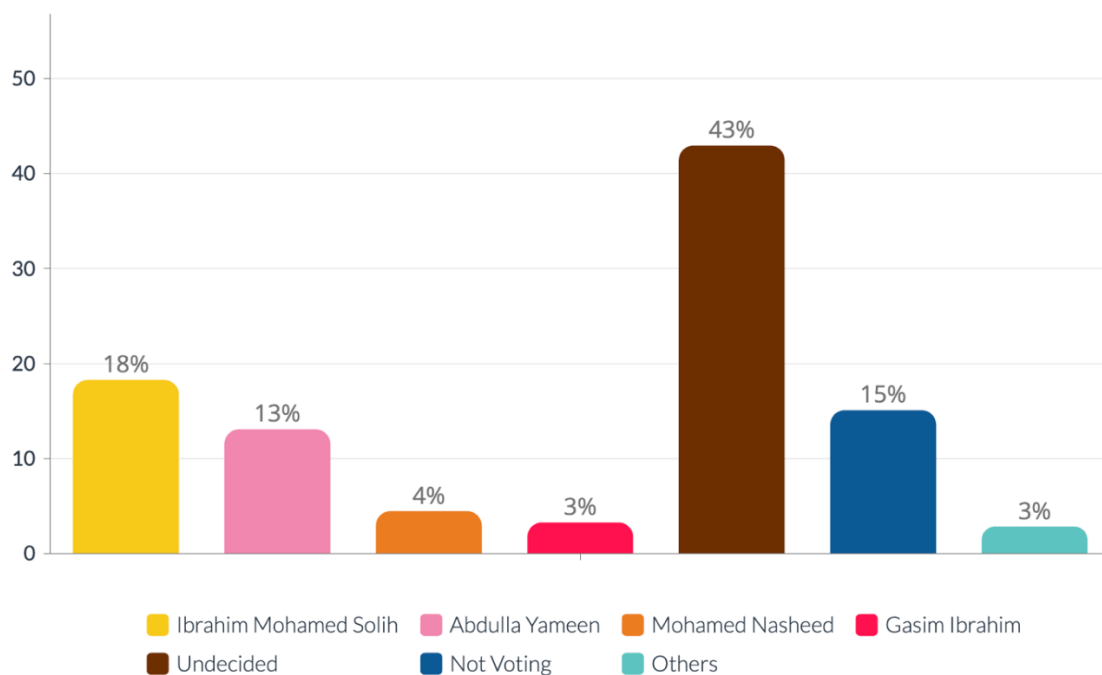


Maldives Presidential Election Race Wide Open As 43% of Voters Still Undecided on Preferred Candidate, New Think Tank Poll Shows

April 25, 2023, MALE: The Maldives 2023 presidential race is currently wide open with no single candidate enjoying a significant lead, and with 43% of voters undecided about their preferred candidate. These are the headline results of a new opinion poll conducted by the Baani Centre for International Policy, a Maldives-based, independent think tank.

The telephone-based poll asked a representative sample of Maldivian voters who they would vote for if a presidential election was held tomorrow (see figure below). 18% of voters responded that they would vote for incumbent president Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. 13% chose former president Abdulla Yameen, 4% selected former president Mohamed Nasheed, and 3% Gasim Ibrahim.

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



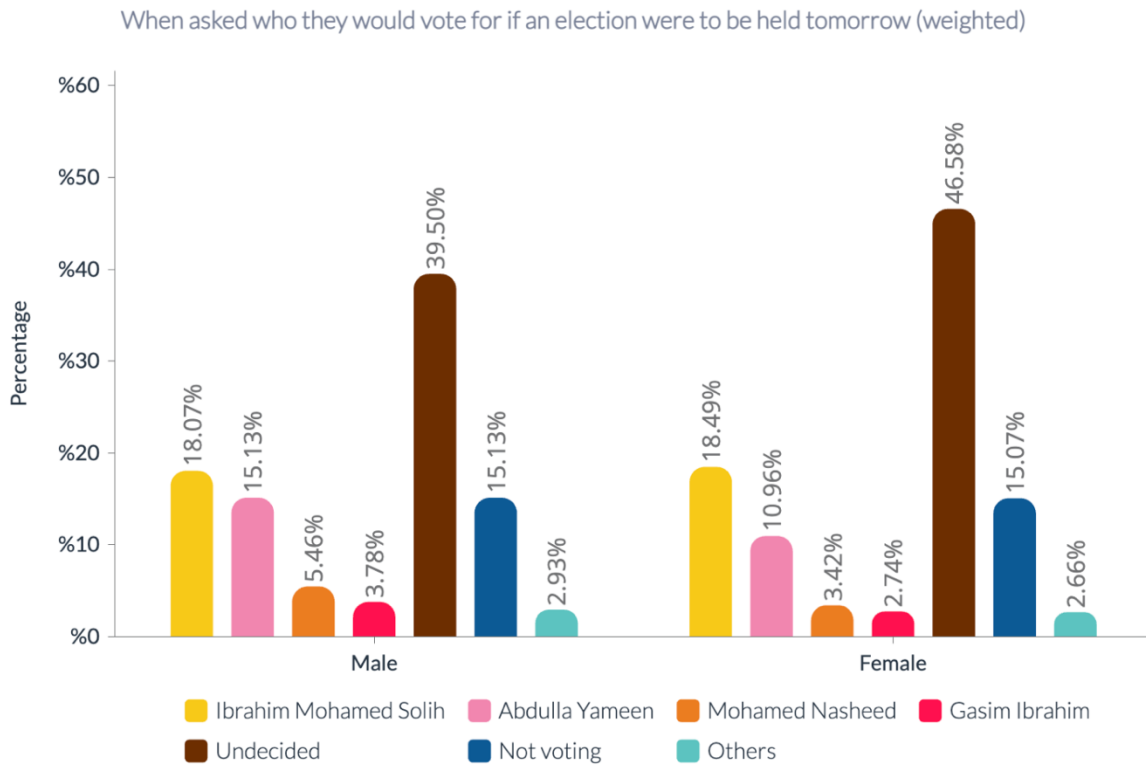
43% of voters said they were undecided on who they would vote for, while 15% said they were not planning to vote.

