



WHAT WORRIES THE WORLD?

January 2026

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What Worries the World?

Ipsos' What Worries the World survey tracks public opinion on the most important social and political issues across 30 countries today, drawing on over ten years of data to place the latest scores in context.

This **global summary report** presents the top concerns around the world, alongside whether people think things in their country are heading in the right or wrong direction.

Full breakdowns of findings for each country, over time and for each issue are also available. Please contact **Joseph.Nadler@ipsos.com** for more information.



Key takeaways

01. Tentative feelings of optimism?

Across our 30 countries, two-fifths (41%) say their country is "heading in the right direction". This is a four percentage points (pp) rise year-on-year.

We also see a majority of countries (19 out of 30) have seen a positive movement when it comes to the proportion expressing optimism over the last 12 months, with South Korea experiencing the sharpest rise of 46pp.

Additionally, the proportion across all countries saying their economy is "good" has risen 3pp since January 2025. Again, 19 out of 30 countries have a positive shift in economic outlook over the year. Take a look at this month's [spotlight on the economy](#) for more.

02. People's perception to crime might be misplaced

Crime & violence across 30 countries is still chosen by 32% as one of the biggest issues facing the country, and it has now been the top issue for the last eight months.

We've also seen some nations becoming increasingly worried about moral decline and rise of extremism recently, particularly in the Netherlands, which is the country most likely to be worried when it comes to both these issues.

However, are these concerns misplaced? When looking at historical homicide rates around the world, for example, we see a [significant drop since the beginning of the century](#).

03. Is concern about inflation plateauing?

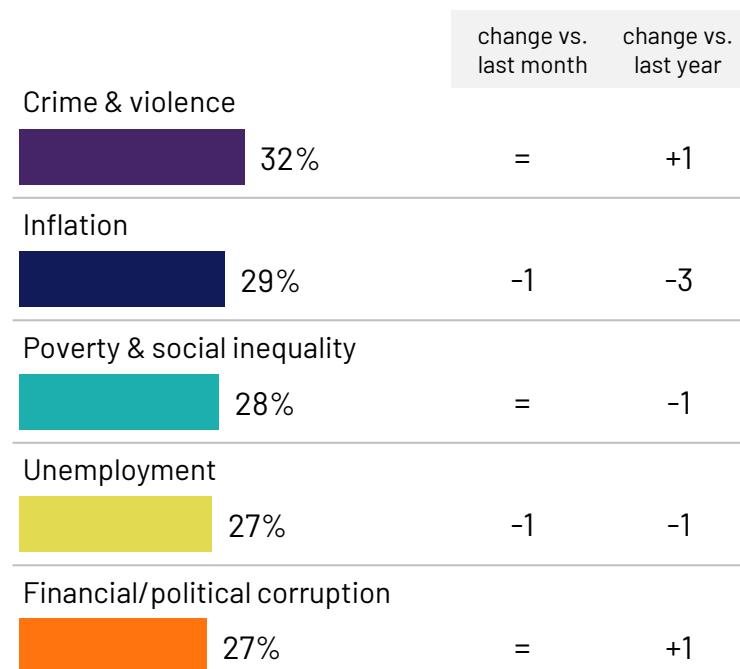
Concern about rising prices reached its peak in February 2023, when, on average across all countries surveyed, 43% mentioned it. This seems to have been triggered by the pandemic and subsequently the invasion of Ukraine. This month, however, it now sits at three in 10 (29%), where it seems to be holding steady.

Despite US President Donald Trump's ongoing threats of tariffs and a general sense of economic uncertainty, the level of worry is not changing. That said, the level is significantly higher than it was before the pandemic (January 2020 recorded 10% on average). Perhaps the only certainty is uncertainty.

