

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation  
Durban, South Africa  
5 March 2019

## News release

---

### Lived poverty on the rise in South Africa

Whilst the Afrobarometer survey findings showed a decline in lived poverty in 2015, the 2018 results show a sharp increase in lived poverty, to the highest level recorded similar to 2002. Levels of lived poverty vary significantly by race, province, level of education, and place of residence. Differences by age and gender are smaller.

Whilst lived poverty has increased in South Africa since 2015, her citizens still compare favourably with most of their peers in the region. In terms of the proportion of respondents experiencing moderate or high lived poverty during the previous year, South Africa rank fourth amongst 11 Southern African countries

#### Key findings

- Close to four in 10 South Africans (38%) experienced a moderate or high level of “lived poverty” during the past year, an increase from 25% recorded in 2015.
- The percentage of South Africans who say they went without enough food, clean water, and other basic necessities “many times” or “always” increased substantially between 2015 and 2018, doubling or tripling in all categories except for cash income.
- Lived poverty in the region varies. It is lowest in Mauritius (3%), Namibia (31%), and Botswana (35%). At the other extreme are Malawi (where 68% of respondents experienced moderate or high lived poverty), Lesotho (63%), Madagascar (59%), and Zimbabwe (59%).

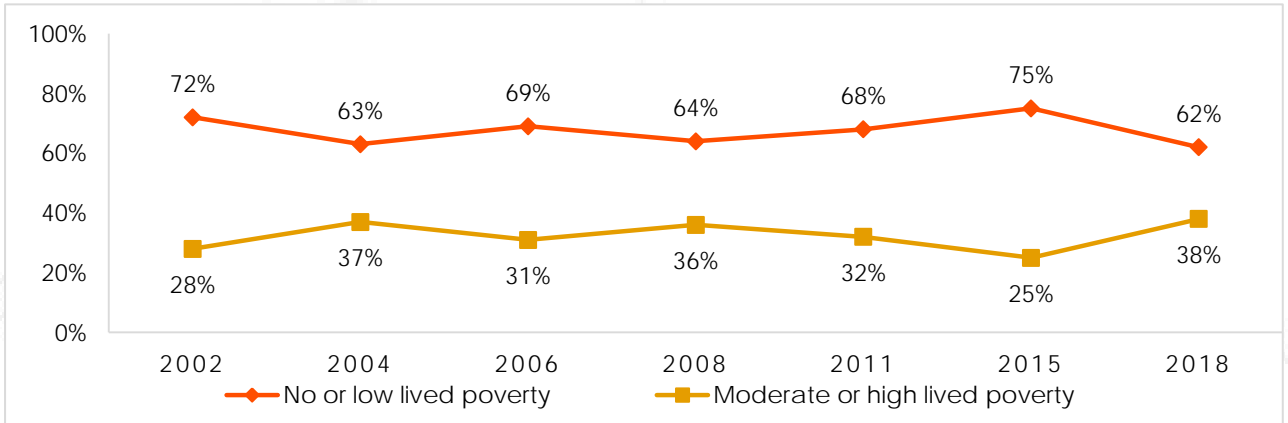
#### Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Seven rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 37 countries between 1999 and 2018. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent’s choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in South Africa, led by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and Plus 94 Research, interviewed 1,800 adult South Africans in August and September 2018. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2.3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in South Africa in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011, and 2015.

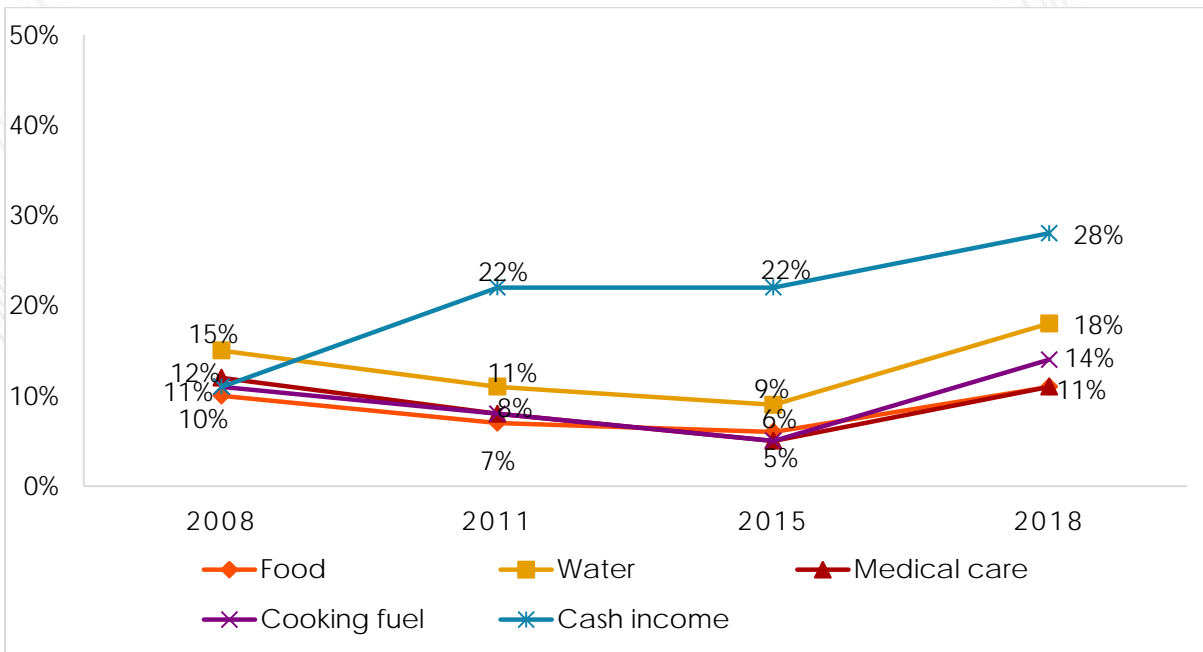
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Lived poverty | South Africa | 2002-2018**



