
Afrobarometer Round 6

**New data from
across Africa**



Accra, Ghana
15 September 2016

News release

Job performance of MPs, local councillors: Are representatives serving Africa's voters or themselves? (Afrobarometer findings)

Members of Parliament and local government councillors across Africa have earned little trust and largely negative performance ratings from their constituents, a new report from Afrobarometer shows.

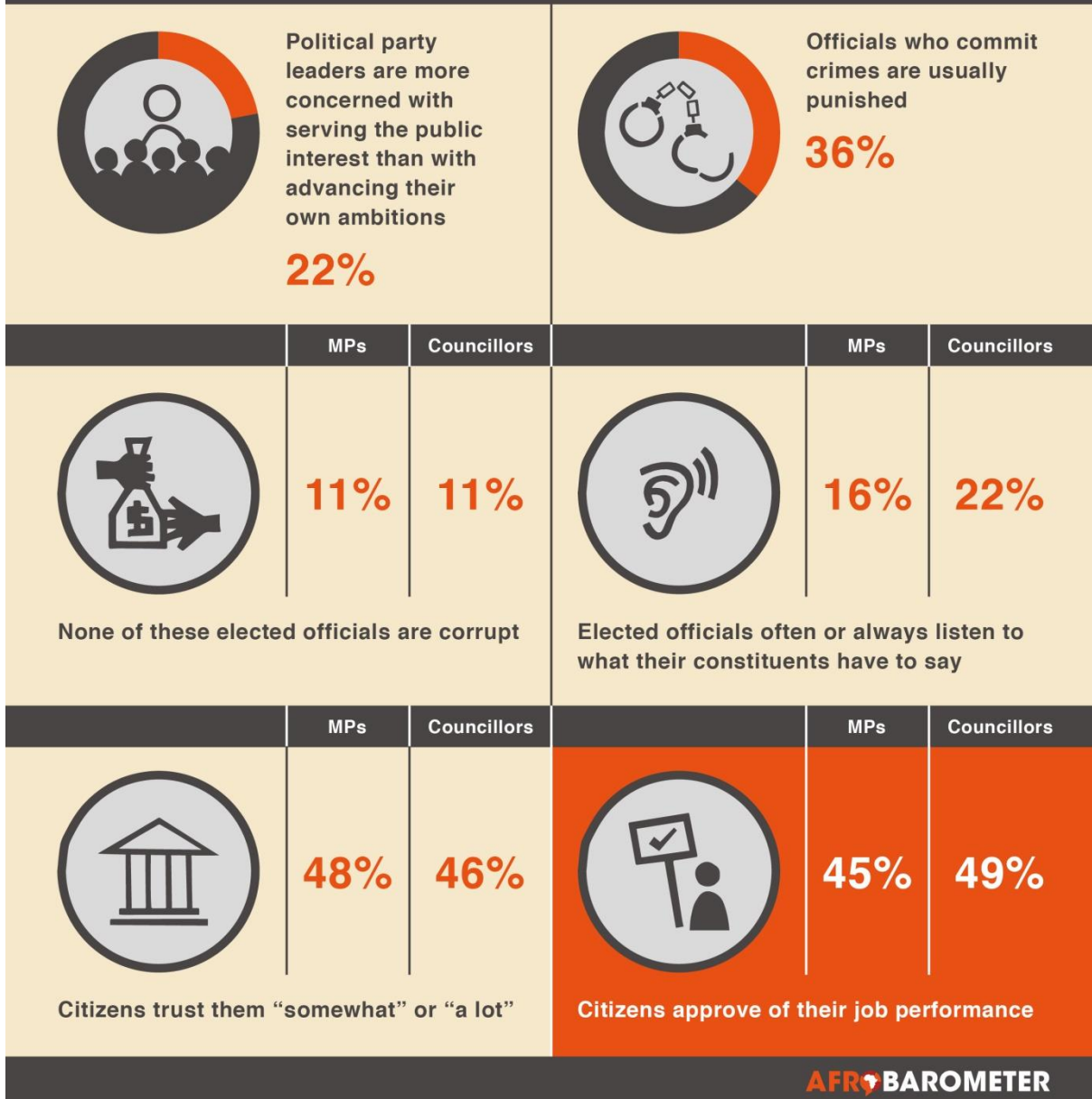
Complaining of increasing official corruption and impunity, most Africans say their political leaders are not interested in listening to their constituents' views and are more concerned with advancing their own ambitions than with serving the people.

