



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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News release

Ugandans show strong commitment to democracy but are increasingly dissatisfied with the way their democracy is working

Uganda ranks high among African countries in commitment to democracy, but a declining share of its citizens think they are getting the democracy they want, according to recent surveys by Afrobarometer.

As in most of the 37 countries surveyed in 2021/2022, Ugandans' commitment to democracy (or "demand for democracy") far outstrips the perception of a full "supply of democracy" – a measure of satisfaction that has been on a declining trend since 2015.

Ugandans show an interesting demand and supply trajectory, with perceived supply of democracy dropping while demand for democracy follows a cyclical pattern, rising and falling between election years.

While support for multiparty competition has been increasing in Uganda, so has the view that multiparty competition leads to political violence.

Key findings

- On average across 37 countries, the proportion of Africans who are committed to democracy – who prefer democracy and reject autocratic alternatives – has dropped by 8 percentage points over the past decade, from 47% in 2011/2013 to 39% in 2021/2022. Similarly, the share who perceive a full supply of democracy – who think their country is a democracy and are satisfied with the way their democracy is working – has dropped by 10 percentage points, from 39% to 29% (Figure 1).
- In Uganda, 62% of citizens express a commitment to democracy, about the same level as in 2012. But the share of Ugandans who perceive a full supply of democracy has declined to 34%.
- While there is great variation across countries in commitment to democracy, Uganda shows an interesting trajectory, with perceived supply of democracy constantly dropping while commitment to democracy shows a cyclical trend, rising and falling, particularly between general election cycles (Figure 2).
- Like most Africans, Ugandans show strong support for democratic norms such as elections as the best way to choose leaders (83%) (Figure 3) and multiparty competition (79%) (Figure 4). But fewer citizens think their last election was free and fair (55%), and three-fourths (74%) say that multiparty competition "often" or "always" leads to violent conflict.
- Between 2000 and 2005, Uganda looked like a supply-led regime, but since public opinion swung in favour of a return to multiparty elections after 2005, the country has had a more demand-led look, where demand consistently surpasses supply (Figure 5).

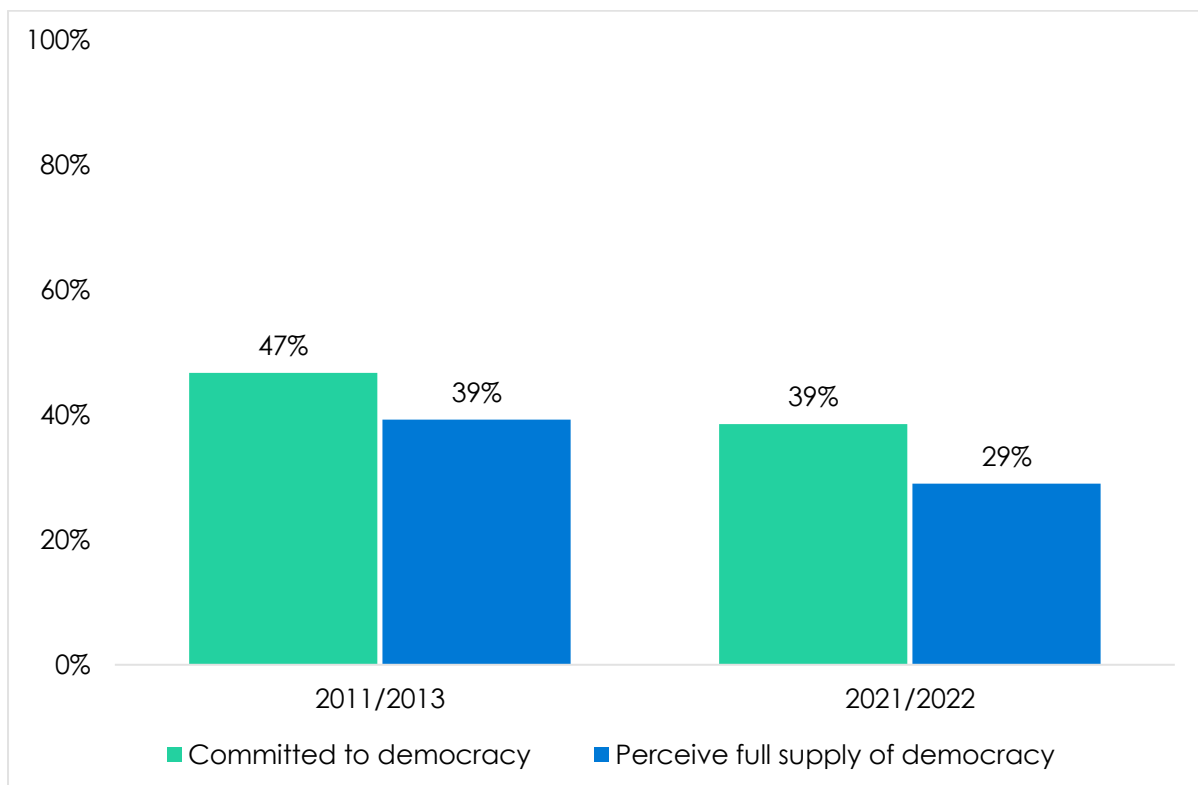
Afrobarometer surveys

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. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

