

# Goodman Poll: Ghana Election 2016 Presidential Poll Tracker. Results for the month of March.

## 2016

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## The Goodman Poll

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The Goodman Poll is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice. It tracks Ghana's Presidential race on a monthly basis by providing an excellent, scientific way to understand the dynamics of Ghana's election campaign, and the impact of foreseen and unforeseen events in the weeks and months ahead.

The nationwide online survey of 2,149 likely Ghanaian voters, was taken from the 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 and closed on the 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2016.

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## Methodology

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The Goodman Poll Monthly Election Tracking Poll for the month of March was conducted online among a national sample of 2,149 adults aged 18 and over. These findings by Goodman Poll was conducted on *29<sup>th</sup> February, 2016* through to *4<sup>th</sup> March, 2016*. Respondents were reached through an opt-in internet survey (Opt-in internet surveys are generally conducted by first recruiting individuals by having them click on a web-based advertisement or soliciting their participation).

After the survey was completed, the raw data was processed through a weighting program to ensure that the sample reflects the overall population in terms of age distribution. The raw data was weighted for age using the 2010 Population and Housing Census to reflect the demographic composition of Ghana.

Since the sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation rather than a probability sample, the initial thought is that, no estimates for margin of sampling error can be calculated. Also, survey may be subject to multiple sources of error, including, but not limited to sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error. In addition to this, question wording in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

Many internet-panels consist of self-selected respondents and hence cover a relatively small part of the population. Estimates based on Internet polling therefore may suffer from non-coverage and self-selection bias

Nevertheless, Goodman AMC is aware of the claims about online polling and those who complete online surveys, these claims include the following:

- Not everyone has internet access;
- Online polls are created through an opt-in process, rather than through a random-digit dial telephone call;

- Less is known about the profiles of individuals who complete online surveys versus those who do not, or about the likelihood of an online person to complete an online survey or to participate in a survey panel.

Therefore, the probability of being included in any given online survey sample is unknown, very difficult to ascertain, or simply zero (non-internet users). Further, the nature of use of the internet is not uniform within the population, so this limits one's ability to calculate the likelihood of reaching a person through an online poll. In short, without this knowledge, a margin of error cannot be calculated.

However, even if all voters in Ghana had made up their minds already and would truthfully tell a pollster their preferences by participating in a probability-based survey, it is obviously just not possible to interview that many Ghanaians. What pollsters often do in a probability-based survey is to interview a smaller number of randomly-selected city residents and use standard statistical methods to project their answers to the rest of the population.

On that note, Goodman AMC also made an attempt to conduct this poll in a scientific way to assess the variability in the estimates and account for design effects which might yield similar results to probability sampling. This is due to the fact that it is very important for us as researchers to provide a measure of confidence along with our data, regardless of the method of data collection. As such, we calculated a margin of error +/- 4 which considers the methodology valid and has a confidence level of 95% to which that projection may be made.

The Margin of Error is a measurement of how confident we can be that our survey of the opinions of 2,149 people actually reflects the opinions of the entire Ghanaian population.

When analysing the survey results and their accuracy, this error estimate should be taken into consideration in much the same way that analysis of probability polls takes into account the margin of sampling error.

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## Caveat

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With public opinion presidential pre-election polling being quite unused in Ghana, and the high tendency of Ghana's hyper-personalized politics to attribute this poll to bias, we want to explain further what Goodman Poll's presidential polling seeks to achieve and how it works:

1. Goodman Poll does not measure the outcome of Ghana's November election. But instead, we measure (scientifically) who is ahead during election campaigning at a given point in time. Goodman Poll therefore does not answer the question "Who will win?" but the question "Who was ahead when we last looked?" To know who is ahead helps both politicians in office and out of office in their planning. This poll is therefore not meant to undermine any political party, but to help provide a solid read to candidates and also enable political parties to not be trapped in a vacuum, in which they are absent-minded of what the public feels.
2. Much will happen between today and 7th November, 2016 which could affect subsequent results in this presidential polling. Most political parties in Ghana are yet to begin active and rigorous campaigning which may give momentum to, or suck oxygen from a given candidate. A candidate may also drop or increase depending on their favourability ratings among floating voters, or some candidates may throw their support behind another candidate, this together with other foreseen and unforeseen instances might render the Goodman Poll very unpredictable.

