



Harare, Zimbabwe
18 August 2023

News release

Zimbabweans favour peaceful election over free and fair election, new Afrobarometer survey indicates

A majority of Zimbabweans say they would rather have peaceful elections, even if they are not completely free and fair, than free and fair elections that are not peaceful, a recent Afrobarometer survey shows.

The preference for peaceful over free and fair elections is particularly widespread in Manicaland and Mashonaland East provinces and Harare, as well as among women and supporters of the ruling ZANU-PF party.

Zimbabweans will go to the polls on 23 August to elect a president, members of Parliament, and local government councillors amid accusations of a government crackdown on the opposition. Past elections have been marred by violence, including the deaths of six protesters following voting in 2018. Most observers have called for an election that is free and fair as well as peaceful.

Key findings

- More than half (53%) of Zimbabweans say they would prefer that their upcoming election be peaceful, even if not completely free and fair, rather than be free and fair but not peaceful. Only one-third of citizens (33%) would prioritise free and fair over peaceful (Figure 1).
- More women than men value a peaceful election more highly than a free and fair election (56% vs. 50%), while different age groups hold similar views (Figure 2).
- Rural (54%) and urban (52%) residents differ little in their prioritisation of peaceful over free and fair elections (Figure 3).
- Manicaland (70%), Mashonaland East (67%), and Harare (65%) record the greatest proportion of respondents who prefer a peaceful election, even if it's not entirely free and fair, while this view is least popular in Bulawayo (21%) (Figure 4).
- A majority of supporters of the ruling ZANU-PF (59%) value a peaceful election more highly than a free and fair election, while supporters of the opposition Citizens' Coalition for Change are split (46% for a peaceful election vs. 40% for a free and fair election) (Figure 5).

Afrobarometer surveys

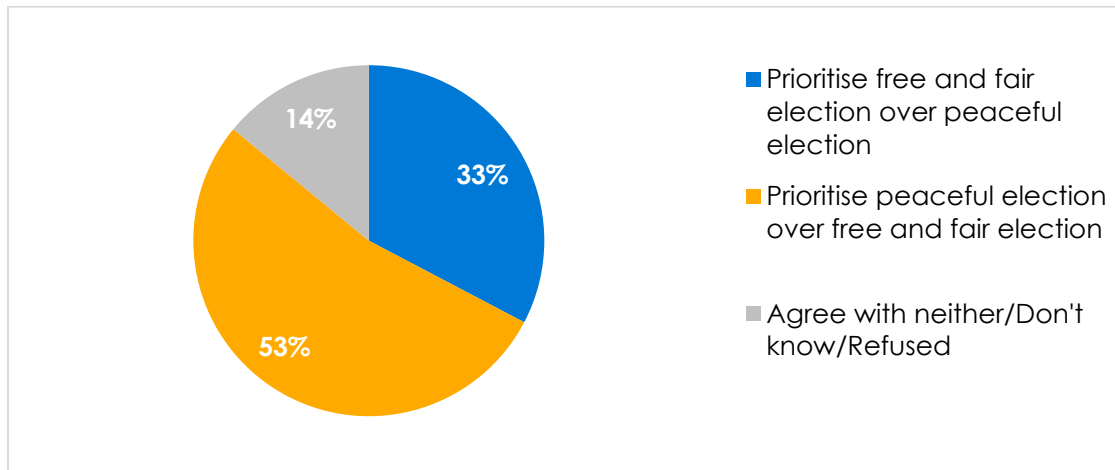
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) cover 39 countries. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

For a special pre-election survey, the Afrobarometer team in Harare, led by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI), interviewed a nationally representative sample of 2,400 adult

Zimbabweans between 29 April and 12 May 2023. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Zimbabwe in 1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2021, and 2022.

