

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
Durban, South Africa
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News release

Lived poverty on the rise in South Africa, Afrobarometer survey shows

More South Africans are going without enough food, clean water, and other basic necessities as “lived poverty” in the country increased compared to 2015, Afrobarometer’s latest survey shows.

The proportion of citizens who suffered frequent deprivation of basic life necessities rose sharply, to the highest levels recorded since Afrobarometer began its surveys in the country in 2002.

Even so, South Africa still compares favourably with most of its peers in the region.

For a detailed analysis, please see www.afrobarometer.org.

Key findings

- Close to four in 10 South Africans (38%) experienced a moderate or high level of “lived poverty” during the past year, an increase from 25% recorded in 2015 (Figure 1).
- The percentage of South Africans who say they went without enough food, clean water, and other basic necessities “many times” or “always” increased substantially between 2015 and 2018, doubling or tripling in all categories except for cash income (Figure 2).
- Among 11 countries in Southern Africa, South Africa ranks fourth-lowest in the proportion of citizens in moderate or high lived poverty, after Mauritius (3%), Namibia (31%), and Botswana (35%) (Figure 3). At the other extreme are Malawi (where 68% of respondents experienced moderate or high lived poverty), Lesotho (63%), Madagascar (59%), and Zimbabwe (59%).

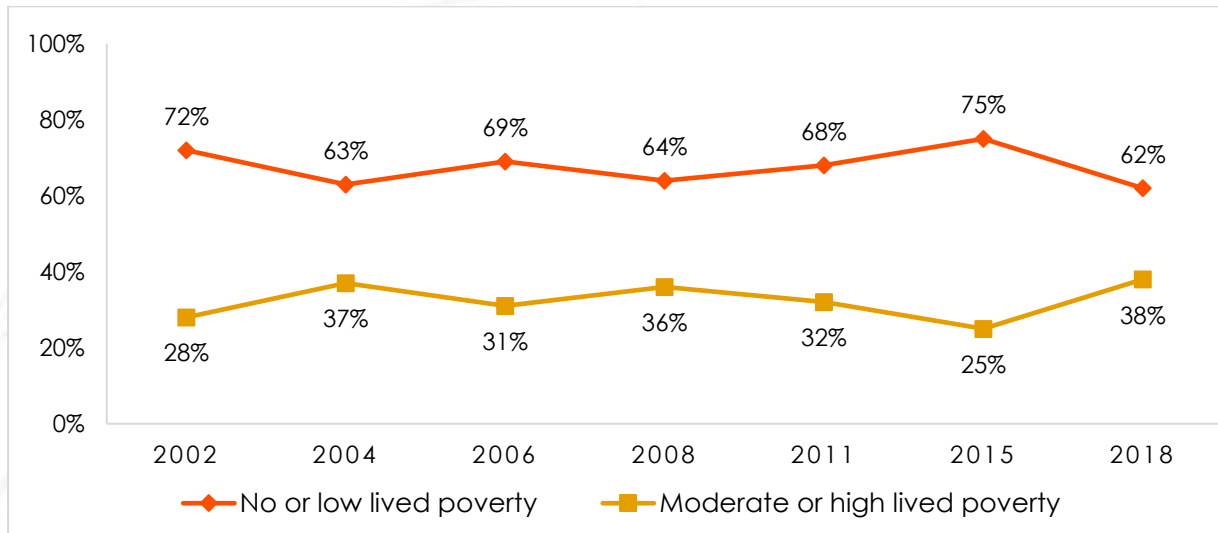
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Seven rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 37 countries between 1999 and 2018. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent’s choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in South Africa, led by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and Plus 94 Research, interviewed 1,800 adult South Africans in August and September 2018. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2.3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in South Africa in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011, and 2015.