**Respondents were asked:** Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

**Figure 2: Going without basic necessities many times" or "always" | South Africa | 2008-2018**



(% who say they went without these necessities "many times" or "always")

**Figure 3: Moderate or high lived poverty | 11 countries in Southern Africa**  
 | 2016/2018

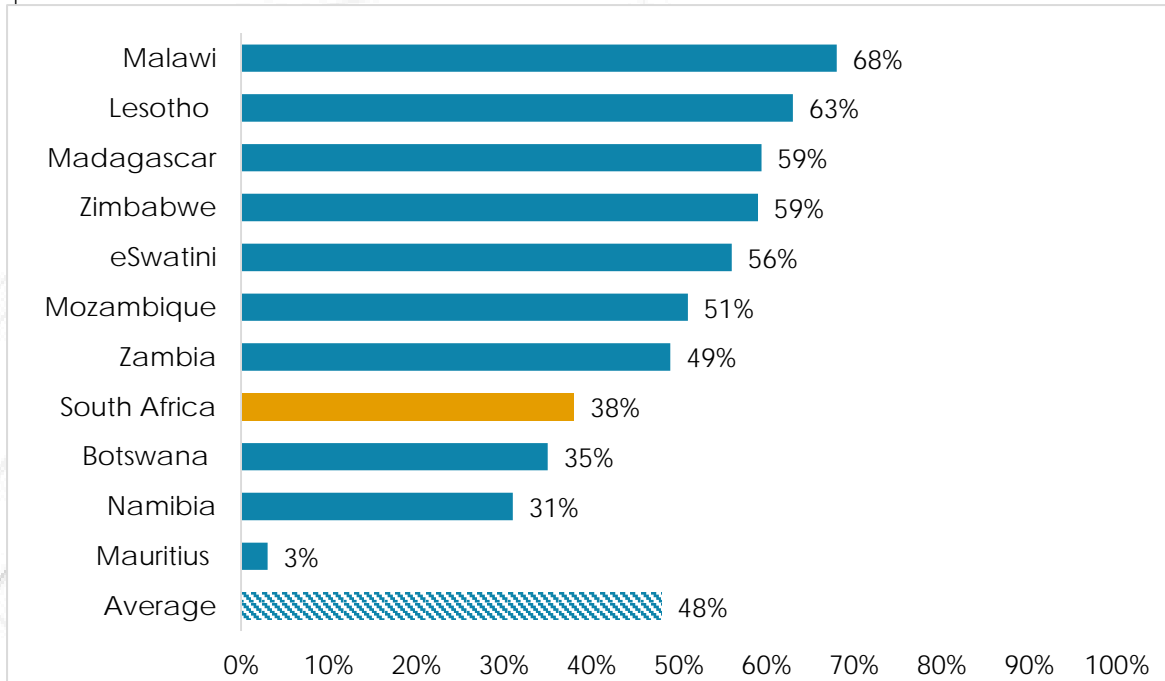


Figure shows % of respondents who experienced moderate or high lived poverty during the previous year.

**For more information, please contact:**

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation  
 Mrs Anyway Chingwete  
 Telephone: 27 21 202 4071  
 Email: [achingwete@afrobarometer.org](mailto:achingwete@afrobarometer.org)

Ms Gugu Nonjinge  
 Telephone: 27 21 202 4071  
 Email: [gnonjinge@afrobarometer.org](mailto:gnonjinge@afrobarometer.org)

Visit us online at:  
[www.ijr.org.za](http://www.ijr.org.za)  
[www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)

