

Arab Barometer VII

Libya Report

October 2022

Executive Summary

After seeing their hopes for elections in late 2021 crushed, Libyans are growing frustrated at the incompetence of the political class and its failure to resolve the country's ongoing crises. Libyans perceive foreign actors as contributors to, if not inciters of, the conflict and want to see Libyan-led efforts to reconcile the country's divisions. Trust in most political institutions is diminishing and belief in the prevalence of corruption is high. Libyans are generally dissatisfied with the government's performance and public services, though evaluations have improved slightly compared to the ratings in 2019. The economic situation in Libya has deteriorated with inflation and **liquidity** issues hindering people's abilities to meet their basic needs. At the same time, there has been a significant decline in optimism regarding the country's economic future while perceptions of inequality are increasing.

All these issues have resulted in popular discontent, which ultimately led to widespread protests in July 2022. The protestors' demands ranged from a better electricity supply to dissolution of all political bodies and the holding of elections. Those in power, however, attempted to utilize the protests for their own political infighting without taking any concrete steps to meet popular demands. These maneuvers reinforce the growing frustration Libyans hold toward democracy. There is now a growing belief that democratic regimes are weak economically, inefficient, and incapable of stabilizing the country. Nevertheless, only a minority of Libyans have considered leaving the country. Among those who have, the primary driver is economic reasons.

Libyan women and minorities continue to face challenges in their public and private lives. Views toward gender norms and roles remain largely patriarchal while large segments of society dispute the existence of racial discrimination in the country.

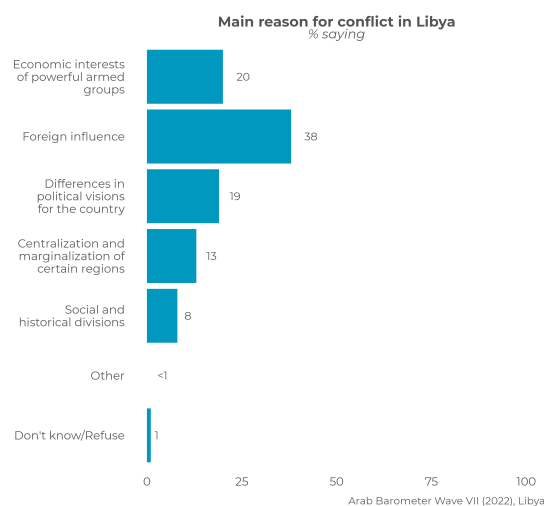
Despite many common problems across the country, Arab Barometer Wave VII in Libya reveals stark variations across the country's three historical regions. These differences are most evident in views of the conflict and political institutions. They also appear, however, in economic views and experiences, views of democracy, attitudes towards racial issues, and views of environmental challenges. The variations reflect the embedded social differences between the populations of the three regions while also reflecting the differences in living conditions and experiences due to the polarized nature of the Libyan conflict.

These are among the main findings of a nationally representative face-to-face survey conducted in Libya. The survey included 2,505 randomly selected citizens from across all governorates and was fielded from February 19 to April 4, 2022 using a multistage clustered sample. The margin of error for the reported

results is ± 2 percentage points. The surveys are part of Arab Barometer's seventh wave which is the largest publicly available survey that captures the sentiments of citizens across MENA following the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional information about the surveys can be found at www.arabbarometer.org.

Drivers of the conflict

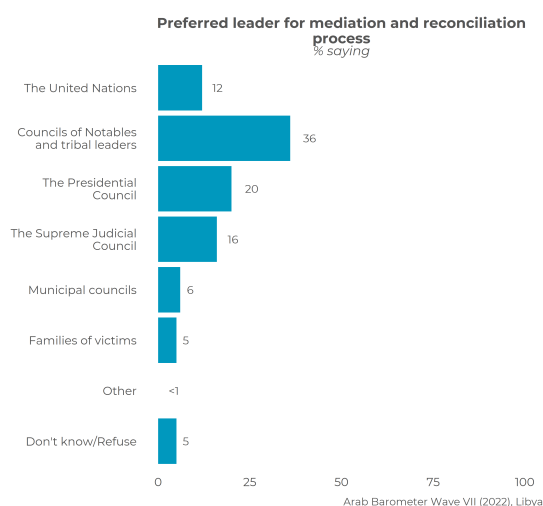
For the majority of Libyans, the most important challenges facing the country are instability, foreign interference, and corruption. Libyans are frustrated by foreign actors meddling in the country. Not only do people consider foreign interference as one of top challenges facing the country, but they also see it as the factor most contributing to the ongoing conflict. A plurality (38 percent) says that foreign influence is the main reason for the conflict, suggesting that Libyans perceive the war as a proxy one for the most part. This sentiment is shared across demography and geography. After years of internationally sponsored conferences and agreements that failed to bring lasting peace to the country, people are skeptical and cynical of the role international actors could play in ending the Libyan conflict. Attempts at international conflict mediation have failed to date, with some intentionally set up to fail. As a result, only a small proportion (12 percent) of people say they want the United Nations to lead mediation and reconciliation efforts.



Meanwhile, a fifth of Libyans blame the powerful armed groups for the conflict as they seek to protect their economic interests at the expense of the state.

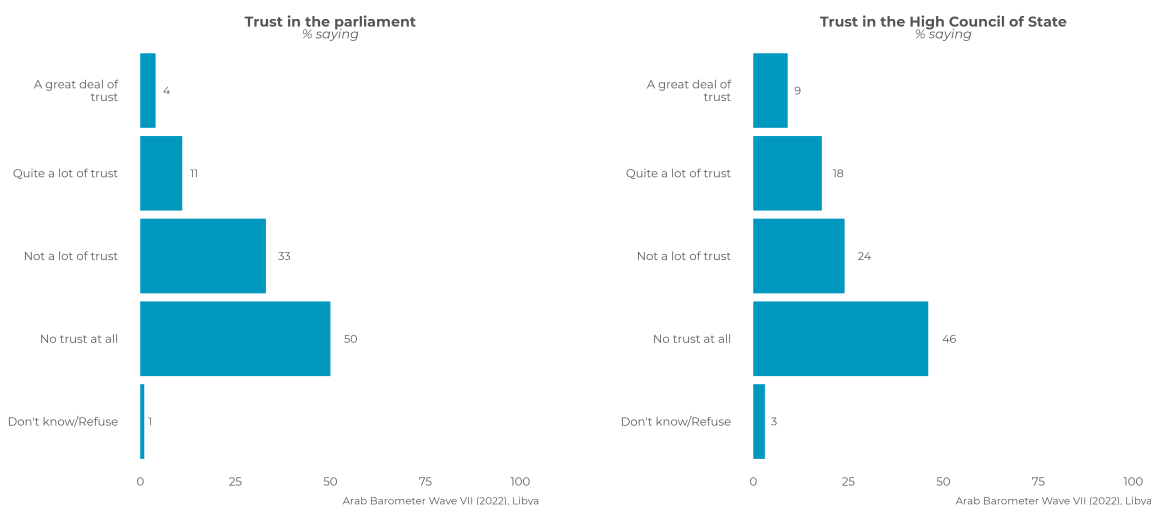
Roughly another fifth (19 percent) say that the conflict is a result of the different political visions powerful parties have for the country's future. While certain circles have been propagating the idea that the ongoing conflict, and especially the 2019 war, is motivated by grievances related to historical marginalization of some groups, only a minority of Libyans support such claims. Arab Barometer's Wave VII shows that only 13 percent say that marginalization and centralization is the main reason for the conflict. Notably, people in the Libyan South are more likely to hold this view (22 percent) compared to those in the East (15 percent) and the West (11 percent). Finally, fewer than one-in-ten Libyans say that historical and social divisions are the main reason for the conflict.

When it comes to mediation and reconciliation, Libyans want to see a Libyan-led, Libyan-owned process. More than a third (36 percent) say they want the councils of notables and tribal leaders to lead mediation efforts. This is especially true in the East where tribal leaders are often perceived as political actors and where people are at least ten points more likely to hold this view than their counterparts in the South and the West. It is noteworthy to mention that councils of notables have been playing an active role in mediation at the local level in some parts of the country, succeeding in bringing about reconciliation between neighboring rivals. Another actor that has been initiating dialogues on reconciliation is the three-member Presidential Council (PC) formed in February 2021 by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) that brought about the GNU. While a fifth say they want to see the PC take the lead on mediation efforts, there is a stark variation across regions. Three-in-ten people in the West hold this view, and roughly a quarter (23 percent) in the South, compared to just 11 percent in the East. Other actors that Libyans believe could lead the reconciliation process include the Supreme Judicial Council (16 percent) and municipal councils (six percent).



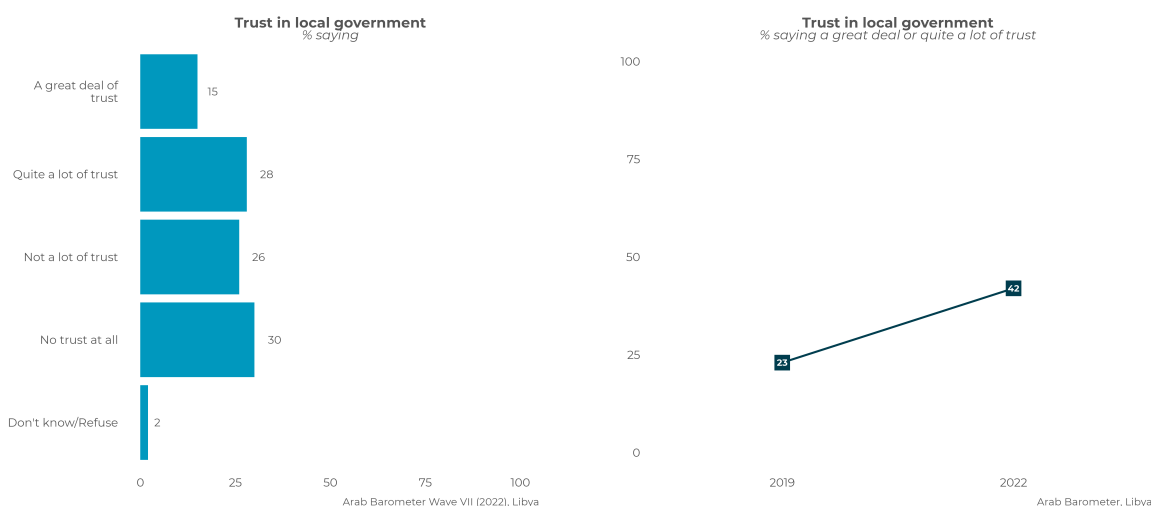
Political actors

Today, Libya is going through yet another political impasse as the various political actors are yet to agree on a roadmap to stability. The ongoing political crisis has demolished the public's trust in political institutions. This is especially true in the case of the House of Representatives (HoR) which was originally elected in 2014. Only 15 percent of Libyans say they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in the main legislative body in the country. Half of Libyans say they have no trust at all in the HoR, including 57 percent in the western part of the country. This result is unsurprising given that the HoR has acted unilaterally in the past year, despite prior agreement to consult with the High Council of State (HCS). The HCS is formerly known as the General National Congress (GNC), which was elected in 2012. Though its mission has changed, the HCS fared slightly better than the HoR in the latest Arab Barometer survey, with around a quarter of people saying they trust this consultative body. Nearly a third say they trust the Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA) which was elected in February 2014 to draft the country's constitution. The CDA concluded its draft in 2017 but a referendum is yet to be held. While more than a third of Libyan youth say they trust the CDA, only a quarter of those ages 30 and older share this sentiment.



