



Gaborone, Botswana
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News release

Batswana worried that tensions between current and former presidents undermine the country's stability

Large majorities in Botswana say the rift between President Mokgweetsi Masisi and his predecessor, Seretse Khama Ian Khama, is causing economic and political instability in the country, a recent Afrobarometer survey indicates.

Concern about the two leaders' falling out is high across key demographic groups, particularly among poorer citizens.

Even though Masisi is Khama's handpicked successor, tensions between the two became apparent shortly after Khama left office when he demanded privileges such as a larger staff, 15 armed security guards, and the appointment of his brother Tshekedi Khama as vice president. The tensions reached the point where Khama left the country, in November 2022; he is currently self-exiled in South Africa.

In recent months, Khama has publicly criticised Masisi's plan to negotiate a better deal for the government with the De Beers Group, saying the president is trying to enrich himself and the ruling party and will be to blame for economic hardship if the mining company pulls out of its 53-year-old partnership with the government.

Key findings

- About three-quarters (74%) of Batswana say tensions between President Masisi and former president Khama is causing economic instability in the country, including 47% who "strongly agree" with this view. Only 12% of respondents think the rift between the two political figures is not affecting the economy (Figure 1).
 - The view that the fallout threatens the economy is particularly common among citizens experiencing high lived poverty (83%), men (78%), and those with at least a primary education (74%-76%) (Figure 2).
- An even larger majority (80%) of citizens say the tensions are causing political instability in the country, including more than half (54%) who "strongly agree" with this perspective (Figure 3).
 - This view increases with respondents' lived poverty level, ranging from 73% among the best-off citizens to 88% among the poorest. It finds less support among women (75%), citizens with no formal education (69%), and rural residents (77%) than among their counterparts (Figure 4).

Afrobarometer surveys

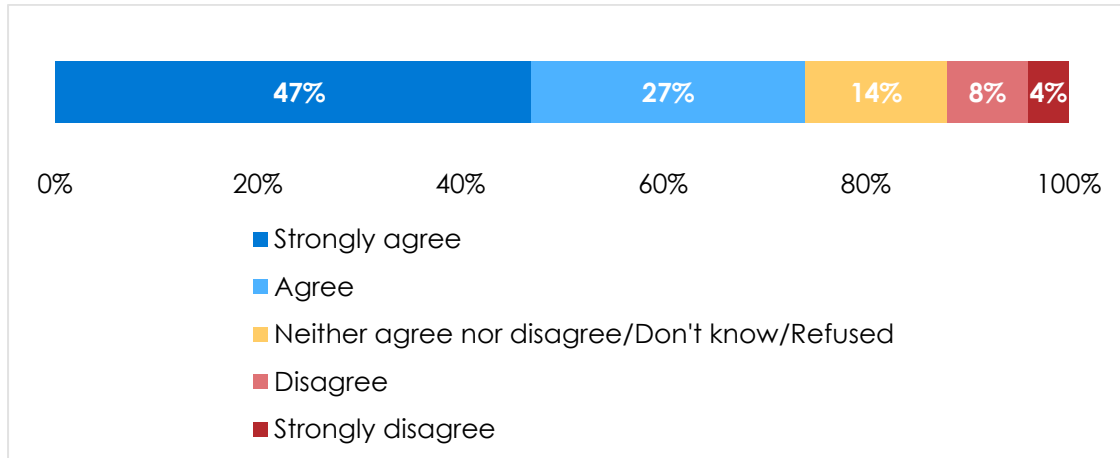
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Botswana, led by Star Awards, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Batswana in July-August 2022. 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 Botswana in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019.

