



# THE STATE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS IN CUBA

**REPORT 5 – 2022**



OBSERVATORIO DE DERECHOS SOCIALES  
CUBA



Observatorio Cubano  
de Derechos Humanos

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# Introduction

The Cuban Observatory of Human Rights presents the fifth study of social rights in Cuba, which gathers the most relevant findings on the social situation and other aspects such as the assessment of the government's administration, the perception of the future of the individual situation and the degree of trust in institutions as the result of direct interviews with more than one thousand Cuban citizens in fourteen provinces of the country.

Important patterns of Cuban social reality have been consolidated from more than three years ago, when these investigations began. We refer to the difficulties in essential public services such as power supply, drinking water, public health, and food, which continue to be the main concerns for the majority.

This study, like previous ones, confirms a growing deterioration of social rights in Cuba largely because of both structural and accumulated crises, along with the lack of political will of the Cuban authorities to make the changes that the country needs. One of the main findings that stands out in this study is precisely the

view that the government and the political system are among the main issues of the country, as well as the negative perceptions of the main State institutions and their management of essential problems to grant a decent life to the population.

The growing direct connection between social and political issues stands out (seen, for example, in the last popular demonstrations of August 2022), which is a warning sign regarding the general decline of the level of trust in the government's management and the pessimistic view Cubans have about their present and future.

## 1 Methodology and technical data sheet

1,227 in-person interviews were conducted in 59 municipalities from 14 out of the 16 provinces in Cuba, covering the western, central, and eastern regions, thereby obtaining a representative sample of the national population. In this fifth survey, 20 additional municipalities were added, compared to in the previous one, despite increased difficulties associated with the repressive environment and the economic situation. Due to the increased coverage in the 2022 poll of 14 provinces versus 11 provinces in previous polls, any comparison to previous surveys must be considered with caution. In addition, the 2022 achieved sample contains only 10% of interviews in Havana province, while its true population share among sampled provinces is 20%. This underrepresentation of Havana will also impact the comparability of current findings to previously collected data.

For data processing purposes, in this report the percentage decimals referred to in tables and graphs have been rounded to provide clarity when reading them, without affecting statistical accuracy.

### SURVEY DATA SHEET

**UNIVERSE:**

Population residing in Cuba aged 18 years and over, both sexes. Excluding populations from the Youth Island and Guantanamo provinces.

**SAMPLE:**

1,227 interviews.

**SAMPLING METHOD:**

Simple random. Sampling stratification by conglomerates: habitat of residence, sex, age, and racial group.

**ALLOCATION:**

Proportional.

**MARGIN OF ERROR:**

+/- 2.8 for global data.

**CONFIDENCE LEVEL:**

95% with p/q probability = 50%.

**FIELD WORK****METHODOLOGY:**

Personal interviews assisted by digital devices (mobile phones and tablets).

**FIELD WORK DATES:**

July 11, 2021, to August 10, 2022.

**ORGANIZATION****RESPONSIBLE FOR FIELD****WORK:**

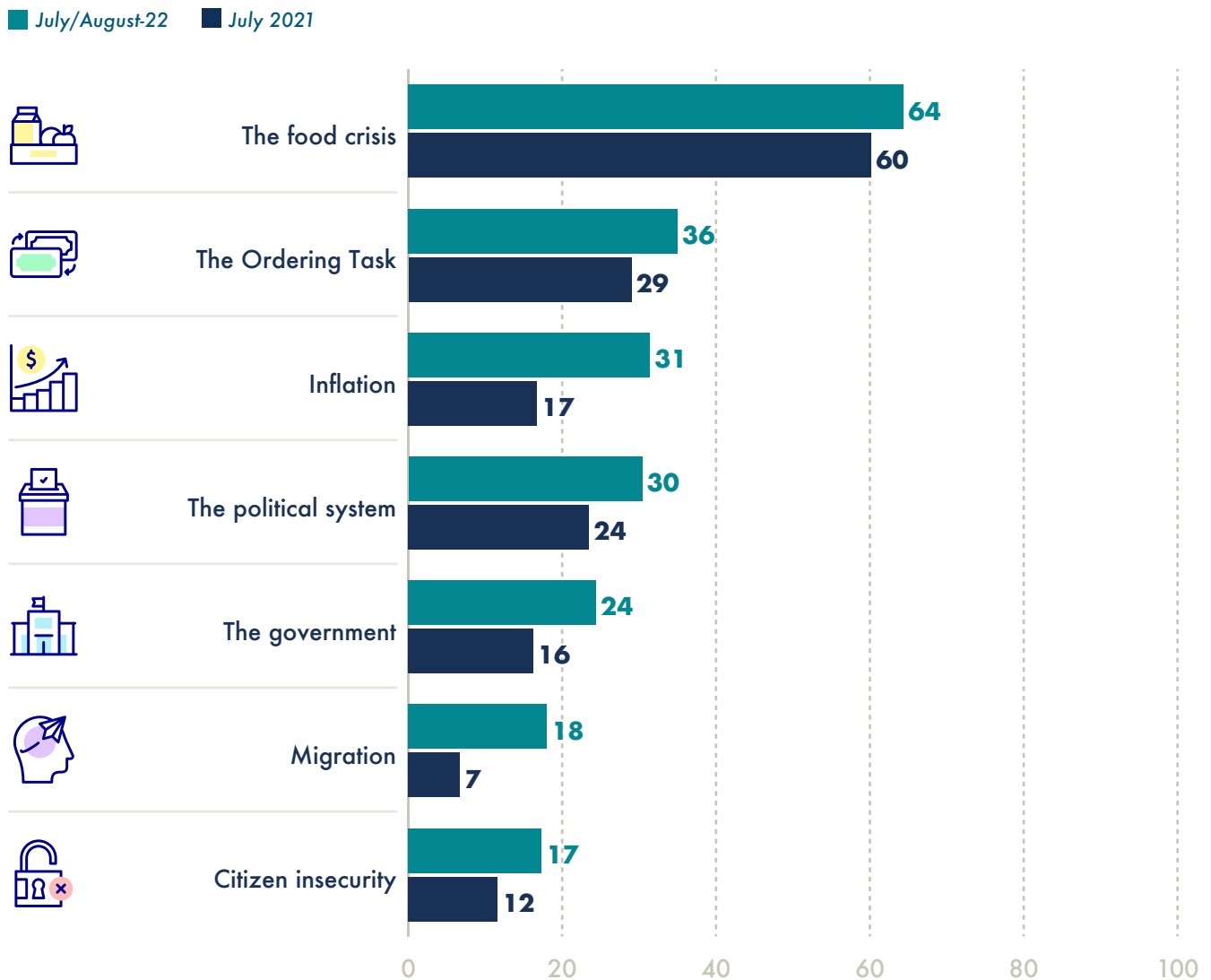
Cuban Human Rights Observatory (*Observatorio Cubano de Derechos Humanos*) (OCDH).

