



Monrovia, Liberia  
24 February 2021

## News release

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### **Liberians are unhappy about economic conditions, but divided on impact of protests, new Afrobarometer study shows**

Liberians hold gloomy views of the direction of the country, the country's economic conditions, and their personal living conditions. But they are split on whether protests are an effective way to influence political leaders and policies, a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

Majorities also say that the level of corruption in the country has increased, that citizens are treated unequally under the law, and that officials who commit crimes often go unpunished.

Recent protests in Liberia have highlighted complaints about poor economic conditions and high levels of corruption in the country. However, a majority say protests are disruptive and should be avoided. Citizens also think the police and protesters are equally to blame for violence that ensues during public protests.

#### **Key findings**

- Eight in 10 citizens (80%) say the country is going in “the wrong direction,” almost double the proportion recorded in 2012 (Figure 1).
- Fewer than half (45%) of Liberians describe their personal living conditions as “fairly good” or “very good” (Figure 2).
  - Only a quarter (24%) describe the country's economic conditions as “fairly good” or “very good.”
- About three-quarters (72%) of citizens say the level of corruption in the country increased “somewhat” or “a lot” during the previous year (Figure 3).
- Majorities of Liberians say that the police use excessive force when responding to protests (58%) and that protests are disruptive and must be avoided (55%) (Figure 4).
  - Half of citizens (50%) say public protests are an effective way to influence political leaders and policies, but almost as many (46%) disagree.
  - Only four in 10 (41%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that protesters in Liberia are generally peaceful and law abiding.
- Almost six in 10 (56%) say police and protesters are equally to blame for violence that ensues during public protests (Figure 5).

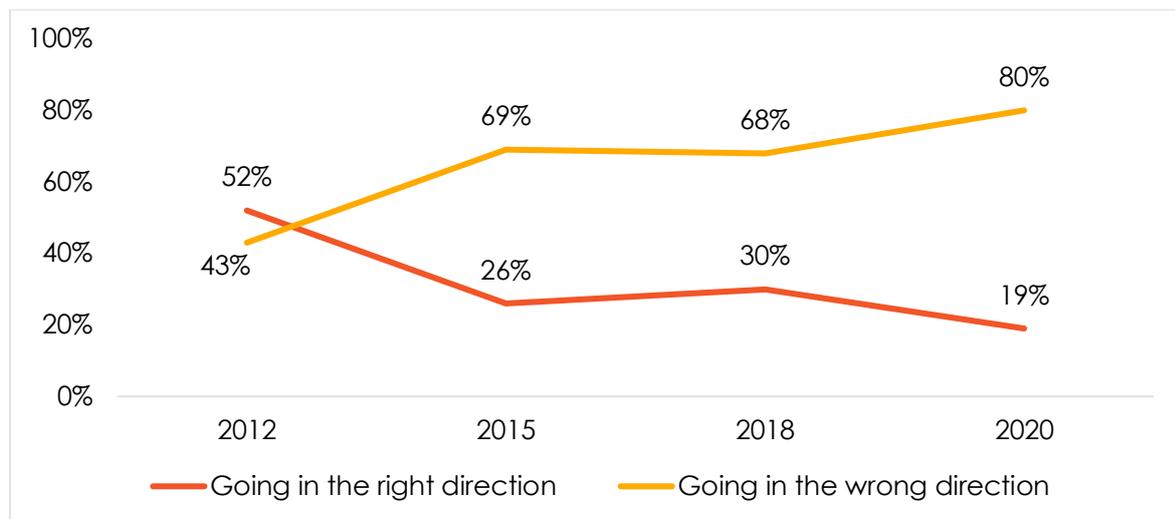
#### **Afrobarometer surveys**

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, and Round 8 surveys are currently underway. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Liberia, led by the Center for Democratic Governance, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 adult Liberians between October and December 2020. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous standard surveys were conducted in Liberia in 2008, 2012, 2015, and 2018.