The critical assessment, based on almost 54,000 interviews in 36 African countries, is detailed in a report released on the International Day of Democracy (15 September). The report (Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 115) is available at <http://globalreleases.afrobarometer.org>.

Key findings

- Across 36 African countries, fewer than half of respondents say they trust their MPs (48%) and local councillors (46%) "somewhat" or "a lot." Among 12 public institutions and leaders, MPs and local councillors rank eighth and ninth in public trust (Figure 1).
- Large majorities say at least "some" of their MPs and local government councillors are corrupt, including one-third of citizens who see "most" or "all" of these elected representatives as corrupt (Figure 2). Across 18 countries tracked over the past decade, public perceptions of corruption have increased for both MPs (by 8 percentage points) and local government councillors (by 6 points).
- A majority (59%) of citizens say that officials who commit crimes "often" or "always" go unpunished. In 18 countries tracked over the past decade, this perception has increased by 13 percentage points.
- About three-fourths of Africans say their MPs and councillors "never" or "only sometimes" listen to what their constituents have to say.
- More than two-thirds (69%) of Africans believe that political party leaders are more concerned with pursuing their own political ambitions than with representing the people's interests (Figure 3).
- Fewer than half of Africans approve of the job performance of their MPs (45%) and local government councillors (49%) (Figure 4). Disapproval is especially high among citizens who see their leaders as driven by personal ambition rather than public service, as corrupt, or as uninterested in what their constituents have to say.

Do elected representatives make the grade? Citizen perceptions
 36 African countries | 2014/2015