# Main issues facing Cuba

For 64% of Cubans, the food crisis continues to be the main issue, followed by the Ordering Task (Tarea de Ordenamiento) and Inflation.

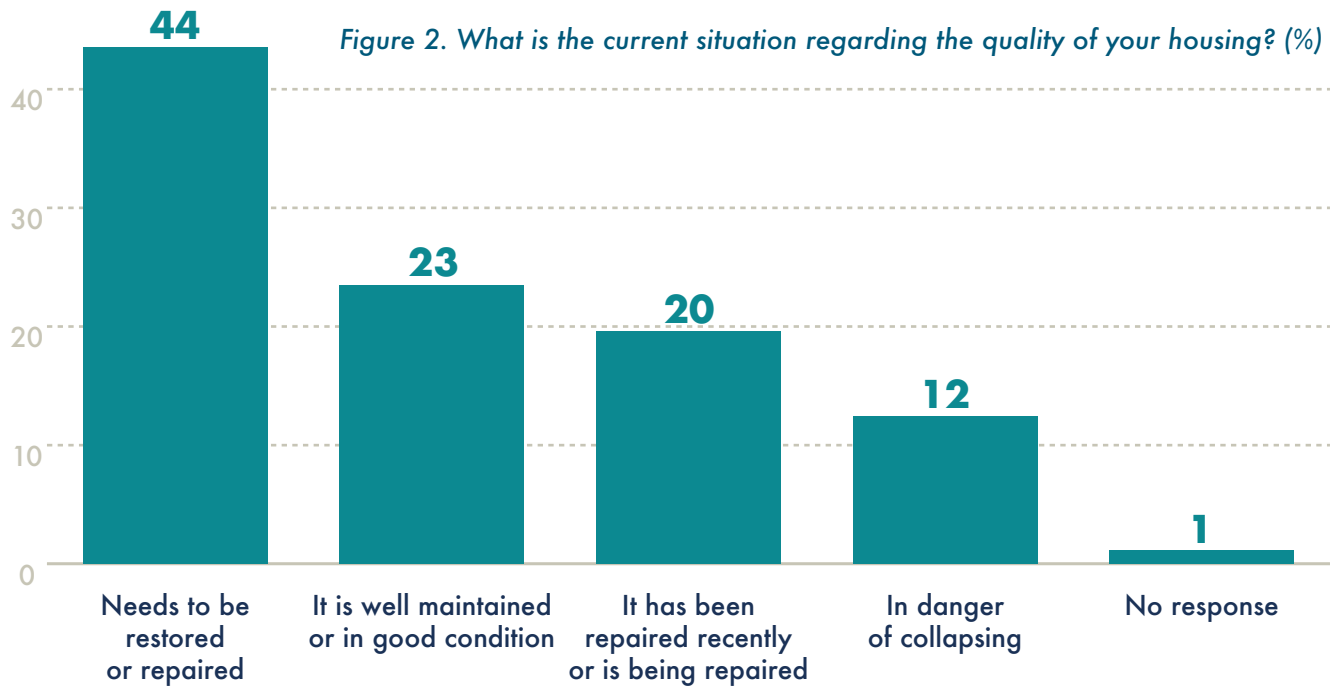
The percentage of people who view the political system and the government as a problem has increased. The U.S. embargo, at 8%, is still not among the ten main issues for Cubans.

Figure 1. Main social issues  
(multiple choice, percentages, top seven responses are displayed)



# Housing, water and electricity

## 3.1 HOUSING QUALITY



## 3.2 SUPPLY AND QUALITY OF DRINKING WATER



The percentage of respondents living in households without water, which ranged from eight to nine percent since 2019, increased to 15% in 2022.

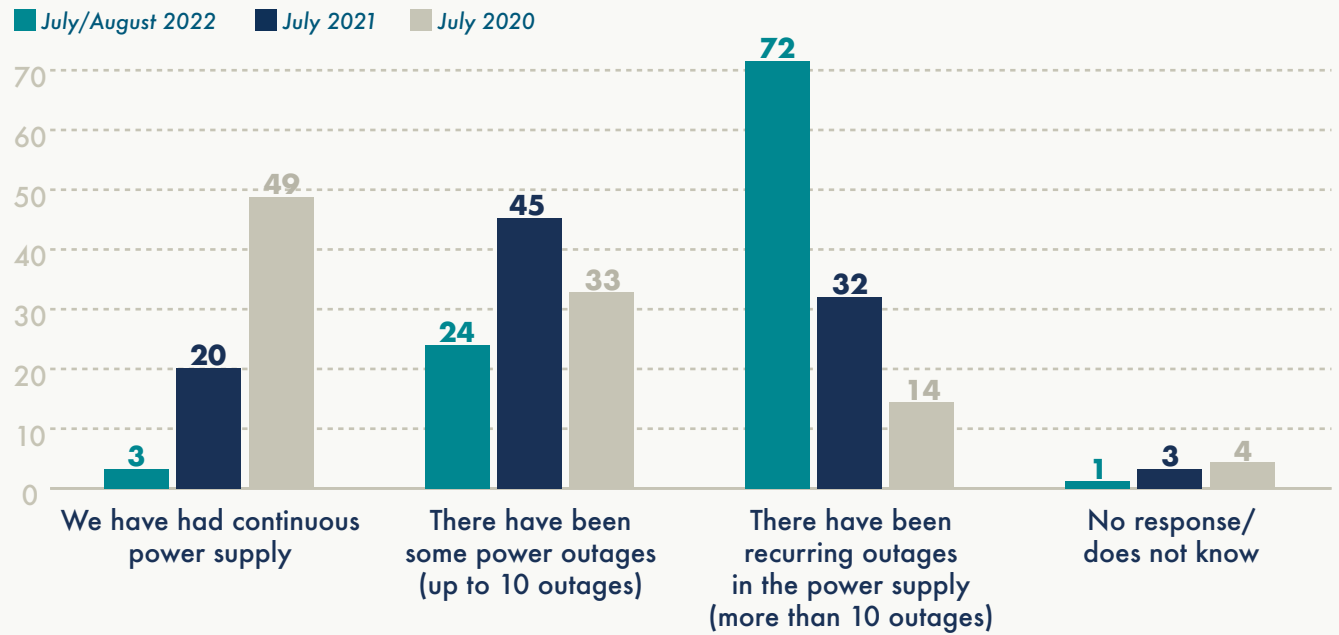
The quality of the water has worsened when compared to previous surveys: more than a third of the population considers the water quality to be bad (15%) or very bad (21%).



