BAANI
CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY

BAANI ELECTION POLL- SNAPSHOT

APRIL 2023 POLL IN NUMBERS

IN APRIL
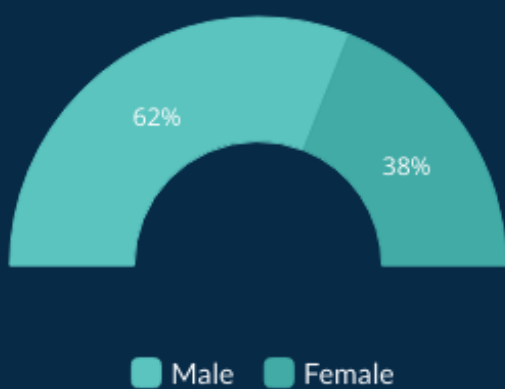### WE CALLED

2697 Dhiraagu

2202 Ooreedoo

RANDOMLY GENERATED NUMBERS
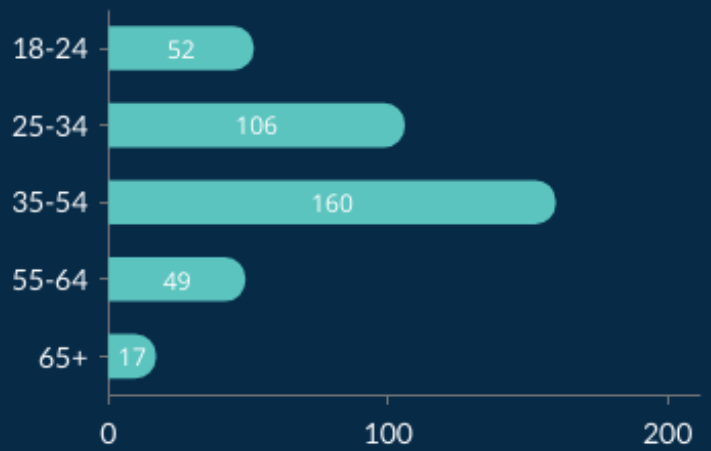
OF THOSE

384 Calls were successful

281 Calls were rejected

959 Were either switched off or did not pick up

3275 Numbers were inactive
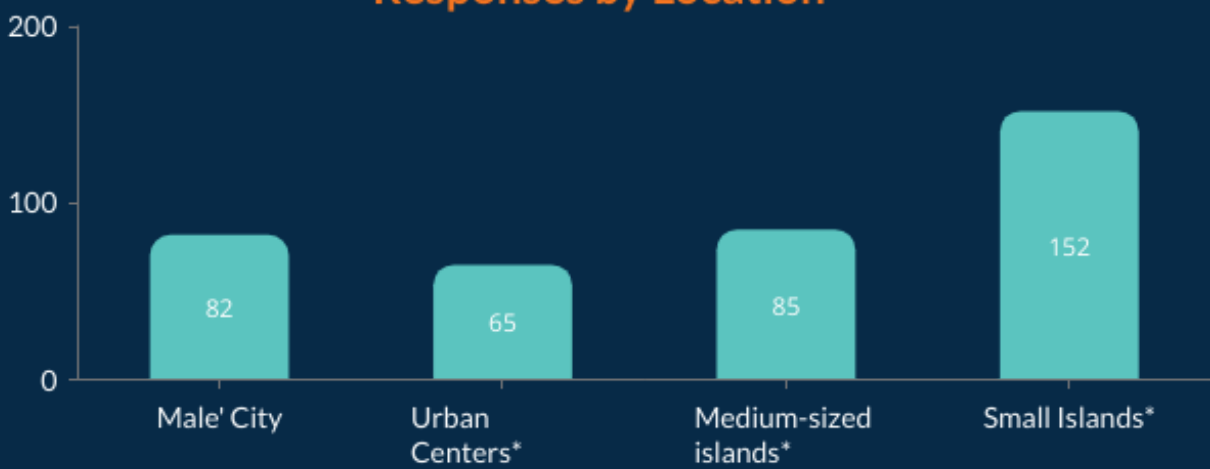
REQUIRED SAMPLE FOR THE POLL
384 RESPONSES

Responses by Gender

62% Male

38% Female

■ Male ■ Female

Responses by Age Groups

Age	Responses
18-24	52
25-34	106
35-54	160
55-64	49
65+	17

0   100   200

Responses by Location

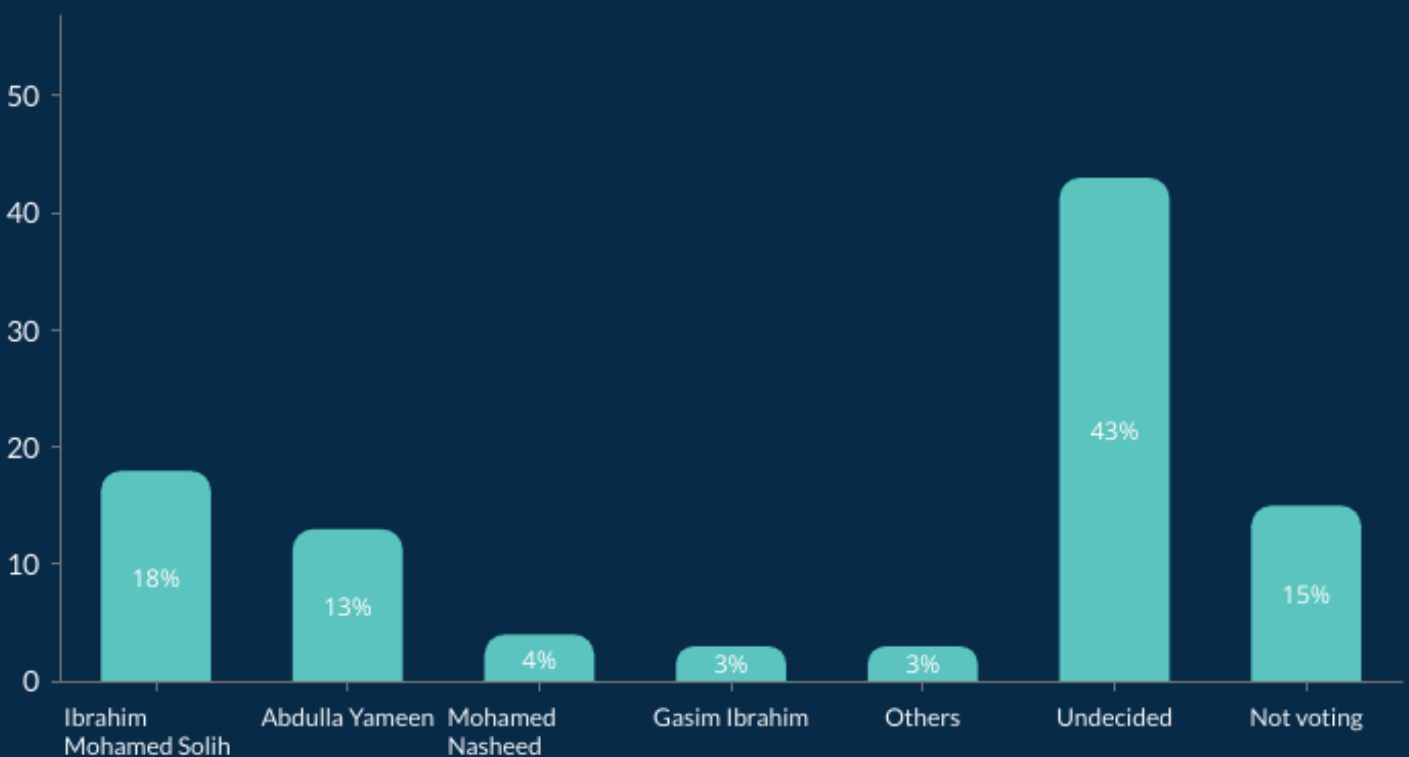| Location	Responses
Male' City	82
Urban Centers*	65
Medium-sized islands*	85
Small Islands*	152

* Urban Centers - Islands with population higher than 5000.
* Medium-sized - Islands with population higher than 1500
* Small islands - Islands with population less than 1500

WE ASKED THEM WHO THEY WOULD VOTE FOR
IF AN ELECTION WERE TO BE HELD TOMORROW

Here are their answers
Candidate preference (weighted)

Candidate	Preference
Ibrahim Mohamed Solih	18%
Abdulla Yameen	13%
Mohamed Nasheed	4%
Gasim Ibrahim	3%
Others	3%
Undecided	43%
Not voting	15%

THE POLL RESULTS ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VOTING POPULATION OF THE MALDIVES, WITH A 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL AND A 5% MARGIN OF ERROR. THIS MEANS THAT IF THE POLL WAS CONDUCTED MULTIPLE TIMES, 95% OF THE TIME THE RESULTS WOULD BE WITHIN 5% OF THE RESULTS SHOWN.

Baani Election Poll 2023 - April Report

A public information project by the Baani Center for International Policy

25th of April 2023

Baani Election Poll - April Report

Introduction

Polling is a relatively new concept in the Maldives. The main political parties often conduct their own polling, as do some international organizations, but the results are rarely shared publicly. This lack of data makes trying to gauge the popularity of presidential candidates, political leaders, or political parties something of a guessing-game.

The Baani Center for International Policy seeks to fill this knowledge gap by conducting an independent, scientific and representative monthly tracker poll, publicly available online.

Our poll gauges the popularity of all the main political leaders through a random telephone interview. The poll is conducted monthly, to allow us to see how politicians' popularity shifts over time.

