



Freetown, Sierra Leone  
11 April 2023

## News release

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### Majority of Sierra Leoneans say government managed COVID-19 better than Ebola

Three-quarters of Sierra Leoneans say the government managed the COVID-19 pandemic better than the 2014 Ebola outbreak, a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

Overwhelming majorities of citizens say that the government did a good job of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and that the country's experience with the Ebola outbreak made it better prepared to handle COVID-19. The two-year-long Ebola crisis claimed at least 3,955 lives in Sierra Leone. COVID-19 has resulted in 125 deaths in the country.

However, very few households report having benefited from government COVID-19 relief assistance. Many also say that relief assistance was distributed unfairly and that resources intended for the COVID response were lost to corruption.

#### Key findings

- Three in four Sierra Leoneans (75%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that the government handled the COVID-19 pandemic better than the Ebola outbreak (Figure 1).
- Nine in 10 citizens (91%) say the government has managed the response to COVID-19 "fairly well" or "very well" (Figure 2). Only 8% say the government has done a poor job.
- Eight in 10 citizens (80%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that the country's experience with Ebola prepared it to better handle the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 3).
- Only 6% of citizens report that their household received COVID-19 relief assistance from the government, while 94% say they did not (Figure 4).
- Only three in 10 citizens (30%) say that COVID-19 relief was distributed "somewhat fairly" or "very fairly," while 62% say the distribution was unfair (Figure 5).
- More than four in 10 Sierra Leoneans (43%) also say that "some" or "a lot" of the resources intended for the COVID response have been lost to corruption. Only 15% think none of the resources were lost to graft (Figure 6).

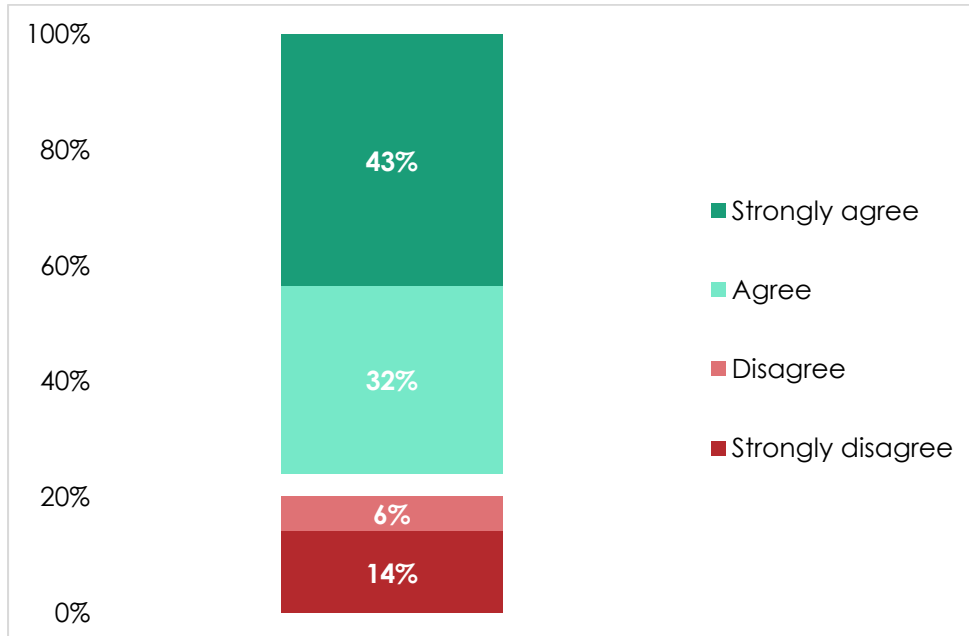
#### Afrobarometer surveys

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 (2021/2023) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct 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.

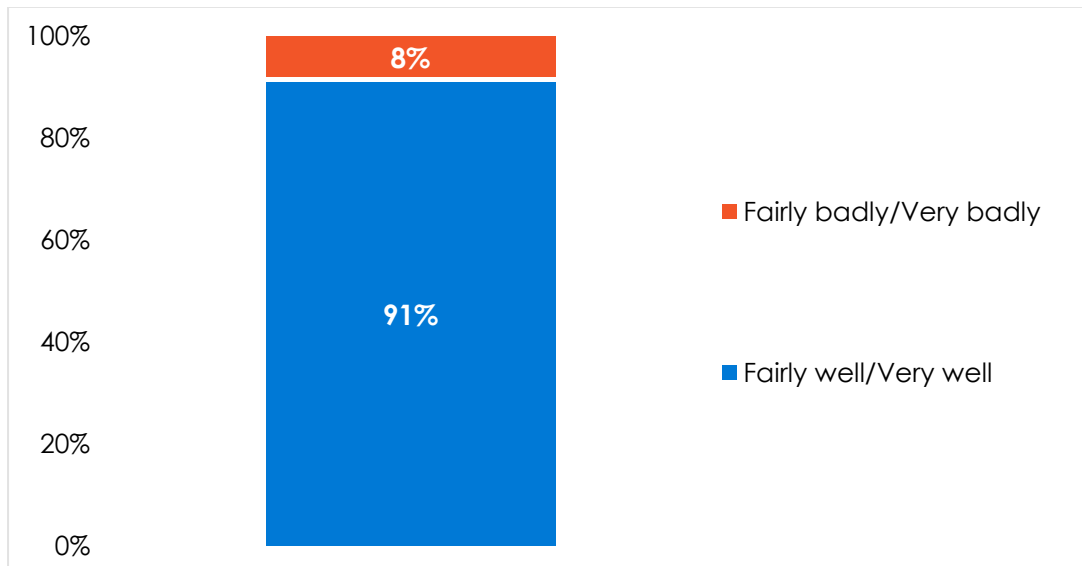
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Government handled the COVID-19 pandemic better than the Ebola outbreak** | Sierra Leone | 2022



