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News release

Moroccans support media's watchdog function but also endorse government limits on information, Afrobarometer survey shows

Most Moroccans want a media that helps them hold the government accountable, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

But a majority also believe that the government should be able to prevent the media from publishing things it disapproves of.

Moroccans see social media as having both positive and negative effects on society, helping create better-informed and more effective citizens but also making people more likely to believe false news. Despite their mixed feelings, Moroccans say unrestricted access to the Internet and social media should be protected.

The [2021 World Press Freedom Index](#) ranks Morocco's media among the least free in the world (136th out of 180 countries). Similarly, [Freedom House](#) (2021) rates Morocco only "partly free" in terms of Internet freedom.

Key findings

- More than three-fourths (78%) of Moroccans say the media should "constantly investigate and report on government mistakes and corruption" (Figure 1).
- But fewer than half (45%) insist on media freedom, while 55% endorse the government's right to prevent the publication of things it disapproves of (Figure 2).
- Among Moroccans who have heard of social media, majorities say it makes people more informed about current events (96%) and helps them have more impact on political processes (64%), but also makes them more likely to believe false news (85%) (Figure 3).
- A majority (57%) of Moroccans say unrestricted access to the Internet and social media should be protected (Figure 4).

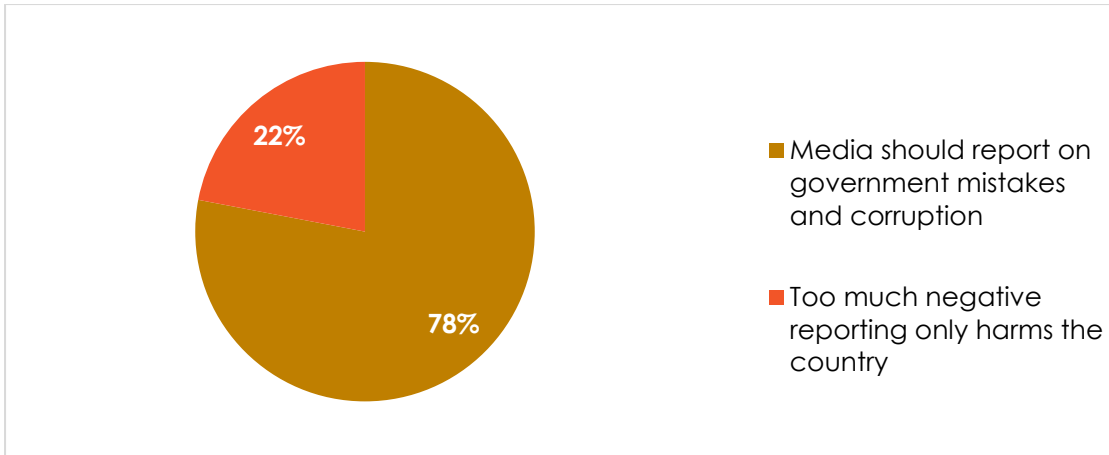
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on Africans' experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2021 cover 34 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Morocco, led by Global for Survey and Consulting (GSC), interviewed 1,200 adult Moroccans in February 2021. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous Afrobarometer surveys were conducted in Morocco in 2013, 2015, and 2018.

