

Cape Town, South Africa
7 December 2021

News release

South Africans say gender-based violence worsening, blame substance abuse

Most South Africans believe that gender-based violence in the country is getting worse, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

Citizens point to alcohol and drug abuse and unemployment as primary contributing factors, although many also acknowledge the multifaceted nature of the crisis.

a majority also say that gender-based violence is a criminal matter that requires the involvement of law enforcement agencies to resolve, rather than a personal affair that should be handled within the family.

Survey findings show that women are more likely than men to report not feeling safe while walking in their neighbourhood or being at home.

Key findings

- Almost three-quarters (73%) of South Africans believe that GBV increased "somewhat" or "a lot" over the past year (Figure 1).
- More than seven in 10 (72%) say that domestic violence is a criminal matter requiring the involvement of law enforcement agencies, while just 26% see it as a private matter to be handled within the family (Figure 2).
- Alcohol abuse (25%), drug abuse (20%), and unemployment (16%) are most widely seen as the main cause of domestic violence in South Africa (Figure 3).
- Women are somewhat more likely than men to report feeling unsafe walking in their neighbourhood and fearing crime in their home (Figure 4).

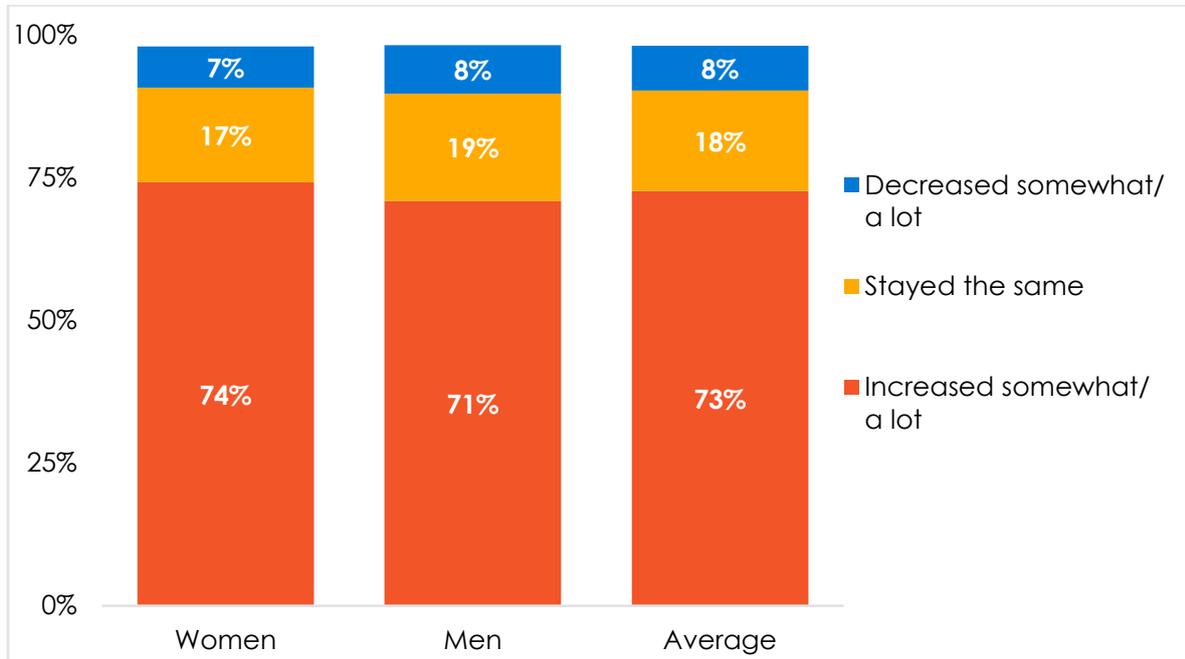
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight rounds of surveys have been conducted in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 8 surveys in 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 South Africa, led by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and Plus 94 Research, interviewed 1,600 adult South Africans in May-June 2021. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2.5 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in South Africa in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2015, and 2018.