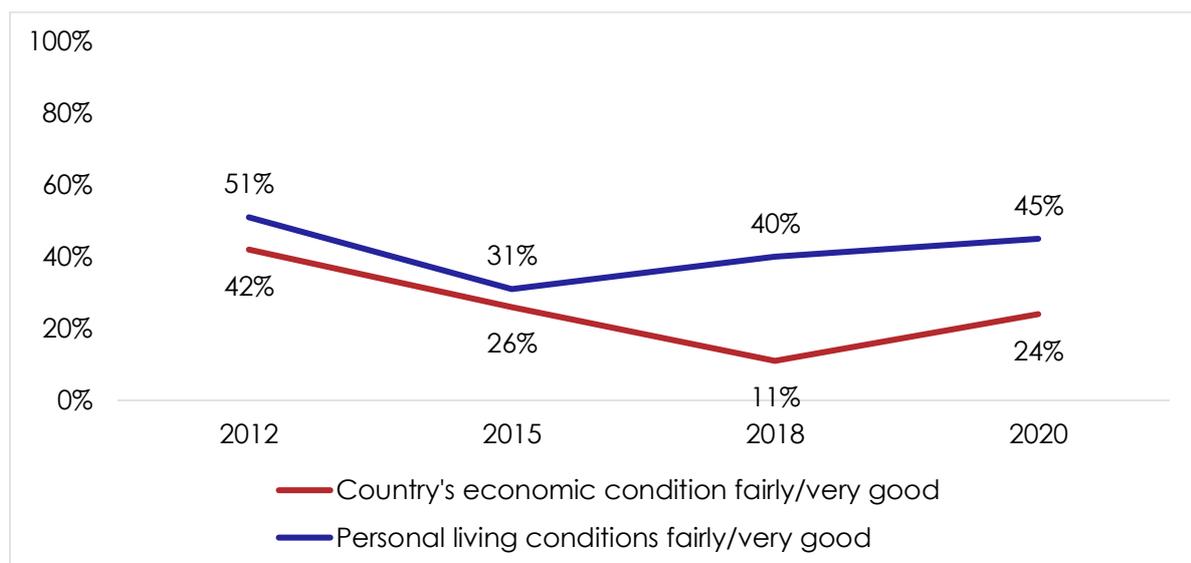
## Charts

**Figure 1: Perceived direction of the country | Liberia | 2020**



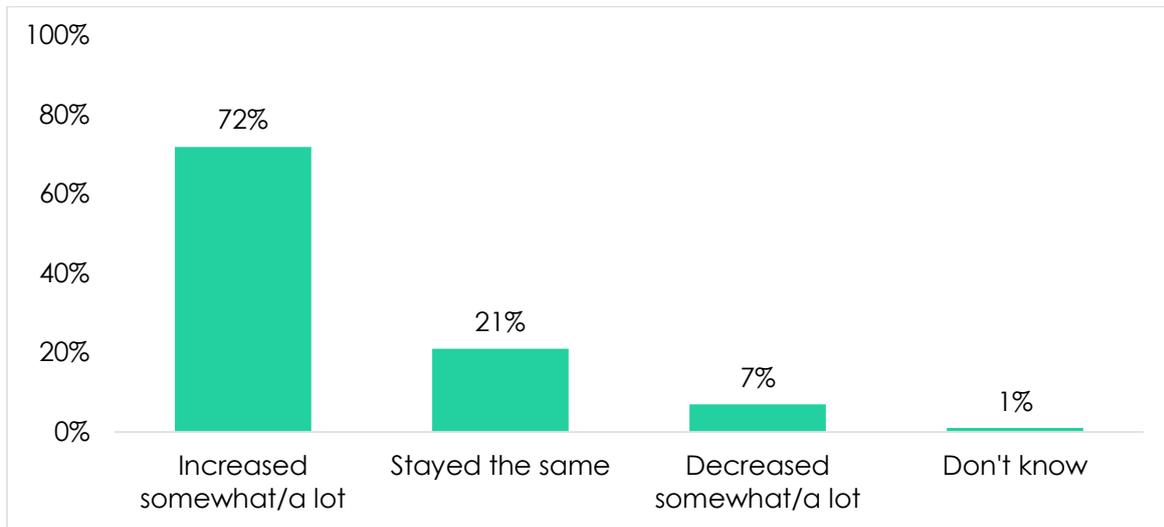
**Respondents were asked:** *Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?*