### 3.3 POWER SUPPLY

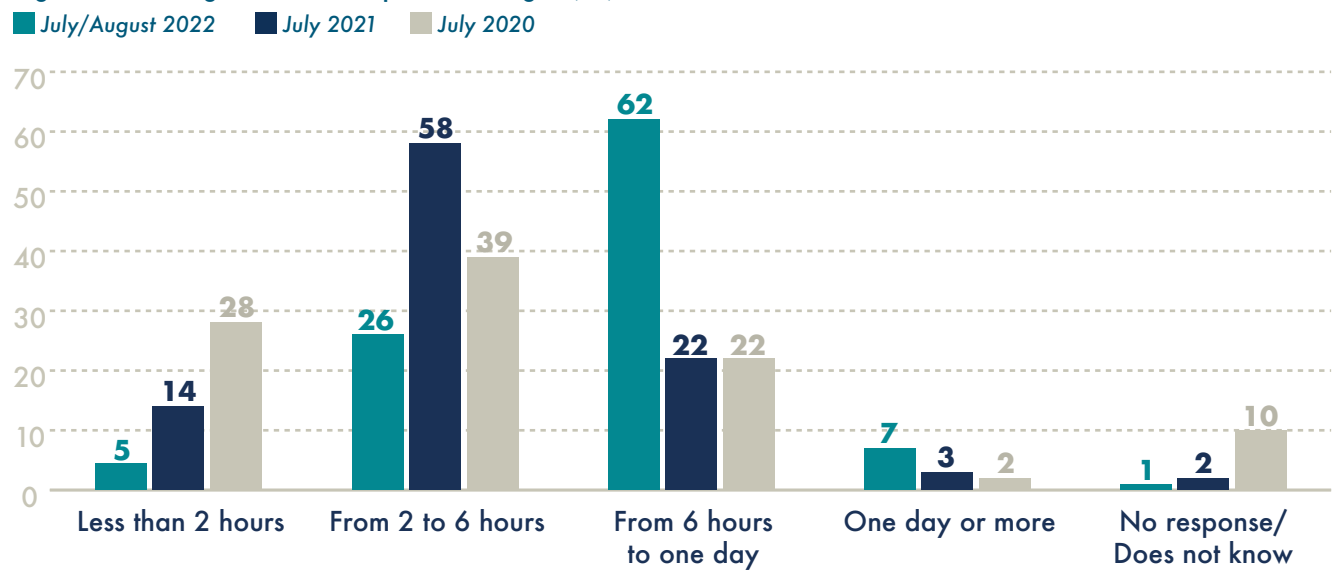
72% of Cubans live in households that suffer recurring power outages; only 3% declare to have a continuous power supply.

Figure 3. Power supply in the last 3 months (%)



A majority report that power outages are lasting from six hours to one day (62%) or one day or more (7%). This is a vast increase from July 2021, when 22% reported power outages of six hours to one day and 3% reported outages of one day or more.

Figure 4. Average duration of power outages (%)



# 4

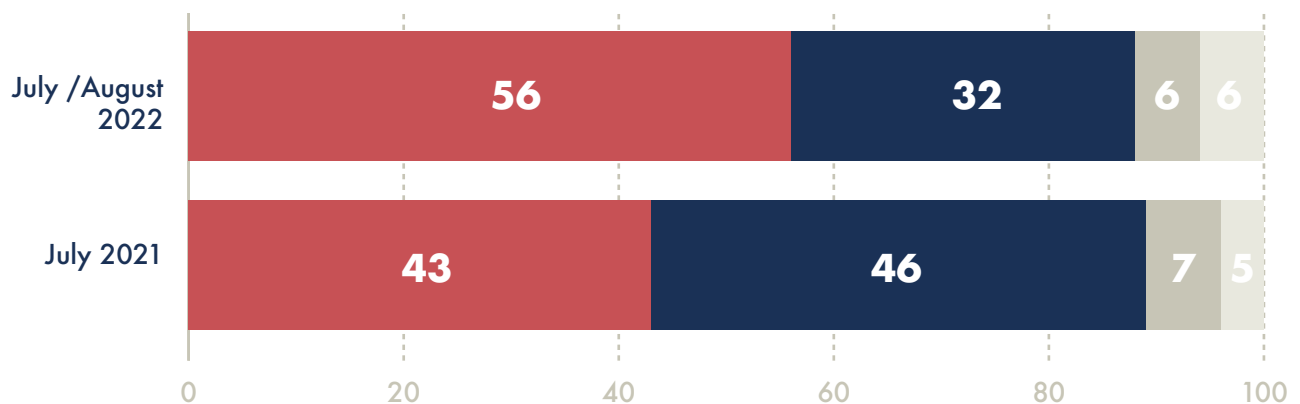
## Public health and access to medicine

### 4.1 ACCESS TO MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS

Most of the population (56%) find it necessary to bribe or make a payment to be able to access or expedite health care for themselves or their close ones.

