



Monrovia, Liberia
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News release

Popular trust in National Elections Commission remains weak as Liberia prepares for general elections

Only one-third of Liberians say they trust the National Elections Commission (NEC) as the country approaches general elections in October, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

One of the NEC's tasks is to manage the country's transition from manual voter registration to the use of a biometric voter registration system – an opportunity for the NEC to build public confidence if it produces a credible voter roll.

While public trust in the NEC has declined by 10 percentage points since 2018, most Liberians think their last national election was free and fair, and most express confidence in the secrecy of their ballots.

And although only a minority of citizens think their elections ensure that their views are represented, a majority think they do enable voters to remove leaders who don't do what the people want.

Key findings

- Only one-third (34%) of Liberians say they trust the National Elections Commission "somewhat" or "a lot," a decline of 10 percentage points since 2018 (Figure 1).
- Six in 10 citizens say elections do not work well to ensure that members of the House of Representatives (61%) and senators (60%) reflect the views of voters. But a majority (55%) think elections do enable voters to remove leaders who don't do what the people want (Figure 2).
- More than three-fourths (78%) of Liberians say political parties that lose an election should cooperate with the government, while only 22% say the opposition should instead focus on hold the government accountable (Figure 3).
- Almost three-fourths (73%) of citizens think it is unlikely that powerful people can find out how they voted (Figure 4).
- An overwhelming majority (85%) of citizens say the 2017 elections were "completely free and fair" (59%) or "free and fair with minor problems" (26%) (Figure 5).

Afrobarometer surveys

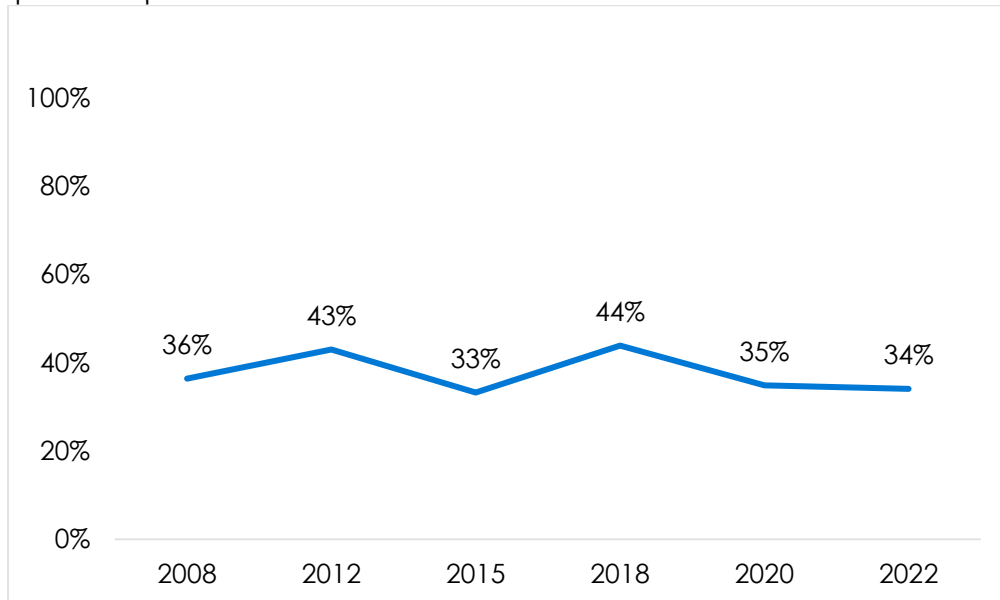
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Liberia, led by the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG), interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult citizens between 25 August and 2 September 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 Liberia in 2008, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2020.