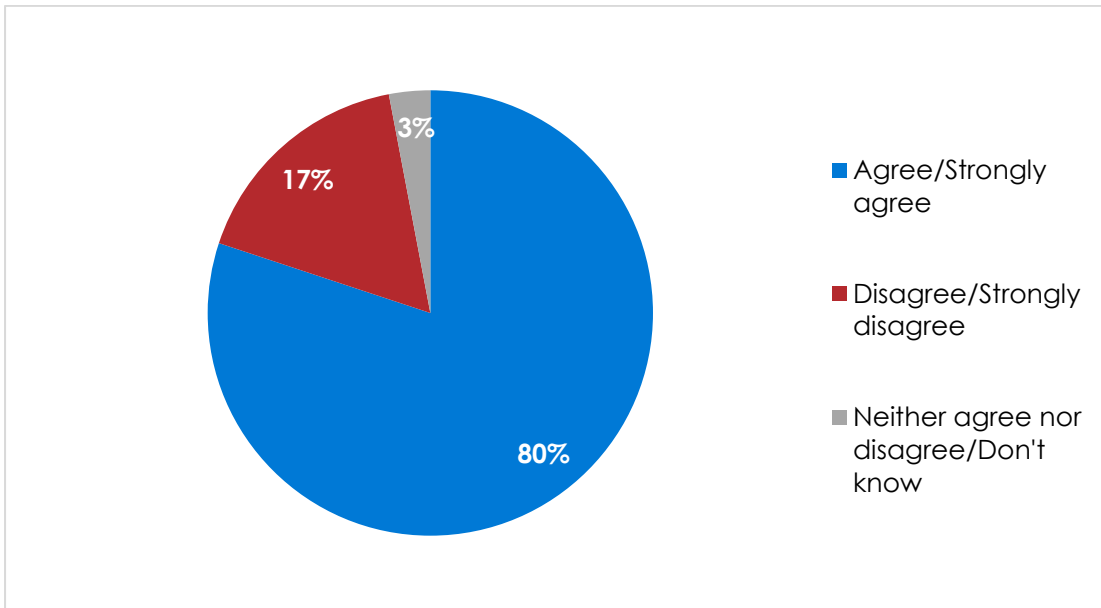
**Respondents were asked:** Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Government's handling of the COVID-19 outbreak has been better than how it handled the Ebola outbreak?