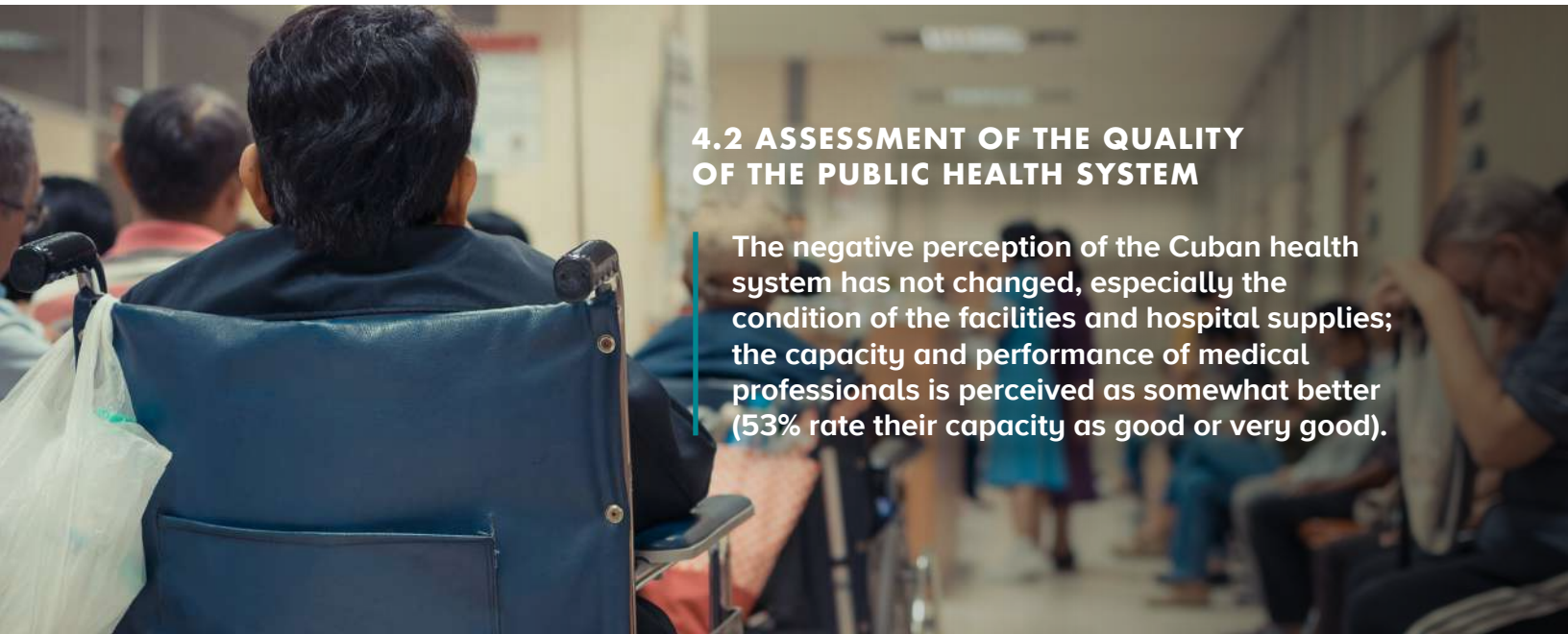
Figure 5. Have you or a close family member *had to pay or bribed to a health professional* to access or expedite a health service? (%)

■ Yes ■ No ■ No response ■ Does not know



### 4.2 ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

The negative perception of the Cuban health system has not changed, especially the condition of the facilities and hospital supplies; the capacity and performance of medical professionals is perceived as somewhat better (53% rate their capacity as good or very good).



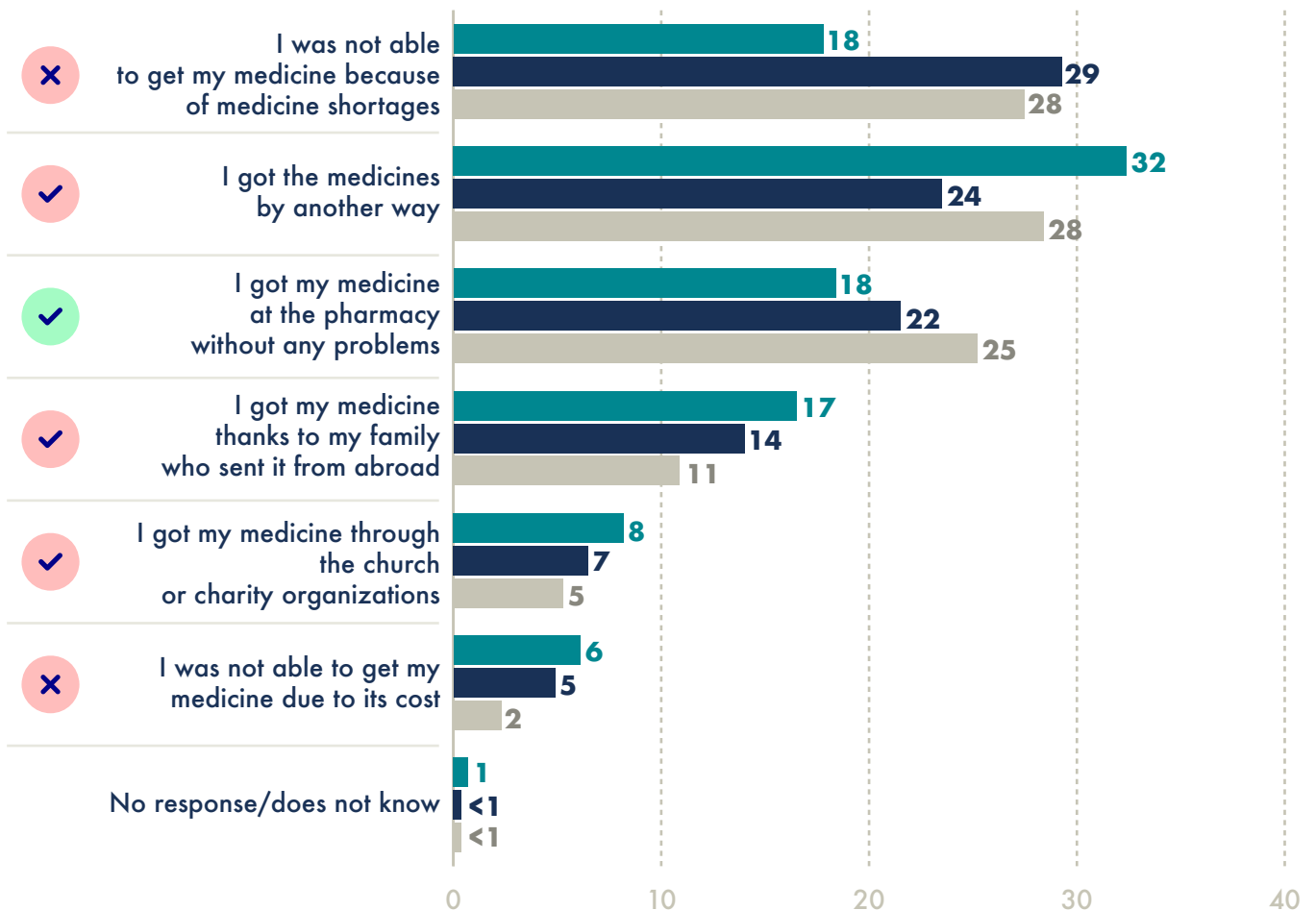


### 4.3 ACCESS TO MEDICINES

8 out of ten Cubans who needed medicines during the past 3 months did not get the medicines they need at the pharmacy.

