

Hatchile Consult Ltd
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News release

Ugandans see shrinking freedom for political opposition, Afrobarometer survey shows

Even before the recent surge in election-related violence, a majority of Ugandans saw freedom for Uganda's political opposition as shrinking, an analysis of Afrobarometer survey data shows.

In a nationally representative survey completed in early 2017, nearly six in 10 Ugandans (58%) said that opposition parties now enjoy less freedom to function than in the past. Almost half of citizens said opposition candidates are at least "sometimes" prevented from running for office, and majorities said that they feared political intimidation and violence and that citizens have to be careful about which political organizations they join and how they vote. A majority said they have to be cautious in their political speech, although six in 10 also said that freedom of speech has increased compared to "a few years ago."

Concerns about political space in Uganda were brought to the fore by the government's treatment of opposition politicians following this year's by-elections in Rukungiri, Bugiri Municipality, Sheema Municipality, and Arua Municipality, in which lives were lost and more than 30 opposition supporters, including five members of Parliament, were charged with various offenses, including treason.

Key findings

- Nearly six in 10 Ugandans (58%) said that opposition parties have less freedom to speak or hold rallies, state their views, or criticize the government than they did a few years ago (Figure 1).
- Almost half (47%) of citizens said that opposition candidates are at least "sometimes" prevented from running for office (Figure 2).
- Seven in 10 Ugandans (71%) said they fear political intimidation or violence at least "a little bit," including 30% who expressed "a lot" of fear (Figure 3).
- A majority said that citizens "often" or "always" have to be careful about what they say about politics (65%), which political organizations they join (53%), and how they vote (64%) (Figure 4), although six in 10 (60%) also said that freedom of speech had increased compared to a few years ago.

Afrobarometer

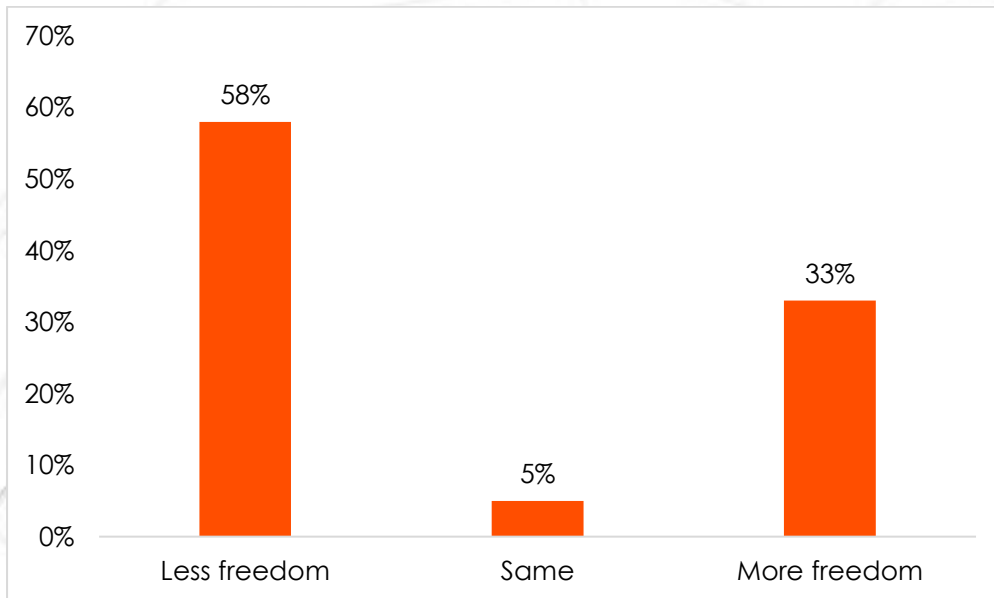
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in Africa. Six rounds of surveys were conducted in up to 37 African countries between 1999 and 2015, and Round 7 surveys are being completed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

The Afrobarometer team in Uganda, led by Hatchile Consult Ltd, interviewed 2,400 adult Ugandans in 2017. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-

2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Uganda in 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, and 2015.

