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## News release

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### **Africans are still hungry for democracy, but leaders are failing to deliver, Afrobarometer board chair tells NORAD Conference**

Despite the “seeming newfound popularity of military governments,” Africans want democracy, but their leaders are failing to deliver on those expectations, Afrobarometer Board Chair E. Gyimah-Boadi told delegates at the Norad Conference on Rights and Resistance.

In his address, titled “[Shaken, not deterred](#),” Gyimah-Boadi shared insights on trends, challenges, and opportunities for sustaining democracy in Africa. He argued that even though democracy in Africa is facing severe headwinds, Africans fundamentally value democratic and accountable governance.

Afrobarometer survey data show that two-thirds (66%) of Africans prefer democracy over any other system of government. They also strongly endorse the norms, institutions, and practices associated with democratic governance, including choosing leaders through the ballot box (75%), constitutional limits on presidential tenure (72%), and parliamentary oversight of the executive (66%). Over the past decade, there have been increases in support for media freedom (+11 percentage points) and the prioritisation of accountable governance over effective governance (+7 points).

However, Gyimah-Boadi noted that the widening gap between citizens' expectations and the actual delivery of democratic governance is fuelling disillusionment and instability.

“What is testing Africans' faith in democracy, Afrobarometer data suggest, is the meagre supply of democracy, which we measure with citizens' ratings of their country as ‘democratic’ and their level of satisfaction with the way democracy works,” he said. “Average Africans desire to live under a democratic, accountable government, but their leaders are failing to meet these expectations.”

He identified corruption and a lack of accountability among leadership failures that drive declining satisfaction with democracy.

The annual Norad Conference, hosted by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, is one of Scandinavia's leading conferences on international development. This year's conference shed light on the erosion of democracy, women's rights, the fight for natural resources, polarisation, and the repercussions of social media as a new weapon in the war for truth.

Gyimah-Boadi urged policy actors and advocates to focus on boosting the delivery of democratic governance in order to sustain and deepen Africans' faith in democracy.

“Democracy requires constant nurturing,” he said. “We need to fortify civil society's resilience and rekindle its energies to continue the struggle. The gains of the past decades came from civil society's commitment to ensuring the integrity of elections, helping enact laws for best practices in good governance, and holding governments accountable.”

He also urged Western countries and regional bodies like the African Union to do more to support democracy in Africa.



## About Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer (AB) is a trusted source of high-quality data and analysis on what Africans are thinking. With an unmatched track record of 385,000+ interviews in 42 countries, representing the views of more than three-fourths of the African population, AB is leading the charge to bridge the continent's data gap. AB data inform many global indices, such as the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer, and the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators. The data are also used for country risk analyses and by credit rating and forecasting agencies such as the Economist Intelligence Unit. All AB data sets are publicly available on the AB [website](#) and may be analysed free of charge using AB's [online data analysis tool](#).

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