

Accra, Ghana  
29 April 2026

## News release

---

### World Press Freedom Day: Africans endorse media watchdog role, but perceptions of freedom are mixed

Most Africans are supportive of media holding government to account and favour press freedom over government regulation, the latest Afrobarometer [Pan-Africa Profile](#) shows.

While support for a free press is a majority position in nearly all surveyed countries, substantial minorities in most countries – and a large majority in Mali – favour government control over what the media can publish.

The new report, based on 45,600 interviews across 38 African countries in 2024/2025, also shows that citizen assessments of whether media freedom is protected in their country are mixed. Only a slim majority see the media in their country as largely free, and that perception has declined slightly over the past half-decade.

The findings further suggest ambivalence: Support for media freedom is somewhat lower among respondents who perceive their country's media as free than among those who see it as unfree.

#### Key findings

- Most Africans (72%) support media playing a role in holding governments accountable (Figure 1).
  - Support for the media's watchdog role is the majority position in every surveyed country, ranging above eight in 10 in Mauritius (86%), Nigeria (83%), Uganda (82%), Ghana (82%), Congo-Brazzaville (81%), and Chad (81%).
  - And even in countries where support for media reporting on government mistakes and corruption is relatively weak, such as Mozambique (58%), Angola (56%), and São Tomé and Príncipe (54%), only minorities prefer avoiding reporting on negative events.
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of citizens support media freedom, including majorities in all surveyed countries except Tanzania (49%) and Mali (27%) (Figure 2).
  - In several countries, support for media freedom exceeds three-fourths of the population, including Mauritius (86%), Seychelles (85%), Congo-Brazzaville (80%), Lesotho (77%), Chad (76%), and Botswana (76%).
- Assessments of whether the media is free are mixed: 53% of respondents say the media in their country is largely free, but 43% see it as subject to censorship or government interference (Figure 3).
  - Perceptions of media freedom vary widely across Africa, from highs of 81% in Tanzania and 77% in Liberia and to just 28% in Comoros and 16% in Congo-Brazzaville.
- Across 30 countries surveyed in both 2019/2021 and 2024/2025, perceptions that the media is free have declined by 4 percentage points (Figure 4).

- The largest drops in the share of respondents who perceive the media as free were recorded in Guinea (-34 percentage points), Lesotho (-22 points), Nigeria (-22 points), and Botswana (-20 points).
- Over the same period, Liberia has seen an enormous 58-point jump in perceived press freedom, moving from the least free to the second-most free. Gabon (+24 points) and Zambia (+22 points) also recorded large gains.
- People who see the media in their country as largely free are somewhat less likely to support media freedom than who see their media as unfree (63% vs. 69%) (Figure 5).

