

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
19 November 2015

News release

Election update: Burkinabé trust electoral commission, incumbent leaders

As Burkina Faso approaches its first presidential election since popular protests ousted long-serving President Blaise Compaoré, Burkinabé express broad public support for the country's democratic process, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

The survey, conducted in April-May 2015, shows that most Burkinabé embrace choosing leaders through regular elections and consider it the duty of good citizens to vote. A majority of citizens trust the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) and believe that the last legislative elections in 2012 were mostly or completely free and fair. Burkinabé are less likely to fear election-related intimidation or violence than citizens in most countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Almost two-thirds of Burkinabé say their country is moving in the right direction.

On the other hand, almost half of citizens say that the national economy is doing "very" or "fairly" badly. Concerns about the election environment include bribery of voters, biased media coverage, and the possibility of unfair vote counting.

Interim President Michel Kafando enjoys strong approval ratings, and public trust in the president and Prime Minister Yacouba Isaac Zida is high. Trust in the parties associated with Compaore's allies is low.

Survey findings related to Burkina Faso's elections and democracy are detailed in **Afrobarometer dispatches No. 59 and 61**, available at www.afrobarometer.org.

Key findings

- A majority (63%) of Burkinabé believe the country is heading in the right direction, but almost half (49%) describe the nation's economic conditions as "very bad" or "fairly bad."
- Overwhelming majorities say that elections are the best way to select leaders (95%) and that a good citizen in a democracy should always vote in elections (90%).
- A majority of Burkinabé say they trust the CENI "a lot" (37%) or "somewhat" (23%). This high level of trust ranks third behind Niger and Mali among ECOWAS countries.
- More than half of Burkinabé think that bribery of voters occurs "always" or "often" (56%), and almost half (47%) say the media "never" or only "sometimes" covers election candidates fairly (Figure 2).
- Most Burkinabé (75%) do not fear election-related intimidation or violence; with 10% who fear this "somewhat" or "a lot," Burkina has one of the lowest levels of fear in the ECOWAS region (Figure 3). At the same time, only 57% feel "completely free" to vote for the candidate of their choice.

- More than four out of five citizens (84%) approve of interim President Kafando's performance in office, and sizeable majorities say they trust the president and the prime minister "a lot" or "somewhat." Trust in parties associated with Compaoré's allies is low (Figure 4).

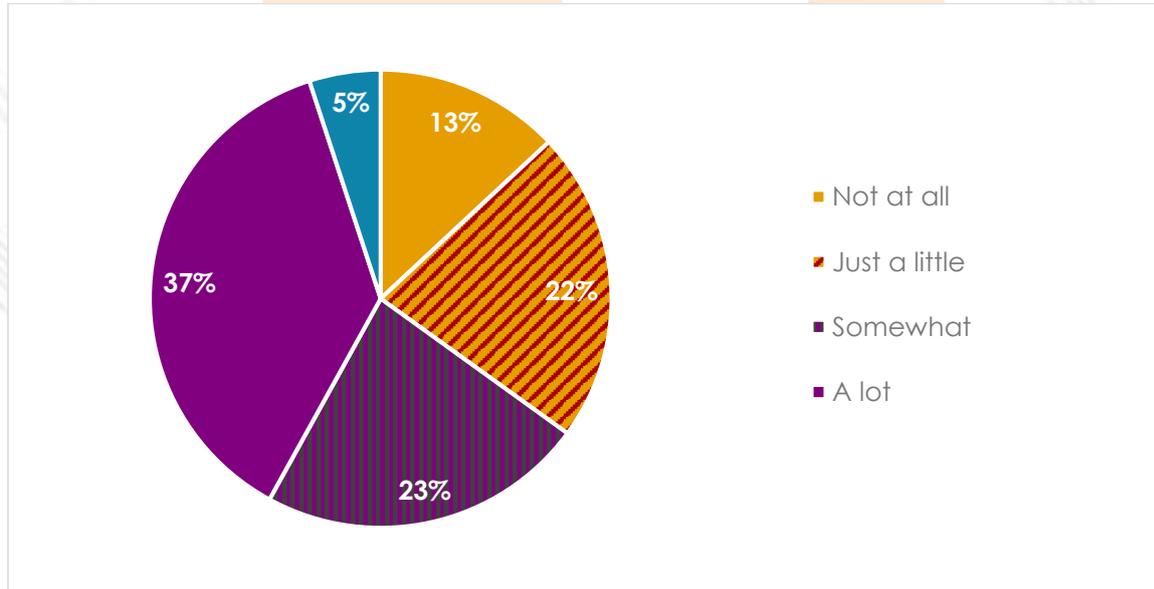
Afrobarometer

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 Burkina Faso, led by the Centre pour la Gouvernance Démocratique, interviewed 1,200 adult Burkinabé in April and May 2015. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level. A previous survey was conducted in Burkina Faso in 2012.

