

8 January 2016

## News release

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### Escalating crisis belies Burundians' strong support for democracy

In contrast to the violent turmoil racking their country, Burundians are largely united in their support for democracy and fair elections and their rejection of authoritarian alternatives, according to the most recent Afrobarometer survey in September-October 2014.

In particular, Burundians value democracy as the protection of civil liberties and personal freedom and as peace, unity, and power-sharing – all of which are threatened by the country's current political crisis.

A majority of Burundians also favour limiting presidential terms to a maximum of two – a contentious issue that helped spark the country's violent crisis when President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to seek, and then claimed, a controversial third term.

Burundians' views on democracy, term limits, and support from the African Union (AU) and the East African Community (EAC) are detailed in **Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 68, available at [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)**.

#### Key findings

- Overwhelming majorities of Burundians believe that democracy is preferable to any other form of government (86%) (Figure 1) and that leaders should be chosen through regular, open, and honest elections (85%) (Figure 2).
- Burundians strongly reject authoritarian forms of government such as one-man (90%), military (83%), and one-party (82%) rule (Figure 3).
- Above all other attributes, Burundians define democracy as the protection of civil liberties and personal freedom (70%) and as peace, unity, and power-sharing (47%).
- A majority of Burundians (62%) favour a two-term limit on presidential mandates, as provided for by the Constitution of Burundi (Figure 4).
- In 2014, Burundians were divided as to whether, in general, states should intervene in neighbouring countries to support human rights and democracy, and they viewed the AU and the EAC as somewhat helpful to their country.

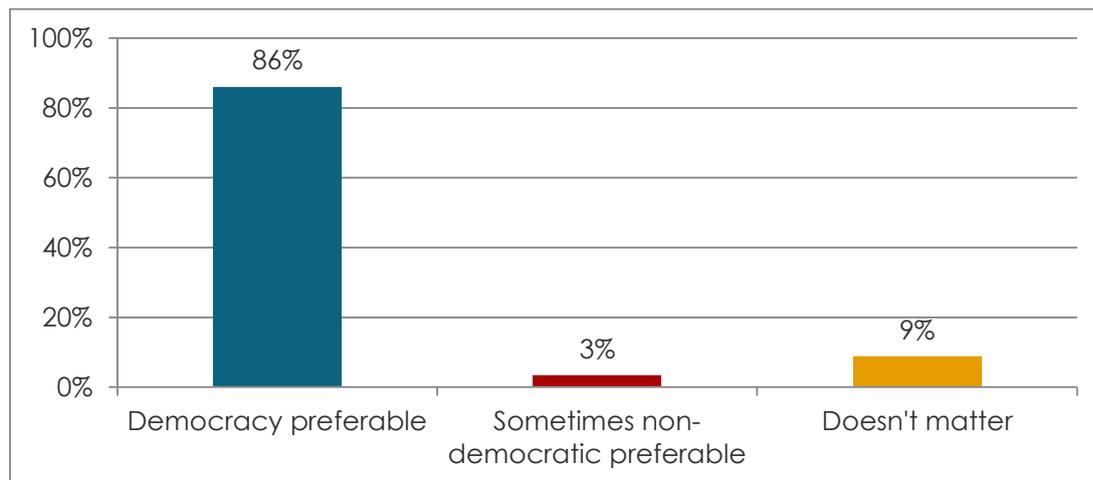
#### Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and Round 6 surveys (2014-2015) are currently being completed. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of between 1,200 and 2,400 respondents.

The Afrobarometer team in Burundi, led by the Groupe de Recherche et d'Appui au Développement des Initiatives Démocratiques (GRADIS), interviewed 1,200 adult Burundians in September and October 2014. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level.

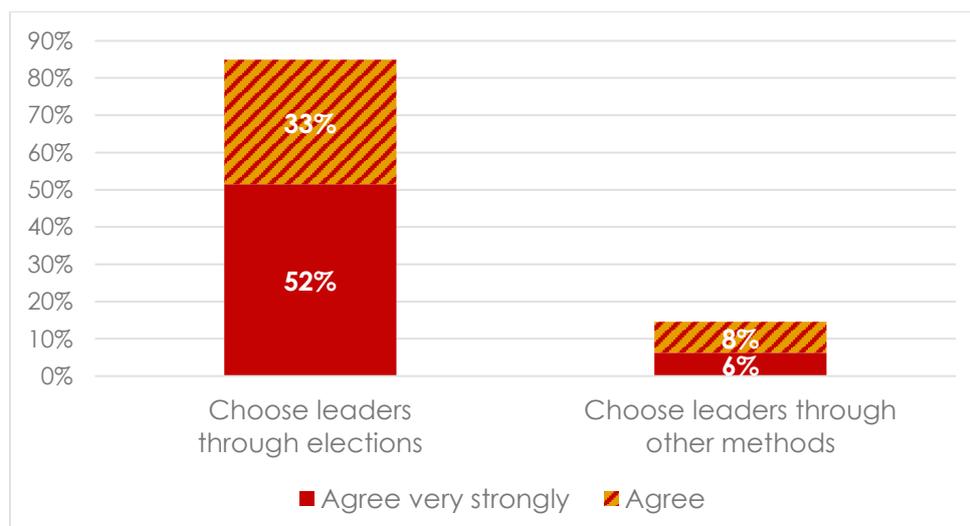
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Support for democracy | Burundi | 2014**