Figure 6. How has your experience been acquiring medicines? (%)

■ July 2022 (Base: 723) ■ July 2021 (Base: 694) ■ July 2020 (Base: 789)

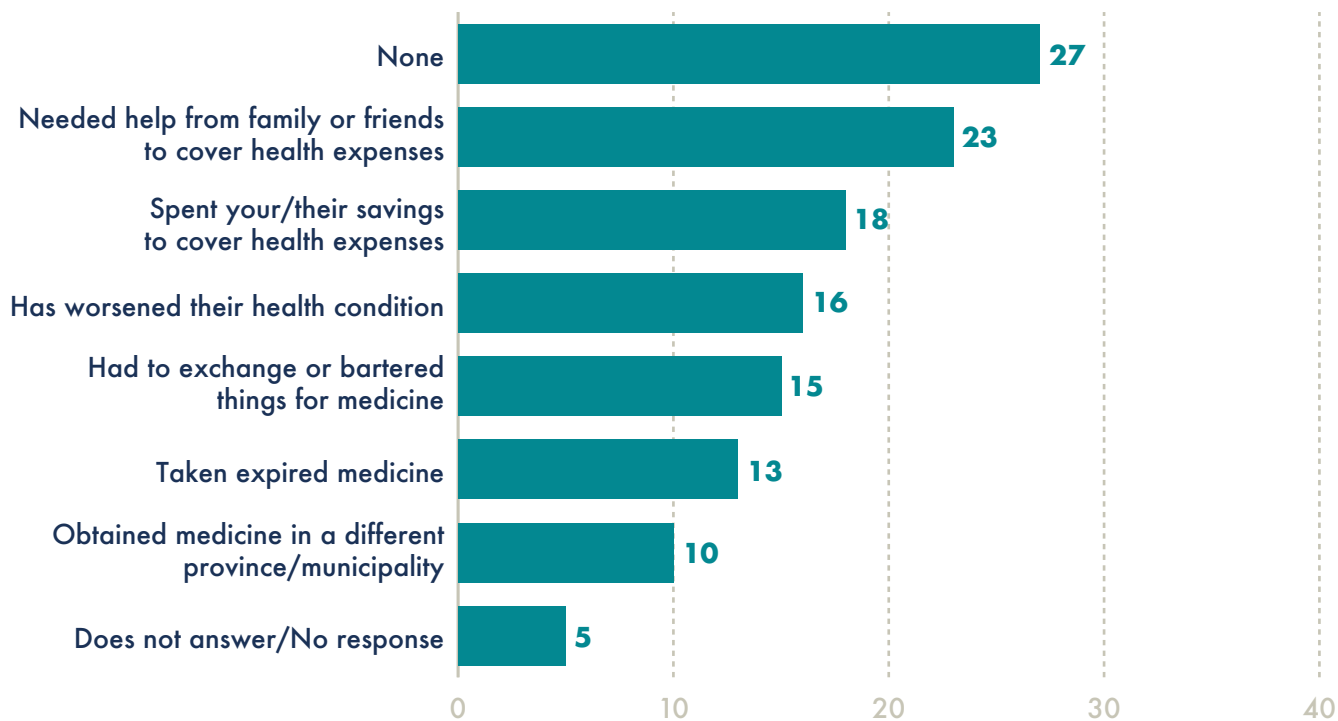




### 4.4 A WORSENING HEALTH SITUATION

The share of people who needed help from family and friends to pay for medical expenses has increased significantly (23%, up from 17% in 2021). The share of Cubans that had to spend from their savings to cover health expenses also increased (18%, up from 10% in 2021).

Figure 7. In the last 3 months, due to lack of medicines or money, have you or someone from your family (% multiple choice)

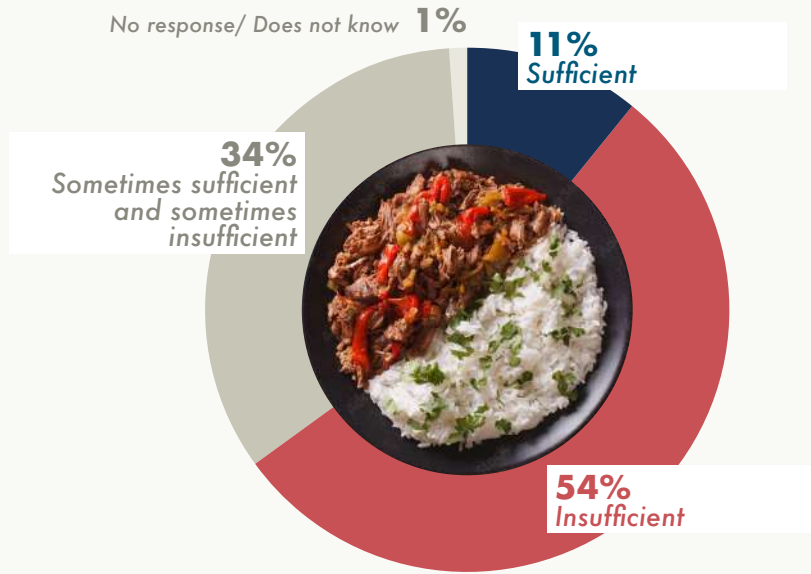


**5.1 THE QUALITY OF FAMILY NUTRITION**

Most of the population describes the quality of their diet and that of their family as "poor" (54%).

Only about one in ten Cubans consider the quality of their diet and that of their family as "sufficient".

Figure 8. How would you rate the quality of your and your family's diet? (%)



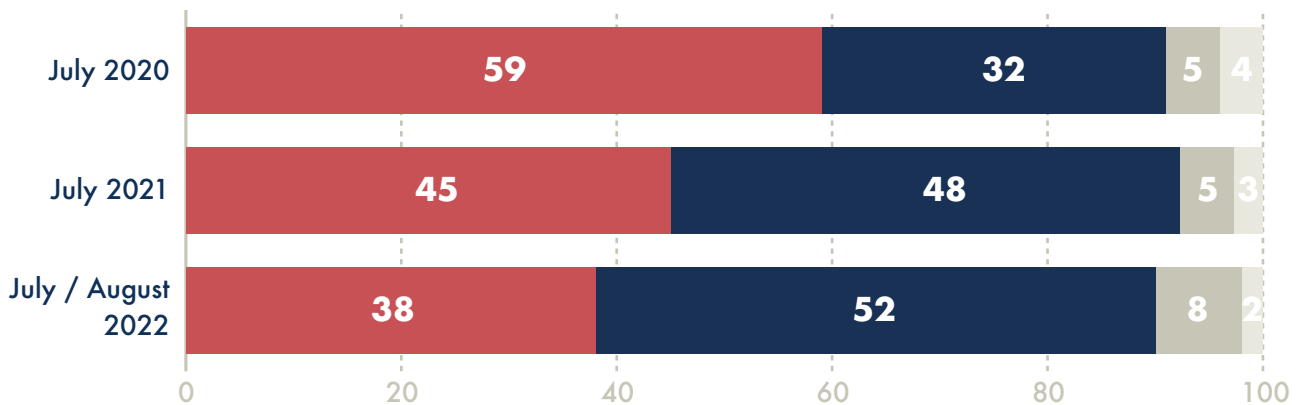
Most of the adult population (52%) eats two meals or less a day.

