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## News release

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### As Africans enter busy political year, scepticism marks weakening support for elections, new Afrobarometer report reveals

While most Africans endorse elections as the best method for choosing their leaders, this preference has weakened over the past decade, a new [Afrobarometer report](#) reveals.

Based on national surveys in 39 African countries, the new analysis shows that most Africans endorse multiparty competition, feel free to vote as they choose, and assess their most recent election as largely free and fair.

But fewer than half think voting ensures representative, accountable governance, and public trust in national electoral-management bodies is weak in most countries.

#### Key findings

- Three-fourths (75%) of Africans support fair, open, and honest elections as the best way to choose their leaders, including 50% who “strongly agree” with this view (Figure 1).
- However, on average across 29 countries where this question was asked in both 2011/2013 and 2021/2023, this support has dropped by 8 percentage points, including massive declines in Tunisia (-24 percentage points), Burkina Faso (-19 points), and Lesotho (-19 points) (Figure 2).
  - Sierra Leone is the only surveyed country that records significantly increased support for elections (+13 points).
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents support multiparty competition to ensure that voters have real choices in who governs them, while 34% think political parties foster division and confusion and their country doesn't need many of them (Figure 3).
- Fewer than half (42%) of Africans believe that their country's elections ensure that members of Parliament (MPs) represent the views of voters. A similar minority (45%) say their elections enable voters to remove leaders from office who fail to align with the desires of the people (Figure 4).
- Africans overwhelmingly say they feel “completely free” (65%) or “somewhat free” (20%) to vote for the candidate of their choice without feeling pressured. Only 14% indicate that they feel pressured or constrained.
- On average, only four in 10 citizens (39%) say they trust their national electoral commission “somewhat” or “a lot,” while 57% express little or no trust (Figure 5).
  - On average across 27 countries where this question was asked consistently since 2011/2013, trust in the electoral commission has dropped by 10 percentage points, from 51% to 41%.

#### Afrobarometer surveys

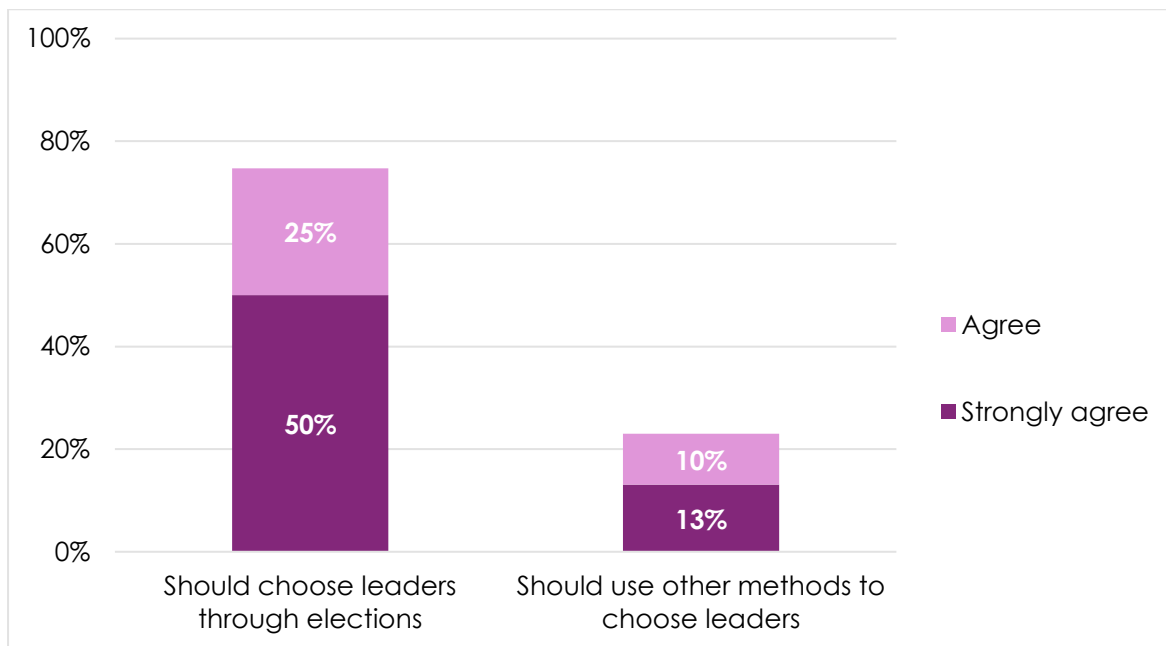
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life.

