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What worries the world – May 2022

Inflation remains the top global worry, after rising for tenth month in a row

Worry about inflation has risen for the tenth month in a row and remains the number one concern in the Ipsos study, *What Worries the World*. A global average of one in three (34%) say inflation is one of the top issues affecting their country, up two points from the previous survey.

Our monthly *What Worries the World* survey explores what the public thinks are the most important social and political issues currently across 27 countries, drawing on ten years of data to place the latest scores in context. Interviews for this wave were conducted from 22 April 2022 to 6 May 2022.

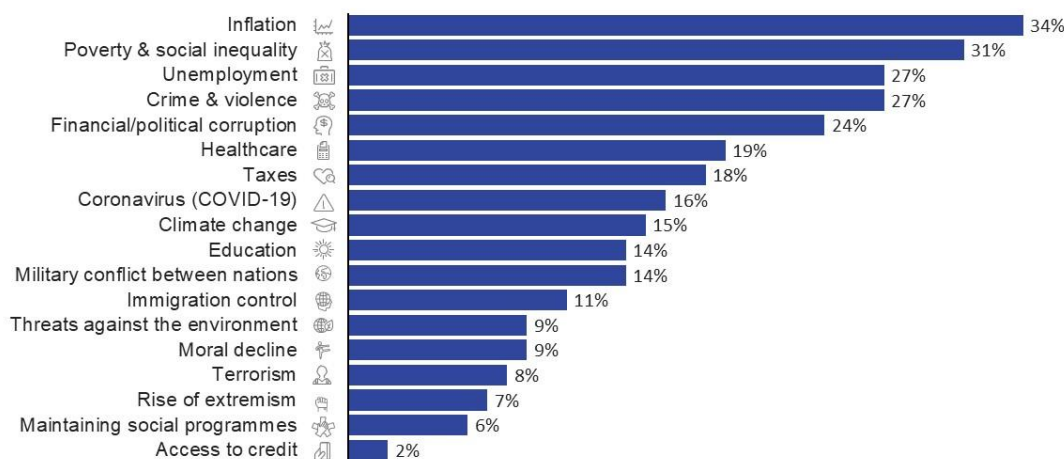
Key findings

- Inflation remains the number one concern globally: 34% say it is one of the biggest worries facing their country today (+2 points vs. April 2022)
- Completing the top five are Poverty/social inequality (31%), Unemployment (27%), Crime and violence (27%), and Financial/political corruption (24%)
- Concern over the pandemic continues to decline, as the Coronavirus stays at eighth position. This is the third month in a row that it places outside the top five concerns
- Japan is the only country where Covid is the top concern, compared to 12 countries in January
- Military conflict between nations was added to the index last month and the global figure remains flat at 14%. However, it is now the top concern in Germany
- Two in three people (65%) believe their country is heading in the wrong direction with Argentina topping the index, followed by Peru (89%) and Japan (87%)

WORLD WORRIES: THE FULL LIST

Q Which three of the following topics do you find the most worrying in your country?

% mentioned in May 2022 (global country average)



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What worries the world – May 2022 (7 June 2022): Results from an Ipsos study (Ipsos Global Advisor). Global score is a Global Country Average.
Base: Representative sample of 19,505 adults aged 16-74 in 27 participating countries April 22nd 2022 – May 6th 2022.

Inflation

Concern about inflation has continued to grow in May's What Worries the World, with 34% (+2) saying it is one of the top issues affecting their country. Worry about the issue has been rising steadily, with the global figure increasing every month for the last ten months.

You have to go back to July 2021 for worry about inflation to not be higher than the previous month. Back then it was tenth in our index, between climate change and immigration control, with 12% having it as an issue affecting their country. At the start of year, it was up to eighth with one in five (20%) choosing it.