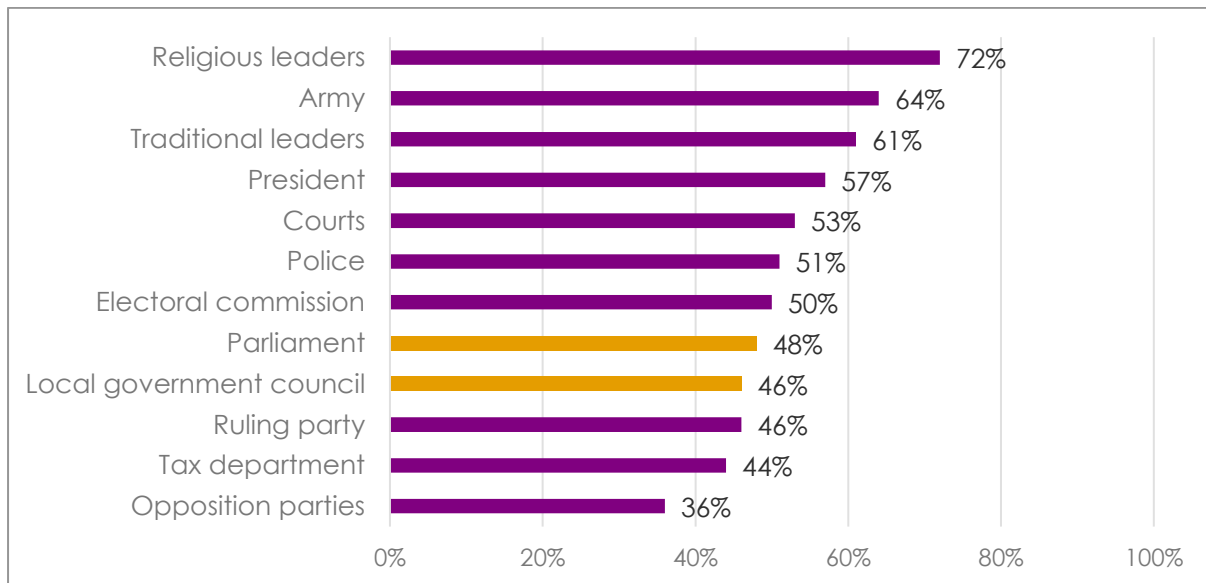


Afrobarometer

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 findings from Round 6 surveys (2014/2015) are currently being released. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2% (for samples of 2,400) or +/-3% (for samples of 1,200) at a 95% confidence level. Interested readers should visit www.afrobarometer.org for previous and upcoming releases.

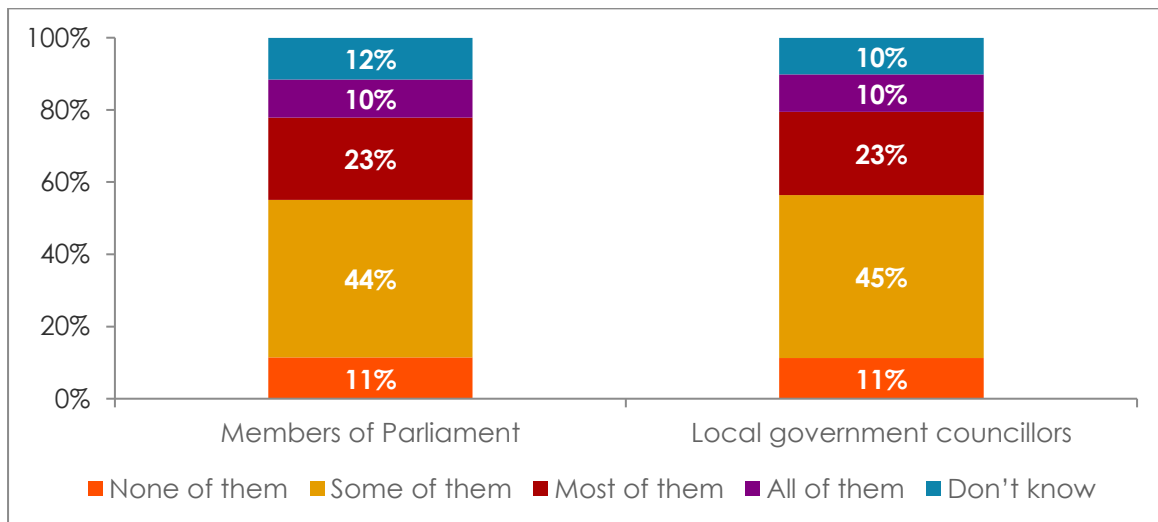
Figures

Figure 1: Trust in leaders and government officials | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Parliament? Your local government council?¹ (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot") (Note: The question about trust in Parliament was not asked in Egypt.)