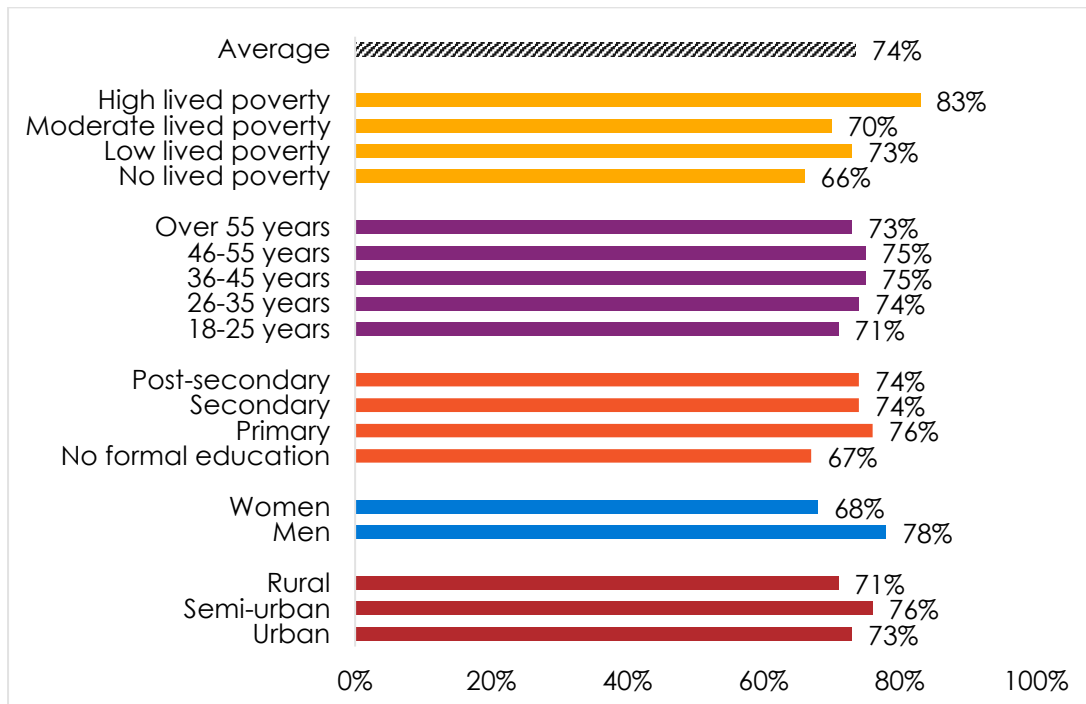
Charts

Figure 1: Are tensions between President Masi and former President Khama causing economic instability? | Botswana | 2022



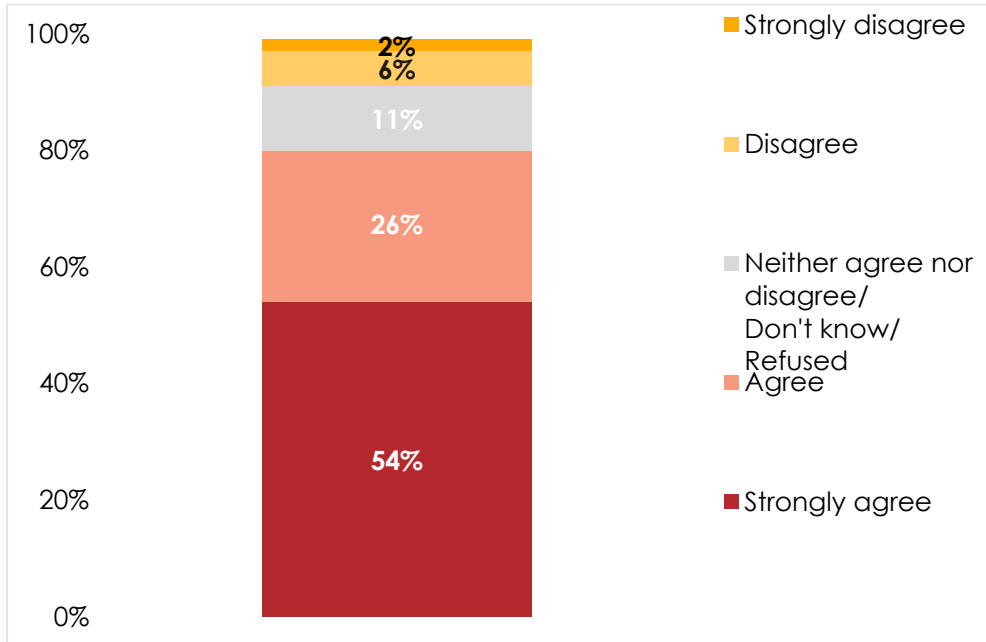
Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you disagree or agree with the following statement: The fallout between President Mokgweetsi Masi and former President Seretse Khama Ian Khama is causing economic instability in Botswana.

