



Center for Democratic Development
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News release

Ghanaians denounce mob 'justice' and political-party vigilantism, endorse rule of law instead

Ghanaians overwhelmingly reject mob "justice" and the lawless activities of political vigilante groups, a recent Afrobarometer survey indicates.

A vast majority disapprove of lawless actions by political-party vigilante groups and want them prosecuted, irrespective of their political-party affiliation.

Similarly, an overwhelming majority say suspected criminals should only be dealt with by the police. The survey, however, reveals that a significant minority of Ghanaians sometimes find mob "justice" acceptable.

These two forms of lawlessness, though not new, have dominated news headlines in Ghana, receiving wide condemnations from citizens, civil society organisations, the media and political leaders alike.

Key findings

- Eight of 10 Ghanaians (81%) say citizens should always rely on the police to deal with suspected criminals (see Figure 1). About one in seven (15%), however, think it is sometimes acceptable for citizens to administer instant "justice" – a view that is shared by 39% of residents in the Upper West and Northern regions.
- Most Ghanaians believe it is "wrong and punishable" for party vigilantes to attack government appointees whose appointment they disagree with (88%), to lock up government offices to protest unfulfilled expectations of employment (87%), and to destroy state property (91%) (see Figure 2).
- Almost nine of 10 Ghanaians (88%) "approve" or "strongly approve" of government prosecuting and punishing political-party vigilantes who engage in acts of lawlessness, irrespective of their party affiliation (see Figure 3).
- A slim majority (53%) of Ghanaians say the government has performed "fairly well" or "very well" in handling the criminal activities of political-party vigilante groups (see Figure 4).

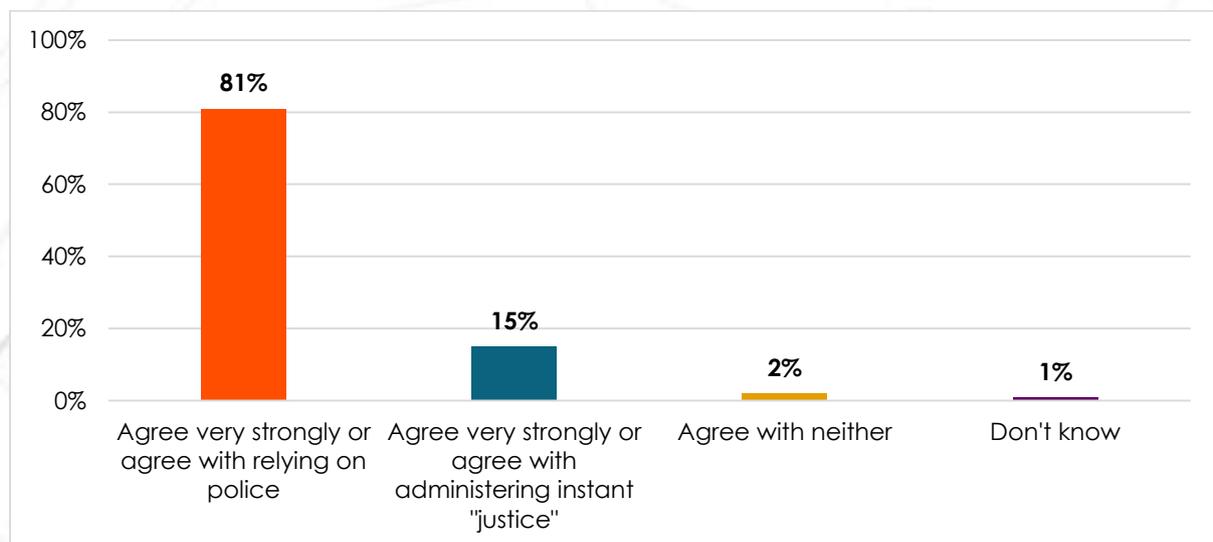
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 35 countries in Africa. Six rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2015, and Round 7 surveys (2016/2018) are currently underway. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Ghana, led by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), interviewed 2,400 adult Ghanaians between September 9 and 25, 2017. A sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Ghana in 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, and 2014.