With financial support from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Uganda, the Afrobarometer team in Uganda, led by Hatchile Consult Ltd., interviewed 2,400 adult Ugandans between 7 and 25 January 2022. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Uganda is one of 37 countries surveyed in 2021/2022 as part of Afrobarometer's Round 9 surveys.

Charts

Figure 1: Committed to democracy and perceive full supply of democracy
 | 33 countries* | 2011-2022

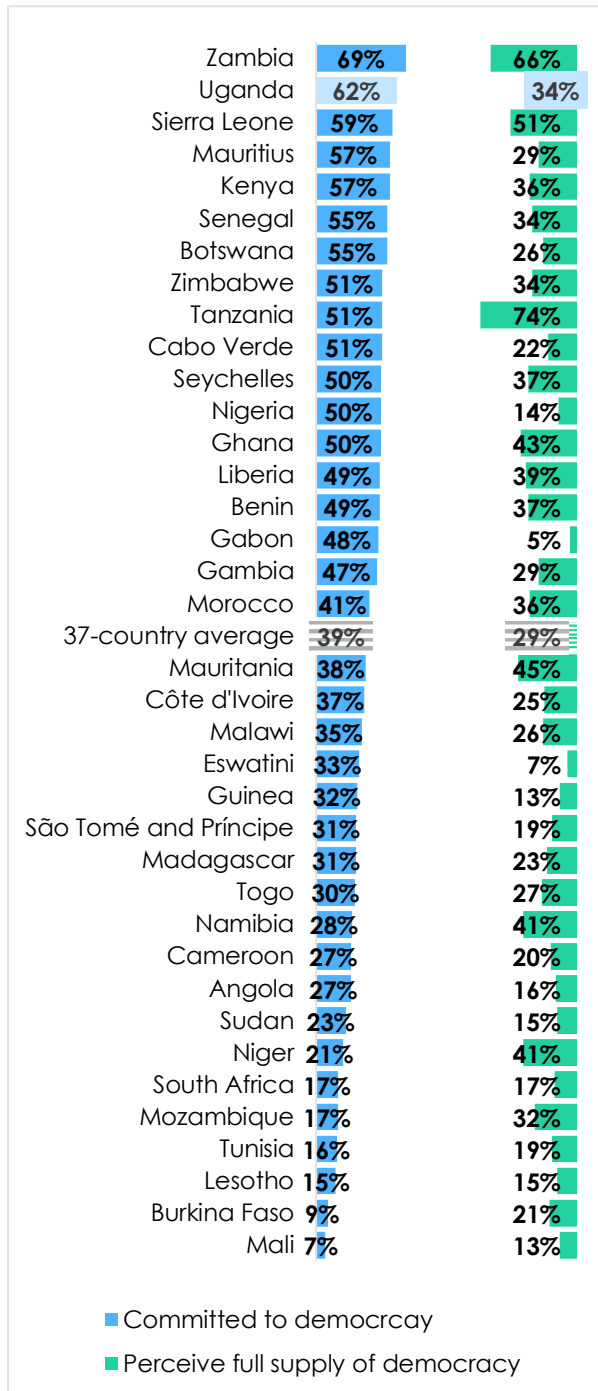


Committed to democracy: % who prefer democracy over any other political system and reject military rule, one-man rule, and one-party rule

