

Windhoek, Namibia
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News release

Majority of Namibians say gender-based violence is common, should be treated as a criminal matter

A majority of Namibians believe that violence against women and girls is common in their homes and communities, the most recent Afrobarometer survey shows.

While more than half believe that men are never justified in physically disciplining their wives, about four in 10 say this can be justified at least some of the time.

Most citizens believe that the police take reported cases of gender-based violence seriously, but many report that community members will criticize or harass the complainant for seeking help from the police.

And while most Namibians see gender-based violence as a criminal matter that requires the involvement of law enforcement agencies to resolve, about one in four say it is a private matter that needs to be handled within the family.

Key findings

- Nearly six in 10 Namibians (57%) report that in their area, it is either “very common” (29%) or “somewhat common” (28%) for men to use violence against women and girls in the home or in the community. Only 16% say it is “not at all common” (Figure 1).
- A majority (58%) of Namibians say it is never justified for a man to use physical discipline on his wife. About one quarter (26%) believe that it is sometimes justified, and 13% say that it is always justified (Figure 2).
- An overwhelming majority (82%) of citizens say that it is either “very likely” (59%) or “somewhat likely” (23%) that the police will take reported cases of gender-based violence seriously. Fewer than one in five believe that it is unlikely (Figure 3).
- But more than four in 10 respondents (42%) think it is likely that a woman will be criticized, harassed, or shamed by others in the community if she reports an incident of gender-based violence (Figure 4).
- Overall, nearly three in four Namibians (73%) say that domestic violence is a criminal matter that requires the involvement of law enforcement agencies to resolve. One quarter (25%) see it as a private matter that needs to be handled within the family (Figure 5).

Afrobarometer surveys

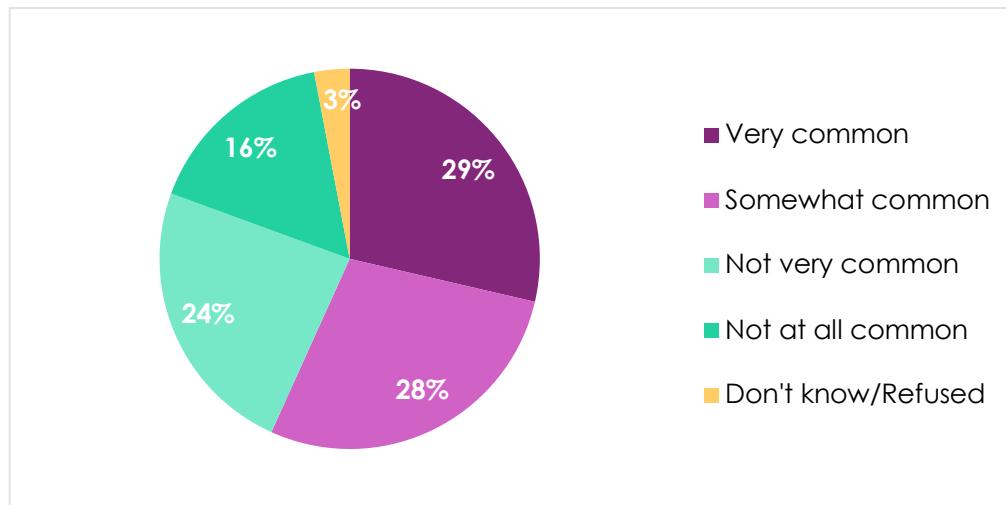
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys

(2021/2022) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Namibia, led by national partner Survey Warehouse, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Namibians in October and November 2021. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Namibia in 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019.