The upward trend in cases that had to deprive themselves of one of their main meals has been on the rise since July of last year.

Figure 9. In the last 3 months, due to lack of money or resources, did you or a member of your family had to stop eating breakfast, lunch, or dinner? (%)



Yes No No response Does not know



## 5.2 ACCESS TO BASIC FOOD WITH THE STATE BOOKLET

Most of the population has experienced interruptions in access to basic food through the state’s ration booklet; 42% have gone long periods of time without access to these foods, and those who have had specific interruptions increased to 46% from 37% in July 2021.

The yield of the products purchased with the rationing booklet for most of the population (68%) is about 10 days of the month or less. Sixteen percent are provided for about 20 days of the month. Only a minority (8%) can cover the entire month’s supply.

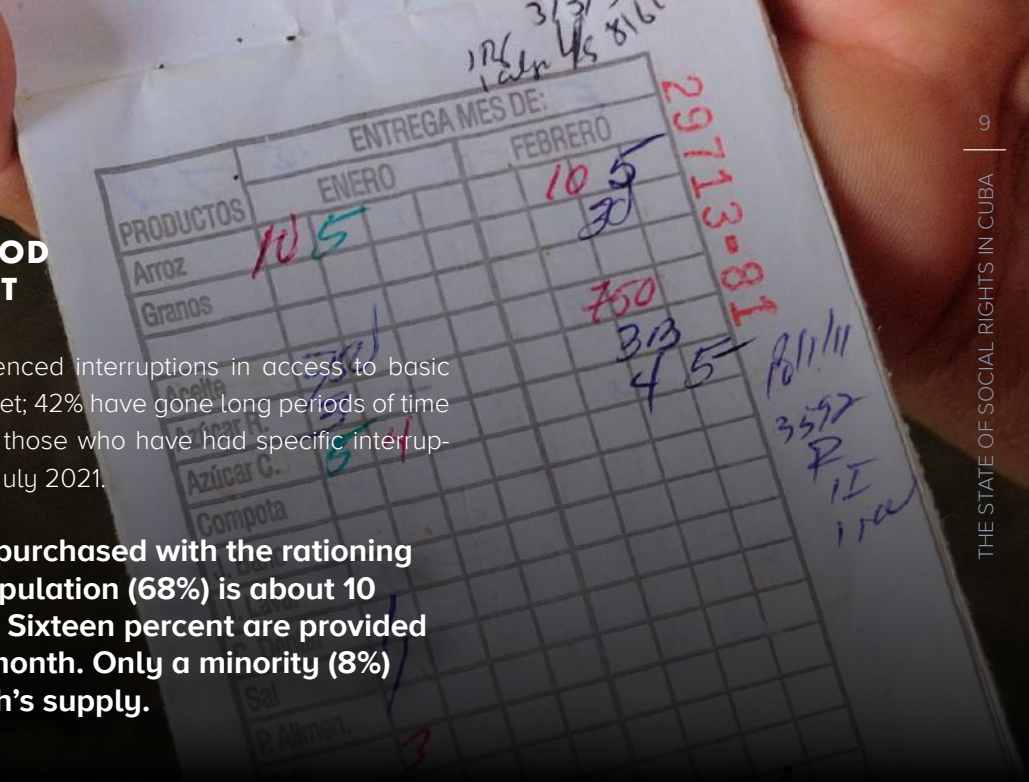
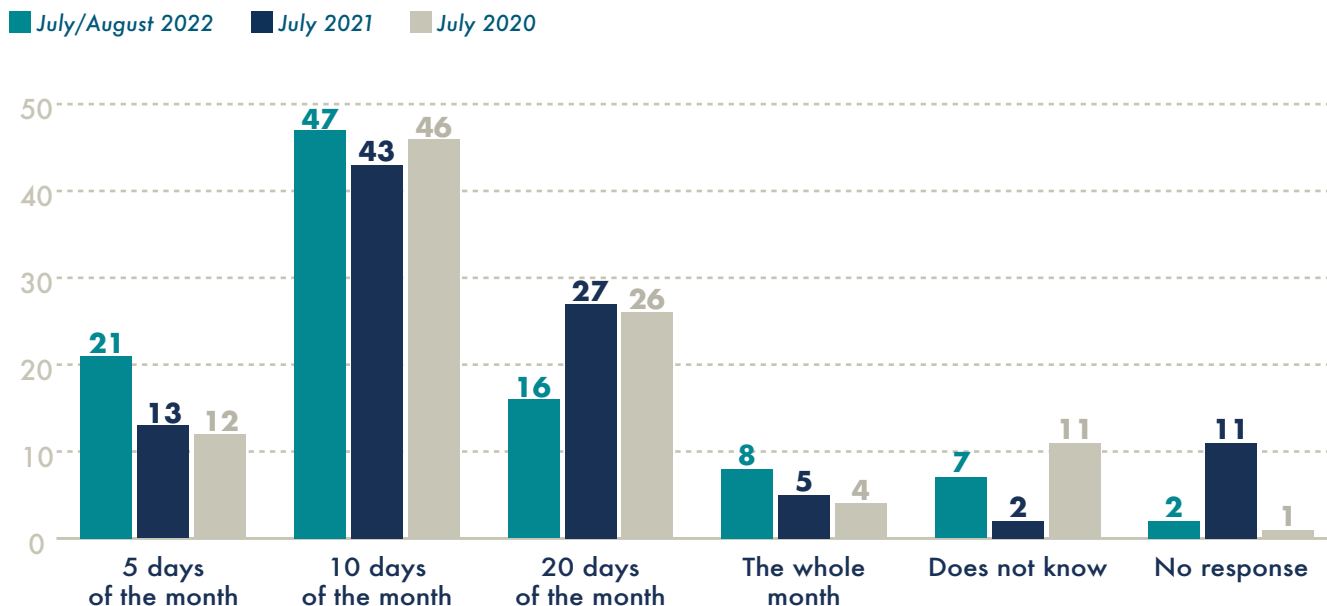