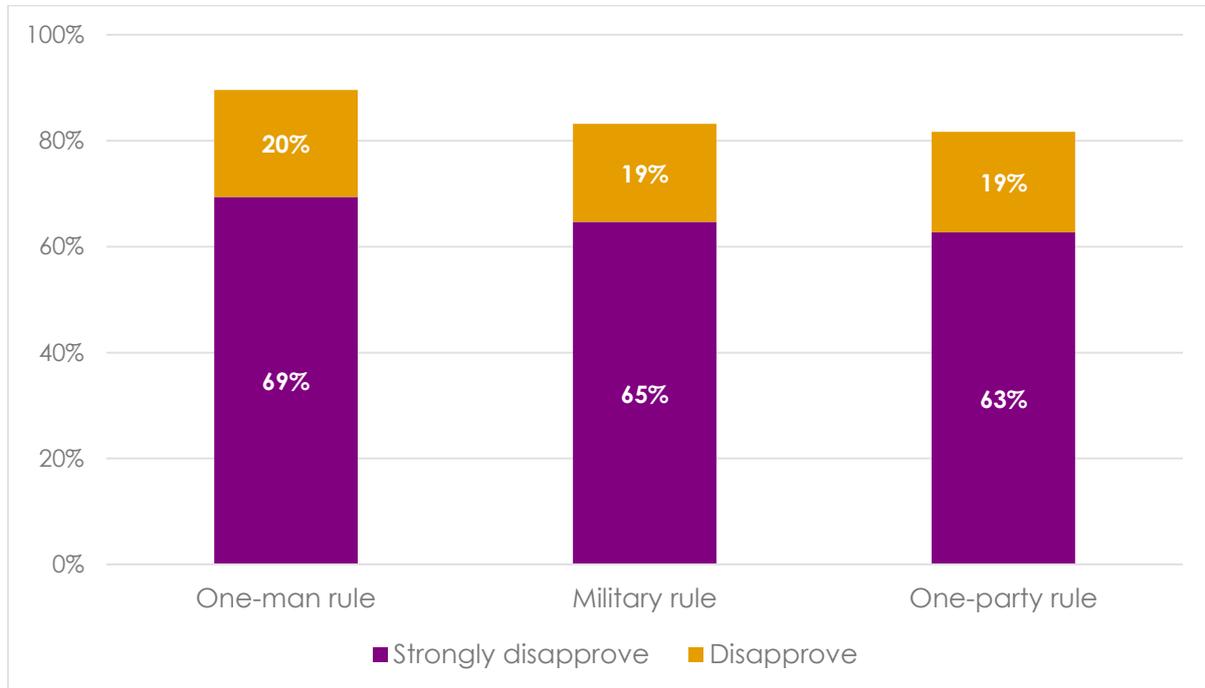
**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your own opinion?  
 Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.  
 Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.  
 Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.  
 Note: Due to rounding, numbers may not always total 100%.

**Figure 2: Choose leaders through elections vs. other methods | Burundi | 2014**



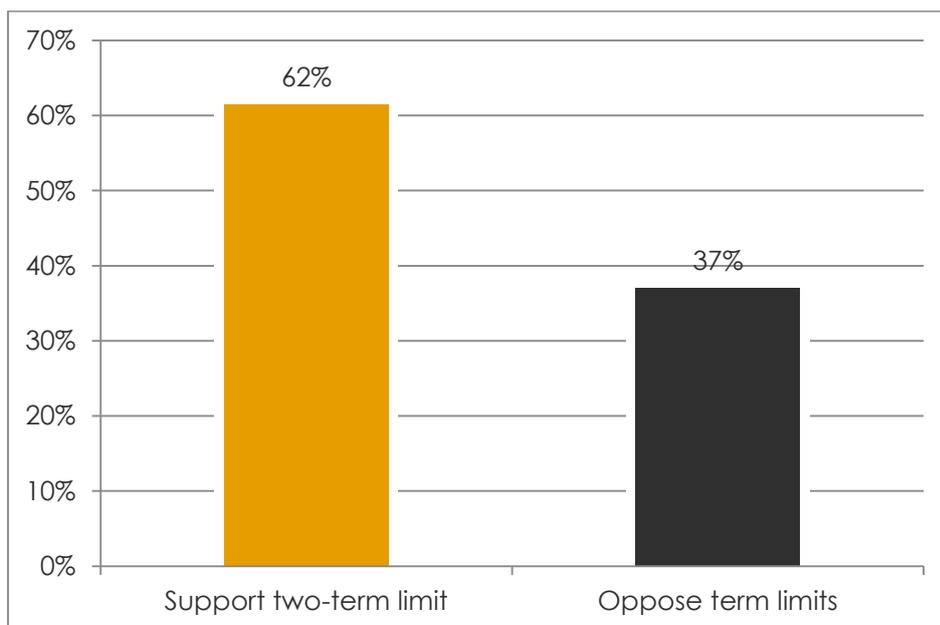
**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?  
 Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.  
 Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.  
 (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

**Figure 3: Rejection of non-democratic alternatives** | Burundi | 2014



**Respondents were asked:** *There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything? The army comes in to govern the country? Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office? (% who "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove" of each option)*

**Figure 4: Support for presidential term limits** | Burundi | 2014



**Respondents were asked:** *Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement 1: The Constitution should limit the president to serving a maximum of two terms in office. Statement 2: There should be no constitutional limit on how long the president can serve. (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)*



**For more information, please contact:**

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