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News release

Preference for democracy remains high in Nigeria, but dissatisfaction with its quality is growing

A majority of Nigerians prefer democracy to any other kind of government, but fully half describe the country as a democracy with major problems, a new Afrobarometer study shows.

Popular dissatisfaction with how Nigeria's democracy is working continues to rise.

Most Nigerians support elections as the best way to choose leaders but believe that elections don't work well to ensure that voters' views are reflected or to enable voters to remove leaders who don't do what the people want.

The country is preparing for general elections next year, its seventh since returning to democracy in 1999.

Key findings

- Seven in 10 Nigerians (70%) say democracy is preferable to any other kind of government (Figure 1).
- But almost two-thirds (63%) of citizens describe the country as "a democracy with major problems" (50%) or "not a democracy" (13%), a 22-percentage-point increase since 2020 (Figure 2).
- And more than three-fourths (77%) of Nigerians say they are not satisfied with the way democracy works in the country. Dissatisfaction has increased by 20 percentage points since 2017 (Figure 3).
- More than seven in 10 Nigerians (71%) support elections as the best way to choose leaders (Figure 4). But 27% say that since elections sometimes produce bad results, the country should adopt other methods for choosing the country's leaders (Figure 4).
- Most citizens believe that elections don't work well to ensure voters' views are reflected (70%) and don't enable voters to remove leaders who don't do what the people want (77%) (Figure 5).

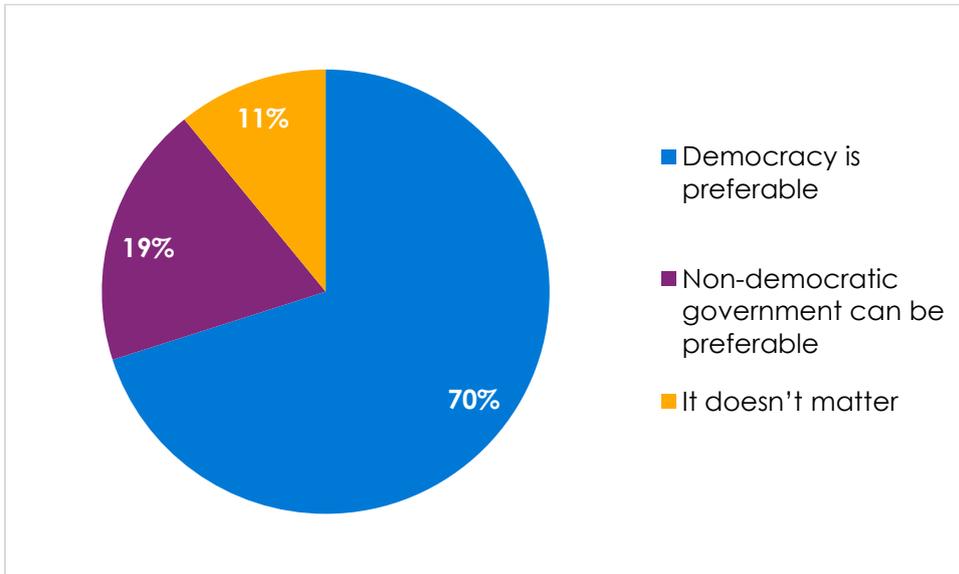
Afrobarometer surveys

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 Nigeria, led by NOIPolls, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,600 adult citizens in March 2022. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2.5 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Nigeria in 2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2020.