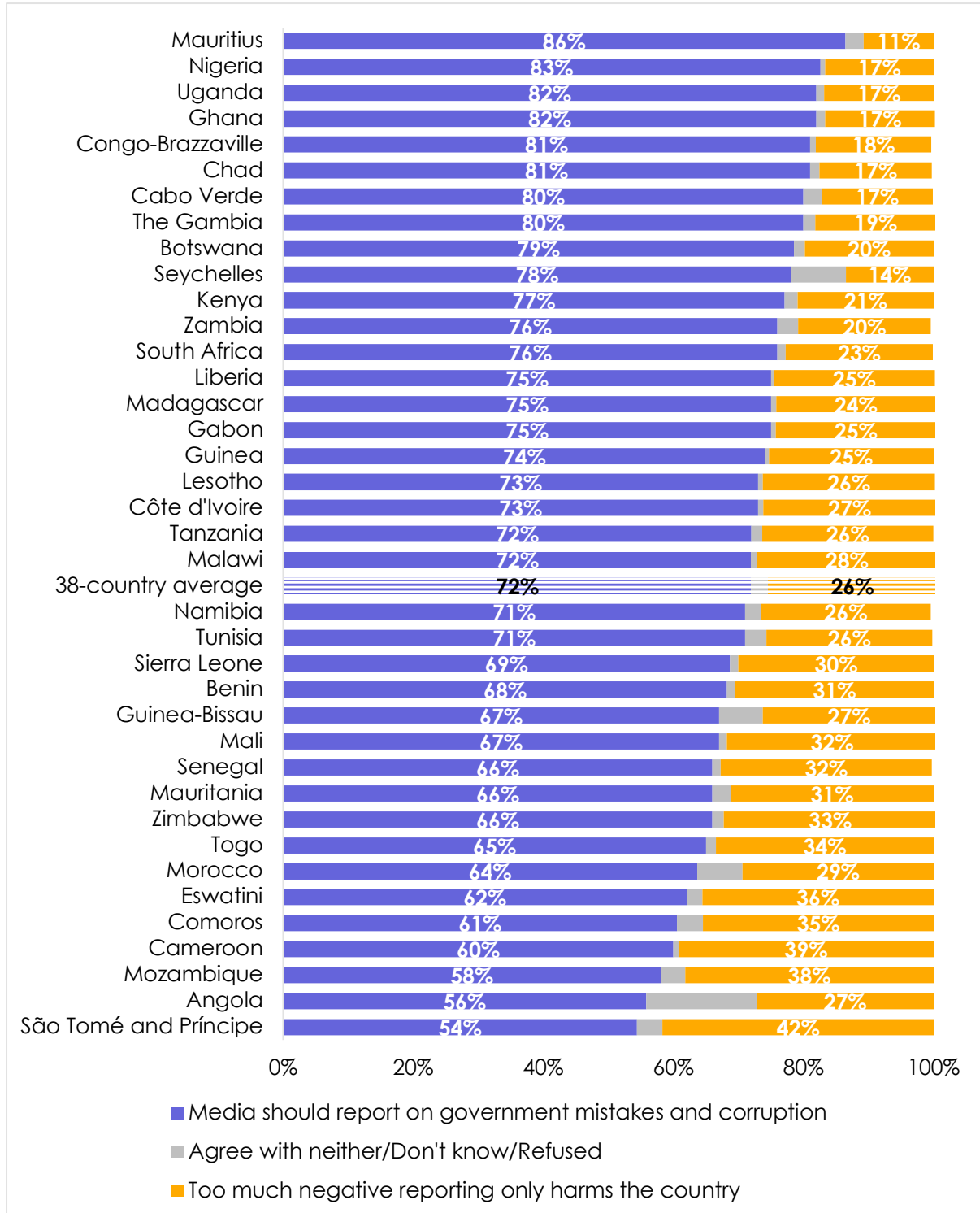
### **Afrobarometer surveys**

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. Ten survey rounds in up to 45 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 10 surveys (2024/2025) cover 38 countries.

Afrobarometer's National Partners conduct face-to-face interviews with nationally representative samples of adults in the language of the respondent's choice that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

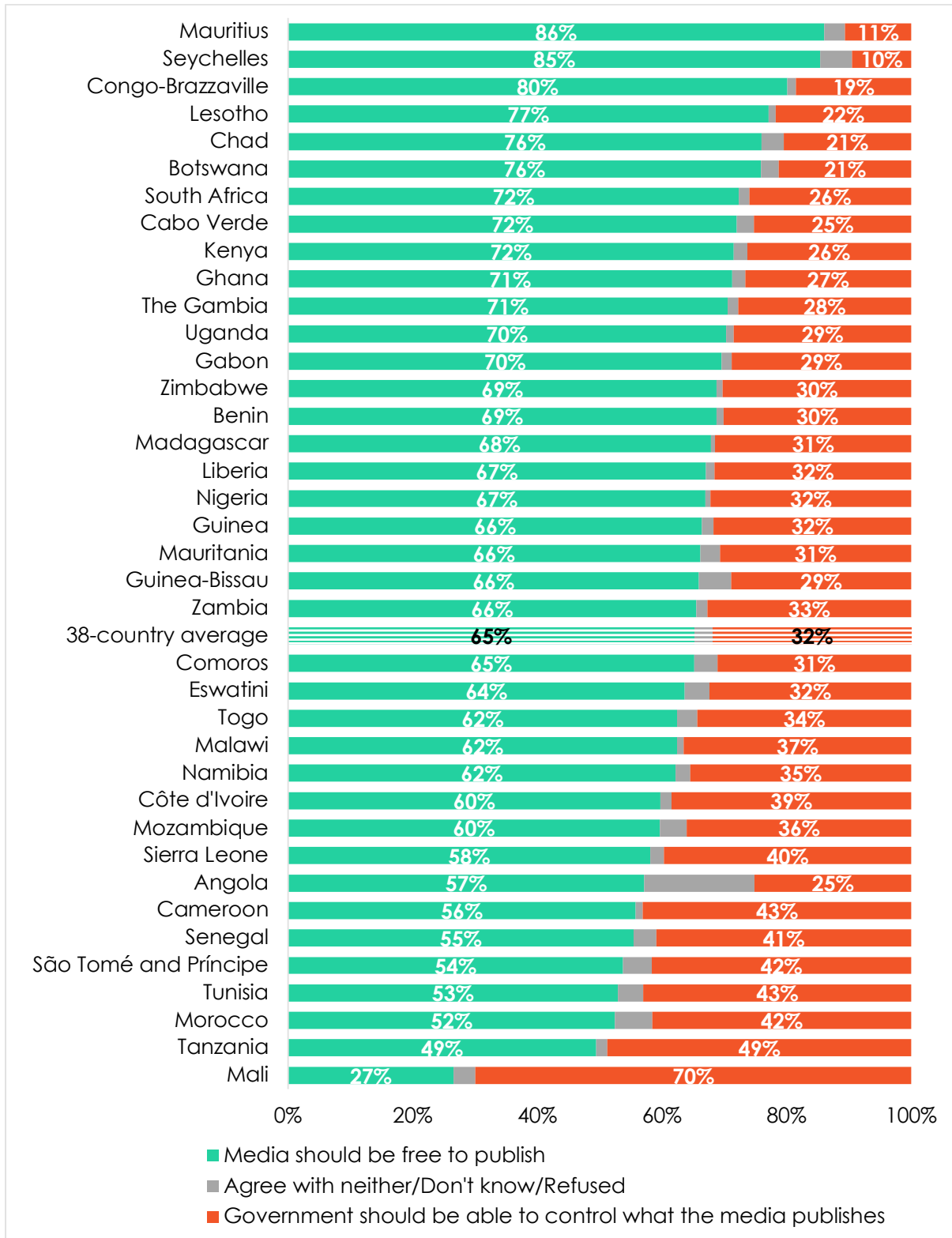
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Media should check government vs. avoid negative reporting**  
 | 38 countries | 2024/2025