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 with samples of 1,200-2,400 adults that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-3 to +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

## Charts

**Figure 1: Support for elections** | 39 countries | 2021/2023



**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.

**Figure 2: Change in support for elections | 29 countries | 2011-2023**

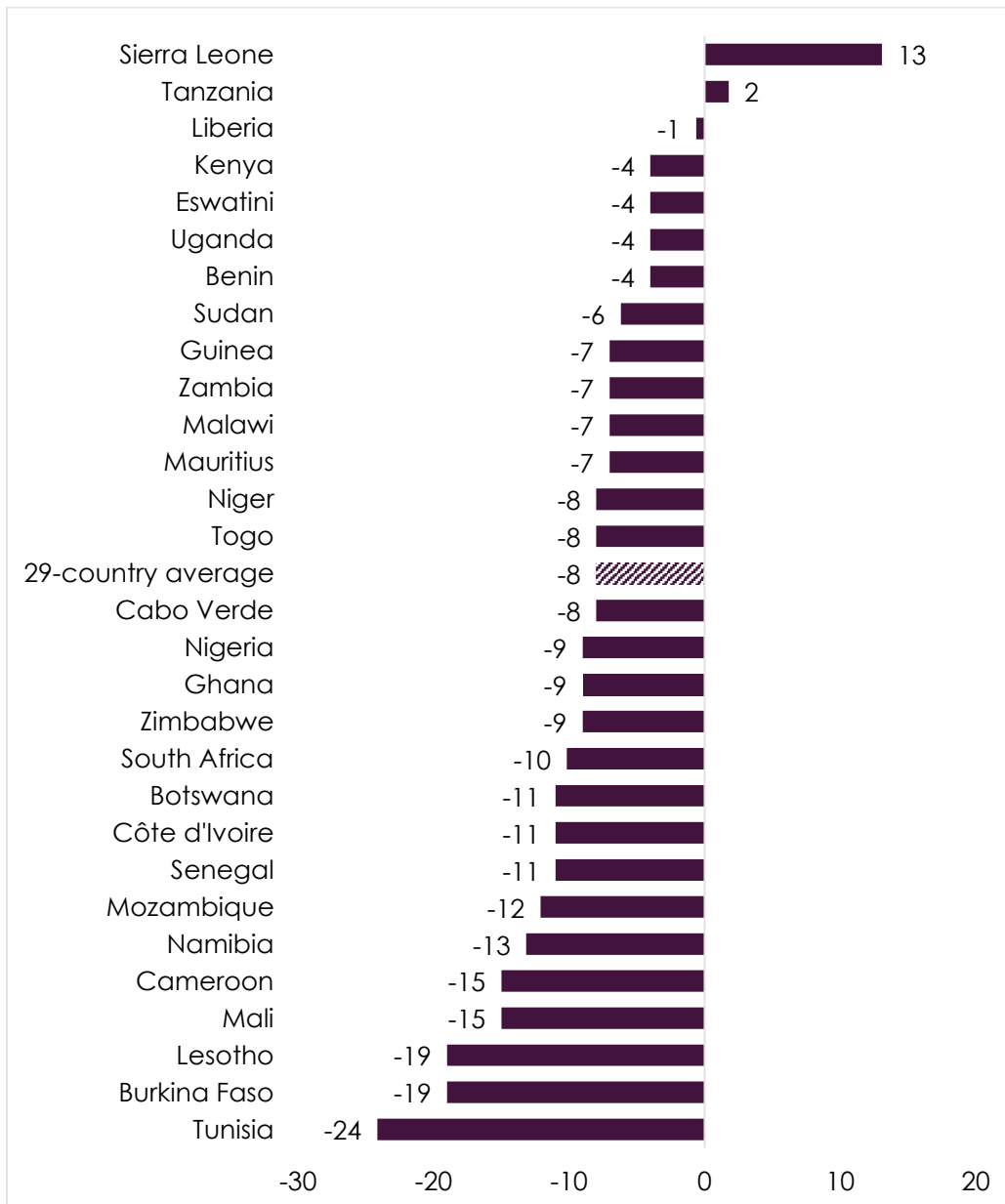
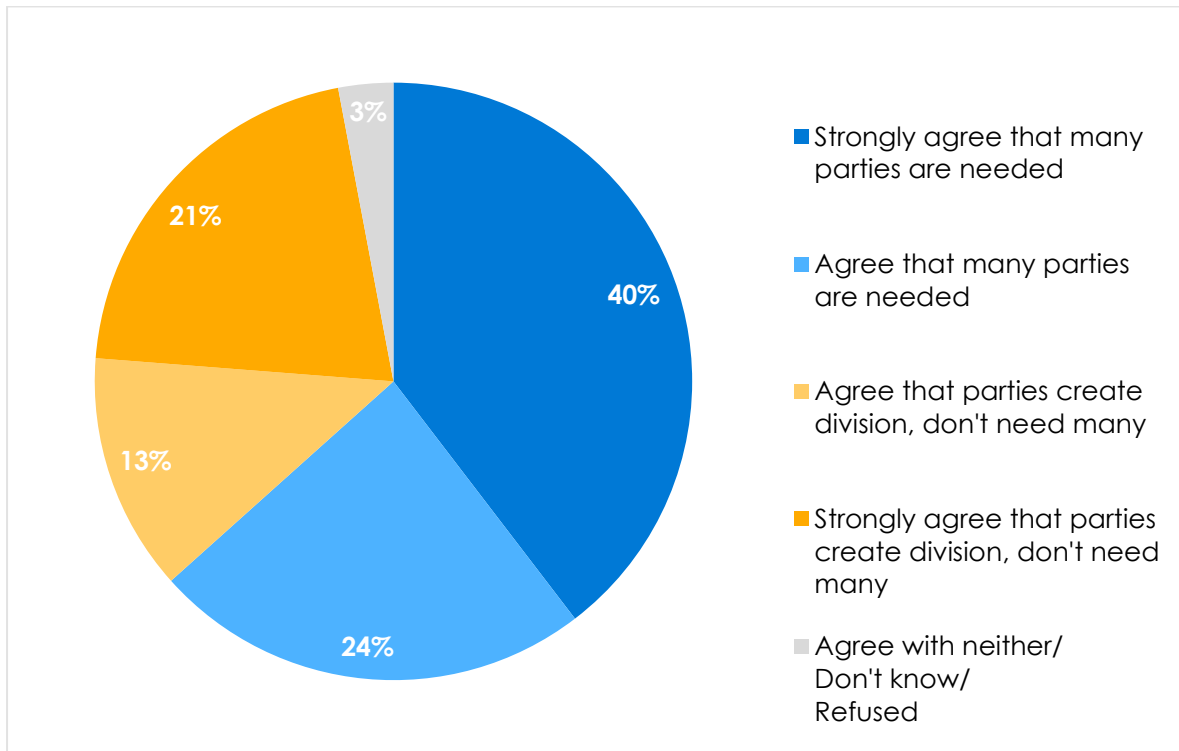