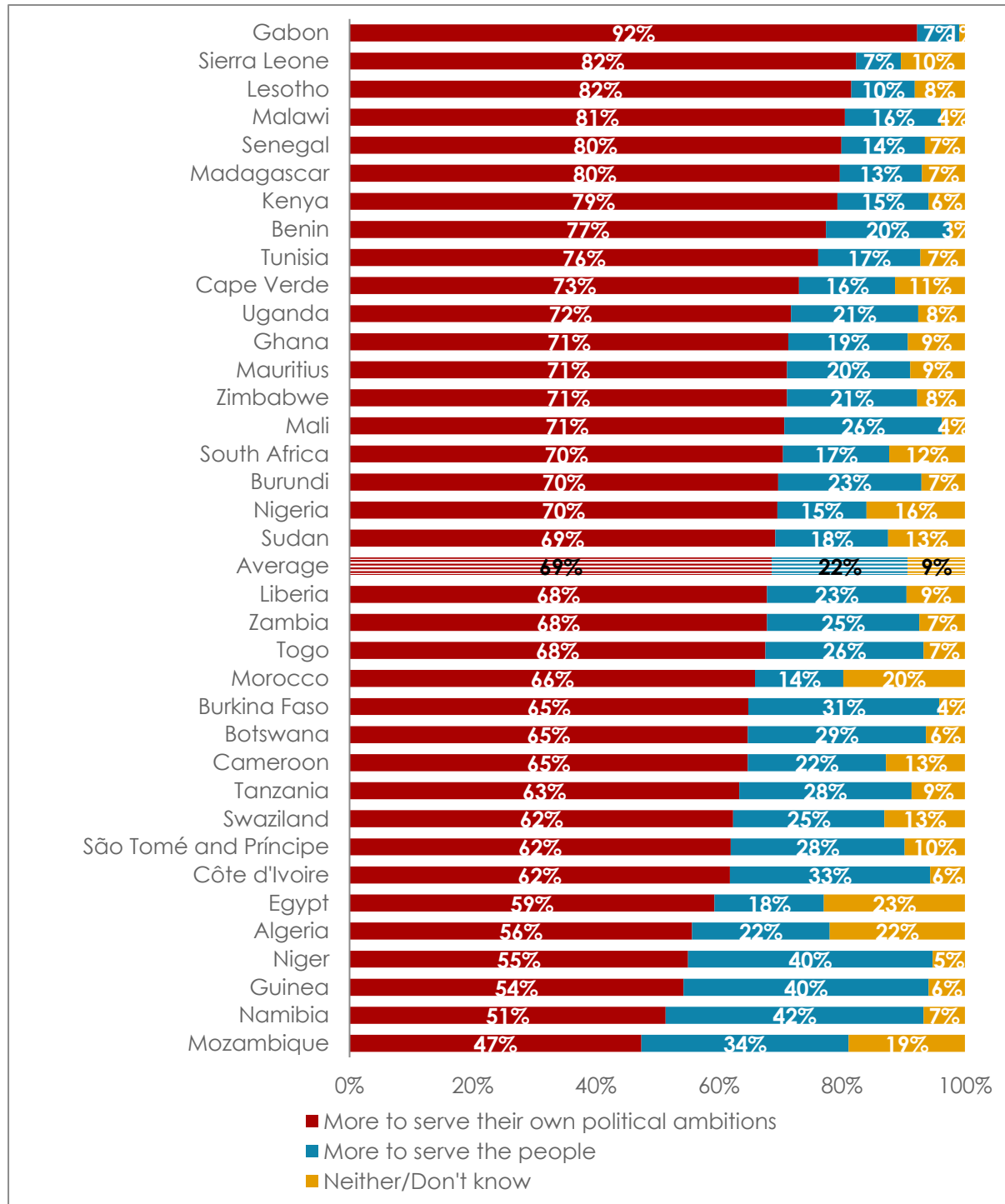
Figure 2: Perceived extent of corruption among MPs and local government councillors | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Members of Parliament? Local government councillors? (Notes: The question about parliamentarians was not asked in Egypt. The question about local government councillors was not asked in Malawi.)