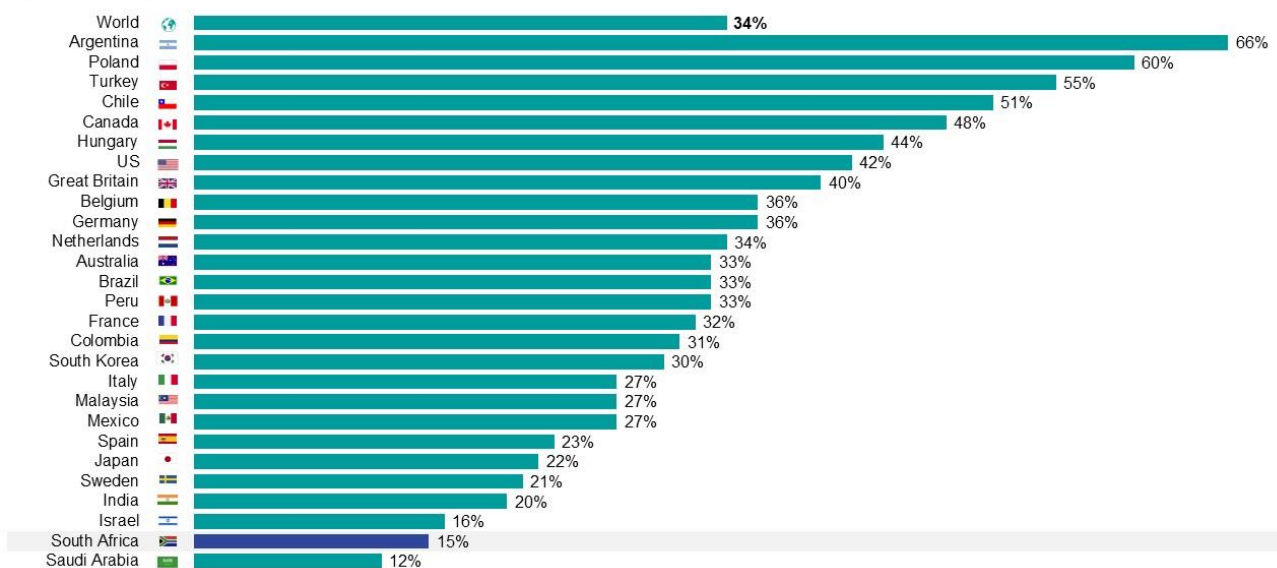
Since then, the rise has been sharper and universal across markets. All 27 countries surveyed have a higher "worried about inflation" figure in May than they did at the start of 2022. In March it made the top five concerns for the first time since it was added to the index in 2013, and then last month it became the top worry globally.

In April, all but one country saw an increase in their worry about rising prices and in May 18 markets have seen their concern rise again. The countries with the biggest growth in concern since last month include Chile (+12), Poland (+9), and South Korea (+9). It was already the number one concern in Argentina, Canada, Great Britain, Poland, Turkey and the US, with Australia now joining that list.

In South Africa, continuous efforts by the Reserve Bank and a conservative fiscal and monetary policy have helped to keep inflation within the range of 4%-6%. However, with many countries in the world, and our most important trading partners, experiencing high inflation it is possible that inflation in South Africa will also be on the incline later this year.

INFLATION

(%) worried in May 2022 in each country



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There are however other important issues that South Africans want addressed, and, as it has been for many years, we top the list in terms of saying that “unemployment and jobs” are very important issues. As far as this aspect is concerned, at 66% South Africa is far ahead of the global country average of 27%.