## Data Tables

\*Percentages with decimal points were rounded off.

\*Percentages in zero decimal digits were rounded off to zero.

\*Where figures do not sum to 100%, this is due to the effects of rounding.

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

**1. Would you say things in Ghana are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?**

	Right Direction	Wrong Track	Don't Know
<b>All Data</b>	16%	83%	2%

**2. Do you approve or disapprove about the way President John Dramani Mahama is handling his job as President?**

	Approve	Disapprove	Not Sure
<b>All Data</b>	15%	82%	3%

**3. If the 2016 Presidential Elections were being held in Ghana today, for whom would you vote for?**

	John Dramani Mahama	Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo	Ivor Kobina Greenstreet	Papa Kwesi Ndoum	Edward Nasigre Mahama	Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings	Jacob Osei Yeboah	Hassan Ayariga	Akua Donkor	Akwasi Addae Odike	Henry Lartey
<b>All Data</b>	15%	79%	1%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**4. In thinking about your choice for President, what is the most important factor in choosing who to vote for?**

	Political affiliation	Ability to win election	Ability to transform Ghana	Ethnical background	Religious background	Don't know	Other (please specify)
<b>All Data</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>

**5. When it comes to your support of your first-choice Presidential candidate, would you say your mind is made up, or could you be persuaded to support another candidate as your first choice?**

	Mind made up	Could still be persuaded	Don't know
<b>All Data</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>1%</b>

**6. Which of these is the most important issue to you in deciding who to support in the 2016 Presidential Elections?**

	Healthcare	The Economy	Taxes	Jobs and employment	Education	Foreign policy	Energy policy	Supporting small businesses	Agriculture	Climate change	Poverty reduction	Anti-corruption	Women empowerment
<b>All Data</b>	3%	64%	1%	15%	3%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	3%	7%	0%

**7. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana is handling its job?**

	Approve	Disapprove	Not sure
<b>All Data</b>	9%	82%	9%

**8. Would you tell us which age group you belong to?**

	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75 and over
<b>All Data</b>	125 (6%)	391 (18%)	396 (18%)	415 (19%)	279 (13%)	192 (9%)	134 (6%)	98 (5%)	72 (3%)	40 (2%)	6 (0%)	1 (0%)

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## Analysis

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Data tracked by Goodman Poll for the month of March 2016 shows Akufo-Addo ahead of the Presidential race with a statistically significant lead at 79%, followed by President Mahama with 15%.

The nationwide online survey of 2,149 likely Ghanaian voters, taken 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 through to 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2016, underscores how formidable an opponent the 72-year-old statesman has become against the National Democratic Congress' most established figure.

Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo who is the presumptive favourite, is a three-time flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party, and a former Member of Parliament for Abuakwa and Abuakwa South as well as Foreign Minister and Attorney General under the Kufuor Administration; pulls ahead of his contenders and is backed by 79% of likely Ghanaian voters. Over that same period, President John Dramani Mahama is backed by 15% of likely Ghanaian voters.

While President Mahama argues that the state of the nation is on track and thus he would be more electable in November, Akufo-Addo shows somewhat more strength against the former Vice President of Ghana and Minister of Communications under the Rawlings Administration as well as three-term Member of Parliament for Bole.

They are followed by lesser favourites, Papa Kwesi Nduom in third place with 4%, Ivor Kobina Greenstreet in fourth place with 1% and Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings in fifth place with 0.3%. Edward Nasigre Mahama follows suit in sixth place with 0.2% with Akua Donkor in seventh position at 0.1%. Jacob Osei Yeboah trails in eighth place at 0.05%. Hassan Ayariga, Akwesi Addai Odike and Henry Lartey had no votes.

With the exception of Papa Kwesi Nduom and Ivor Greenstreet, the possible candidacy of Edward Mahama, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, Akwasi Addai Odike, Hassan Ayariga, Akua Donkor, Jacob Osei Yeboah and Henry Lartey does not have any significant impact on election dynamics since they are all trailing in a percentage value of greater than zero but less than one half of one percent.

Based on data by Goodman Poll, Ghana's Presidential horserace has proven to be a two-man contest between President John Dramani Mahama of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, the flagbearer of Ghana's largest opposition political party, the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Papa Kwesi Nduom of the Progressive People's Party (PPP) on the other hand has shown some promise.

