

Accra, Ghana  
2 May 2025

## News release

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### **World Press Freedom Day: Africans see limited press freedom, endorse media's role in holding government accountable**

While a majority of Africans endorse press freedom, significant proportions say their media is not fully free to operate without censorship or government interference, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

Perceptions of media freedom vary sharply across 30 surveyed countries, and have worsened significantly in 14 countries over the past few years.

In addition to favouring a free press, African citizens also strongly support the role of the media in consistently scrutinising government actions and exposing errors and corruption.

#### **Key finding**

- On average across 30 African countries, four in 10 citizens (41%) say the news media in their country is “not very free” or “not at all free” to report and comment on the news without censorship or interference by the government (Figure 1). A slim majority (55%) see their media as “somewhat” or “completely” free.
- Perceptions of a lack of media freedom vary widely across countries, ranging up to more than six in 10 citizens in Congo-Brazzaville (83%), Cameroon (69%), and Guinea (64%) (Figure 2).
  - At the other extreme, fewer than one-fourth of citizens see their media as unfree in Tanzania (15%), Namibia (22%), Liberia (22%), the Gambia (22%), and Tunisia (23%).
  - Compared to survey findings in 2021/2023, perceptions of a lack of media freedom have increased significantly (by more than 2 percentage points) in 14 of 30 surveyed countries, led by Guinea (+21 points), Mali (+16 points), Madagascar (+14 points), and Mauritius (+11 points) (Figure 3).
  - Significantly fewer citizens see their media as free in 10 countries, most notably in Gabon (-32 points), Morocco (-13), and Côte d'Ivoire (-9).
- Nearly two-thirds of citizens (64%) say the media should have the right to publish any views and ideas without government control, while 33% say their government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it disapproves of (Figure 4).
- More than seven in 10 Africans (72%) say that the news media should “constantly investigate and report on government mistakes and corruption.” Only 25% instead agree that too much reporting on negative events only harms the country (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.

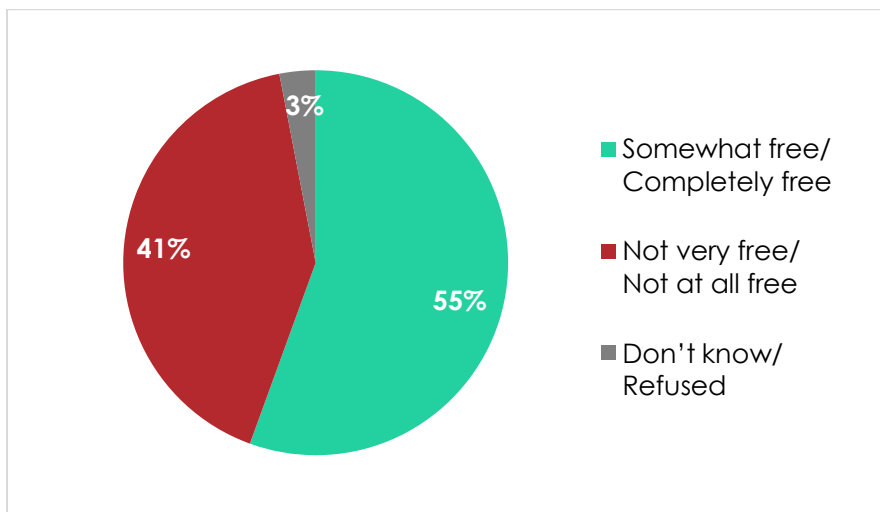
Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 10 surveys (2024/2025) have covered 30 countries so far.

Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondents' choice, which yields country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

This 30-country analysis is based on 41,200 interviews. The data are weighted to ensure nationally representative samples. When reporting multi-country averages, all countries are weighted equally (rather than in proportion to population size).