What Worries the World? JANUARY 2026

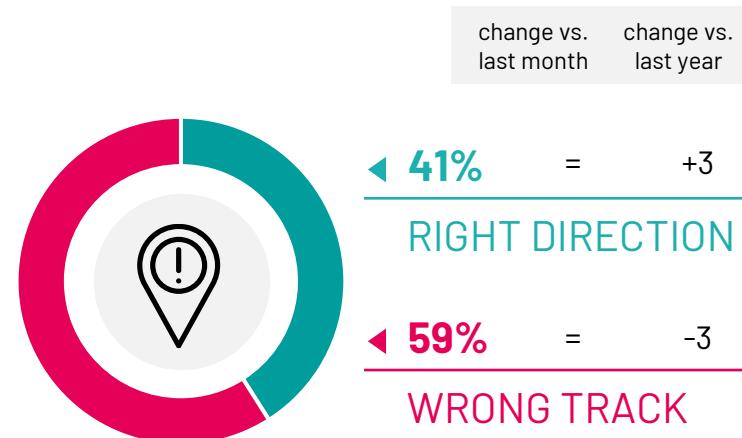
Top five worries

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



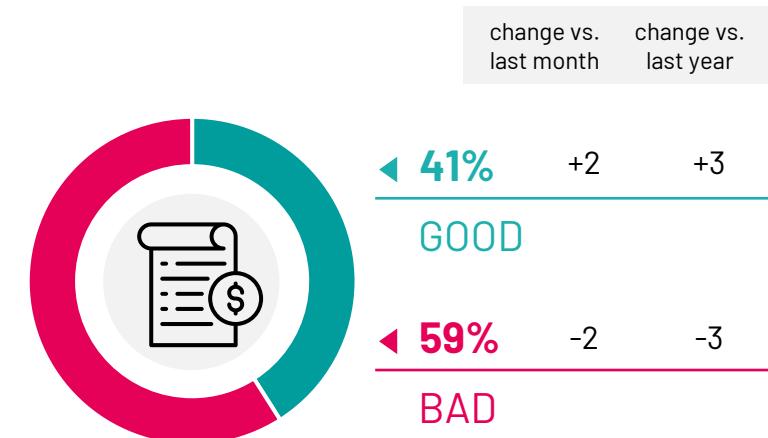
State of the country

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



State of the economy

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



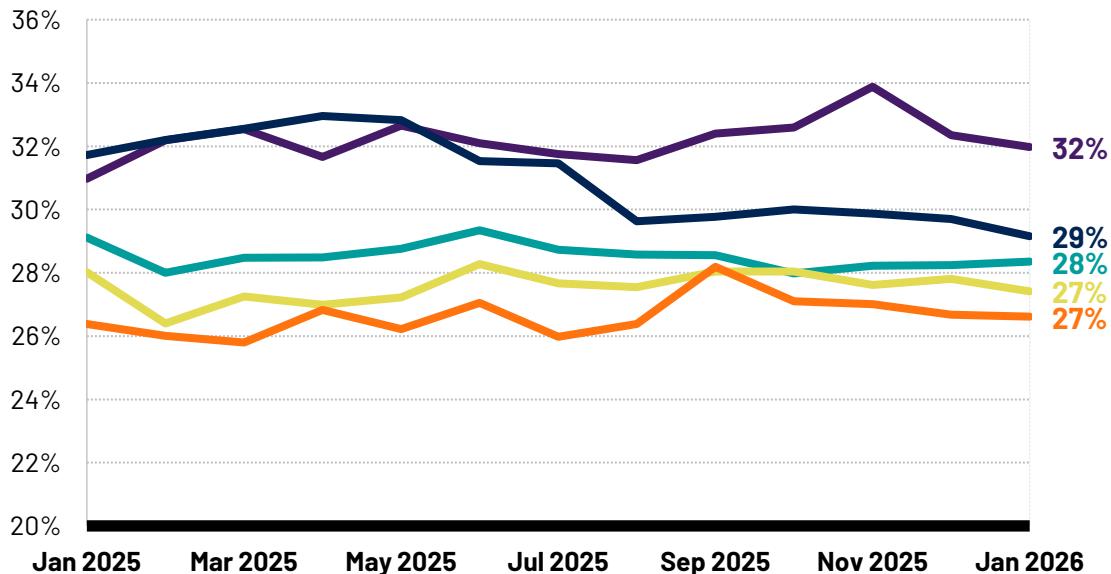
Base: Representative sample of 25,270 adults aged 16-74 in 30 participating countries, December 24th 2025 - January 9th 2026.

Source: Ipsos Global Advisor. Global score is a Global Country Average. See methodology for details. Filter: Country: World | Current Wave: Jan 26

What Worries the World? 12 MONTH TREND

Top five worries

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



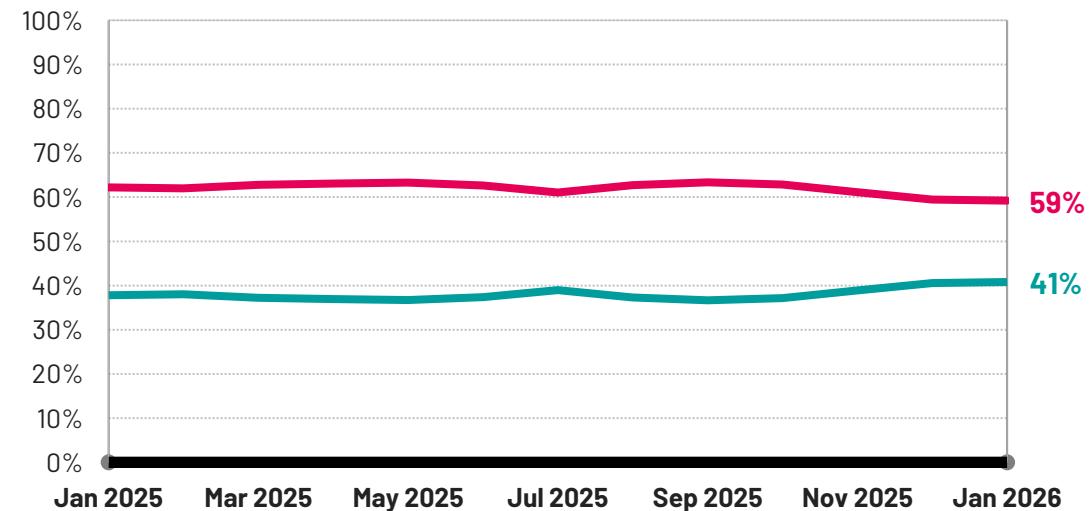
Crime Inflation Inequality Jobs Corruption

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State of the country

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

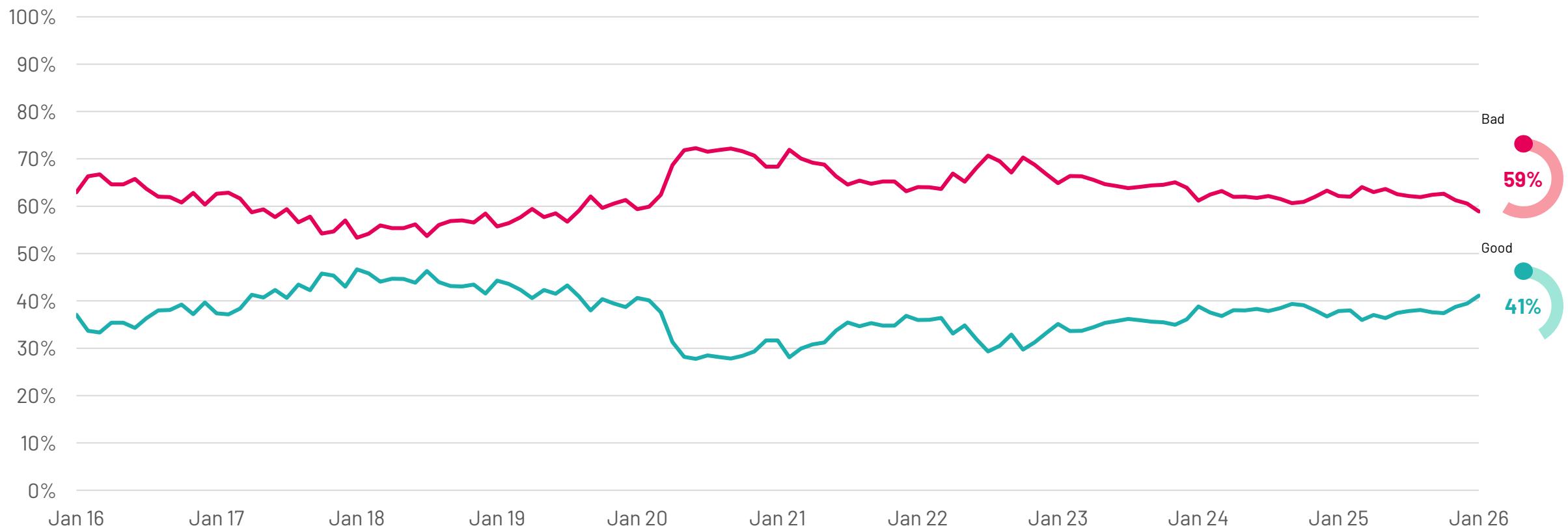


Right Direction Wrong Track

Global: Current Economic Situation

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

(% 'Very good' or 'Somewhat good' & 'Very bad' or 'Somewhat bad')