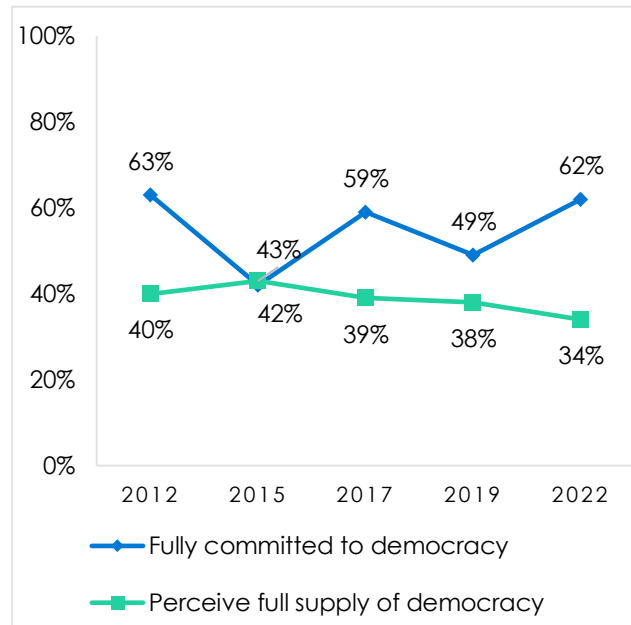
Perceive full supply of democracy: % who describe their country as "a full democracy" or a "democracy with minor problems" and are "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the way democracy works

* Results calculated for 33 countries surveyed in both 2011/2013 and 2021/2022

Figure 2: Committed to democracy and perceive full supply of democracy
 | 37 countries | 2021/2022



Uganda | 2012-2022

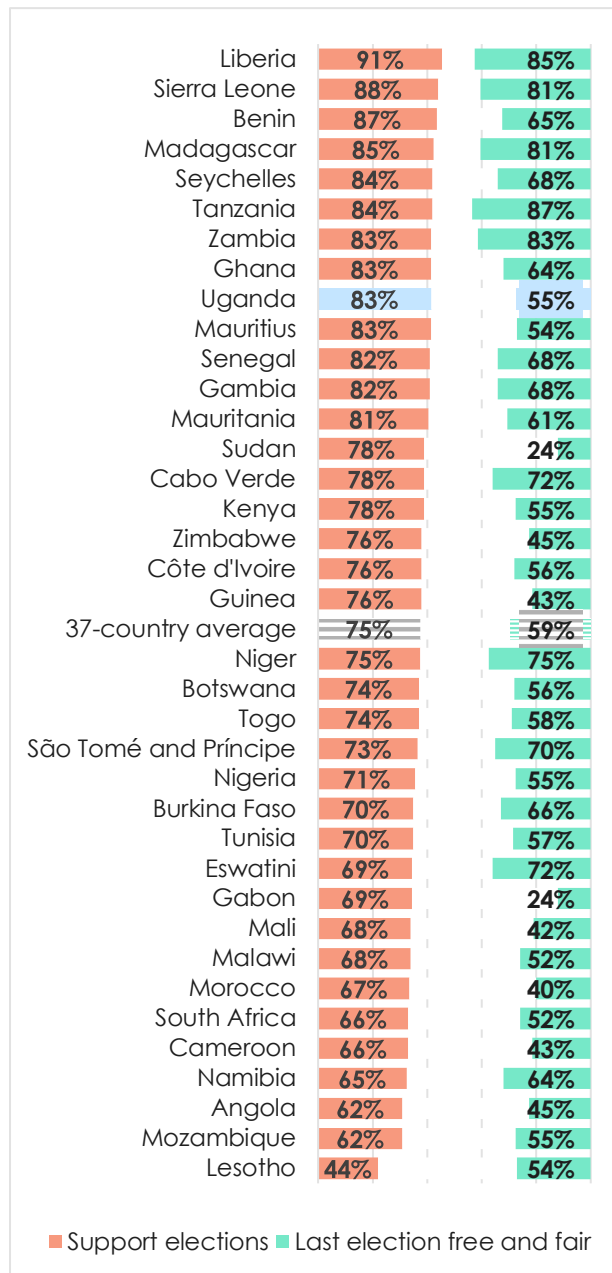


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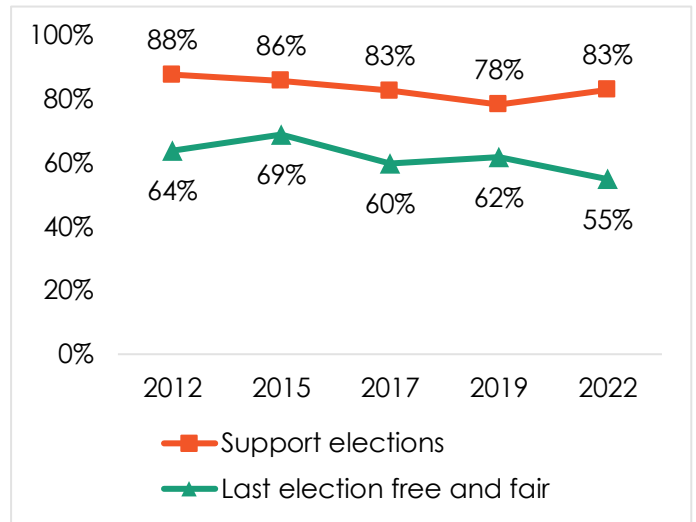
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Figure 3: Views on elections | 37 countries | 2021/2022