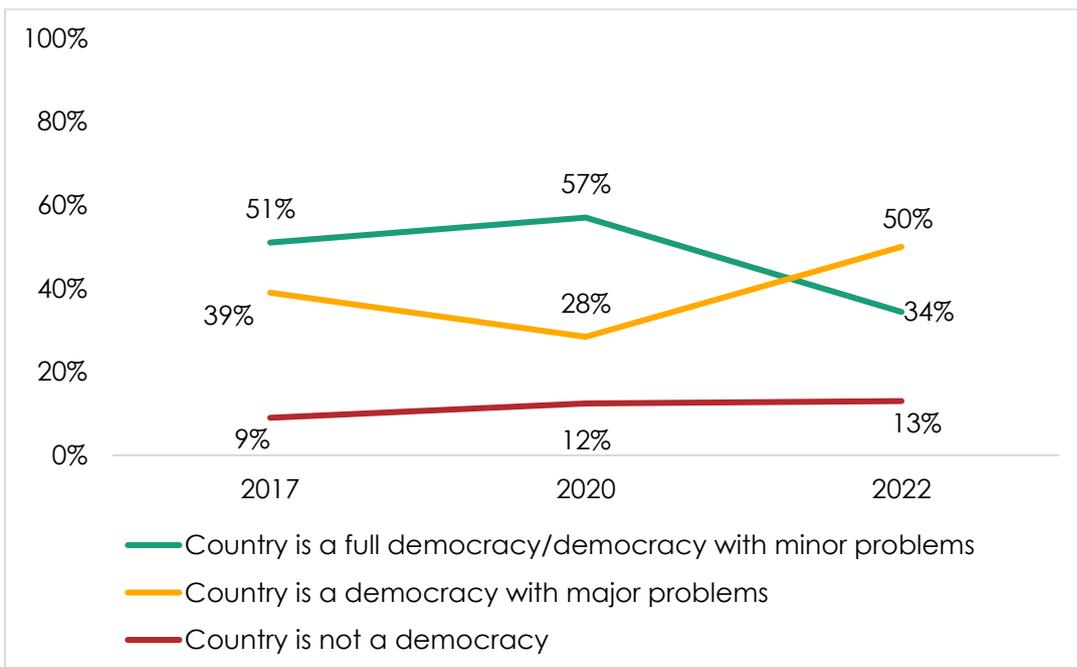
Charts

Figure 1: Support for democracy | Nigeria | 2022



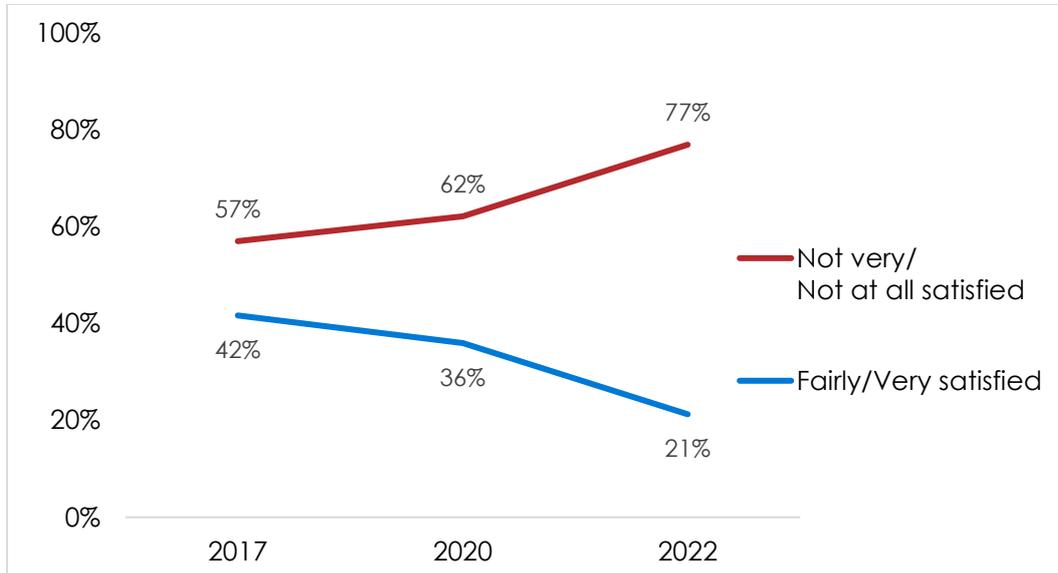
Respondents were asked: Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?
 Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.
 Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.
 Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.