The poll follows internationally established methodology guidelines regarding sample size, as well as weighting for respondents' age, gender, and where in the Maldives they live. According to these guidelines, our poll has a 95% confidence level, with a 5% margin of error. Our poll is conducted in Dhivehi by a team of trained Maldivian enumerators.

We hope the results will be useful to political parties, the media, international observers, and the general public.

The Baani Center for International Policy

The Baani Centre for International Policy is an independent think-tank based in the Maldives that provides a perspective on international issues from the viewpoint of small island states.

In the past few months, we have published a number of in-depth studies on issues including the impact of Chinese tourism on the Maldivian economy, and the state of the nation's levels of debt. Upcoming studies include an economic assessment of the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge and link road, and an economic and political assessment of the China-Maldives Free Trade Agreement.

Our Polling Methodology

Sample Size
To ensure an accurate poll result that is representative of the Maldivian population, it is necessary to scientifically determine a correct sample size. To determine the size of the eligible voter population, we used the figures from the 2019 parliamentary election, where 264,442 individuals were eligible to vote.[1]

Based on this figure, we calculated, using international best practice polling guidelines, that we need to conduct a minimum of 384 telephone interviews to generate results with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. This means that if the survey was conducted multiple times, 95% of the time the results would be within 5% of the results in this report.

The Questionnaire
The telephone questionnaire collected the following information from each participant:

1. Citizenship(Q1)
2. Age (Q2)
3. Gender (Q3)
4. Permanently registered island (Q4)
5. Preferred candidate (Q5)

Information was only collected from Maldivians, who are 18 years of age at the time of the call. We also collected information on age, gender, and the island where a respondent is registered to vote. The telephone poll was conducted in Dhivehi.

To determine respondents' preferred political candidate, we asked the following open-ended question: Q5) *"If a presidential election was held tomorrow, and all the main politicians are able to contest, who would you vote for?"*

This approach was taken because the official list of candidates had not been determined at the time of the survey. The question helped us capture the respondents' preference at the time of the survey. In future polls, we may rephrase the question to limit responses to candidates who are officially on the ballot.

