



Freetown, Sierra Leone  
26 April 2023



## News release

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### **In Sierra Leone, perceived corruption in the president's office has declined, but so has trust**

In Sierra Leone, perceptions of corruption in the Presidency have decreased over the past decade, but so has popular trust, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

The president's office is one of seven key institutions and leadership groups in which widespread corruption, as measured by citizens' perceptions, has declined. These include judges/magistrates and local government councillors, which have seen double-digit improvements since 2012. The office of the president follows closely behind, with a 9-percentage-point decline in perceived widespread corruption.

However, trust in the office of the president has declined as well since 2012, with regional disparities in how the presidency is viewed.

#### **Key findings**

- A slim majority (53%) of Sierra Leoneans say they trust the president "somewhat" or "a lot" (Figure 1), a 17-percentage-point drop from 2012 (70%) (Figure 2).
  - Trust in the president varies widely by region. Most residents in the South (87%) and East (78%) – regions dominated by the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party – say they trust the president "somewhat" or "a lot," while fewer than half as many say the same in the opposition-dominated North (36%), North-West (32%), and West (28%).
- Only three in 10 citizens (31%) say "most" or "all" officials in the Presidency are corrupt, the best rating among elected and state officials that the survey asked about. Among key institutions and leaders, the police are most widely seen as corrupt: 71% of citizens say "most" or "all" police are involved in corruption. The police are followed by members of Parliament (49%), tax officials (45%), and business executives (45%) (Figure 3).
- Perceptions of widespread corruption have declined for seven of 10 institutions and leaders for which data over parts or all the past decade are available, including the president's office (Table 1).
  - The steepest improvements were recorded for judges and magistrates (a decline of 16 percentage points in perceptions of widespread corruption), religious leaders (-15 points), local government councillors (-14 points), traditional leaders (-10 points), and the president's office (-9 points).
  - However, perceptions of widespread corruption rose for tax officials (by 10 percentage points) and members of Parliament (+8 points), while ratings of police corruption remained near their 2012 level (+2 points).
- Assessments of widespread corruption in the president's office are considerably higher in the North-West (49%), West (42%), and North (38%) than in the Eastern (21%) and Southern (10%) regions. The poorest citizens (50%) are far more likely to say that "most" or "all" officials in the Presidency are corrupt than their better-off counterparts (22%-34%). (Figure 4).

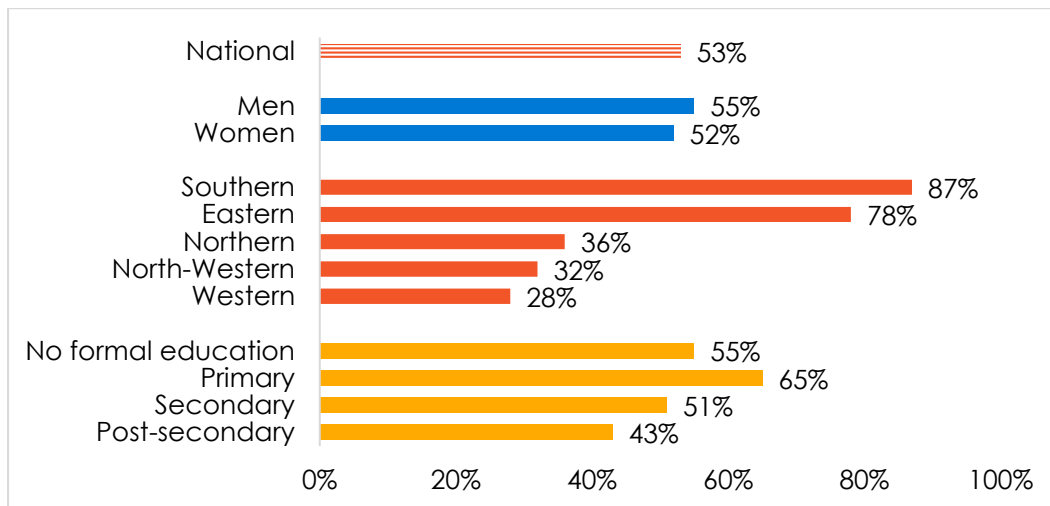
## Afrobarometer surveys

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. Eight rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 39 countries since 1999, and Round 9 surveys are being completed in early 2023. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Sierra Leone, led by the Institute for Governance Reform (IGR), interviewed 1,200 adult citizens of Sierra Leone between 13 June and 9 July 2022. 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 Sierra Leone in 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2020.