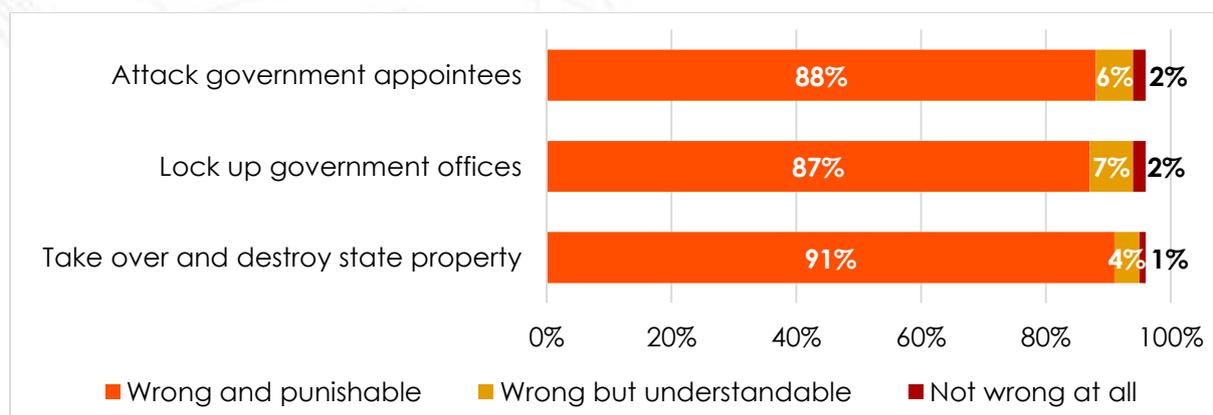
Charts

Figure 1: Rely on police vs. instant 'justice' to deal with suspected criminals | Ghana | 2017



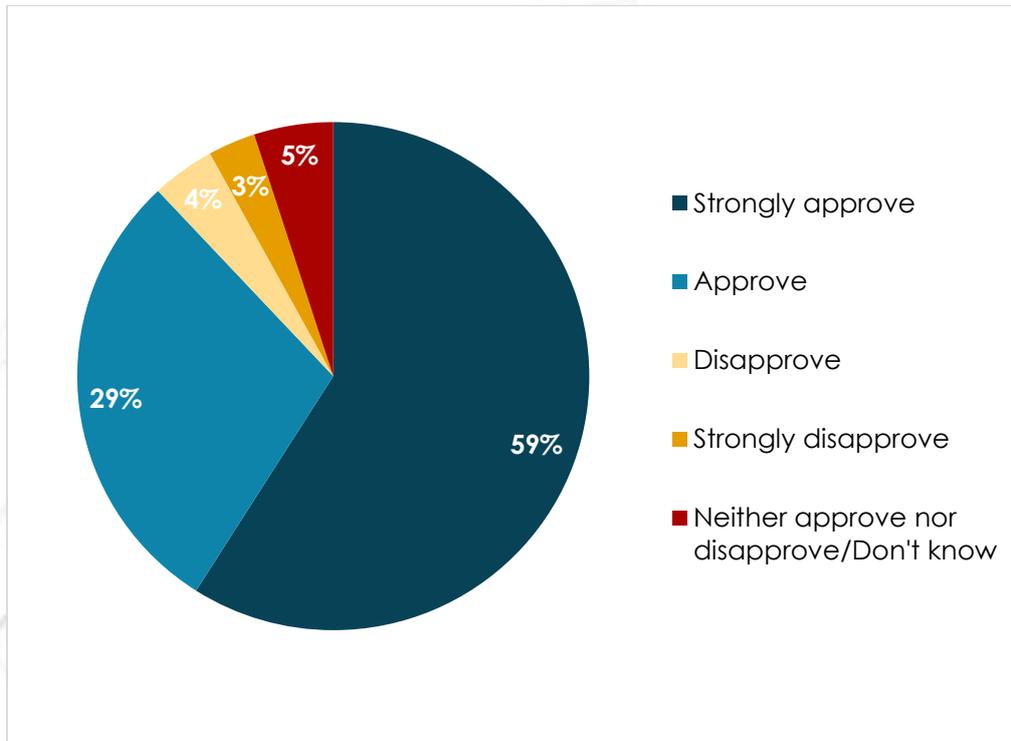
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: Sometimes it is acceptable for citizens to administer instant justice to suspected criminals.
 Statement 2: Citizens should always rely solely on the police to deal with suspected criminals.