Coronavirus

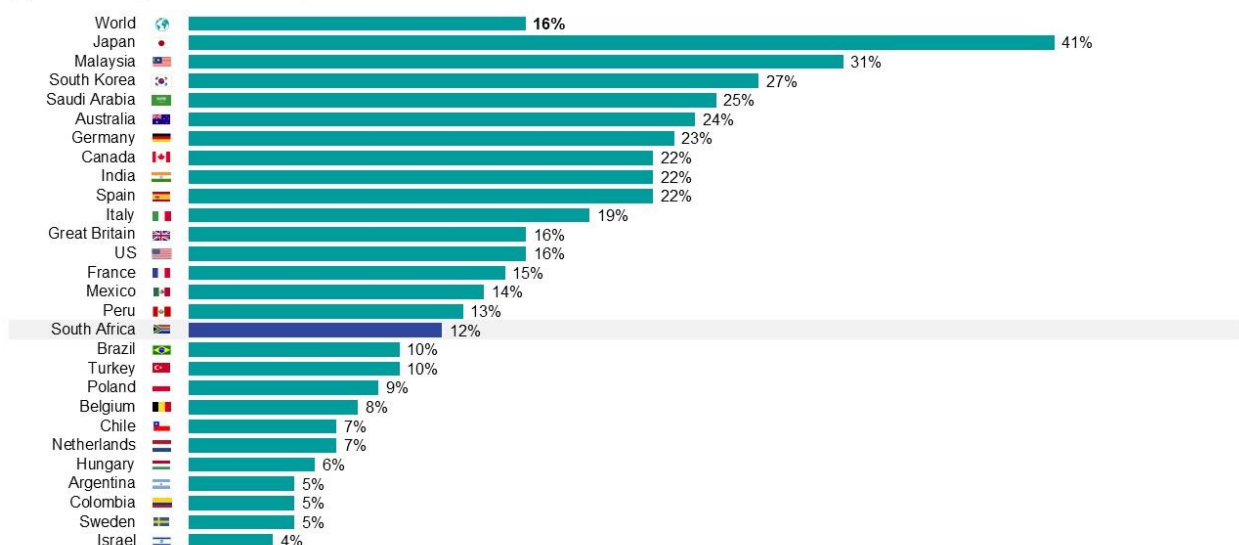
Covid-19 has recorded its lowest score for the third month in a row as it remains in eighth place (between taxes and climate change).

Globally, the proportion concerned about Coronavirus is 16%, down two points from the previous survey, but down 17 points from March and 19 points below its figure at the start of the year. To highlight the scale of decline in concern for the pandemic, back in February it was still top of our list of 18 issues. Japan remains the lone country where Covid is the top concern compared to nine countries three months ago.

However, six countries have seen a rise in worry, with Spain seeing the biggest increase of +7. Saudi Arabia is now fourth out of 27 countries after concern rose +3.

CORONAVIRUS

(%) worried in May 2022 in each country



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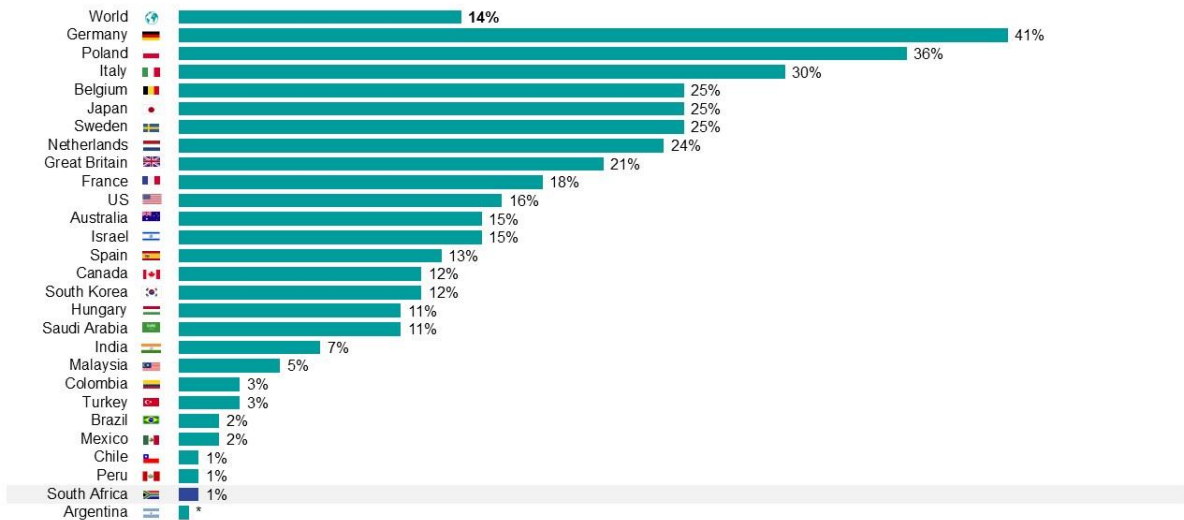
Issue focus: Military conflict between nations