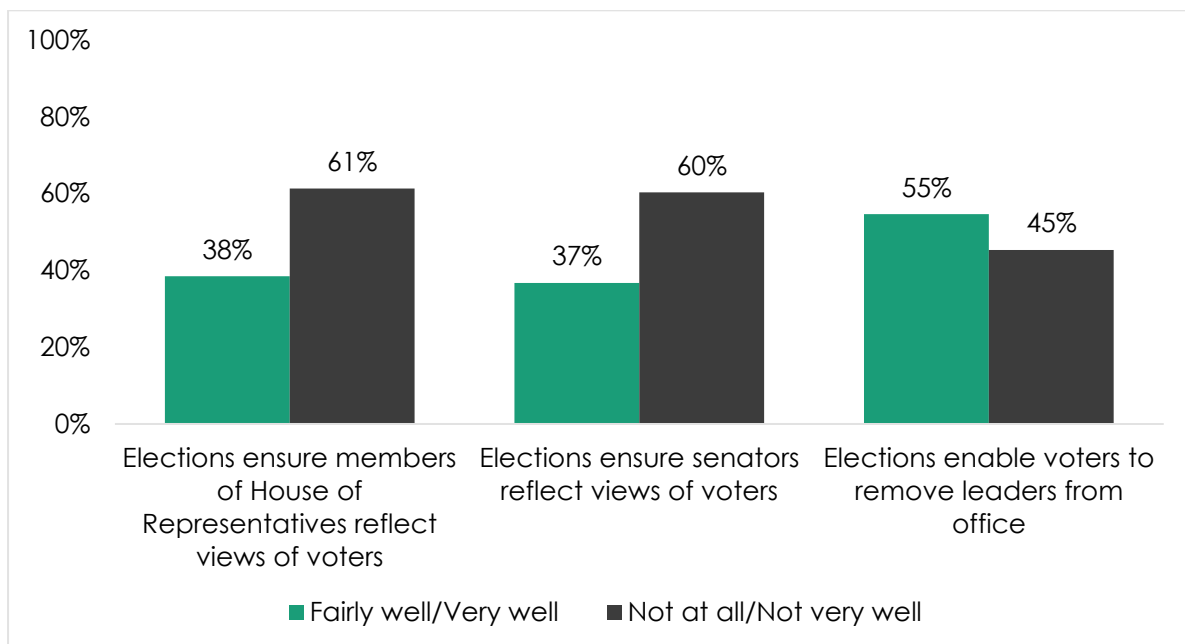
Charts

Figure 1: Trust the National Elections Commission somewhat/a lot
 | Liberia | 2008-2022



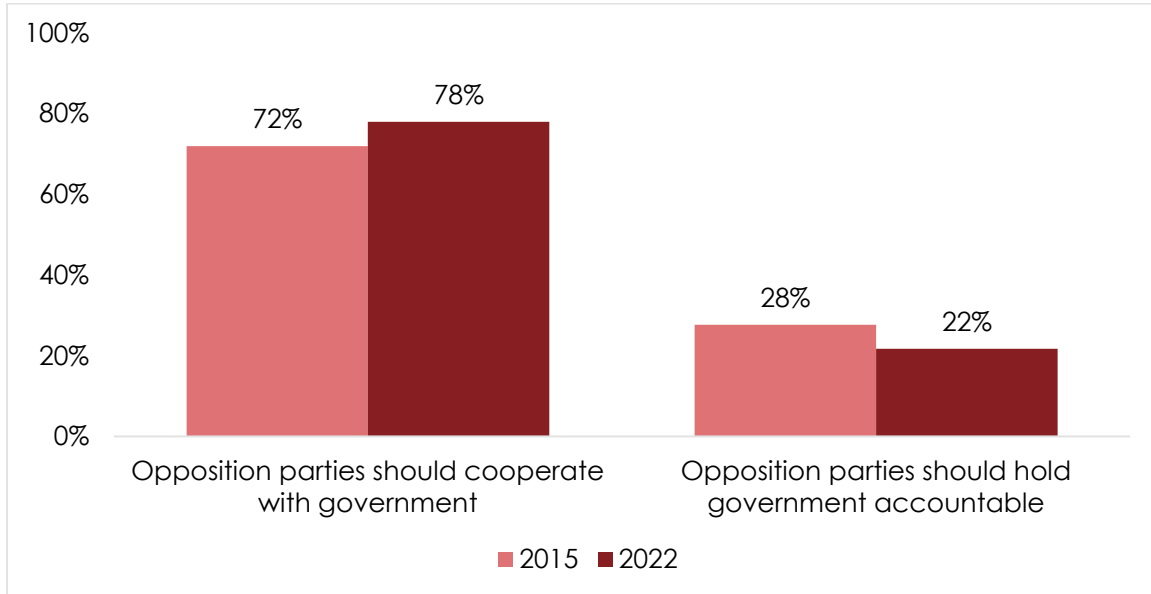
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The National Elections Commission? (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")

