



Zomba, Malawi  
04 November 2021

## News release

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### **Citizens offer bleak outlook on Malawi's economy, Afrobarometer survey shows**

A majority of Malawi's citizenry say the country is headed in the wrong direction and its economic condition is bad, with almost half describing the economy as "very bad," according to an Afrobarometer analysis.

Results from Afrobarometer's most recent national survey, conducted in late 2019, show that Malawians' perceptions of their country's economic life continue to be bleak. Regardless of their gender, location, age, education, socioeconomic status, and political party affiliation, citizens see the country as headed in the wrong direction, and most citizens describe the national economy and their personal living conditions as bad.

Most Malawians also rate the government's performance as poor on economic issues, suggesting it must look for new strategies to end the country's economic malaise.

Malawi is among the poorest countries in the world; about half of its population lives below the poverty line. Heavily dependent on agriculture, its economy is susceptible to climate and other shocks.

#### **Key findings**

- More than eight out of 10 Malawians (84%) say the country is going "in the wrong direction" (Figure 1). This is the majority view regardless of respondents' gender, urban or rural residency, and political party affiliation (Figure 2).
- The same majority (84%) say the country's economic condition is bad, including almost half (48%) who describe it as "very bad" (Figure 3).
- Six out of 10 respondents (61%) say they expect economic conditions to be worse in 12 months' time, including 41% who think they will get "much worse" (Figure 4).
- Eight out of 10 Malawians (80%) describe their personal living conditions as "fairly bad" or "very bad" (Figure 5).
- Most Malawians say the government is doing a poor job on economic issues, including managing the economy (74%), creating jobs (75%), keeping prices stable (77%), and narrowing gaps between rich and poor (79%) (Figure 6).

#### **Afrobarometer**

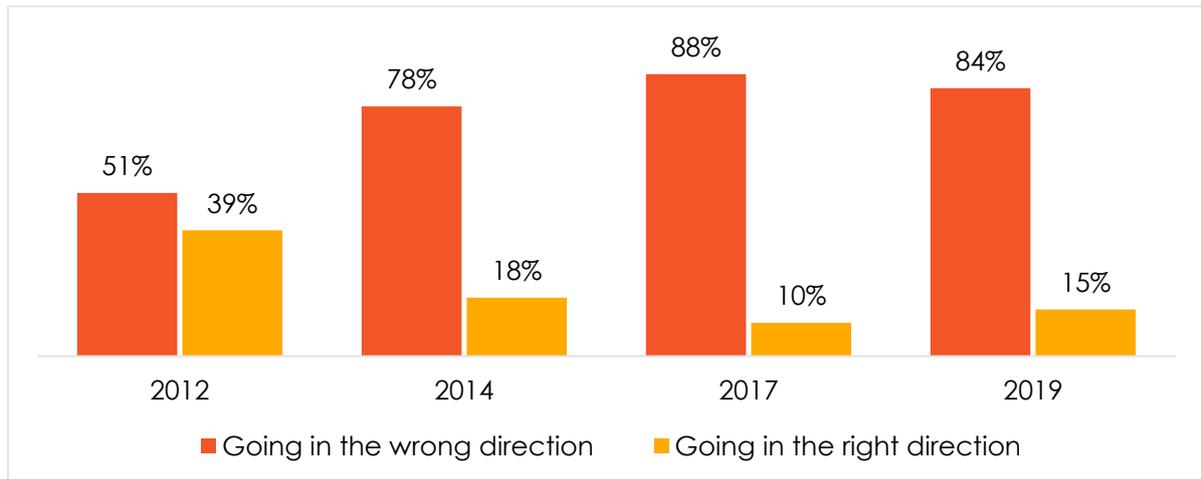
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on Africans' experiences and evaluations of quality of life, governance, and democracy. Eight rounds of surveys have been conducted in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) cover 34 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Malawi, led by the Centre for Social Research at the University of Malawi, interviewed 1,200 adult Malawians in November and December 2019. A sample

of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Malawi in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2017.

