



Lusaka, Zambia
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News release

Most Zambians say they enjoy political freedoms – but have to be careful when they talk about politics

Overwhelming majorities of Zambians say they feel free to choose whom to vote for without pressure, to join political organisations of their choice, and to say what they think, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

But six in 10 citizens also say they have to be careful about what they say about politics.

Overall, most Zambians prefer a society where they are free to join any organisation, whether or not the government approves of it.

Key findings

- Large majorities of Zambians say they feel free to choose whom to vote for without pressure (97%), to join political organisations of their choice (88%), and to say what they think (83%) (Figure 1).
- But almost six in 10 Zambians (59%) say people “always” or “often” have to be careful about what they say about politics (Figure 2).
 - Urban residents (66%) and men (64%) are more likely than rural residents (54%) and women (54%) to say people have to be cautious when talking about politics (Figure 3).
 - Older citizens (46%) and those with primary education or less (52%) are less likely to feel constrained in political speech.
- More than six in 10 citizens (62%) prefer a society in which they are free to join any organisation, whether or not the government approves of it (Figure 4).

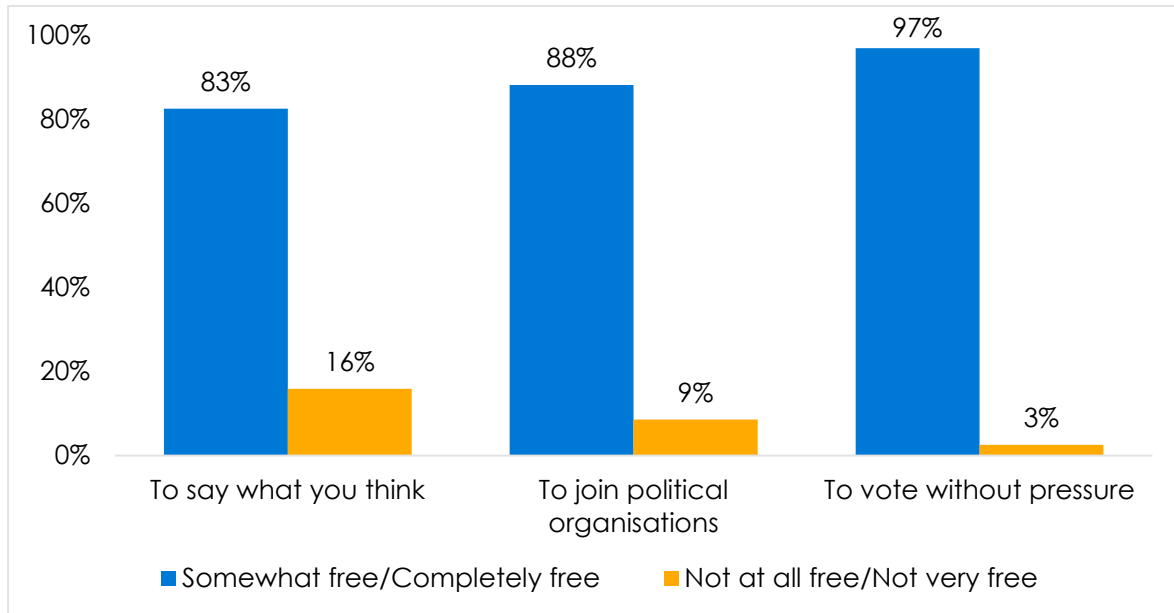
Afrobarometer surveys

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. Round 9 surveys are being completed in 2023. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Zambia, led by the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), a research wing of the University of Zambia, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 Zambian adults between 3 August and 7 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 have been conducted in Zambia in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2017, and 2020.