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WORRY SPOTLIGHT: ECONOMY



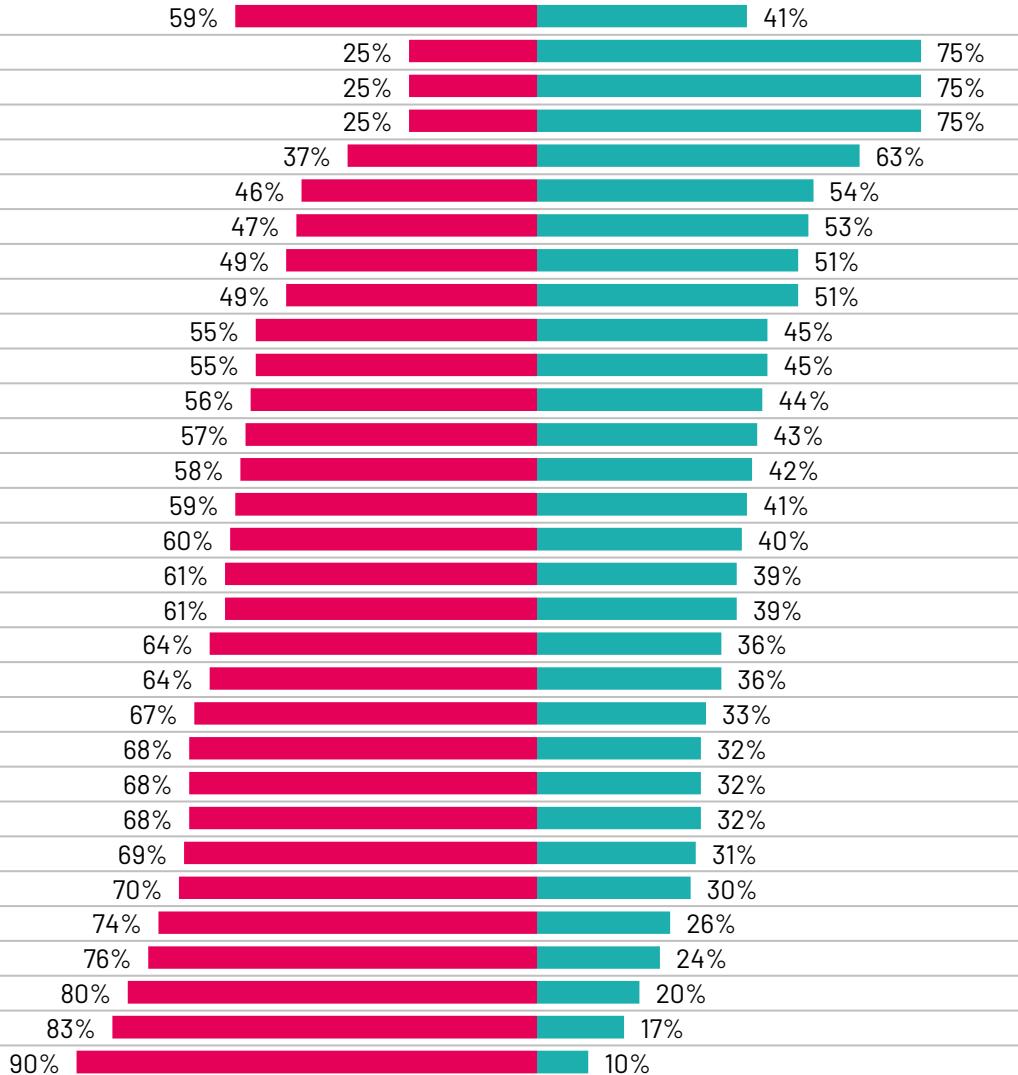
Current Economic Situation

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Country
World
Singapore
Malaysia
India
Netherlands
Ireland
Poland
Indonesia
Australia
Israel
Sweden
US
Brazil
Thailand
Chile
Mexico
Colombia
Spain
Canada
Argentina
Peru
South Africa
Italy
Germany
Belgium
South Korea
Great Britain
Türkiye
Hungary
Japan
France

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



Good Bad

— teal bar
— red bar

Change from 12-month last month	change
+2	+3
-3	-7
+1	+10
+2	-4
=	+3
+3	-7
+5	+10
-1	-5
+2	+6
+3	+12
+1	+6
+5	+6
+6	+10
+4	-4
+3	+10
-3	-5
=	+2
+1	=
+3	+10
=	-1
+4	+12
+6	-4
=	+3
+2	+6
+4	-5
=	+21
+4	+2
-1	+5
-1	-1
+2	+4
=	=

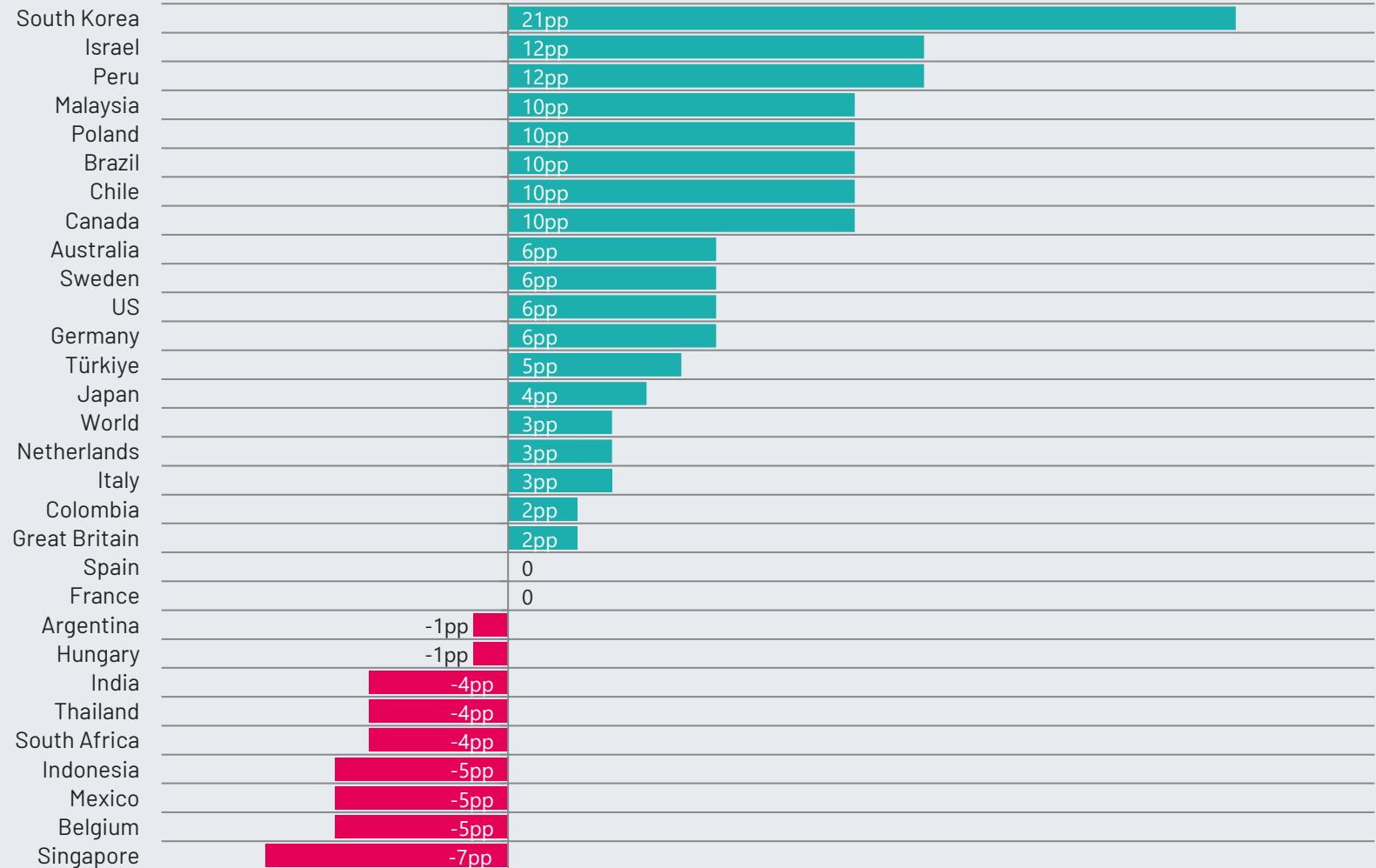
Overall optimism for economic outlook

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

% saying "good"

Percentage point change between January 2025 and January 2026.

