

THE STATE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS IN CUBA

VIII REPORT 2025



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THE STATE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS IN CUBA

Introduction

89% of Cuban families suffer from extreme poverty, and 78% want to leave or know someone who wants to leave the country.

Millions of Cubans live their lives between denial of the issues, persistent calls for resistance, and the authorities' never-ending blaming of others due to the food crisis, the cost of living, poor wages, ineffective public health care, and constant blackouts.

There are still those who believe that Cuba is a paradise of social rights. The findings we provided in these reports since 2019 reveal a reality that is completely at contradiction with government propaganda regarding the status of social rights and disprove a political argument that justified restricting the exercise of civil rights and liberties in exchange for "social achievements" that are not visible in any neighborhood or street on the island.

With data in hand, gathered from thousands of interviews conducted nationwide, we have consistently cautioned since the outset that a severe and expanding crisis in every sphere of social life would be an unmistakable outcome of the current system's failure. The dire demographic situation, the loss of life expectancy, and the deterioration of internal security are just three examples.

In July, the now former Minister of Labor and Social Security denied the existence of beggars in Cuba: "There are no beggars in Cuba... There are people who pretend to be beggars to make easy money," disregarding the fact that ***89% of Cuban families live in extreme poverty***, that ***7 out of 10 Cubans must forgo some of their daily meals, and that only 3% can purchase medication at pharmacies***. It also ignores the fact that ***12% of people over 70 continue to work after retirement in order to survive***, as ***58% of people in that age group make less than 4,500 Cuban pesos per month, to name just a few statistics***. Regretfully, this is not the first time that a high-ranking government official

has disregarded the situation of the Cuban people, and we may predict that it will not be the last.

The evolving situation we have captured in our reports obviously does not offer hope for the future; therefore, even though it is sad to admit a tragic fact, it makes sense

that 78% of Cubans surveyed for this study want to leave or know someone who wants to leave the country.

It is also consistent with the high level of disapproval of the government's economic and social management found in this survey, which has reached 92% since we measured this parameter.

As in previous reports, this eighth report provides objective data to the investigation into the state of social rights on the island; at the same time, it reveals the seriousness of a situation that requires urgent solutions that are not only temporary but also, and primarily, structural.



METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DATA

The interviews were conducted in all of the country’s provinces, spread across a total of 70 municipalities.

We continued with the methodology used in previous surveys, consisting of digitally assisted personal interviews. Using the most recent official data from the National Institute of Statistics (ONEI) (both the 2023 Statistical Yearbook, which updates the 2012 one, and the recently published Studies and Data on the Cuban Population), a representative sample was created, with provincial quotas based on age, sex, and racial groups for the entire population, adjusted for demographic weight.

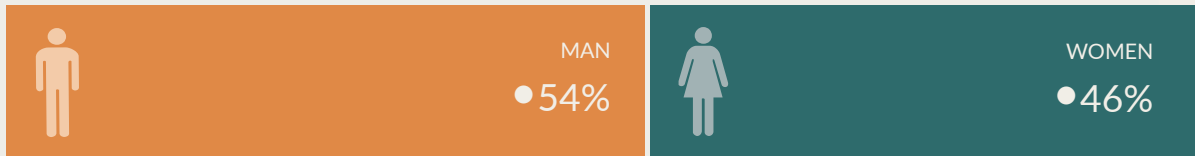
SURVEY TECHNICAL DATA
Universe: People of both sexes residing in Cuba aged 18 and over.
Sample: 1,344 interviews.
Sampling method: Simple random sampling. Sampling stratification conducted by clusters based on racial group, age, sex, and type of residence.
Allocation: proportional.
Margin of error: +/- 2.73 for aggregate data.
Confidence level: 95.45% with probability p/q = 50%.
Fieldwork methodology: in-person survey with data entry assisted by mobile phones and tablets.
Fieldwork dates: June 8 to July 11, 2025.
Agency responsible for fieldwork: Cuban Observatory of Human Rights (OCDH).



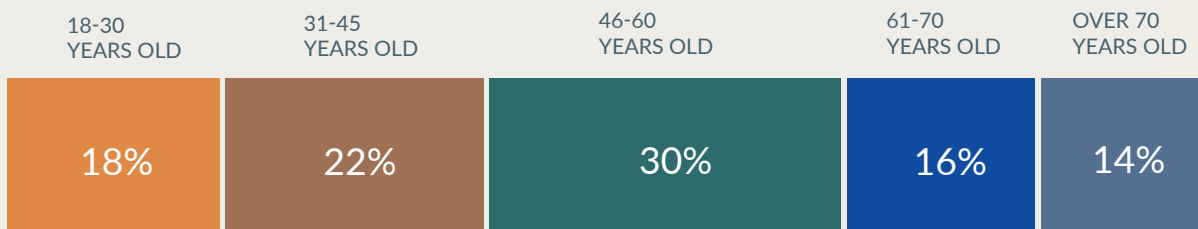
- Open Data Kit (ODK) technology was used for fieldwork; and SPSS v28.0.0.1 and Gandia Barbwin v7.5 software were used for data processing and statistical analysis.
- Decimals derived from percentages were rounded up to whole numbers in the analyses provided.

