

One to One for Research and Polling  
Tunis, Tunisia  
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## News release

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### Support for democracy dwindles in Tunisia amid negative perceptions of economic conditions

Support for democracy is continuing a downward trend, and almost half of all citizens are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in Tunisia, new Afrobarometer survey results reveal. The proportion of Tunisians who say the country is “not a democracy” has doubled since 2015.

The survey also reveals that Tunisians hold gloomy views of national economic conditions and remain highly critical in their assessments of government efforts to address the country’s three most important problems. Although a majority of Tunisians support regular, open, and honest elections, they expressed little interest in recent municipal elections, and popular trust in the electoral commission is on the decline.

Tunisia has achieved several democratic milestones in the past few years, earning “free” status from Freedom House and a dramatic improvement in its rank on the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index, from 144<sup>th</sup> in 2010 to 69<sup>th</sup> in 2018. However, the country’s persistent economic and social challenges and a series of problems at the electoral commission combine to cast a cloud of uncertainty over the democratic process, especially with the approach of legislative and presidential elections scheduled for 2019.

#### Key findings

- Almost eight in 10 Tunisians (79%) say the country is heading in “the wrong direction,” a 12-percentage-point increase since 2013 (see Figure 1). A large majority (72%) perceive the country’s economic condition as “fairly bad” or “very bad.”
- Citizens continue to give the government poor ratings on its performance in handling what survey respondents see as the country’s three most important problems – managing the economy, creating jobs, and fighting corruption (Figure 2).
- Popular support for democracy over any other political system continued to decline, dropping to 46% compared to 71% in 2013. The proportions of Tunisians who reject alternatives to democratic governance have also decreased (Figure 3).
- Six in 10 Tunisians (62%) say the country is “a democracy with major problems” or “not a democracy.” The proportion who say the country is not a democracy has doubled since 2015, from 14% to 29% (Figure 4).
- Half (51%) of Tunisians are “not very satisfied” or “not at all satisfied” with the way democracy is working in their country (Figure 5).
- Although almost two-thirds (64%) of Tunisians endorse “regular, open, and honest elections” as the best way to choose their leaders, this reflects a 30-percentage-point decline since 2013 (Figure 6).
- A majority (57%) said they were “not at all interested” or “not very interested” in the recent municipal elections, and most (84%) declared they had little or no information

about these elections (Figure 7). Furthermore, trust in the electoral commission has decreased by 18 percentage points compared to 2015 (Figure 8).

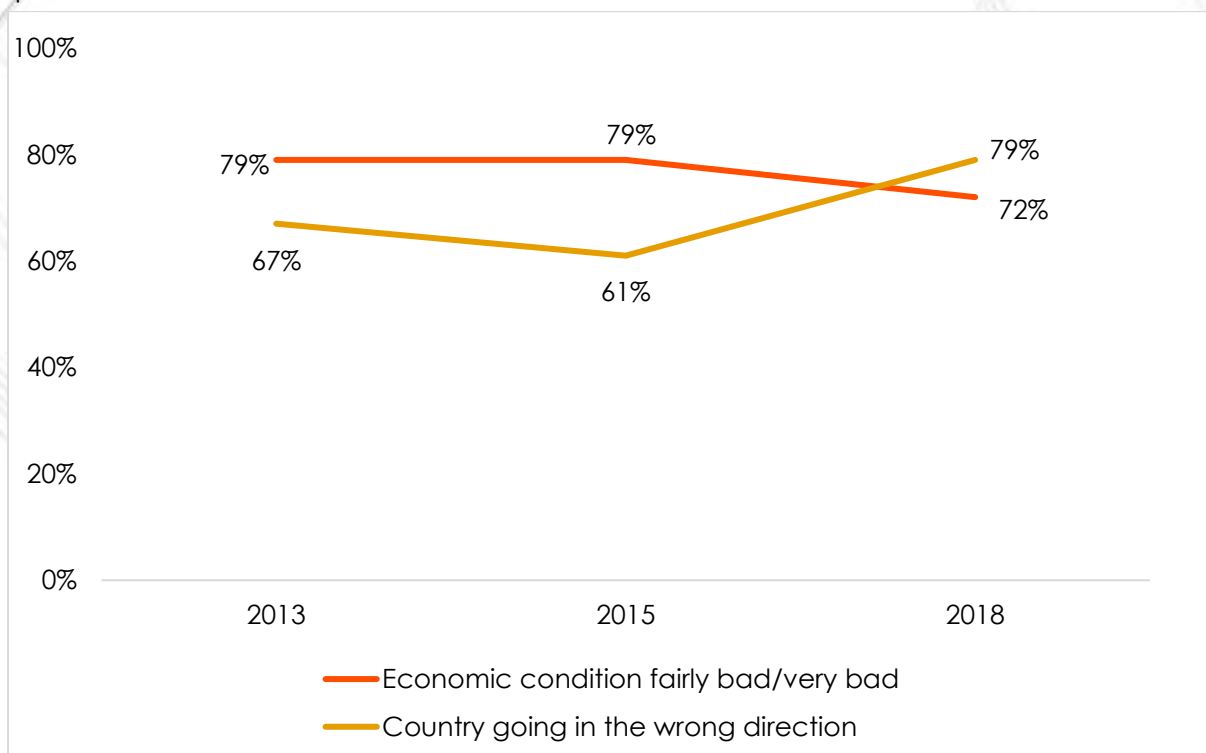
### Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Six rounds of surveys were conducted in up to 37 countries between 1999 and 2015, and Round 7 surveys are being completed in 2018. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Tunisia, led by One to One for Research and Polling, interviewed 1,200 adult Tunisians in April-May 2018. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Tunisia in 2013 and 2015.