Military conflict between nations were added to *What Worries the World*. The global figure remains flat at 14%, staying in 11th place in our rankings (between education and immigration control). Concern in Germany has risen six points, and it is now the most concerned country globally on the issue. Germans have it as the number one concern out of 18 issues, the only country where this is the case.

Italy (+4), Belgium (+3), and Japan (+6) are in the top five and have seen increases in worry. Poland, which was top in the previous survey, has seen a decline in concern and is now number two in the rankings. European countries are the most concerned, but like Poland, many of those in the top ten have seen declines in worry. These include Sweden (-5), Great Britain (-7), and France (-2). At only 1% this aspect is not worrying to South Africans.

MILITARY CONFLICT BETWEEN NATIONS

(%) worried in May 2022 in each country



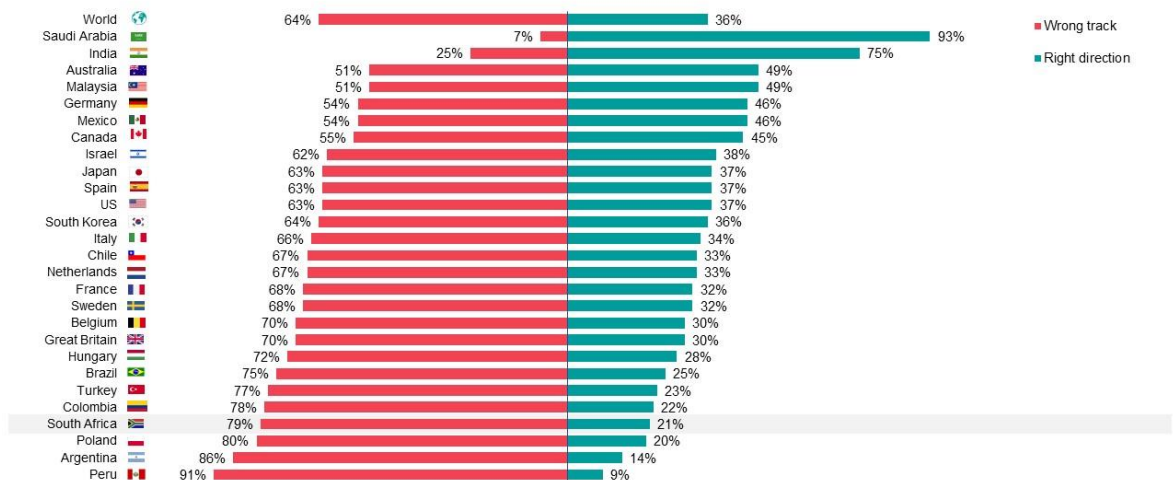
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Heading in the right direction?

Across the 27 nations surveyed, two-thirds (64%) say that things in their country are on the wrong track, while 36% think they are heading in the right direction.

RIGHT DIRECTION VS. WRONG TRACK MONITOR

Q Would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?



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Peru and Argentina have the largest proportion saying that their country is heading in the wrong direction (91% and 86% respectively). They are followed by Poland (80%) and South Africa (79%). There has been a 9-point increase on the “wrong track” score in Chile and an 8-point rise in Hungary since the previous survey.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia (93%) and India (75%) remain the most positive about their country. While Israel has seen a 9-point increase in its “right track” score since the previous survey and Spain and Colombia have both seen a 6-point rise.