Distribution by Gender, Age, and Racial Groups

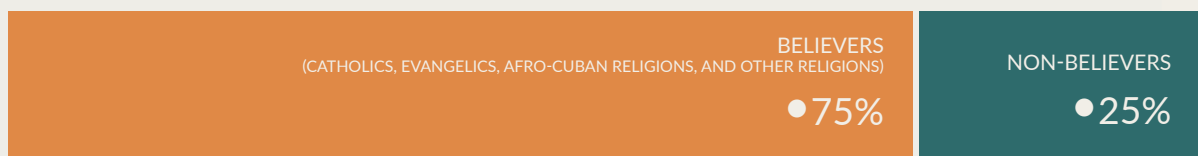
GENDER GROUPS



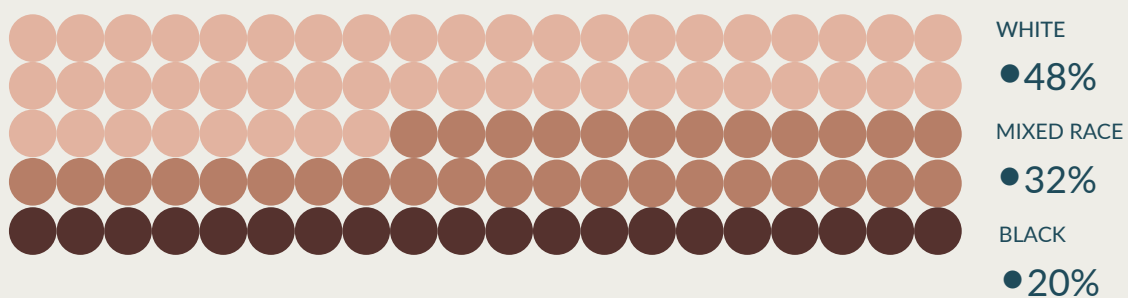
AGE GROUPS



RELIGIOUS BELIEFS



RACIAL GROUPS

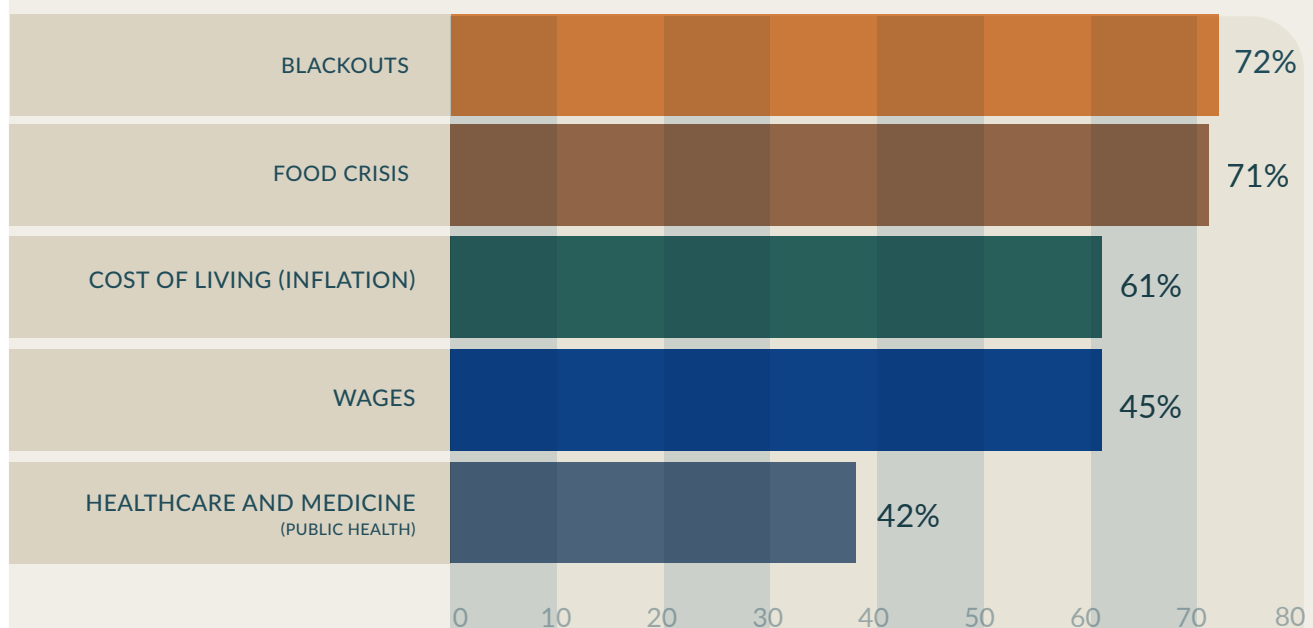


1. MAIN SOCIAL PROBLEMS

*For the first time, **blackouts** are Cubans' top concern, barely overtaking the food crisis.*

Wages, public health (medicine and healthcare), and the cost of living (inflation) come next. *Despite official propaganda, issues such as the embargo and MSMEs are a minority concern among Cubans (3% and 2%, respectively).*

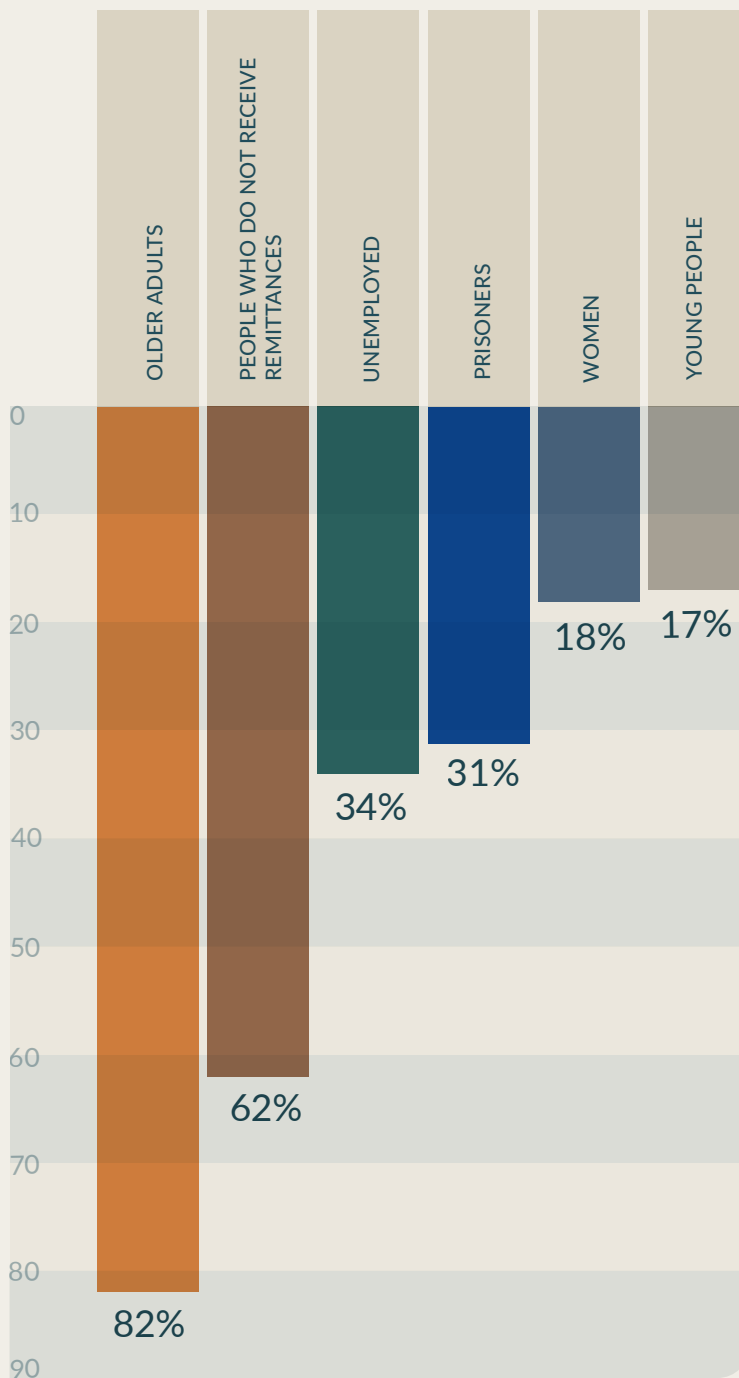
MAIN SOCIAL PROBLEMS



There are no significant differences by age, and the assessment of the main problems is homogeneous across all population groups.

