



Nairobi, Kenya
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News release

Kenyans oppose the use of physical discipline against women, but see gender-based violence as a private matter

Kenyans overwhelmingly oppose the use of physical discipline against women, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Gender-based violence (GBV) constitutes the most important women's-rights issue that the government and the country must address, according to survey respondents. But many citizens say GBV is not a common occurrence and should be treated as a private matter to be resolved within the family rather than as a criminal matter.

Although most citizens believe that the police take reported cases of GBV seriously, many also think community members will criticise or harass complainants for seeking help from the police.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has reiterated the government's commitment to end all forms of GBV by the year 2030.

Key findings

- About eight in 10 Kenyans (81%) say it is "never justified" for a man to physically discipline his wife (Figure 1).
 - Women are more likely than men to condemn the use of physical force against women (88% vs. 75%).
- GBV ranks first among the most important women's-rights issues that Kenyans want their government and society to address (cited by 35%), followed by unequal access to education (21%), unequal opportunities for pay in the work place (14%), and too few women in influential positions in government (14%) (Figure 2).
- About seven in 10 Kenyans say violence against women is "not very common" (39%) or "not at all common" (29%). Three in 10 (31%) say it is a common occurrence (Figure 3).
- More than two-thirds (68%) of Kenyans say domestic violence is a private matter that needs to be handled and resolved within the family rather than as a criminal matter (Figure 4). Only 29% believe it should be seen as a criminal matter that requires the involvement of law enforcement agencies.
- Most citizens (79%) see it as likely that the police will take cases of GBV seriously, including 58% who say it is "very unlikely" (Figure 5).
- But six in 10 citizens say it is "somewhat likely" (28%) or "very likely" (31%) that a woman will be criticised, harassed, or shamed if she reports an incident of GBV to the authorities (Figure 6).
 - Women are more likely than men to hold this view (63% vs. 56%).

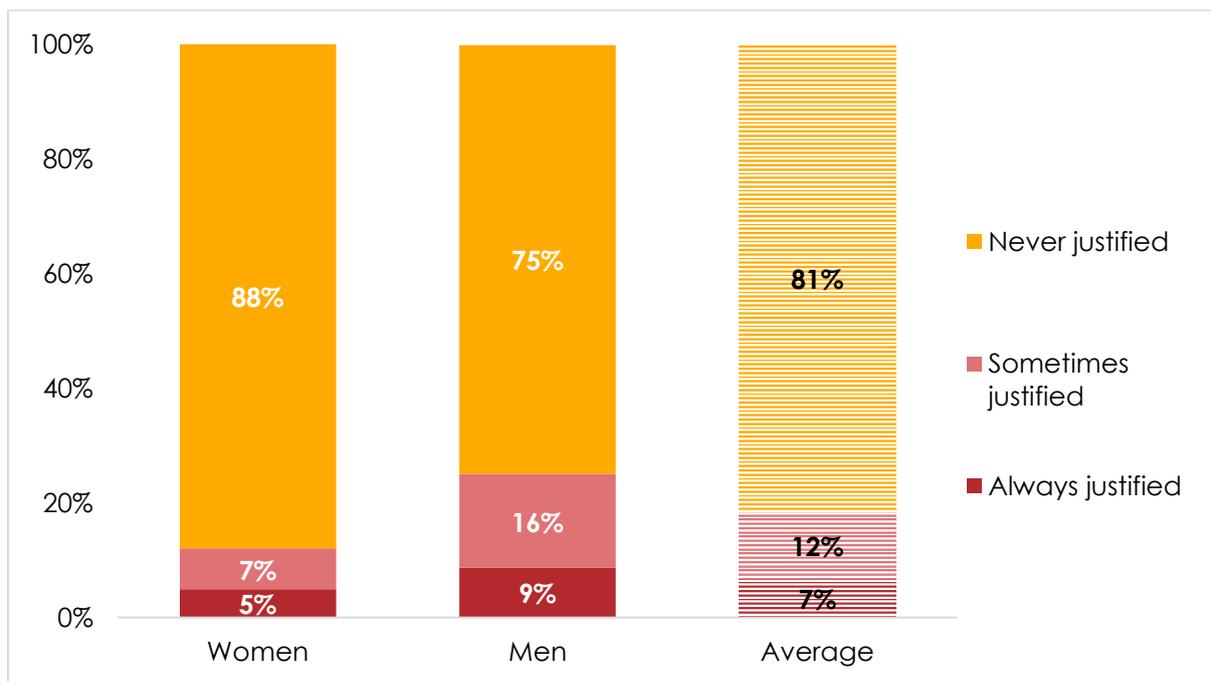
Afrobarometer surveys

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 survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2022) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Kenya, based at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, interviewed 2,400 adult Kenyans in November-December 2021. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Kenya in 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2016, and 2019.

