

CLEEN Foundation
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News release

Unemployment, poverty, and religious beliefs drive some Nigerians to join extremist groups, according to Afrobarometer survey

Nigerians say unemployment, poverty, and religious beliefs are the main reasons why some citizens join extremist groups, a recent Afrobarometer survey indicates.

The survey reveals that a majority of Nigerians believe international extremist groups are involved in supporting and assisting the extremist groups that have launched attacks and kidnappings in Nigeria.

A majority of Nigerians praise the efforts of government and the Nigerian armed forces in combating armed extremism in the country. They suggest the best ways for the government to address the problem is by strengthening the military response or military capabilities, improving the economy, and creating jobs.

The findings are being released in a period when security concerns have been raised following the African Union's warning that more than 6,000 dislodged Africans who fought for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) could be returning to West Africa to join and try to strengthen Boko Haram.

Key findings

- Nigerians say the main reasons why citizens join extremist groups are unemployment (cited by 31% of respondents), poverty (27%), and their religious beliefs (11%) (Figure 1).
- More than half (52%) of Nigerians believe "most" or "all" international extremist groups are involved in supporting and assisting the extremist groups in Nigeria (Figure 2). One-third (33%) of respondents say the same about senior officials in the federal and central government and members of the National Assembly.
- A large majority (72%) say Nigerian armed forces are handling the insurgency in the North Eastern part of the country "better" or "much better" compared to a year ago; 12% think otherwise (Figure 3).
- Three-fourths of Nigerians say the government has been "somewhat effective" (39%) or "very effective" (35%) in addressing the problem of armed extremists in the country (Figure 4).
- Nigerians say the best ways for the government to effectively address the problem of armed extremists is by strengthening the military response or military capabilities, improving the economy and creating jobs, and working together with traditional and religious leaders to address the issue (Figure 5).

Afrobarometer

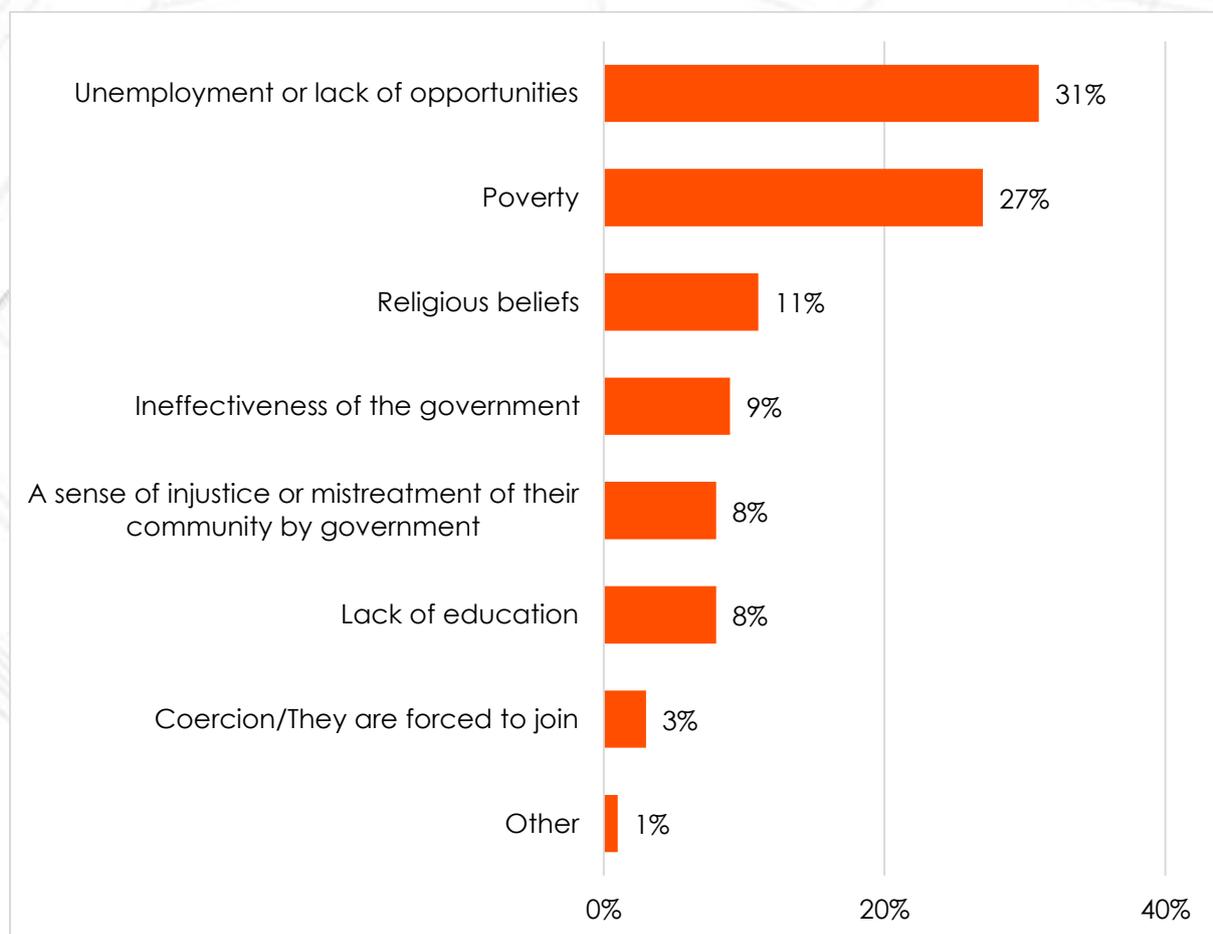
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 35 countries in Africa. Six rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2015, and Round 7 surveys (2016/2018) are currently underway. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-

