

Windhoek, Namibia
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News release

Majority of Namibians don't mind a dominant-party system, so long as elections are free and fair, Afrobarometer study shows

A majority of Namibians say it does not matter if one political party always wins elections and continuously governs the country, so long as the elections are free and fair, a recent Afrobarometer survey indicates.

A sizeable minority, however, believe it's good for a democracy if power changes hands via elections from time to time.

Majorities say democracy is preferable to any other kind of political system, that Namibia needs many political parties to ensure voter choice, and that the country has a well-functioning democracy.

Despite widespread support for democracy, a slim majority of Namibians believe it is legitimate for the armed forces to take control of government if elected leaders abuse power for their own interests.

Namibians will vote in a general election on 27 November 2024.

Key findings

- More than half (57%) of Namibians say it does not matter if the same party always wins elections, so long as the government is elected by the people in a free and fair manner (Figure 1).
 - A significant minority (39%) believe it is better in a democracy if power sometimes changes hands in elections from one political party to another.
- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of citizens say the country needs many political parties to give voters real choices in who governs them, while 25% believe political parties create division and confusion (Figure 2).
- Six in 10 Namibians (60%) say democracy is preferable to any other political system of governance (Figure 3).
 - Stronger majorities reject military rule (68%), one-man rule (73%), and one-party rule (80%).
- About seven in 10 citizens (69%) describe the country as “a full democracy” (30%) or “a democracy with minor problems (39%),” an 11-percentage-point decline compared to Afrobarometer's first survey in Namibia in 1999 (Figure 4).
 - A majority (55%) say they are “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way democracy is working in the country, while 43% express little or no satisfaction (Figure 5).
- More than half (53%) of Namibians say it is legitimate for the armed forces to take control of government if elected leaders abuse power for their own interests, while 38% believe the armed forces should never intervene in politics (Figure 6).

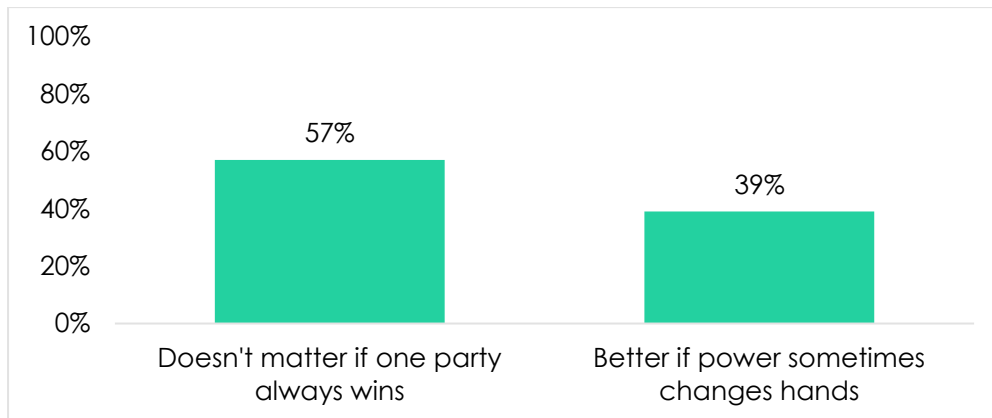
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 10 surveys are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Namibia, led by Survey Warehouse, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult citizens of Namibia in March 2024. 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 Namibia in 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2021.

Charts

Figure 1: Electoral turnover in a democracy | Namibia | 2024



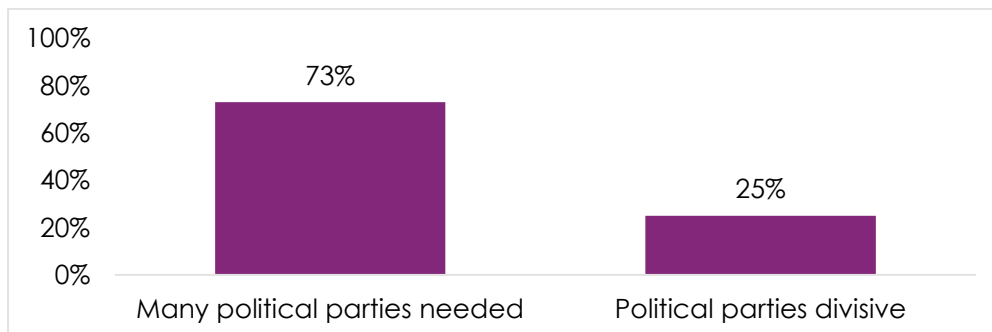
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: In a democracy, it is better if power sometimes changes hands in elections from one political party to another.