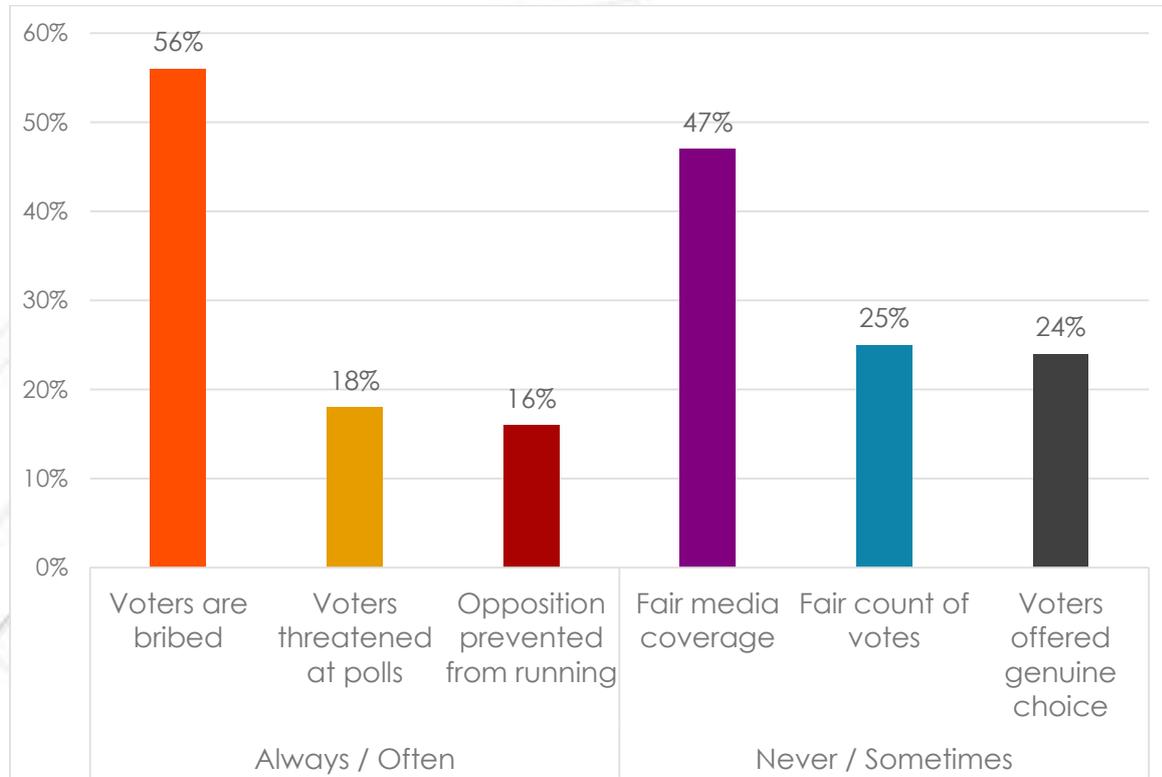
Charts

Figure 1: Trust in the National Independent Election Commission (CENI) | Burkina Faso | 2015



