



Lusaka, Zambia  
23 May 2023

## News release

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### **Zambians see gender-based violence as a top priority, but many think women will face backlash if they report to the authorities**

Zambians see gender-based violence (GBV) as the most important women's-rights issue that their government and society must address, a recent Afrobarometer study shows.

Most Zambians say it is never justified for a man to use physical force to discipline his wife and express confidence that the police take GBV cases seriously.

But a slim majority also consider domestic violence a private matter to be handled within the family and think it's likely that a woman who reports GBV to the authorities will be criticised, harassed, or shamed by others in the community.

#### **Key findings**

- Zambians see gender-based violence (GBV) as the most important women's-rights issue that the government and society must address (Figure 1). Unequal access to education follows in second place.
- Almost half (48%) of citizens say violence against women and girls is a common occurrence in their community (Figure 2).
- Almost three-fourths (72%) of Zambians say a man is "never justified" in using physical force to discipline his wife (Figure 3).
- A large majority (73%) of citizens believe that the police are likely to take cases of GBV seriously (Figure 4).
- But more than half (54%) of citizens consider it "somewhat" or "very" likely that a woman who reports being a victim of GBV will be criticised, harassed, or shamed by others in the community (Figure 5).
- Views are divided on whether domestic violence should be referred to the police or handled within the family: 43% say domestic violence should be treated as a criminal matter, but a slim majority (51%) consider it a private matter (Figure 6).

#### **Afrobarometer surveys**

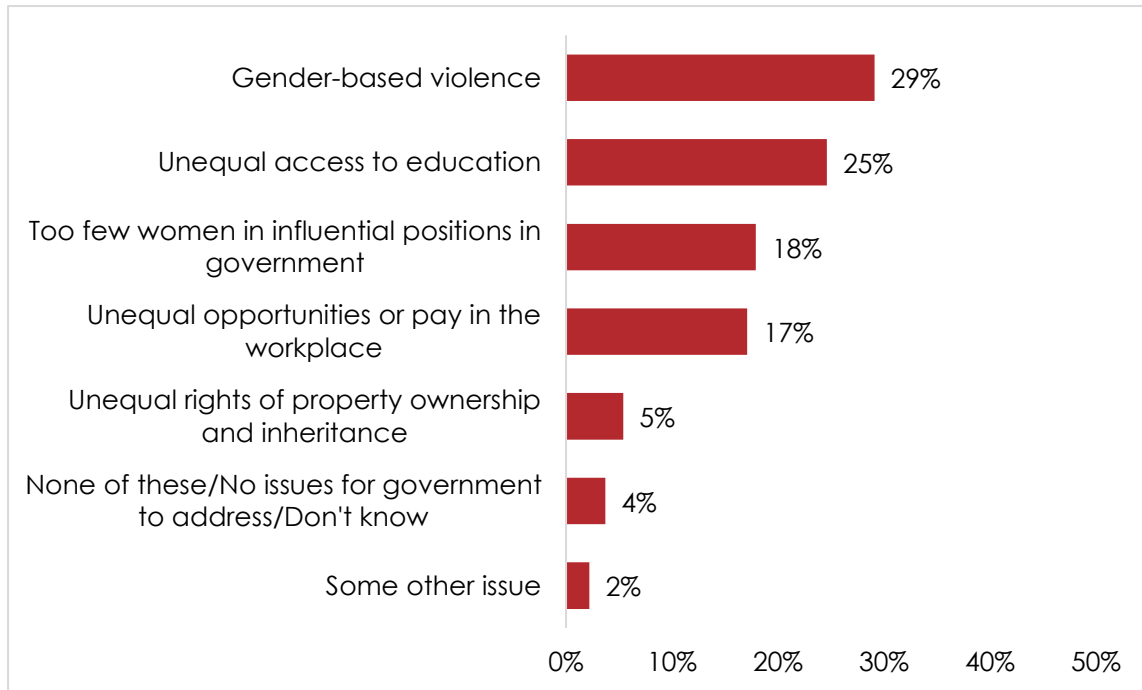
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight rounds of surveys have been conducted in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 9 surveys are being completed in early 2023. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Zambia, led by the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), a research wing of the University of Zambia, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 Zambian adults between 3

August and 7 September 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 have been conducted in Zambia in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2017, and 2020.

