

Banjul, the Gambia
13 April 2021

News release

Gambians laud government's response to COVID-19 pandemic but don't trust it on vaccines, Afrobarometer survey shows

A majority of Gambians approve of the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, but few trust the government to ensure that vaccines are safe, a new Afrobarometer study shows.

While vaccination roll-out in the Gambia began in February, only two in 10 citizens say they are likely to try to be vaccinated, while most believe that prayer is more effective than a vaccine in preventing COVID-19 infection.

Survey results show that while most Gambian households received government assistance to help them weather the pandemic, more than half think assistance was not distributed fairly, and an even larger majority think COVID-19 resources were lost to government corruption.

Key findings

- Eight in 10 Gambians (79%) say their households received government assistance to help mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 1).
- A slim majority (53%) say government assistance was not distributed fairly (Figure 2).
- Fewer than one in four citizens (23%) say they trust the government "somewhat" or "a lot" to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe. A similar minority (21%) say they are "somewhat" or "very" likely to try to get vaccinated (Figure 3).
- Strong majorities say the government has managed the pandemic "fairly well" or "very well" (60%) and done a good job of keeping the public informed (75%) (Figure 4).
- But similar majorities express mistrust of the government's COVID-19 statistics (75%) and believe that "some" or "a lot" of resources intended for the pandemic response were lost to government corruption.
- About seven in 10 citizens (69%) believe that prayer is more effective than a vaccine would be in preventing COVID-19 infection, including 52% who think prayer is "much more effective" (Figure 5).

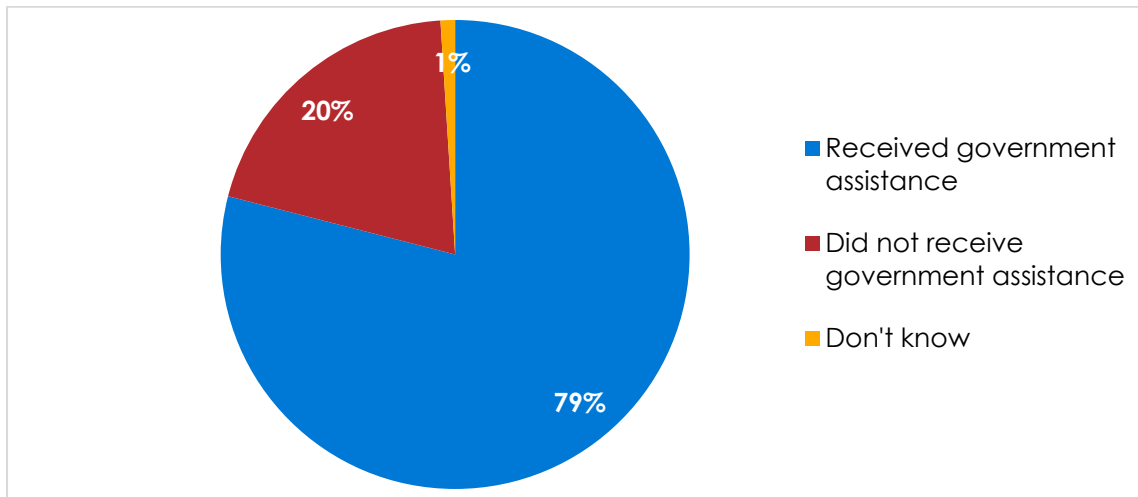
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on Africans' experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2021 are currently underway. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in the Gambia, led by the Center for Policy, Research and Strategic Studies (CePrass), interviewed 1,200 adult Gambians between 1 and 22 March 2021. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. A previous Afrobarometer survey was conducted in the Gambia in 2018.