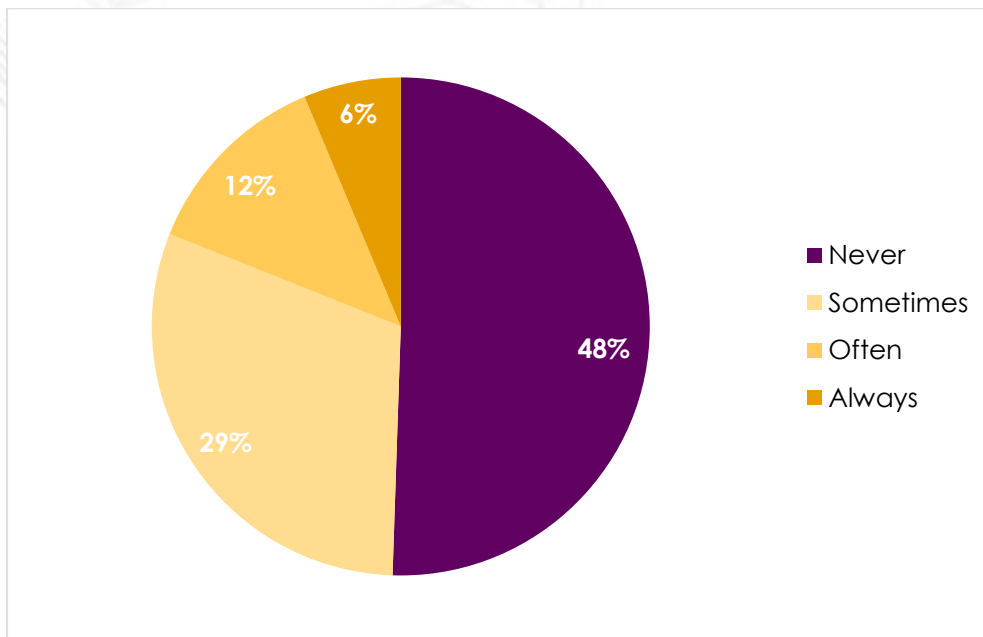
Charts

Figure 1: Opposition freedom compared to a few years ago | Uganda | 2017



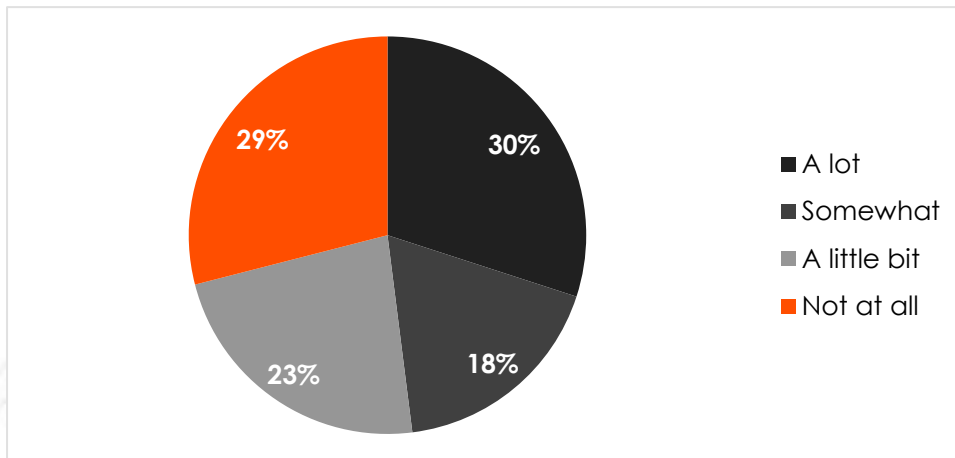
Respondents were asked: Regarding the freedom of opposition parties or candidates to speak or hold rallies, state their views, or criticize their government, is there more or less freedom now compared to a few years ago, or are things about the same?

Figure 2: Are opposition candidates prevented from running for office? | Uganda | 2017



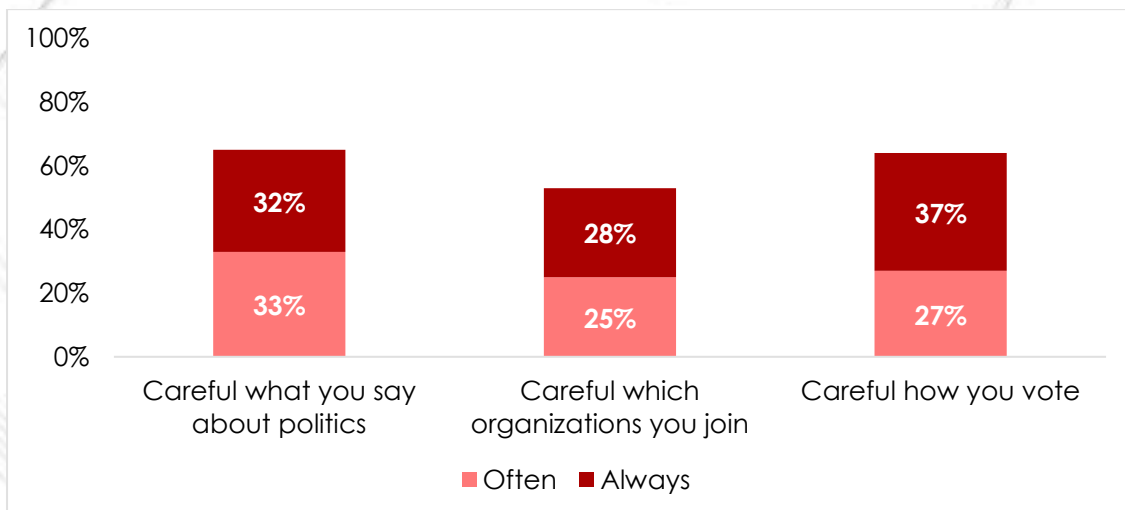
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, during this country's elections, how often are opposition candidates prevented from running for office?

Figure 3: Fear of political intimidation or violence | Uganda | 2017



Respondents were asked: During election campaigns in Uganda, how much do you personally fear becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence?

Figure 4: Political freedoms | Uganda | 2017



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often, in this country:

- Do people have to be careful what they say about politics?
- Do people have to be careful about which political organizations they join?
- Do people have to be careful about how they vote in an election?

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