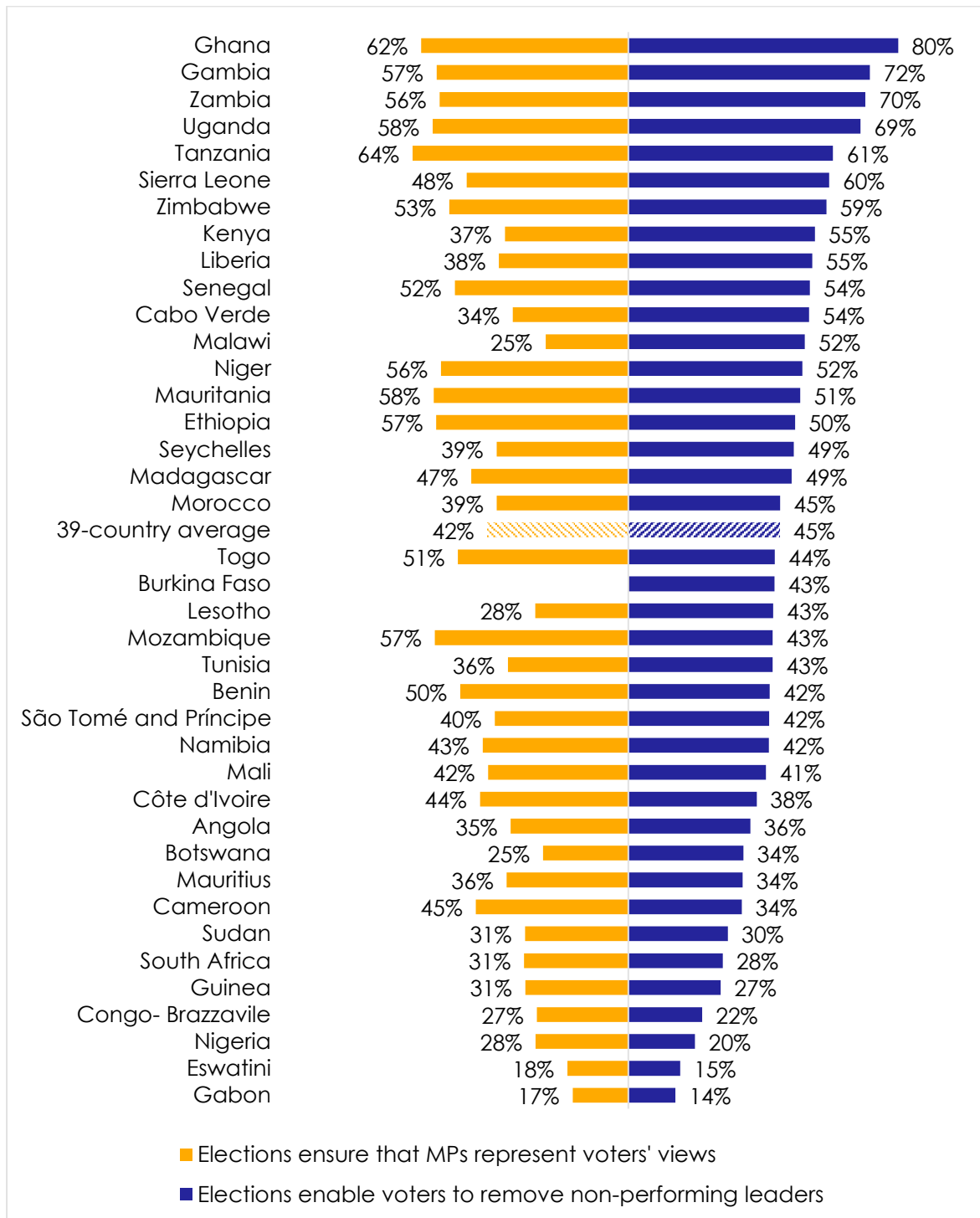
Figure shows change, in percentage points, between survey rounds in 2011/2013 and 2021/2023 in the proportion of respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree” that leaders should be chosen through elections.

**Figure 3: Support for multiparty competition** | 39 countries | 2021/2023



**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 in [this country].  
 Statement 2: Many political parties are needed to make sure that [this country's citizens] have real choices in who governs them.