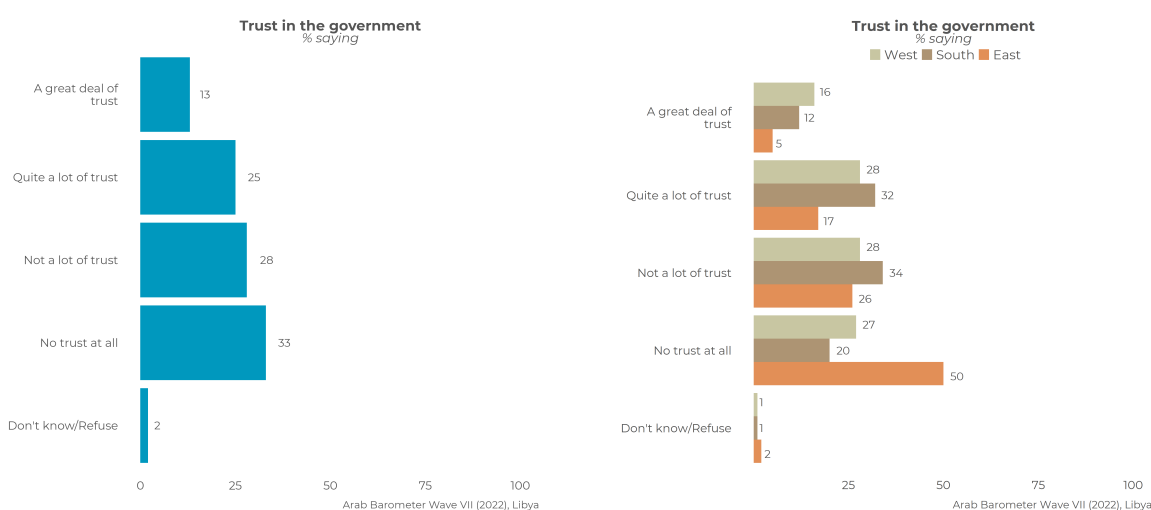
The failure of elected bodies to bring about a sustainable peace settlement has pushed Libyan and international mediators to look for alternatives. In 2020, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) formed the LPDF for the

sole purpose of formulating a new roadmap to stability. Although its formation procedures lacked transparency, the LPDF succeeded in selecting a new government in early 2021. It has not been regularly active following that, however. Despite that, more than a quarter of Libyans say they trust the LPDF, perhaps reflecting satisfaction with the LPDF's ability to agree on a new executive authority. Another alternative that has been advocated for is the municipal councils. Four-in-ten (42 percent) Libyans say they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in their municipal government. This is a 19-point increase compared to 2019 when only 23 percent of people said the same. The fact that, since 2019, the majority of municipalities have held elections is most likely the key factor contributing to this jump. The judicial institutions have also witnessed a jump in public trust from 37 percent in 2019 to 55 percent in 2022.



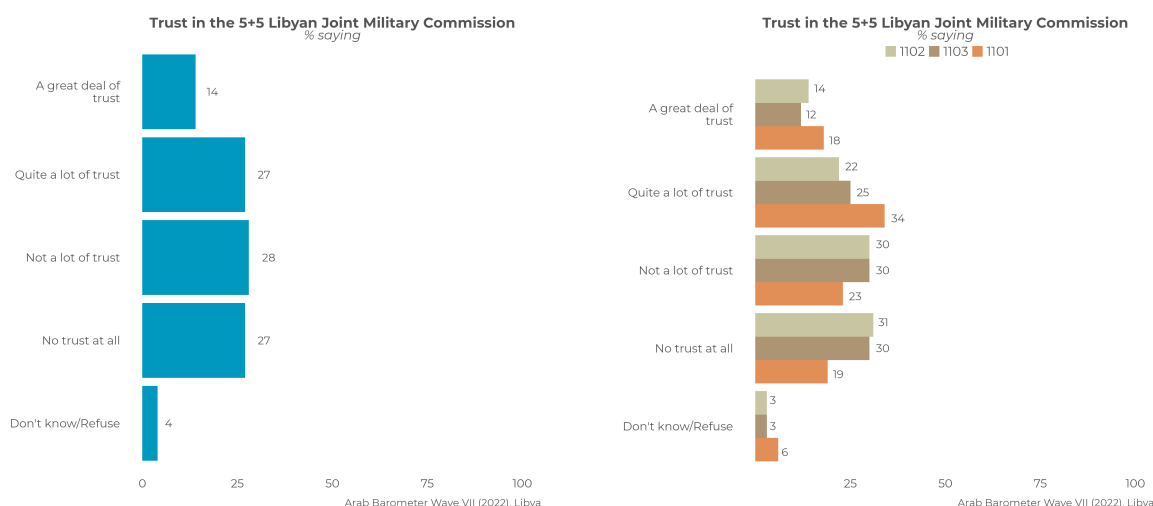
The GNU enjoys more support than other prominent political actors in the country. Despite criticisms, more than a third of Libyans (37 percent) say they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in the government. This constitutes a 27-point increase compared to the Government of National Accords on the eve of the attack on Tripoli in 2019, and a 19-point increase compared to Ali Zidan's government in 2014. Youth ages 18-29 are ten points more likely to trust the government than their older counterparts (42 percent vs. 32 percent). Unsurprisingly, there is a stark regional divide in terms of trust in the government. People in the West (44 percent) and South (44 percent) of the country are twice as likely to trust the government compared to Easterners (21 percent). Given the political divisions resulting in the GNU's inability to exert control or function in the East, it is also no surprise that Easterners view the government more negatively than their counterparts in the other two regions. In fact, half of people in the East say

they have no trust at all in the government, while only a quarter (27 percent) in the West and a fifth (20 percent) in the South say the same. Figures of trust in the GNU prime minister, Abdulhameed Dbaiba, are quite similar. Overall, nearly four-in-ten Libyans say they trust him. The results vary greatly, however, across the three regions. While nearly half of Westerners and Southerners (46 percent) say they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in Dbeibah, only a fifth of Easterners share the sentiment. Rather, more than half (54 percent) in the East say they have no trust at all in the PM, compared to a quarter in the West and South saying the same.



One major contributing factor to instability in Libya is the lack of a unified military. While the government's armed forces and its allied groups are largely controlling the western part of the country, the so-called Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), led by Khalifa Haftar, are controlling most of the eastern part. Neither group has the trust of more than a third of the population, though their support bases are quite opposite to each other. On one hand, the GNU's armed forces enjoy the trust of nearly half the population in the West and the South. At the same time, 60 percent of Easterners say they have no trust at all in these forces. On the other hand, nearly two thirds of people in the East say they have a great deal (36 percent) or quite a lot (29 percent) of trust the LAAF while 61 percent of Westerners say they have no trust in the LAAF at all. In the South, 61 percent of people say they have no trust at all in the LAAF while only a quarter have no trust at all in the GNU forces. To bridge the gap between the two armed forces, the UN has created the Joint Military Commission (JMC), also known as the 5+5 committee. Though it partially succeeded in maintaining the 2020 ceasefire, the JMC has yet to take any direct steps to unify the military or push foreign

forces out of the country. Despite that, the Committee enjoys more support than either of the two armed forces with nearly 4-in-ten Libyans saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in it.



Civil society

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are a new phenomenon in Libya. Prior to 2011, a handful of CSOs operated in the country, with missions almost exclusively focused on charity. Since 2011, however, hundreds of CSOs have been founded across the country to contribute to state-building efforts. In 2014, half (52 percent) of Libyans said they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in CSOs. This percentage dropped, however, to only a quarter (28 percent) of people in 2019. Today, CSOs have regained some of the public trust, with the percentage rising to 37 percent of the population. Youth ages 18-29 are seven points more likely to trust CSOs than those thirty or older (41 percent vs. 34 percent).

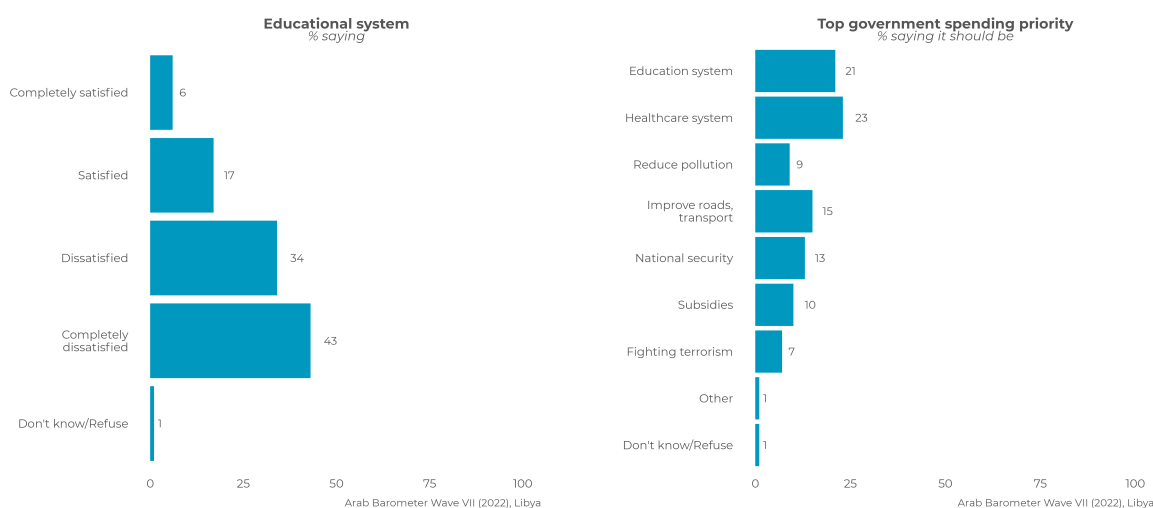
Government performance and services

A third (33 percent) of the population says they are satisfied or completely satisfied with the overall performance of the government. People with higher incomes (36 percent) are eight points more likely to express their satisfaction as compared to their compatriots with lower incomes (28 percent). In the West

(38 percent) and the South (36 percent), people are more likely to be satisfied with the government's overall performance compared to those in the East (20 percent).