face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer national partners in Nigeria, CLEEN Foundation and Practical Sampling International, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,600 adult Nigerians between 26 April and 10 May 2017. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Nigeria in 1999, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2012, and 2014.

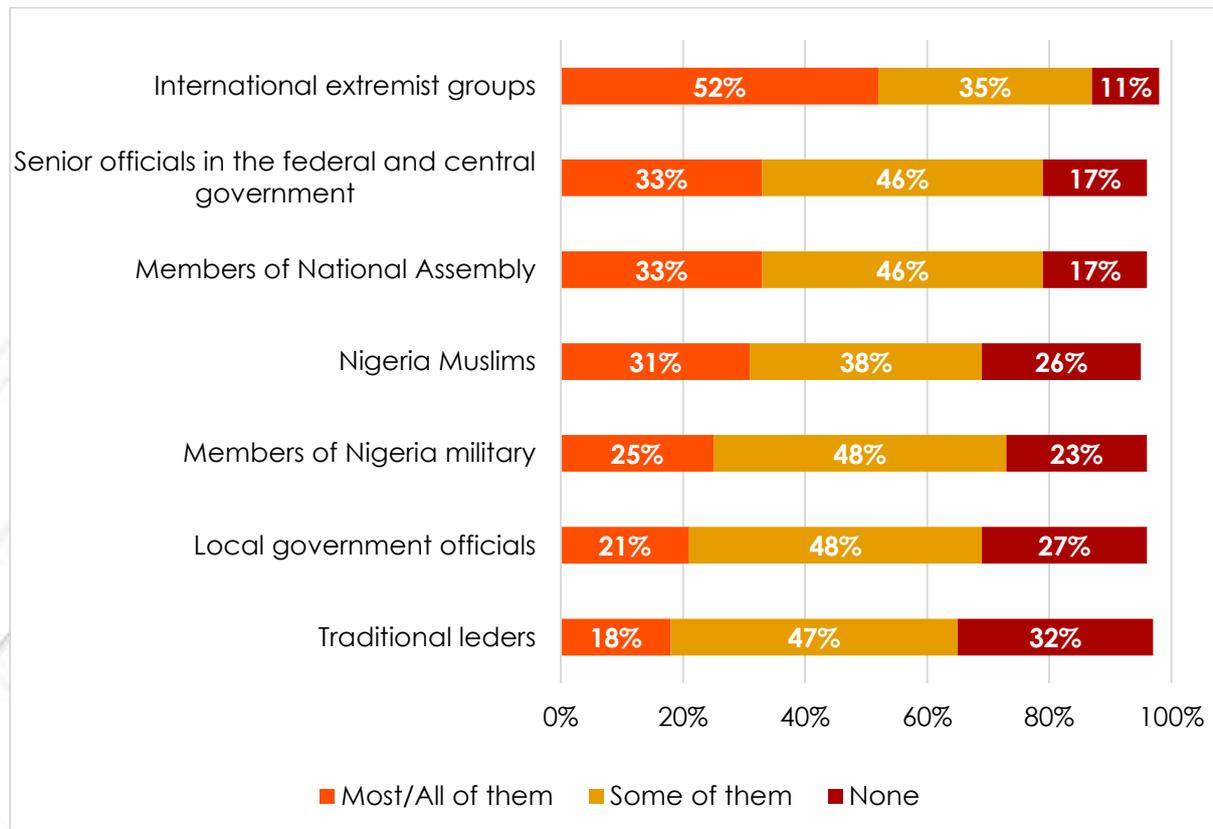
Charts

Figure 1: Reasons why Nigerians join extremist groups | Nigeria | 2017