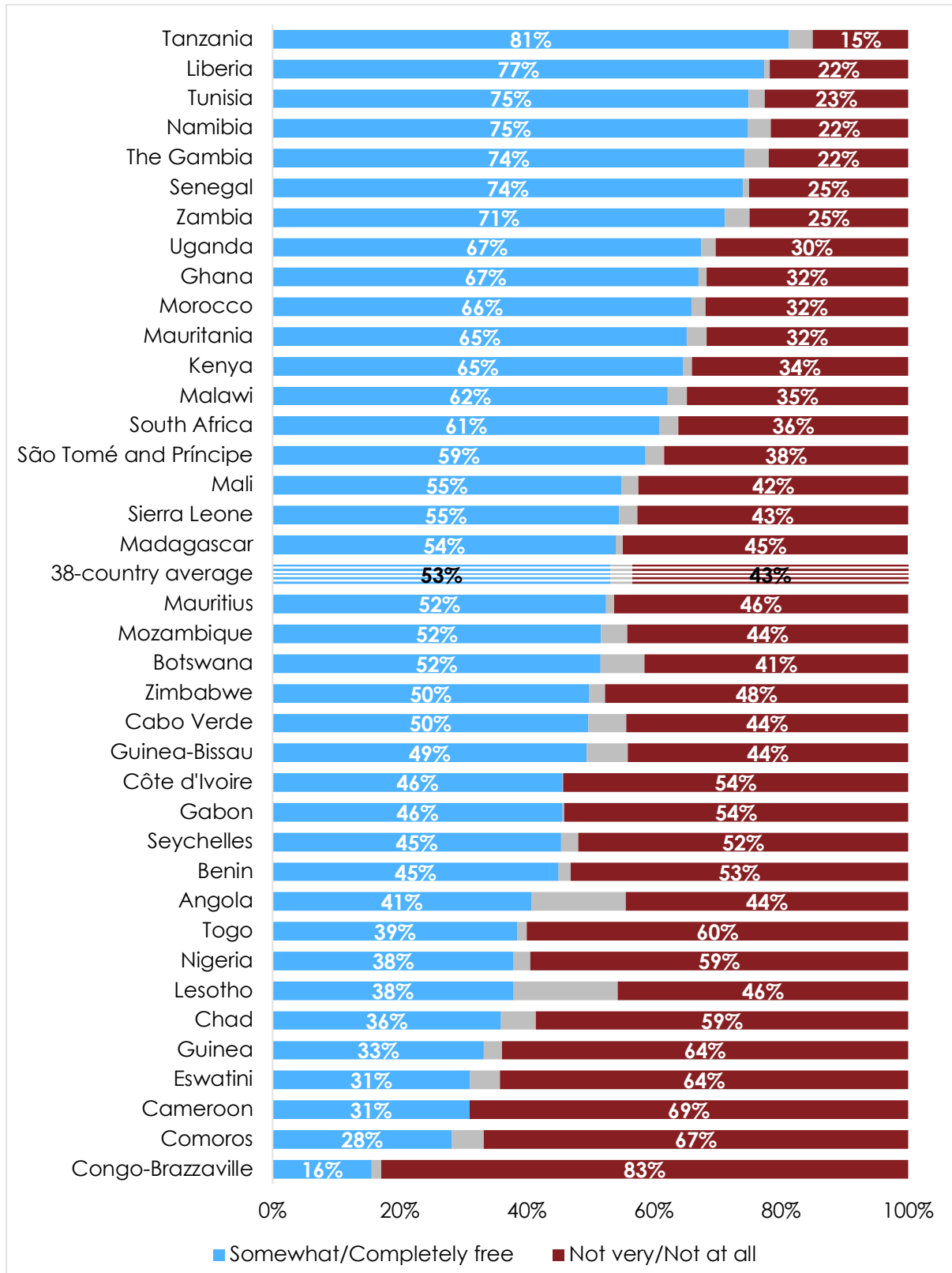
**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?  
 Statement 1: The news media should constantly investigate and report on government mistakes and corruption.  
 Statement 2: Too much reporting on negative events, like government mistakes and corruption, only harms the country.