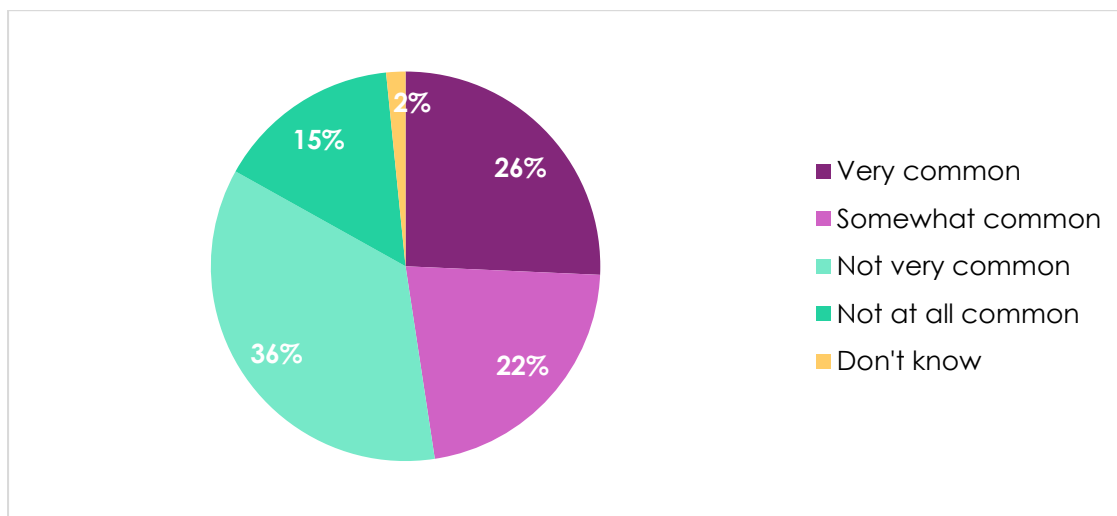
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Most Important women’s-rights issue | Zambia | 2022**



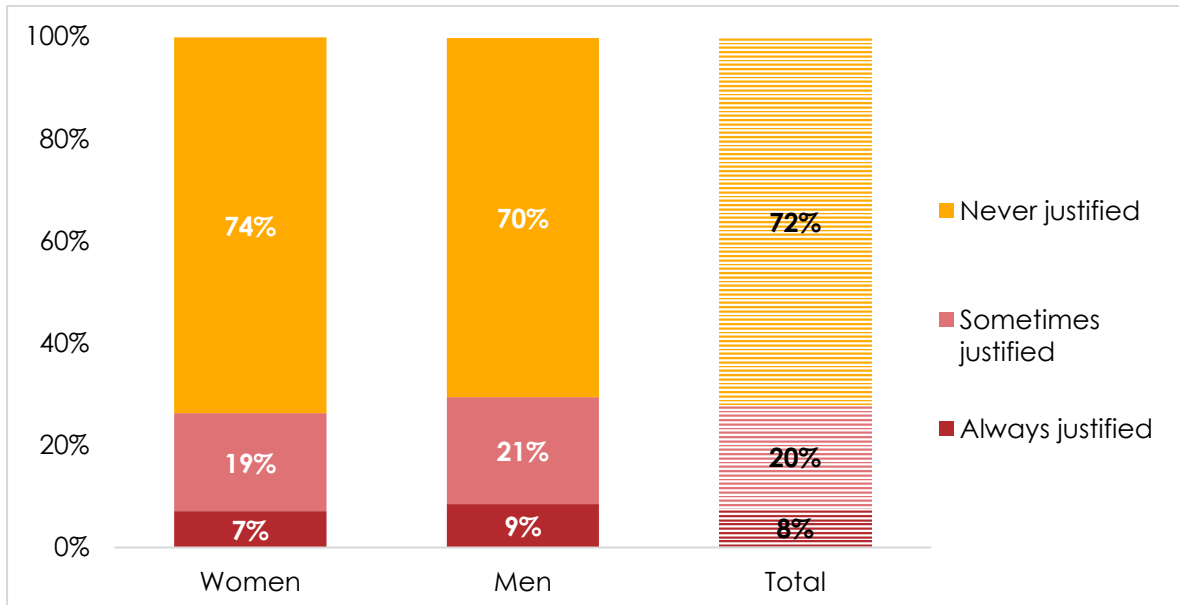
**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, which of the following issues related to women's rights and equality do you think is the most important for our government and society to address?*