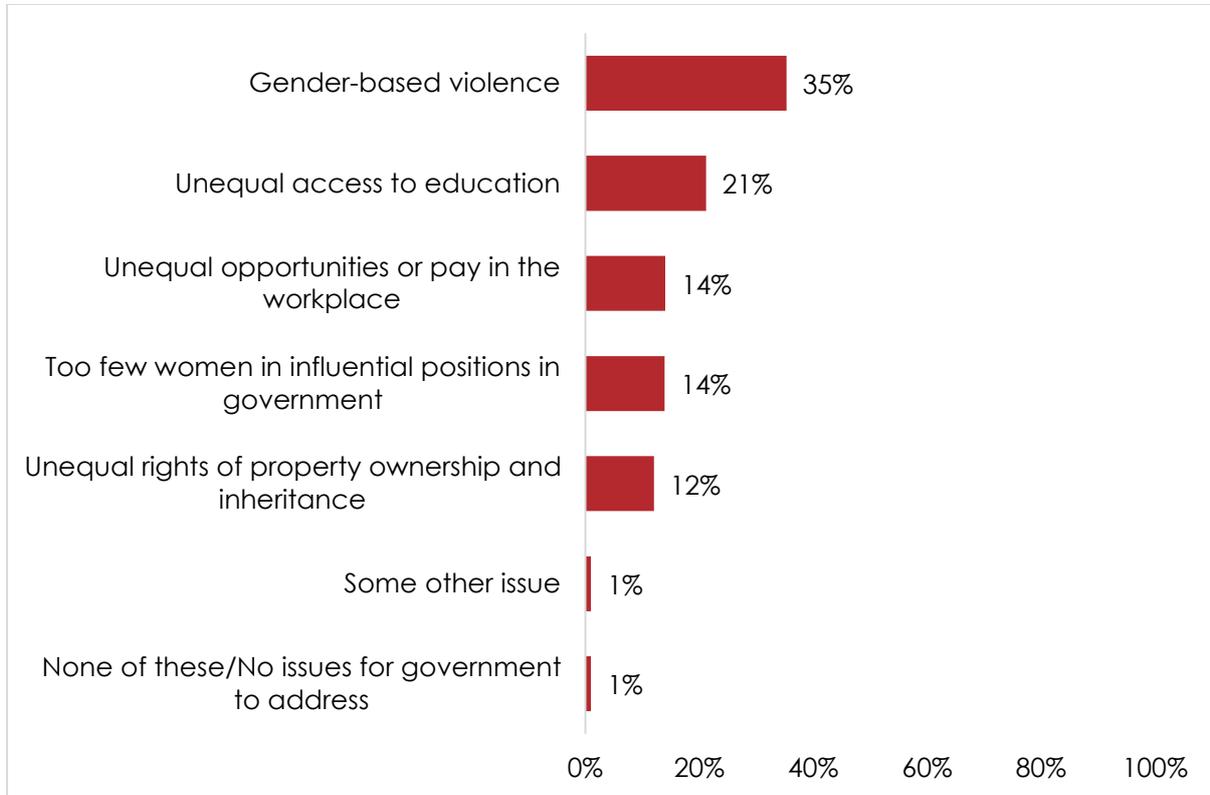
Charts

Figure 1: Is it justified for men to physically discipline their wives? | by gender
 | Kenya | 2021



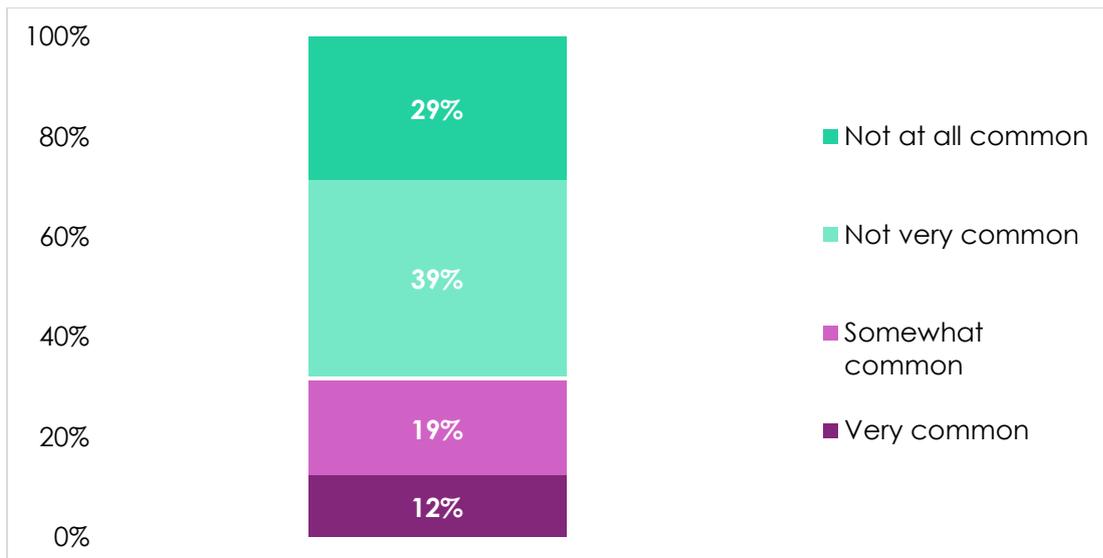
Respondents were asked: For each of the following actions, please tell me whether you think it can always be justified, sometimes be justified, or never be justified: For a man to use physical discipline on his wife if she has done something he doesn't like or thinks is wrong?