**Figure 2: Support for media freedom** | 38 countries | 2024/2025



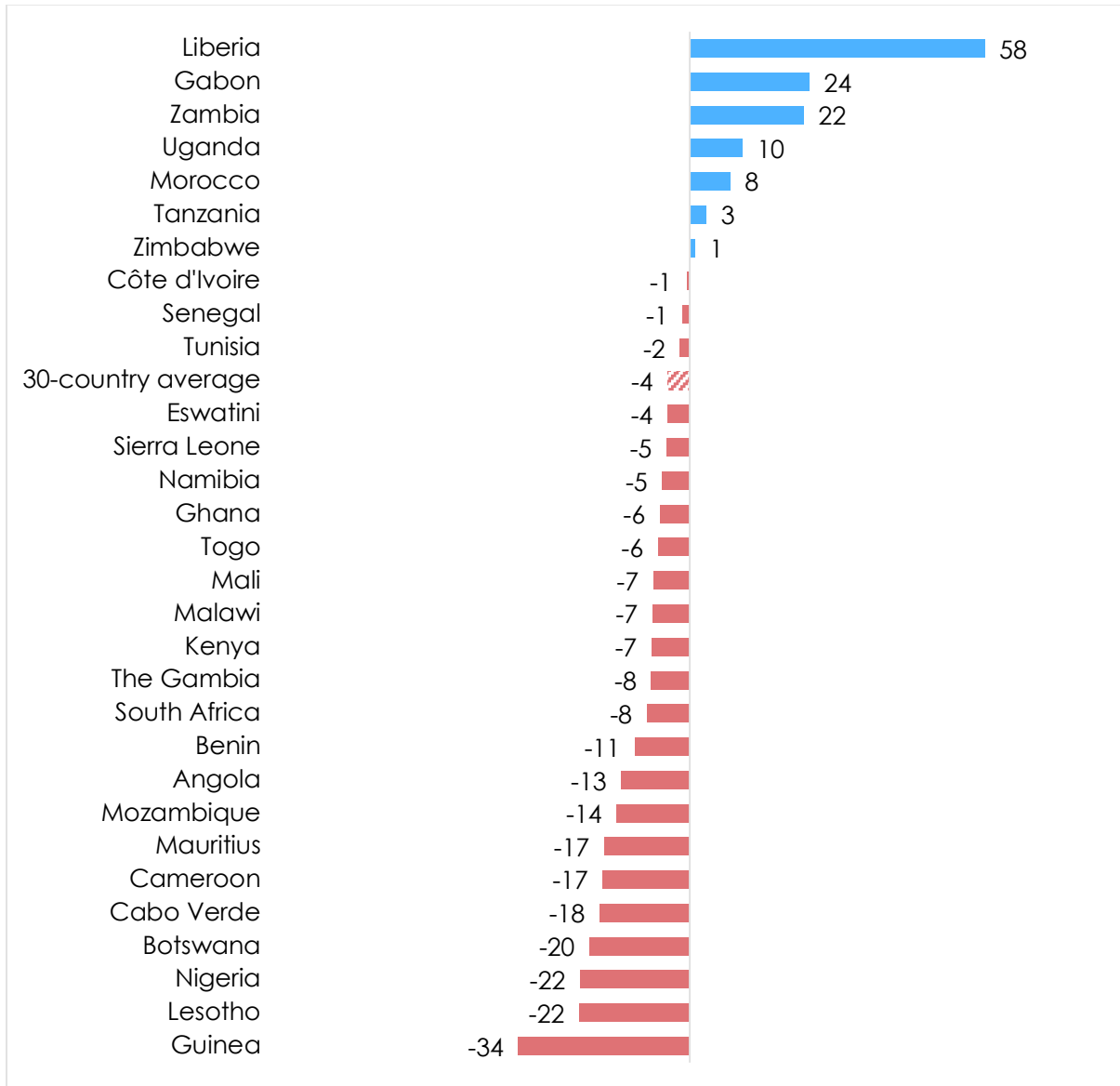
**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?  
 Statement 1: The media should have the right to publish any views and ideas without government control.  
 Statement 2: The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it disapproves of.

