



Monrovia, Liberia  
5 October 2023

## News release

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### **Popular trust in National Elections Commission remains weak, but majority of Liberians trust voter power**

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.

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 the power of their vote to affect the country's future.

### **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 that elections in general (not regarding any particular election) do enable voters to remove elected officials 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 holding 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).

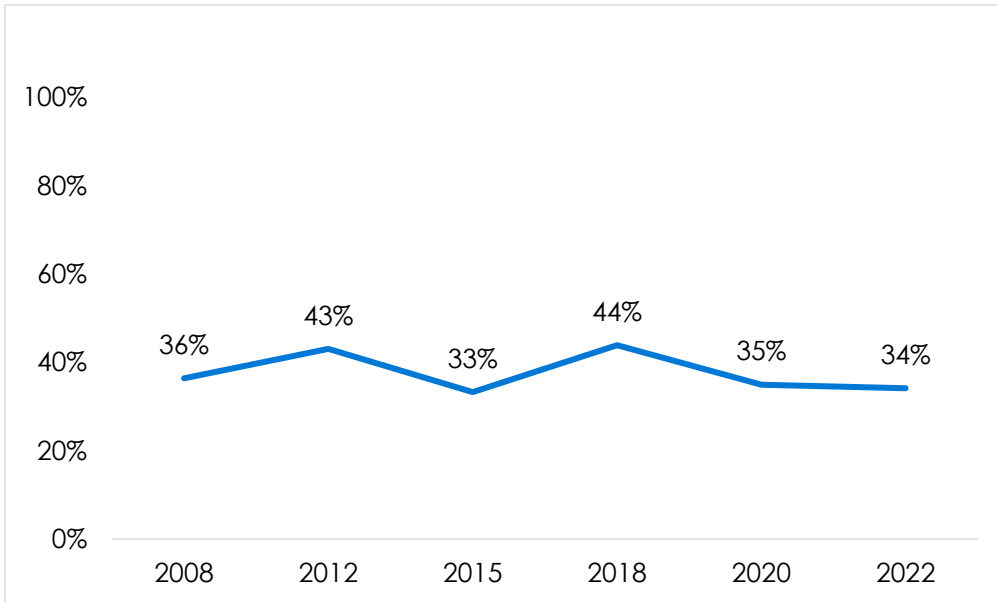
### **Afrobarometer surveys**

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

The Afrobarometer team in Liberia, led by the Center for Democratic Governance, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 adult Liberians between 15 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 were conducted in Liberia in 2008, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2020.