Data tracked shows that likely voters who support both NDC and NPP are looking for different things in the next president. By an overwhelming 64%; voters say they prefer a presidential candidate whose campaign message will focus more on issues concerning Ghana's economy. This sentiment felt by many likely voters demonstrates how economic fears are weighing heavily on Ghanaians.

15% of likely Ghanaian voters also say they would prefer a candidate whose campaign priority will focus on creating jobs and employment. Likely voters who say fighting corruption should be the most important issue make up 7%. Another 3% each say the most important issue in this year's campaign should be improving education, improving healthcare and reducing poverty. Interestingly, 2% also say supporting small businesses should be the most important issue of focus during election campaigns and 1% each say issues concerning agriculture, energy policy, and taxes should be the main focus.

When asked to name the most important factor in choosing who to vote for, 94% of likely Ghanaian voters say they will vote for a candidate as a result of that candidate's ability to transform Ghana. Out of this figure 78% of likely voters think Akuffo-Addo has the ability to transform Ghana over 14% for Mahama. Also, 2% of likely voters say their choice of candidate is as a result of their strong political affiliation to a particular political party, 1% also say a candidate's ability to win election in November is what really motivates them to vote for that particular candidate. Meanwhile 0.3% and 0.2% of likely voters say they will vote for a candidate based on ethnicity and religion respectively.

Akuffo-Addo's lead according to the Goodman Poll is as a result of his increasing support from likely voters between the ages of 30-34 and 35-39. This trend is not surprising as majority of likely voters between the age group 25-29 also go to Mahama over Akuffo-Addo, Mahama on that note does well among a more youthful populace. Nonetheless,

Akufo-Addo's support is proportionately distributed among all age groups as compared to Mahama whose majority support is disproportionately distributed among age groups.

In terms of gender preferences, Mahama's appeal cuts across gender lines, he holds a slim edge among women voters, with 53% women to 47% men. Whereas Akufo-Addo's appeal is stronger with men and holds a 4-1 advantage over women voters, 82% (men) and 18% (women).

86% of likely voters also say they are completely decided on their choice of candidate; including 74% of Akufo-Addo supporters and 10% of Mahama backers. Another 13% of likely voters say they have a strong preference but could still be persuaded to consider another candidate while 1% say they are really undecided about whom they will ultimately support in the November polls. These two groups of likely voters who could still be persuaded and those who are still undecided on who to vote for make up the floating voters who constitute 14% of likely Ghanaian voters nationwide. Notwithstanding, 10% of the floating voters are likely to vote for Akufo-Addo who is enjoying a higher favourability rating than Mahama among floating voters.

With no high-profile third-party candidate entering Ghana's presidential race thus far, the third-party vote for president is likely to be limited this year. Only 6% of likely Ghanaian voters currently say they would vote for someone other than Mahama or Akufo-Addo.

### **President Mahama's Job Approval Rating**

President Mahama's performance in his role as the President of the Republic of Ghana is being marked down. The Goodman Poll monthly Presidential Tracking data for March shows that 82% of likely Ghanaian voters disapprove of President Mahama's job performance while 15% approve of his job performance as the President of Ghana.

In other words, 82% of likely voters have a negative opinion or impression about how the President is handling his job while 15% have a positive opinion.

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This latest figure therefore gives President Mahama a Presidential Approval rating of 15%.

### **Ghana Heading in Right Direction or Wrong Track**

83% of likely Ghanaian voters think the country is heading in the wrong direction and are not satisfied with the current state of Ghana while only 16% say the country is headed in the right direction, according to Goodman Poll for the month of March.

### **Parliamentary Job Approval Rating**

Parliament's job approval rating is at 9%, according to Goodman Poll.

The poll found just 9% of likely voters in Ghana saying they approve of Parliament's job performance. Meanwhile, a whopping 82% of likely Ghanaian voters said they disapprove of how Parliament is handling its job.

If this trend continues, it would mean that Ghanaians are on track to become unhappier with Parliament's performance this year.

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## Our Thoughts

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President Mahama appears to be losing momentum, and trails Akufo-Addo among likely voters in Ghana. Though Mahama is presumed to have an advantage in terms of likability and empathy, any attempt by his campaign to leverage it as his current strength might probably not work in his favour. Given President Mahama's 11% approval rating, his likability deficit remains unprecedented in an election year. Analysis of data available also indicates that out of the 2% of likely voters who are voting based on their political affiliations, about 1.6% are likely to vote for Mahama. This raises the issue of the backbone of Mahama's support which is clearly not as a result of his economic heroism, but more of a likely voters' association with the NDC. Therefore though some section of likely voters might disapprove of Mahama's job performance, they might still end up voting for him.