The full questionnaire (Dhivehi and English) can be found at Annex 1.

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[1] **http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/yearbook/2021/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/06/20.5.pdf**

Phone Number generation

To achieve the required sample size of 380 telephone interviews, we estimated having to call around 3,800 numbers, assuming a success rate of 10 per cent. As we were unable to obtain a list of active mobile phone numbers from telecom operators we had to generate our own list. To do this, we used a random number generator to generate two separate lists of 7 digit numbers. The first list consisted of numbers that begin with a "7" (Dhiraagu Numbers), and the second list consisted of numbers that begin with a "9" (Ooredoo numbers). The two lists were then merged and randomized to create a fully random list of phone numbers.

Polling Period

To ensure that we capture voters' preferences in a timely manner, we conducted telephone interviews over a five-day period. A survey conducted over a longer period could potentially obscure the data set as respondents would be influenced by political events. Data collection for the April poll began on April 10 and concluded on the 16th.

Enumeration

To conduct the survey we employed a team of experienced Maldivian enumerators and trained them. The enumerators input the data gathered from the surveys into our data collection tool. Additionally, the enumerators tracked the number of successful calls and deactivated numbers, allowing us to track response rates.

Data Weighting

In order to weight the data, we use publicly available information to determine our desired makeup of the sample, which was then compared to our actual sample. A weighting factor for each of our data categories (age and gender) was then determined and used to calculate a weighted result. ⌁The effect of the data weighing on the April poll was minimal (changing candidates' poll numbers by less than 0.5%).

Safety Measures

We take data safety seriously and took the following measures to protect our data:

1) Our data is stored securely with limited access.
2) Following each poll the phone number lists will be stored only for a period of one month and will not be shared with third parties, to ensure privacy of survey respondents.
3) All data sharing happens through double-encrypted services.

Prior to polling we informed telecom operators, Maldives Police Service, National Bureau of Statistics and the Communication Authority of Maldives of our plans to conduct polling.

Limitations

While we put in extensive efforts to ensure our polling methodology meets international best practice, no polling survey is perfect. Following are the limitations we encountered during the April poll, and measures we plan to take in future polls to to address them:

1) Enumeration team size - We employed a five person enumeration team for the April poll. The team was too small to be able to reach the sample size within the targeted three days. Instead, the data collection was completed in six days. We plan to increase the number of enumerators for subsequent polls.

2) Ramadan limitations - April's polling period coincided with the month of Ramadan. Because of this, our polling team was only able to convene at night from 8:00 PM to 11:00 AM. Response rates were low from 8:00 to 9:00 PM due to Tharaavees prayer times.

3) Data weighting - We were unable to obtain location based demographic data in time for publication and as a result all location based results in this poll are not weighted. However, we will make all efforts to obtain this information for future polls.
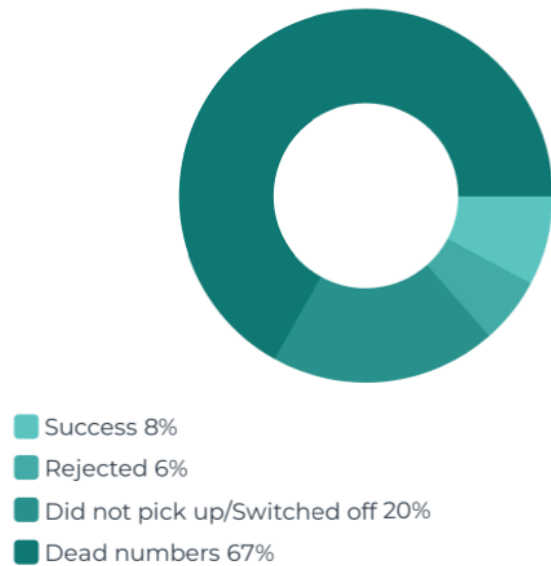
Results

Sample

During the April enumeration period we made a total of 4,899 telephone calls.

We called 2,697 Dhiraagu phone numbers and 2,202 Ooreedoo phone numbers over the polling period.

As seen in **Figure 1.1**, of the 4,899 calls, 384 were successful responses while 281 were persons who did not want to participate in the survey. Meanwhile, 959 numbers were either switched off or did not pick up and 3,275 phone numbers were inactive.
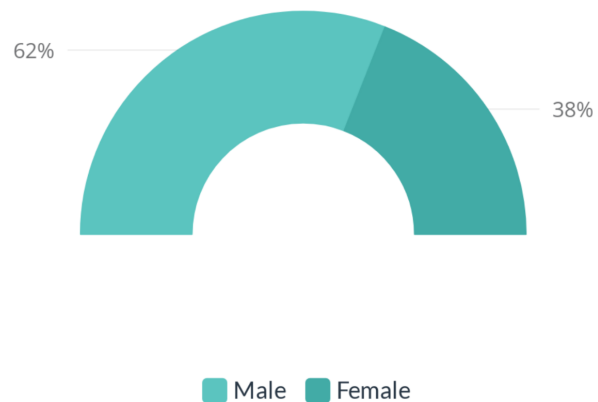
Figure 1.1: Total Calls Breakdown

- Success 8%
- Rejected 6%
- Did not pick up/Switched off 20%
- Dead numbers 67%

As shown in **Figure 1.2**, 62 percent of the respondents were male while 38 percent of the respondents were female.

Baani weighted the gender data based on the results of the 2022 census, resulting in a weighted sample size of 196 male and 188 female responses.

Please note that all gender based analysis in this report will use the weighted data as opposed to the actual response data.