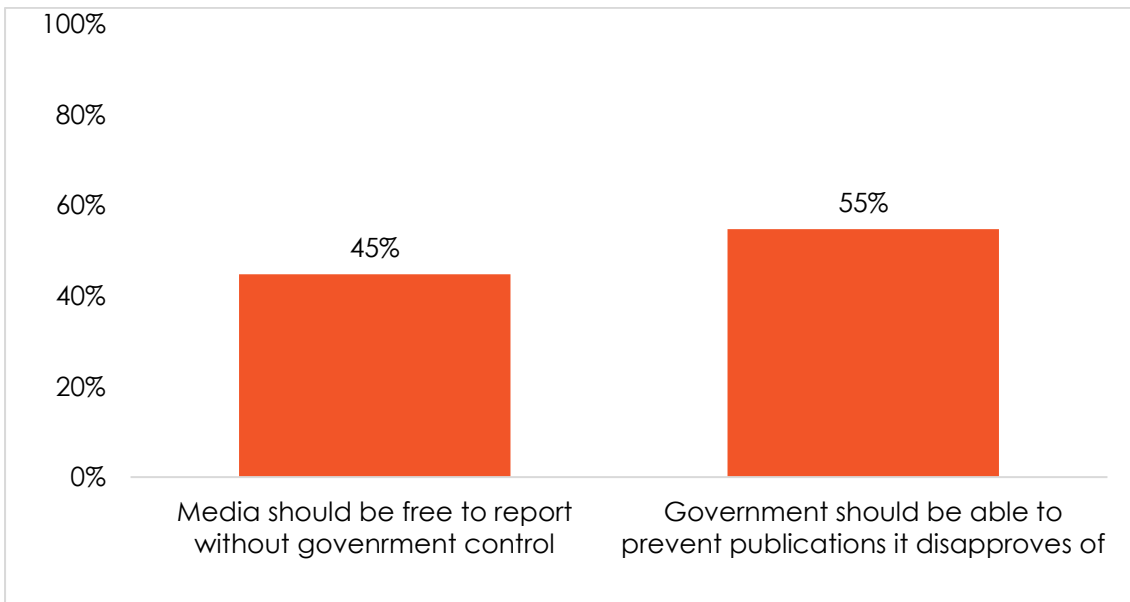
Charts

Figure 1: Media's watchdog role | Morocco | 2021



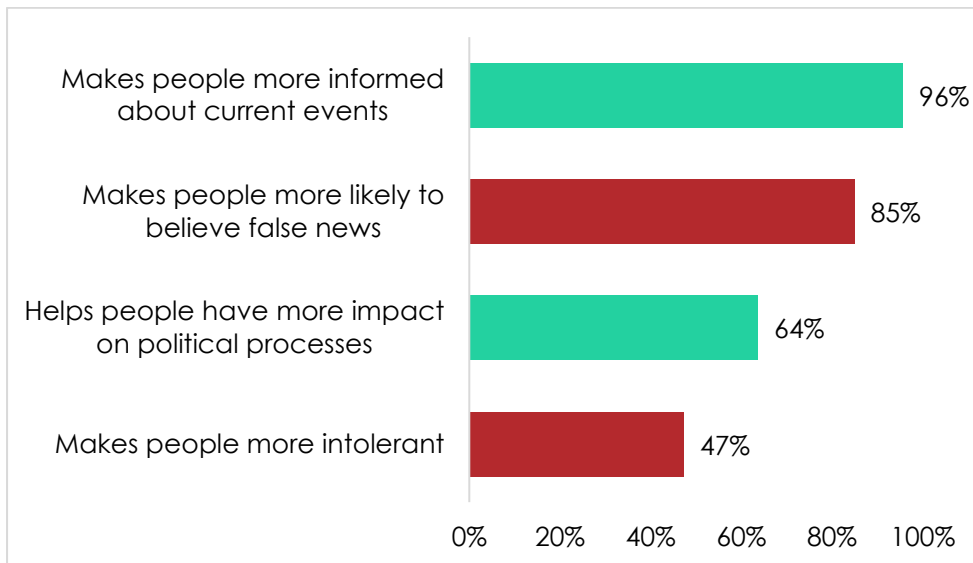
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: The news media should constantly investigate and report on government mistakes and corruption.
 Statement 2: Too much reporting on negative events, like government mistakes and corruption, only harms the country.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 2: Should the media be free? | Morocco | 2021



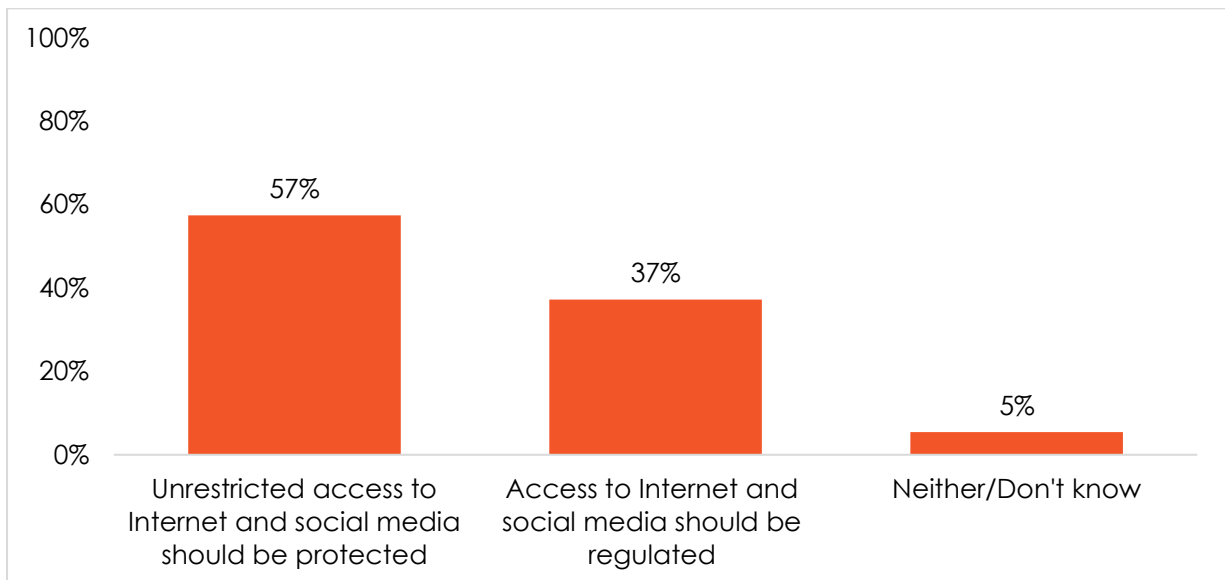
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your views?
 Statement 1: The media should have the right to publish any views and ideas without government control.
 Statement 2: The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it disapproves of.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 3: Effects of social media usage | Morocco | 2021



Respondents who said they had heard about social media were asked: Regardless of whether you personally use social media yourself, please tell me whether you agree or disagree that social media ... (% who "agree" or "strongly agree") (Respondents who had not heard of social media are excluded.)

Figure 4: Should access to social media and Internet be regulated? | Morocco | 2021



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

Statement 1: Unrestricted access to the Internet and social media helps people to be more informed and active citizens, and should be protected.

Statement 2: Information shared on the Internet and social media is dividing our country, so access should be regulated by government.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

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