2. SECTORS IN WORST ECONOMIC SITUATION

MOST AFFECTED SECTORS OF THE POPULATION



Older adults are once again considered the population sector most affected by current problems

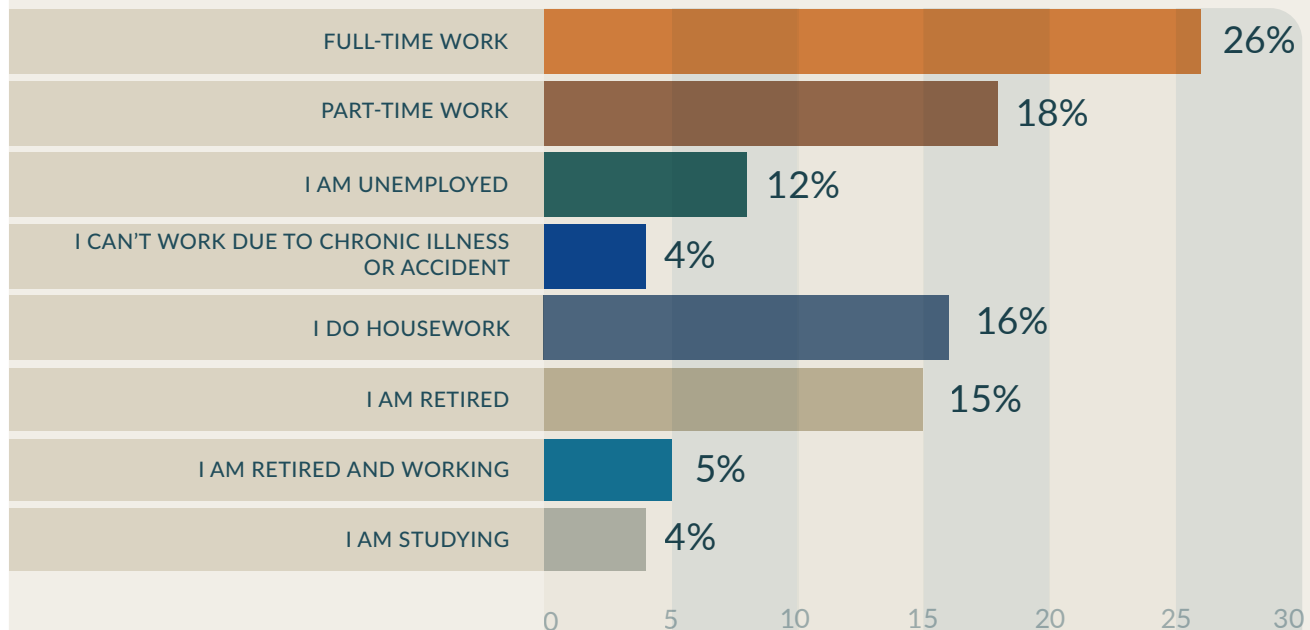
(82% of those interviewed believe this), followed by people who do not receive foreign aid and those who are unemployed. The same groups from previous surveys are in the top positions..

Social awareness of prisoners as one of the most impacted groups continues to grow (rising 5% to 31% from 26% in the previous study).



3. EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION



The proportion of those **working either part-time or full-time (43% in total)** varies significantly by age. Among **young people, part-time work increases significantly (28%)**, while **in the 31-45 age group, full-time work increases (44%)**.

The percentage of young people **aged 18-30 who are studying is only 22%**, and almost two out of ten are unemployed: neither studying nor working. **11% of young people are engaged in housework.**

Unemployment remains at around 12%
(similar to 2024).

14%
14% of those over 70 continue working after retirement.

● Amount of time unemployed



72%

Among the unemployed population, 72% have been unemployed for more than a year (a 3% increase compared to 2024). 32% of the unemployed have been unemployed for more than three years..



81%

81% of young people between the ages of 18 and 30 have been unemployed for more than a year.