Figure 2: Most important women’s rights issue | Kenya | 2021



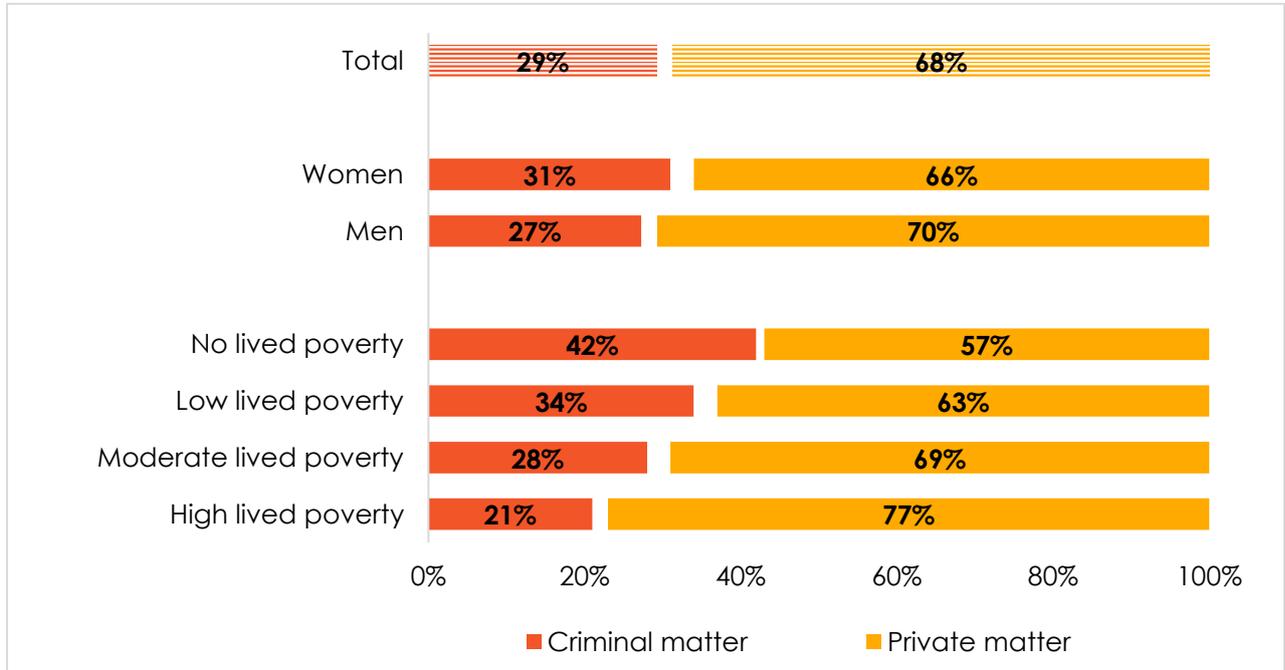
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, which of the following issues related to women's rights and equality do you think is the most important for our government and society to address?

Figure 3: Frequency of GBV | Kenya | 2021



Respondents were asked: In this area, how common do you think it is for men to use violence against women and girls in the home or in the community?