Statement 2: In a democracy, as long as a government is elected by the people in a free and fair election, it doesn't matter if one party always wins and continuously governs the country.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 2: Support for multiparty competition | Namibia | 2024



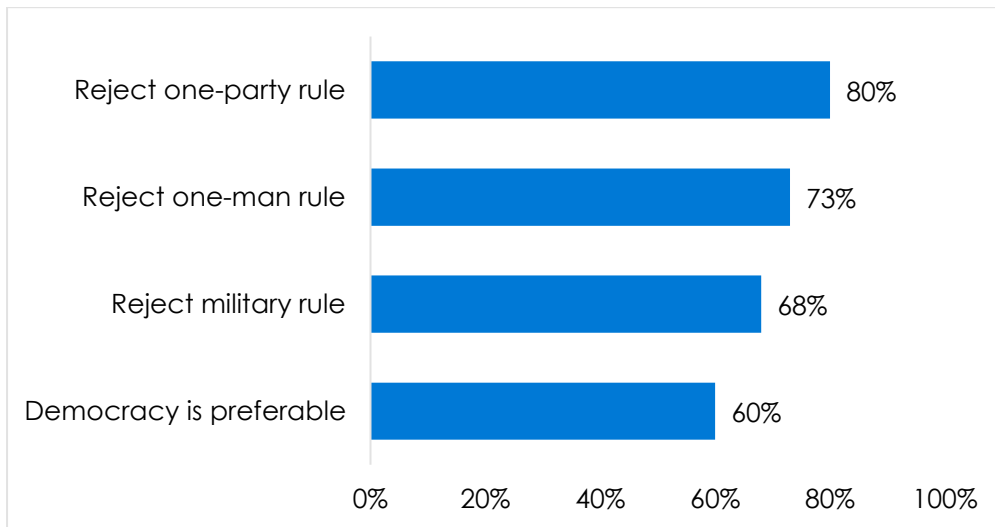
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in Namibia.

Statement 2: Many political parties are needed to make sure that Namibians have real choices in who governs them.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 3: Support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian rule | Namibia | 2024



Respondents were asked:

Which of the following 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.

(% who say democracy is preferable to any other kind of government)

There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?

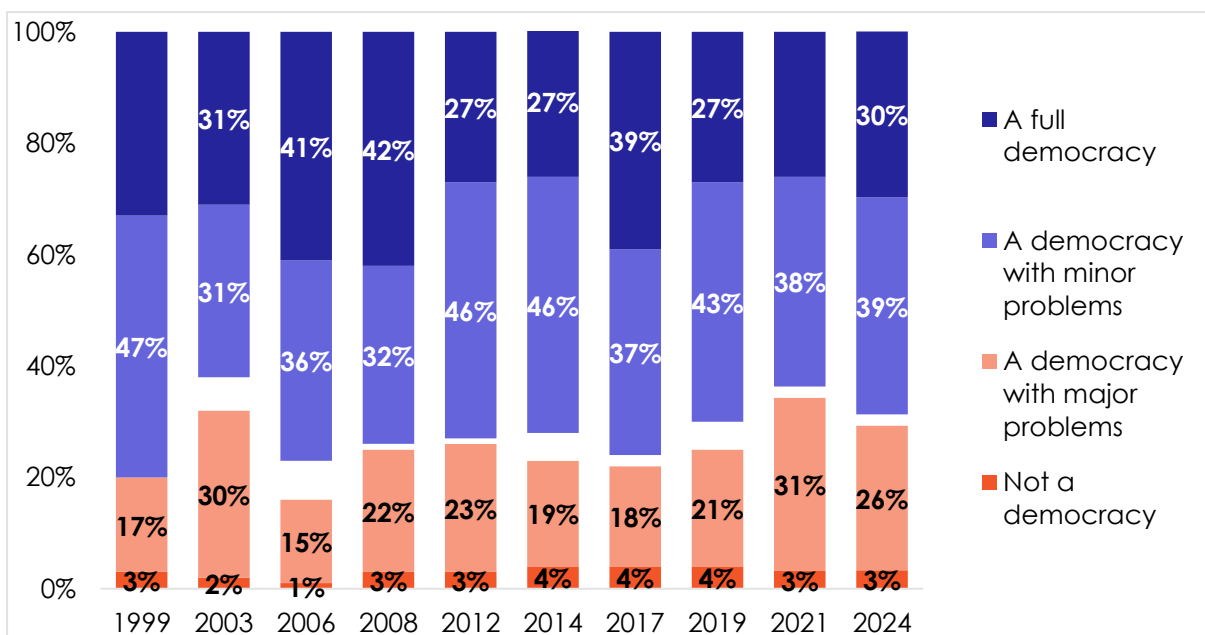
Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.