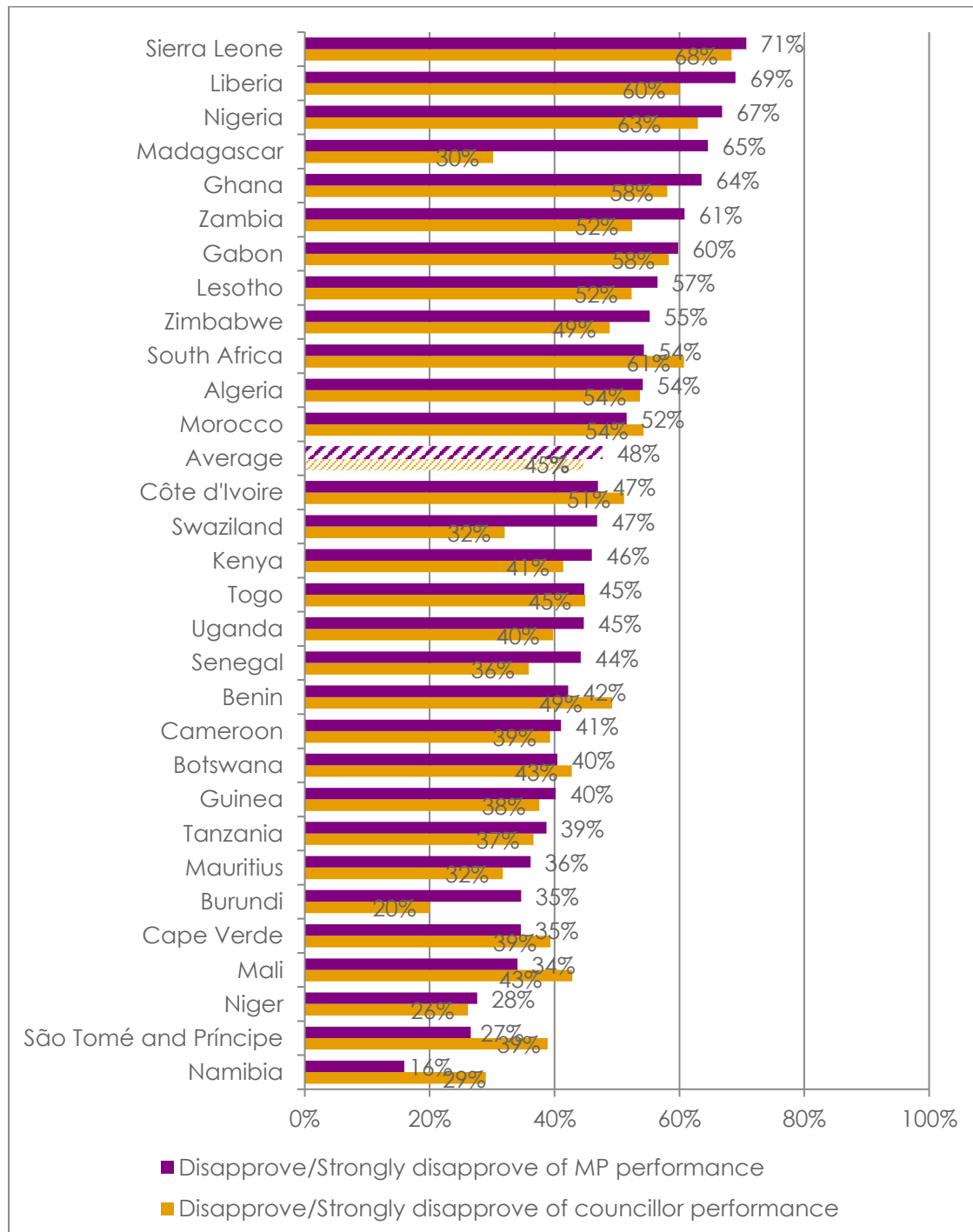
¹ Questions about parliaments and local government councils were adapted for national contexts, e.g. by asking about national assemblies, local district councils, etc.

Figure 3: Motivation of leaders of political parties | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: Do you think that leaders of political parties in this country are more concerned with serving the interests of the people, or more concerned with advancing their own political ambitions, or haven't you heard enough to say?

Figure 4: Disapproval of MP and local government councillor performance
 32 countries* | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Your member of Parliament? Your elected local government councillor?
 (* These performance questions were not asked about MPs in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Mozambique, and Tunisia. In addition, the question about local councillor performance was not asked in Malawi and Sudan.)



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