

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire  
19 October 2015

## News release

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### Election update: Ivoirians mistrust electoral commission, fear violence

As Côte d'Ivoire approaches its first presidential election since the violent 2010-2011 election crisis, many Ivoirians harbour mistrust of the Independent Electoral Commission and are concerned about the fairness and security of the election environment, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

The survey, conducted in August-September 2014, suggests that Ivoirians are sharply divided in their views on the direction of the country and the state of the national economy. Results show strong mistrust of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), and only a minority of citizens believe that the last parliamentary elections in 2011 were mostly or completely free and fair.

Sizeable proportions of Ivoirians express concerns about the election environment, including the bribery of voters, biased media coverage, the likelihood of unfair vote counting, and threats to voters at polling stations.

President Ouattara enjoys fairly high approval ratings, and public trust in the president is higher than in the ruling coalition or the opposition. A slim majority of Ivoirians say they feel "completely free" to vote as they choose.

Survey findings related to Côte d'Ivoire elections and democracy are detailed in **Afrobarometer dispatches No. 51 and 42**, available at [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org).

### Key findings

- Ivoirians are divided as to whether the country is going in the right direction (57%) or the wrong direction (41%) (Figure 1). Views about the current state of the national economy are also mixed, with 45% saying conditions are "very" or "fairly" good and 38% saying conditions are "very" or "fairly" bad.
- Overwhelming majorities say that elections are the best way to select leaders (87%) and that a good citizen in a democracy should always vote in elections (86%). But only 55% believe that the 2011 legislative elections were "completely free and fair" or "free and fair with minor problems."
- A majority of Ivoirians (57%) have no trust or "just a little" trust in the Independent Election Commission (CEI) (Figure 2).
- More than half of Ivoirians think that bribery of voters occurs "always" or "often" (54%) and that the media "never" or only "sometimes" covers election candidates fairly (51%). Many Ivoirians also believe that voters are "always" or "often" threatened at the polls (42%) and that votes are "never" or only "sometimes" counted fairly (40%) (Figure 3).
- Nearly half of Ivoirians (48%) fear election-related intimidation or violence "somewhat" or "a lot," second only to Nigerians (50%) among 13 countries in the

ECOWAS region (Figure 4). Only 54% feel “completely free” to vote for the candidate of their choice.

- Almost two-thirds (64%) of citizens approve of President Ouattara's performance in office, but fewer say they trust him “a lot” (40%) or “somewhat” (14%).