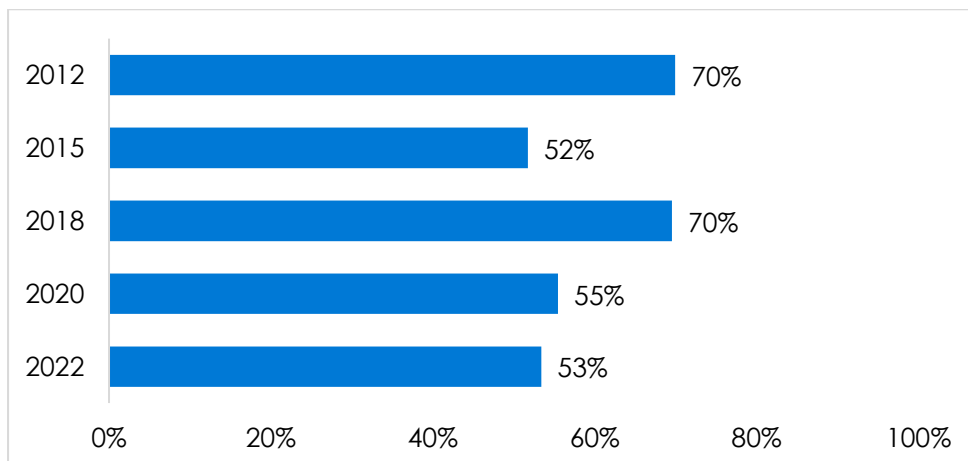
## Charts

**Figure 1: Trust in the president** | by demographic group | Sierra Leone | 2022



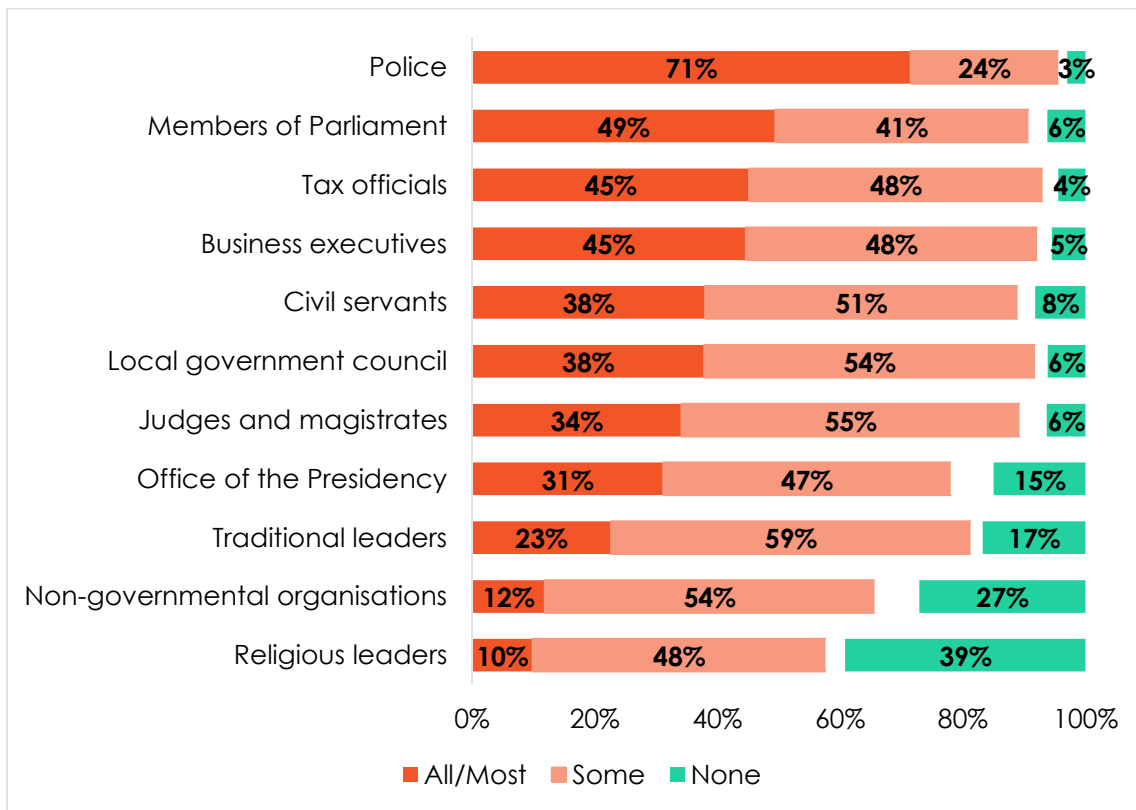
**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The president? (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")