**Figure 2: Government response to COVID-19** | Sierra Leone | 2022



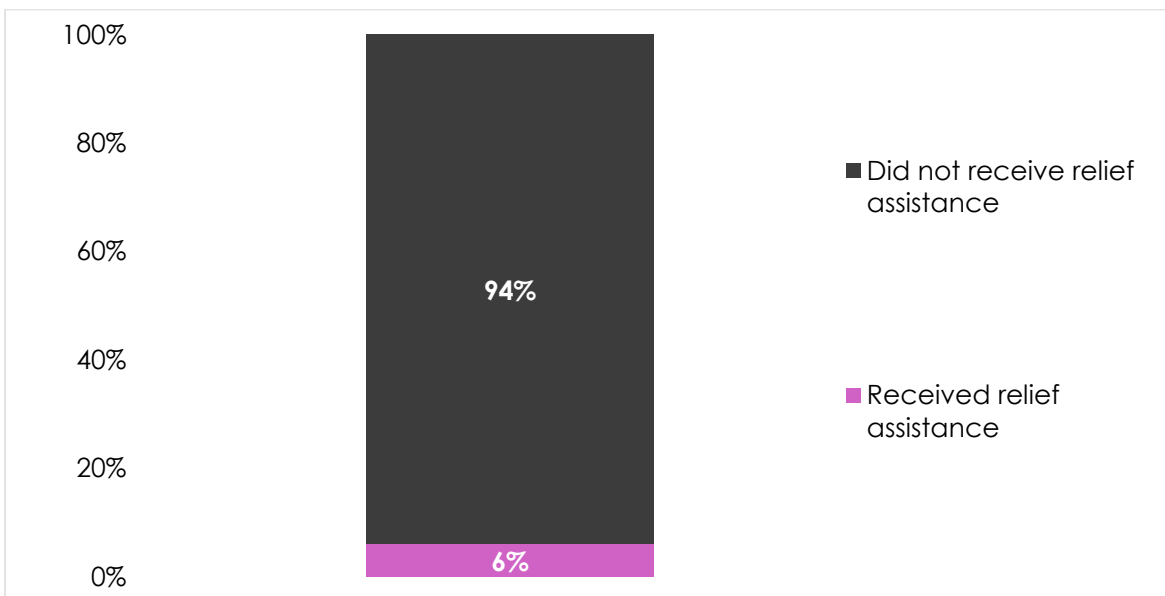
**Respondents were asked:** How well or badly would you say the current government has managed the response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Figure 3: Ebola outbreak prepared government to better respond to COVID-19**  
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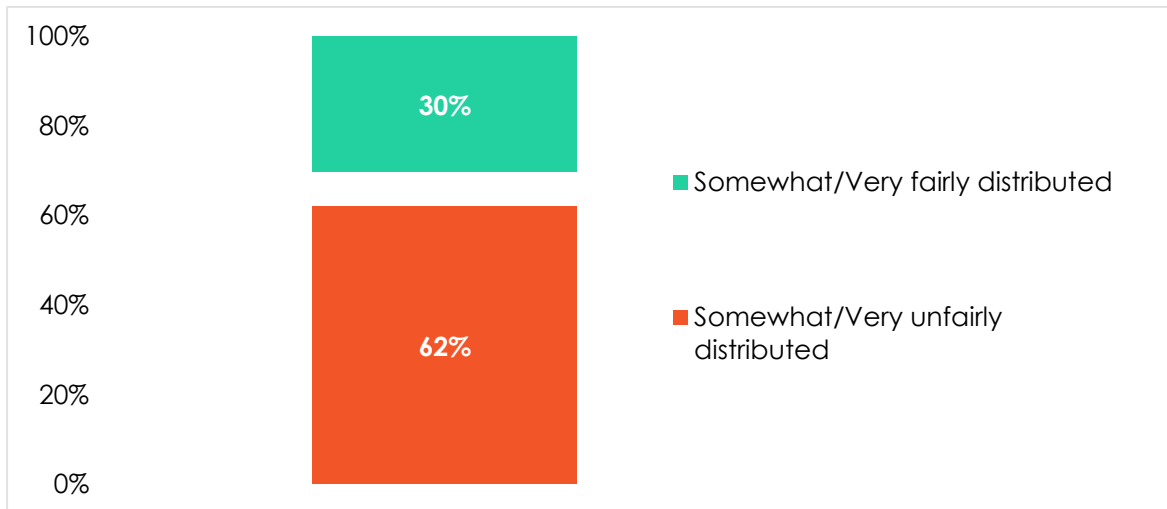
**Respondents were asked:** Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Sierra Leone's previous experience with Ebola virus made the country better prepared to handle a new pandemic like COVID-19?

**Figure 4: Access to COVID-19 relief assistance** | Sierra Leone | 2022



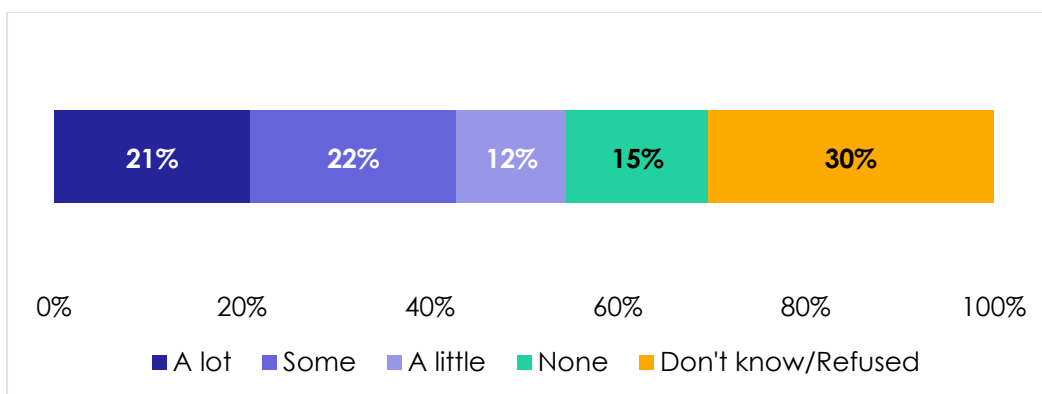
**Respondents were asked:** Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or your household received any assistance from government, like food, cash payments, relief from bill payments, or other assistance that you were not normally receiving before the pandemic?

**Figure 5: Was COVID-19 relief assistance distributed fairly?** | Sierra Leone | 2022



**Respondents were asked:** Do you think that the distribution of government support to people during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example through food packages or cash payments, has been fair or unfair?

**Figure 6: Perceived pandemic-related corruption** | Sierra Leone | 2022



**Respondents were asked:** Considering all of the funds and resources that were available to the government for combating and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, how much do you think was lost or stolen due to corruption?

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