

Afrobarometer Network
Accra, Ghana
15 November 2017

News release

Zimbabweans trust army but reject military rule, support democracy

Zimbabwe's political crisis will play out against a backdrop of substantial public trust in the army but a clear rejection of military rule in favour of democracy.

Almost two-thirds of Zimbabweans said in an Afrobarometer survey in January-February 2017 that they trust the army at least "somewhat." But even more said they disapprove of military rule and prefer democracy over any other political system.

Importantly, respondents overwhelmingly said they feel "not very free" or "not at all free" to criticize the army.

Key findings

- Six in 10 Zimbabweans (64%) said they trust the army "somewhat" or "a lot." But only 23% said they feel "somewhat" or "completely" free to criticize the army (Figure 1).
- More than two-thirds (69%) of Zimbabweans said they disapprove – including 43% who "strongly disapprove" – of military rule. Strong majorities also rejected one-man rule (78%) and one-party rule (65%) and said they prefer democracy over any other political system (75%) (Figure 2).
- Only 38% of respondents said they were "fairly" or "very" satisfied with the way democracy was working in Zimbabwe (Figure 3).

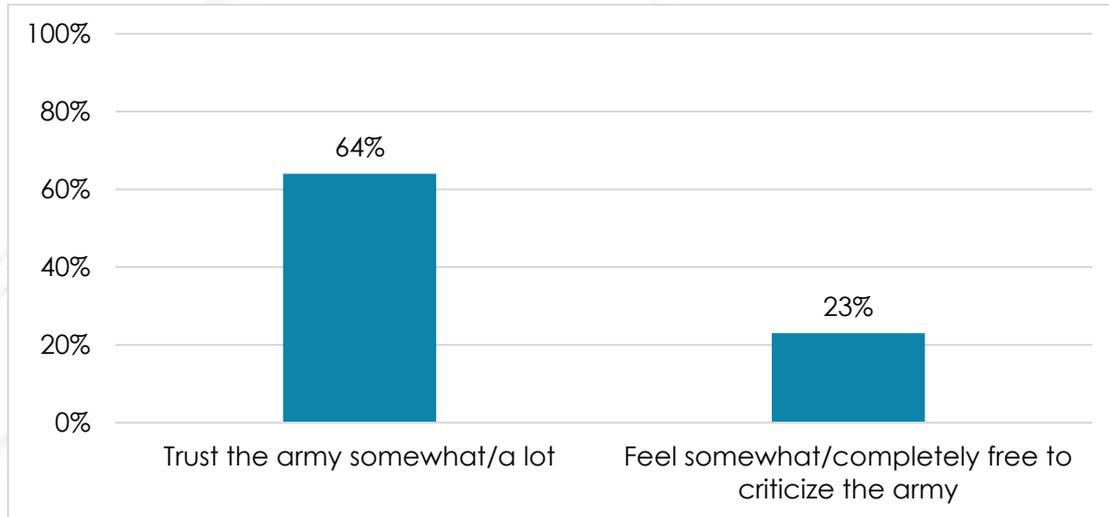
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in Africa. Six rounds of surveys were conducted in up to 37 African countries between 1999 and 2016, 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 team in Zimbabwe, led by the Mass Public Opinion Institute, interviewed 1,200 adult Zimbabweans between 28 January and 10 February 2017. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/- 3% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Zimbabwe in 1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2014.

