Windhoek, Namibia
12 July 2024

News release

Food insecurity on the rise in Namibia, recent Afrobarometer study shows

Almost three-quarters of Namibians went without enough food to eat at least once during the previous year, a recent Afrobarometer survey indicates.

During the same period, more than six in 10 citizens experienced shortages of cooking fuel at least once.

The proportion of citizens who suffer frequent deprivations of food has risen steadily, to the highest levels recorded since 2017. Food shortage ranks in the top three most important problems that Namibians want their government to urgently address.

Overall, nearly two-thirds of Namibians repeatedly went without basic life necessities during the previous year, placing them in the category of moderate or high lived poverty.

Key findings

- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Namibians say they or a family member went without enough food to eat at least once during the past year, including one-fifth (19%) who say this happened “many times” or “always” (Figure 1).
  - This represents a 26-percentage-point increase compared to 2017 (47%).
- More than six in 10 citizens (62%) report that they went without enough cooking fuel at least once, including 16% who say this happened “many times” or “always” (Figure 2).
- Food shortage/Famine ranks third among the most important problems that Namibians want their government to address, cited by 23% of respondents as one of their three priorities (Figure 3).
- Nearly two-thirds of citizens experienced “moderate lived poverty” (39%) or “high lived poverty” (25%) during the previous year, meaning they frequently went without basic life necessities. This is an 8-percentage-point increase, from 56% to 64%, compared to 2021 (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. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 10 surveys are currently underway. Afrobarometer’s national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent’s choice.

Charts

Figure 1: Went without enough food to eat | Namibia | 2017-2024

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough food to eat?

Figure 2: Went without enough fuel to cook food | Namibia | 2024

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough fuel to cook your food?
Figure 3: Most important problems | Namibia | 2024

Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Figure shows % of respondents who cite each problem as one of up to three priorities. The health category also includes responses coded as “illness, sickness,” “HIV/AIDS,” and “COVID-19.”)

Figure 4: Lived poverty | Namibia | 2006-2024

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?
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