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News release

Most Kenyans support multiparty elections, but fewer trust the electoral commission, Afrobarometer survey shows

More than three-fourths of Kenyans support regular, open, and honest elections as the best way to choose leaders, the most recent Afrobarometer survey shows.

And most citizens favour the existence of many political parties to ensure that voters have real choices in electing their leaders.

But fewer than half express trust in the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the body charged with managing the country's elections.

As Kenyans approach the August 2022 general elections, these perceptions are critical as they hold the key to the realization of a peaceful electoral process that has eluded the country for several electoral cycles.

Key findings

- More than three-fourths (78%) of Kenyans support regular, open, and honest elections as the best way to choose leaders (Figure 1).
 - A weaker majority (56%) believe that elections work well in enabling voters to remove leaders who don't do what the people want (Figure 2).
- A large majority (78%) say Kenya needs many political parties to ensure that voters have a real choice when electing their leaders (Figure 3).
- Fewer than one in four Kenyans (23%) say the 2017 election was "completely free and fair," while another 31% consider it "free and fair with minor problems." More than four in 10 (42%) say the election was either "free and fair with major problems" or "not free and fair" (Figure 4).
- More than half of Kenyans say they trust the IEBC "just a little" (23%) or "not at all" (31%) (Figure 5).

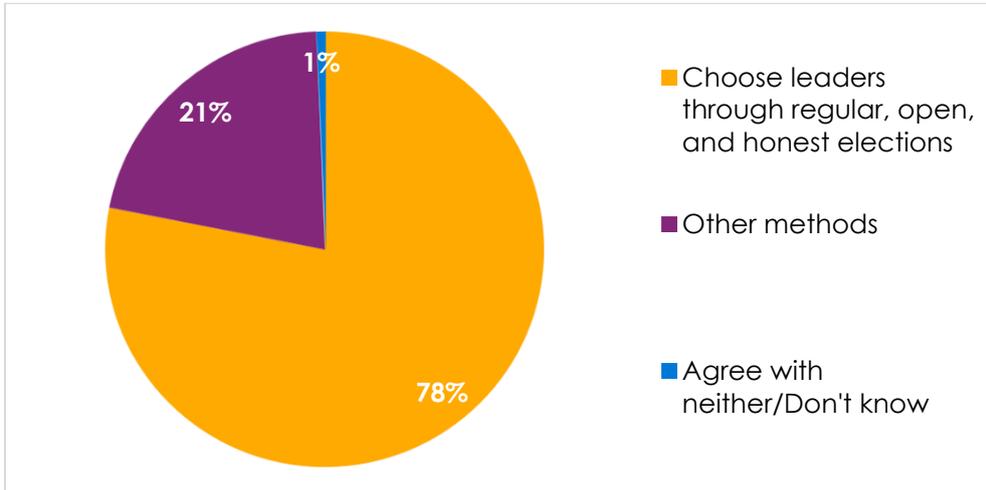
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2022) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Kenya, based at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, interviewed 2,400 adult Kenyans in November-December 2021. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Kenya in 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2016, and 2019.