Figure 10. How many days can your family cover with the products obtained from the ration booklet? (%)



# Employment and social security

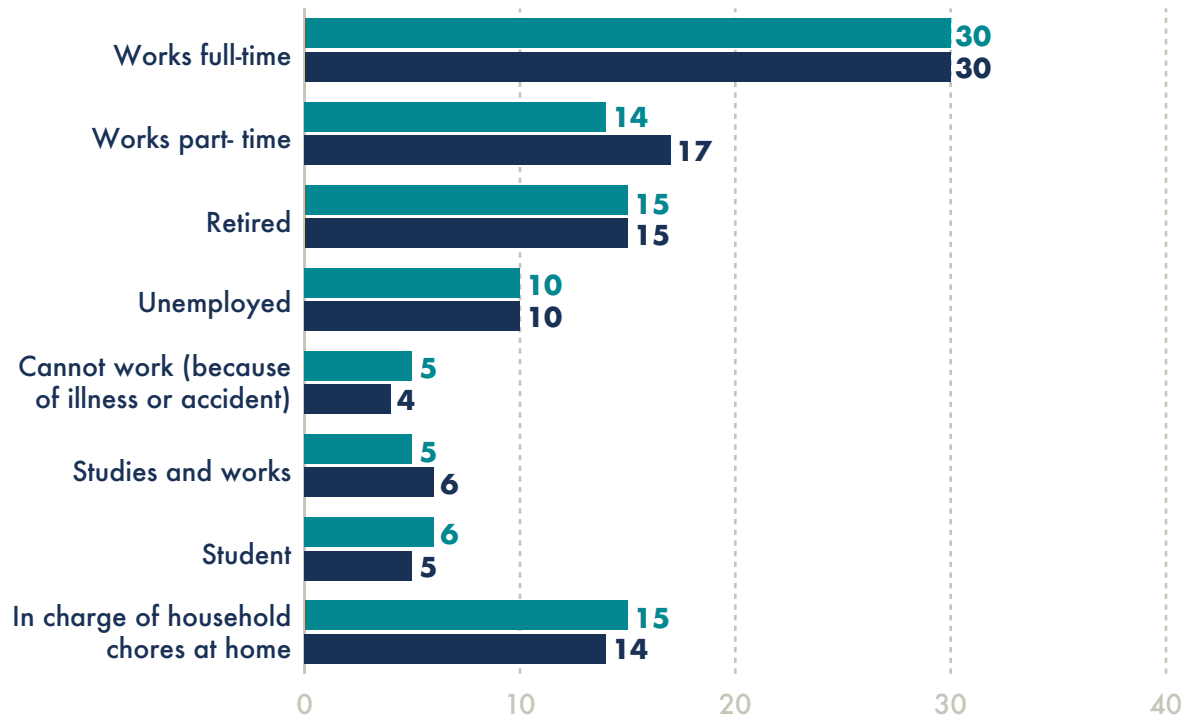
## 6.1 EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AND TYPE OF WORK

The percentages of unemployed, retired, students, as well as those of people employed in domestic work, remain in practically identical proportions with respect to previous surveys.

**The main sources or forms of employment are maintained: the State (47%) and self-employment (about a third of the population), and Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) burst into the labor environment (7%).**

Figure 11. Current employment situation (%)

■ July/August 2022 ■ July 2021

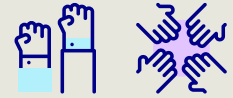


## 6.2 MEMBERSHIP IN LABOR UNIONS OR WORKERS' ASSOCIATIONS

72% of the respondents declare that they do not belong to State labor unions.

53% of union members respond that the state labor unions do not defend or hardly defend their rights as workers.

## 6.3 LABOR RIGHTS AND FREE LABOR UNION ACTIVITY



70% of adults affirm that free labor union activity is not allowed in Cuba.

Similarly, the majority of those interviewed (64%) believe that labor rights of workers are not respected in the country.

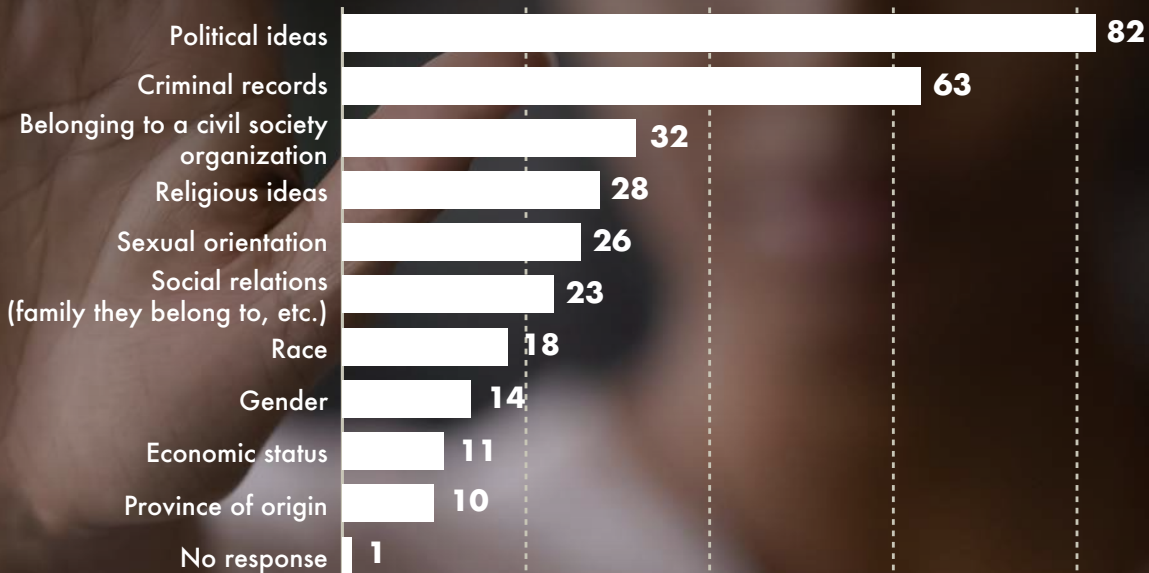
51% of those interviewed say they are unaware of any entity or mechanism to turn to in case of a violation of workers rights; and when adding those who do not know, this figure rises to 61%.