Figure 1.2 - Gender breakdown of responses

62%

38%

- Male
- Female

When looking at the different age groups (**Figure 1.3**), 14 percent of all the respondents were between the ages of 18 to 25 years old, 28 percent were between 25 to 35 years old, 42 percent were between 35 to 54 years old, and 13 percent were between 55 to 64 years old and 4 percent were above the age of 65 years old.

Figure 1.3 - Age breakdown of responses
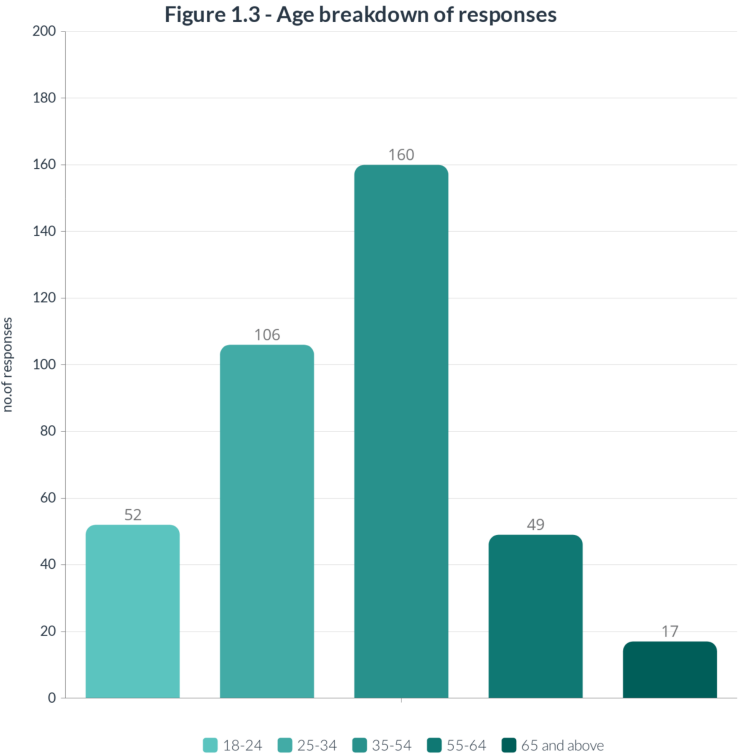
Here again, we weighted the data using information from the 2022 census. All age based analysis below uses weighted data. The age weighting is as follows:

18 to 24 years - 60

25 to 34 years - 106

35 to 54 years - 149

55 to 64 years - 40

65 and above - 29

When looking at the geographic spread of the respondents (**Figure 1.4**), 21 percent of the respondents were from Male' City, 17 percent were from Urban Centers (islands with population above 5,000). Medium-sized island (population above 1,500) responses made up 22 percent of responses and 40 percent of the responses were from small islands (population below 1,500).

Figure 1.4 - Geographic breakdown of responses
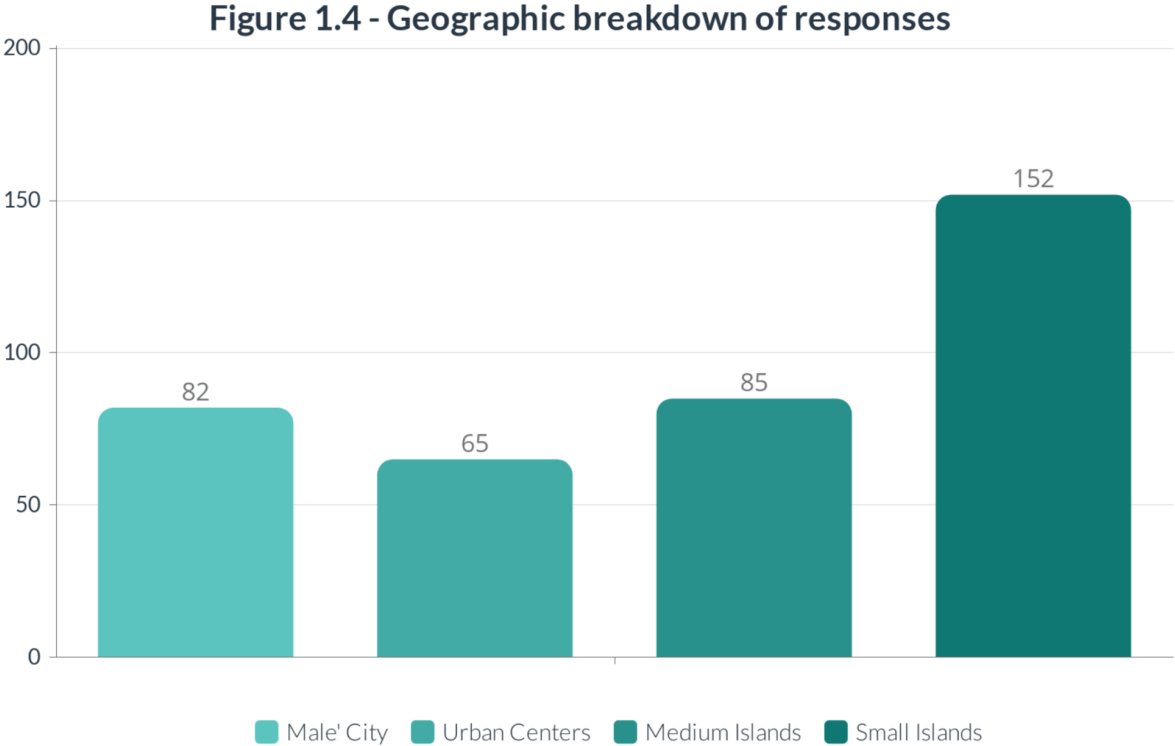
Since the 2022 census data records resident population, as opposed to the number of people registered to an island, we requested for a list of eligible voters disaggregated by location from the Elections Commission. However, this information was not available at the time of publication and we were unable to weight the data by location. If we had used the resident population figures from the census to weight the data, the results would have been heavily biased towards Male', the capital city. However, this would not have been useful since voting is based on the voter registry for each constituency, not on the resident population.