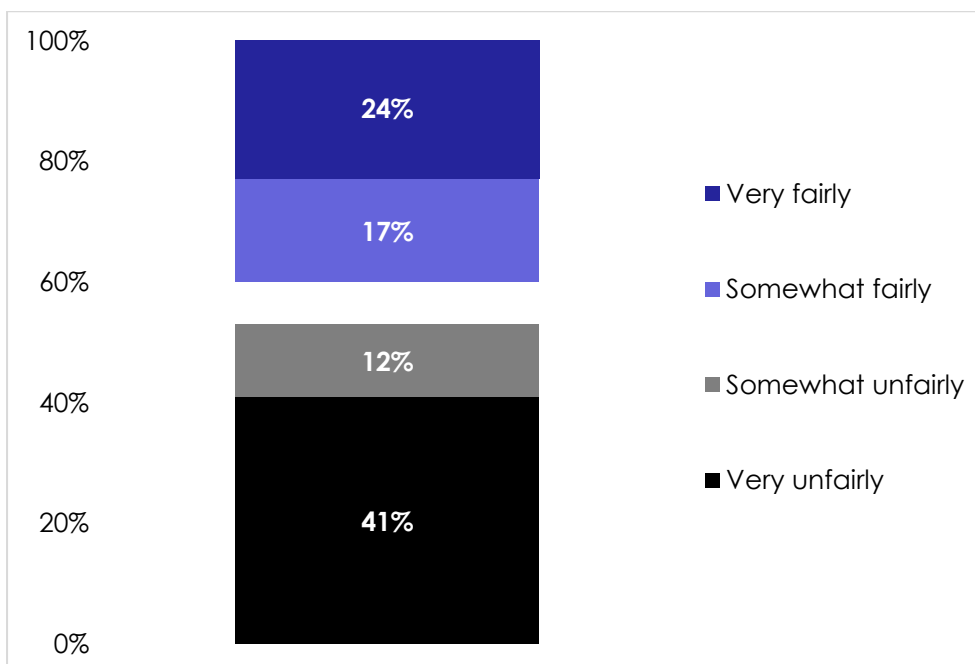
Charts

Figure 1: Received government assistance during COVID-19 pandemic
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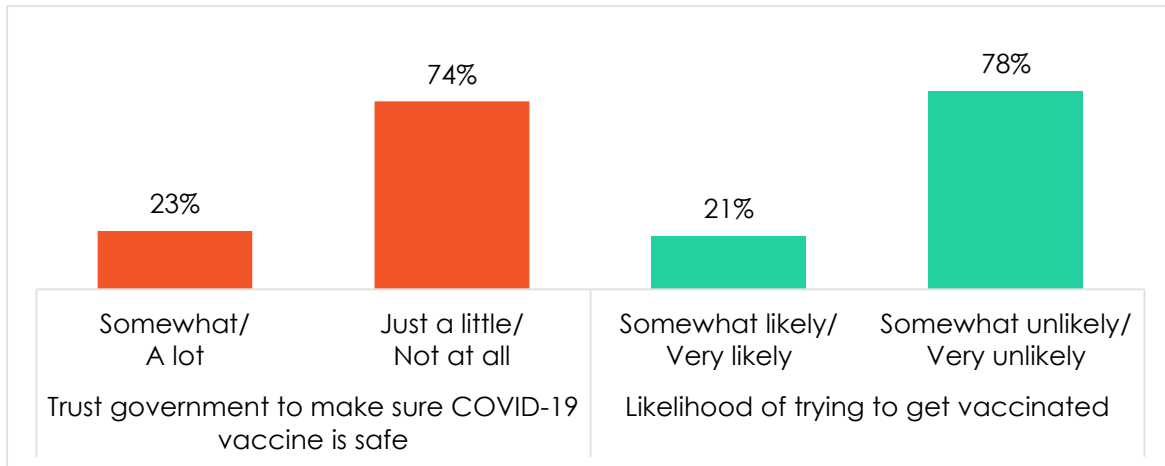
Respondents were asked: Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or your household received any assistance from government, like food, cash payments, relief from bill payments, or other assistance that you were not normally receiving before the pandemic?

Figure 2: Fairness of government assistance | The Gambia | 2021



Respondents were asked: Do you think that the benefits of government programs to support people during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example through food packages or cash payments, have been distributed fairly, or that the distribution was unfair, for example by favoring certain groups or regions?