### Charts

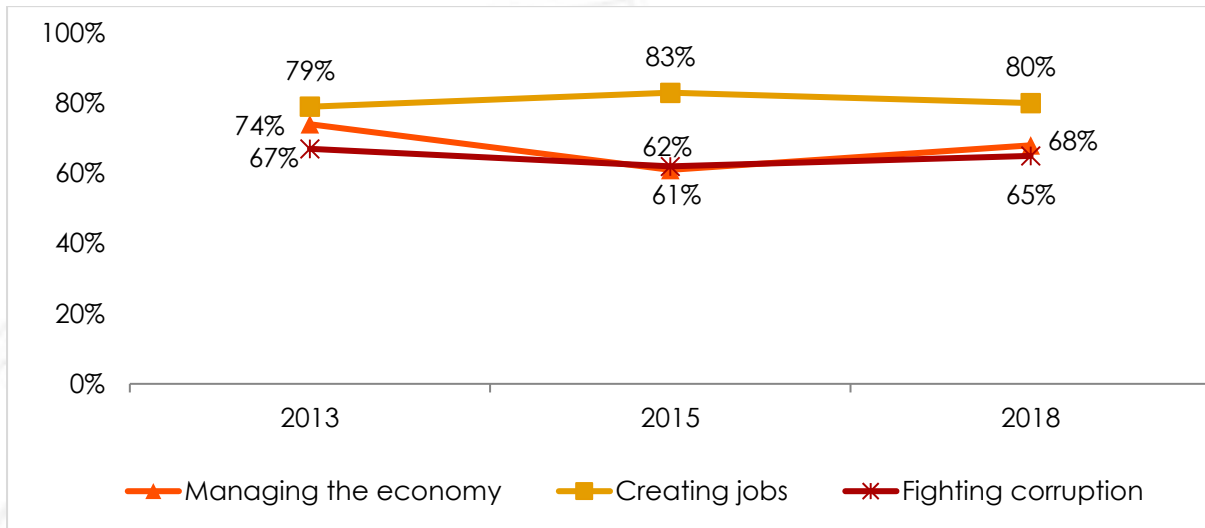
**Figure 1: Direction of the country and views on economic conditions | Tunisia**  
 | 2013-2018