Preferred candidate

As seen in **Figure 2.1**, the data we collected in April indicates that the majority of Maldivians (43 percent) are yet to decide who their preferred candidate is for the upcoming election. President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was the most preferred candidate, with the support of 18 percent of Maldivians. Meanwhile, opposition leader and former President Abulla Yameen comes second, at 13 percent.

Figure 2.1 - Voter Preference

When asked who they would vote for if an election were to be held tomorrow (weighted)
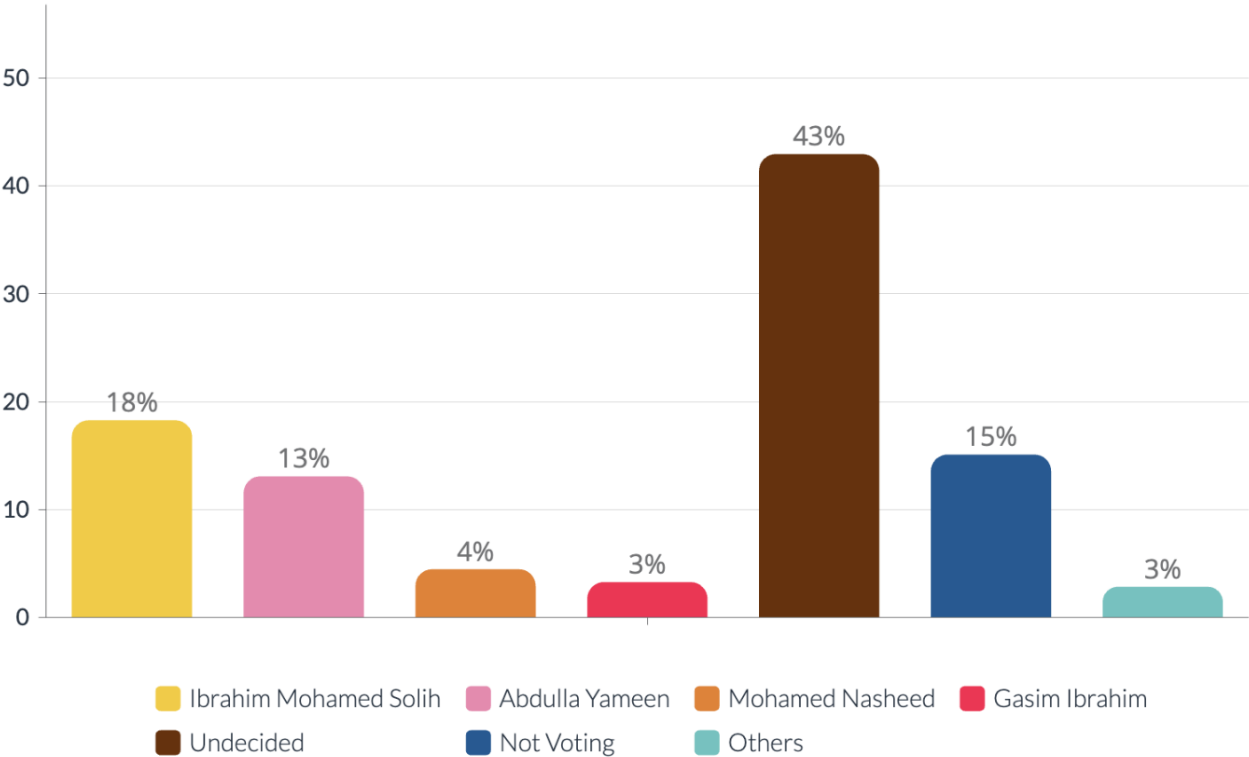
Four percent of Maldivians indicated that they will support Speaker of Parliament and former President Mohamed Nasheed and three percent indicated that they will support Jumhooree Party Leader Gasim Ibrahim.

Meanwhile, Maldives National Party leader Colonel Mohamed Nazim and Umar Naseer received 0.55 percent of support, and former President Maumoon Abdul Gayyoom received 0.21 percent.

It is important to note that 15 percent of Maldivians indicated that they are not going to vote in the upcoming election.

When looking at preferences across genders (**Figure 2.2**), President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was the most popular candidate across both Male (18.07 percent) and Female (18.49 percent) respondents. However, across both genders, a significant portion of the population indicated that they are yet to decide who to vote for, with 39.50 percent of all males and 46.58 percent of all females undecided.