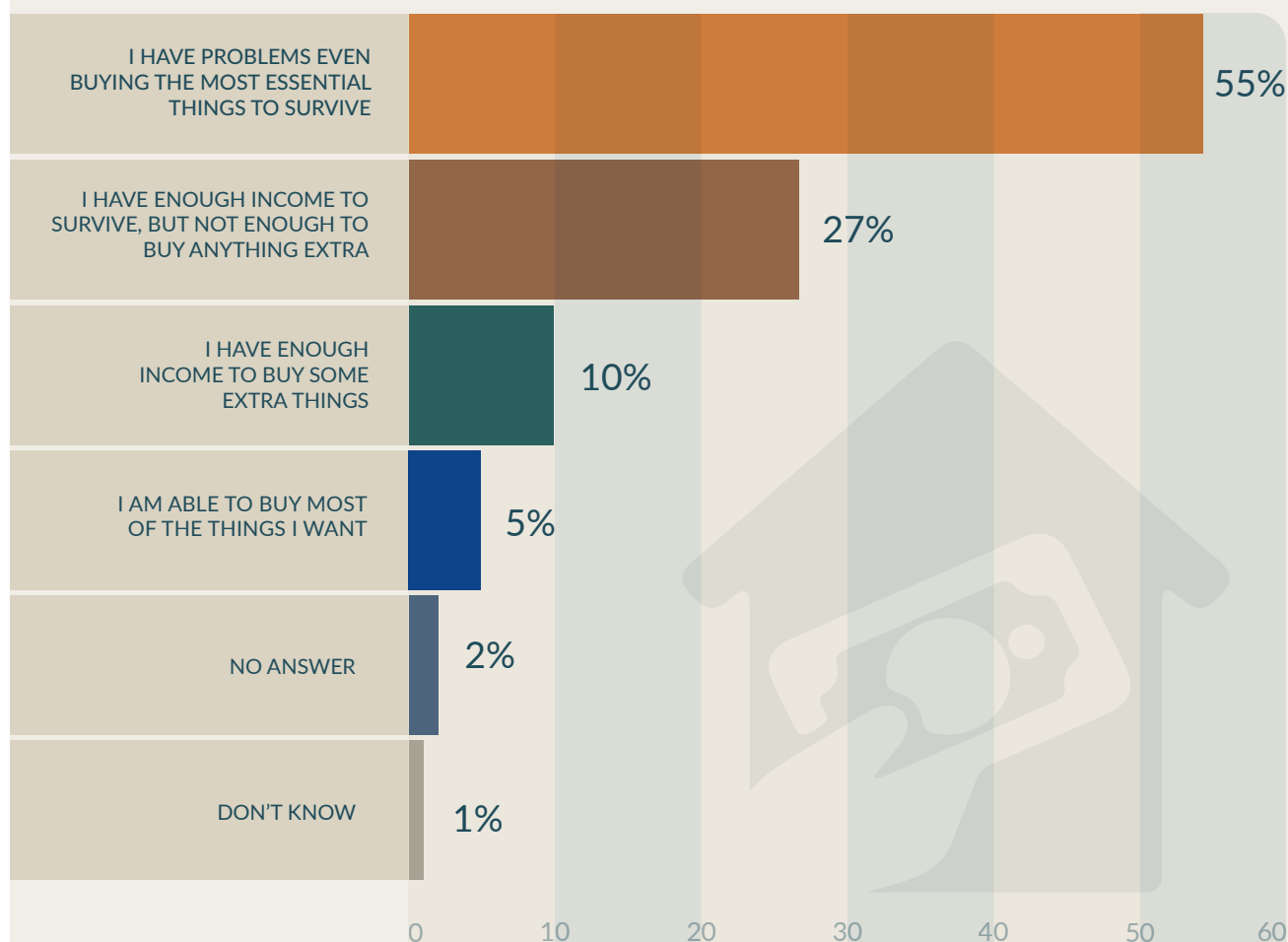
*48% of those surveyed who are employed still work for the **state**, but a sizable percentage of them (9%) are self-employed or employed by MSMEs in addition to their state jobs.*

4. HOUSEHOLD'S ECONOMIC SITUATION



The dire situation of Cuban households continues: 8 out of 10 are on the margins of survival.

DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSEHOLD'S ECONOMIC SITUATION



● Food Situation



7 out of 10 Cubans have stopped eating breakfast, lunch, or dinner due to a lack of money or food shortages.

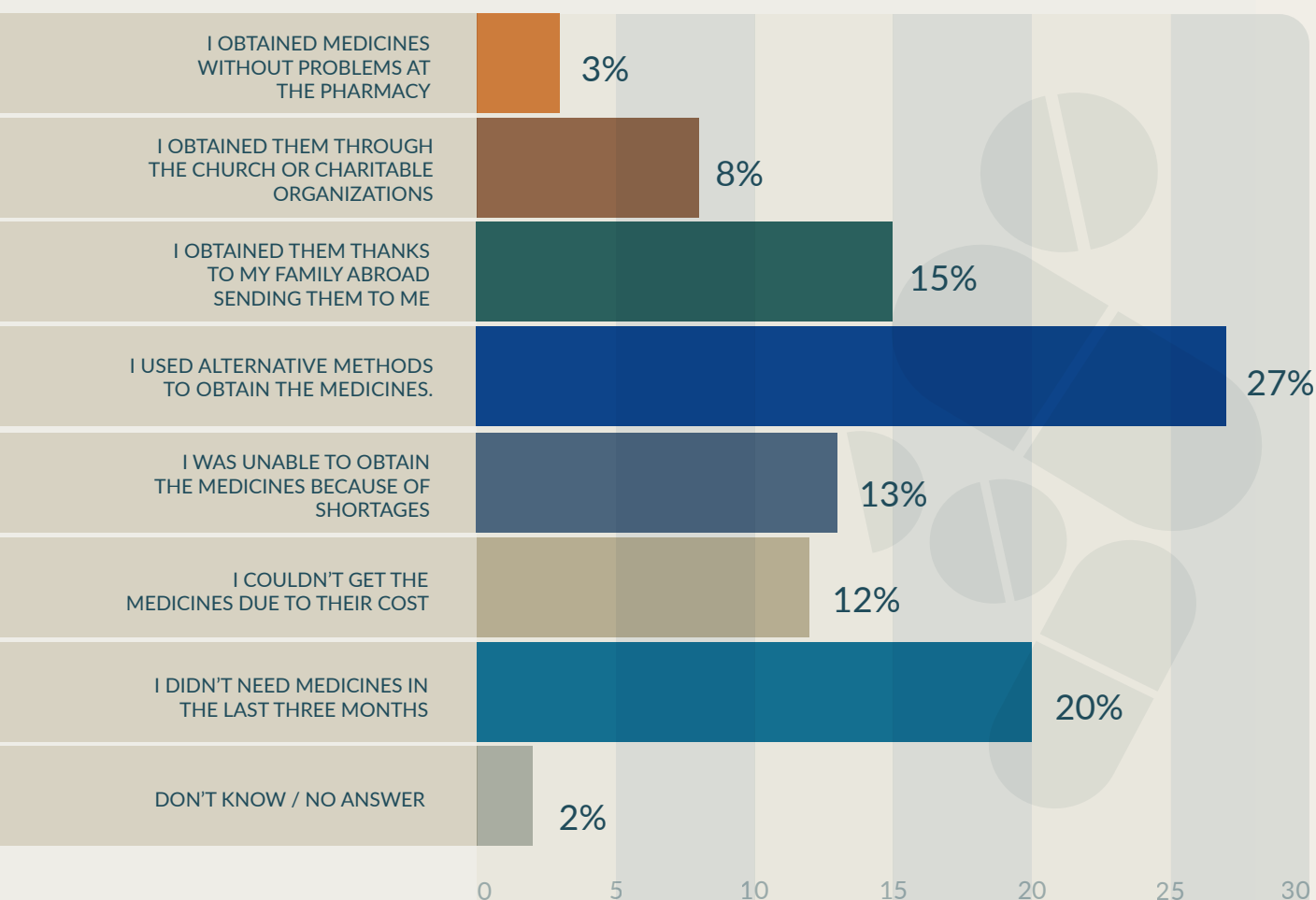


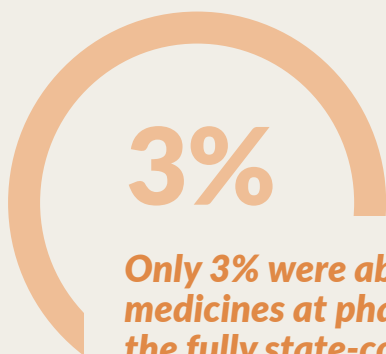
The proportion rises to **8 out of 10** among those over 61 years of age.