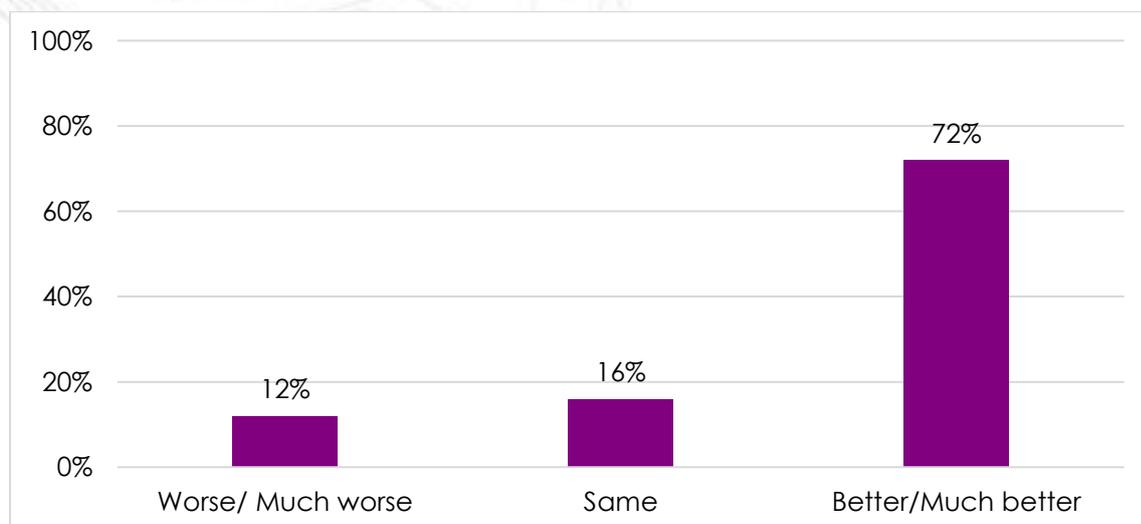
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what is the main reason why some Nigerians join extremist groups?

Figure 2: Who supports and assists extremist groups? | Nigeria | 2017



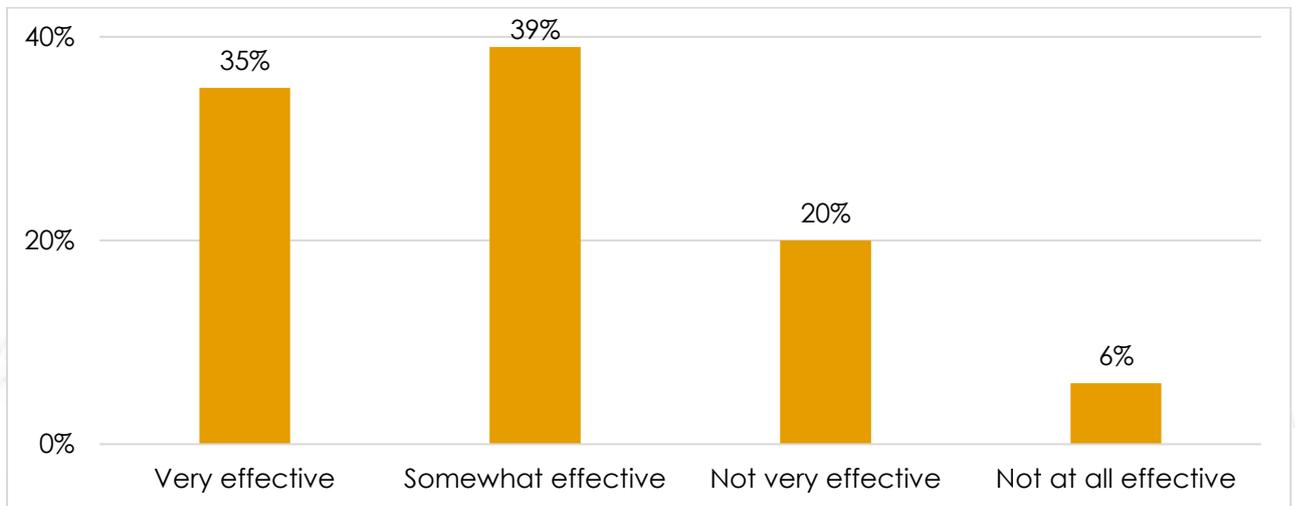
Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in supporting and assisting the extremist groups that have launched attacks and kidnappings in Nigeria, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

