Country direction and economic situation, government performance, COVID-19, popular trust and political party affiliation and voting intentions

Findings from Afrobarometer Round 8 survey in Zimbabwe
At a glance

- **General direction of the country:** Two-thirds (67%) of Zimbabweans say the country is going in the wrong direction.

- **Economic situation:** Almost three-quarters (72%) describe country’s economic condition as “fairly bad” or “very bad.”

- **Government’s response to COVID-19:** On the whole, the public gives a thumbs-up to the government for its response to COVID-19.
What is Afrobarometer?

• A pan-African, non-partisan, non-profit survey research network that provides reliable data on Africans’ experiences and evaluations of quality of life, governance, and democracy.

• Started in 12 African countries in 1999. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2021 cover 34 countries.

• **Goal:** To give the public a voice in policymaking by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.

• A national partner in each country conducts the survey. In Zimbabwe, the Afrobarometer Round 8 survey was conducted by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI).
Methodology

• Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
  - All respondents are randomly selected.
  - Sample is distributed across regions/states/provinces and urban/rural areas in proportion to their share in the national population.
  - Every adult citizen has an equal chance of being selected.

• Face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent’s choice.

• Standard questionnaire allows comparisons across countries and over time.

• Sample size in Zimbabwe of 1,200 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

• Fieldwork for Round 8 in Zimbabwe was conducted between 16 April and 1 May 2021.
## Survey demographics
### Zimbabwe | 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>50</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>62</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary</td>
<td>16</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harare</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulawayo</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masvingo</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland East</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland West</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland Central</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matabeleland South</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matabeleland North</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicaland</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Findings
Country direction and economic conditions
Key findings

- Two-thirds (67%) of Zimbabweans say the country is going in the wrong direction.

- Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Zimbabweans say economic conditions in the country are “fairly bad” or “very bad.”

- Almost two-thirds (62%) describe their personal living conditions as “fairly bad” or “very bad.”

- About one-third (35%) are optimistic that macro-economic conditions will be better in 12 months’ time.
Respondents were asked: Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?
Respondents were asked: Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction? (% who say “wrong direction”)
Economic conditions | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: In general, how would you describe: The present economic condition of this country? Your own present living conditions?

Country’s economic condition

- Fairly bad / Very bad: 72%
- Neither good nor bad: 10%
- Fairly good / Very good: 16%
- Don’t know: 1%

Personal living conditions

- Fairly bad / Very bad: 62%
- Neither good nor bad: 19%
- Fairly good / Very good: 19%
- Don’t know: 0%
## Country’s economic condition | by demographic group
### Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: In general, how would you describe the present economic condition of this country? (% of those who say “fairly bad” or “very bad”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland Central</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland West</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland East</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masvingo</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harare</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulawayo/Matabeleland…</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicaland</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary education</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal/primary education</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56+ years</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-55 years</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-35 years</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average**                             | 72%   |

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%
Respondents were asked: Looking ahead, do you expect economic conditions in this country to be better or worse in 12 months’ time?
Lived poverty
An overwhelming majority (87%) of Zimbabweans say they went without a cash income “several times,” “many times,” or “always” during the previous year.

About half of citizens say they went without enough food (52%), enough clean water (51%), and without medical care (55%) at least “several times” during the past year.

Lack of clean water was more common in urban areas.

Going without enough food and without a cash income was more common in rural areas.
Went without enough food | by urban-rural location | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough food to eat?

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Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough food to eat?
Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough clean water for home use?
Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without medicines or medical treatment?

**Went without medical care by urban-rural location**

Zimbabwe | 2021

- **Average**
  - Never: 32%
  - Just once or twice: 13%
  - Several times/Many times/Always: 55%

- **Rural**
  - Never: 30%
  - Just once or twice: 13%
  - Several times/Many times/Always: 56%

- **Urban**
  - Never: 33%
  - Just once or twice: 13%
  - Several times/Many times/Always: 53%
Went without enough cooking fuel | by urban-rural location | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough fuel to cook your food?

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough fuel to cook your food?
Went without a cash income | by urban-rural location | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without a cash income?

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without a cash income?
Government’s response to COVID-19
Zimbabweans broadly commend the government for its response to the COVID-19 pandemic: 81% say it managed the response “fairly well” or “very well,” and 84% say it kept the public informed.