Charts

Figure 1: Peaceful election vs. free and fair election | Zimbabwe | 2023



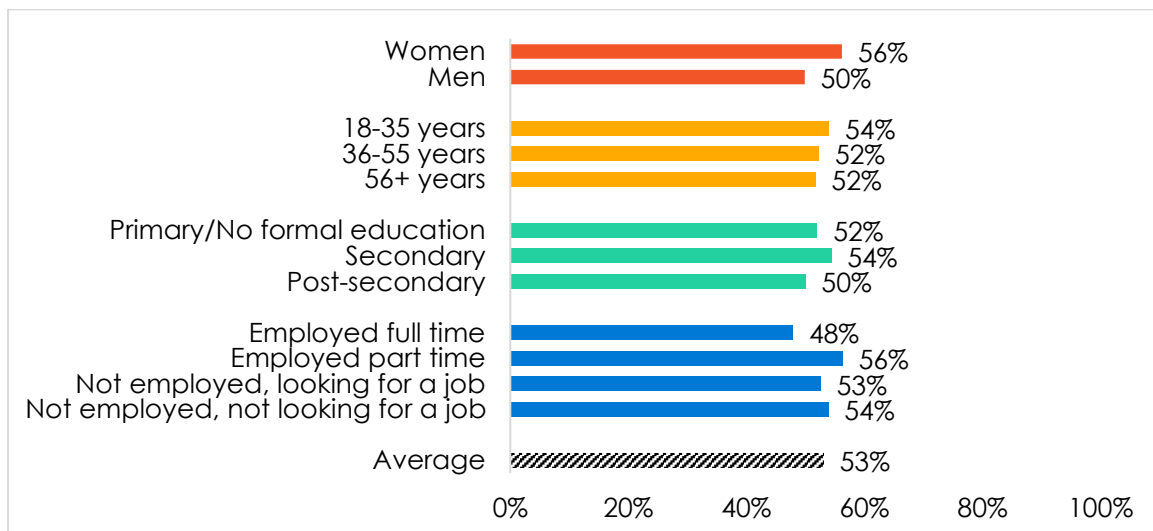
Respondents were asked: Thinking about the upcoming elections, which of the following is closest to your own view?

Statement 1: I would prefer that the election is free and fair, even if it is not entirely peaceful.

Statement 2: I would prefer that the election is entirely peaceful, even if it is not completely free and fair.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 2: Prioritise peaceful election over free and fair election | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2023



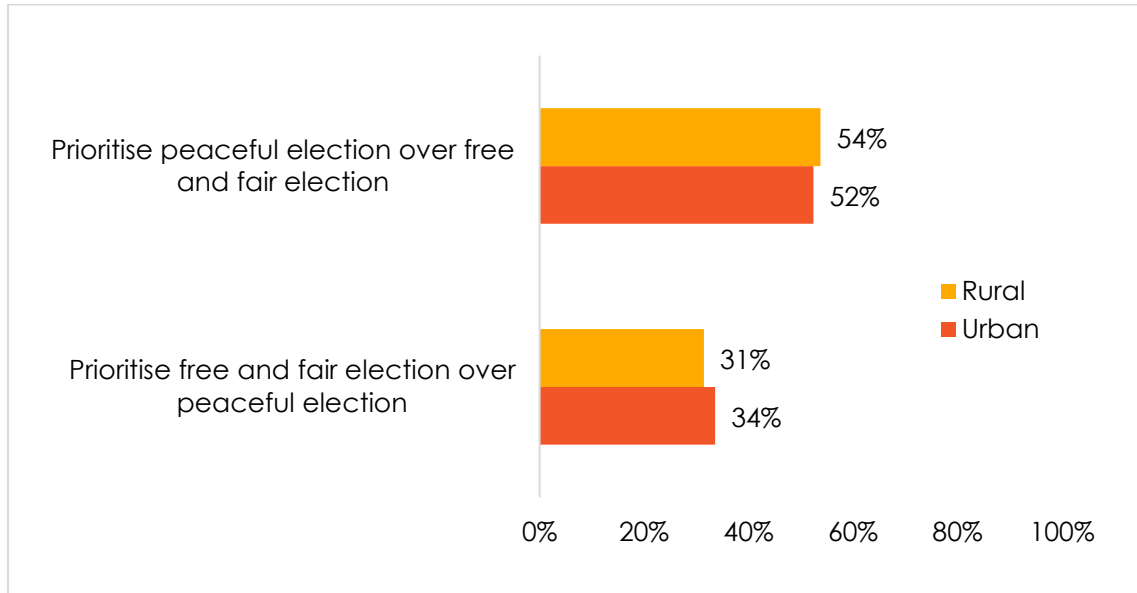
Respondents were asked: Thinking about the upcoming elections, which of the following is closest to your own view. Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.

Statement 1: I would prefer that the election is free and fair, even if it is not entirely peaceful.