Figure 2.2 - Voter preference across genders

When asked who they would vote for if an election were to be held tomorrow (weighted)
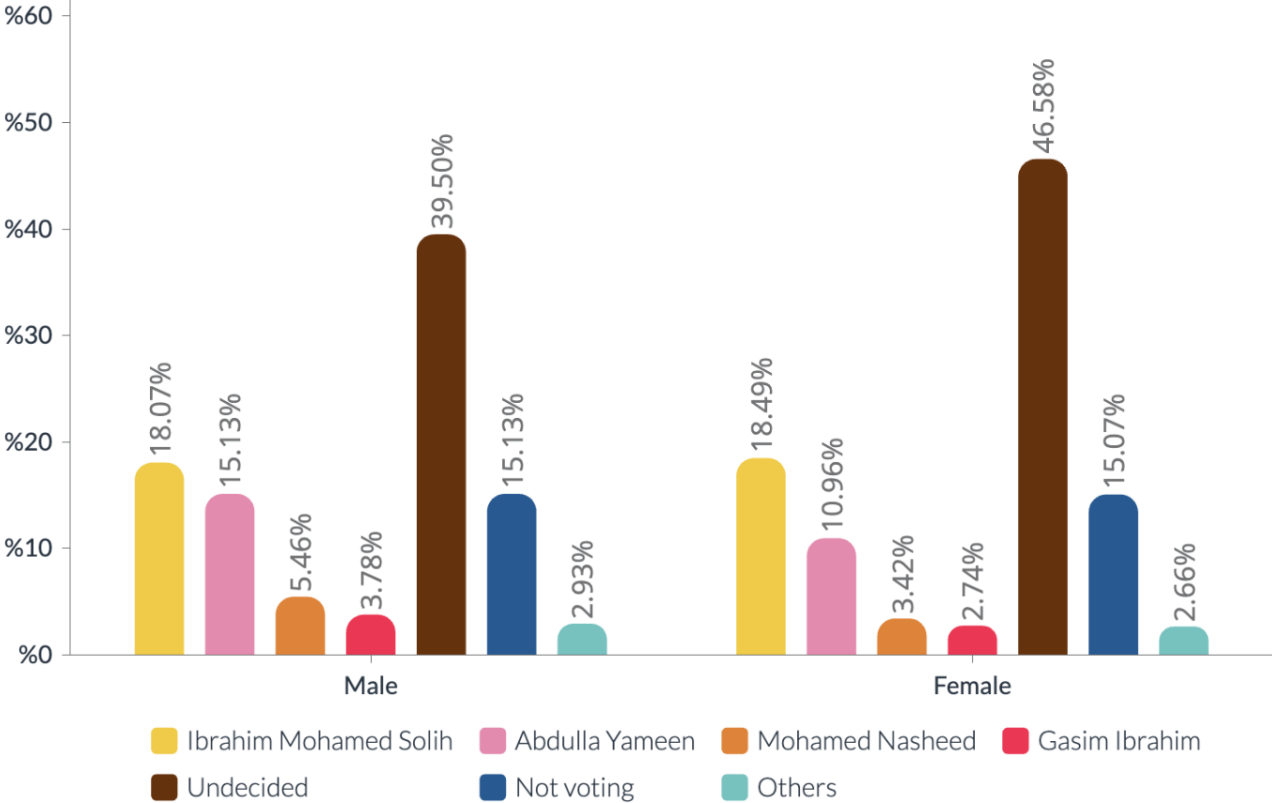
Meanwhile, former President and opposition leader Abdulla Yameen was the preferred candidate for 15.13 percent of males and 10.96 percent of females. Speaker of Parliament and former President Mohamed Nasheed received a 5.46 percent rating from males and 3.42 percent from females.

A large portion of the male and female respondents indicated that they will note vote in the 2023 elections; 15.13 percent of males and 15.07 percent of females.

Across the different age groups (**Figure 2.3**), President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was the most popular choice for those between 25 to 34 years (15.09 percent), 35 to 54 years (21.25 percent), and 55 to 64 years (24.49 percent). Meanwhile, former President Abdulla Yameen was most popular amongst those between 18 to 24 years (15.38 percent) and was in a tie with President Solih for the 65 and above age group (17.65 percent each).

Figure 2.3 - Voter Preference across age groups

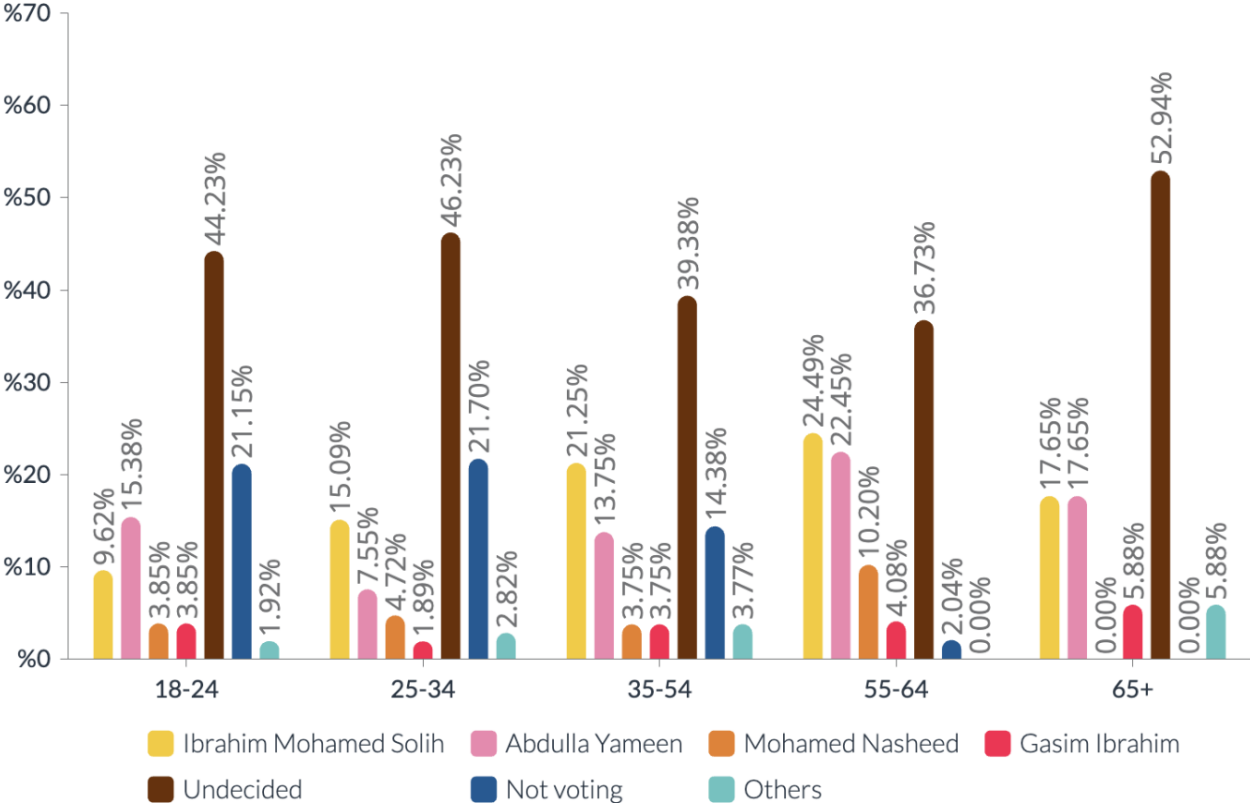When asked who they would vote for if an election were to be held tomorrow (weighted)