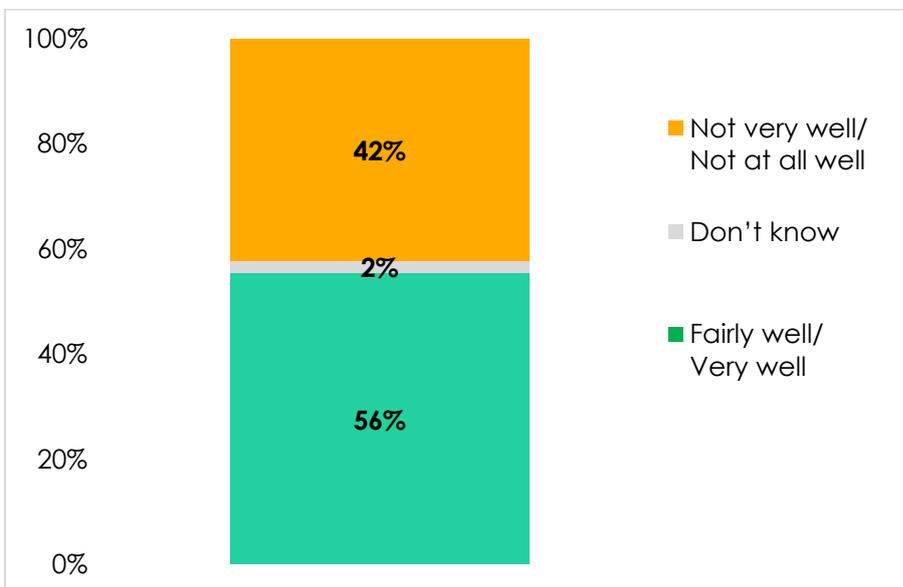
Charts

Figure 1: Preferred method for choosing leaders | Kenya | 2021



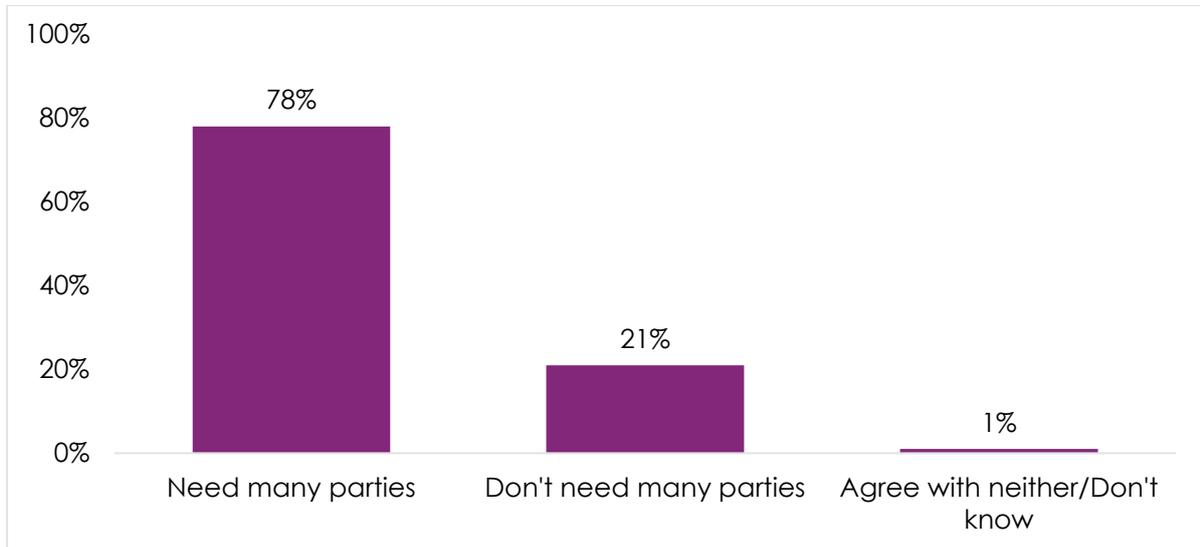
Respondents were asked : Which of the following statements is closest to your view ?
 Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.
 Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 2: How well do elections facilitate removal of leaders who don't do what the people want? | Kenya | 2021



