

Afrobarometer National Partner: Advision Lesotho, Maseru  
Afrobarometer Core Partner: The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town  
4 September 2014

## News Release

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### **Amid political upheaval, Basotho support democratic process, reject military rule; trust in political institutions remains low**

Basotho overwhelmingly support democratic elections and reject military and strongman rule, according to a new Afrobarometer study.

The survey, conducted at a time of mounting political tensions leading to the dissolution of Parliament, sheds light on citizen views on democracy and trust in political institutions, among other issues.

The Afrobarometer Round 6 public opinion survey interviewed 1,200 Basotho in May 2014. The nationally representative sample yields a +/- 3% margin of error with a 95% confidence level.

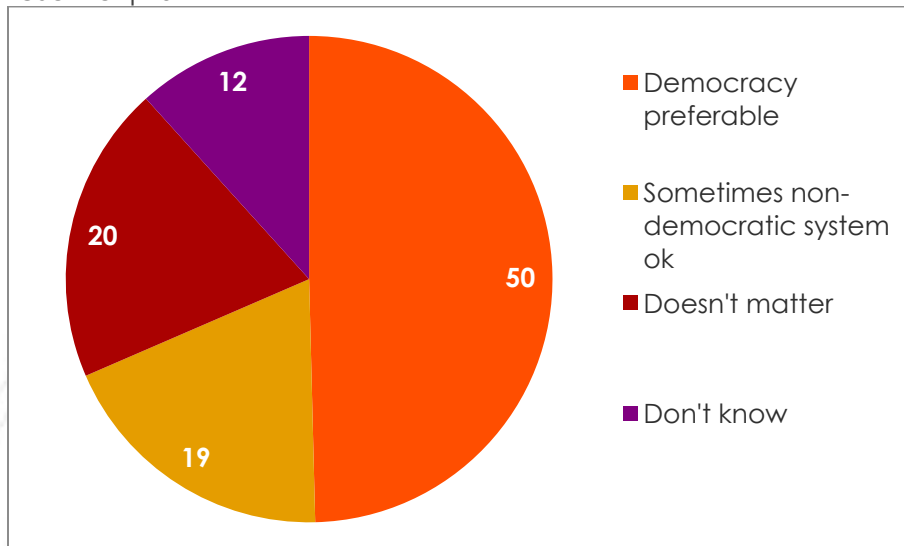
#### **Key Findings**

- Three-fourths (73%) of Basotho express commitment to elections as the best means for selecting their leaders. But only a bare majority (50%) express clear support for democracy as the best system of government (Figure 1). This is well below the 35-country mean of 72% in the previous Round 5 Afrobarometer surveys (2011-2013).
- Rejection of military rule is solid: 79% express disapproval. (The 35-country average in the Round 5 survey was 73 %.) Basotho also roundly reject “one-man” or “strongman” rule (81%). They are considerably more willing to tolerate one-party rule (just 57% reject it) (Figure 2).
- Satisfaction with democracy in Lesotho remains low: Fully 55% are dissatisfied with “the way democracy works” in the country (Figure 3), and just one in three (36%) believes the country is either “a full democracy” or “a democracy with only minor problems,” compared to 47% who either see it as a “democracy with major problems” or don’t rate the country a democracy at all.
- One key challenge for democracy in Lesotho is the low level of trust in political institutions: Just 44% trust Parliament and 43% trust the ruling coalition. Trust in the police (58%) and military (65%) is significantly higher. But traditional leaders (73%) and religious leaders (82%) enjoy much higher levels of trust, suggesting that they might be well placed to help broker a solution to the current political crisis (Figure 4).

## Charts

Figure 1: **Support for Democracy**

Lesotho | 2014



Respondents were asked: "Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?"