Legend: Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, Abdulla Yameen, Mohamed Nasheed, Gasim Ibrahim, Undecided, Not voting, Others

Meanwhile, Speaker of Parliament Mohamed Nasheed received most support from those between 55 to 64 years old (10.20 percent). Again here, it is important to note that across all groups a significant portion of the population is undecided about who they will vote for (above 35 percent in all age groups). Of those that indicated that they will not vote, the largest portion (21.15 percent) comes from those between 18 to 24 years. Only 2.04 percent of those between 55 to 64 years old indicated that they will not vote while 0 percent of those above 65 indicated that they will not vote, indicating a high voter turnout from older age groups.

Across all locations of the Maldives (**figure 2.4**), President Ibrahim Solih was the most popular candidate, scoring his highest popularity figures from small islands (22.37 percent). Former President Abdulla Yameen was the second most popular candidate, also scoring his highest rating from small islands (16.45 percent).

Figure 2.4 - Voter Preference Across Locations
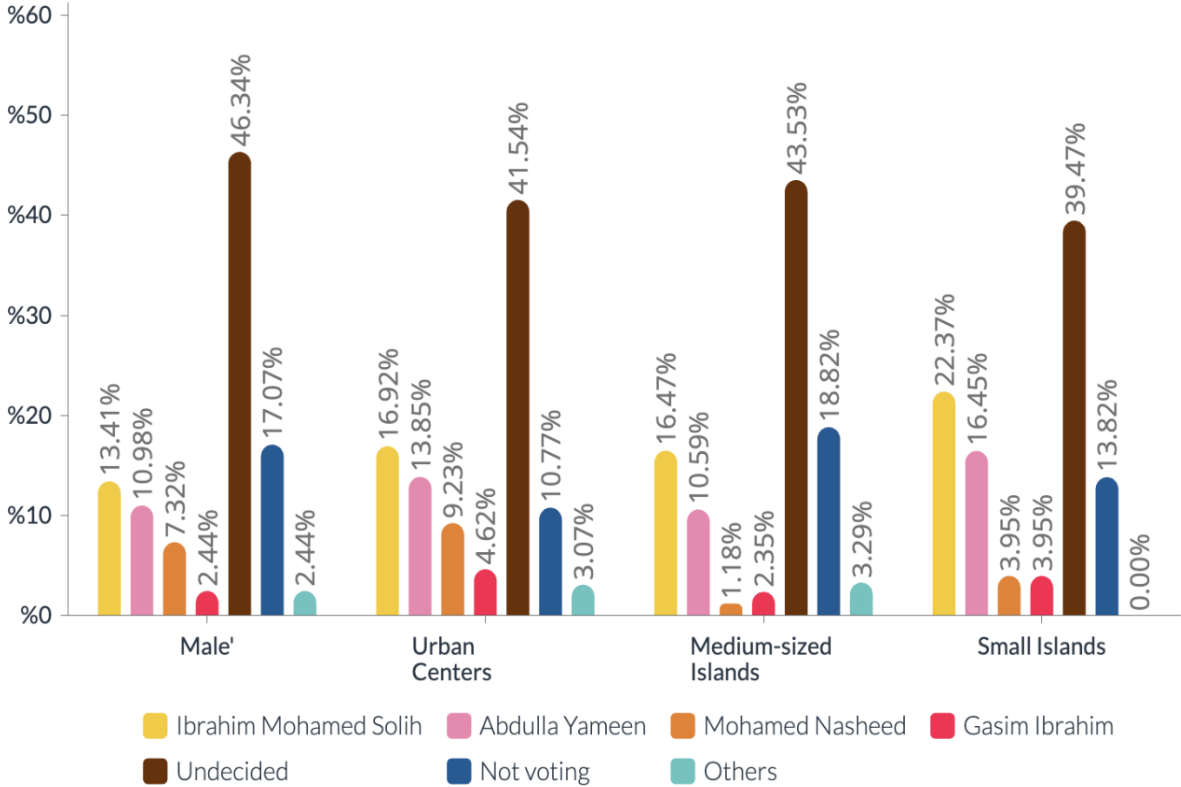When asked who they would vote for if an election were to be held tomorrow (unweighted)

Speaker of Parliament and former President Mohamed Nasheed scored his highest ratings from urban centers (9.23 percent) and Male' (7.32 percent). Across all locations, most voters are yet to decide who to vote for, with Male' voters being the most undecided (46.43 percent).

Analysis

April's poll results suggest that the 2023 presidential election is currently wide open, with 43 percent of all voters undecided on who they would vote for. This suggests that everything is to play for, with no one candidate enjoying a strong, or unassailable, lead over the others.

The high proportion of undecided voters may well reflect the uncertainty over who will stand in the elections. Former President Yameen is currently serving a jail sentence and, as such, is barred from contesting. Former President Nasheed lost January's MDP primary election but has not backed President Solih, who won the primary. Furthermore, discussions are ongoing amongst political leaders on building coalitions, leading to a lack of clarity for voters on where their preferred candidate might stand.

As we get closer to the elections and the candidate field and coalitions become clearer, more voters who are currently undecided will most likely land on a candidate.