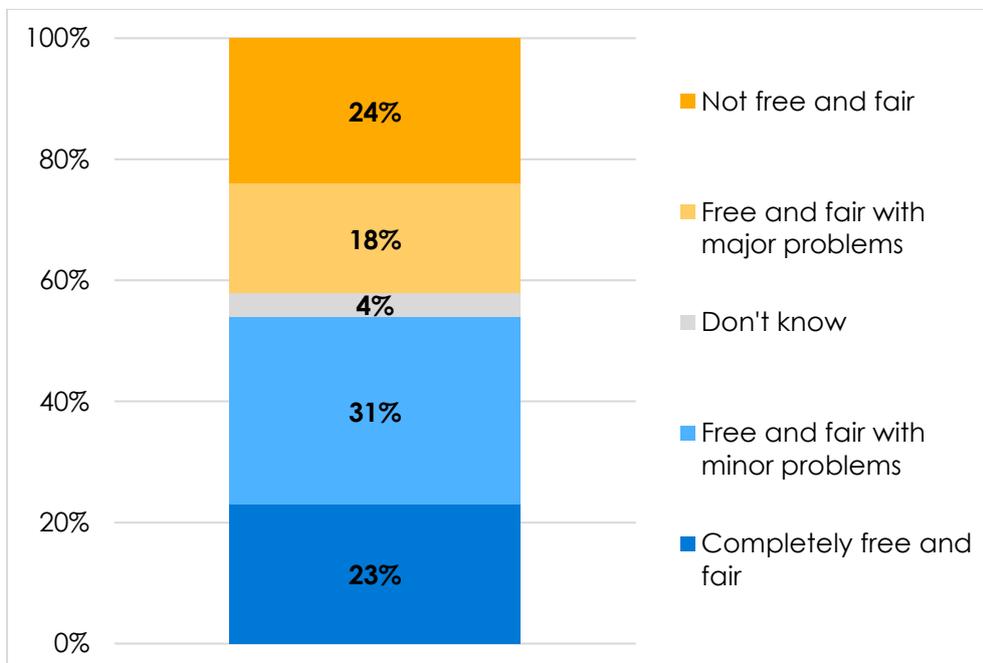
Respondents were asked: Thinking about how elections work in practice in this country, how well do elections enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want?

Figure 3: Does Kenya need many political parties? | Kenya | 2021



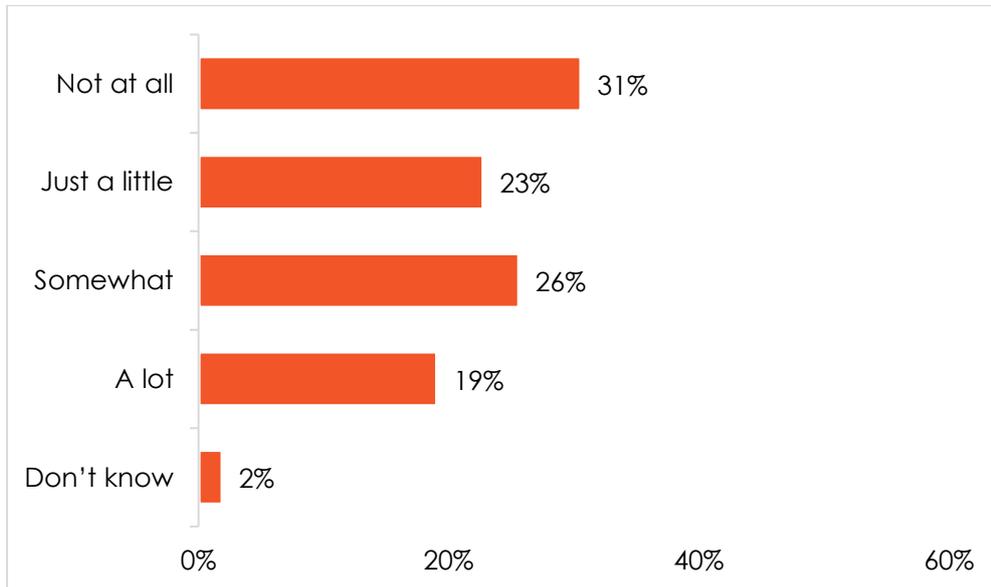
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in Kenya.
 Statement 2: Many political parties are needed to make sure that Kenyans have real choices in who governs them.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 4: 2017 elections: How free and fair? | Kenya | 2021



Respondents were asked: On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in 2017?

Figure 5: Citizens' trust in the electoral management body (IEBC) | Kenya | 2021



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission or IEBC?

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