Education

Only a fifth (22 percent) of Libyans say they are completely satisfied or satisfied with the country's education system. Continuous interruptions and lack of clear planning from the government have contributed to this low level of satisfaction. The survey results make clear that there are a number of concerns about the education system, as there is no clear consensus about the greatest challenge facing the school system. Lack of qualified teachers, outdated curriculum, crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, lack of modern technology in classrooms, and teachers' poor treatment of kids all fall within the five-point margin of each other on the challenges' scale.



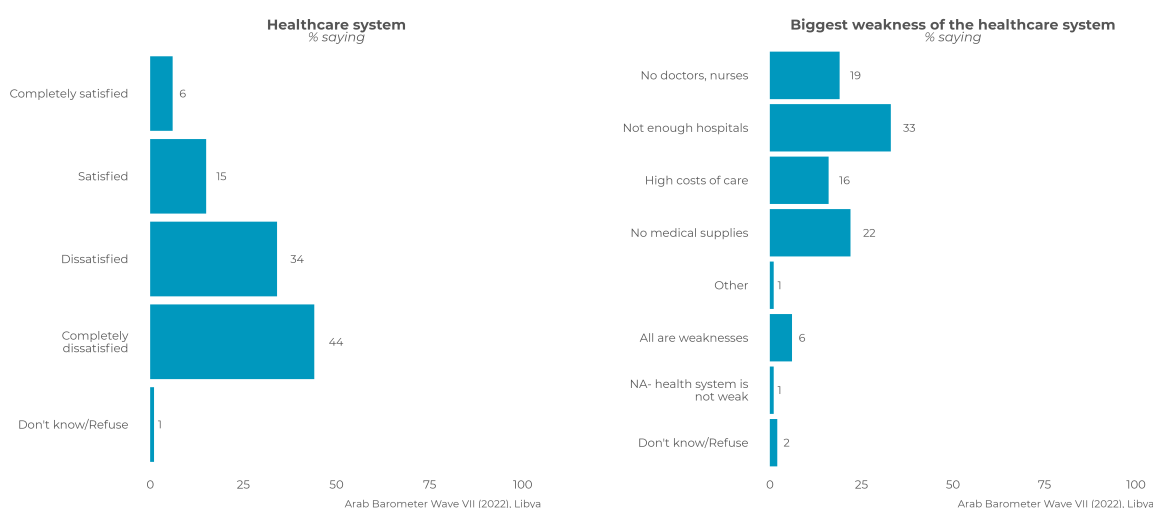
It is no surprise that education is ranked among the top government spending priorities by Libyans, second only to the healthcare system (albeit within its margin of error). In the East, Libyans are 11 points more likely than the West and eight points more likely than the South to say the education system should be the top government spending priority in the upcoming year. Additionally, there is not a clear consensus for how to improve education. While a quarter say the government should focus on providing training to teachers, a fifth say it should update the curriculum. Additionally, 16 percent of Libyans want to see the government improving technology in the classroom, 13 percent providing

textbooks and supplies, 12 percent building schools, and 11 percent reducing class size.

Healthcare & COVID19

Views of the healthcare system are similar to those of the education system. Only a fifth of Libyans (21 percent) say they are completely satisfied or satisfied with the healthcare services. These low levels of satisfaction have not changed significantly compared to levels in 2019 (18 percent). Notably, however, youth are more likely to be satisfied with the healthcare system than those thirty years or older by a margin of ten points. Similarly, those with lower educational attainment are 11 points more likely to express satisfaction than those with higher degrees. Libyans with higher incomes are more likely to be satisfied than those with lower incomes by a margin of nine points. This could be the result of their ability to seek healthcare at private hospitals and clinics, rather than relying on the less-well-equipped public hospitals.

When asked about the biggest weakness of the system revealed by COVID19, a third of Libyans (33 percent) say it does not have enough hospitals, while a fifth (22 percent) say the lack of medical supplies and another fifth (19 percent) say lack of qualified medical personnel. Against this background, the spread of COVID-19 presented a major challenge for the healthcare system. Two years after the initial breakout, more than half of Libyans (58 percent) say they are very or somewhat concerned about the spread of the virus in the upcoming months.



In addition to straining the healthcare sector, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused several challenges for Libyans. Roughly a fifth (18 percent) say that disruption of their social life was the biggest challenge caused by the pandemic, while 16 percent say it is the inflation and increased cost of living. Fewer say loss of income (13 percent), disruption of kids' education (13 percent), getting infected with COVID-19 (12 percent), the psychological effects (11 percent), and the resulting scarcity of basic goods (11 percent) are the biggest challenges.

The GNU was formed during the pandemic in early 2021, so naturally vaccination campaigns were one of the promises made by the various candidates to lead the government. Soon after it came to power, the GNU launched a campaign encouraging Libyans to get vaccinated. As a result, six-in-ten adult Libyans say they have received at least one dose of the vaccine. Many people clearly credit the GNU for its efforts in response to the pandemic, as half (49 percent) of the population rate its performance on this front as very good or good.

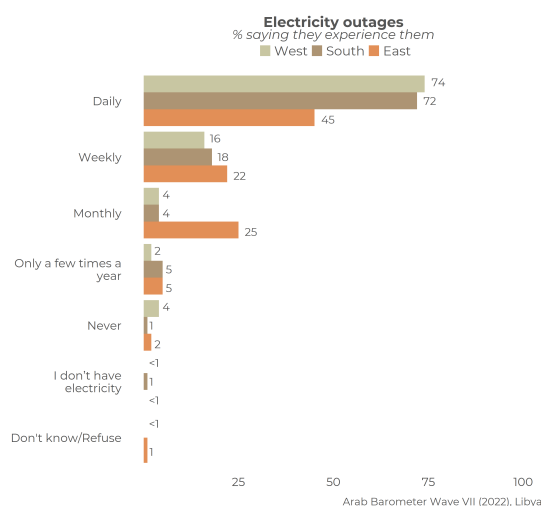
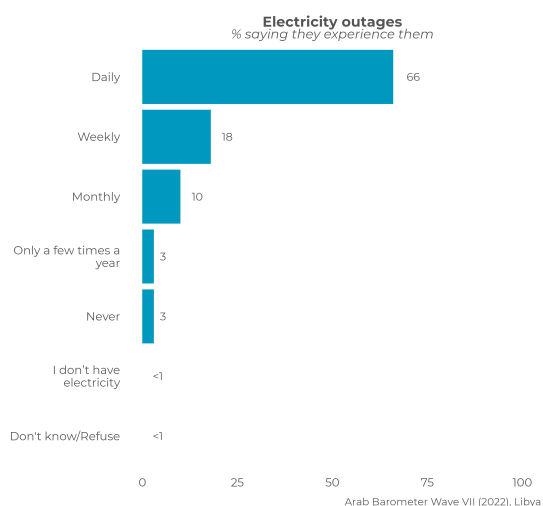
Trash collection and street quality

As for public services, a third of people (35 percent) say they are completely satisfied or satisfied with the trash collection service in the country. This is especially true in the West (45 percent) and the South (37 percent). Only a small minority (13 percent) in the East, expresses satisfaction. At least half of Easterners (55 percent) say they are completely dissatisfied with the trash collection services. Additionally, only a fifth (19 percent) of Libyans say they are completely satisfied or satisfied with the quality of their streets and roads. The vast majority say they are dissatisfied (34 percent) or completely dissatisfied (46 percent).

Electricity

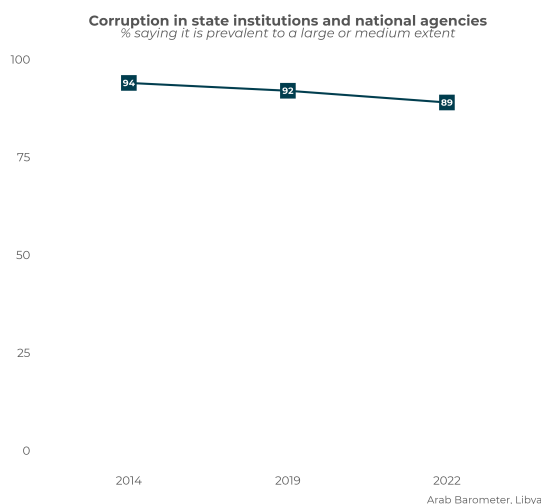
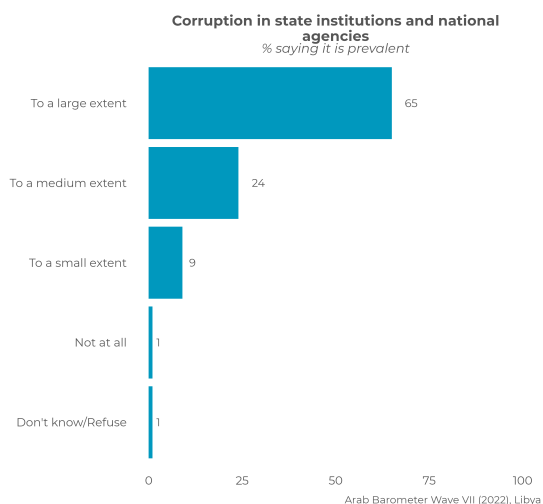
The electricity crisis is endemic in Libya. Two thirds (66 percent) of Libyans say they experience cuts on a daily basis. An additional 18 percent say they experience them on a weekly basis and another ten percent on a monthly basis. There are stark differences across Libya's three historical regions, however, when it comes to electricity outages. While three quarters (74 percent) in the West and 72 percent in the South experience cuts every day, fewer than half (45 percent) in the East share the same experience. This is in part due to the fact that the electricity grid is often disconnected between the West and the East. At the same time, the electricity grid in the East is connected to the Egyptian grid, perhaps increasing its reliability. The crumbling infrastructure of the grid, thefts of lines, corruption, and damage to power plants due to clashes are

the main reasons for the electricity crisis in the country. The chronic electricity cuts were one of the main factors leading to the protests in early July 2022.