Figure 2: Efficacy of elections | Liberia | 2022



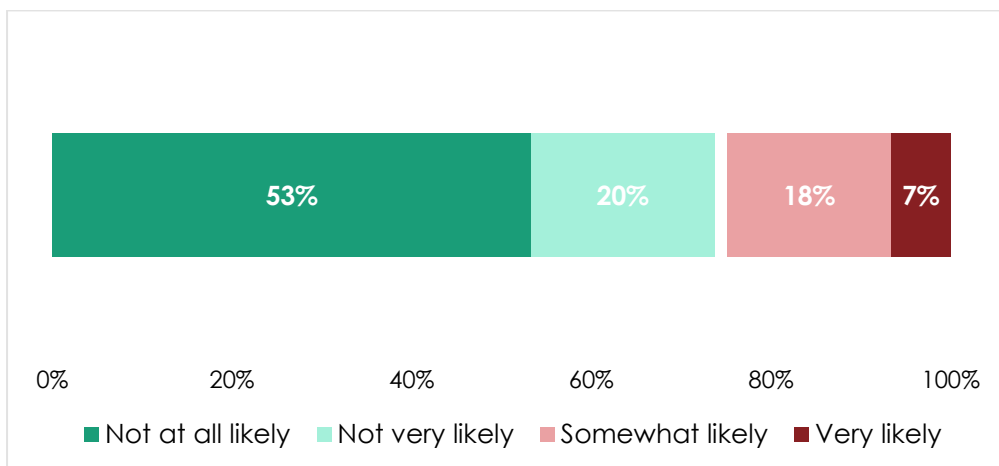
Respondents were asked: Thinking about how elections work in practice in this country, how well do elections: Ensure that members of the House of Representatives reflect the views of voters? Ensure that senators reflect the views of voters? Enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what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

Figure 3: Should opposition hold government accountable or cooperate with it?
 | Liberia | 2015-2022



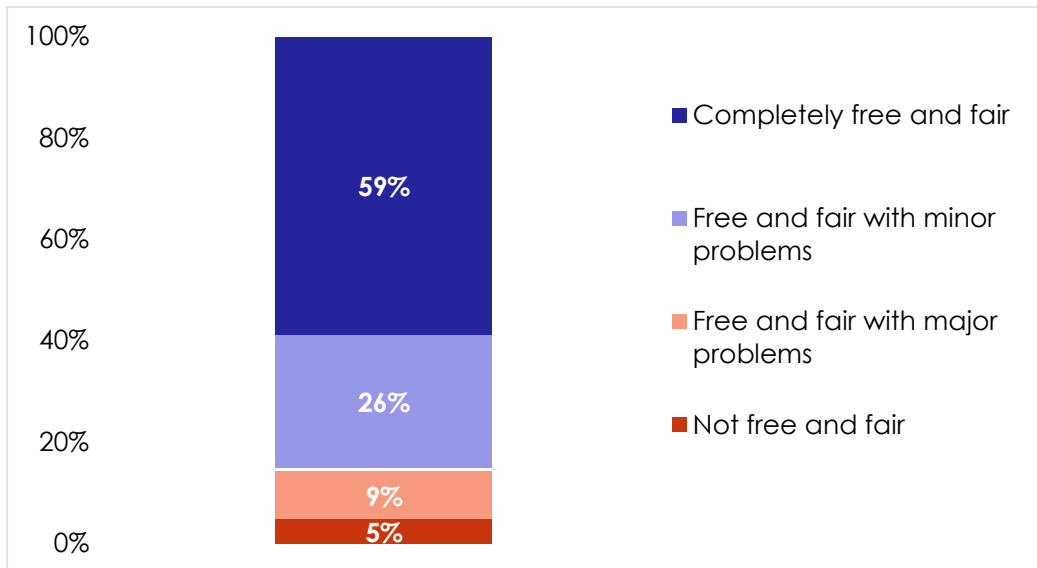
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: After losing an election, opposition parties should monitor and criticize the government in order to hold it accountable.
 Statement 2: Once an election is over, opposition parties and politicians should accept defeat and cooperate with government to help it develop the country.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 4: Can powerful people find out how you voted? | Liberia | 2022



Respondents were asked: How likely do you think it is that powerful people can find out how you voted, even though there is supposed to be a secret ballot in this country?

Figure 5: Freeness and fairness of 2017 election | Liberia | 2022



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

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