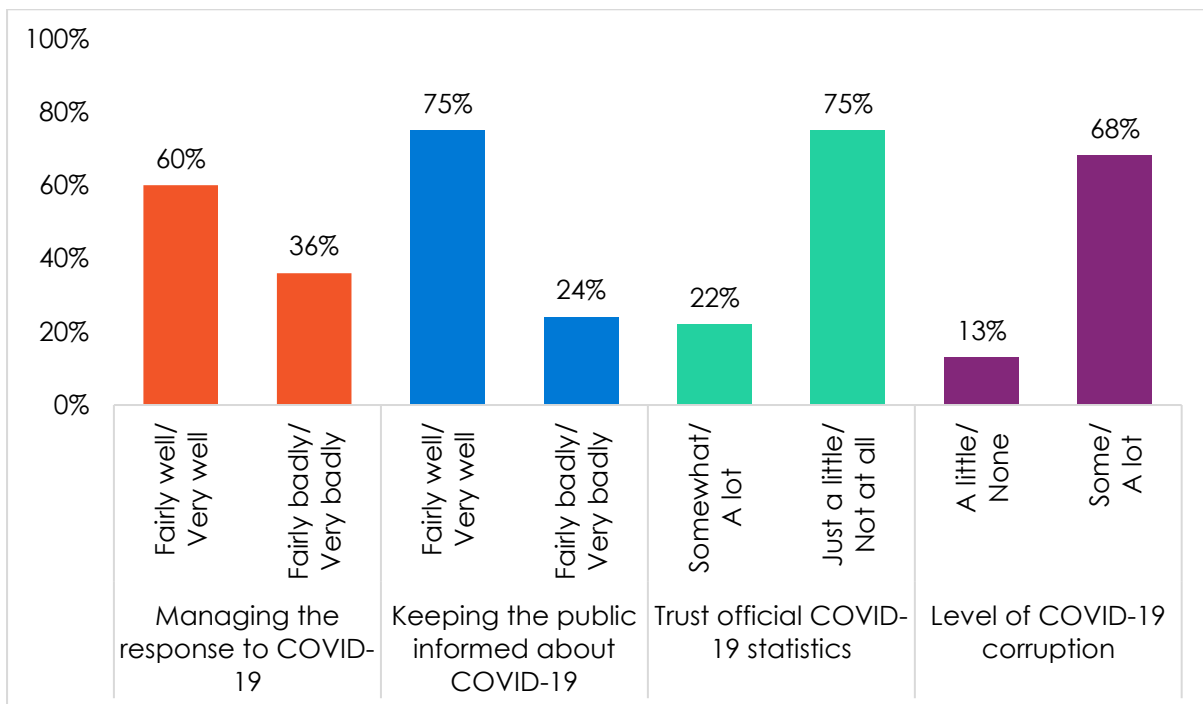
Figure 3: Attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccine | The Gambia | 2021



Respondents were asked:

How much do you trust the government to ensure that any vaccine for COVID-19 that is developed or offered to Gambian 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?

Figure 4 : Assessment of government performance during the pandemic | The Gambia | 2021

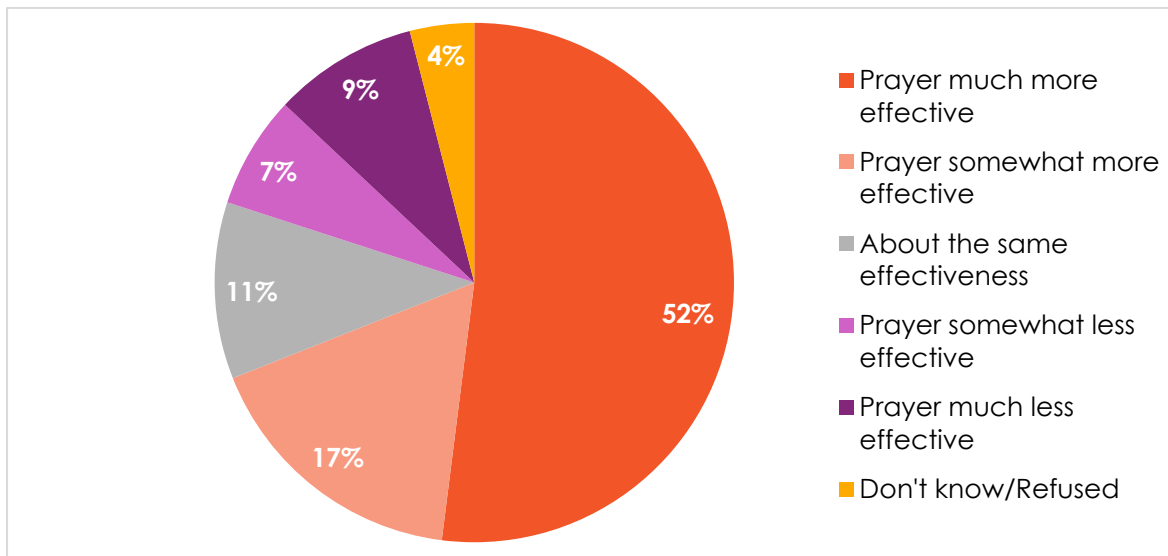


Respondents were asked:

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 combatting and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, how much do you think was lost or stolen due to corruption among government officials?

Figure 5 : Prayer vs. vaccine : Which is more effective against COVID-19?

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Respondents were asked: Do you think that prayer is more effective or less effective than a vaccine would be in preventing COVID-19 infection?

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