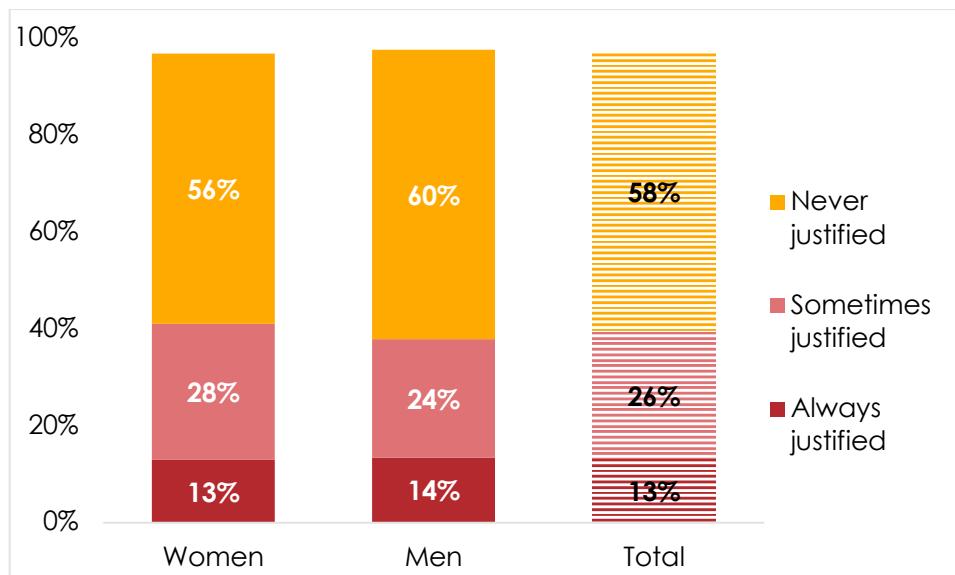
Charts

Figure 1: Prevalence of violence against women and girls | Namibia | 2021



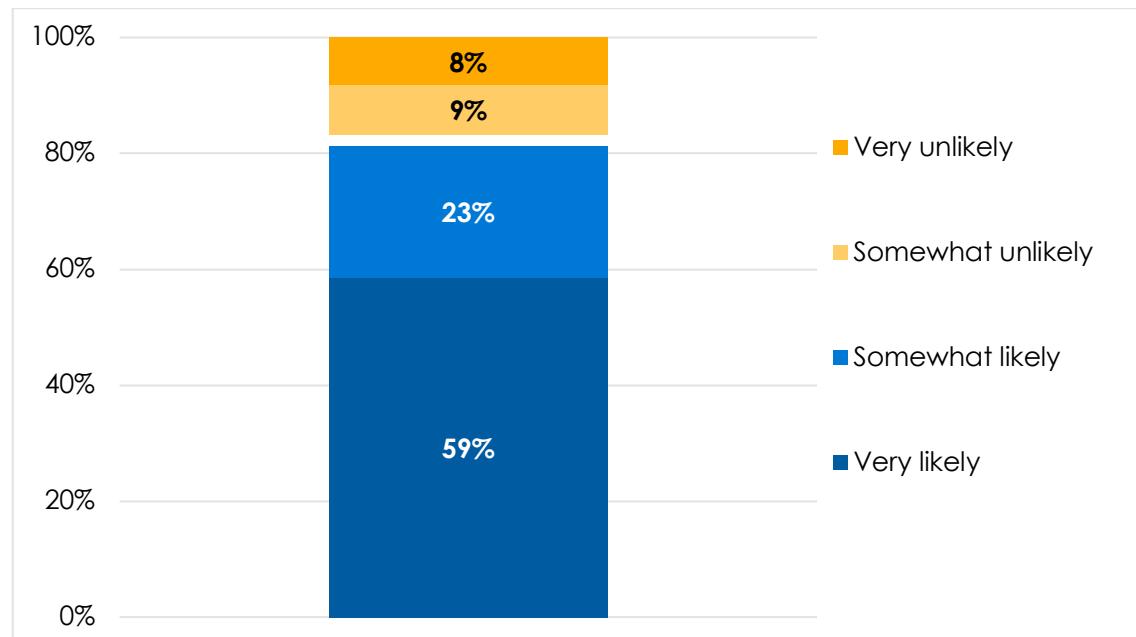
Respondents were asked: In this area, how common do you think it is for men to use violence against women and girls in the home or in the community?

Figure 2: Is it justified for men to physically discipline their wives? | Namibia | 2021