January 2026 Base: Representative sample of 25,270 adults aged 16-74 in 30 participating countries, December 24th 2025 - January 9th 2026.



Worry Spotlight: Economy

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Over the past 12 months there has been a slight uptick on average across 30 countries in those believing their country's economy is doing "good". 18 out of the 30 surveyed countries show a positive movement since last January, with some of the largest economies seeing significant shifts. For example, South Korea (+21pp), Brazil & Canada (both +10pp), and US & Germany (both +6pp).

However, a longer-term analysis paints a slightly less optimistic picture. When looking at the G7 nations, it's

clear that the pandemic kicked off an era of global economic uncertainty. All seven countries have struggled to return to their 2020 levels, in particular France, who reached a record low of just 9% saying the economy is "good" in October 2025. For reference, in February 2020, France's score was 28%.

Our [Cost of Living Monitor](#) further highlights continued weariness when it comes to people's economic expectations.

Turn overleaf.

+21pp

year-on-year increase in South Korea's "good economy" score

Worry Spotlight: Economy

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Across 30 countries, nearly seven in ten (68%) expect the rate of inflation to rise in their country. Meanwhile, 31% expect their disposable income to fall this year and 32% say they are "just about getting by" financially.

Caution is also in evidence when we look at our latest [*Predictions 2026 Report*](#). This found that, on average across 30 countries, around half (48%) believe it is likely their country will be in recession in 2026 (vs. 33% who think it is unlikely).

With further threats of tariffs by President Donald Trump and ongoing geopolitical tensions, 2026 could bring increased uncertainty and angst. We will continue to bring the latest research and insights on people's perceptions to their finances and more.

48%

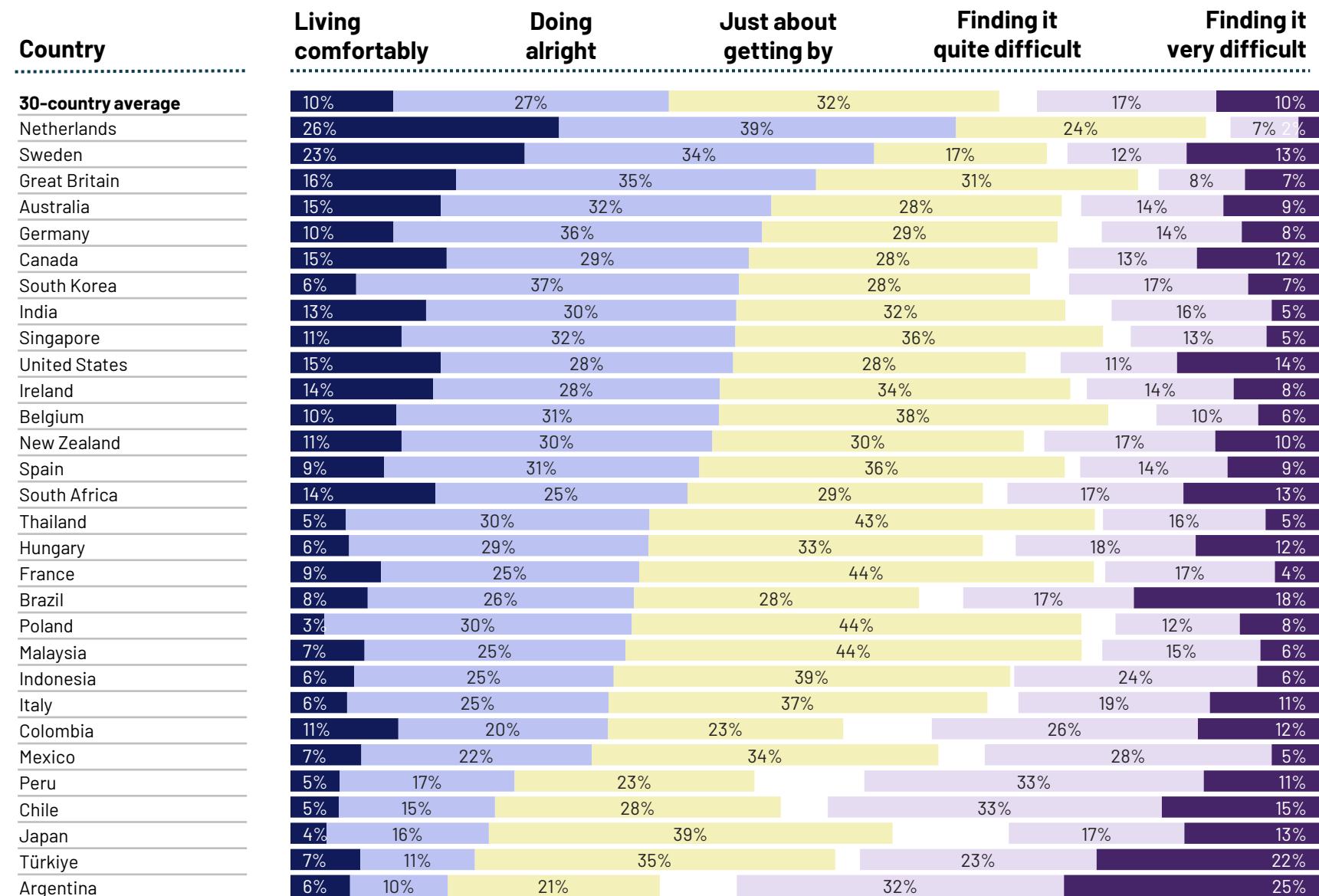
say their country will be in recession in 2026

How well would you say you are managing financially these days?

Would you say you are...?



Base: 23,772 adults under the age of 75 across 30 countries, interviewed between Friday, August 22, and Friday, September 5, 2025.



Q.