**Respondents were asked:**

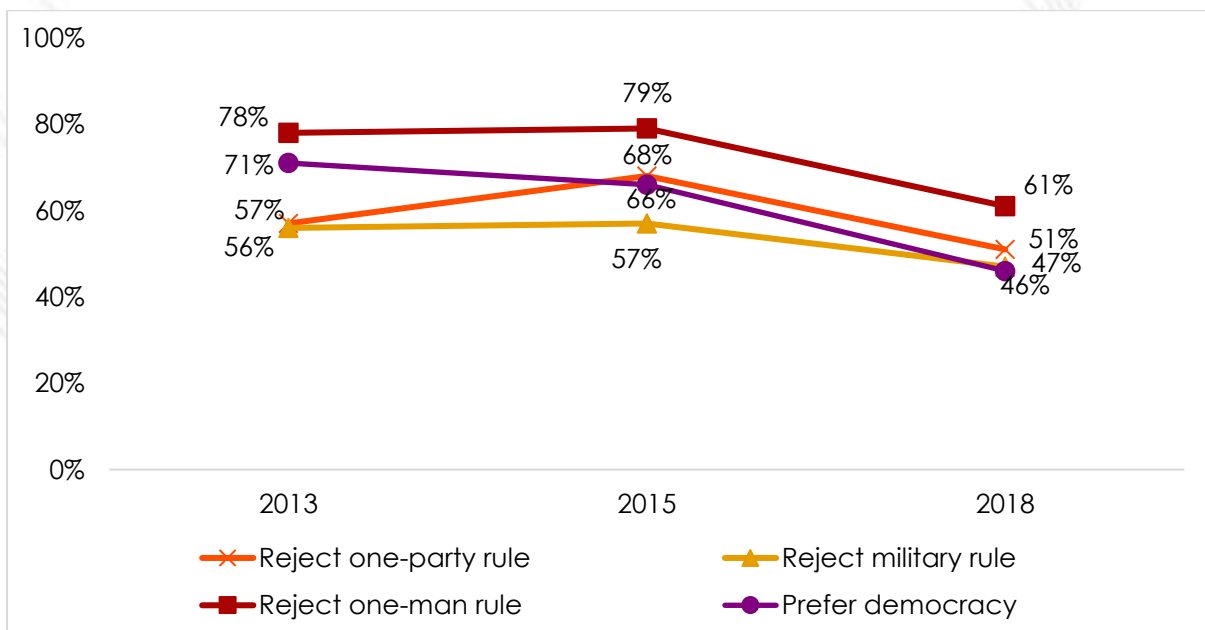
- Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?
- In general, how would you describe the present economic condition of this country?

**Figure 2: Evaluation of government's performance in handling most important problems | Tunisia | 2018**



**Respondents were asked:** How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? (% who say "very badly" or "fairly badly")

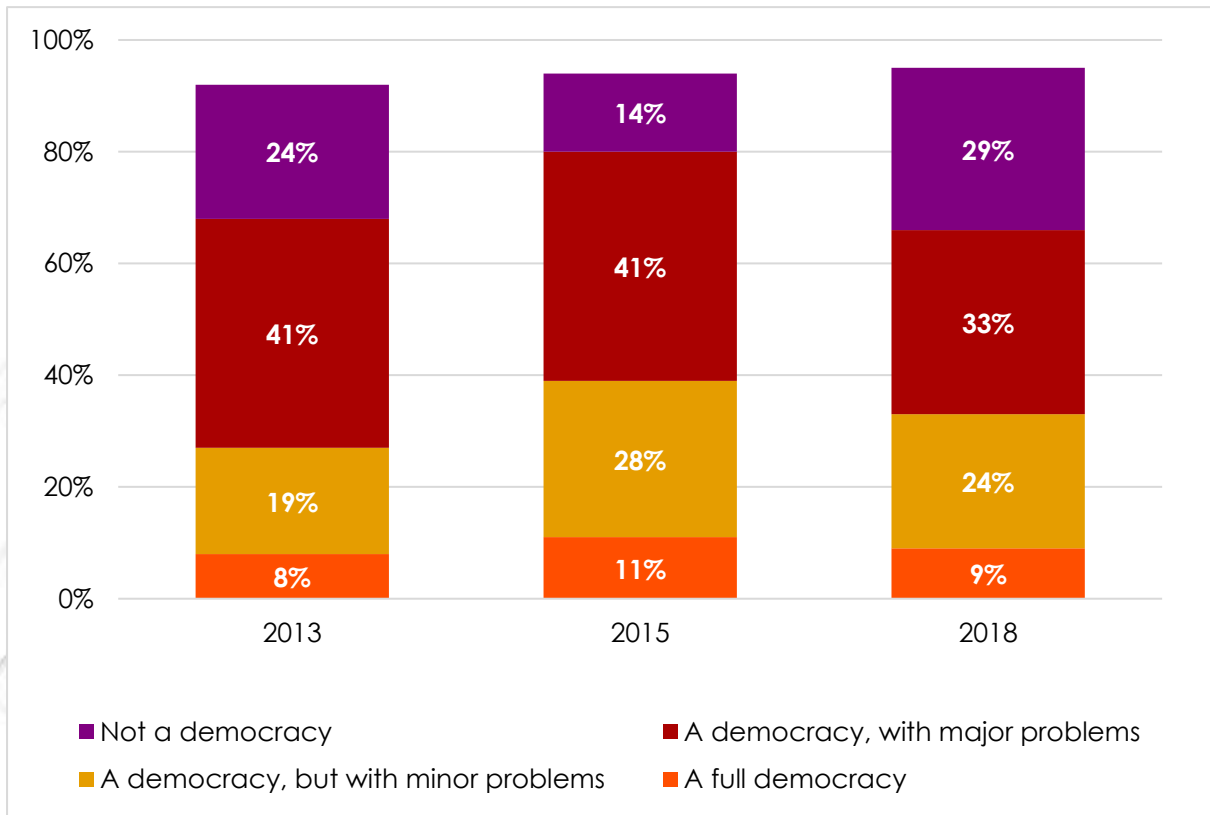
**Figure 3: Preference for democracy and rejection of autocratic alternatives | Tunisia | 2013-2018**