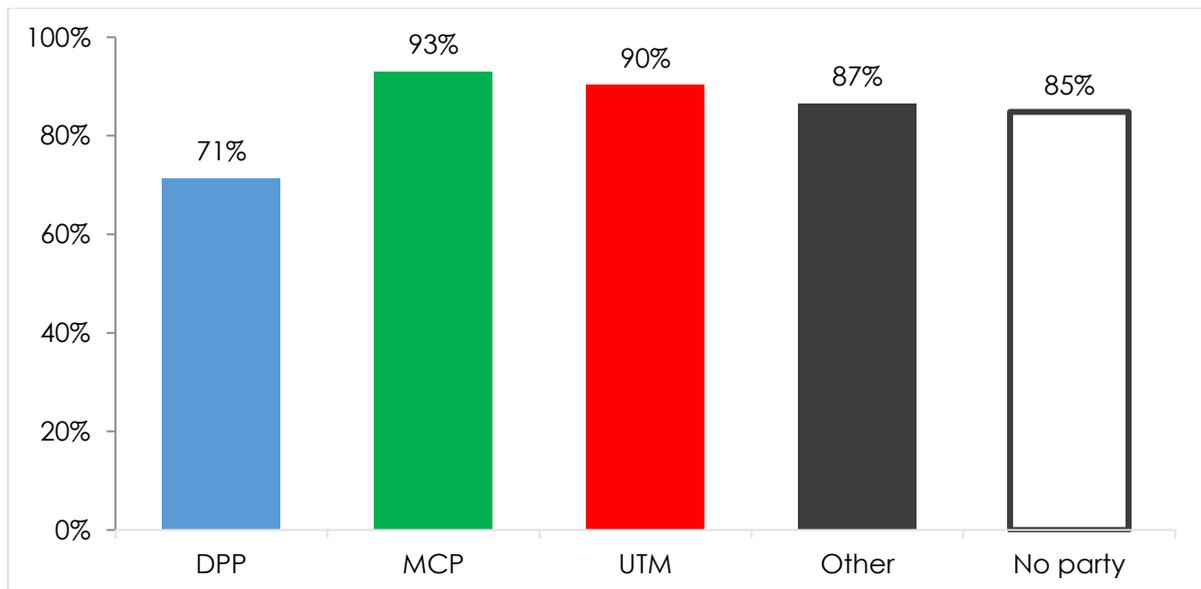
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Overall direction of the country | Malawi | 2012-2019**



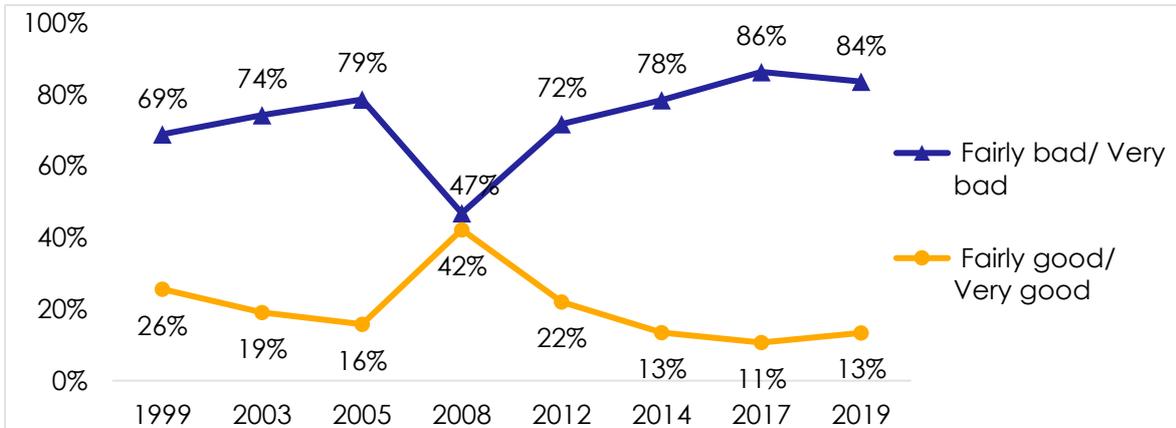
**Respondents were asked:** Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?

**Figure 2: Overall direction of the country is wrong | by political party affiliation | Malawi | 2019**



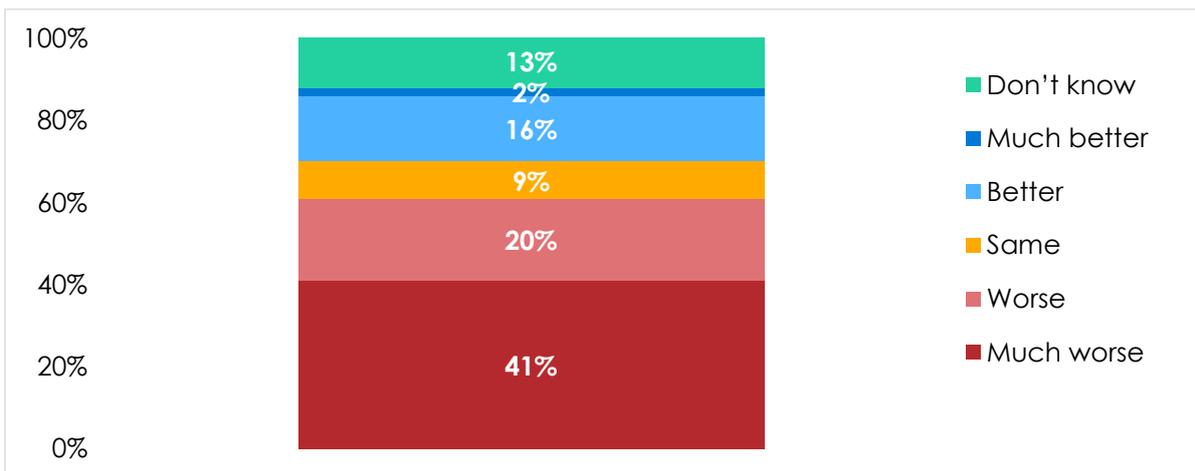
**Respondents were asked:** Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction? (% who say "going in the wrong direction")