Four out of five respondents (81%) endorse lockdowns and school closures to curb the spread of COVID-19, although most say lockdowns were difficult to comply with and schools should have reopened much sooner.

Almost half (47%) of Zimbabweans say they lost a job, business, or primary source of income due to COVID-19.

Half (51%) of citizens say it is justified for the government to temporarily limit democratic freedoms by postponing elections or limiting political campaigning during a health emergency.
Support for lockdown | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Even if the lockdown or curfew had negative impacts on the economy and people’s livelihoods, it was necessary to limit the spread of COVID-19?

- **Strongly agree**: 47%
- **Agree**: 34%
- **Disagree**: 8%
- **Strongly disagree**: 5%

Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Even if the lockdown or curfew had negative impacts on the economy and people’s livelihoods, it was necessary to limit the spread of COVID-19?
Support for lockdown
| Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Even if the lockdown or curfew had negative impacts on the economy and people’s livelihoods, it was necessary to limit the spread of COVID-19? (% who “agree” or “strongly agree”)

- Women: 82%
- Men: 80%
- Rural: 84%
- Urban: 77%
- Manicaland: 97%
- Bulawayo/Matabeleland North: 77%
- Bulawayo/Matabeleland South: 73%
- Harare: 75%
- Midlands: 77%
- Mashonaland Central: 77%
- Mashonaland West: 81%
- Masvingo: 89%
- Mashonaland East: 91%
- Average: 81%
Ease of compliance with lockdown | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: How easy or difficult was it for you and your household to comply with the lockdown or curfew restrictions imposed by the government?
Support for school closure | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Did you support or oppose the government’s decision to close schools in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19?

Respondents were asked: Did you support or oppose the government’s decision to close schools in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19?
Support for school closure  |  Zimbabwe  |  2021

Respondents were asked: Did you support or oppose the government’s decision to close schools in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19? (% who “somewhat support” or “strongly support”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary education</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary/No formal education</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56+ years</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-55 years</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-35 years</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary/No formal education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Respondents were asked: How well informed would you say you are about the coronavirus, or the COVID-19 pandemic, and efforts to combat it? (% who say “somewhat well informed” or “very well informed”)
Awareness of COVID-19 | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: How well informed would you say you are about the coronavirus, or the COVID-19 pandemic, and efforts to combat it? (% who say “somewhat well informed or “very well informed”)
### Government response to COVID-19 | Zimbabwe | 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing COVID-19 response</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping public informed about COVID-19</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust government COVID-19 statistics</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 resources lost to corruption</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Respondents were asked:**

- How well or badly would you say the current government has handled the following matters since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, or haven’t you heard enough to say: Managing the response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Keeping the public informed about COVID-19?
- How much do you trust the official statistics provided by government on the number of infections and deaths due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Considering all of the funds and resources that were available to the government for combating and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, how much do you think was lost or stolen due to corruption among government officials?
Attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccines | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked:

How much do you trust the government to ensure that any vaccine for COVID-19 that is developed or offered to Zimbabwean citizens is safe before it is used in this country?

If a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available and the government says it is safe, how likely are you to try to get vaccinated?

Trust government to ensure safety of COVID-19 vaccine
- Not at all/Just a little: 51%
- Somewhat/A lot: 42%

Likelihood of trying to get COVID-19 vaccination
- Somewhat unlikely/Very unlikely: 51%
- Somewhat likely/Very likely: 47%
Loss of jobs, business, or primary source of income
| by urban-rural location | Zimbabwe | 2021

**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me if you personally or any other member of your household have been affected in any of the following ways by the COVID-19 pandemic: Temporarily or permanently lost a job, business, or primary source of income?

- **Average:**
  - Yes: 47%
  - No: 53%

- **Urban:**
  - Yes: 57%
  - No: 43%

- **Rural:**
  - Yes: 60%
  - No: 40%
Respondents were asked: When the country is facing a public health emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic, do you agree or disagree that it is justified for the government to temporarily limit democracy or democratic freedoms by taking the following measures: Censoring media reporting? Using the police and security forces to enforce public health mandates like lockdown orders, mask requirements, or restrictions on public gatherings? Postponing elections or limiting political campaigning?
Government performance
Key findings

- Large majorities say the government is performing badly on creating jobs (91%), keeping prices stable (78%), improving living standards of the poor (75%), and other issues.