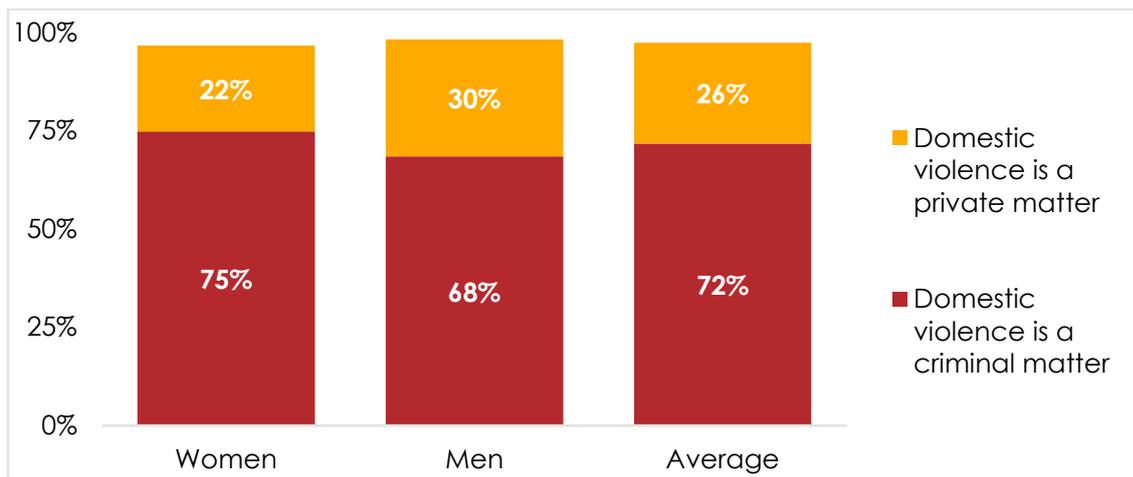
Charts

Figure 1: Level of gender-based violence | South Africa | 2021



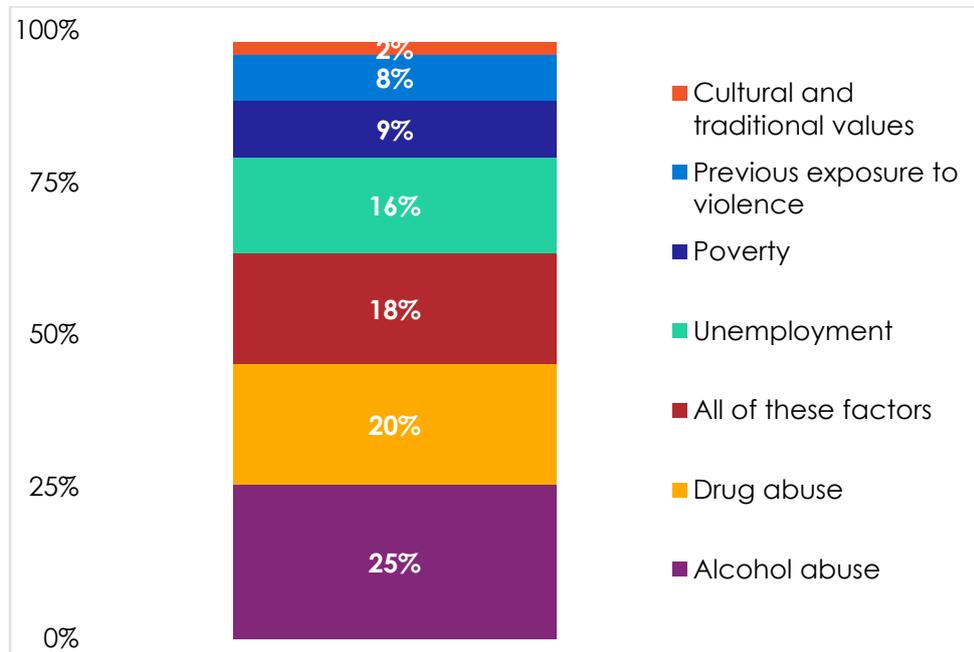
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, has the level of gender-based violence in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the past year?