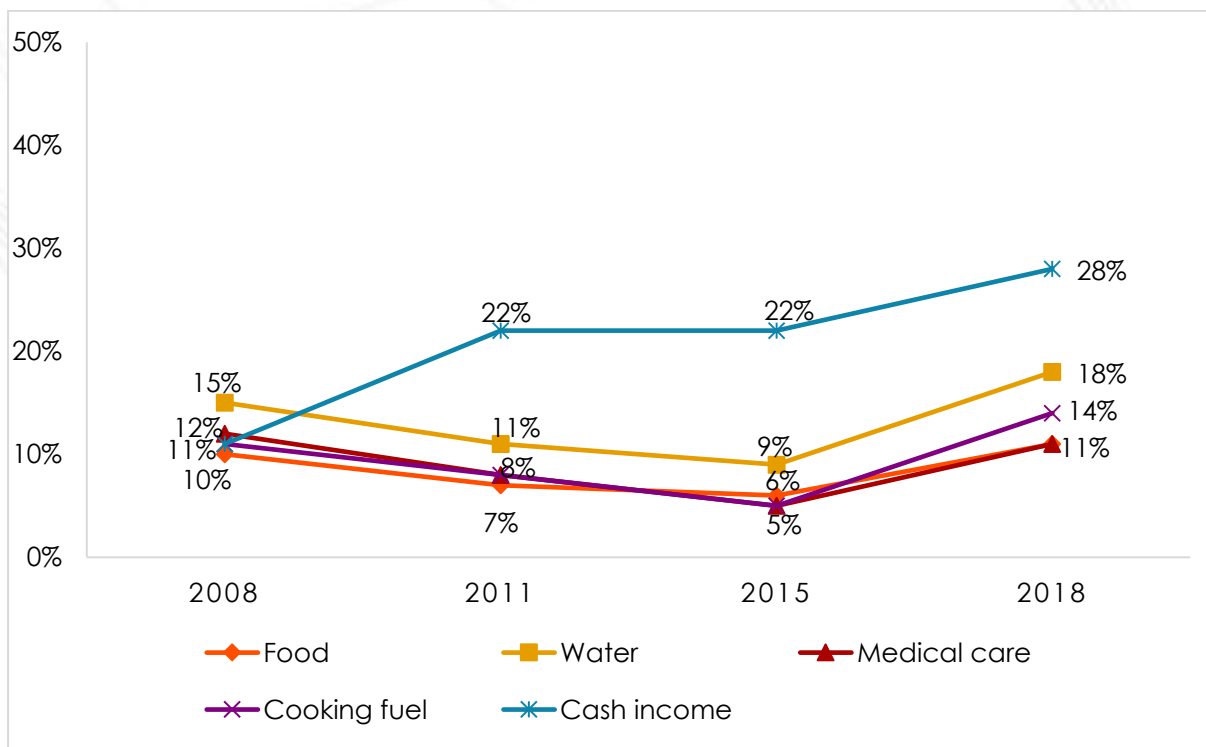
Charts

Figure 1: Lived poverty | South Africa | 2002-2018



Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

Figure 2: Going without basic necessities “many times” or “always” | South Africa | 2008-2018



(% who say they went without these necessities “many times” or “always”)

Figure 3: Moderate or high lived poverty | 11 countries in Southern Africa
 | 2016/2018

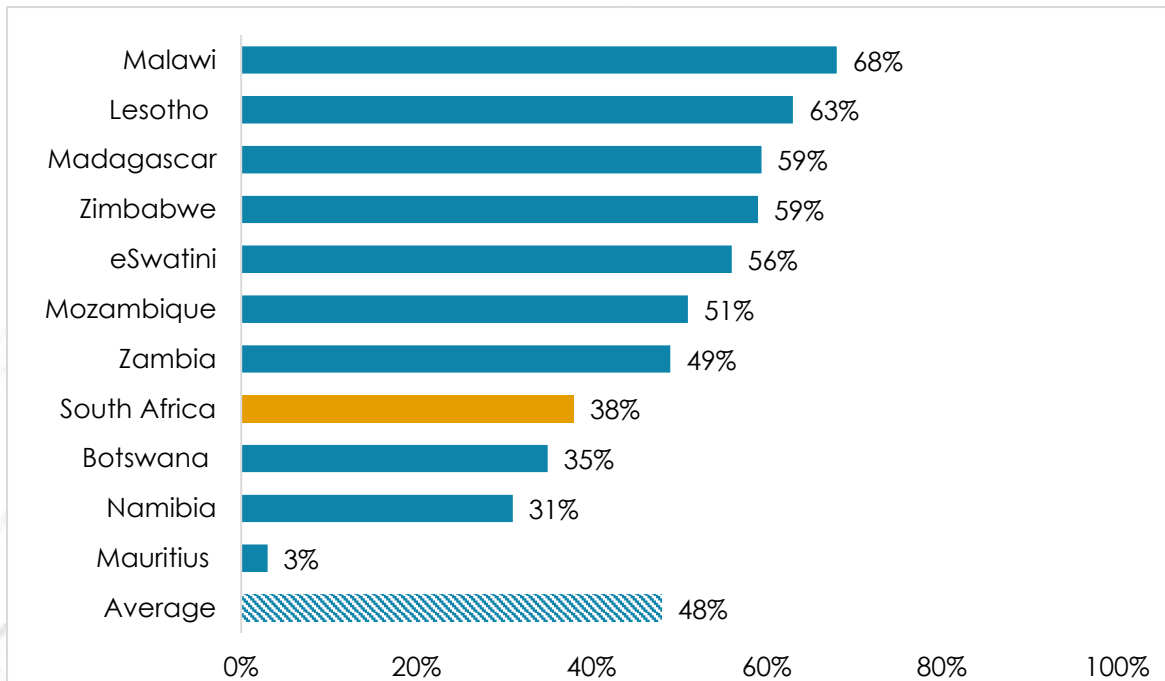


Figure shows % of respondents who experienced moderate or high lived poverty during the previous year.

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