**Figure 2: Trust the president 'somewhat' or 'a lot'** | Sierra Leone | 2012-2022



**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The president? (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")

**Figure 3: Who is corrupt?** | Sierra Leone | 2022



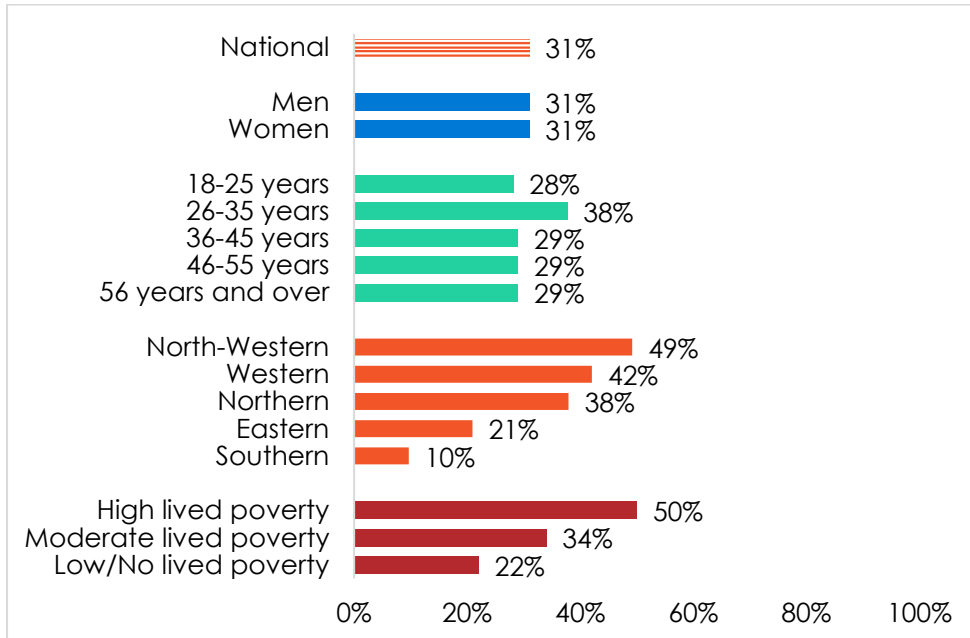
**Respondents were asked:** How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

**Table 1: Who is corrupt?** | Sierra Leone | 2012-2022

	2012	2015	2018	2020	2022	Change (pct. points)
<b>Police</b>	69%	59%	56%	61%	71%	+2
<b>Members of Parliament</b>	41%	50%	25%	40%	49%	+8
<b>Tax officials</b>	-	-	-	35%	45%	+10
<b>Business executives</b>	-	53%	39%	-	45%	-8
<b>Local government councillors</b>	52%	49%	22%	36%	38%	-14
<b>Judges and magistrates</b>	50%	47%	33%	37%	34%	-16
<b>Office of the Presidency</b>	40%	48%	24%	37%	31%	-9
<b>Traditional leaders</b>	-	35%	17%	23%	23%	-12
<b>Non-governmental organisations</b>	-	-	18%	-	12%	-6
<b>Religious leaders</b>	-	25%	10%	10%	10%	-15

**Respondents were asked:** How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say "most" or "all")

**Figure 4: Perception of widespread corruption in the president's office** | by demographic group | Sierra Leone | 2022



**Respondents were asked:** How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The president and officials in his office? (% who say "most" or "all")

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