**Figure 3: How free is the media?** | 38 countries | 2024/2025



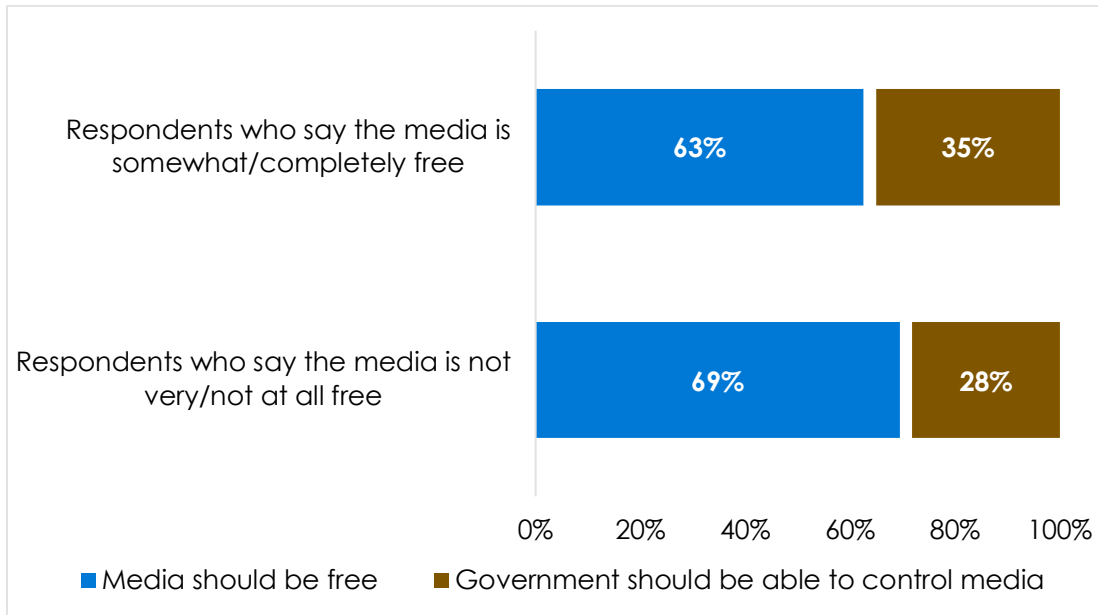
**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, how free is the news media in this country to report and comment on the news without censorship or interference by the government?*

**Figure 4: Change in perceived media freedom (percentage points) | 30 countries**  
 | 2019-2025



**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 the change, in percentage points, between 2019/2021 and 2024/2025 in the proportion of respondents who say “completely free” or “somewhat free”)*

**Figure 5: Support for media freedom by perception of media freedom**  
 | 38 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?*

*Which of the following statements is closest to your view?*

*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.*

**For more information, please contact:**

Josephine Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny  
 Director of communications  
 Email: [jappiah@afrobarometer.org](mailto:jappiah@afrobarometer.org)  
 Telephone: +233243240933

Visit us online at [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org).

Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