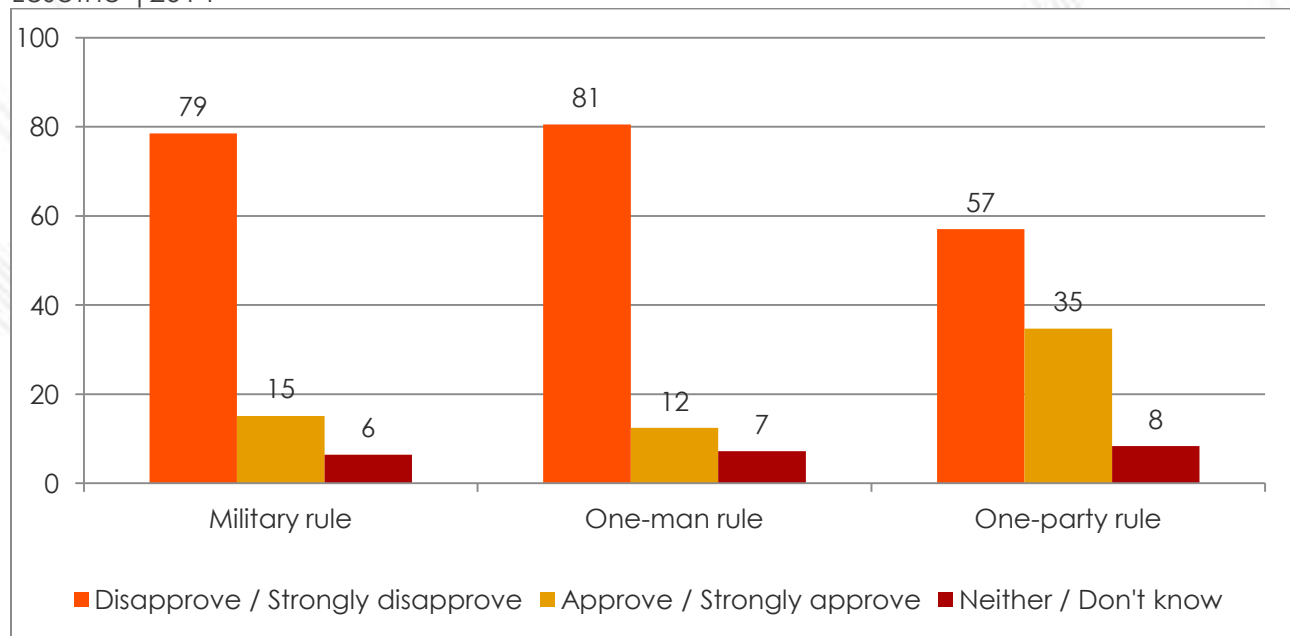
Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.

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 2: **Rejection of Alternative Political Systems**

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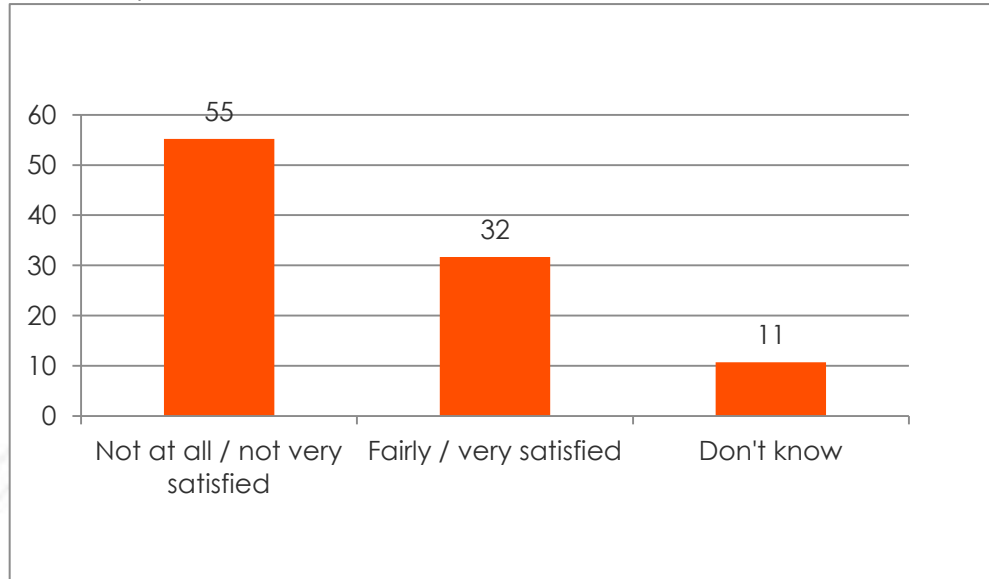
Respondents were asked: "There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?"

