourced, politically autonomous provincial and metropolitan councils.
- Traditional authorities focused on their functions as custodians of customary law, rather than partisan mobilization.
- Engagement by strengthened independent commissions, a less partisan civil society channeling popular demands for reform, and religious leaders and educational institutions imparting messages of tolerance and unity with diversity.

Read Afrobarometer's thought- and action-provoking new analysis at www.afrobarometer.org.



Public attitude surveys

Afrobarometer, a pan-African, non-partisan research network, has conducted public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in Zimbabwe and other African countries since 1999. Afrobarometer employs face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

In 2018, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Afrobarometer's core partner for Southern Africa, commissioned two pre-election surveys in Zimbabwe. The Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI), Afrobarometer's national partner in Zimbabwe, conducted survey fieldwork (28 April-13 May 2018 and 25 June-6 July 2018). Afrobarometer provided technical support. Each survey interviewed 2,400 adult citizens, yielding country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

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