Figure 2: Extent of democracy | Nigeria | 2017-2022



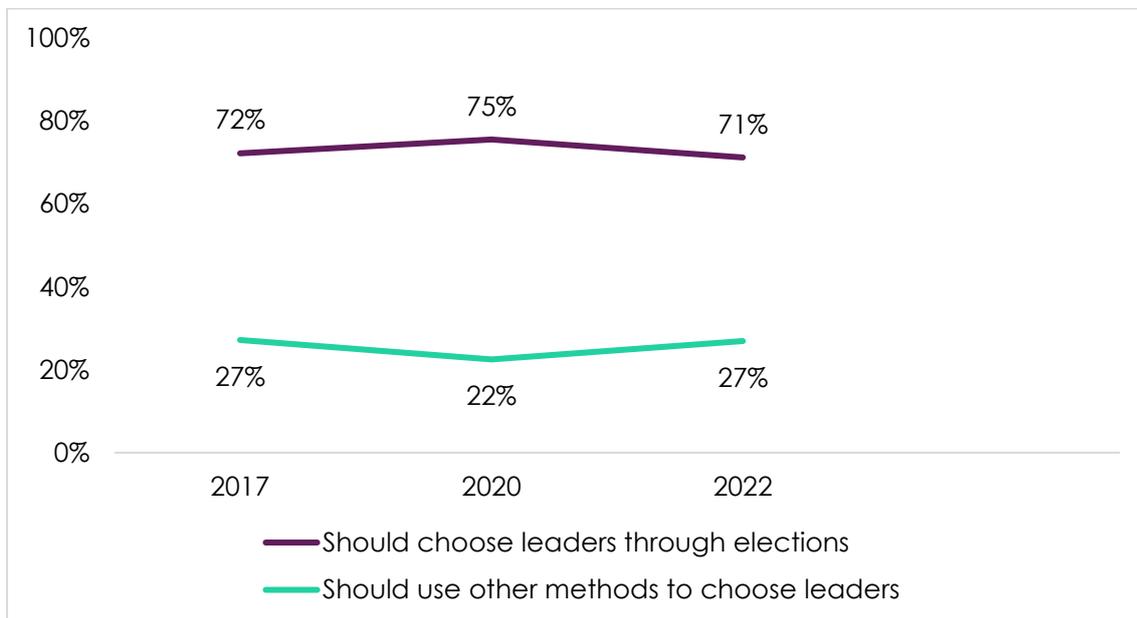
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Nigeria today?

Figure 3: Satisfaction with democracy | Nigeria | 2017-2022



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

Figure 4: Popular support for elections | Nigeria | 2022



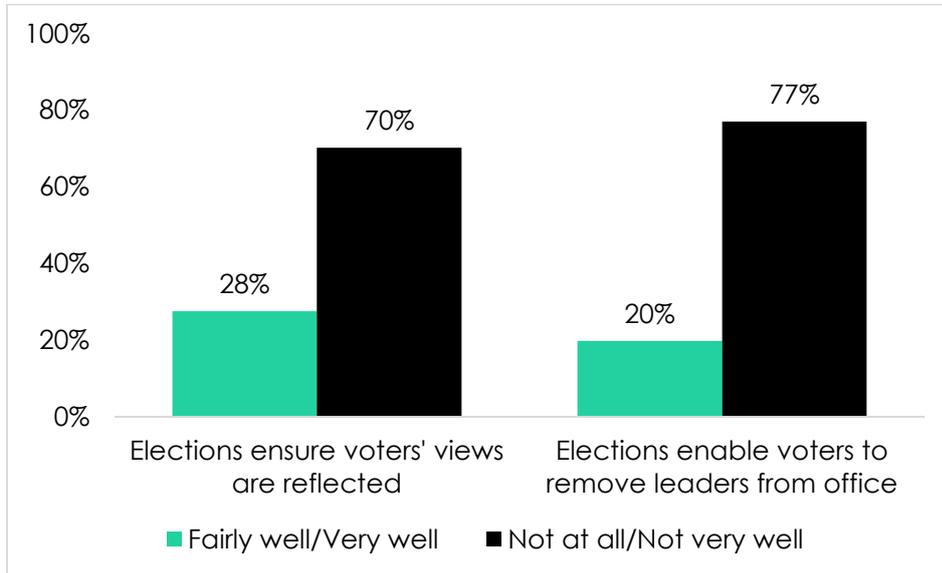
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

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 5: Efficacy of elections | Nigeria | 2022



Respondents were asked: Thinking about how elections work in practice in this country, how well do elections: Ensure that representatives to the National Assembly reflect the views of voters? Enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want?

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