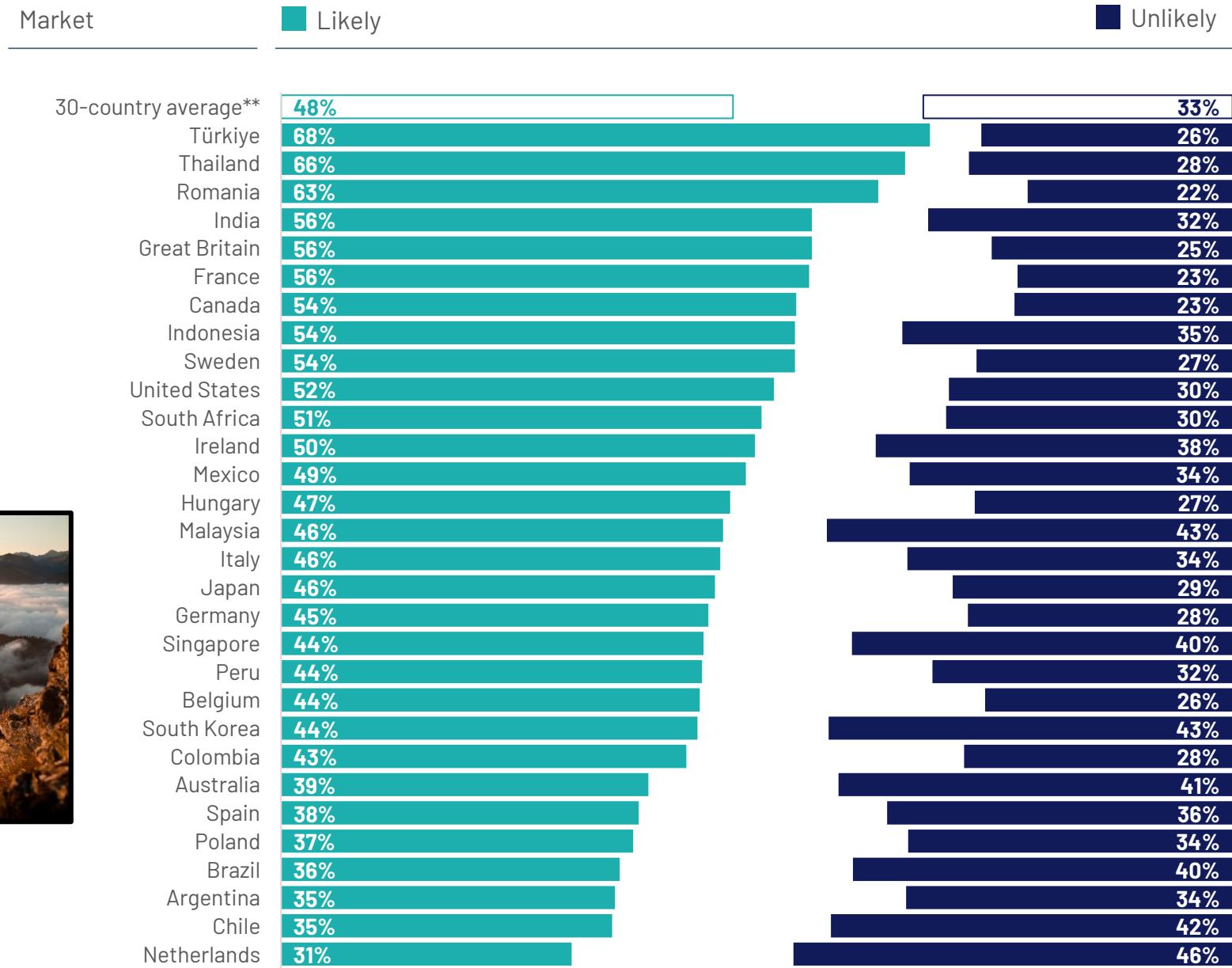
For each of the following, please tell me how likely or unlikely you think they are to happen...?

My country will be in recession in 2026



Base: 23,642 online adults under the age of 75 across 30 countries, interviewed 27 October – 4 November 2025.

**30-country average includes all countries that were in the 2024 and 2025 waves.



DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

All countries

Right vs. Wrong Direction Monitor

Base: Representative sample of 25,270 adults aged 16-74 in 30 participating countries, December 24th 2025 - January 9th 2026.

Source: Ipsos Global Advisor. Global score is a Global Country Average. See methodology for details.

This month two-fifths (41%), on average across 30 countries, say their country is “heading in the right direction”, which is 3pp higher than it was in January 2025.

The proportion of Indonesians expressing optimism has taken a sharp fall this month as the [effects of Cyclone Ditwah continue to be felt](#). There has been a 12pp decrease in month-on-month change, taking the nation’s right direction score to 63%.

In July 2025, when fighting

erupted along the border with Cambodia, Thailand recorded their joint lowest right direction score of 41% since they were added to the survey in August 2022. Since then, however, the level of optimism has been increasing, with this month seeing an 8pp rise, [despite renewed escalation](#).

3pp
increase in “right direction score” (across 30 countries)

Right vs. Wrong Direction Monitor

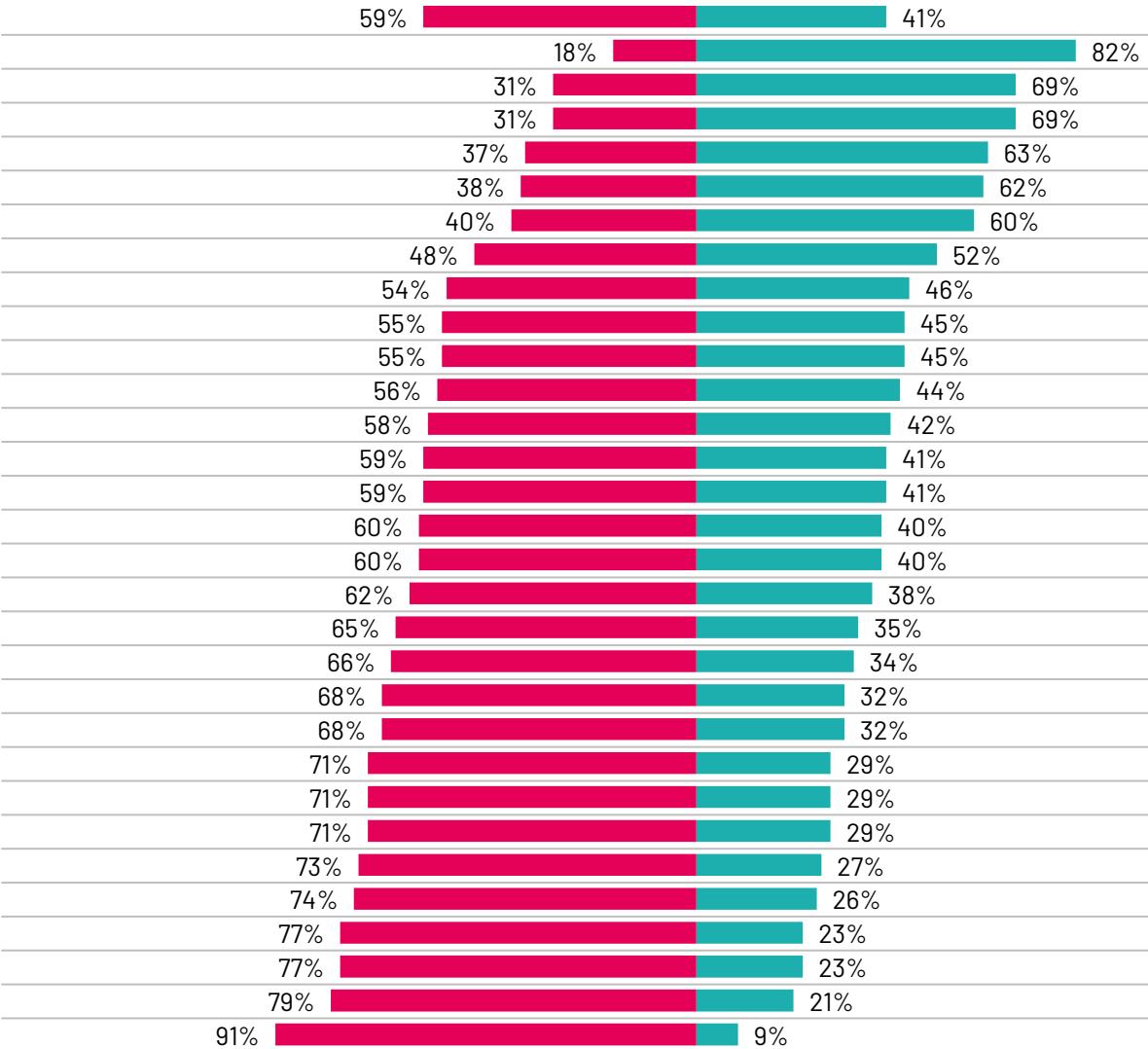
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Country