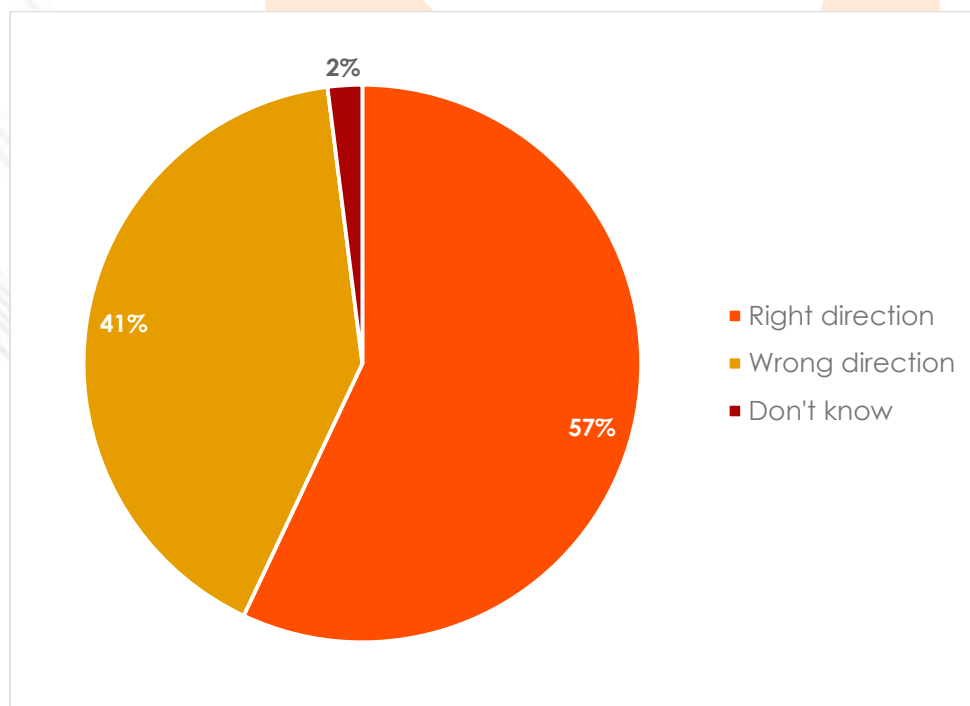
## Afrobarometer

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 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 Côte d'Ivoire, led by Centre de Recherche et de Formation sur le Développement Intégré (CREFDI), interviewed 1,200 adult Ivoirians in August and September 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 Côte d'Ivoire in 2013.

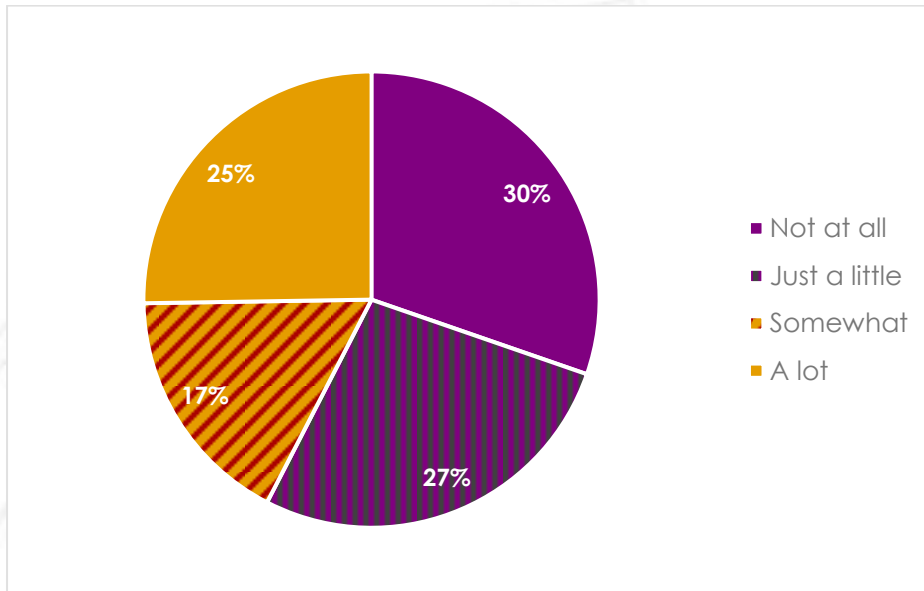
## Charts

Figure 1: Overall direction of the country | Côte d'Ivoire | 2014



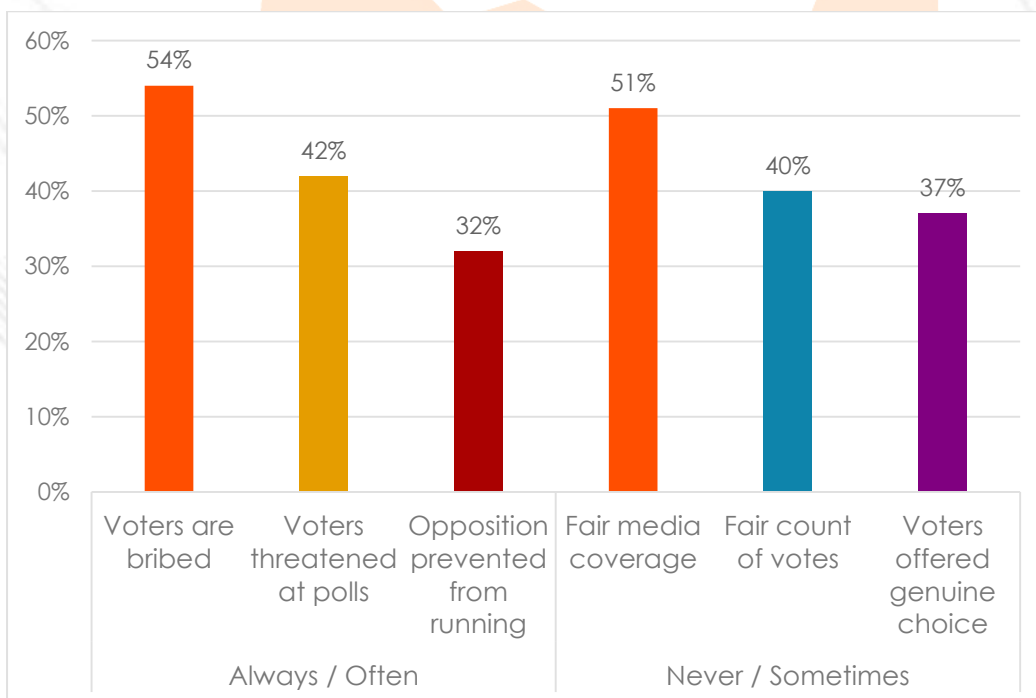
**Respondents were asked:** *Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?*