Figure 2: Domestic violence as a criminal or private matter | by gender | South Africa | 2021



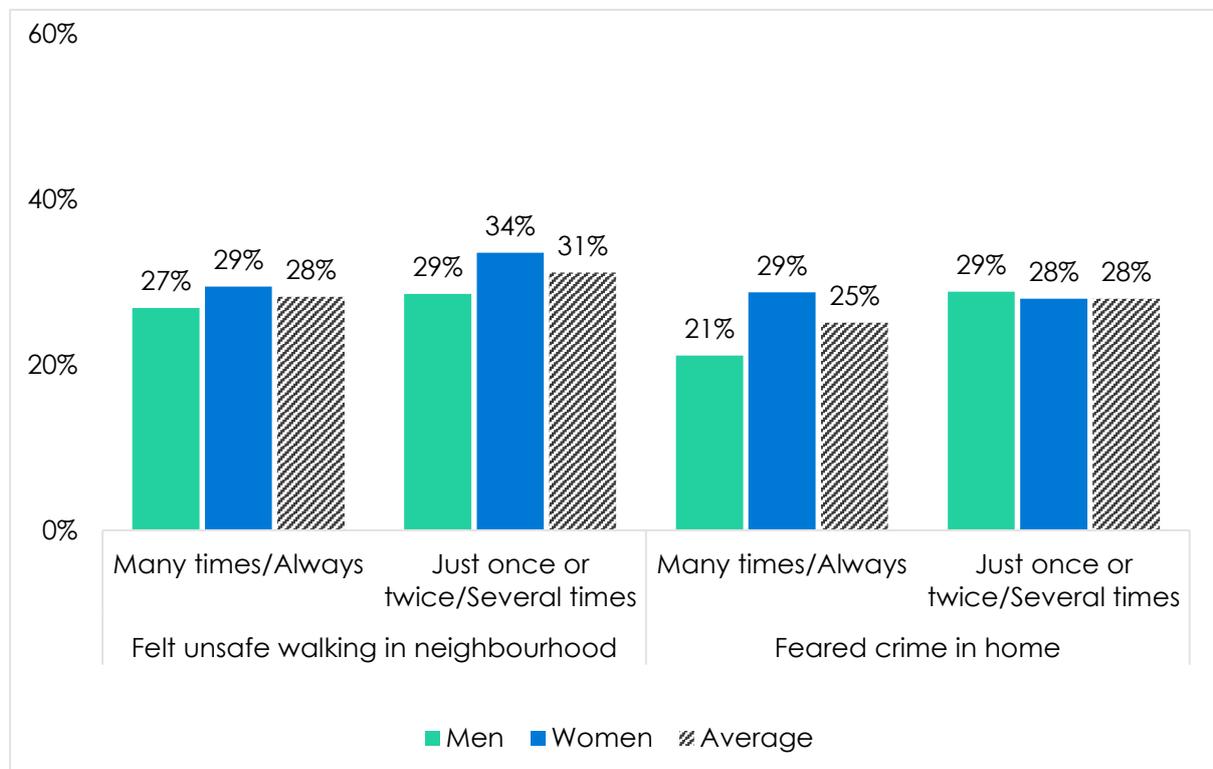
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: Domestic violence is a private matter that needs to be handled and resolved within the family.
 Statement 2: Domestic violence is a criminal matter whose full resolution requires the involvement of law enforcement agency.
 (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

Figure 3: Main cause of domestic violence | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: There are several factors that contribute to domestic violence. In your opinion, which of the following factors would you say is the main cause of domestic violence in South Africa today?

Figure 4: Fear of violence and crime | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Felt unsafe walking in your neighbourhood? Feared crime in your own home?

For more information, please contact:

Sibonelo Mavuso
Telephone: +27 84 357 7738
Email: smavuso@ijr.org.za

Visit us online at www.afrobarometer.org.
Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