**Figure 2: Country's economic condition and personal living conditions | Liberia | 2020**



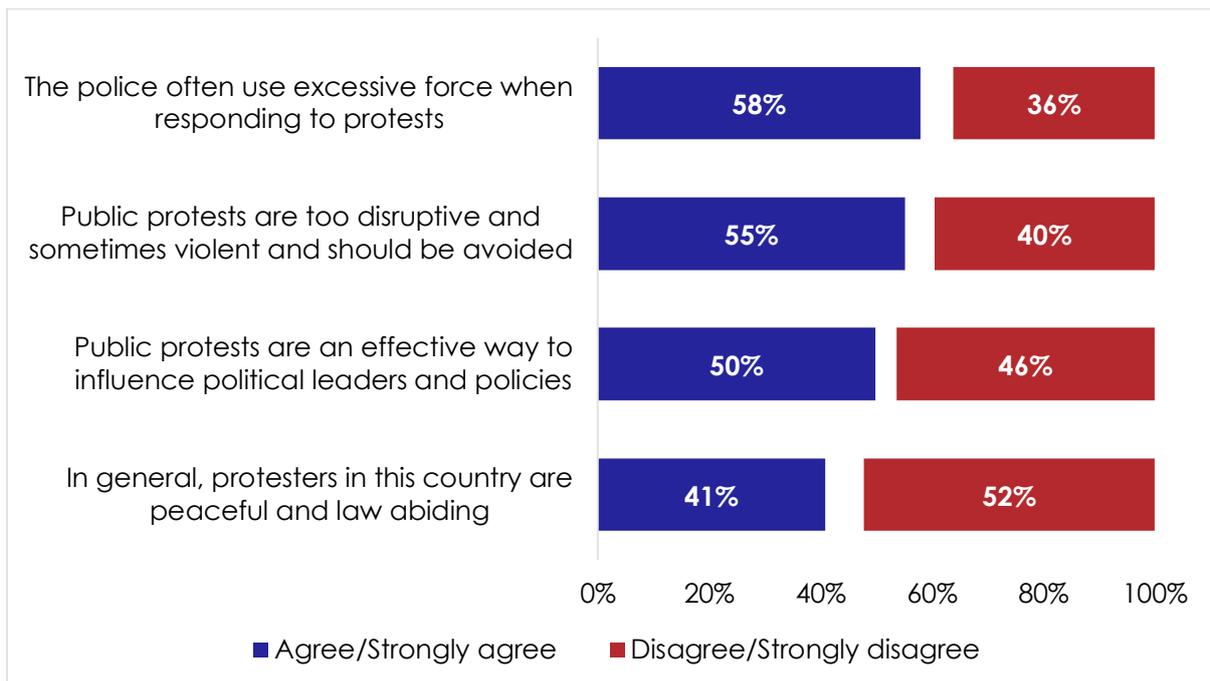
**Respondents were asked:** *In general, how would you describe: The present economic condition of this country? Your own present living conditions?*

**Figure 3: Level of corruption** | Liberia | 2020



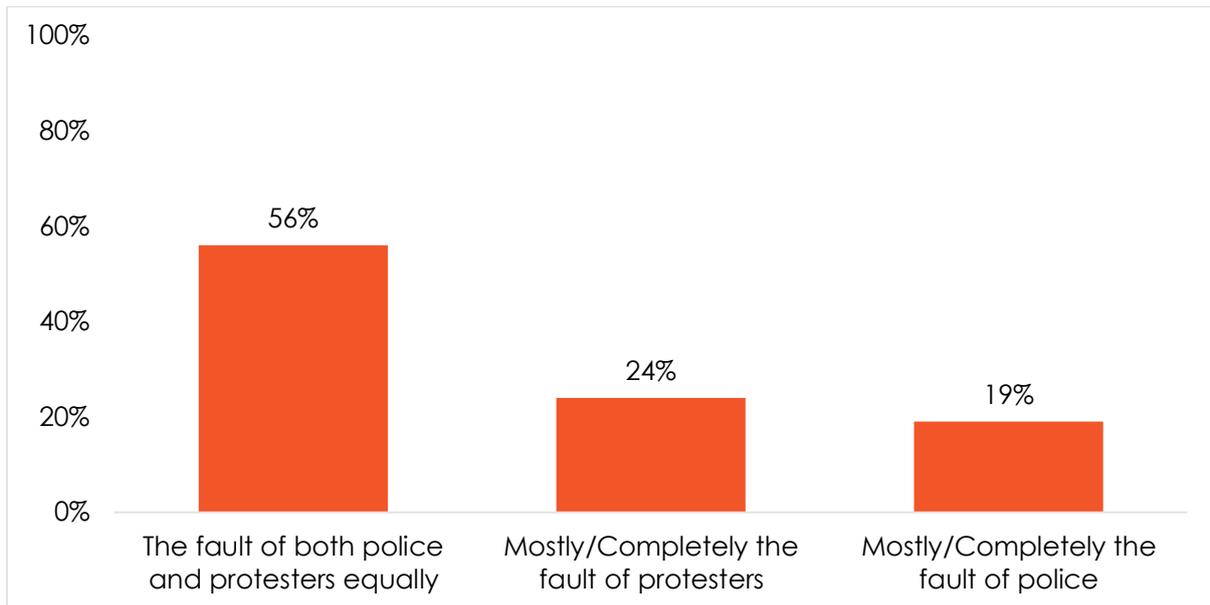
**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

**Figure 4: Views on protests** | Liberia | 2020



**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me whether you disagree or agree with each of the following statements about our experiences with public protests in Liberia, or whether you haven't heard enough about it to say?

**Figure 5: Violence during public protests: Who is to blame? | Liberia | 2020**



**Respondents were asked:** Based on our experience in Liberia, when violence occurs during public protests, do you think it is usually the fault of the protesters or the police, or both?

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