Freetown, Sierra Leone
22 August 2025

News release

Sierra Leoneans urge cross-party unity amid electoral system debate

More than nine in 10 Sierra Leoneans favour ethnic and regional balance in political appointments across all governments, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

Following the 2023 presidential election, the Tripartite Committee was established with a mandate to review Sierra Leone's electoral and governance systems to foster greater transparency, political inclusion, and national cohesion.

As part of this process, the committee is facilitating a national conversation on which electoral system is best suited for the country, first-past-the-post or proportional representation – both of which have been employed during different elections since 1996. The debate culminated in a national dialogue on 17 July.

Survey findings from March-April 2025 show that only one in four citizens have heard of the electoral system review, with awareness especially low among citizens in the North, women, and rural residents.

Strong majorities say they would fully support their political party if it appointed individuals from other political parties, different regions, and diverse ethnic groups to key political positions.

Key findings

- About one in four respondents (26%) say they have heard of the review of the country's electoral system (Figure 1)
    - Awareness is particularly low among people in the North (13%), women (16%), and rural residents (20%) (Figure 2).
- An overwhelming majority (93%) of citizens say governments should be required to promote regional and ethnic balance in making political appointments (Figure 3).
- Majorities say they would support their party if it decided to appoint people from other political parties (66%), regions (70%), and ethnic groups (73%) to key political positions (Figure 4).

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 were launched in January 2024. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Sierra Leone, led by the Institute for Governance Reform (IGR), interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Sierra Leoneans in March-April 2025. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3

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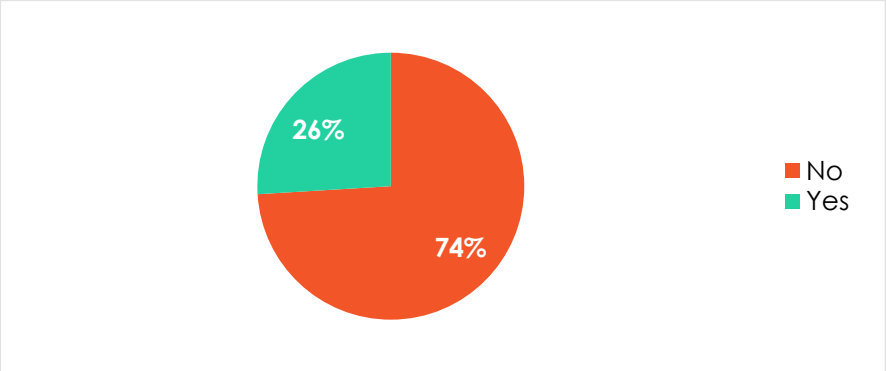
percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous standard surveys were conducted in Sierra Leone in 2012, 2015, 2018, 2020, and 2022.

