

The Khana Group
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News release

Two-thirds of Liberians want exclusive citizenship and land ownership laws maintained, study shows

Two-thirds of Liberians want the exclusive black citizenship law in the country to be maintained, a new Afrobarometer survey reveals. The same proportion say only Liberian citizens should be allowed to own land.

President George Weah has described these citizenship and land ownership laws as “unnecessary, racist, and inappropriate for the 21st century,” and advocated strongly for the Land Rights Act. The act, which was passed in September 2018, allows non-Liberian missionary, educational, and other benevolent institutions to own property as long as it is used for the purpose acquired.

The survey also found that a majority of Liberians would grant citizenship rights to persons born in Liberia of one Liberian parent and one non-Liberian parent as well as to persons from other countries who have worked in Liberia and want to stay and to persons born in Liberia of two non-Liberian parents. The least deserving to be Liberian citizens, according to the respondents, are husbands of Liberian women and persons who wish to hold dual citizenship. The study also shows that majorities perceive widespread discrimination against native Liberians, Muslims, people of Congolese descent, Christians, and their own ethnic groups.

Key findings

- Two-thirds (68%) of Liberians “agree” or “agree very strongly” that the law stating that only black people or persons of negro descent should be allowed to acquire Liberian citizenship should be maintained (Figure 1). About a third (32%) say the law is discriminatory and should be abolished.
- The same proportion (68%) “agree” or “agree very strongly” that the law stating that only Liberian citizens can own land and property in the country should be maintained (Figure 2).
- Large majorities say persons born in Liberia of one Liberian parent and one non-Liberian parent (77%) and persons from other countries who have worked in Liberia and want to stay (59%) have the right to be Liberian citizens (Figure 3). About half want that right given to persons born in Liberia of two non-Liberian parents (53%) and to wives of Liberians, even if they were born outside Liberia (46%).
- Liberians perceive widespread discrimination against native Liberians or country people (68%), their own ethnic group (65%), Muslims (63%), settlers or Congo people (58%), and Christians (57%) (Figure 4).

Afrobarometer

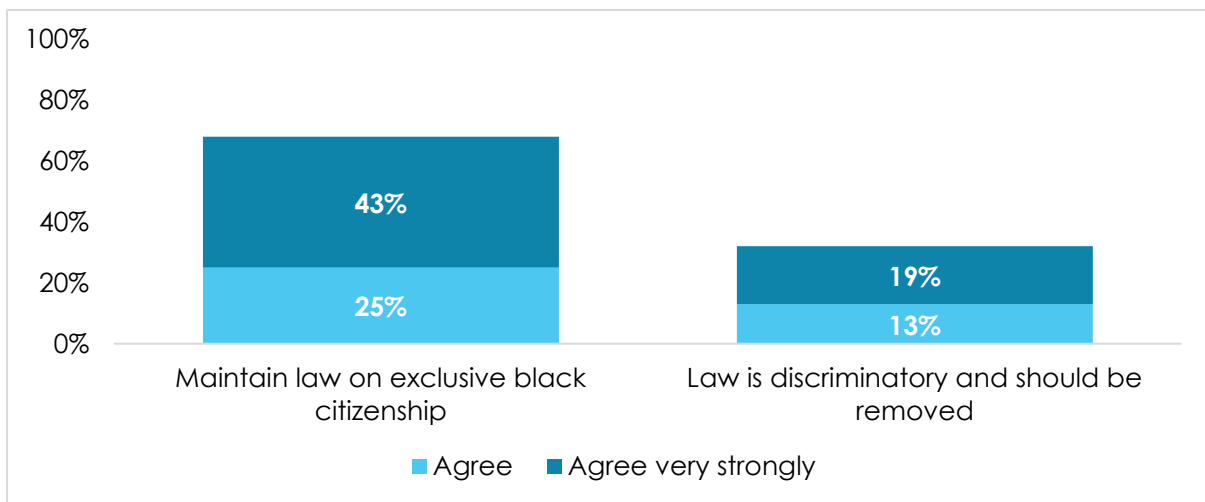
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in Africa. Six rounds of surveys were conducted in up to 37 African countries between 1999 and 2015, and Round 7 surveys are being completed in 2018. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face

interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Liberia, led by The Khana Group, interviewed 1,200 adult Liberians in June 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 have been conducted in Liberia in 2008, 2012, and 2015.

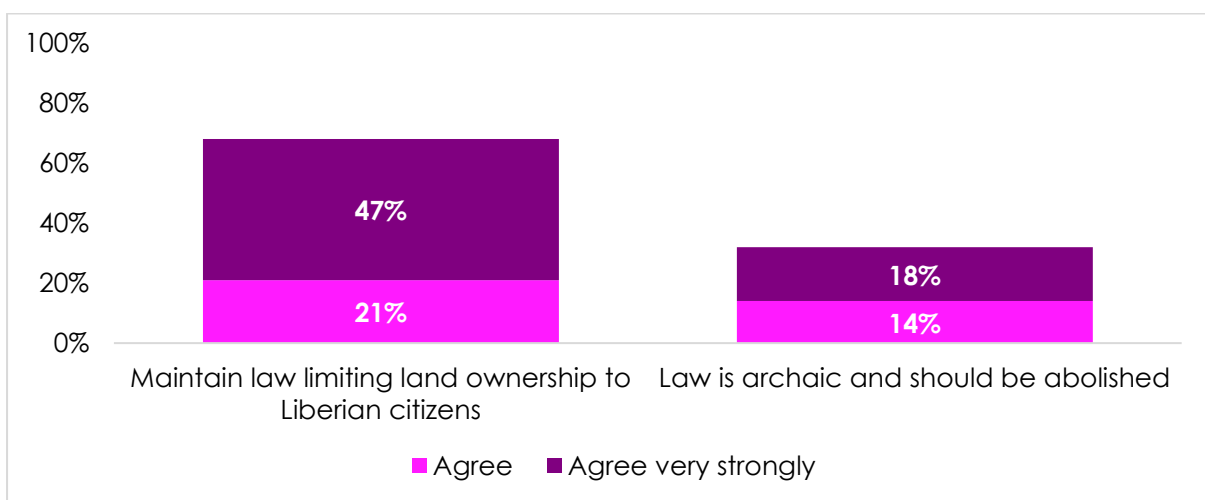
Charts

Figure 1: Should the exclusive black citizenship law be abolished? | Liberia | 2018