**Figure 2: Trust in the Independent Election Commission (CEI) | Côte d'Ivoire | 2014**



**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust the Independent Election Commission (CEI)?

**Figure 3: Perceptions of the election environment | Côte d'Ivoire | 2014**



**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, how often do the following things occur in this country's elections?

Voters are bribed?

Voters are threatened with violence at the polls?

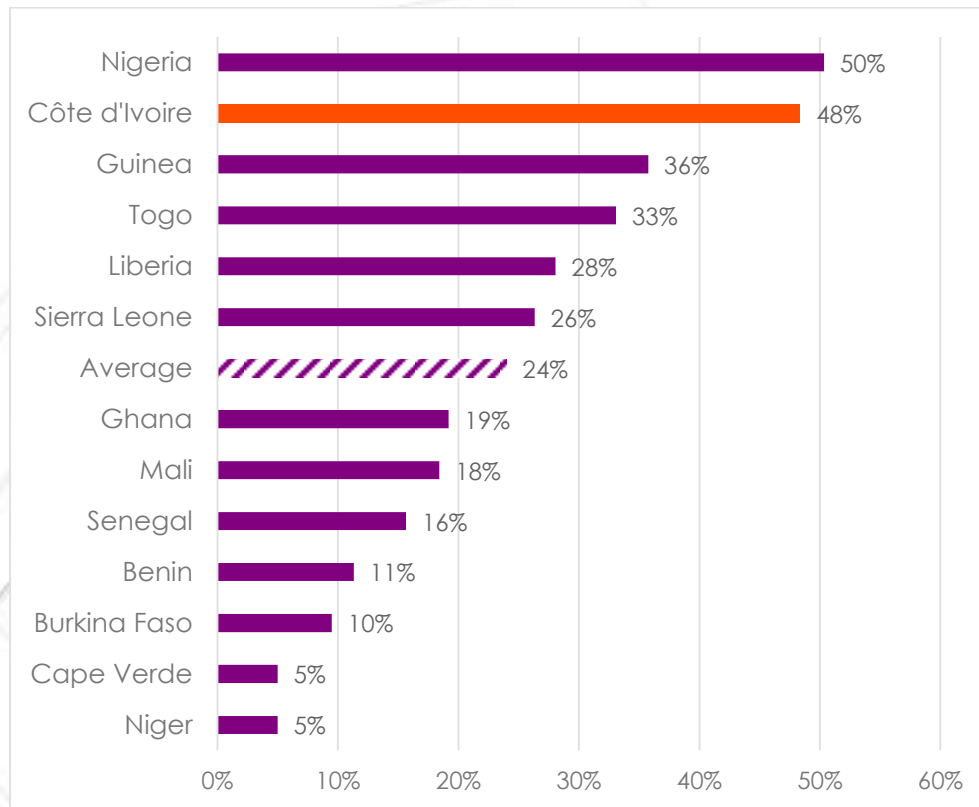
Opposition candidates are prevented from running for office?

The media provides fair coverage of all candidates?

Votes are counted fairly?

Voters are offered a genuine choice in the elections?

**Figure 4: Fear of intimidation or violence during election campaigns | 13 ECOWAS countries | 2014/2015**



**Respondents were asked:** *During election campaigns in this country, how much do you personally fear becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence? (% "somewhat" or "a lot")*

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