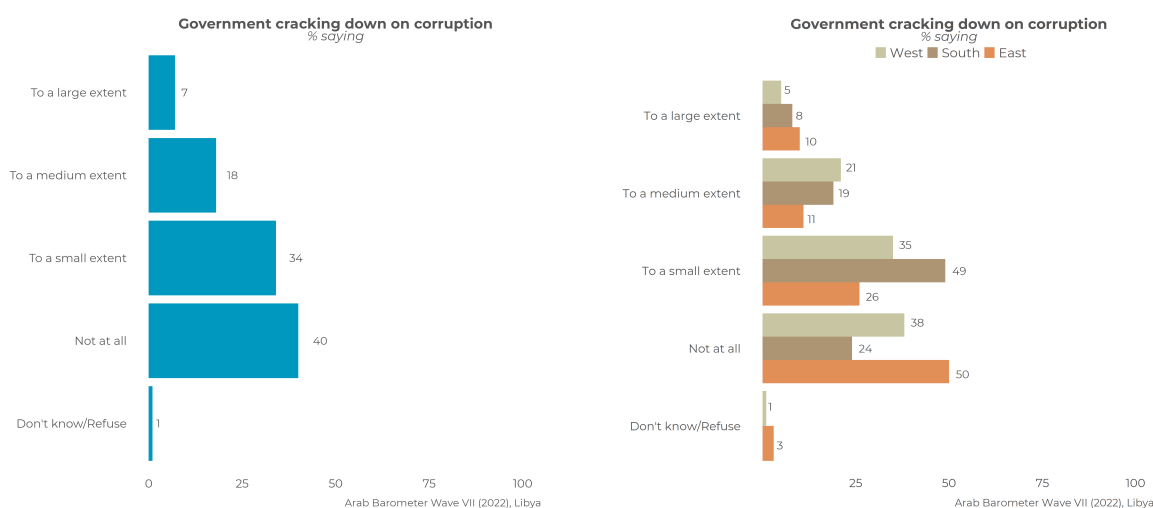


Corruption

Corruption remains one of the top challenges in Libya with a fifth (21 percent) saying it is the most important challenge facing the country. The overwhelming majority (89 percent) of people are convinced that corruption is prevalent to a large or medium extent in national state institutions. This level has not changed significantly since 2014.



Only a quarter of Libyans say the government is combating corruption to a large or medium extent. Just like perceptions of corruption prevalence, the numbers of people who credit the government on this front has witnessed no significant changes since 2014. Notably, people in the East (50 percent) and the West (38 percent) are more likely to say the government is doing nothing at all in fighting corruption as compared to people in the South (24 percent). Southerners tend to say the government is cracking down on corruption to a small extent (49 percent). This could be a result of the marginalization that the South has been suffering for a long time, causing people's expectation of the government to plummet. Similarly, Libyans with higher incomes are more likely to credit the government (28 percent) compared to those with lower incomes (20 percent).

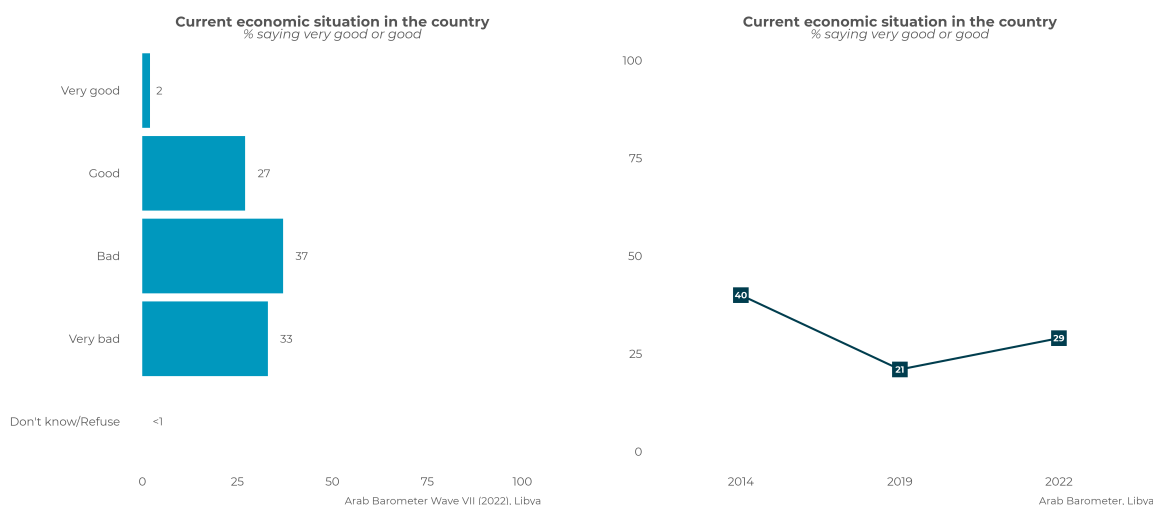


Matters are not better at the local level. The vast majority of Libyans say almost all officials (23 percent) or most of them (55 percent) at the local level are corrupt. Less than a fifth (18 percent) of Libyans say their local officials are not corrupt.

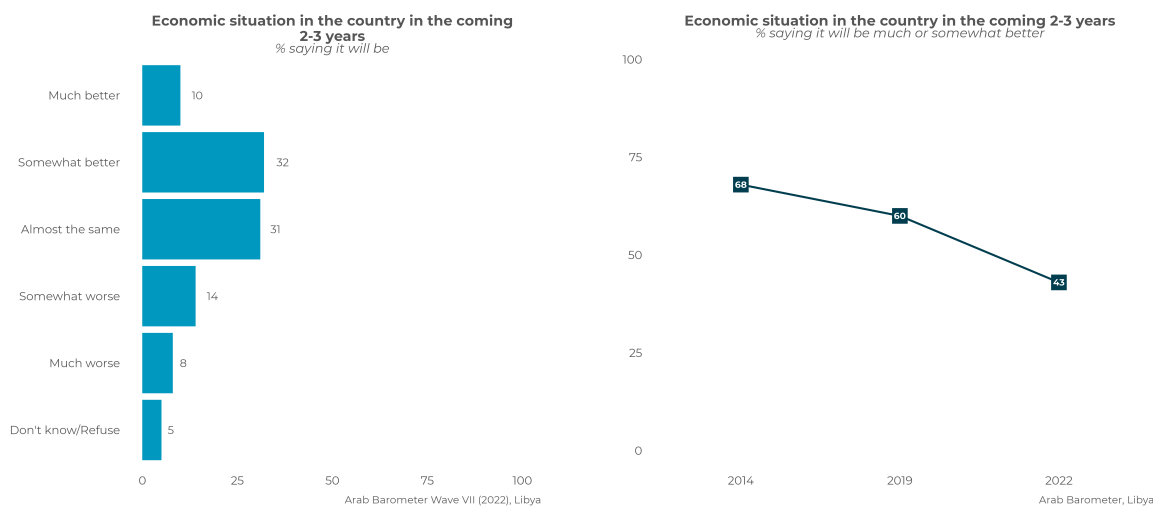
Economy

Oil production in Libya, the country's main source of income, has witnessed repeated interruptions since 2011. Various parties have used oil blockades as a way to extort the state in Tripoli. These blockades have casted a dark shadow on the country's economy. The economic impacts of the COVID19 pandemic

have only exacerbated the crisis. Fewer than a third (29 percent) of people say the current economic situation is very good or good. Though a rise from 21 percent in 2019, this level is still below what it was in 2014 (40 percent).



Libyans are growing dissatisfied and pessimistic regarding the economy. This year, less than half (43 percent) say they believe the economy will be much better or somewhat better. This constitutes a significant decline since 2014 when two third of Libyans (68 percent) and 2019 when six-in-ten shared the view. Libyans ages 30 or older tend to be more optimistic, however, with a nine-point margin compared to youth. Similarly, people in the East are more optimistic with more than half of them (57 percent) saying the economy will be much or somewhat better, compared to 38 percent in the West and three-in-ten in the South.



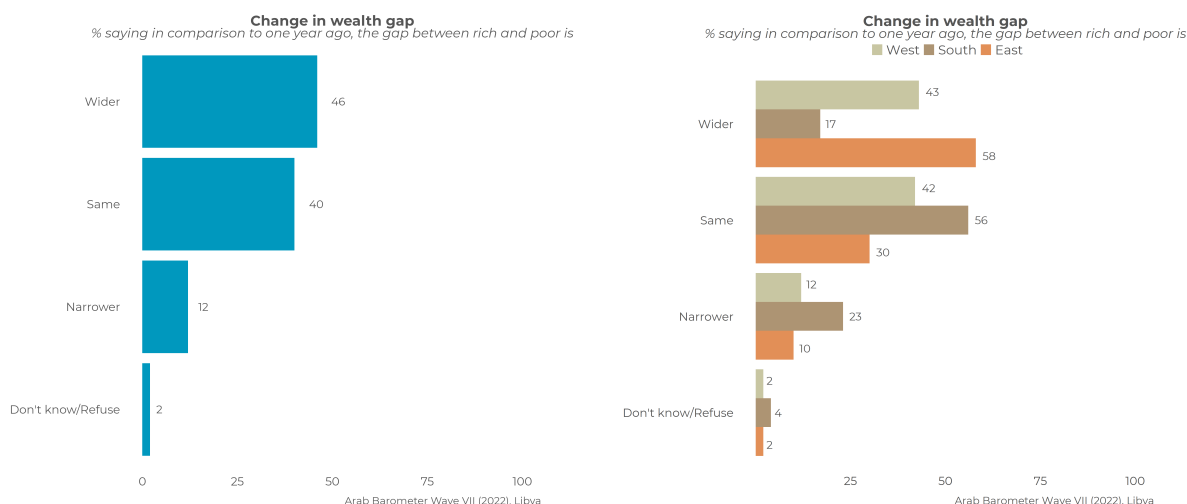
One symptom of deteriorating economic conditions is food insecurity. In recent years, Libya has canceled several aspects of food subsidies, leaving prices up to the market. With the repeated interruptions of oil production leading to a weaker currency and the ongoing conflict, inflation has risen several folds in Libya since 2014. The COVID-19 pandemic caused prices to soar further. The Libyan government has done little to combat this increase in prices of basic goods. Today, most Libyans say the government's performance in keeping prices down is bad (27 percent) or very bad (55 percent).