Statement 2: I would prefer that the election is entirely peaceful, even if it is not completely free and fair.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with Statement 2)

Figure 3: Peaceful election vs. free and fair election | by urban-rural location
 | Zimbabwe | 2023



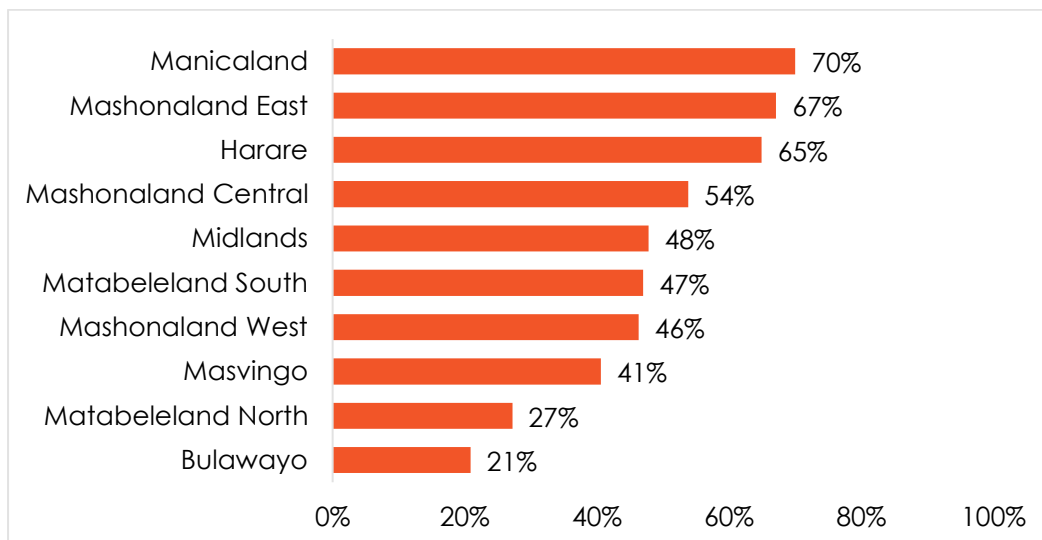
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(% who “agree” or “strongly agree” with each statement)

Figure 4: Prioritise peaceful election over free and fair election | by province
 | Zimbabwe | 2023



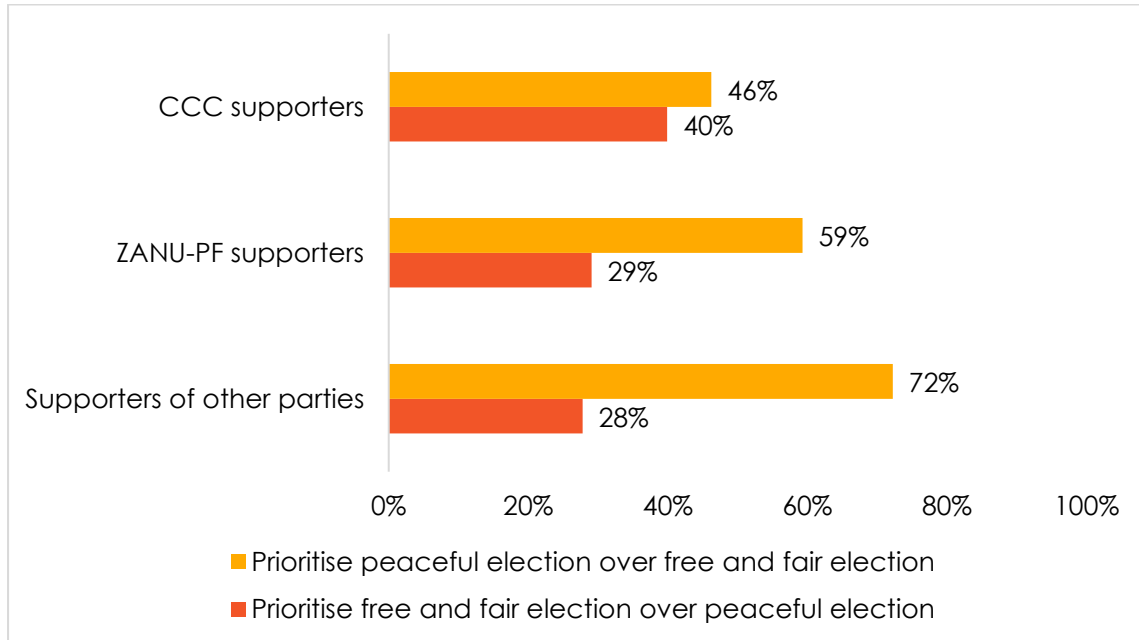
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Statement 2: I would prefer that the election is entirely peaceful, even if it is not completely free and fair.

(% who “agree” or “strongly agree” with Statement 2)

Figure 5: Peaceful election vs. free and fair election | by political party affiliation
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Respondents were asked: Thinking about the upcoming elections, which of the following is closest to your own view.

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Statement 2: I would prefer that the election is entirely peaceful, even if it is not completely free and fair.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

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