Figure 3: Armed forces' performance in handling insurgency compared to a year ago | Nigeria | 2017



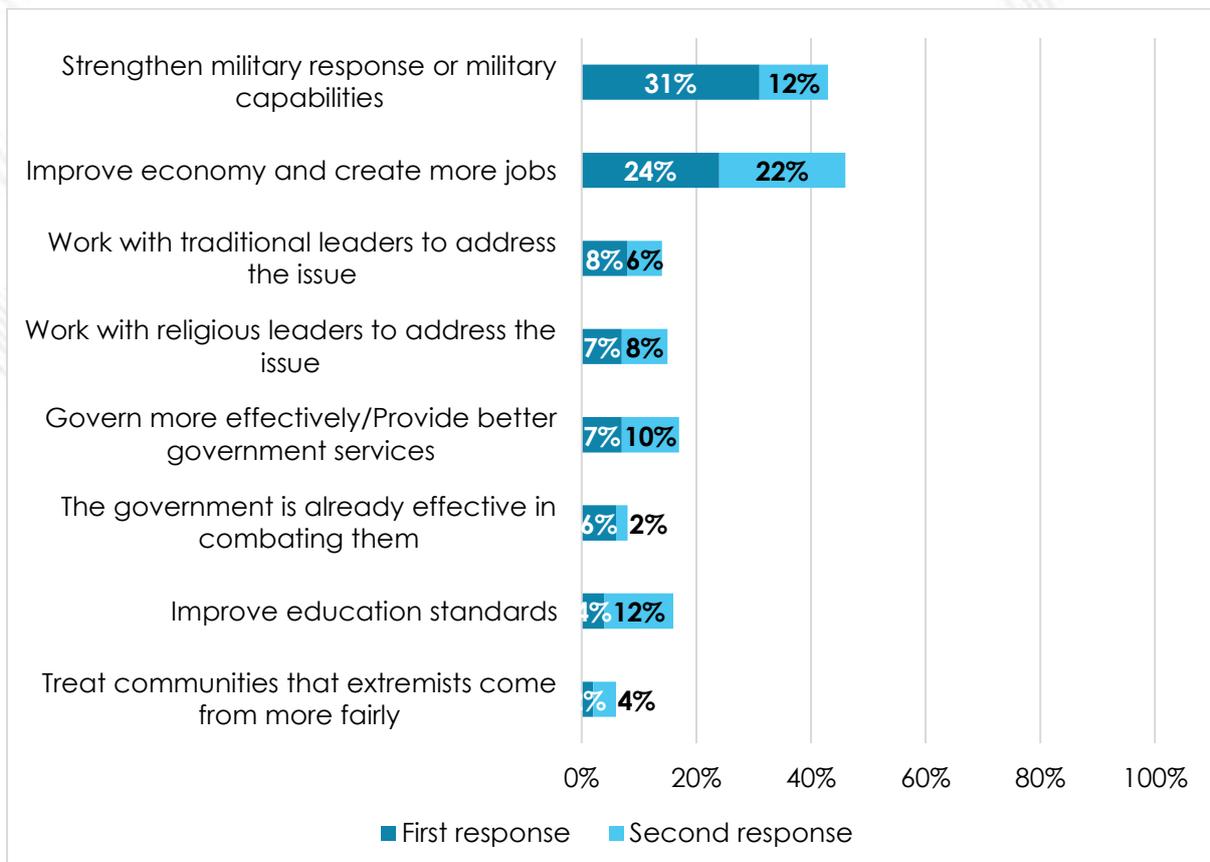
Respondents were asked: How would you rate the performance of the Nigerian armed forces in handling the insurgency in the North Eastern part of the country compared to 12 months ago?

Figure 4: How well government is handling armed extremism | Nigeria | 2017



Respondents were asked: How effective do you think the Nigerian government has been in its efforts to address the problem of armed extremists in this country?

Figure 5: Most effective ways of addressing the problem of armed extremists | Nigeria | 2017



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what do you think would be the best way for the government to be more effective in addressing the problem of armed extremists in our country?

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