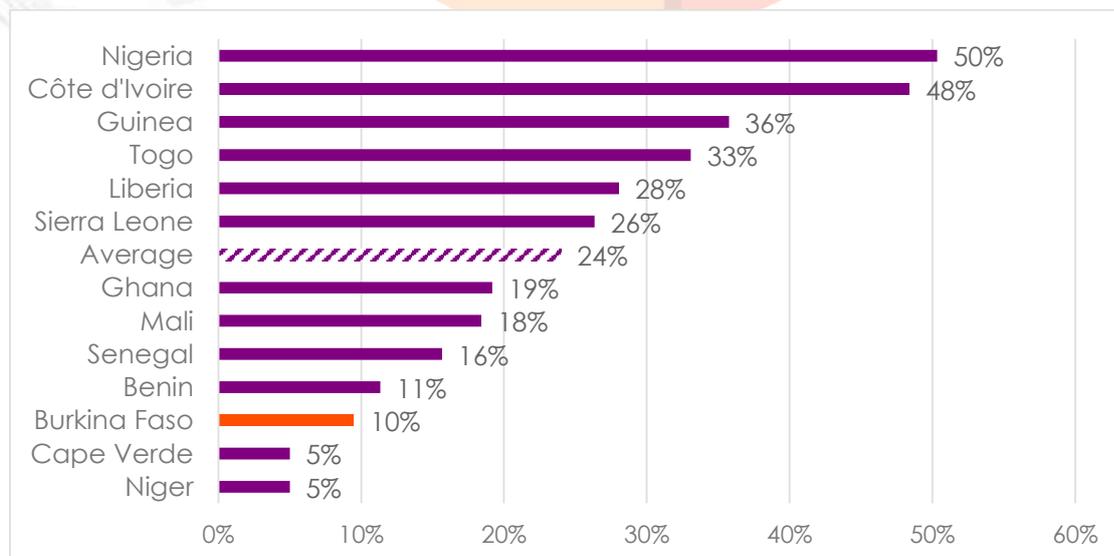
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust the National Independent Election Commission (CENI)?

Figure 2: Perceptions of the election environment | Burkina Faso | 2015



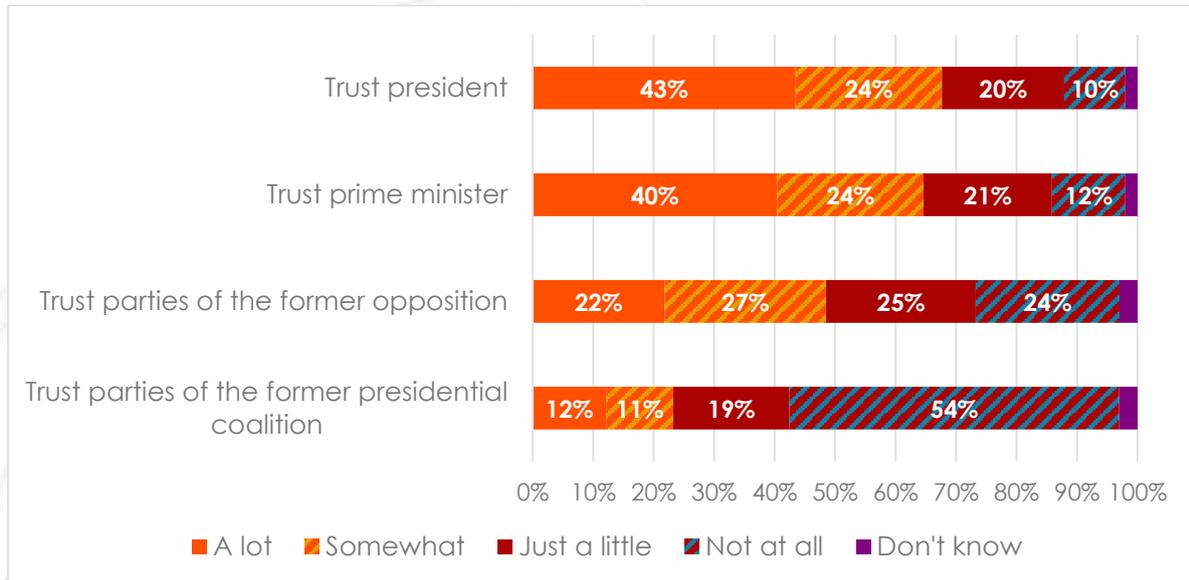
Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how often do the following things occur in this country's elections: Voters are bribed? Voters are threatened with violence at the polls? Opposition candidates are prevented from running for office? The media provides fair coverage of all candidates? Votes are counted fairly? Voters are offered a genuine choice in the elections?*

Figure 3: Fear of election-related intimidation or violence | 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? (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")*

Figure 4: Trust in the president, prime minister, ruling parties, and opposition parties
 | Burkina Faso | 2015



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The president? The prime minister? The parties of the former presidential coalition? The political parties of the former opposition?

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