Arab Barometer presents people with the following statement: we worried our food would run out before we got money to buy more. Two third of Libyans say this statement is often true (29 percent) or sometimes true (38 percent). People with lower incomes are 15-points more likely to say this statement is often true compared to those with higher incomes. At least half of Libyans (53 percent) say they often or sometimes experienced running out of food without having money to buy more. Similarly, people with lower incomes are 12-points more likely to say this is often the case, compared to those with higher incomes.

Most Libyans (59 percent) consider the gap between the rich and the poor in the country a problem to a great or medium extent. This is especially true in the East where two thirds share this belief, compared to around half of their compatriots in the West and the South.

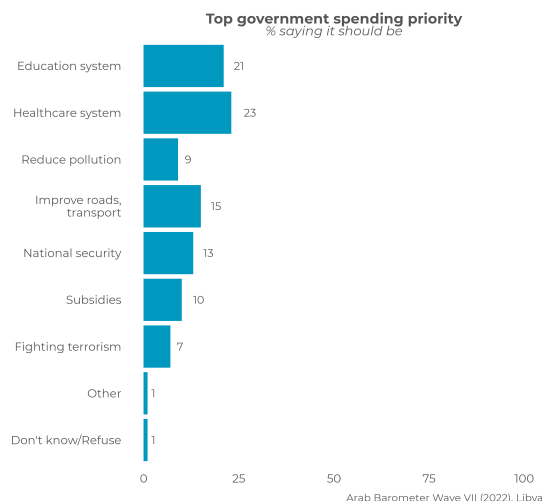
Furthermore, nearly half of Libyans think that the wealth gap has become wider over the past year. Notably, people in the South are significantly less likely to hold this view (17 percent), compared to 58 percent in the East and 43 percent in the West. Given that most financial resources in the country are clustered in

the northern regions, it is likely that inequality is more apparent in the North than it is in the South.



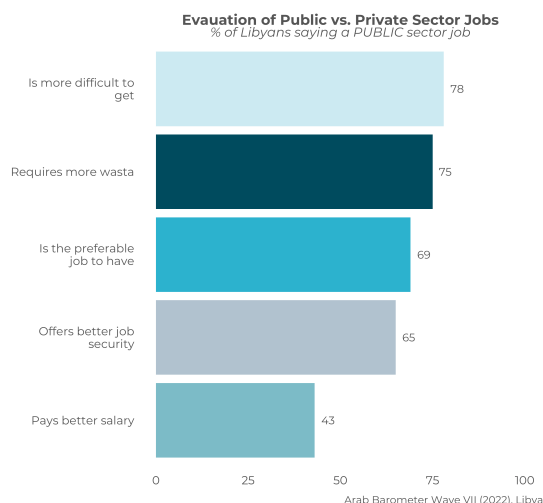
Government performance on economic inequality is evaluated negatively by the vast majority of people. Only a quarter (27 percent) say the government is doing a very good or good job in narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor. This is especially true across economic classes. While a third (32 percent) of people with higher incomes evaluate government performance on that front positively, only a fifth (21 percent) of those with lower incomes share the sentiment.

Libyans clearly disagree on the recipe for economic improvement. When asked about the most important government action to improve the economy, answers varied greatly. A fifth (21 percent) of Libyans choose political stability as a precursor for improving economic conditions. The remaining four fifths, however, were divided between creating jobs, reforming education, raising wages, limiting inflation, limiting smuggling, and encouraging foreign investments, with all these options falling with the 5-point margin of each other.



Job creation

While 15 percent of Libyans think that job creation is the most important action the government should take to improve the economy, the majority have clear preferences for which sector should jobs be created in. Nearly two thirds (62 percent) say they want the government to create public sector jobs, while only a fifth (19 percent) say they want jobs in the private sector. These results match people's personal preferences for employment as two thirds (69 percent) say they prefer to be employed in the public sector compared to a fifth saying they prefer the private sector. Preference levels remain high despite public belief that public sector jobs are harder to get (78 percent), require more Wasta (75 percent), and pay less than private jobs (43 percent for public jobs vs 49 percent for private ones).

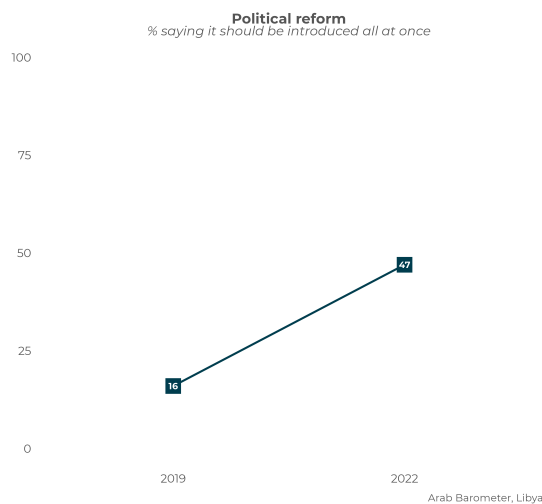
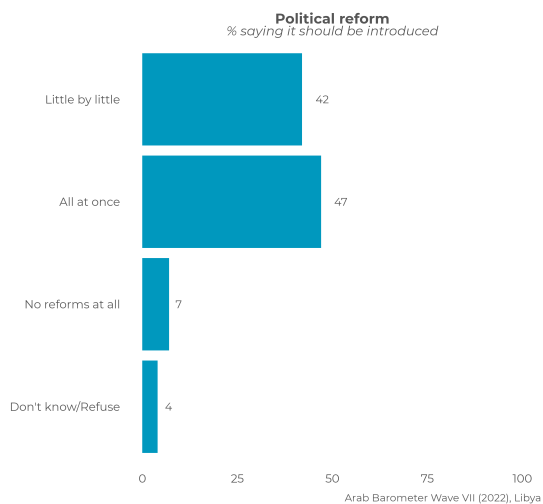


One reason Libyans prefer public sector jobs is the job security associated with them. Two thirds (65 percent) say the public sector offers more security, compared to a quarter (26 percent) saying the private sector is more secure.

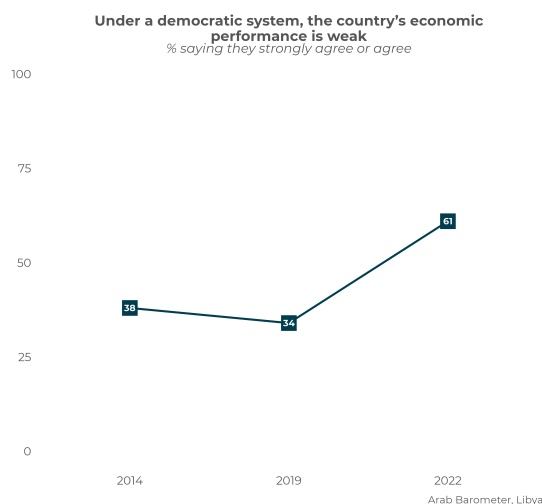
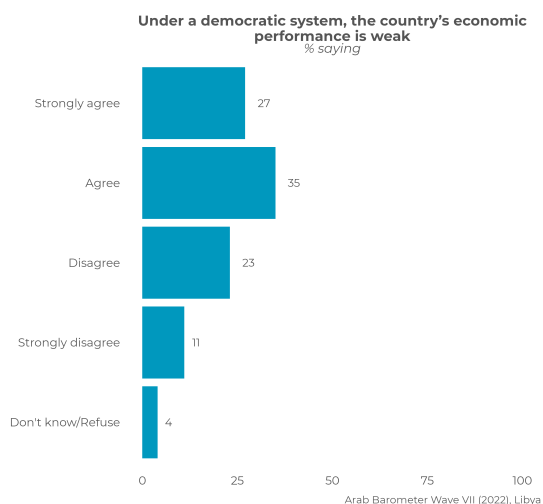
Democracy

Similar to several other MENA countries, there is a growing frustration with the political system in Libya. After 11 years of instability and chaos, people want deep political reforms to bring about lasting, sustainable peace in the North African country. Today, half (47 percent) of Libyans say they want reforms to be introduced all at once. This percentage has tripled compared to 2019 when only 16 percent said the same. Simultaneously, the percentage of those wanting reforms to be introduced incrementally has shrunk from three quarters in 2019 to only 42 percent this year.

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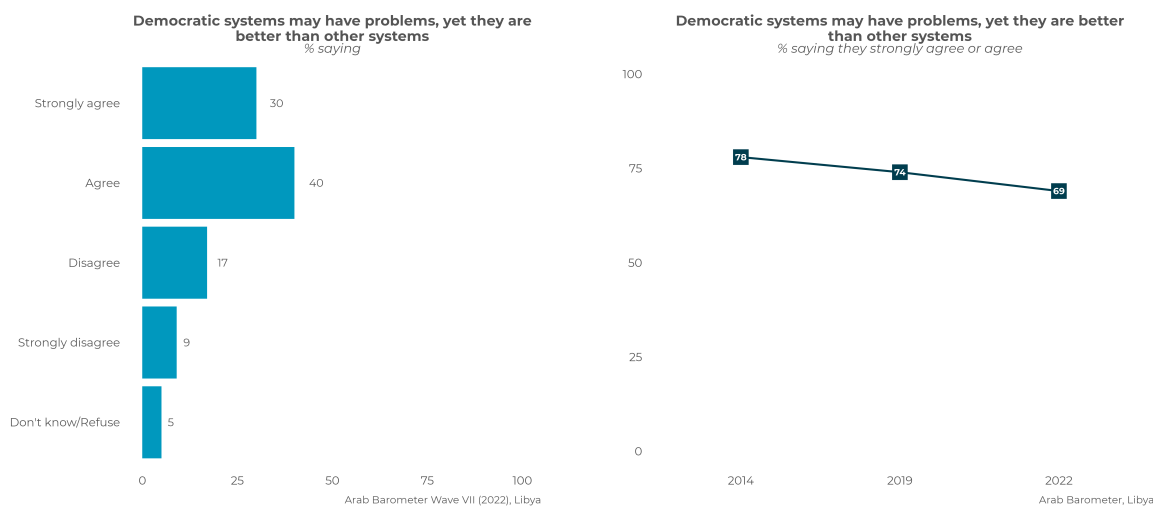
While demanding reforms, people are also increasingly concerned about the potential limitations of a democratic system. Six-in-ten Libyans say they strongly agree or agree that economic performance is weak under a democracy. People with a higher education and those 30 or older are more likely to hold this view as compared to people with lower education and youth by a margin of 12 points. Notably, Libyans in the East and the West are significantly more likely to hold this view compared to people in the South where half say they disagree (38 percent) or strongly disagree (14 percent) with the claim that economic performance under a democracy is weak. More striking, however, is the massive jump in the percentage of people holding this view across the country as compared to previous years. In 2019, only a third (34 percent) held this view, which means that this year's number (61 percent) represents a 27-point jump.