Uganda | 2012-2022



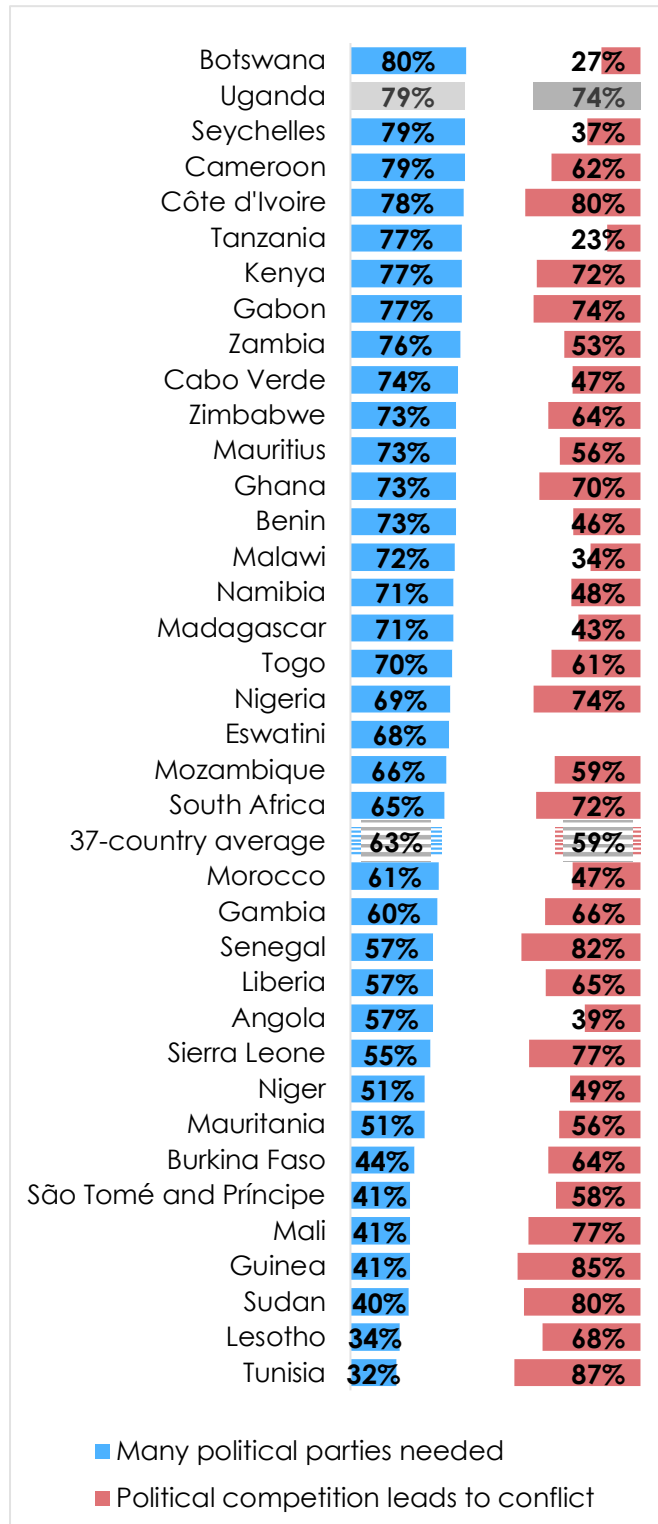
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.

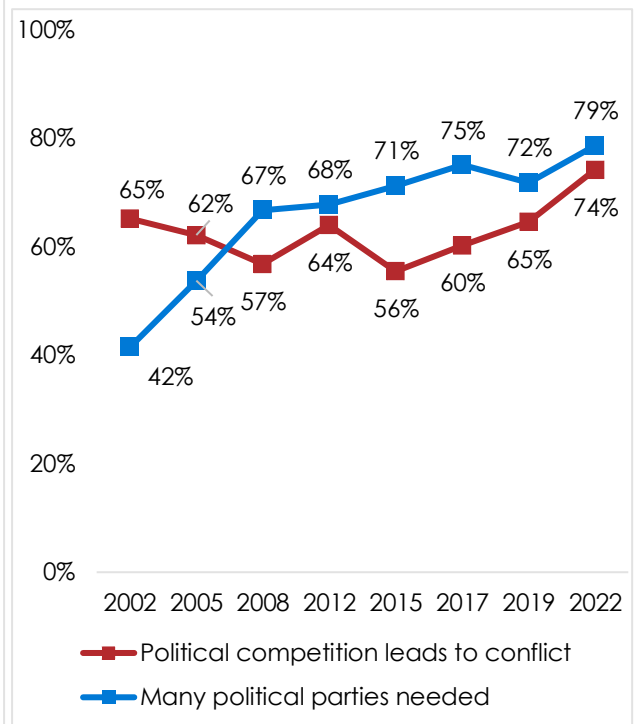
Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.