**Respondents were asked:**

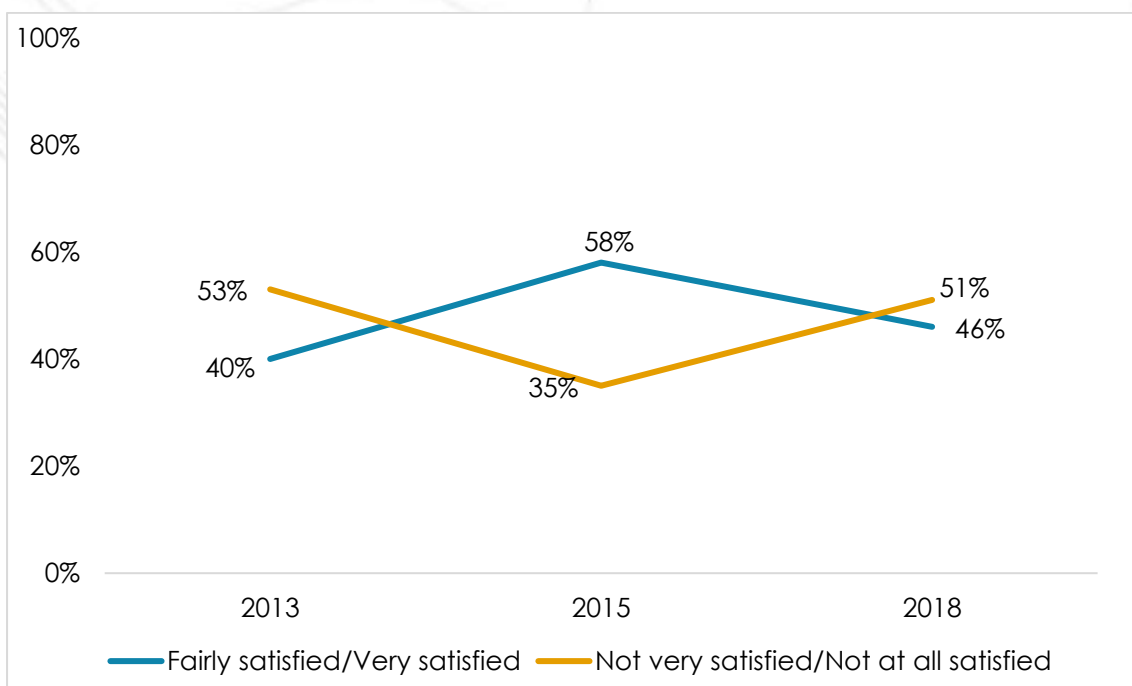
- There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?
  - Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.
  - The army comes in to govern the country.
  - Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.
- 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 4: Extent of democracy | Tunisia | 2013-2018**