Similar increases are documented in other democracy-related questions. Six-in-ten Libyans say they strongly agree or agree with the statement that democracies are indecisive and full of problems. This constitutes an increase of 23 points as compared to 2019 when only 37 percent agreed with the statement. Libyans with lower incomes are ten points more likely to hold this view compared to those with higher incomes. Similarly, people aged 30 or older are more likely to agree with the statement than youth (64 percent vs. 56 percent). Once again, Libyans in the South are less likely to agree that democratic regimes are indecisive than those in the West or the East. More than half in the South say they disagree (41 percent, compared to 26 in the West and 23 in the East) or strongly disagree (14 percent, compared to eight in the West and seven in the East) with this notion.

Views are also similar when it comes to democracy's effectiveness in maintaining stability. Six-in-ten Libyans say they strongly agree or agree that democracies are ineffective on this front. This is a jump from a third (34 percent) in 2019. Nearly half of people in the South say they disagree with this claim (42 percent) or strongly disagree (six percent) compared to only a third disagreeing in the West and the East.

While acknowledging the various limitations of democracy, two thirds of Libyans (69 percent) still hold that despite these problems, democracy is better than other systems. This level of support for democracy as the best system has remained largely unchanged since 2019 when three quarters (74 percent) expressed this belief. By a stronger measure, however, only a plurality (38 percent) say that democracy is the only viable form of government. At the same time, three-in-ten say that a non-democratic government could be preferable sometimes (28 percent) or that the type of government does not matter (29 percent). This is quite different from levels in 2019 when 58 percent said democracy is always preferable (drop of 20 points this year), 15 percent said non-democracy is sometimes preferable (increase of 13 points), and 17 percent said type of government does not matter (increase of 12 points). This perhaps reflects a growing frustration with the current political situation in the country as people emphasize outcomes over processes.



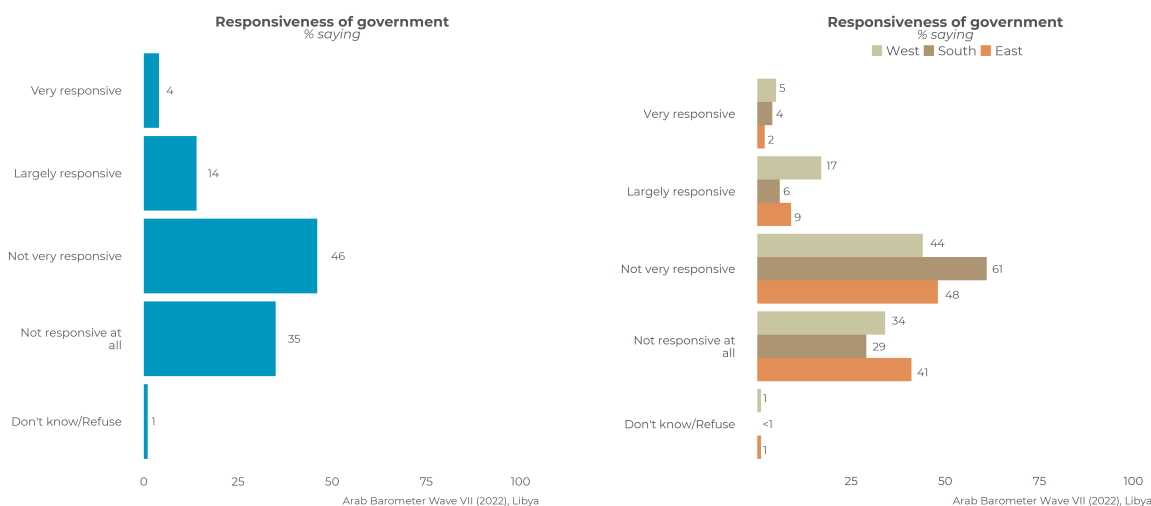
This emphasis is further reinforced by the fact that three quarters (77 percent) say they strongly agree or agree that the type of government does not matter as long as it can solve the country's economic problems. A similar proportion (75 percent) say it does not matter whether the government is democratic or undemocratic as long as it maintains stability and order. In the same vein, seven-in-ten Libyans (71 percent) say "the country needs a leader who can bend the rules if necessary to get things done."

Civic participation

Interest in politics is low in Libya as only a quarter of the population say they are very interested or interested. The vast majority express disinterest with four-in-ten saying they are uninterested and a third (35 percent) saying they are very uninterested in politics. Youth, the less educated, and women are more likely to say they are very uninterested compared to older people, those who are more educated, and men. Levels of interest in politics have not changed significantly since 2019 when 22 percent of Libyans said they were very interested or interested. These levels remain far below 2014 levels when 42 percent expressed their interest in politics. The drop is most likely a reflection of general disappointment of the path the country delved into since the civil war broke out in summer 2014.

Only a minority of Libyans think that the government is responsive to what the public wants. No more than a fifth (18 percent) say the government is very or largely responsive. Nearly half (46 percent) say it is not very responsive and a third (35 percent) say not responsive at all. Notably, people in the West are twice

as likely to say the government is responsive compared to those in the South or the East. This is perhaps the result of geographic proximity to the capital where most political powers are concentrated in the country. Though with this regional variation, only a small minority (less than a quarter) in the West say the government is responsive to the demands of its people.



Along with this wide perception of the government's unresponsiveness, there is a lack of agreement on effective ways to influence the government. A fifth (21 percent) of Libyans say that protests are the most effective way, while less than a fifth either say online activism (16 percent), working through a political party (15 percent), or nothing is effective (15 percent). Notably, people with college degrees or higher are more likely to consider protests as the most effective way to influence the government, as compared to those with secondary degrees or less by a margin of 10 points. Inversely, people with lower education levels are eight points more likely to say working through a political party is the way to go. Ironically, some of these ways appear again on the list of least effective ways to influence the government. A quarter (23 percent) say a protest is the least effective, 16 percent say online activism, 13 percent say working through a political party, and 13 percent writing to officials.

Given these results, it is unsurprising that most Libyans (76 percent) say they have not attended any in-person protests in the past year. Only a quarter say they participated once (9 percent) or more than once (14 percent). More striking are the findings for online activism as only nine percent say they have attended or participated in an online activity aiming to solve a communal problem. Similarly, the majority of Libyans say they are not affiliated with any political party and no single party could harness the support of even one-tenth of the

population.

July Protests

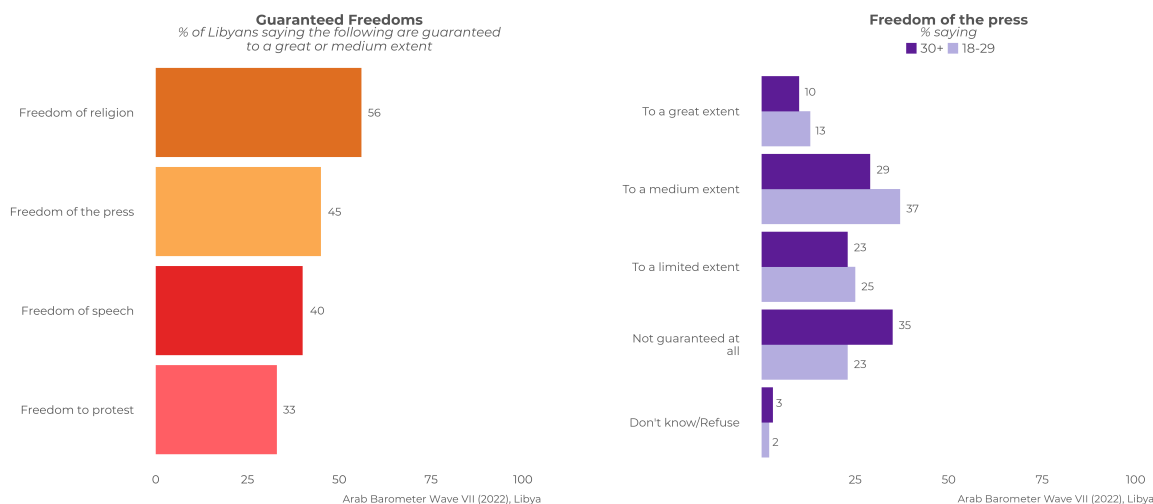
Against the backdrop of political impasse and polarized institutions, thousands of Libyans [took to the streets](#) in several cities across the country on July 1, 2022. Protestors voiced their anger at the failures of political elites that have worsened the living conditions for Libyans. Chronic power cuts, insecurity, and failure to hold elections were the main items protestors mentioned in their chants. Though simultaneous, the protests were loosely coordinated across cities. The loose coordination was evident in the lack of unified demands and leadership, as different groups coordinated, rallied, and participated in different cities. Lack of leadership, however, proved a positive as it deprived politicians from dismissing the protests as a coordinated plot by a single party or an actor. One of the most significant moments in the July protests was storming the headquarters of the House of Representatives in Tobruk before setting the building ablaze. Protesters in Libya's most eastern city accused HoR members of treason and corruption. The significance of this protest was that it demonstrated how weak support for the HoR is even in Tobruk where it has been based for the past eight years. This weak support is shown in Arab Barometer surveys and is made further evident by the protest. In other cities, protestors called for dissolution of all political bodies, including the GNU and the Government of National Stability appointed by the HoR in March 2022. Protestors also called for a better electricity supply and a solution to the inflation crisis in the country. One key demand that protestors shared across the country was a call for holding elections. Protesters stated that political elites have failed to hold elections in December 2021 and continue to benefit from their access to power and money, delaying elections in the process. Out of the July protests emerged a number of active groups, one of which is the Misrata Youth Movement to Correct the Path. The founders of the movement met during the Misrata protest on July 1st and agreed to form a group in order to continue efforts and follow up on their demands. In August, the Movement organized a protest and issued a [statement](#) calling for immediate parliamentary elections to establish a new legislative body capable of forming a unified government and resolving the constitutional crisis.