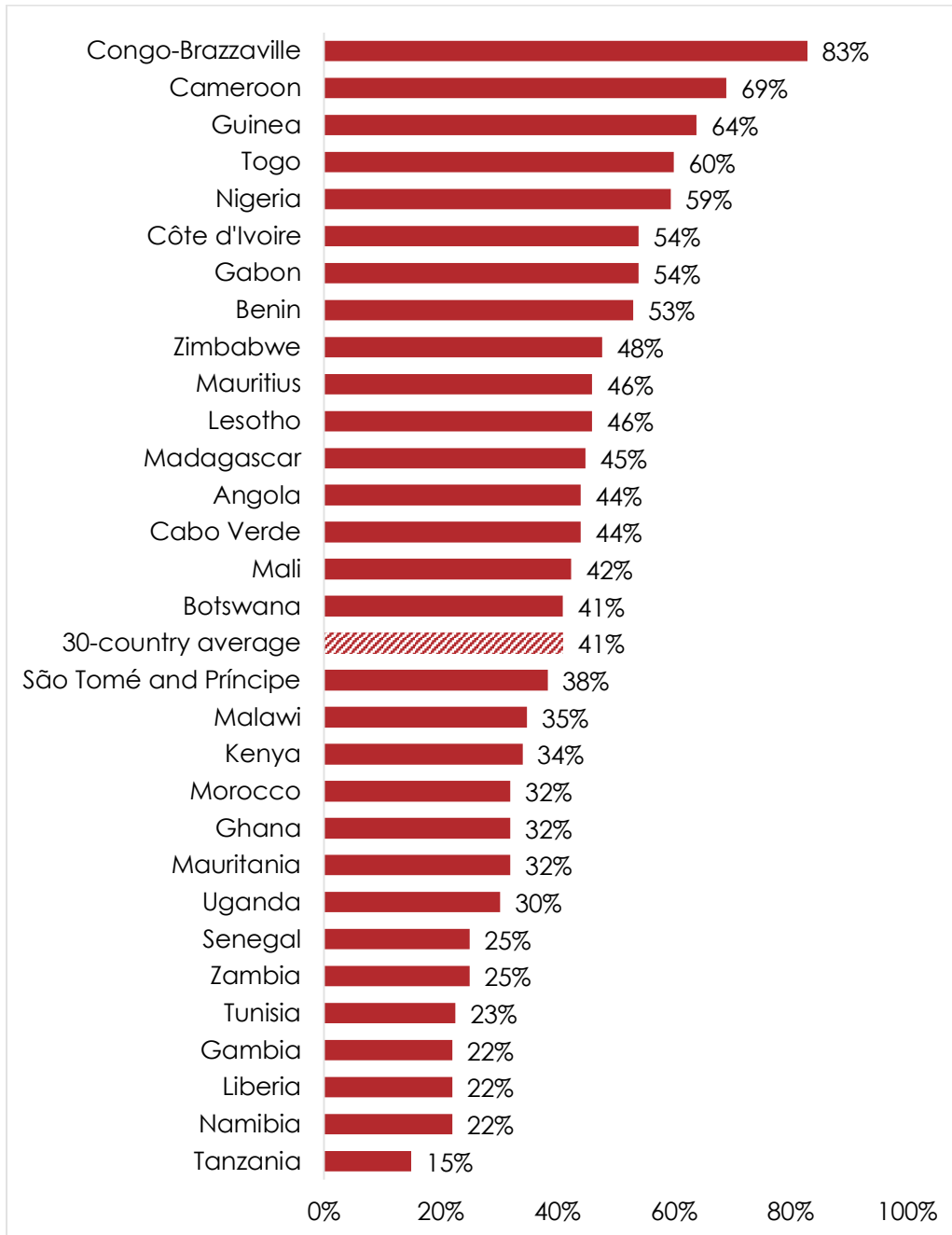
## Charts

**Figure 1: How free is the media?** | 30 countries | 2024/2025



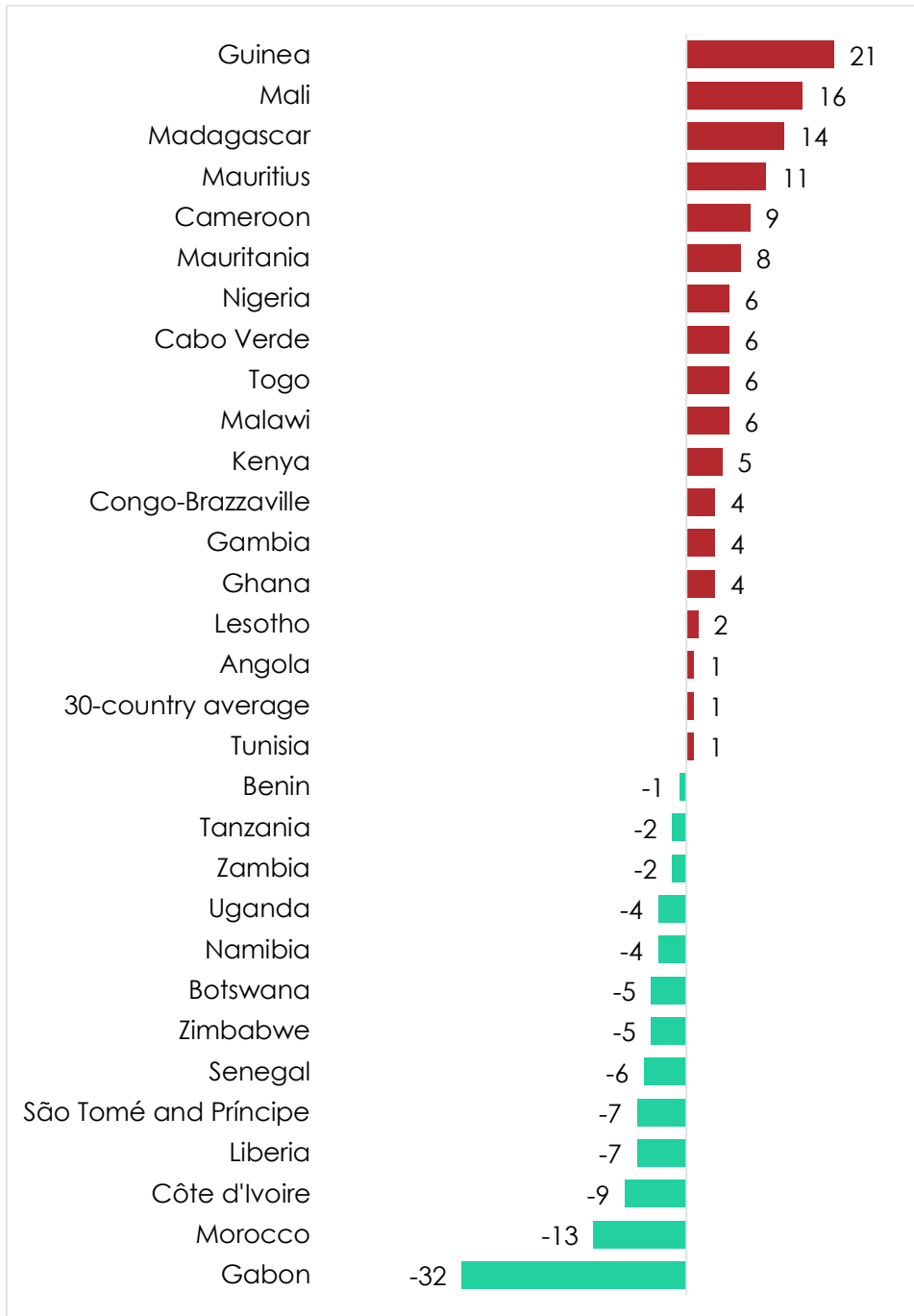
**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, how free is the news media in this country to report and comment on the news without censorship or interference by the government?*