Charts

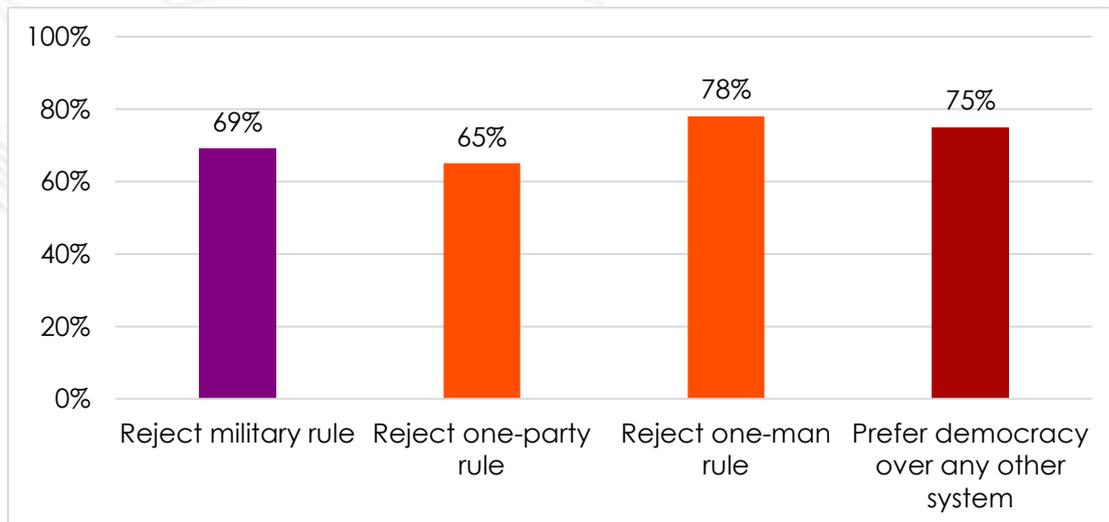
Figure 1: Popular trust and freedom to criticize the army | Zimbabwe | 2017



Respondents were asked:

- How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The army? The president?
- In this country, how free do you feel to criticize the following: The army? Robert Mugabe?

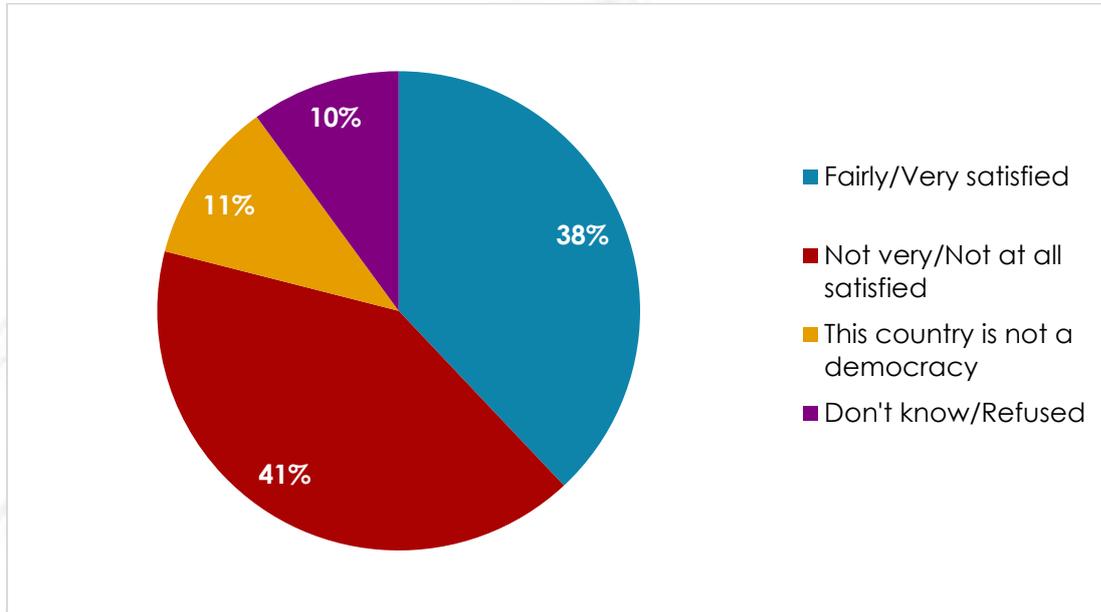
Figure 2: Support for democracy and rejection of non-democratic alternatives | Zimbabwe | 2017



Respondents were asked:

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

Figure 3: Satisfaction with democracy | Zimbabwe | January-February 2017



Respondents were asked: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Zimbabwe?

For more information, please contact:

Mass Public Opinion Institute
Eldred V. Masunungure
Telephone: +263772100409
Email: director@mpoi.org.zw

Visit us online at:
<http://www.mpoi.net/>
www.afrobarometer.org

Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

