



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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News release

Ethiopians support rule of law, concerned about impunity for officials who break the law, Afrobarometer survey shows

Ethiopians overwhelmingly favour a government that always follows the law, even when doing so runs counter to popular demand, according to the most recent Afrobarometer survey.

Similarly, a majority say the prime minister must always obey the laws and courts, even if he or she thinks they are wrong.

But popular faith in the rule of law confronts the widespread perception that officials who commit crimes often go unpunished and that people are often treated unequally under the law.

Key findings

- An overwhelming majority (86%) of Ethiopians say government actions must always follow the law; only 14% think that popular support should allow a government to do “whatever the people want” (Figure 1).
- More than two-thirds (68%) of citizens say the prime minister must always obey the laws and the courts, while three in 10 (31%) hold that he should not be bound by laws or court decisions that he thinks are wrong (Figure 2).
- More than half (53%) of Ethiopians think that officials who commit crimes “often” or “always” go unpunished. By contrast, only three in 10 (29%) say the same is true for ordinary citizens (Figure 3).
 - The perception that officials who break the law often go unpunished is more common among citizens with post-secondary education (65%) and urban residents (62%) than among those with less education (51%-53%) and rural dwellers (51%) (Figure 4).
- Almost half (45%) of Ethiopians say people are “often” or “always” treated unequally under the law, though a slim majority (53%) believe this “rarely” or “never” happens (Figure 5).

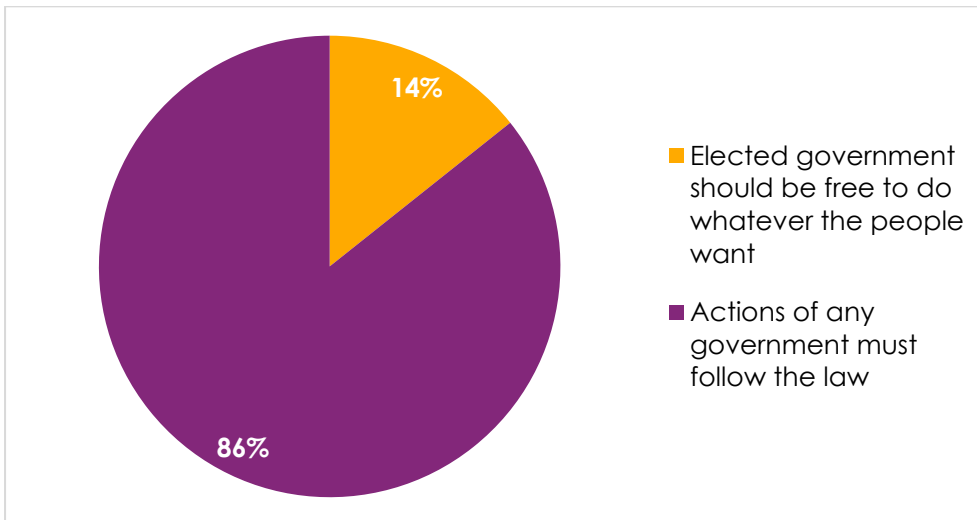
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2020 are planned in at least 35 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

These findings are drawn from a survey of 2,400 adult citizens conducted in December 2019-January 2020 by ABCON Research & Consulting with financial support from Freedom House. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. A previous survey was conducted in Ethiopia in 2013.

