



PRESS RELEASE

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

December’s findings show COVID-19 is now the top concern in 15 of the 27 surveyed nations. This is the highest country count since May, when 18 nations cited the pandemic as their single greatest worry.

London, 17/12/2020 – On average, 47% of people around the world currently say COVID-19 is one of the top issues facing their country. This is the same figure as last month and marks a slight increase on October’s figures, which saw 44% placing the pandemic on their list of main concerns.

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 top worries globally are currently (in the following order): COVID-19, Unemployment, Poverty/Social inequality, Financial/Political Corruption and Crime/Violence, the same sequence as last month and October:

- 1) COVID-19 (47%):** Included for the first time in April, COVID-19 is still the highest scoring global issue this month. Malaysia (**where it is mentioned by 69%**), Great Britain (**65%**), Canada (**64%**) and Japan (**63%**) are currently the nations most worried about this issue. The pandemic is the *single* greatest concern for **15 of the 27 surveyed nations** and additionally is the joint top worry for Brazil (alongside Healthcare).

Despite the upsurge of the virus in many parts of the world, present levels of worry are still some way below the peak of 63% which we recorded when coronavirus was first introduced to the list of topics in April. That survey saw COVID-19 stand out as the single most important concern in 25 out of 28 countries.

The eleven countries which do not mention coronavirus as their number one issue are: Argentina (Unemployment), Australia (Unemployment), Chile (Poverty/social inequality), Hungary (Healthcare), Italy (Unemployment), Mexico (Crime and violence), Peru (Financial/political corruption), Poland (Healthcare), Russia (Poverty/social inequality), South Africa (Financial/political corruption and Unemployment), Sweden (Crime and violence).

- 2) Unemployment (37%):** Overall, the levels of concern about unemployment remain in line with last month. The highest levels of worry are seen in Italy (**59%**) and South Africa (**also 59%**) followed by Spain (**58%**) and South Korea (**54%**).
- 3) Poverty/social inequality (29%):** The figure recorded for this category is equal to last month; once again Russia (**scoring 51%**) has the highest levels of concern about this issue, followed by Chile (**45%**) and Hungary (**42%**).





PRESS RELEASE

- 4) **Financial/political corruption (27%)**: The proportion citing this issue is the same as last month. South Africa (**59%**) is again the nation most concerned about this issue, ahead of Peru (**53%**), Malaysia (**48%**) and Russia (**47%**).
- 5) **Crime and violence (24%)**: Concern about this issue is slightly lower than last month. South Africa (**58%**) is the nation most troubled about this issue, ahead of Mexico (**54%**).

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. In the main, people are less assured about the future than a few months ago. The recent peak was in May when we recorded 45% saying their nation was heading in the right track. We find that Poland (**82%**), South Africa (**80%**), France (**79%**) are most worried about their country's direction of travel.

At the other end of the spectrum, **seventeen nations** have seen an increase in national optimism from last month, with **seven countries** showing a drop. Three nations remain the same as last month. The biggest falls since last time are observed in Chile (currently registering **25% saying the country is on the right track**) (-11pts) Meanwhile, most marked increases come from the Netherlands (**41%**) and Turkey (**35%**) (both with +11pts on the last measure).

That said, there are noticeable disparities by country when we look at how national sentiment has changed over the past six months.

This month, the biggest fall recorded when it comes to positive direction of travel is in Chile, where there has been a 11-point drop from last month to 25% today. In contrast, Turkey (35%) and Netherlands (30%) have both seen a 11-point increases from last month.

Technical Note

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.

19,504 interviews were conducted between **November 20th 2020 and December 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





PRESS RELEASE

affluent, connected population. These are still a vital Social group to understand in these countries, representing an important and emerging middle class.

About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world's third largest market research company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP www.ipsos.com

