

News release

Majority of Burundians support presidential term limits

Six of 10 Burundians (62%) support limiting presidential terms to two – a remarkable evolution of public opinion between 2012 and 2014.

In 2012, only 51% of Burundian citizens supported presidential term limits. The larger new majority may indicate that as the country approaches elections, and in response to public debate on the issue, the number of people opposed to a third presidential term is increasing.

Public debate on the issue has raised significant controversy. The political opposition and civil society are firmly opposed to a third presidential term, whereas the ruling party says the government and appropriate authorities should decide the question. In March 2014, the government submitted to the National Assembly a proposed constitutional amendment designed to enable the current president of the Republic, Pierre Nkurunziza, to seek a third term. The amendment was rejected by a one-vote margin.

Key findings

- A majority of 62% of Burundians favour a two-term limit on presidential mandates.
- A significant gap exists between urban and rural residents. Support for term limits is overwhelming (82%) among urbanites and less strong (59%) among rural residents.
- Men (67%) support term limits more strongly than women (56%).

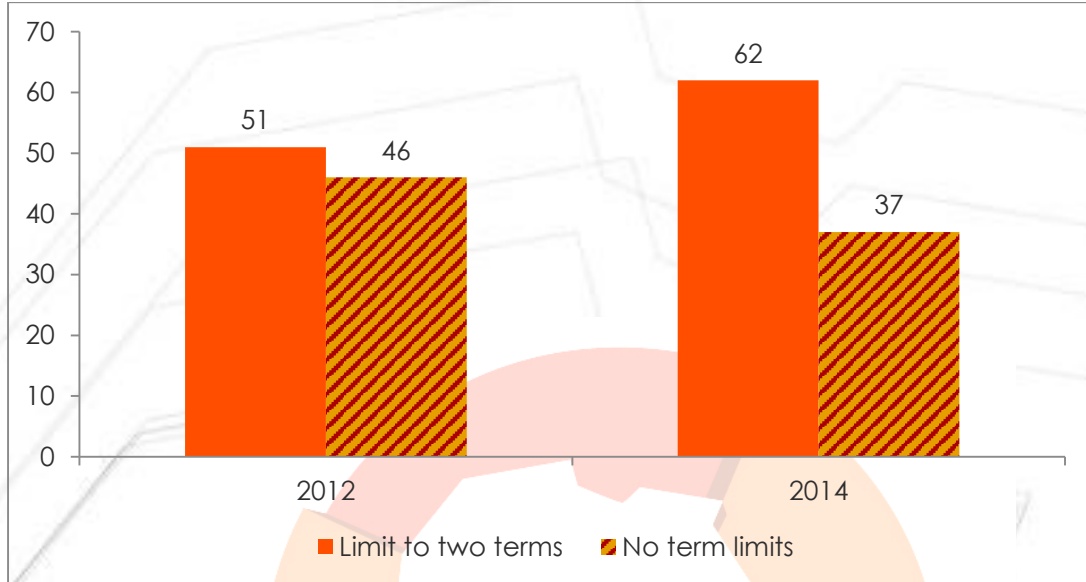
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is an African-led, 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 are currently under way (2014-2015). 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 Groupe de Recherche et d'Appui au Développement des Initiatives Démocratiques (GRADIS), interviewed 1,200 adult Burundians in September-October 2014. A sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level. A previous survey was conducted in Burundi in 2012.

Charts

Figure 1: Trend in public opinion on presidential term limits | 2012-2014



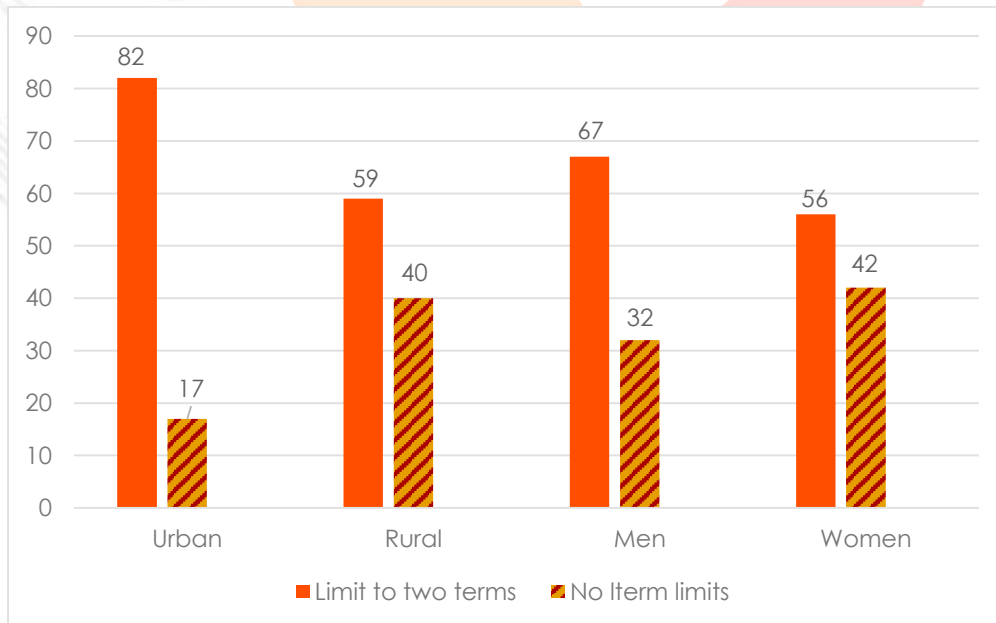
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.

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”)

Figure 2: Views on presidential term limits | by residence location and gender





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