Figure 4: Is GBV a criminal or private matter? | by gender and lived poverty | Kenya | 2021



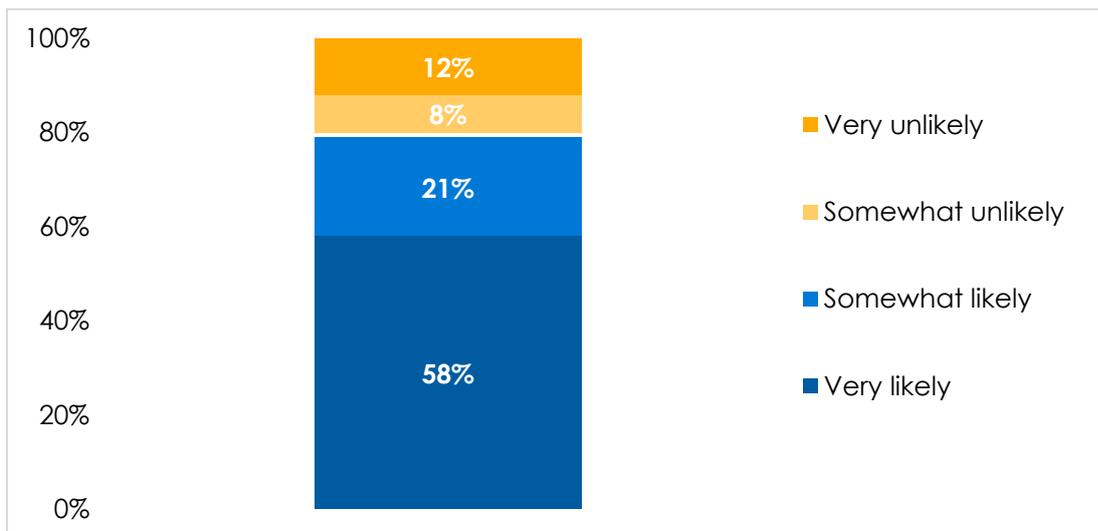
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

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 agencies.

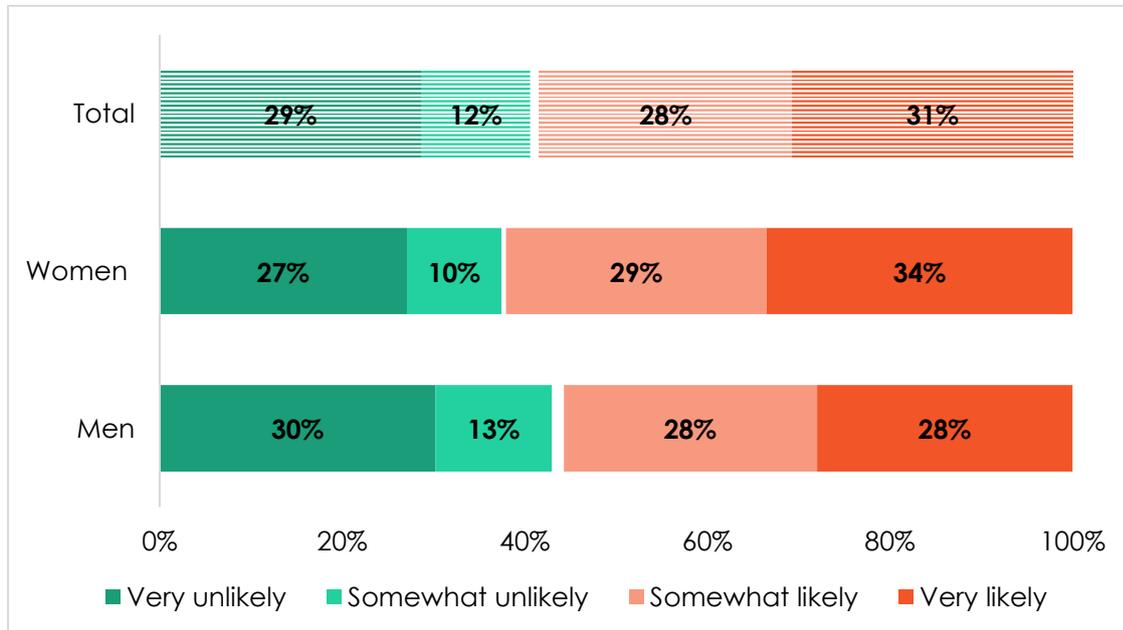
(% who “agree” or “strongly agree” with each statement)

Figure 5: Will the police take reported GBV cases seriously? | Kenya | 2021



Respondents were asked: If a woman in your community goes to the police to report being a victim of gender-based violence, for example, to report a rape or report being physically abused by her husband, how likely or unlikely is it that the following things might occur? Her case will be taken seriously by the police?

Figure 6: Likelihood that women will be criticised for reporting GBV | by gender
 | Kenya | 2021



Respondents were asked: *If a woman in your community goes to the police to report being a victim of gender-based violence, for example, to report a rape or report being physically abused by her husband, how likely or unlikely is it that the following things might occur? She will be criticised, harassed, or shamed by others in the community?*

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