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“What Worries the World?”: COVID-19 is the biggest concern for the sixth successive month.

On average, 45% of people around the world now say COVID-19 is one of the top issues facing their country. This is in line with August’s figures, which saw 46% putting the pandemic on their list of top concerns.

London, 25/09/2020 - Current levels of concern are however some way below the peak of 63% which we recorded when coronavirus was introduced as an index in April. These latest findings see COVID-19 appearing as the single top concern in 14 of the 27 surveyed nations, which is in line with the August findings. Back in April, 25 of the 27 countries covered selected the pandemic as their greatest worry.

Nations from the APAC region currently show heightened levels of concern: the proportion mentioning coronavirus is up 28 points from August in South Korea and up 10 points in Australia and Japan. Looking across all the 27 countries in the survey, it is South Korea, Australia, Japan and Malaysia who now make up the top 4 in terms of levels of concern.

What Worries the World is a monthly online survey of adults aged under 75 in 27 countries comprising Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, Britain, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States.

The four major worries globally are:

- 1) **COVID-19 (45%)**: Included for the first time in April, COVID-19 is still the highest scoring global issue this month. South Korea (**72%**), Australia (**63%**), Japan (**60%**) and Malaysia/Spain (**58%**) are now the nations most worried about this issue. The pandemic is the *single* greatest concern for **14 of the 27 surveyed nations** and additionally is the joint top worry for **Brazil** (alongside Healthcare). **The twelve “discrepancies”** are: Argentina (Crime/violence), Belgium (Poverty/Social inequality), Chile (Unemployment & Poverty/Social inequality), Germany (Poverty/Social inequality), Hungary (Healthcare), Italy (Unemployment), Mexico (Crime/violence), Poland (Healthcare), Russia (Poverty/Social inequality), South Africa (Financial/Political corruption), Spain (Unemployment) and Sweden (Crime/violence)
- 2) **Unemployment (39%)**: Levels of concern about unemployment remain similar to last month. The highest levels of worry are seen in South Africa (**62%**) closely followed by Spain (**61%**) and Italy (**59%**).
- 3) **Poverty/Social inequality (30%)**: Concern about Poverty/Social inequality is in line with August; once more Russia (**scoring 58%**) has the highest levels of concern about this issue, followed by Chile (**50%**).
- 4) **Crime & violence and Financial/Political corruption (27%)**: The proportion citing Crime/Violence has increased slightly, by 3 points from last month. Sweden (**65%**) is now the





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- most concerned nation about this issue, ahead of Mexico (**61%**) and South Africa (**52%**). South Africa (**67%**) is also the nation most concerned about Financial/Political corruption.
- 4) **Financial/Political corruption (27%)**.

The study finds that most people across the 27 countries surveyed say that their country is on the wrong track. Globally, 38% think their country is heading in the right direction while 62% say things are on the wrong track. Looking back 6 months, the global figure was similar: in March we recorded 37% saying their nation was heading in the right track.

The biggest fall recorded is in the US, where there has been a 20-point drop in positive scores, from 48% in March to 28% today. Israel now records 29% saying things are going in the right direction (down 13% on March) while Spain's 26% is down 12 points on six months ago.

Looking at how many say their nation is on the wrong track (**62% on average**), we find South Africa (**86%**), Belgium (**78%**), Chile (**76%**) and Spain (**74%**) are most worried about their country's direction of travel.

At the other end of the spectrum, **ten nations** have seen an increase in national optimism from last month with **sixteen nations** showing a drop. One nation has remained the same. The biggest changes on August levels are Japan (**+ 11 percentage points**) and Great Britain (**- 8 percentage points**).

Technical Note

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Full results available from <https://www.ipsos.com/>.

The survey was conducted in **27 countries** around the world via the Ipsos Online Panel system. The 27 countries included are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States of America.

20,085 interviews were conducted between **August 21st 2020 and September 4th 2020** among adults aged 18-74 in the US, South Africa, Turkey, Israel and Canada and age 16-74 in all other countries. Data are weighted to match the profile of the population.

In 16 of the 27 countries surveyed internet penetration is sufficiently high to think of the samples as representative of the wider population within the age ranges covered: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Great Britain and United States. The remaining 11 countries surveyed: Brazil, Chile, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Russia, Peru, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey have lower levels of internet penetration and so these samples should instead be considered to represent a more affluent, connected population. These are still a vital Social group to understand in these countries, representing an important and emerging middle class.



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