Baani will conduct regular monthly polls ahead of the September presidential vote. All of our results will be available online at https://baanicentre.org/research/.

Annex 1 - Baani Election Poll Questionnaire (English)

Assalaamu Alaikum!

I am calling on behalf of Baani Centre, a local NGO. We are conducting a poll to gauge the public's opinion of political leaders ahead of the 2023 presidential election.

Your number was randomly selected for the survey, which will take 2 minutes. Participation is voluntary, and we will not ask any questions that can be used to identify you. We will share the results of the opinion poll with you when it is finished.

May I proceed with the survey?
- If yes - Proceed to Questions below
- If no - Thank them and conclude the call

Q1) Are you a Maldivian citizen? (ask if only unable to determine)
      a) Yes
      b) No
      If the answer is no, conclude the survey.

Q2) What is your age? (Do not provide options)
      a) 18 to 25 years old
      b) 25 - 35 years old
      c) 35 - 50 years old
      d) Over 50 years old
      If the answer is "Under 18 years," conclude the survey.

Q3) What is your sex? (ask only if unable to determine)
      a) Male
      b) Female

Q3) Which island are you registered to?
      a) Select from Island list

Q4) If a presidential election was held tomorrow, and all the main politicians are able to contest, who would you vote for? (Do not provide options)
      a) President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
      b) Former president Abdulla Yameen
      c) Speaker of Parliament and former President Mohamed Nasheed
      d) Ibrahim Qasim

e) Colonel Mohamed Nazim

f) Others

Thank you for your participation. Share website if requested.

<u>Annex 2</u> - Baani Election Poll Questionnaire (Dhivehi)

އައްސަލާމްޢަލައިކުމް!

އަޅުގަނޑުގެ ނަންނަ _____

އަޅުގަނޑު މި ގުޅީ ރާއްޖޭގެ މަރުހަލާ މަޝްރޫޢު ކަރުދާހެއް ކަމަށް ސާމްޕަލް ޕޯލް އިންތިޚާބީ ޕްރޮސީޖް ފަރާތުން އަޅުގަނޑުމެން ނަން މި 2023 ވަނަ
ރާއްޖޭ އިންތިޚާބާ ގުޅިގެން ސާމްޕަލް ފޯރިކުރާނަމަ އަޅުގަނޑުމެން ހިނގާ ހުރިހާ ބޭފުޅުން ގެ މަޢުލޫމާތު އެއް ހިންގަވަން

ޖުމްލަ 2 މިނެޓް ނަގާ މި ސާމްޕަލް އަންކޮޅު ފަރާތް ނަންނަވާ ހުރިހާ ރައްޔިތު ޖަވާބުތަކާއި މި ސާމްޕަލްގައި ކާކުކަން އެނގޭ އެއްވެސް ސަބަބުން
އަޅުގަނޑުމެން ނަގާނަންނަށް އަދި މި ސާމްޕަލްގައި ބައިވެރިވުމުގެ އިންޚިޔާރު ފަރާ މި ފަރާތް އަޅުވެއެއްވެ. މި ސާމްޕަލް ނަންނަ ރައްޔިތު މައްޗަށް މަޢުލޫމާތު
ހިއްސާ ކުރެވިގެންދާނެ

ސާމްޕަލް ސަރުކާރުވަކާއި އަޅުގަނޑު ކަމަށްވަން ފަހުމް?
- އަންނަނާނަ – ސަރުކާރުވަނީ
- ނޫންނަނާ – ދަން ވަރުވަކަން ސާރަން އަޑުވަކުޅަ ކާ ނަންނަވު

Q1) ތިޔަ ފަރާތަކީ ދިވެހި ރައްޔިތެއްތަ؟ (މި ސާމްޕަލް ކުރާނަ އަދުހިނަންނަވަނަވަރ)
ހ) އާން – ސަރުކާރުވަކާއި ކަން ކުރަންއަންނަ
ށ) ނޫން – ސާރުވަކުރަން ހަންޗޫ

Q2) އަޑުވަ ކިހާވަރެއް؟ (އެންނަ ފަހަގަ އަޅަނަ ދުވަސް ފަހަރަން އަޑުވަ)
ހ) ޔަވަނަ ނަންޓު ކަން

Q3) ތިޔަ ފަރާތުގެ ޖިންސަކީ ކޮބާއިތަ؟
ހ) އަންނަވަން
ށ) ފިރިހަން

Q3) ތިޔަ ފަރާތުގެ ނަންނަ ވަނަވު ނަންޖޫ ސުއްޖި އަންނަނަވަ ކޮންނަރަންނަކަންވަތަ؟ (އަމައްޖު ކަންނަވެކަން ޔަހަރައިވަ ނަންނަ)
ހ) ޔަންޓުވަނަ ނަންނަ ޔަފަވަ ނަންޑަ

Q4) މޯޑަ ރާއްޖެ އިންތިޚާބާ ކަމަށްވަނަ ބަންނަވަނަރަ އަދި ހުރަ ސާރަން ފަރާތުވެކަން އިންތިޚާބާކަން ކަންނަވަނަވެވަނަވަރަ ތިއަންނަރަވަނަ ވެޖޫ ފަންނަ ކާކަން؟
ހ) ޔަވަނަ ނަންޓުކަން

ތު ސާރުވެގައި ބައުވެރު ވެއްވިއި ޖޯޅިރިއެން ސާރުވެގެ ޝްކައިރިއެން ޖޯވުރިވެގިރިއެ ޓީރުވެ އިވެގީސިއޭއުނެ ވެބް—އަރިބް ވުވުވިއިއޭނަ މުވުވިރިއާޅި ކިޅިވެޅިއިއުނ ހަވުވުވިއެން އިޑައިގައި ވެޅިރިގައި ދިޔެން

ހުނުޅިރި