Only about 25% of the population has had no difficulties accessing food.

● Medications

EXPERIENCE PURCHASING MEDICINES

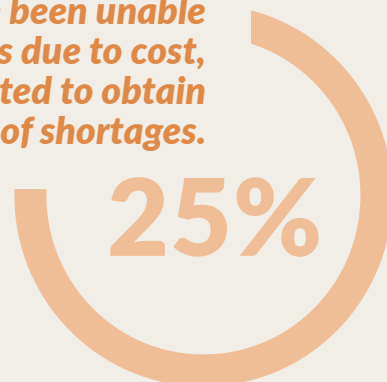




3%

Only 3% were able to obtain medicines at pharmacies in the fully state-controlled health system.

Twelve percent have been unable to obtain medicines due to cost, and 13% were prevented to obtain them because of shortages.



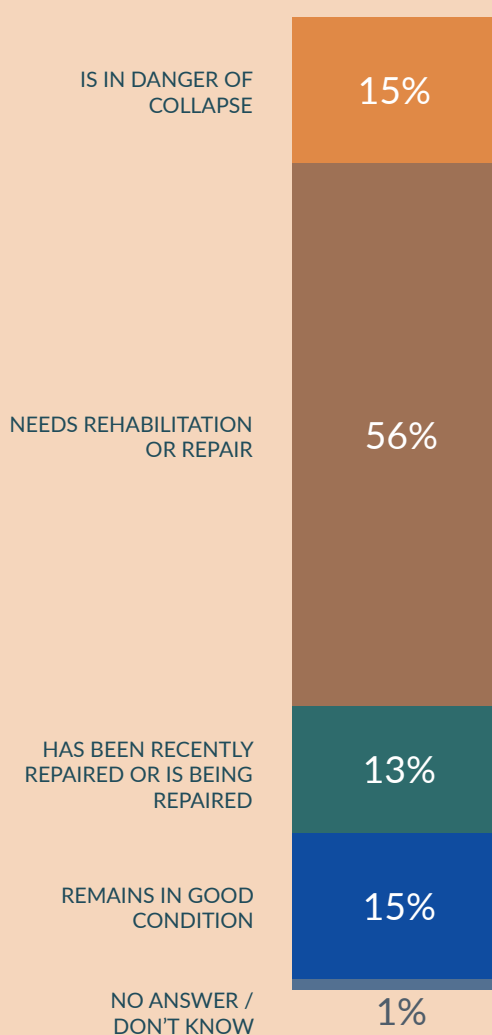
25%

● Housing and Water

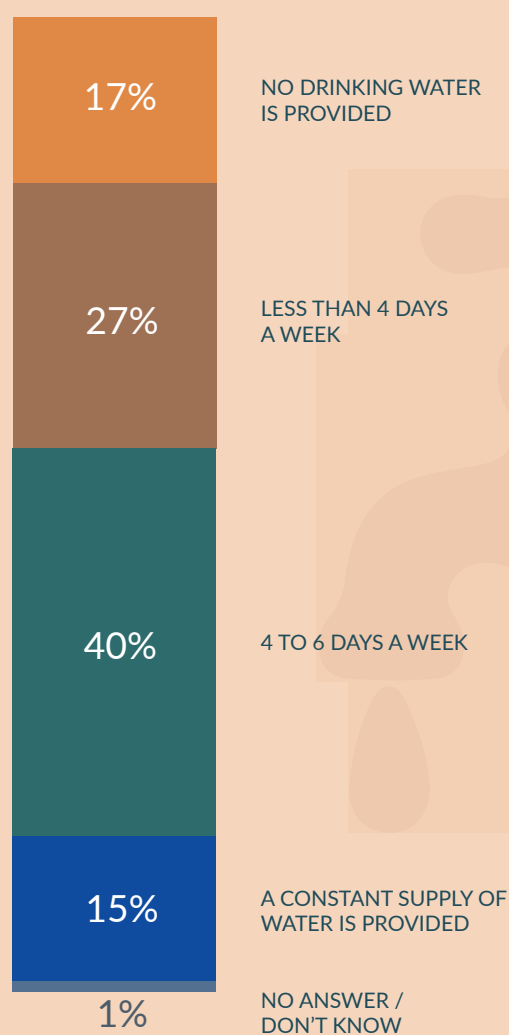
We recall data

regarding the housing and drinking water situation in 2023, which were not currently surveyed.

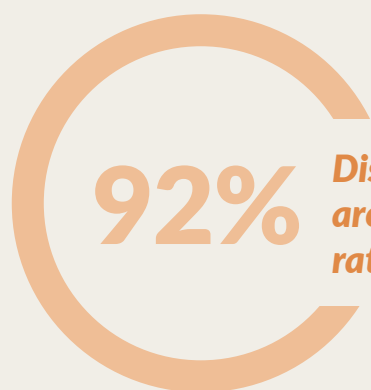
WHAT IS THE SITUATION REGARDING THE QUALITY OF THE PLACE YOU LIVE?