- On a positive note, 57% of Zimbabweans commend government efforts to prevent or resolve violent conflict.
Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven’t you heard enough to say?

- Creating jobs: 91% Fairly badly/Very badly, 7% Fairly well/Very well
- Maintaining roads and bridges: 79% Fairly badly/Very badly, 20% Fairly well/Very well
- Keeping prices stable: 78% Fairly badly/Very badly, 20% Fairly well/Very well
- Addressing the needs of young people: 77% Fairly badly/Very badly, 20% Fairly well/Very well
- Narrowing income gaps: 75% Fairly badly/Very badly, 17% Fairly well/Very well
- Improving living standards of the poor: 75% Fairly badly/Very badly, 21% Fairly well/Very well
- Addressing educational needs: 69% Fairly badly/Very badly, 30% Fairly well/Very well
- Managing the economy: 69% Fairly badly/Very badly, 25% Fairly well/Very well
Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven’t you heard enough to say?

- Fighting corruption: 66% Fairly badly/Very badly, 26% Fairly well/Very well
- Improving basic health services: 66% Fairly badly/Very badly, 32% Fairly well/Very well
- Providing water and sanitation services: 62% Fairly badly/Very badly, 37% Fairly well/Very well
- Reducing crime: 55% Fairly badly/Very badly, 42% Fairly well/Very well
- Handling providing a reliable supply of electricity: 47% Fairly badly/Very badly, 40% Fairly well/Very well
- Handling protecting rights, promoting opportunities for disabled: 41% Fairly badly/Very badly, 38% Fairly well/Very well
- Handling preventing or resolving violent conflict: 40% Fairly badly/Very badly, 57% Fairly well/Very well
Trust in institutions and political figures
Key findings

- Considerably more Zimbabweans trust NGOs (79%) and religious leaders (78%) than trust the president (48%), members of Parliament (44%), or the police (38%).
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say?

- NGOs: 79% Somewhat/A lot, 12% Just a little/Not at all
- Religious leaders: 78% Somewhat/A lot, 21% Just a little/Not at all
- Traditional leaders: 60% Somewhat/A lot, 26% Just a little/Not at all
- Courts of law: 56% Somewhat/A lot, 36% Just a little/Not at all
- President: 48% Somewhat/A lot, 45% Just a little/Not at all
- Members of Parliament: 44% Somewhat/A lot, 49% Just a little/Not at all
- Police: 38% Somewhat/A lot, 60% Just a little/Not at all
- Zimbabwe Electoral Commission: 38% Somewhat/A lot, 52% Just a little/Not at all
- Local government councillors: 38% Somewhat/A lot, 52% Just a little/Not at all
- Zimbabwe Revenue Authority: 36% Somewhat/A lot, 44% Just a little/Not at all
Political party affiliation and voting intentions
Key findings

- More than half (54%) of Zimbabweans say they feel close to a political party.

- About a quarter (27%) of citizens say they feel close to ZANU-PF, while a fifth (20%) say they feel close to MDC-Chamisa.

- If presidential elections were held tomorrow, one-third (33%) of respondents say they would vote for the ZANU-PF candidate, compared to one-fourth (26%) who say they would vote for the MDC-Chamisa candidate.
  - About four in 10 refused to answer, say they would not vote, or say they don’t know.
Political party affiliation | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Do you feel close to any particular political party?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No (does not feel close to any party)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (feels close to a party)</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused to answer</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents were asked: Do you feel close to any particular political party? [If yes:] Which party is that?
Respondents were asked: If presidential elections were held tomorrow, which party’s candidate would you vote for?
Respondents were asked: If presidential elections were held tomorrow, which party’s candidate would you vote for?
Conclusion
Conclusion

- Zimbabweans say economic conditions are bad and the country is headed in the wrong direction. Only slightly more than one-third are optimistic about the coming year.

- Most Zimbabweans went without a cash income at least “several times” during the past year, and about half experienced repeated shortages of food, clean water, and medical care.

- Government generally gets positive ratings for its management of the COVID-19 response, despite concerns about some of the measures which saw citizens losing jobs and sources of income.

- Government received its’ lowest rating on job creation and a majority gives it low marks on other indicators.

- Non-elective institutions enjoy the most trust from the citizens.

- A small majority say they feel close to a political party and ZANU-PF has an edge over the main opposition if presidential elections were held tomorrow.
Thank you

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