Maldives National Party leader Colonel Mohamed Nazim and Umar Naseer received 0.6% of support, and former President Maumoon Abdul Gayyoom received 0.2% (the three politicians are represented in the 'Others' category).

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 from our poll.

Voter Preference based on gender

When looking at voter preferences by gender, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was the most popular candidate across both male (18.07%) and female (18.49%) 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% of all males and 46.58% of all females undecided.

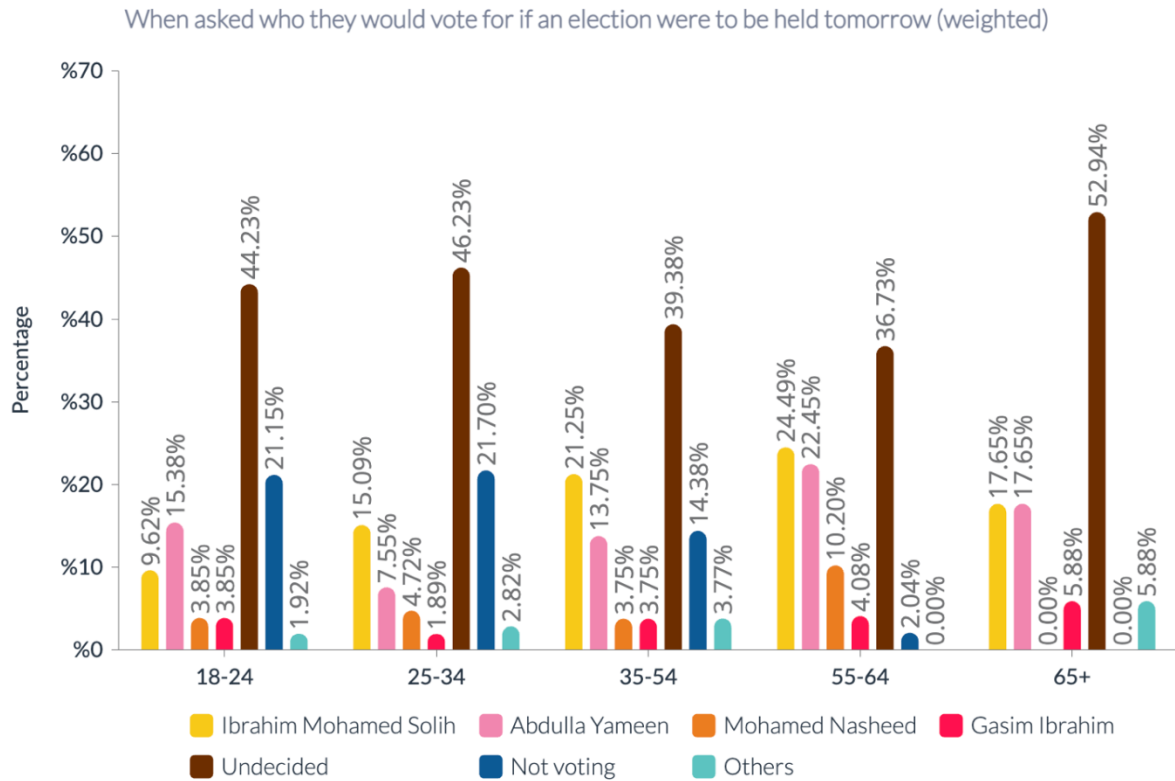


Meanwhile, former President and opposition leader Abdulla Yameen was the preferred candidate for 15.13% of males and 10.96% of females. Speaker of Parliament and former President Mohamed Nasheed received a 5.46% rating from males and 3.42% from females.