**Figure 2: How common is gender-based violence? | Zambia | 2022**



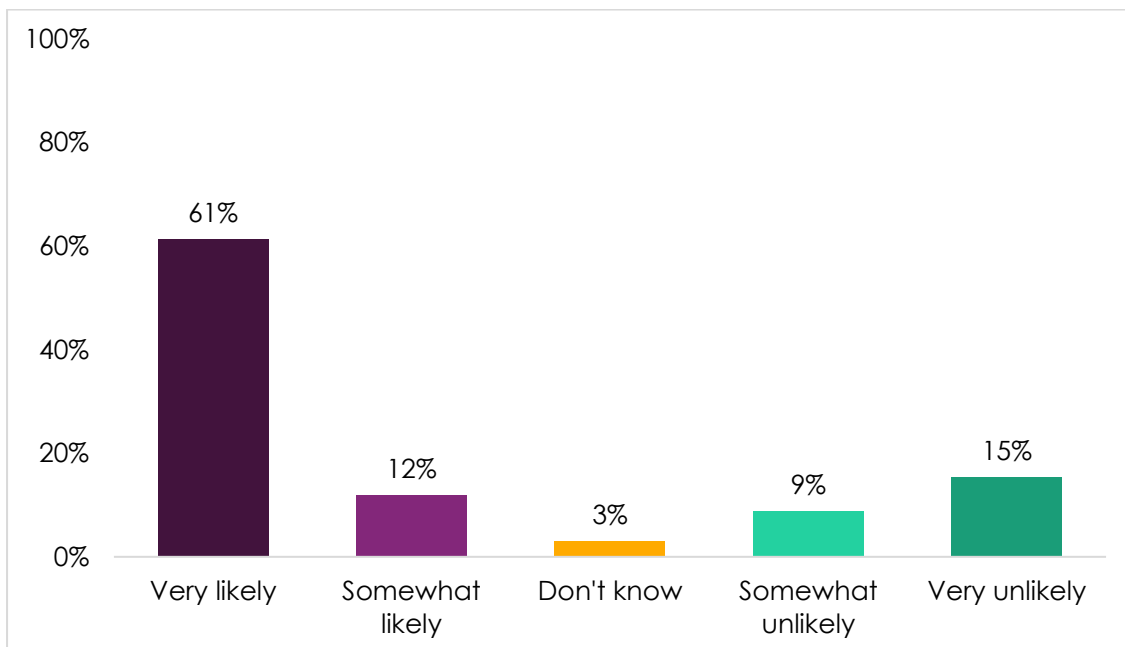
**Respondents were asked:** *In this area, how common do you think it is for men to use violence against women and girls in the home or the community?*