Freedoms

When it comes to civil liberties, perceptions have improved dramatically as compared to the situation three years ago. Four-in-ten Libyans say that freedom of expression is guaranteed to a great or medium extent this year. This is an increase from only a quarter (24 percent) believing that it is guaranteed in 2019.

It remains, however, far below levels in 2014 when 71 percent of Libyans held this view.

Similarly, 45 percent of Libyans say that freedom of the press is guaranteed to a great or medium extent in the country. This is another drop from 70 percent in 2014. Youth are more likely to hold this view than their older compatriots (50 percent vs. 39 percent).



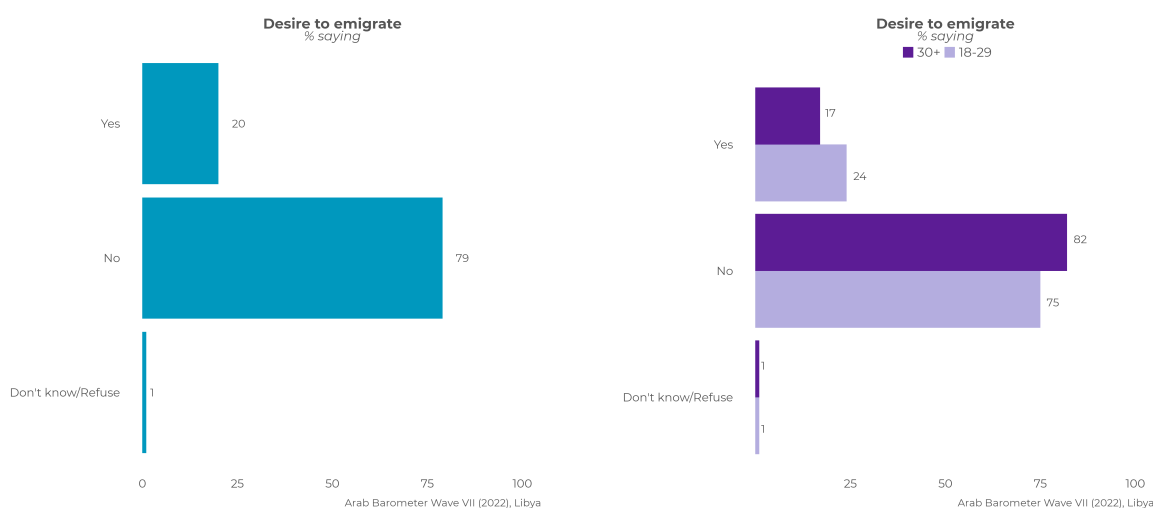
People's perception of the extent the freedom to protest is guaranteed is not as high, however. Only a third of Libyans say that it is guaranteed to a great or medium extent. Compared to 2019, this constitutes an increase of 12 points. But going from three quarters (74 percent) in 2014 to only a third this year is a much more notable change. The plurality (40 percent) says the freedom to participate in peaceful protest is not guaranteed at all.

Libyans seem to be intolerant towards any attempts at curbing freedom of expression by the government. Only one-in-ten (11 percent) say it is always justifiable for the government to limit freedom of speech during an emergency. While nearly half (48 percent) say such actions could be justifiable in certain cases, a sizable minority (38 percent) say it is never justifiable.

People are less opposed to curbing freedom of the media, however. A fifth (22 percent) of Libyans say it is always justifiable for the government to censor the media during a public emergency and 45 percent say it is sometimes justifiable. Only three-in-ten (29 percent) say such actions are never justifiable.

Migration

A fifth of Libyans say they have considered emigrating from their home country. Youth are more likely to say they want to emigrate compared to their older compatriots (24 percent vs. 17 percent). There are, however, no significant differences among other demographic factors like educational attainment, gender, income, or geography. This suggests that desire to emigrate in Libya is not exclusive to one particular group; rather, Libyans from various demographic groups are considering emigrating at similar levels.



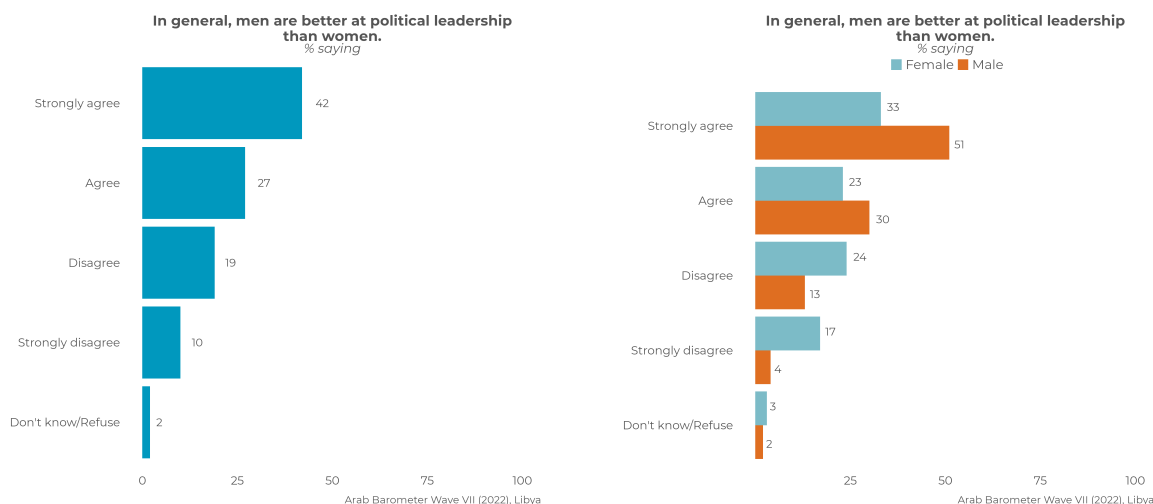
Among potential migrants in Libya, at least half (53 percent) say the economic conditions are their reason for wanting to migrate. This is the lowest level among all countries included in Arab Barometer Wave VII surveys, except for Kuwait. Three-in-ten of potential migrants cite security issues while a fifth say corruption, 16 percent mention looking for educational opportunities, and 15 percent political reasons.

Potential migrants prefer emigrating to a Western destination over the Gulf or other parts of the world. Germany and Italy are the two most preferable destinations (23 percent and 22 percent, respectively) followed by Canada (20 percent), the United States (13 percent), and Turkey (11 percent).

Four-in-ten (41 percent) of potential migrants from Libya say they would consider emigrating even if they lacked the necessary documents. Those with only a secondary education or less are more likely than those with a college education to hold this view by a nine-point margin. Men are twice as likely to say they would emigrate without papers than women (54 percent vs. 25 percent).

Gender norms

Views on gender roles in Libya have remained largely unchanged for the past eight years. Today, no more than a quarter (23 percent) of Libyans say that university education for men is more important than for women. This level is similar to what it was in 2014 (24 percent) and not meaningfully higher than 2019 (15 percent).

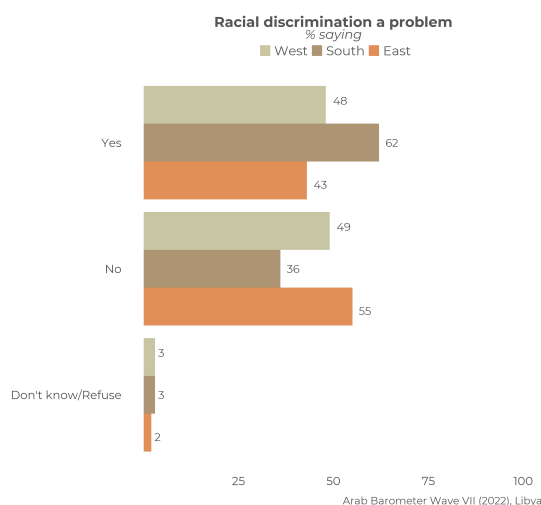
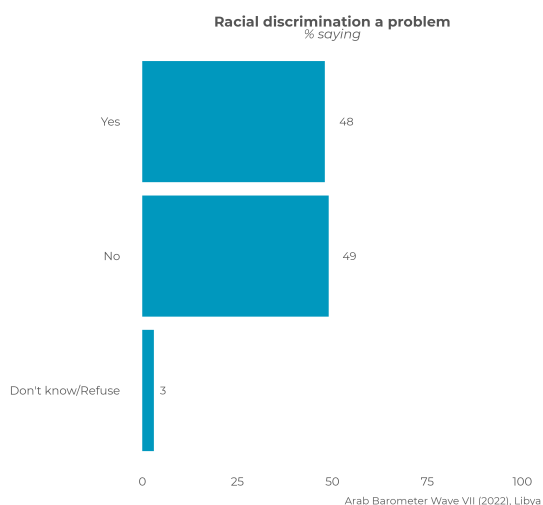


On the political stage, Libyans continue to look for male leadership as two thirds believe that men are better at political leadership than women. This level is similar to 2019 (70 percent) and not meaningfully lower than 2014 (76 percent). Though some efforts were taken to improve levels of women's participation in politics, such as the GNU PM pledging a 30 percent quota for women in his cabinet to the LPDF in January 2021 and appointing the first female foreign minister, the societal impact appears limited. While men (81 percent) are more likely to hold this view, more than half of women say men are better political leaders than women.

Similarly, views on the role of women in private life have remained the same since 2019. Nearly two thirds of Libyans say that a man should have final say in all decisions concerning the family. While three-quarters (73 percent) of men hold this view, at least half (52 percent) of women do as well.