A large portion of the male and female respondents indicated that they will not vote in the 2023 elections: 15.13% of males and 15.07% of females.

Voter preference by age

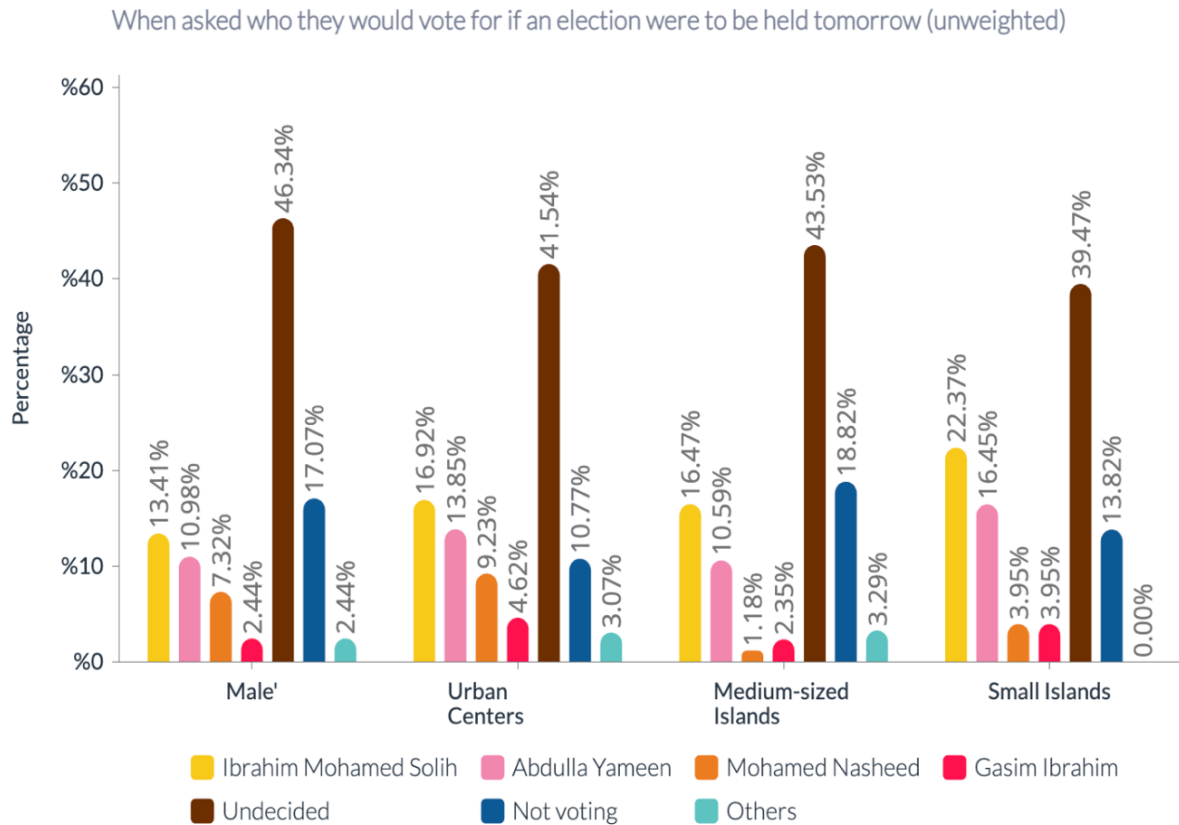
Across the different age groups, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was the most popular choice for those between 25 to 34 years (15.09%), 35 to 54 years (21.25%), and 55 to 64 years (24.49%). Meanwhile, former President Abdulla Yameen was most popular amongst those between 18 to 24 years (15.38%) and was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



Meanwhile, Speaker of Parliament Mohamed Nasheed received most support from those between 55 to 64 years old (10.20%). Here again, it is important to note that across all age groups a significant portion of the population is undecided on who they will vote for (above 35% in all age groups). Of those that indicated that they will not vote, the largest portion is from those between 18 to 54 years. Only 2.04% of those between 55 to 64 years old indicated that they will not vote while 0% of those above 65 indicated that they will not vote, indicating a high voter turnout from older age groups.

Voter preference based across locations

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



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

Analysis

April's poll results suggest that the 2023 presidential election is currently wide open, with 43% 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, leading to questions about what the opposition's strategy would be. 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.

Baani anticipates that as we get closer to the elections and the candidate field and coalitions become clearer, more voters who are currently undecided will land on a candidate.

Baani will conduct regular, monthly polls ahead of the September presidential elections.

All of our reports will be available online at <https://baanicentre.org/research>.

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