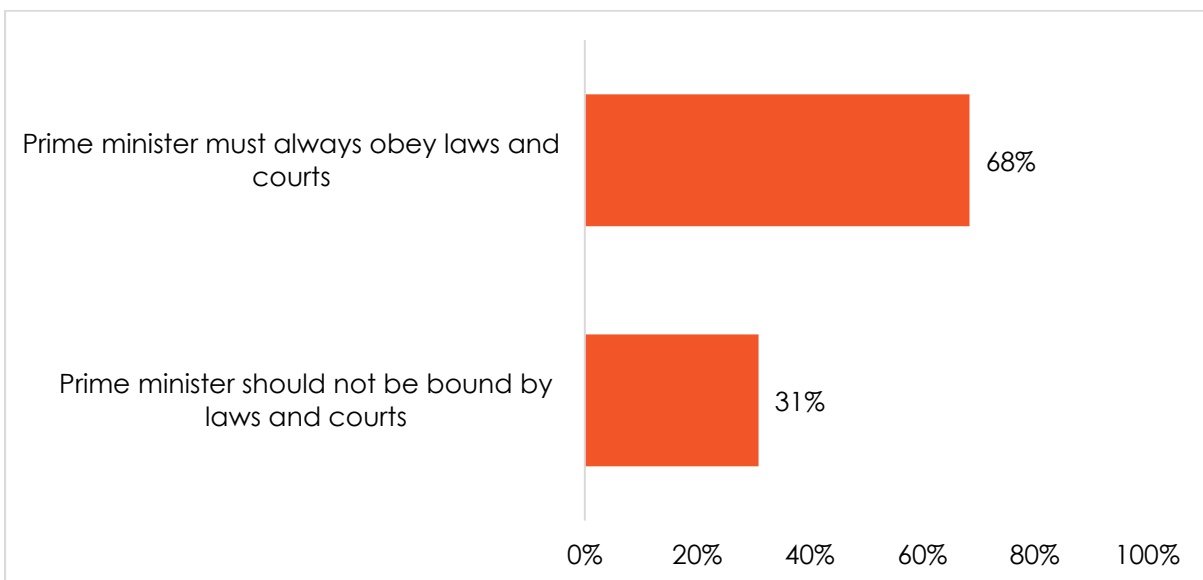
Charts

Figure 1: Should the government be bound by the law or the will of the people?
 | Ethiopia | 2020



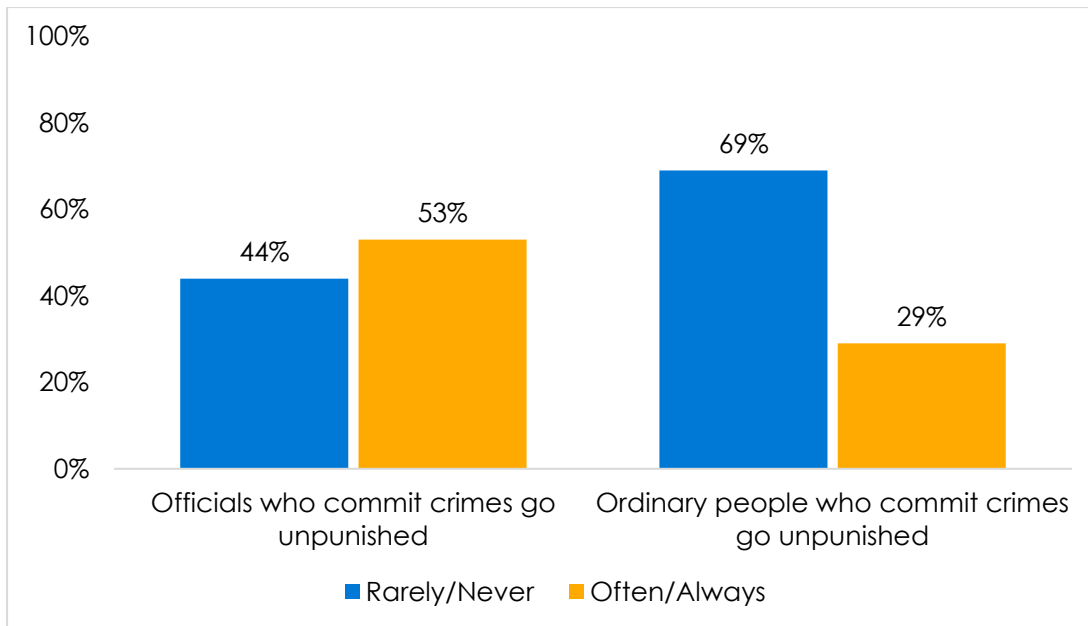
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: A government that enjoys the support of the people should be free to do whatever the people want, even if it is outside the law.
 Statement 2: The actions of any government, no matter how popular it is, must always follow the law.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 2: Prime minister must obey the law vs. is free to act | Ethiopia | 2020