Race

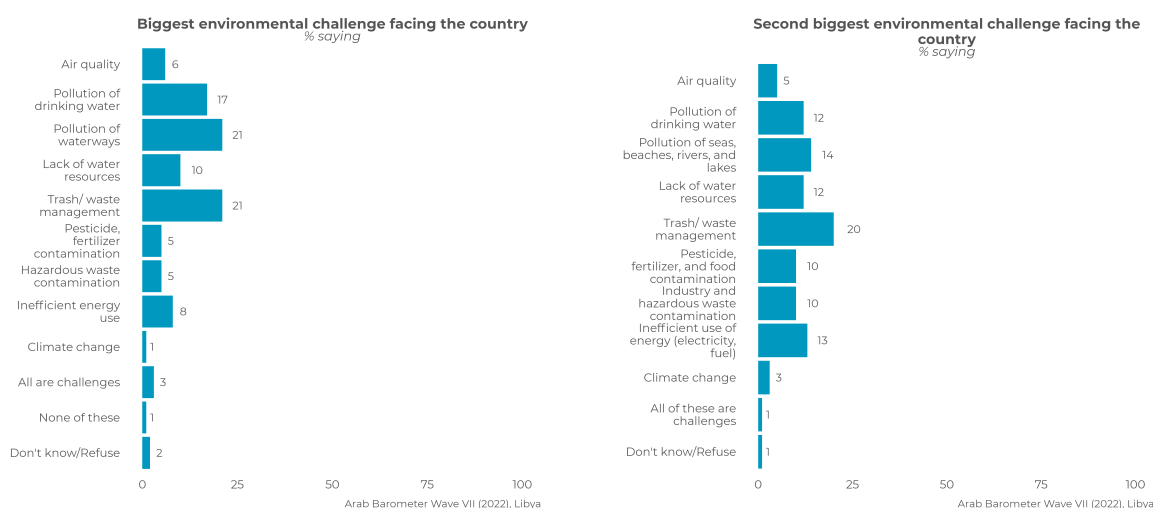
There is a clear divide on the question of racial discrimination in Libya with half of people saying it is a problem and the other half saying it is not. This is the case especially in the northern part of the country, both the East and the West. The story is different, however, in the South where nearly two thirds (62 percent) consider racial discrimination a problem. When asked on discrimination against dark-skinned individuals, less than half say it exists to a great or medium extent. People in the South are more likely to hold this view (64 percent), compared to those in the West (48 percent) and the East (36 percent). Notably, while only seven percent of Southerners say that discrimination against dark-skinned individuals does not exist at all, a quarter in the West (27 percent) and four-in-ten (39 percent) in the East say the same. Furthermore, people in the South are three times more likely than in the East and the West to say they have personally experienced discrimination several times (24 percent vs. eight percent).



Environment

For Libyans, the main environmental challenges are water-related with nearly half citing either pollution of drinking water, pollution of water sources, or lack of these sources in the first place. This is unsurprising given the regional and global rising concerns over water security. Another important environmental challenge is waste management, with a fifth ranking it as the biggest challenge. In several Libyan cities, there is a lack of proper waste management system,

leading in various incidents to accumulation of trash in the streets or random disposal of waste. The regional differences regarding environmental challenges are stark. For example, while a third (34 percent) of Easterners cite waste management as the biggest challenge, only a quarter (28 percent) in the South and fewer than a fifth (15 percent) in the West hold similar views. Pollution of waterways is a major concern in the West where a quarter (27 percent) say it is the biggest challenge; only 11 percent or less in the other two regions say the same. Pollution of drinking water is seen by three-in-ten in the South as the biggest challenge; fewer than a fifth in the West and the East share this view.

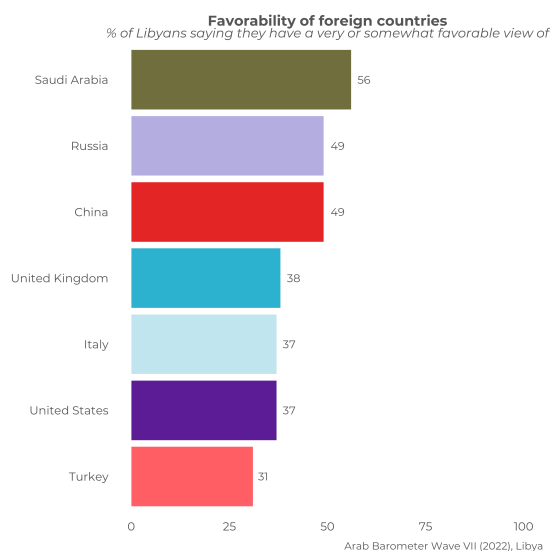


Two thirds (70 percent) of Libyans think that lack of environmental awareness among citizens is contributing to environmental challenges to a large or medium extent. This is especially true in the West where three quarters (74 percent) hold this view compared to two thirds in the South and the East. Similarly, two thirds say that lack of government spending on the environment contributes to challenges to a large or medium extent. People in the West are more likely to hold this view than their compatriots in the rest of the country. Despite that, people rank the environment among the lowest priorities (only nine percent) for government spending in the upcoming year.

International Relations

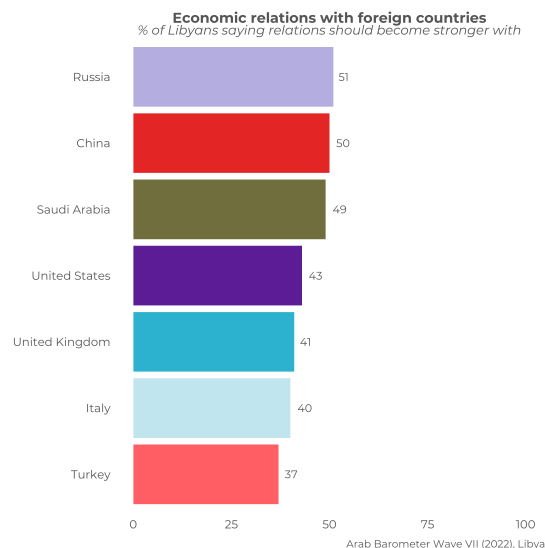
Among global powers, China is more favored than the U.S. in Libya. While half (49 percent) of Libyans say they have a very or somewhat favorable view of

China, only 37 percent say the same about the U.S. Notably, Libyan youth are six points more likely to hold favorable views of the U.S. as compared to those 30 or older (41 percent vs. 35 percent). Saudi Arabia is the most favored country in Libya as more than half (56 percent) say they have very or somewhat favorable views of the kingdom. At the same time, Italy (37 percent) and the United Kingdom (38 percent) are less favored.



Despite its interference in Libya through the Wagner group, Russia is looked upon favorably by half the population (49 percent). Surprisingly, views of Russia are more favorable in the West (55 percent) and the South (53 percent) than they are in the East (35 percent), suggesting that views are not necessarily based on Russia's interference in Libya. Turkey, another interfering country, is favored by only three-in-ten Libyans (31 percent). Favorable views of Turkey are more common in the West than in the East or the South.

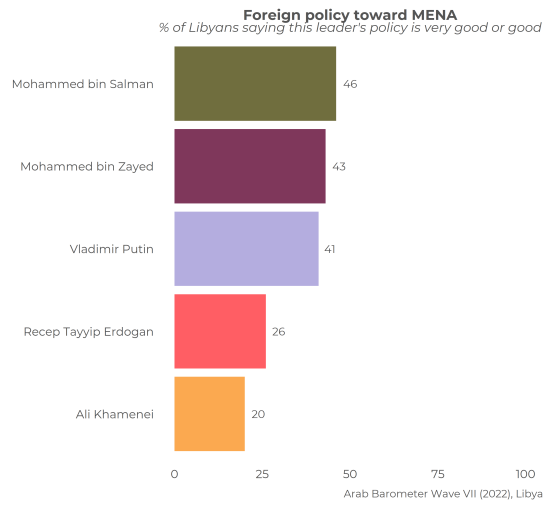
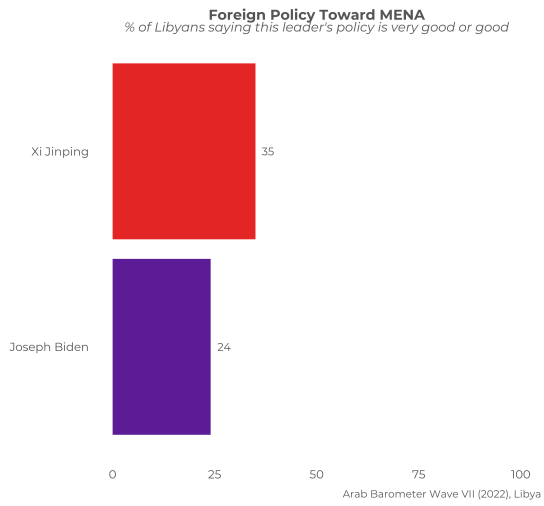
Desire for stronger economic relations aligns with favorability of the aforementioned states. Half of Libyans say they want stronger economic ties with Russia (51 percent), China (50 percent), and Saudi Arabia (49 percent). These numbers constitute drops from the latter two countries, however, from 63 percent wanting stronger economic relations with China and 56 percent with Saudi Arabia in 2019. Only the U.S. and Turkey have witnessed an increase in the percentage of Libyans wanting stronger economic ties. For the U.S., 43 percent express this desire as compared to 37 percent in 2019. As for Turkey, 37 percent want stronger ties, compared to 29 percent in 2019.



When asked about the country they prefer to work on infrastructure projects in Libya, three-in-ten (29 percent) of people choose a company from Germany, followed by the U.S. (26 percent), and China (20 percent). Notably, such infrastructure projects are among the top preferences for foreign aid in Libya. A quarter say that foreign aid should be directed toward economic development (25 percent) and building infrastructure (23 percent). An additional 16 percent prefer foreign aid to be directed towards education. This is one area where U.S. foreign aid seems to be recognized. Half of Libyans (53 percent) say that U.S. foreign aid strengthens educational initiatives to a great or limited extent. Nearly the same proportion views U.S. foreign aid as positively in supporting civil society (49 percent) and women's rights (45 percent).

Among foreign leaders, Gulf leaders Mohammed bin Salman (46 percent) and Mohammed bin Zayed (43 percent) are the most favored in Libya. Russian president Vladimir Putin (41 percent) and China's Xi Jinping (35 percent) follow. Only a quarter favor the Turkish President Erdogan (26 percent) and U.S. President Biden (24 percent). Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is the least favored as only a fifth (20 percent) say his foreign policies toward MENA are very good or good.

Arab Barometer – Wave VII Libya Report





ABOUT ARAB BAROMETER

Arab Barometer is a nonpartisan research network that provides insight into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world.

We have been conducting rigorous, and nationally representative public opinion surveys on probability samples of the adult populations across the Arab world since 2006 across 15 countries.

We are the longest-standing and the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. Our findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics.



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