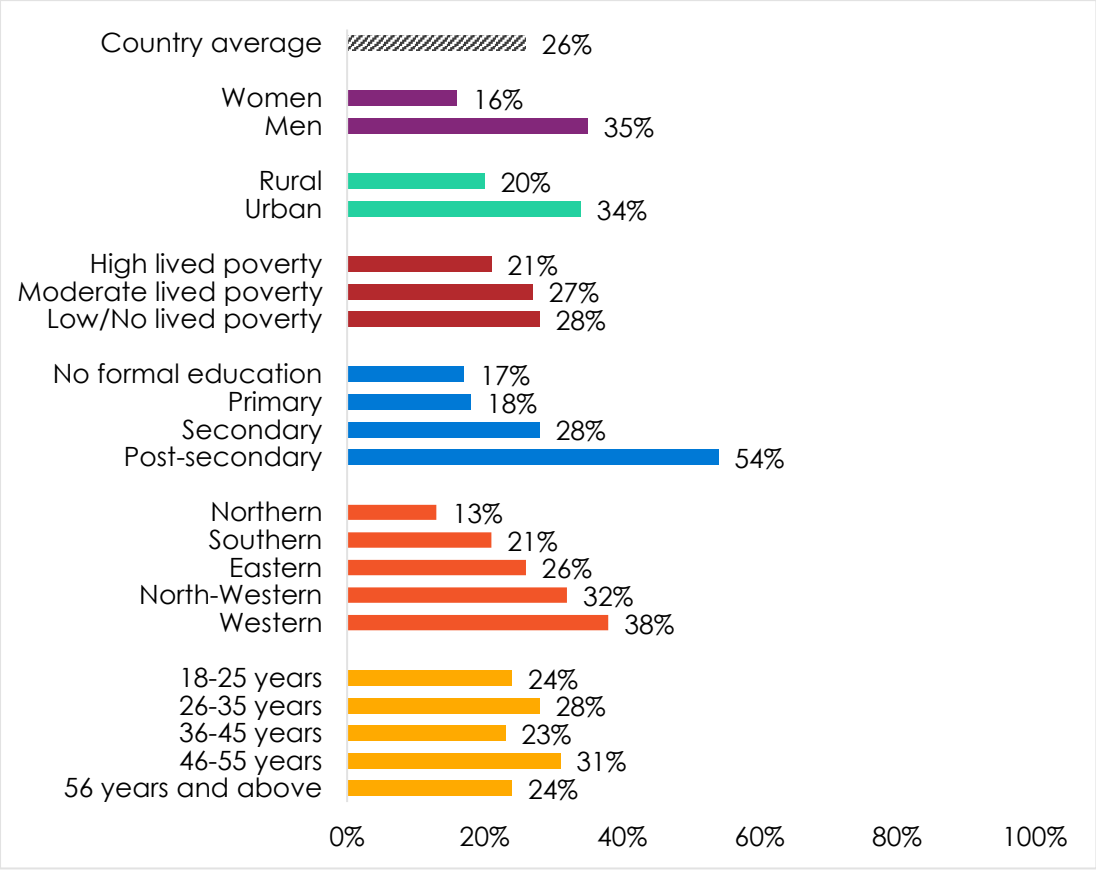
Charts

Figure 1: Awareness of electoral system review | Sierra Leone | 2025



Respondents were asked: *Have you heard about the review of the country's electoral system following the June 2023 presidential elections?*

Figure 2: Awareness of electoral system review | by demographic group | Sierra Leone | 2025



Respondents were asked: *Have you heard about the review of the country's electoral system following the June 2023 presidential elections?*

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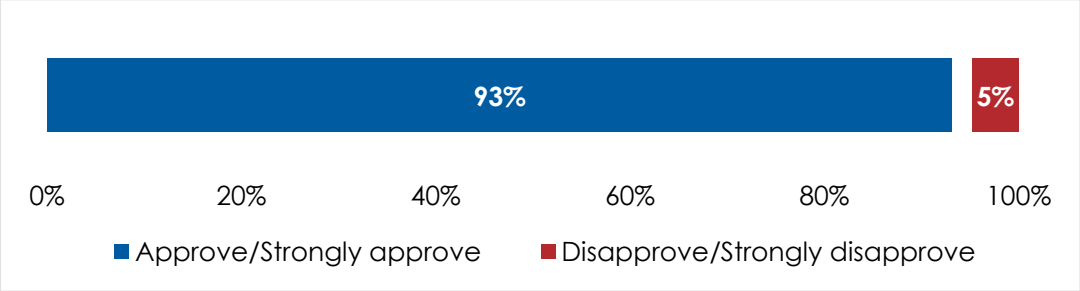
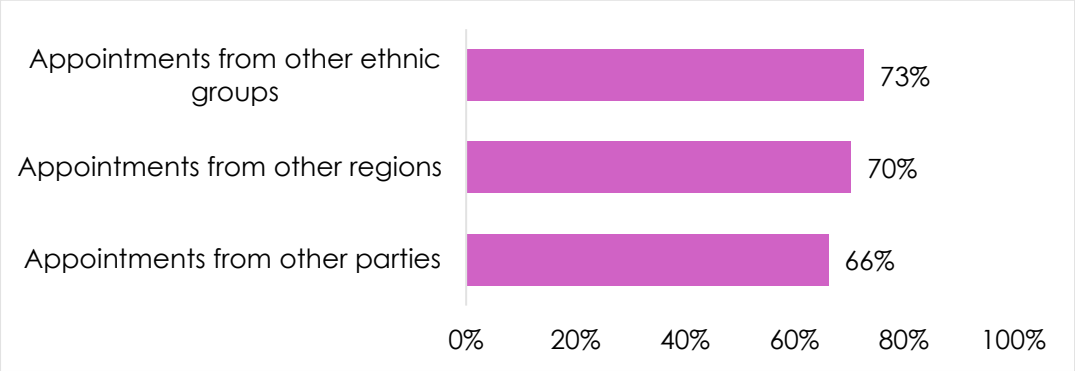
Figure 3: Should governments promote regional and ethnic balance in appointments? | Sierra Leone | 2025



Respondents were asked: *Please tell me whether you disapprove or approve of the following recommendations on the country's electoral systems: All governments should be required to promote regional and ethnic balance in political appointments.*

Figure 4: Support for political inclusion: Ethnicity, region, and political party | Sierra Leone | 2025



Respondents were asked: *Please tell me whether you disagree or agree with each of these statements:*

I will fully support my political party if it decides to appoint people from other political parties into key political positions.

I will fully support my political party if it decides to appoint people from other regions into key political positions.

I will fully support my political party if it decides to appoint people from other ethnic groups into key political positions.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

For more information, please contact:

Institute for Governance Reform, Sierra Leone
Andrew Lavali
Telephone: +232 78 399 388
Email: info@igr-sl.org

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