World
Singapore
Malaysia
India
Indonesia
Thailand
South Korea
Argentina
Australia
Chile
Brazil
Japan
Canada
Ireland
Poland
US
Mexico
Colombia
Spain
Israel
South Africa
Belgium
Sweden
Italy
Germany
Great Britain
Netherlands
Türkiye
Peru
Hungary
France

Q: Would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track? (January 2026)



Right Direction

Wrong Track

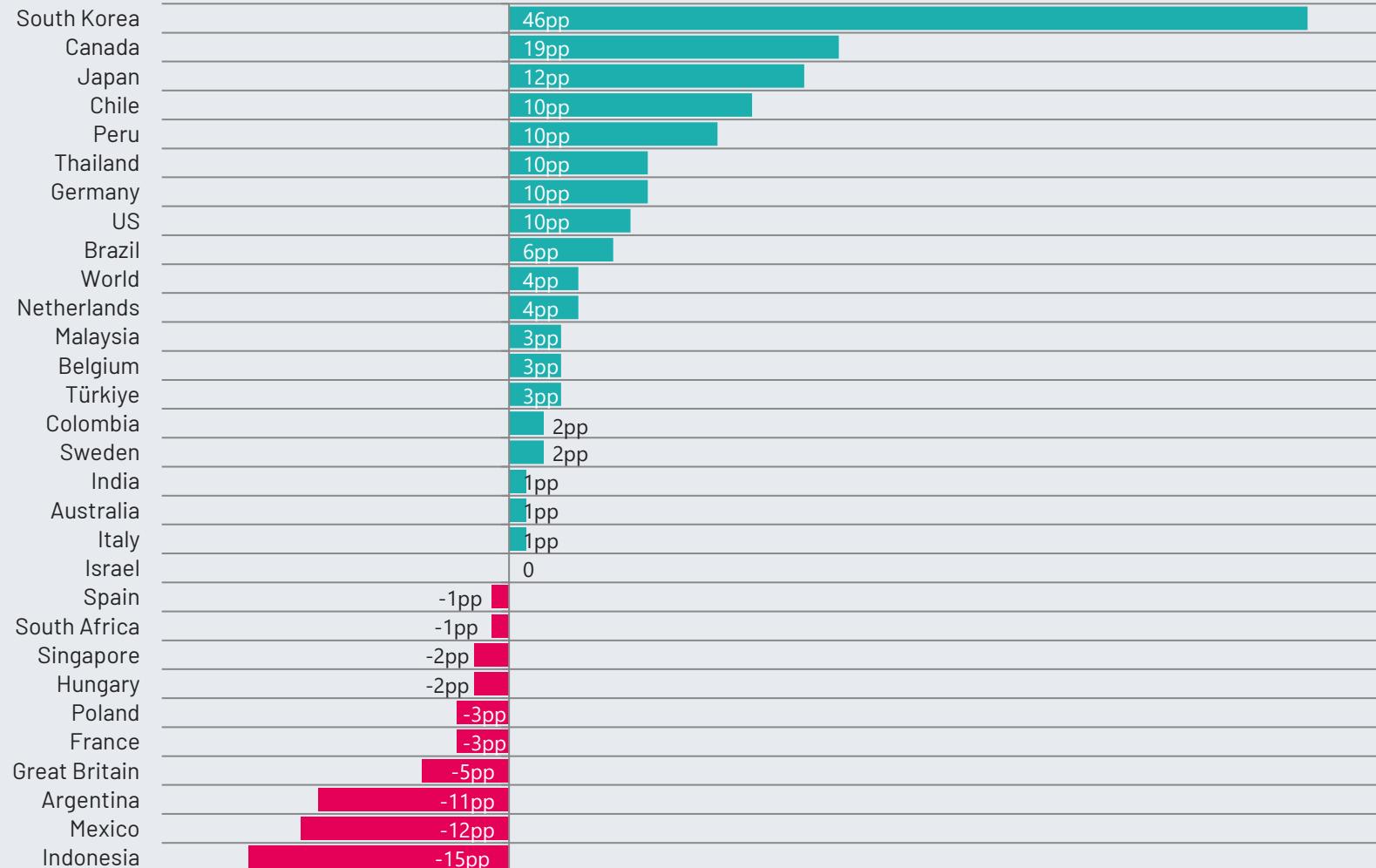
Change in the direction of travel

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

% saying their country is "heading in the right direction"

Percentage point change between January 2025 and January 2026.