**Figure 3: Is it justified for men to physically discipline their wives? | Zambia | 2022**



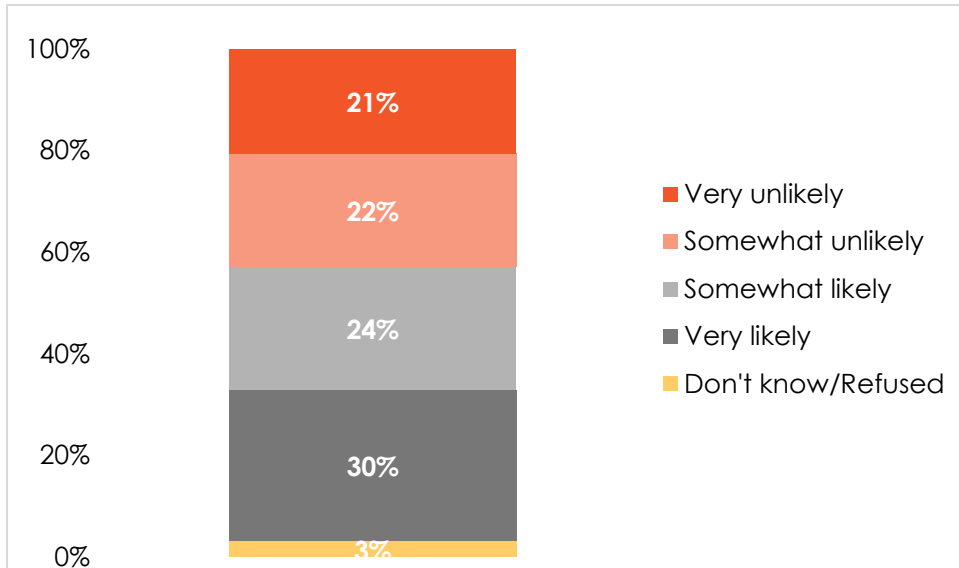
**Respondents were asked:** For each of the following actions, please tell me whether you think it can always be justified, sometimes be justified, or never be justified: For a man to use physical discipline on his wife if she has done something he doesn't like or thinks is wrong?

**Figure 4: Do the police take GBV cases seriously? | Zambia | 2022**



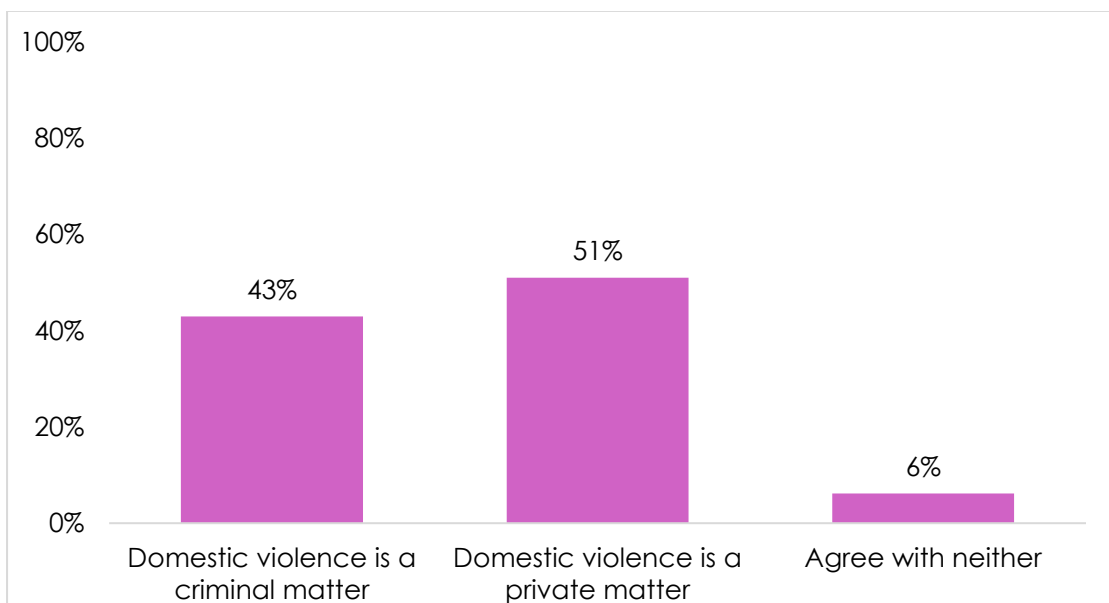
**Respondents were asked:** If a woman in your community goes to the police to report being a victim of gender-based violence, for example, to report a rape or report being physically abused by her husband, how likely or unlikely is it that the following things might occur: Her case will be taken seriously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

**Figure 5: Will a woman be criticised, harassed, or shamed for reporting GBV?**  
 | Zambia | 2022



**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?*

**Figure 6: Is domestic violence a criminal or private matter?** | Zambia | 2022



**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)

**For more information, please contact:**

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