WATER SUPPLY TO THE PLACE YOU LIVE

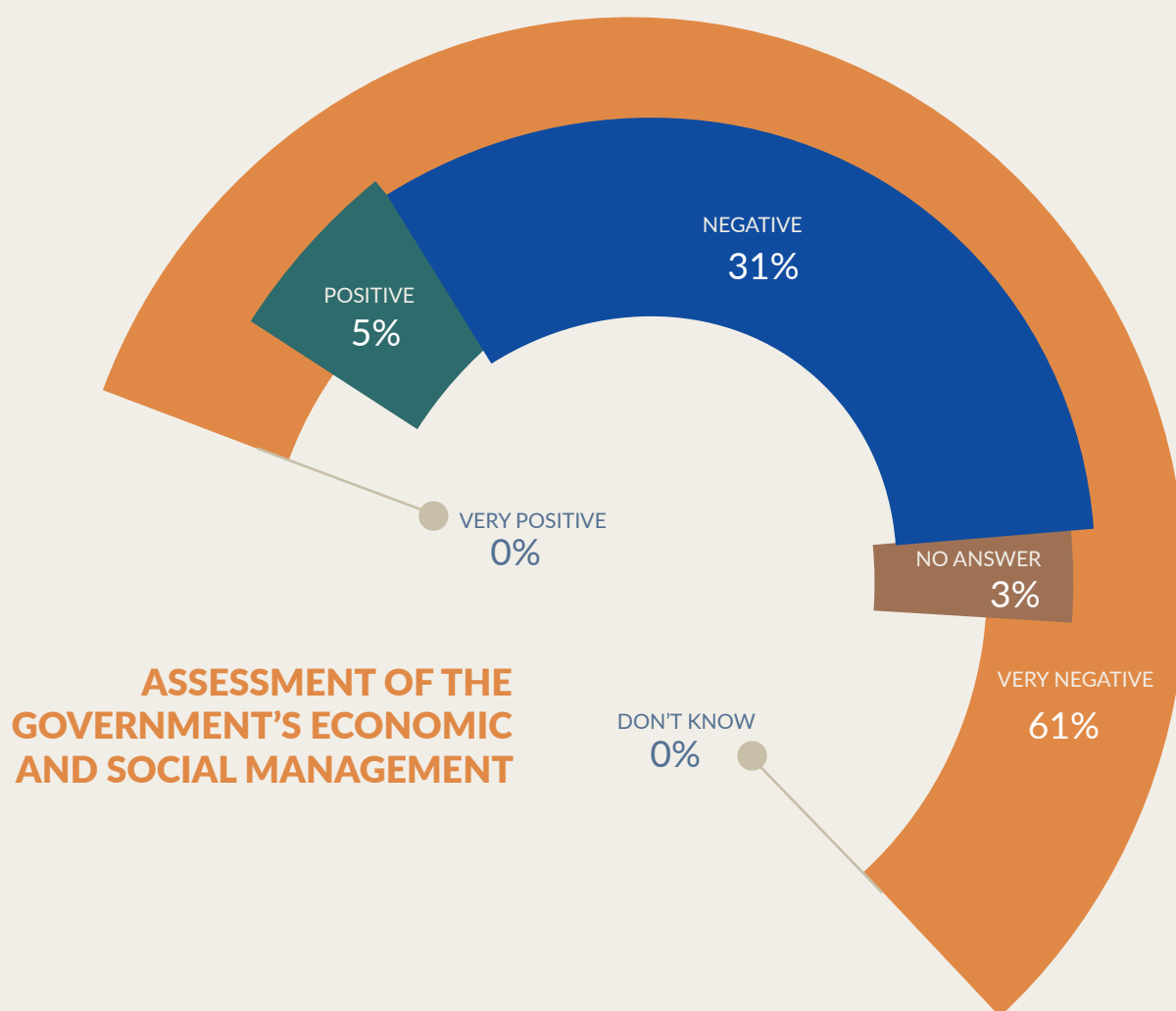


5. GOVERNMENTAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT



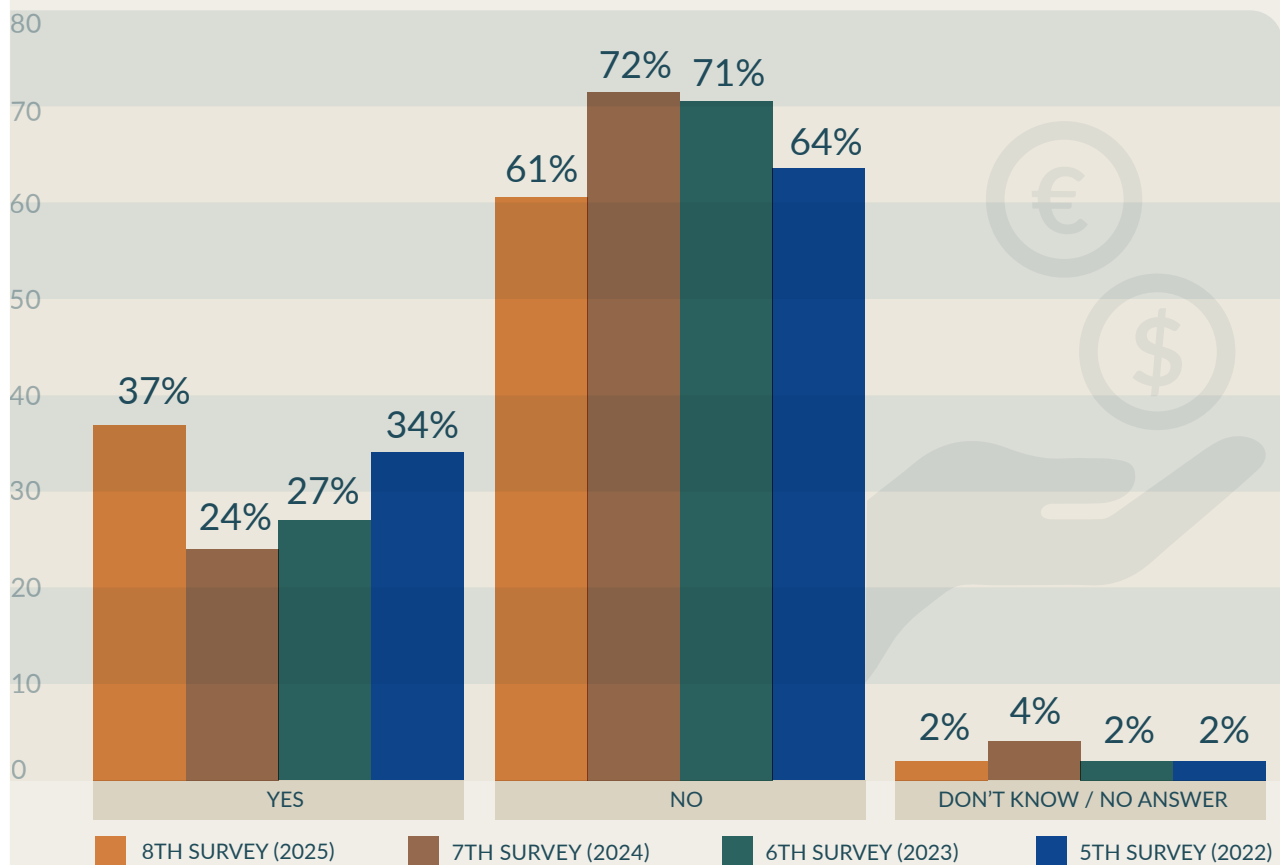
Disapproval of the government is around 92%, while the favorable rating is 5%.