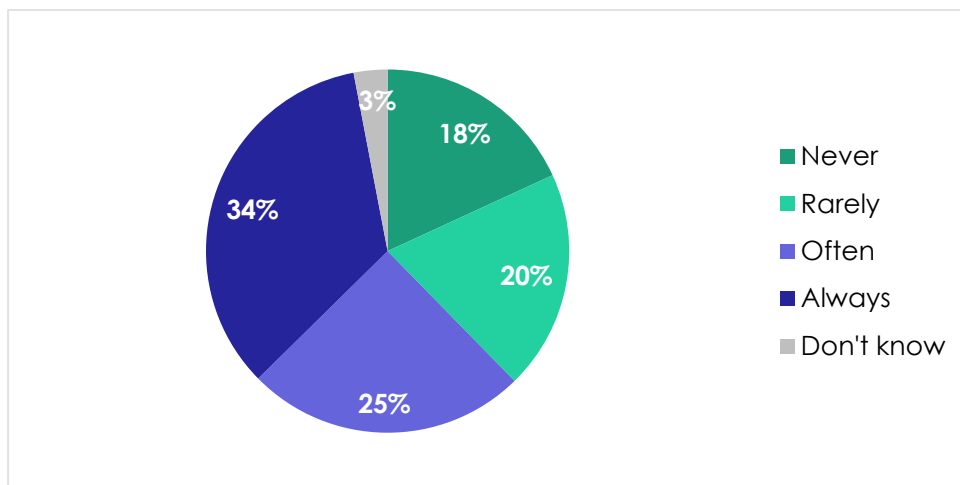
Charts

Figure 1: Political freedoms | Zambia | 2022



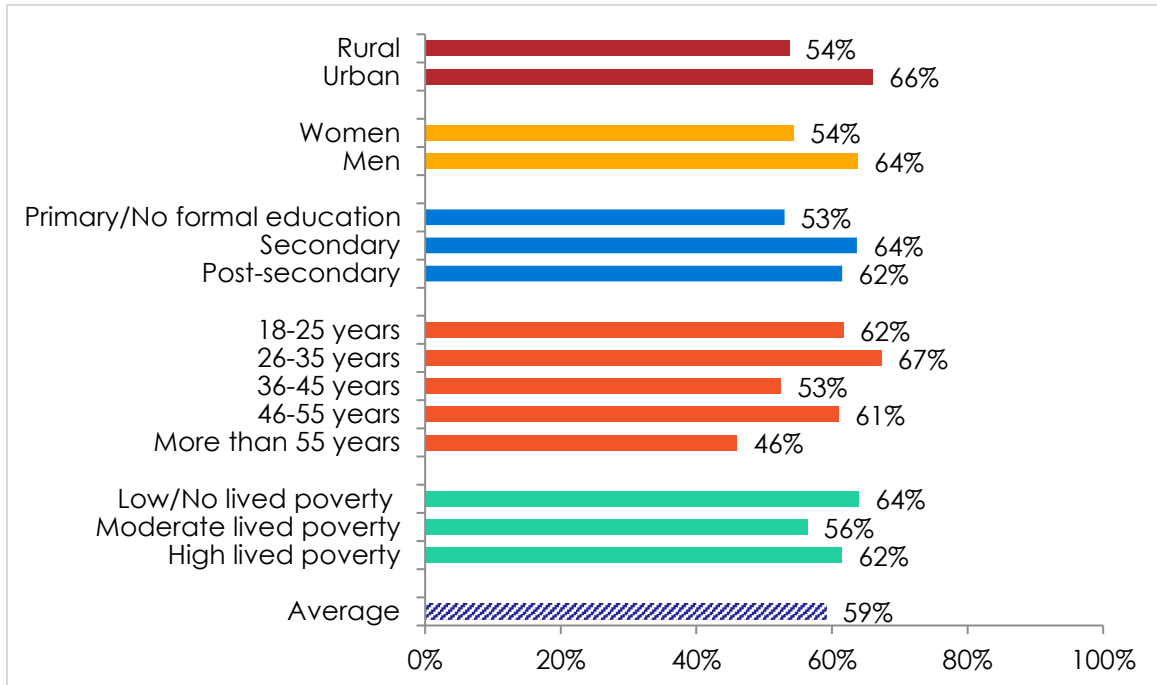
Respondents were asked: In this country, how free are you: To say what you think? To join any political organisation you want? To choose who to vote for without feeling pressured?

Figure 2: Do people have to be careful about what they say about politics? | Zambia | 2022



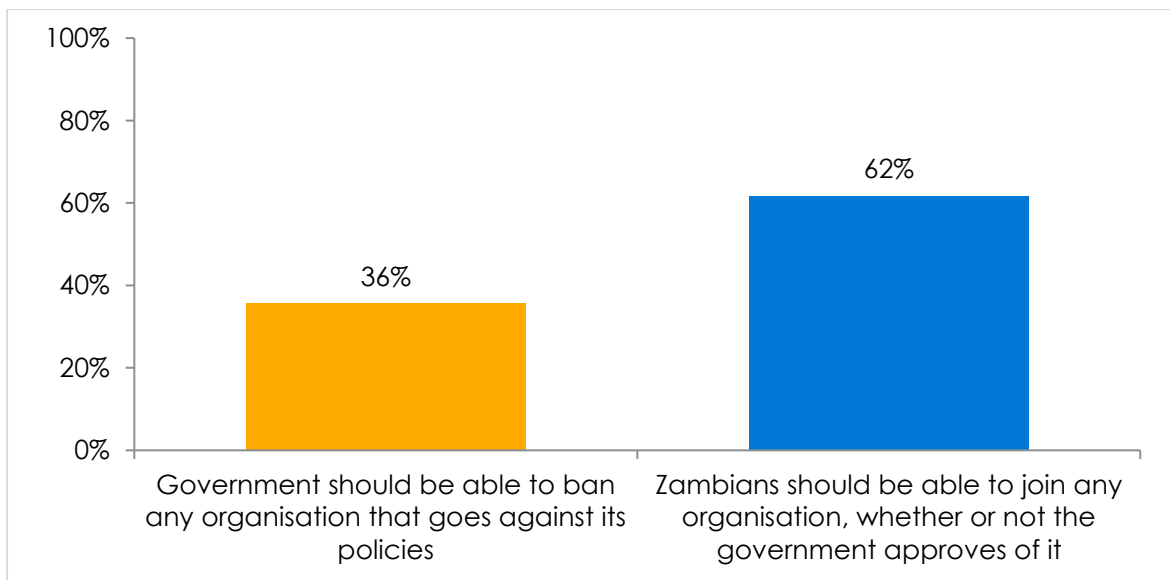
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often, in this country, do people have to be careful of what they say about politics?

Figure 3: People have to be careful about what they say about politics | by demographic group | Zambia | 2022



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often, in this country, do people have to be careful of what they say about politics?

Figure 4: Support for freedom of association | Zambia | 2022



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: The government should be able to ban any organisation that goes against its policies.
 Statement 2: We should be able to join any organisation, whether or not the government approves of it.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

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