**Figure 2: Media is not free** | 30 countries | 2024/2025



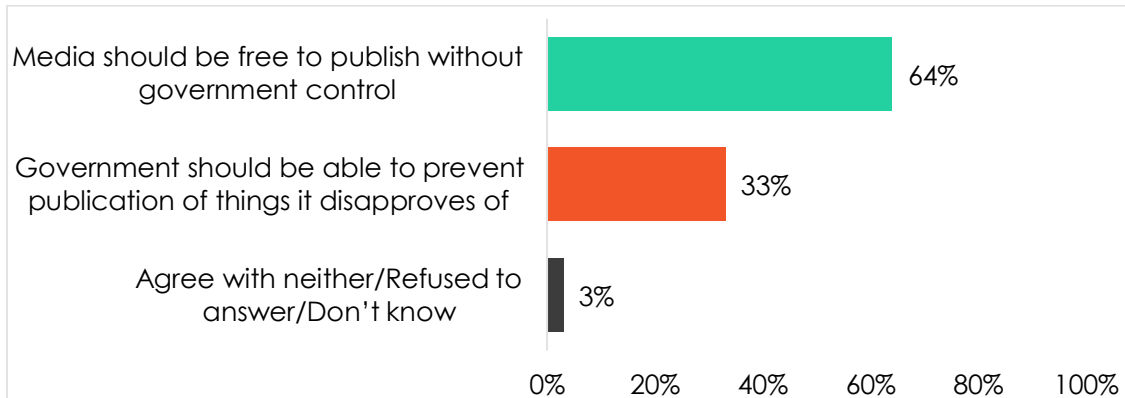
**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, how free is the news media in this country to report and comment on the news without censorship or interference by the government? (% who say "not very free" or "not at all free")*

**Figure 3: Media is not free** | 30 countries | 2021-2025



**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, how free is the news media in this country to report and comment on the news without censorship or interference by the government? (Figure shows percentage-point change between 2021/2023 and 2024/2025 survey rounds in the proportion of respondents who say the media in their country is "not very free" or "not at all free.")*

**Figure 4: Support for media freedom** | 30 countries | 2024/2025

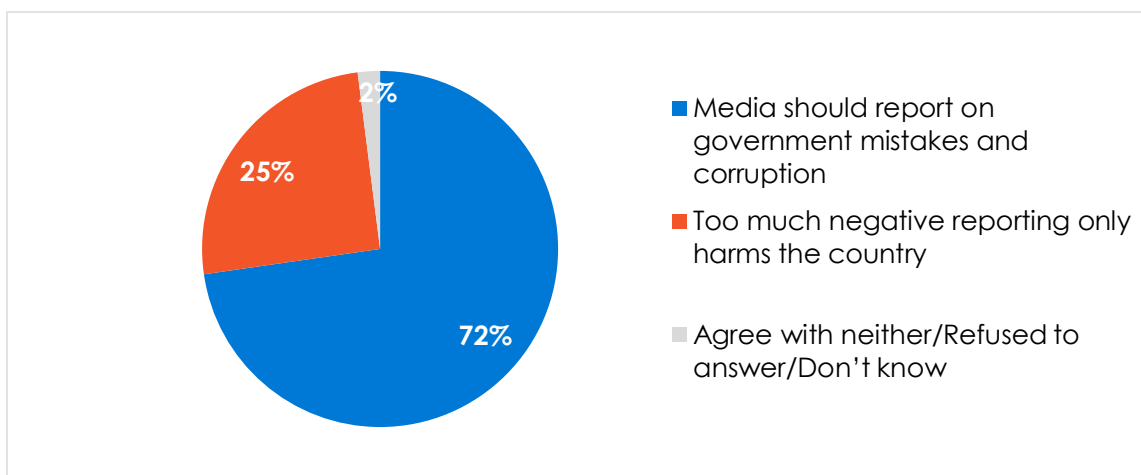


**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your views?

Statement 1: The media should have the right to publish any views and ideas without government control.

Statement 2: The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it disapproves of.

**Figure 5: Media should check government vs. avoid negative reporting**  
| 30 countries | 2024/2025



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

Statement 1: The news media should constantly investigate and report on government mistakes and corruption.

Statement 2: Too much reporting on negative events, like government mistakes and corruption, only harms the country.

**For more information, please contact:**

Daniel Iberi  
Afrobarometer communications coordinator for East Africa  
Email: [diberi@afrobarometer.org](mailto:diberi@afrobarometer.org)  
Telephone: +254725674457

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