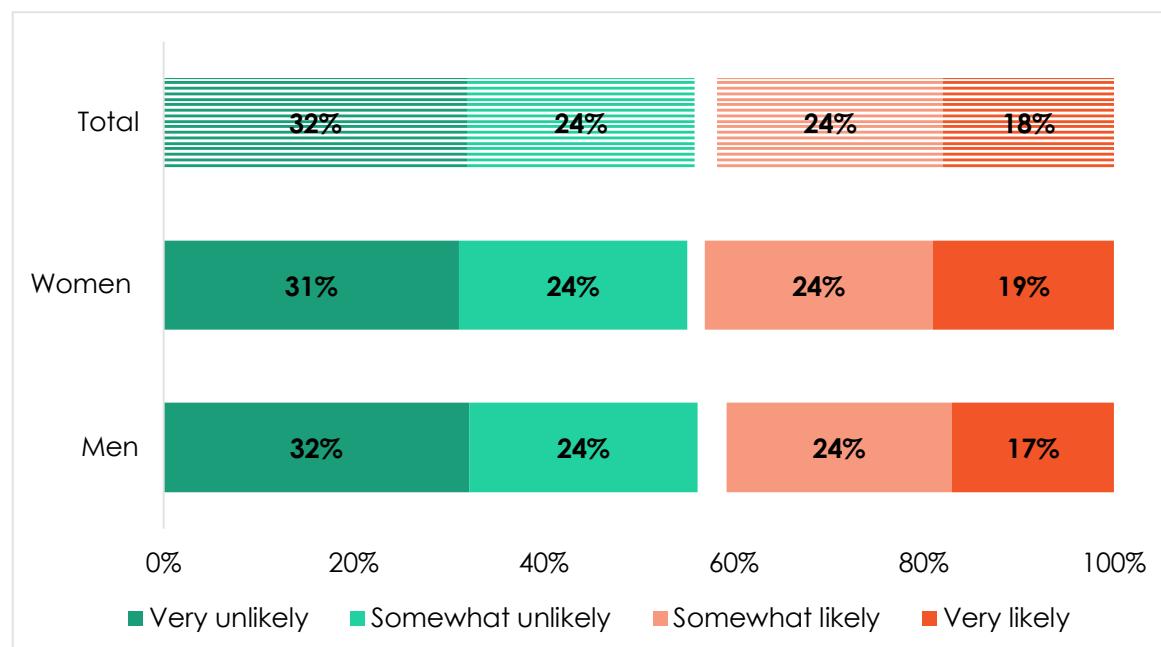
Respondents were asked: For each of the following actions, please tell me whether you think it can always be justified, sometimes be justified, or never be justified: For a man to use physical discipline on his wife if she has done something he doesn't like or thinks is wrong?

Figure 3: Likelihood that police will take reported GBV cases seriously | Namibia | 2021



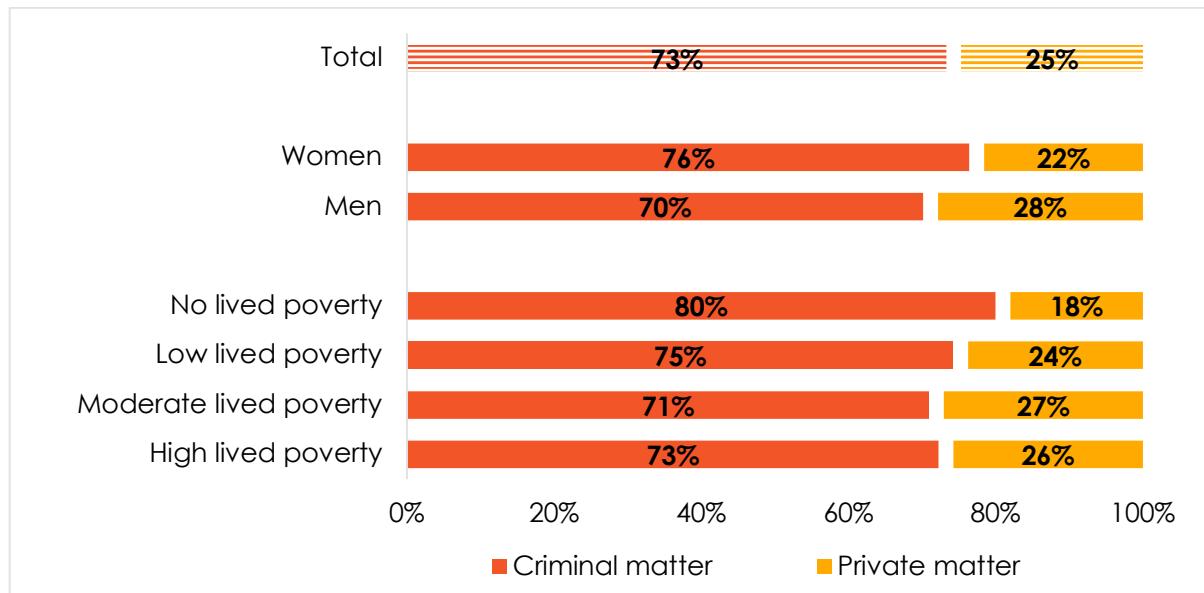
Respondents were asked: If a woman in your community goes to the police to report being a victim of gender-based violence, for example, to report a rape or report being physically abused by her husband, how likely or unlikely is it that the following things might occur? Her case will be taken seriously by the police?

Figure 4: Likelihood that women will be criticized for reporting GBV | Namibia | 2021



Respondents were asked: If a woman in your community goes to the police to report being a victim of gender-based violence, for example, to report a rape or report being physically abused by her husband, how likely or unlikely is it that the following things might occur? She will be criticized, harassed, or shamed by others in the community?

Figure 5: Is GBV a criminal or private matter? | Namibia | 2021



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Domestic violence is a private matter that needs to be handled and resolved within the family.

Statement 2: Domestic violence is a criminal matter whose full resolution requires the involvement of law enforcement agencies.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

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