**Figure 4: Efficacy of elections** | 39 countries\* | 2021/2023



**Respondents were asked:** Think about how elections work in practice in this country. How well do elections:

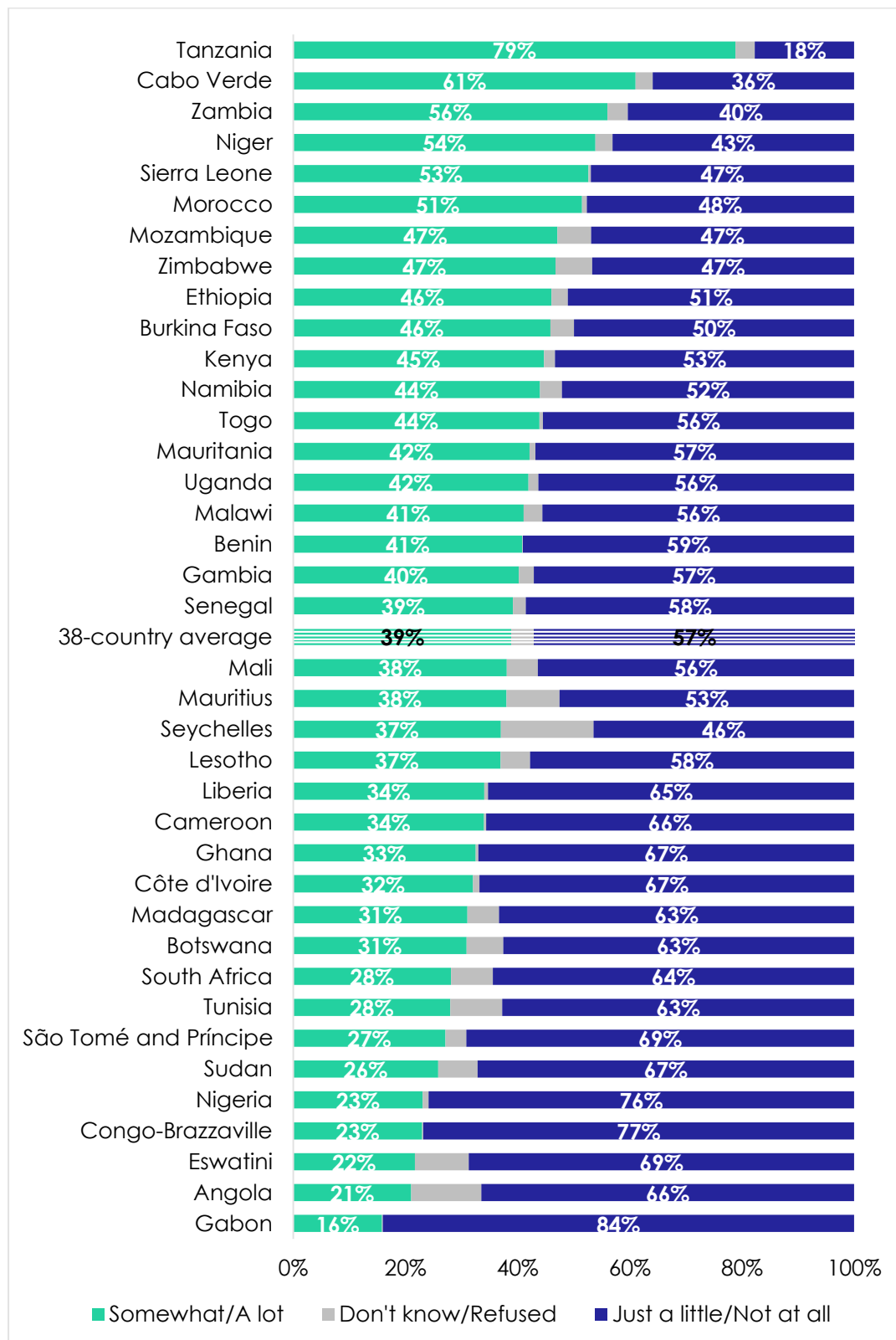
Ensure that representatives to Parliament reflect the views of voters?

Enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want?

(% who say "fairly well" or "very well")

\* Results for the question about MPs do not include Burkina Faso, where this question was not posed to the full sample.

**Figure 5: Trust in the electoral commission** | 38 countries\* | 2021/2023



**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The [national electoral commission]?

\* Question was not asked in Guinea.

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