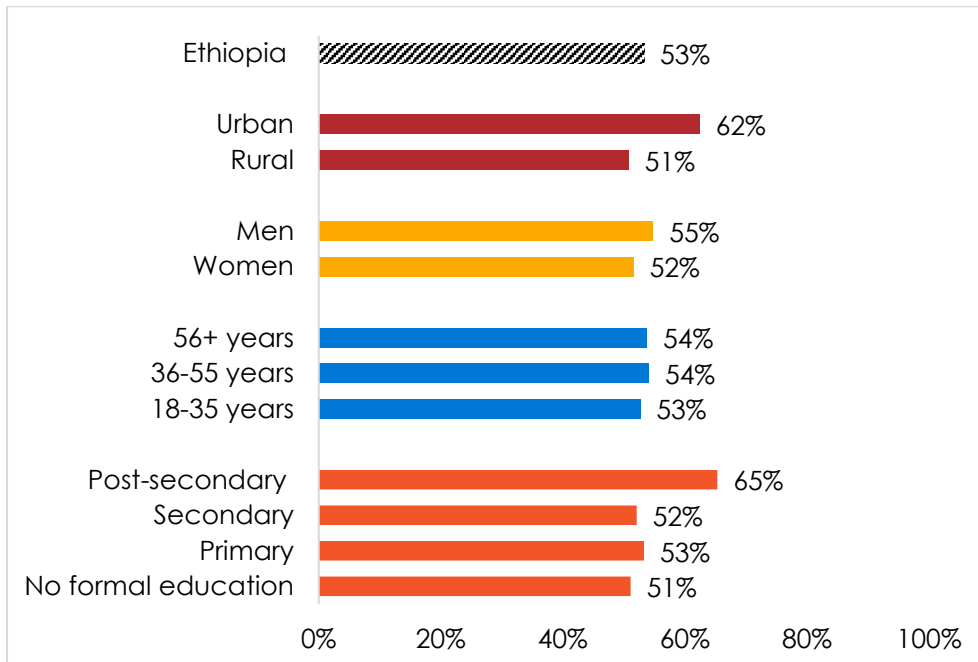
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: Since the prime minister was elected to lead the country, he should not be bound by laws or court decision that he thinks are wrong.
 Statement 2: The prime minister must always obey the laws and the courts, even if he thinks they are wrong.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 3: Impunity for officials vs. ordinary citizens | Ethiopia | 2020



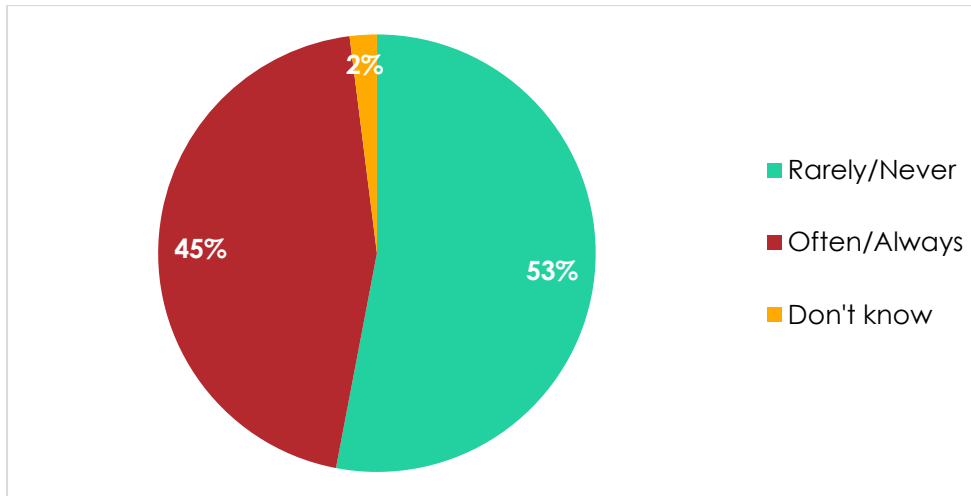
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often, in this country: Do officials who commit crimes go unpunished? Do ordinary people who break the law go unpunished?

Figure 4: Officials who commit crimes often/always go unpunished | by socio-demographic group | Ethiopia | 2020



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often, in this country, do officials who commit crimes go unpunished? (% who say "often" or "always")

Figure 5: How often are people treated unequally under the law? | Ethiopia | 2020



Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how often, in this country, are people treated unequally under the law?*

For more information, please contact:

Mulu Teka
National Investigator
ABCON – Research & Consulting
Tel +251 973 077 414, +251 115 531 470, +251 115 521 696, +251 115 537 061
mulu.mtg@gmail.com / info@abconltd.et
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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