(% who "agree" or "agree strongly" with Statement 1)

Figure 4: Views on multiparty competition | 37 countries | 2021/2022



Uganda | 2002-2022



Respondents were asked:

Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

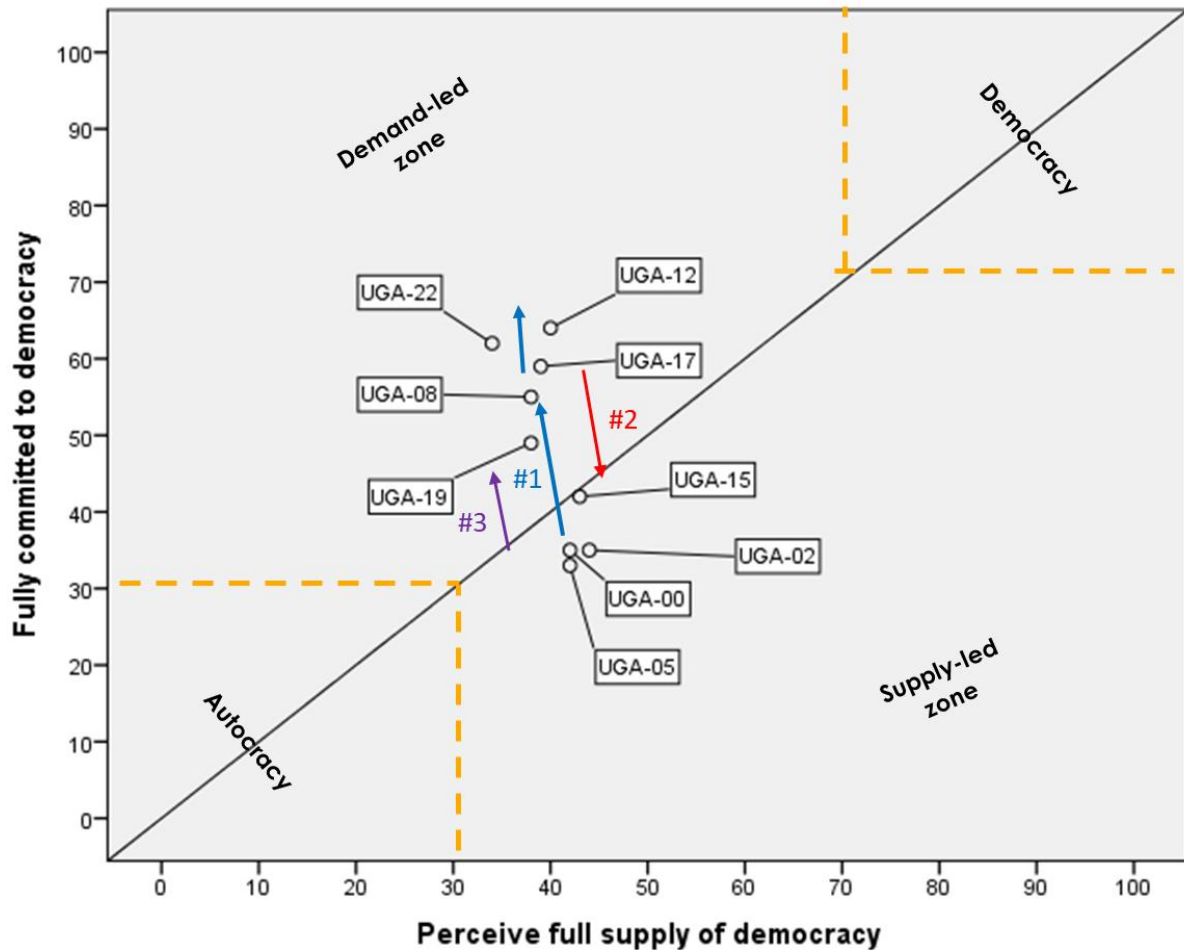
Statement 1: Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties.

Statement 2: Many political parties are needed to make sure that citizens have real choices in who governs them.

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

In your opinion, how often, in this country, does competition between political parties lead to violent conflict? (% who say "often" or "always")

Figure 5: Uganda's back-and-forth path in attempts to consolidate democracy
 | Uganda | 2000-2022



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