Focus on the economy

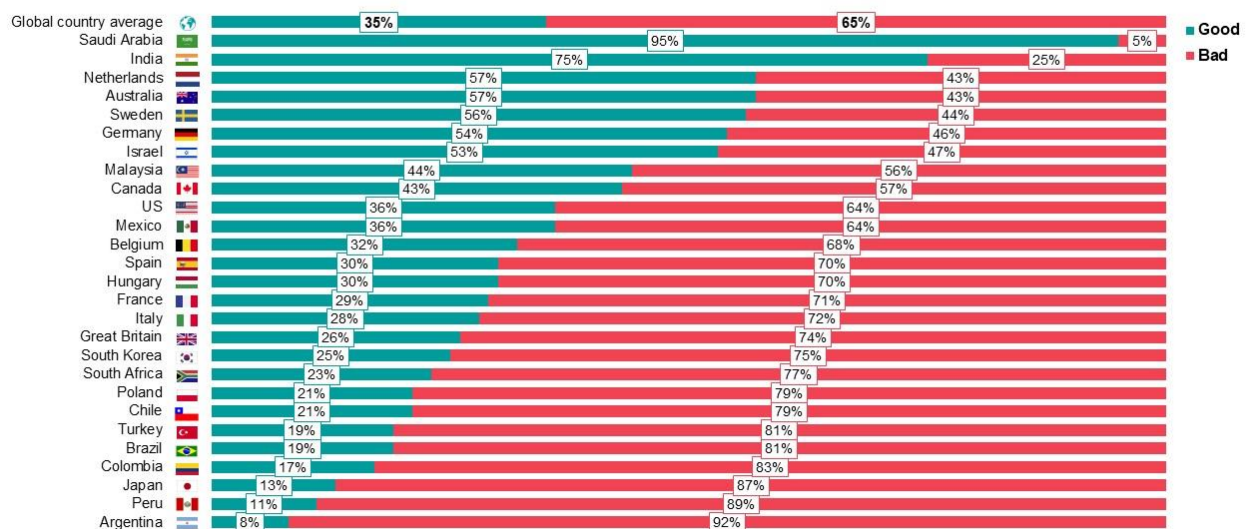
Across all countries, a third (35%) on average say that the current economic situation in their country is good, while a majority (65%) say that it is bad. After experiencing a steep drop last month, Spain’s score is up 12 points, with 30% of people saying the state of their country’s current economy is good. Increases are also seen this month in Israel (+6) and Canada (+5).

After dropping 12 points between March and April, Great Britain’s score falls a further 4 points this month, to 26%. Elsewhere, the largest decreases are seen in Poland (-7, down to 21%), Sweden (-5, down to 21%) and Malaysia (-5, down to 44%).

Argentina is once again at the bottom of the table this month, with only 8% of people rating the country’s economic situation as good. South Africa is also in the bottom half of the table, with more than three-quarters (77%) saying the economy is bad – no doubt influencing our opinions about the direction of the country as well as feeding the strong and relentless concern about unemployment and job creation.

CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION

Q How would you describe the current economic situation in your country?



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Technical Detail

- Full results are available at: <https://www.ipsos.com/en/what-worries-world-May-2022>
- Ipsos' What Worries the World survey is conducted in 27 countries around the world via the Ipsos Online Panel system. The countries included are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States.
- 19,000 online interviews were conducted between April 22nd 2022 - May 6th 2022 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 the United States.
- The remaining 11 countries surveyed: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, 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.
- The global score reflects the "Global Country Average": the average result for all the countries where the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country and is not intended to suggest a total result.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Mari Harris

Knowledge Director, Ipsos Sub-Saharan Africa

Mobile: +27 (0)82 557 5058

mari.harris@ipsos.com

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