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

B. The army comes in to govern the country.

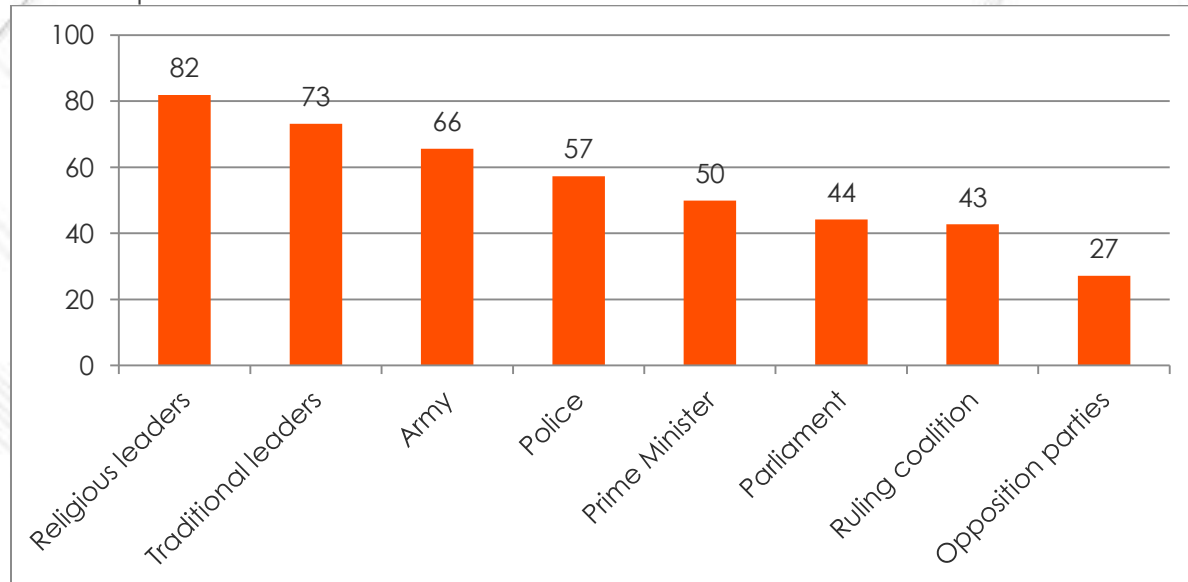
C. Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the Prime Minister can decide everything."

Figure 3: **Satisfaction with Democracy**  
Lesotho | 2014



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

Figure 4: **Institutional Trust**  
Lesotho | 2014



Respondents were asked: "How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (Reported figures are for percent who said "somewhat" or "a lot.")"

### Afrobarometer in Southern Africa

Afrobarometer is an African-led, non-partisan research project that conducts a comparative series of public attitude surveys assessing citizen attitudes on democracy, governance, and civil society, among other topics. The surveys have been undertaken at periodic intervals since 1999. The Lesotho survey was part of the 6<sup>th</sup> round of surveys, which is being conducted in 35 African countries in 2014-2015. Fieldwork was conducted by Advision Lesotho, the Afrobarometer

national partner in Lesotho, with technical support from the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), the Afrobarometer core partner for Southern Africa.

Afrobarometer is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Mo Ibrahim Foundation, and World Bank.

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