Figure 2: Tensions between President Masi and former President Khama are causing economic instability | by demographic group | Botswana | 2022



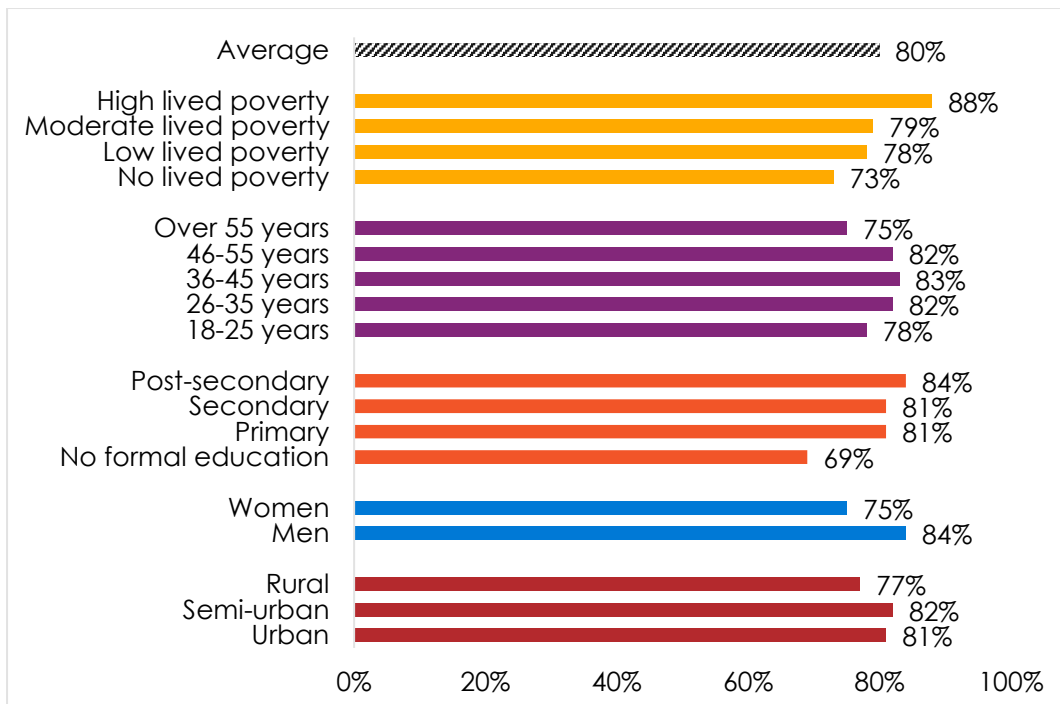
Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you disagree or agree with the following statements: The fallout between President Mokgweetsi Masi and the former President Seretse Khama Ian Khama is causing economic instability in Botswana? (% who "agree" or "strongly agree")

Figure 3: Are tensions between President Masi and former President Khama causing political instability? | Botswana | 2022



Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you disagree or agree with the following statements: The fallout between President Mokgweetsi Masi and former President Seretse Khama Ian Khama is causing political instability in Botswana.

Figure 4: Tensions between President Masi and former President Khama are causing political instability | by demographic group | Botswana | 2022



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