Figure 2: Disapproval of actions of political-party vigilante groups | Ghana | 2017



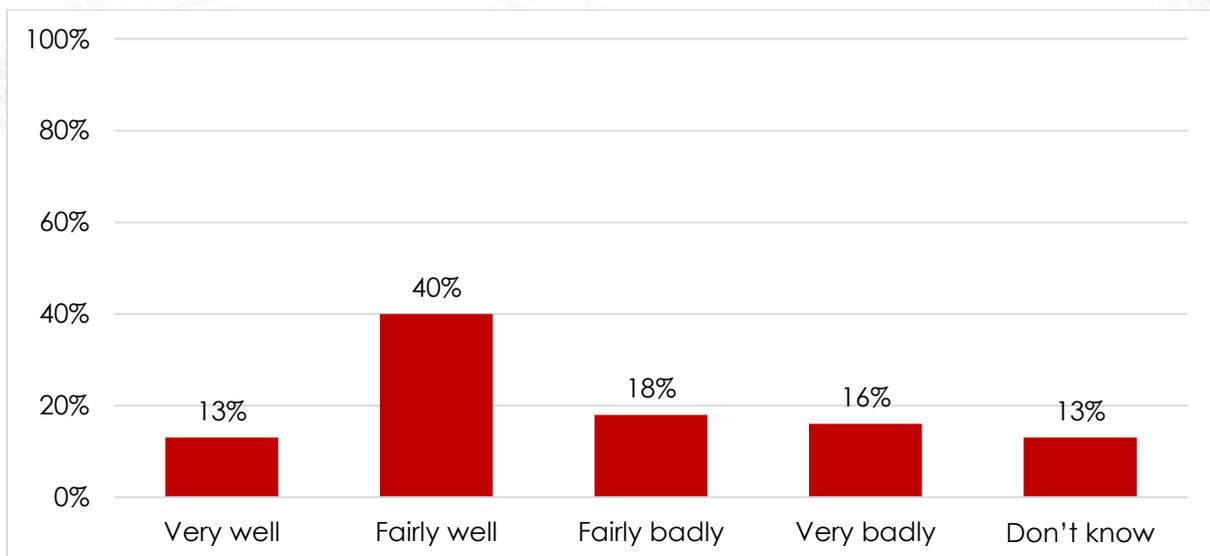
Respondents were asked: In Ghana, political-party vigilante groups engage in some activities during the election and post-election periods. Please tell me whether you think the following actions of these vigilante groups are not wrong at all, wrong but understandable, or wrong and punishable: Members of a political-party vigilante group: a) Attack government appointees whose appointment they disagree with? b) Lock up government offices because their expectation of getting employment with those institutions are not met? c) Take over and destroy state properties such as offices, tollbooths, public toilets, and car parks?

Figure 3: Demand for prosecution of political-party vigilantes | Ghana | 2017



Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the following statement: Government must prosecute and punish vigilante groups that engage in acts of lawlessness irrespective of their party affiliation?

Figure 4: Government handling of political-party vigilante groups | Ghana | 2017



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: Illegal activities of political-party vigilante groups?

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