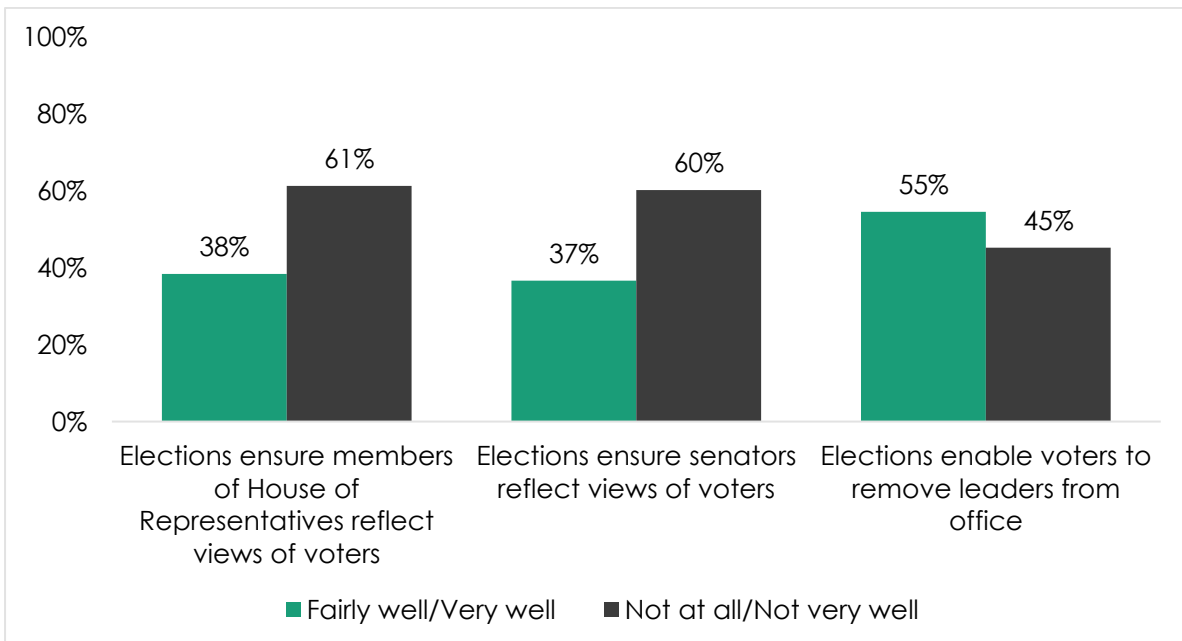
**Charts**

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



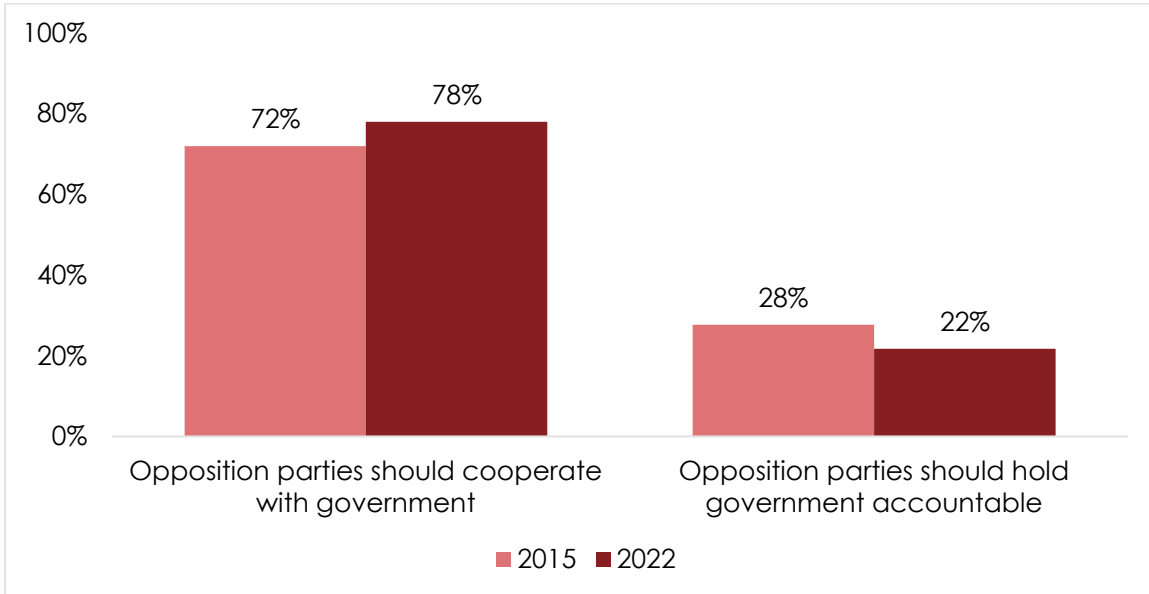
**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The National Elections Commission? (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")

**Figure 2: Efficacy of elections | Liberia | 2022**



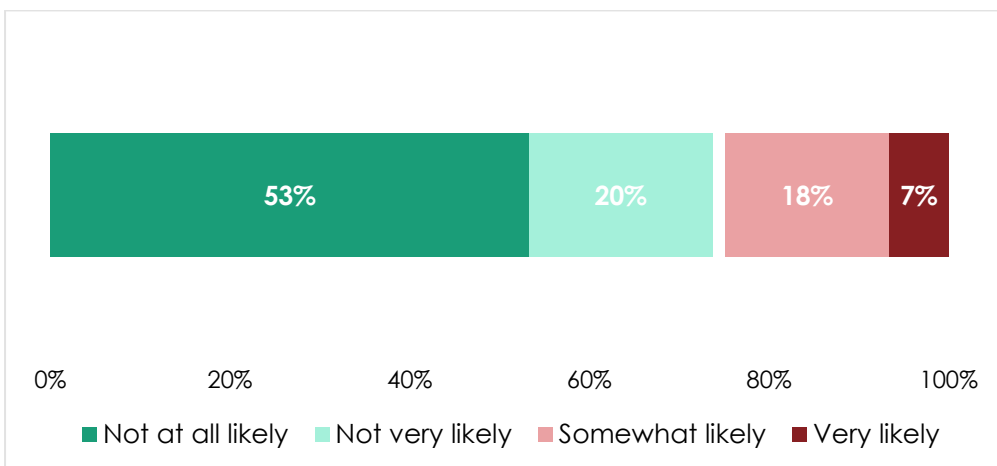
**Respondents were asked:** Thinking about how elections work in practice in this country, how well do elections: Ensure that members of the House of Representatives reflect the views of voters? Ensure that senators reflect the views of voters? Enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do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

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



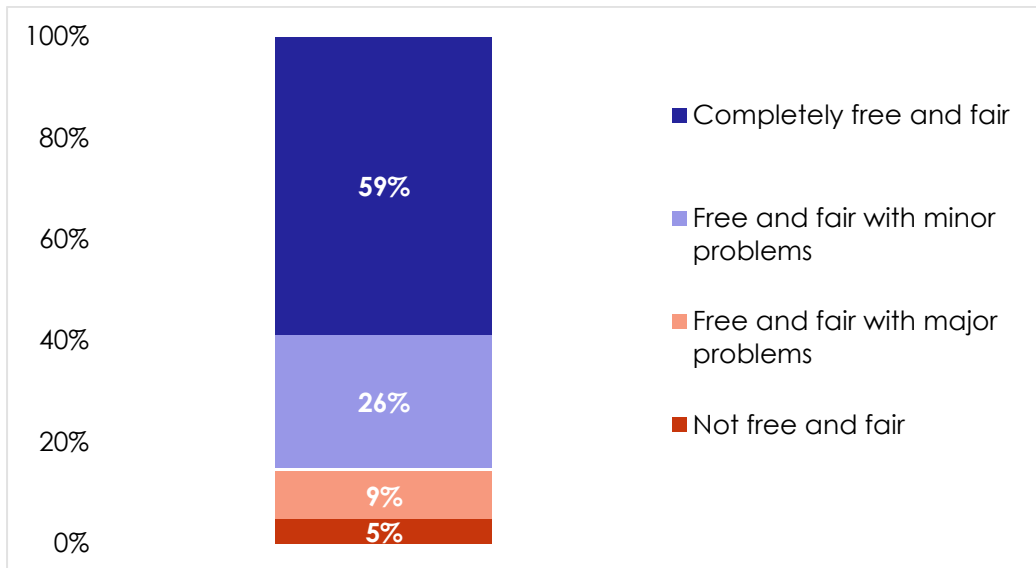
**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?  
 Statement 1: After losing an election, opposition parties should monitor and criticize the government in order to hold it accountable.  
 Statement 2: Once an election is over, opposition parties and politicians 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?*

**For more information, please contact:**

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