It should be noted that among young individuals aged 18 to 30, the positive rating falls to 3.39%.



6. FAMILY REMITTANCES, POVERTY, AND HOUSEHOLD'S ECONOMIC SITUATION

RECEIPT OF REMITTANCES



37%

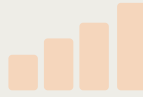
Compared to 2024, up to 37% of households now receive remittances, a marginally greater percentage than in 2022..

Family remittance assistance is “comprehensive”, given the broad needs of Cubans living on the island and/or in accordance with the preferences of those providing help.

They are evenly distributed within the following categories:



food or medicine packages (55%)

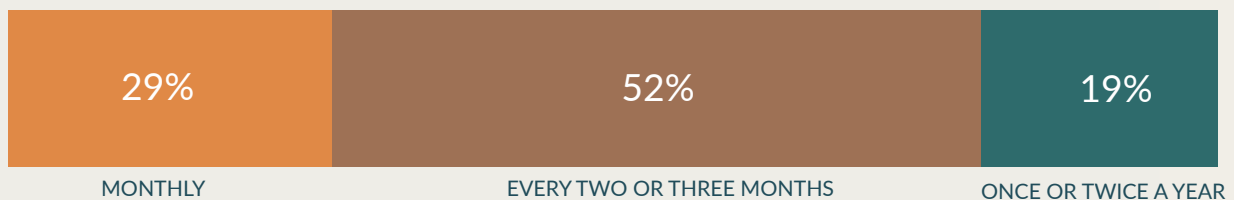


mobile phone recharges (received by 58% of those interviewed)

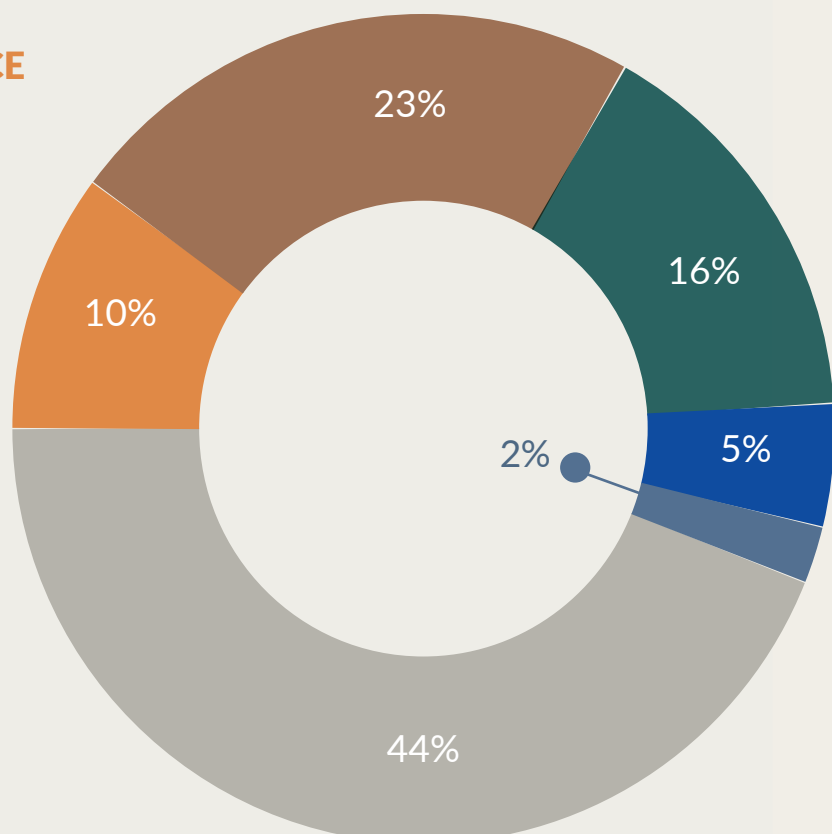


or monetary transfers (57%)