The heart of President Mahama's campaign strategy must focus on assuring and convincing voters that he is capable of handling the job and that he has the judgement, and the temperament to be a successful president in his second term of office. This will depend on the kind of actions President Mahama takes to increase the Economic Confidence Level of Ghanaians and how he deals with the perceived vices in his government; both of which are sine qua nons for his success in the November polls (*Note: economic transformation, creating jobs and tackling corruption are the top-three most important issues that would influence a likely voters choice of candidate in November*). With 83% of likely voters thinking Ghana is heading in the wrong direction and a convincingly low approval rating for President Mahama, the NDC needs not misjudge or take for granted the President's plummeting favourability among the Ghanaian public.

On the contrary, Akufo-Addo's best argument for convincing voters to support him may be his ability to manage government. Rather than touting his achievements as Foreign Minister under the Kufour administration, his campaign needs to focus on selling his private life achievements as a top-notch lawyer, an entrepreneur/businessman, an effective dealmaker/negotiator and a political activist; all of which are relevant skills at the helm of government. Akufo-Addo's ability to manage government could be a

particularly persuasive argument in an election year likely to be decided on economic issues.

But the downside for Akufo-Addo is that, his only clear advantage (ability to manage government) has been undermined by his supposed divisive nature which led to the ousting of three key party executives of the NPP (*an occurrence which led the NDC to feel a bit of schadenfreude*), this might therefore leave Akufo-Addo little to fall back on. Also, given the fact that he is the most favourable candidate among floating voters, it follows that, he might have lost support amongst at least some subgroups of the electorate within the NPP. Goodman Poll predicts that by portraying a convincing united front with so-called factions in the NPP, Akufo-Addo might increase his support among floating voters by a slightly significant margin.

Ghanaians continue to have slightly more negative than positive views of the strength of the country's economy, with 64% of likely Ghanaian voters saying the economy is the most important issue that would influence who they support in November indicates that Ghanaians may need more drastic changes in the economy itself for their views to change.

Election manifestoes and campaign messages therefore need to address the following issues extensively. In order of priority, these are the following issues that resonates most with Ghanaian voters according to data collected by Goodman Poll;

1. The economy
2. Jobs and employment creation
3. Tackling corruption
4. Improving education
5. Health care
6. Poverty reduction
7. Support for small businesses
8. Agriculture
9. Energy policy
10. Tax reforms
11. Women empowerment

12. Climate change

13. Foreign policy

On that note, the November Presidential elections is likely to be decided based on these key issues.

The upsurge of non-partisan middle class political activism in Ghana stands to play a major role in informing and educating the electorates. By exercising their right to a fair trial, the non-partisan middle class political activists are gradually helping shape the thoughts of Ghanaian voters on governance issues, and this we predict will have an influence on the voting pattern of Ghanaians in general depending on how rigorous their campaigns are and how convincing they are perceived as non-partisan. Their strong participation in this year's election might go a long way to enlighten voters to weigh issues before they cast their votes.

In conclusion, Ghanaians have definite opinions about the personal and presidential qualities of President Mahama and Akufo-Addo, but there still may be some opportunity for the candidates to change those perceptions during the remaining months of their campaigns.

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## About Goodman AMC

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### **Goodman Poll**

The Goodman Poll is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice. We conduct strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of African and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research, but elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research.

### **Goodman AMC LLC**

Goodman AMC LLC is Africa's leading management consulting firm. At Goodman AMC, we utilize unique strategic planning methods to advise leading businesses, governments, non-governmental organizations, and not-for-profits. And we achieve this by taking pragmatic steps which are based on the effectiveness of our recommendation. We have expertise in partnering with our clients to help them improve their performance and achieve their strategic planning goals and objectives. The strength of our firm is rooted in our belief that success is derived from a collaborative process, a smart action plan, a focused approach and an unwavering commitment to deliver results. We are very passionate about attaining the best pragmatic and holistic results for our clients.

### **Goodman AMC LLC**

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The logo consists of a dark blue square with the text "Goodman AMC" in white, serif font centered within it.

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