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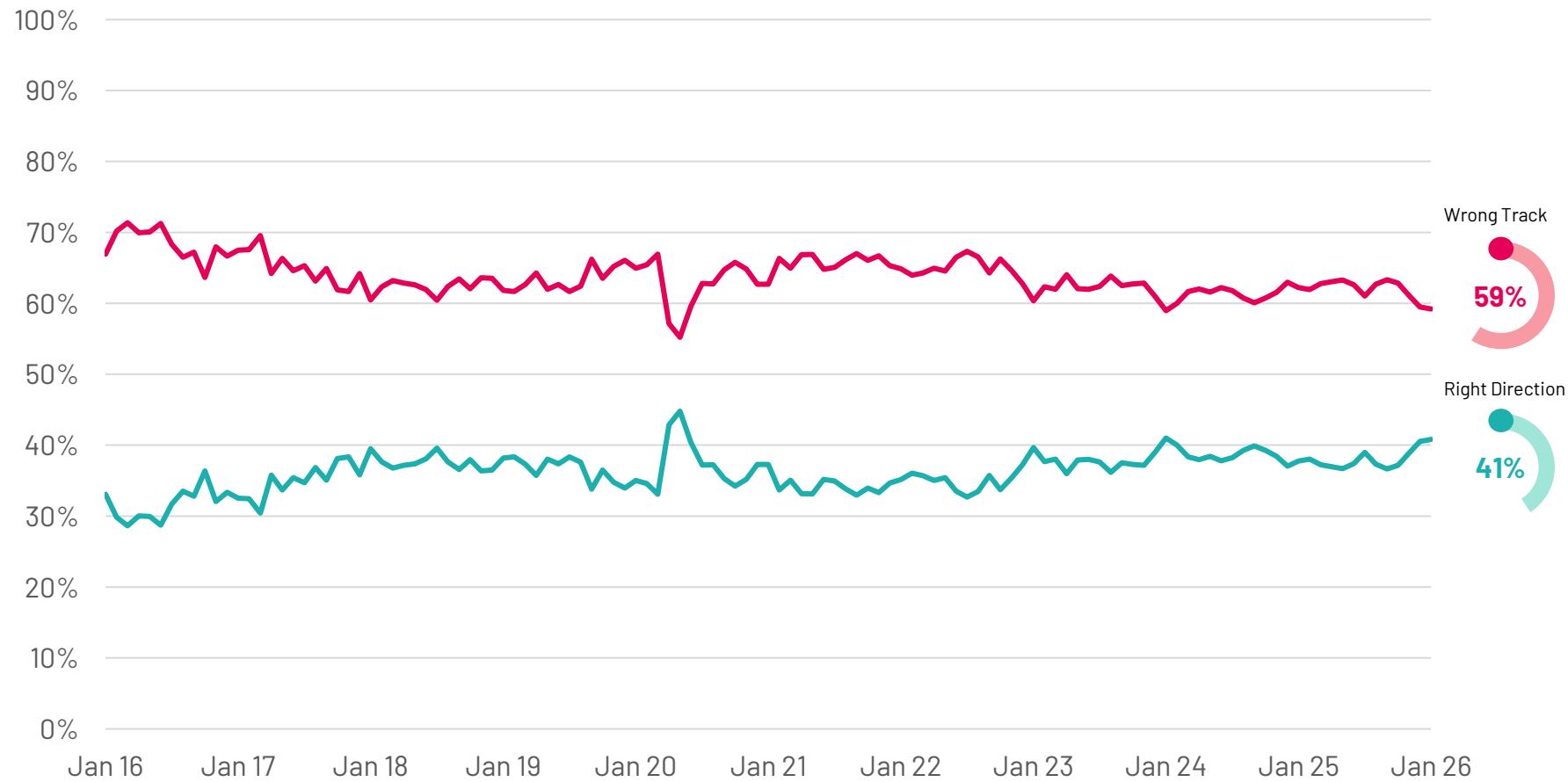
Global Right/Wrong Direction

Global country average score

Base: Representative sample of 25,270 adults aged 16-74 in 30 participating countries, December 24th 2025 - January 9th 2026.

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



WHAT WORRIES THE WORLD?

Top issues ranked

World Worries: Full List

Base: Representative sample of 25,270 adults aged 16-74 in 30 participating countries, December 24th 2025 - January 9th 2026.

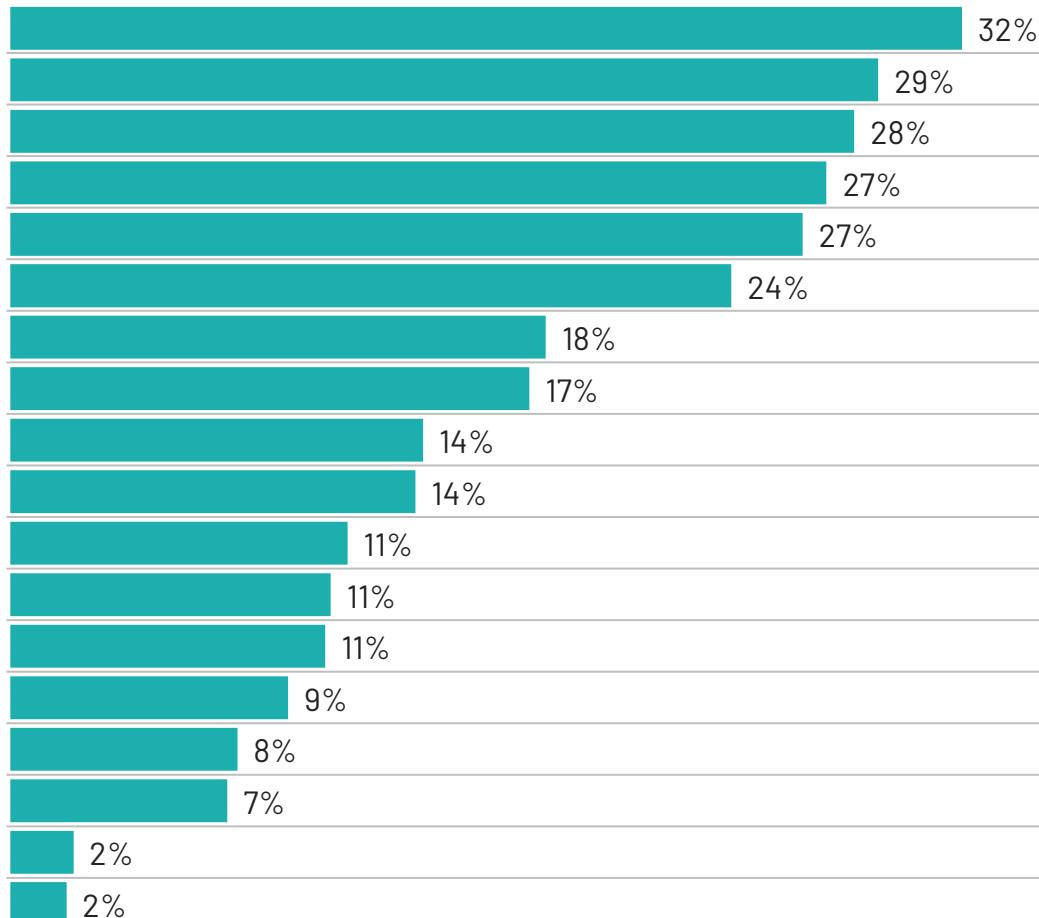
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Q: Which three of the following topics do you find the most worrying in your country?