USUAL FREQUENCY OF RECEIPT OF REMITTANCES



AVERAGE AMOUNT OF EACH REMITTANCE RECEIVED

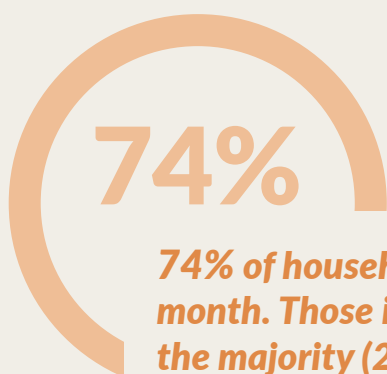
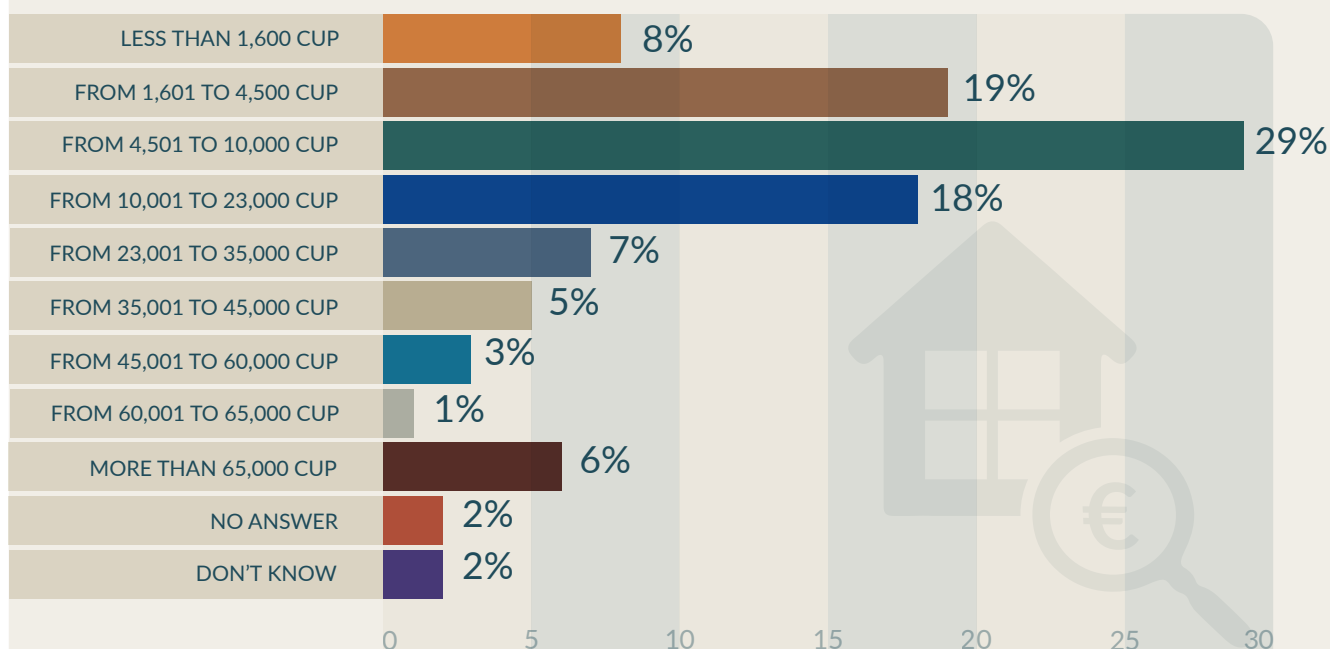




89% of Cuban households live in extreme poverty

The monthly income distribution of the households surveyed, including all revenue sources (salaries, remittances, etc.), is displayed in the following graph in Cuban pesos (CUP).

MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME



74% of households have incomes below 23,000 CUP per month. Those in the 4,501–10,000 CUP income range make up the majority (29%), followed by those in the 1,601–4,500 CUP range (19%).

More than 58% of people over 70 reported that their household income is equal to or less than 4,500 CUP.

In recent years, Cuban authorities have rapidly implemented a policy of eliminating subsidies. Subsidized products and services, due to their short duration, quantity, intermittence, or scarcity, have increasingly less impact on many households. Added to this is the serious crisis in public services and the lack of transparency regarding their true costs.

The growing decline in the value of the Cuban peso has severely impacted the vast majority of households. And while family remittances have a positive impact on those who receive them, the scarcity or rising costs of essential products and services also limit these families (*see 7th Report*, at <https://derechossocialescuba.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ODS7redux.pdf>).

The Cuban peso (CUP) in the non-state market, which Cubans typically use as a benchmark, has been losing value in relation to the US dollar (USD) since January 2025. In this context, we took the median of the monthly data from January to July as the exchange rate of \$1 to 355 Cuban pesos, in order to determine the extreme poverty criterion.

Since 2015, the World Bank has set the global extreme poverty boundary at \$1.90, a figure that we have maintained “frozen” despite rising. A household of three people will need to earn the equivalent of US \$171 per month to avoid extreme poverty (*).

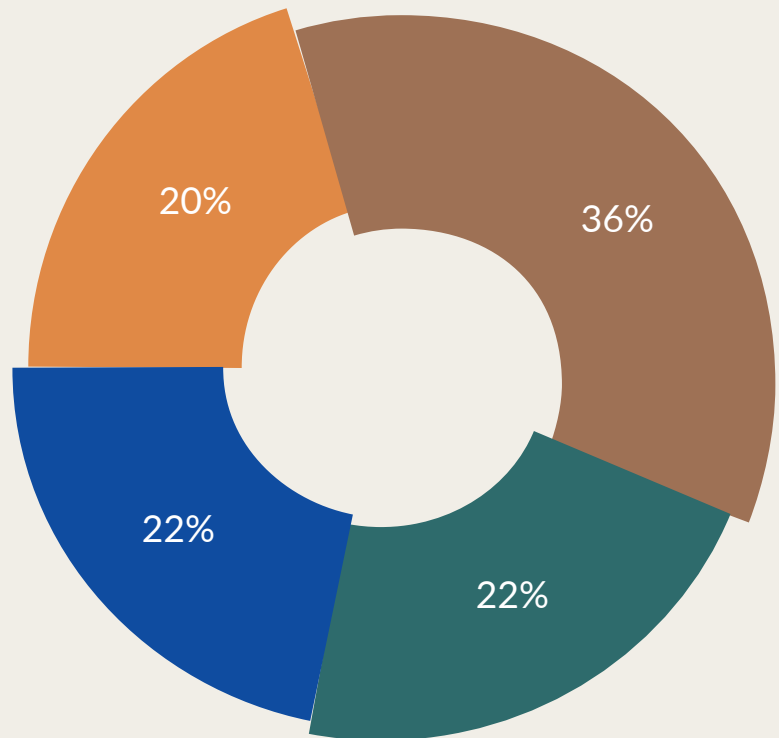
Considering the above and taking into account the total household income, we can conclude that at least 89% of Cubans remain in extreme poverty.



According to the Cuban Citizen Audit Observatory, a Cuban needs at least 30,000 Cuban pesos per month to “eat poorly.” According to economist Omar Everleny Pérez Villanueva, a basic food basket would cost \$24,351 Cuban pesos, which would cover the minimum subsistence needs for two people. Economist Miguel Alejandro Hayes maintains that people in Cuba need 53,049 Cuban pesos to feed themselves. According to the Food Monitor Program, two people in Havana would need 41,000 Cuban pesos to maintain an adequate diet.

7. FUTURE PROSPECTS

INTENT TO EMIGRATE



78% of Cubans want to leave or know someone who wants to leave the country.

The intention to leave the country is significantly higher among the younger population and decreases with age.

More young people express a direct wish to leave their country: **61% of those between the ages of 31 and 45 and 76% of those between the ages of 18 and 30 do so.**

The preferred destination would be the United States (30%);

however, it is significant that 34% of those who want to emigrate would do so to "anywhere they can go," indicating the urgency or seriousness of the current situation.

China and Russia attract only 2% of those willing to emigrate.





OBSERVATORIO DE DERECHOS SOCIALES
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