The army comes in and governs the country.

Elections and the National Assembly are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

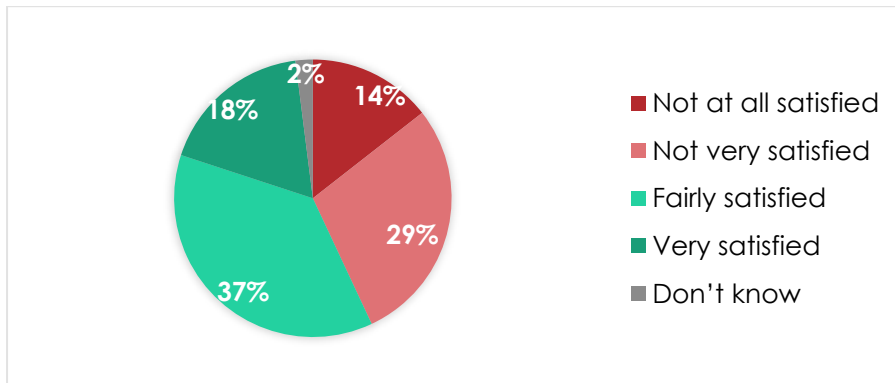
(% who "disagree" or "strongly disagree")

Figure 4: Extent of democracy | Namibia | 2024



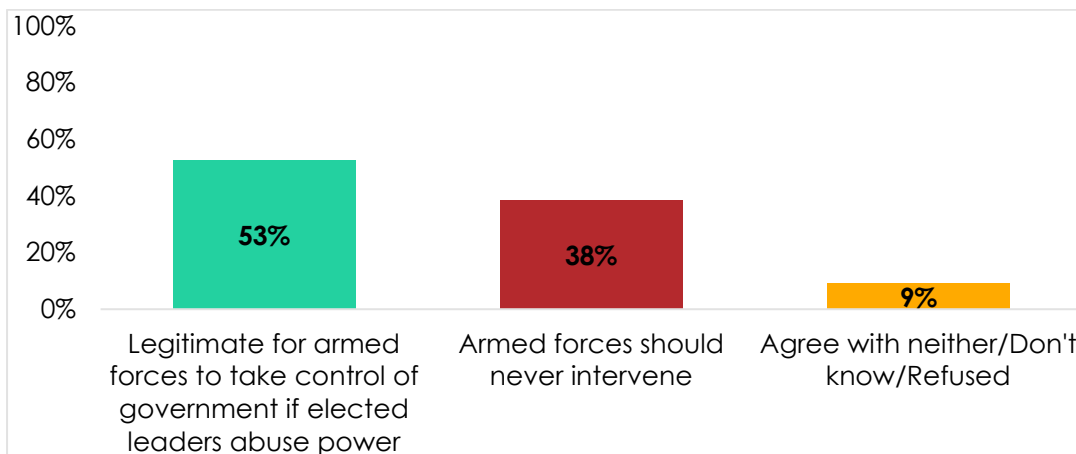
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Namibia today?

Figure 5: Satisfaction with democracy | Namibia | 2024



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

Figure 6: Support for military intervention | Namibia | 2024



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: Namibia's armed forces should never intervene in the country's political process.
 Statement 2: It is legitimate for the armed forces to take control of government when elected leaders abuse power for their own needs.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

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