**Figure 3: Country's economic condition | Malawi | 1999-2019**



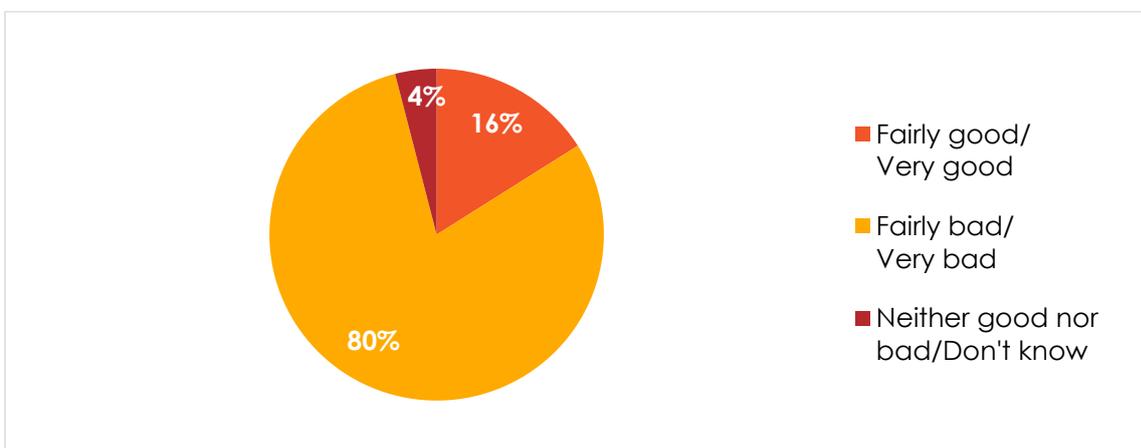
**Respondents were asked:** In general, how would you describe the present economic condition of this country?

**Figure 4: Country's economic condition in 12 months' time | Malawi | 2019**



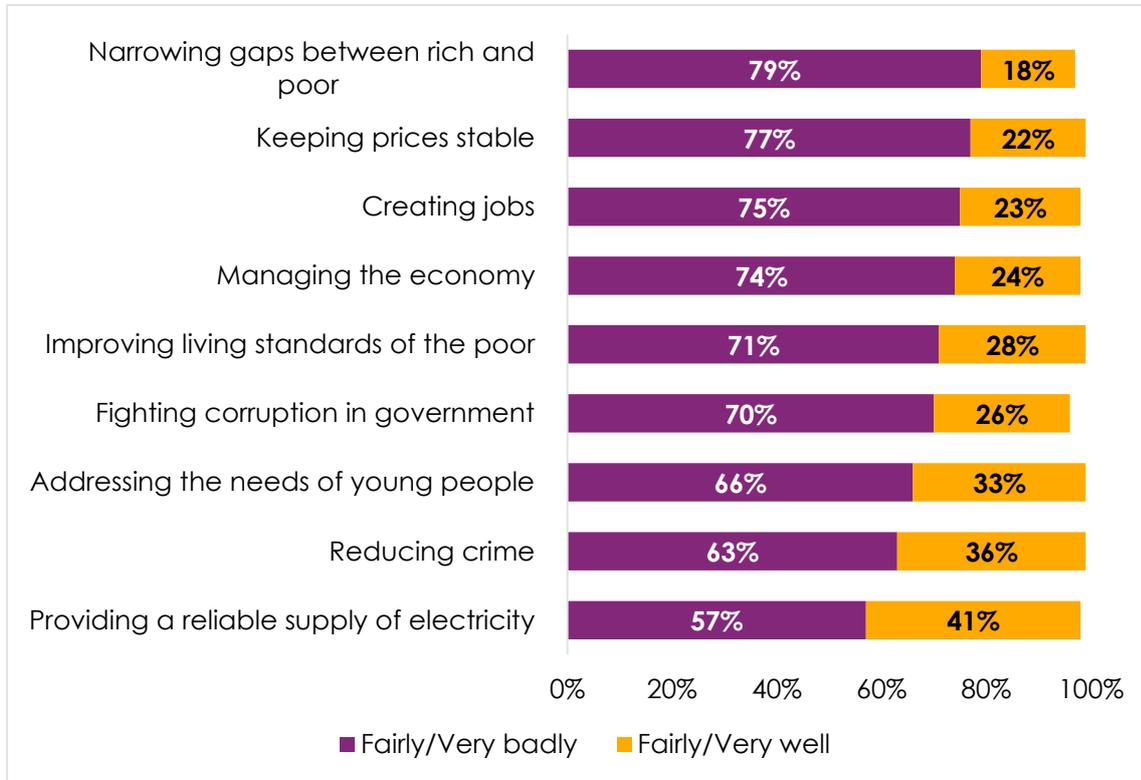
**Respondents were asked:** Looking ahead, do you expect economic conditions in this country to be better or worse in 12 months' time?

**Figure 5: Personal living conditions | Malawi | 2019**



**Respondents were asked:** In general, how would you describe your own present living conditions?

**Figure 6: Government performance on economic issues | Malawi | 2019**



**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?

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