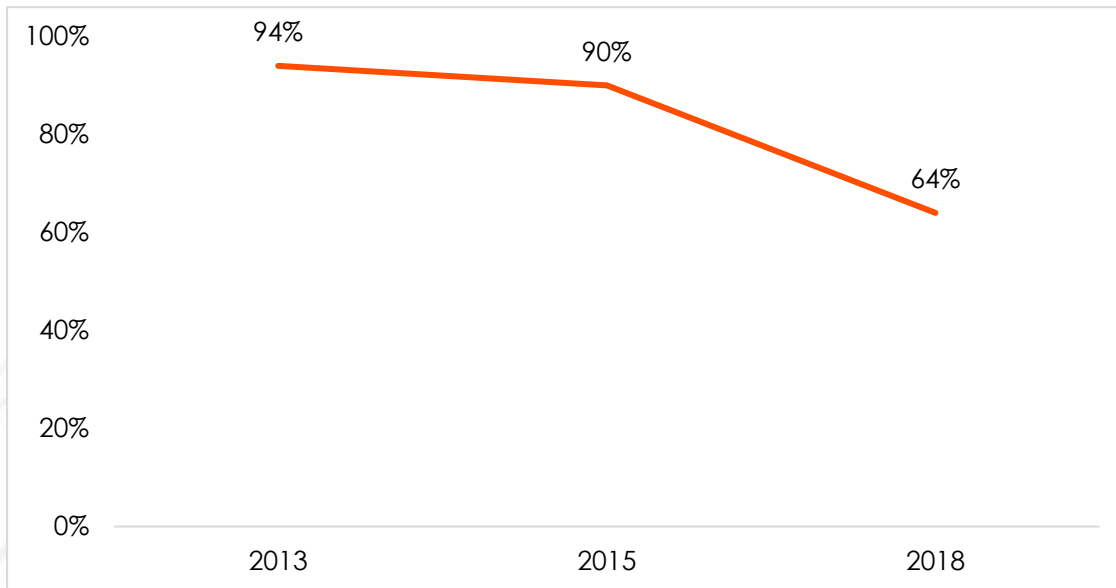
**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Tunisia today?*

**Figure 5: Satisfaction with democracy | Tunisia | 2013-2018**



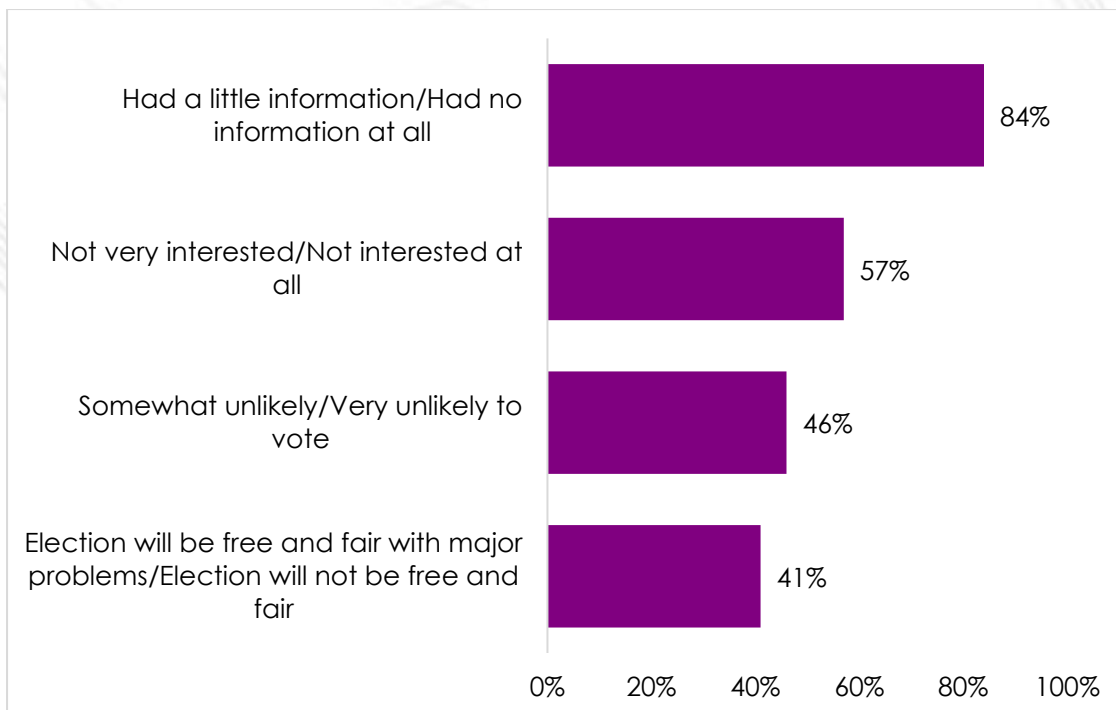
**Respondents were asked:** *Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Tunisia?*