Worry

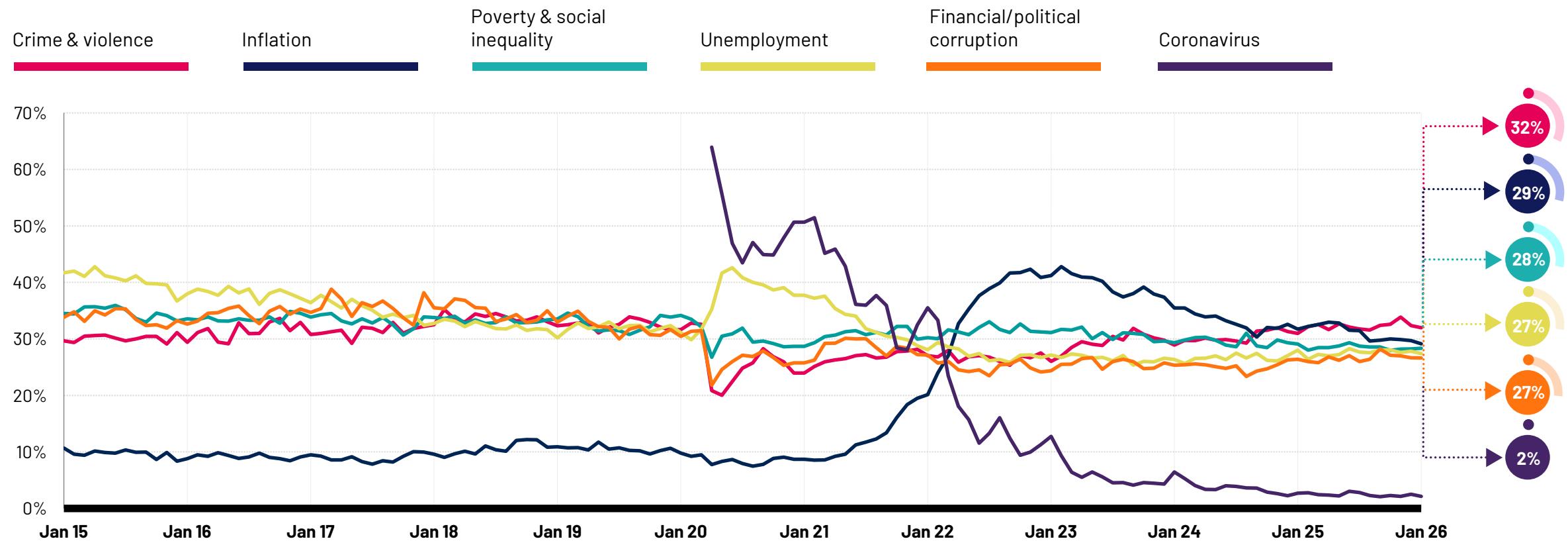
- Crime & violence
- Inflation
- Poverty & social inequality
- Unemployment
- Financial/political corruption
- Healthcare
- Taxes
- Immigration control
- Education
- Climate change
- Military conflict between nations
- Moral decline
- Rise of extremism
- Terrorism
- Threats against the environment
- Maintaining social programmes
- Coronavirus (Covid-19)
- Access to credit

% mentioned in January 2026 (global country average)



World Worries: Long-Term Trend

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



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Methodology

This 29-country Global Advisor survey was conducted between December 24th 2025 and January 9th 2026 via the Ipsos Online Panel system among 500 adults aged 18-74 in Canada, Israel, Malaysia, South Africa, Türkiye and the United States, 20-74 in Indonesia and Thailand, 21-74 in Singapore, and 16-74 in all other nations.

The "Global Country Average" reflects 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."

The sample consists of approximately 1000+ individuals in each of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Spain, Sweden, and the US, and approximately 500+ individuals in each of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Thailand and Türkiye.

The sample in India consists of approximately 2,200 individuals, of whom approximately 1,800 were interviewed face-to-face and 400 were interviewed online.

The samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the US can be taken as representative of these countries' general adult population under the age of 75.

The samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand and Türkiye are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these markets should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of these populations.

India's sample represents a large subset of its urban population – social economic

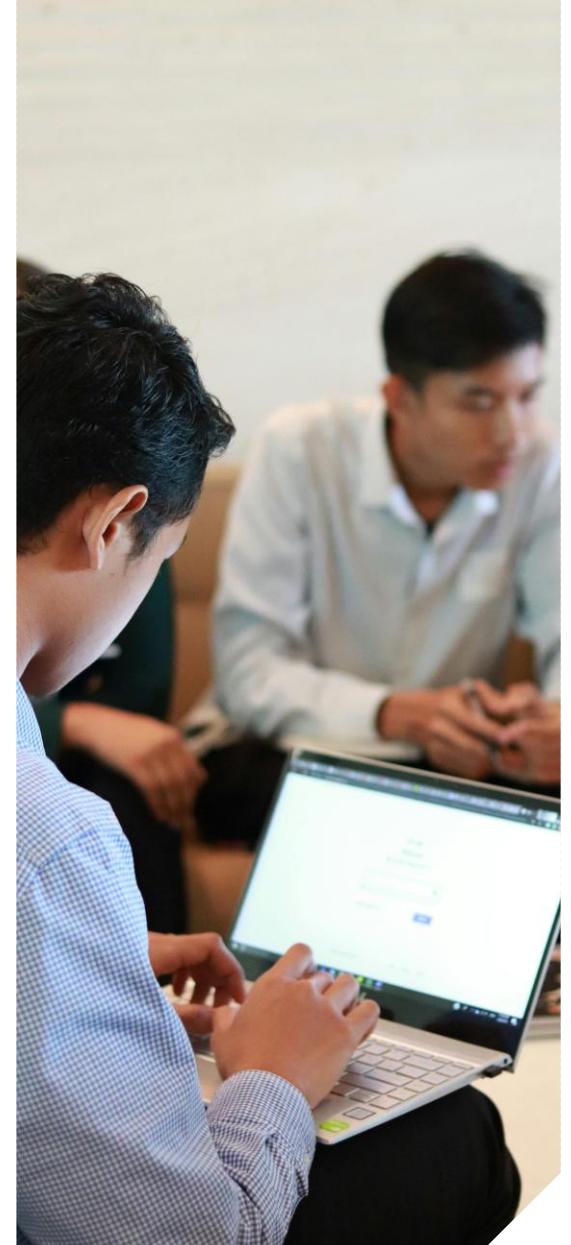
classes A, B and C in metros and tier 1-3 town classes across all four zones.

Weighting has been employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to the most recent census data.

The precision of Ipsos online polls are calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

Where results do not sum to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/- more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses

The publication of these findings abides by local rules and regulations.



THANK YOU

CONTACT:

Joseph.Nadler@ipsos.com

VISIT:

ipsos.com