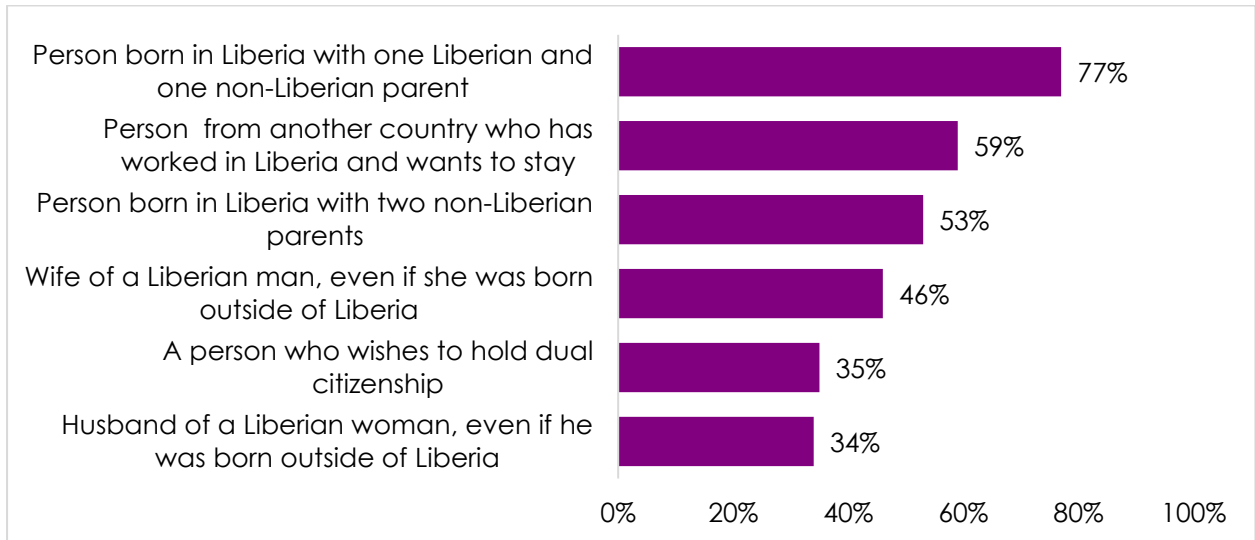
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: The current law which states that only black people or persons of negro descent should be allowed to acquire Liberian citizenship has served the country well and should be maintained.
 Statement 2: The current law which states that only black people or persons of negro descent should be allowed to acquire Liberian citizenship is discriminatory and should be removed.

Figure 2: Should only Liberian citizens be allowed to own land? | Liberia | 2018



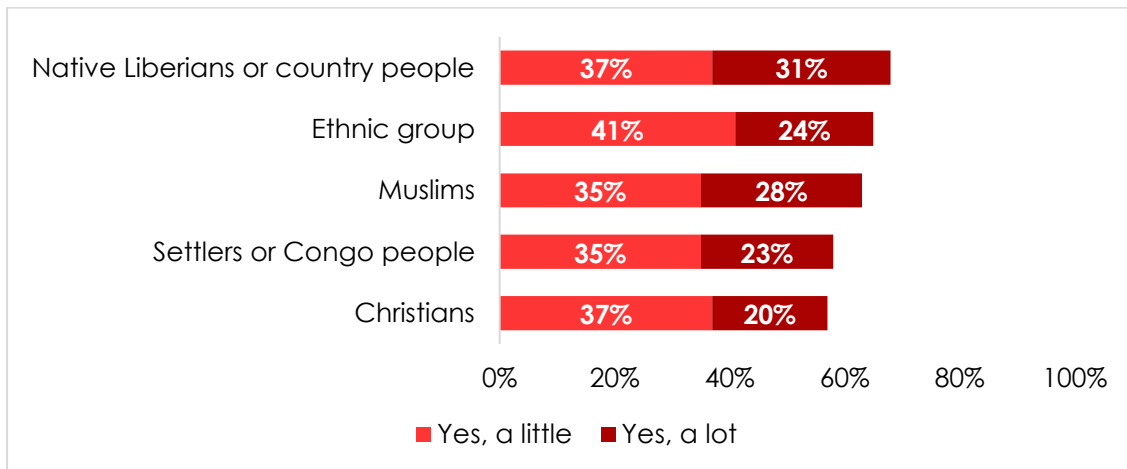
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view:
 Statement 1: The current law which states that only Liberian citizens can own land and property in the country has served the country well and should be maintained.
 Statement 2: The current law which states that only Liberian citizens can own land and property in the country is archaic and should be abolished.

Figure 3: Who has the right to be a Liberian citizen? | Liberia | 2018



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, which of the following people have a right to be a citizen of Liberia?

Figure 4: Experiencing discrimination | Liberia | 2018



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how much, if any, discrimination do you think is experienced by the following groups in Liberian society today?

For more information, please contact:

Taa Wongbe
 The Khana Group
 Telephone: +231 777 231 777
 Email: taa.wongbe@thekhanagroup.com

Visit us online at: www.afrobarometer.org