**Figure 6: Support for elections | Tunisia | 2013-2018**



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?  
 Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.  
 Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.

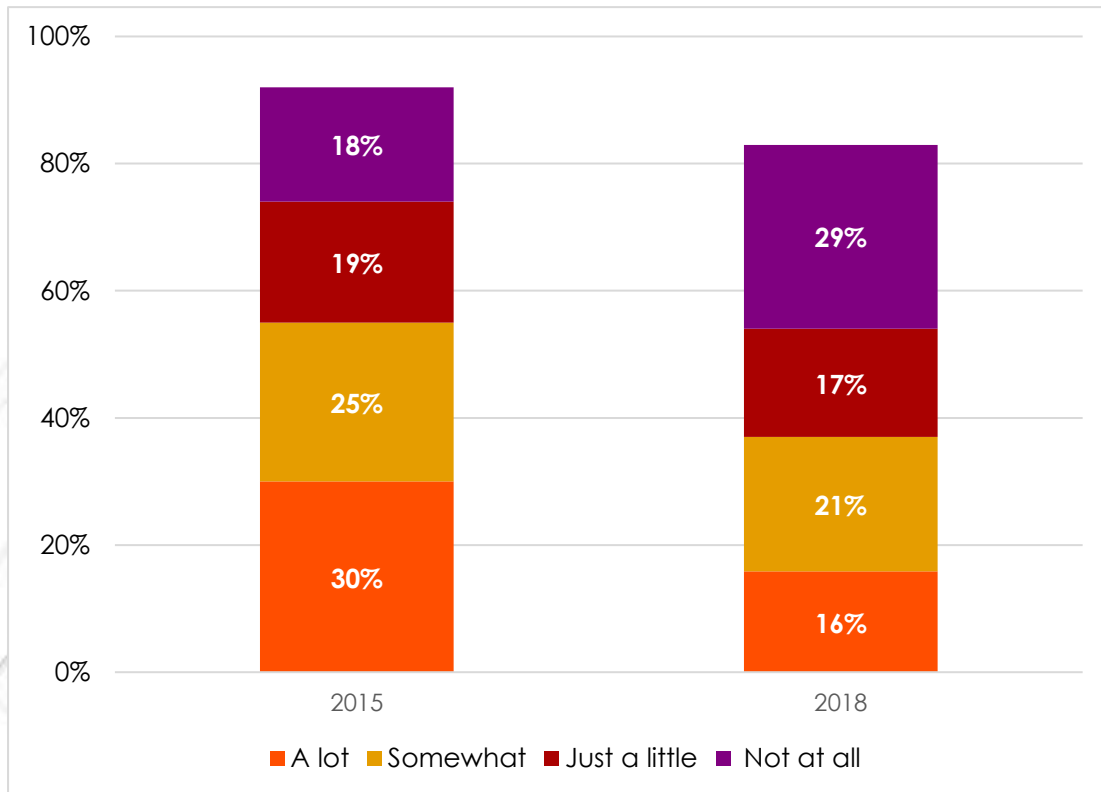
**Figure 7: Perceptions of the municipal elections | Tunisia | 2018**



**Respondents were asked:**

- How interested are you in the forthcoming municipal elections?
- How much information do you have about the forthcoming local government elections?
- How free and fair do you expect the upcoming municipal elections to be?
- How likely are you to vote in the forthcoming municipal elections in 2018?

**Figure 8: Trust in electoral commission | Tunisia | 2015-2018**



**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The electoral commission?

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