## 6.4 DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES IN THE LABOR SECTOR

More than half of those interviewed believe that there is discrimination of some kind for a person finding a job (56%). It is also worth noting that 29% of those interviewed believe that there is no such type of discrimination and, as in the previous survey, when asked there is a considerable segment that does not answer (15%).

Among the factors listed by those who believe there is discrimination, political ideas (82%) and criminal records (63%) come first as drivers of employment discrimination, and criminal records can possibly in some cases be also related to political reasons. Membership in a civil society association (32%) and religious ideas (28%) are also listed among the most frequently mentioned reasons.

Figure 12. Reasons why people are discriminated against when looking for a job (%) (Base: there is discrimination 691) Multiple responses accepted

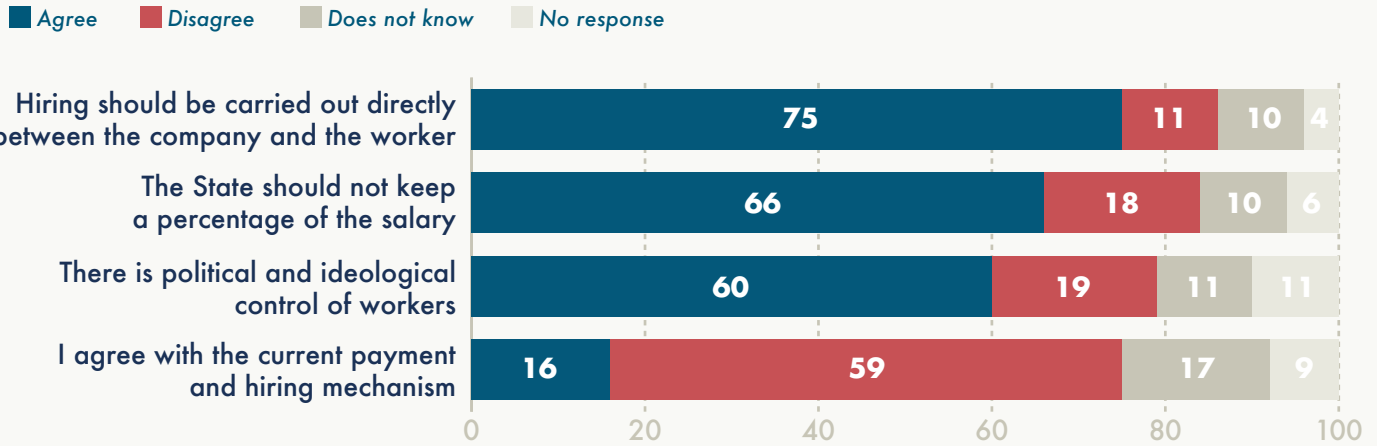


## 6.5 WORKING CONDITIONS

Regarding employment related to foreign investment, 75% of the adult population agrees that hiring should be carried out directly between the company and the worker, agree that the State should not keep a percentage of the salary (66%) and agree that there is political and ideological control of the workers (60%).

Regarding the salary of workers in Cuba, most of the adult population (80%) attest that the salary is insufficient for amount of work they do.

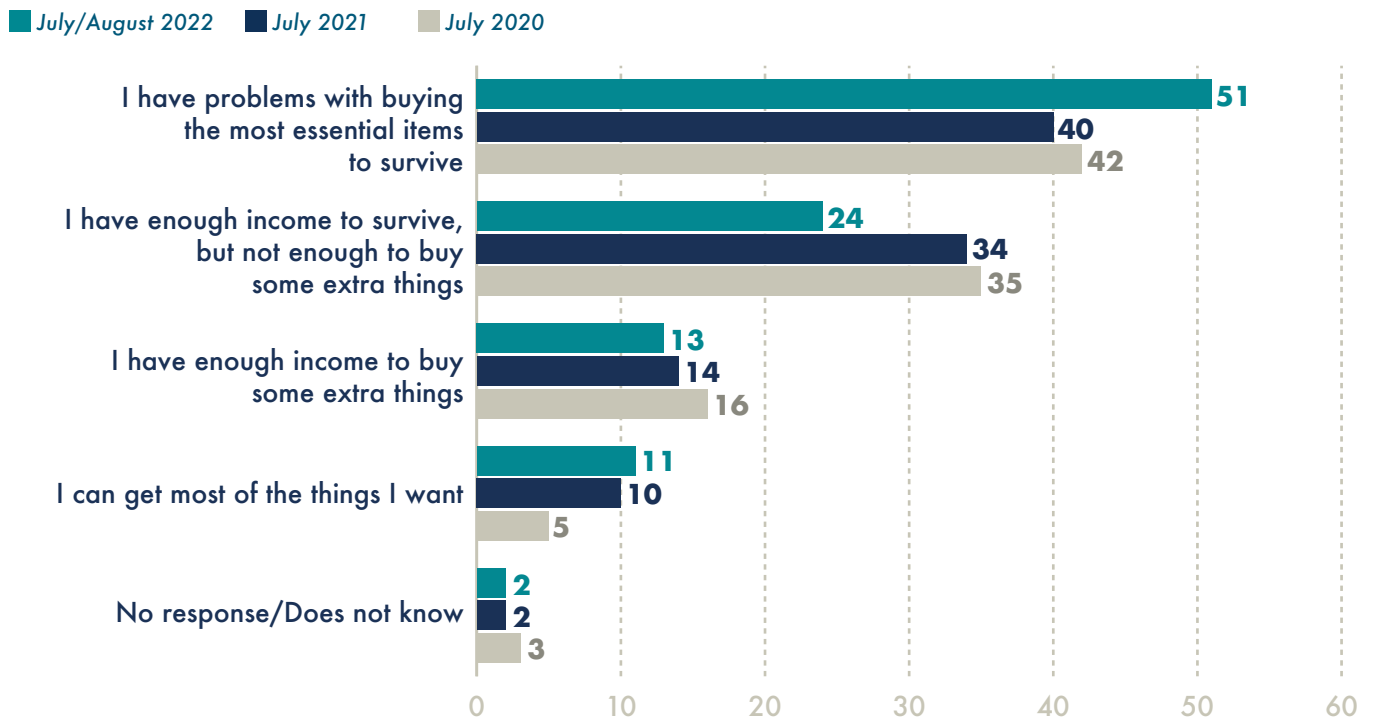
Figure 13. In relation to workers in companies with foreign capital, mark the statements you agree with (%)



## 6.6 MONTHLY INCOME AND THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE FAMILY

More than half of respondents (51%) note they have problems buying the most essential items to survive.

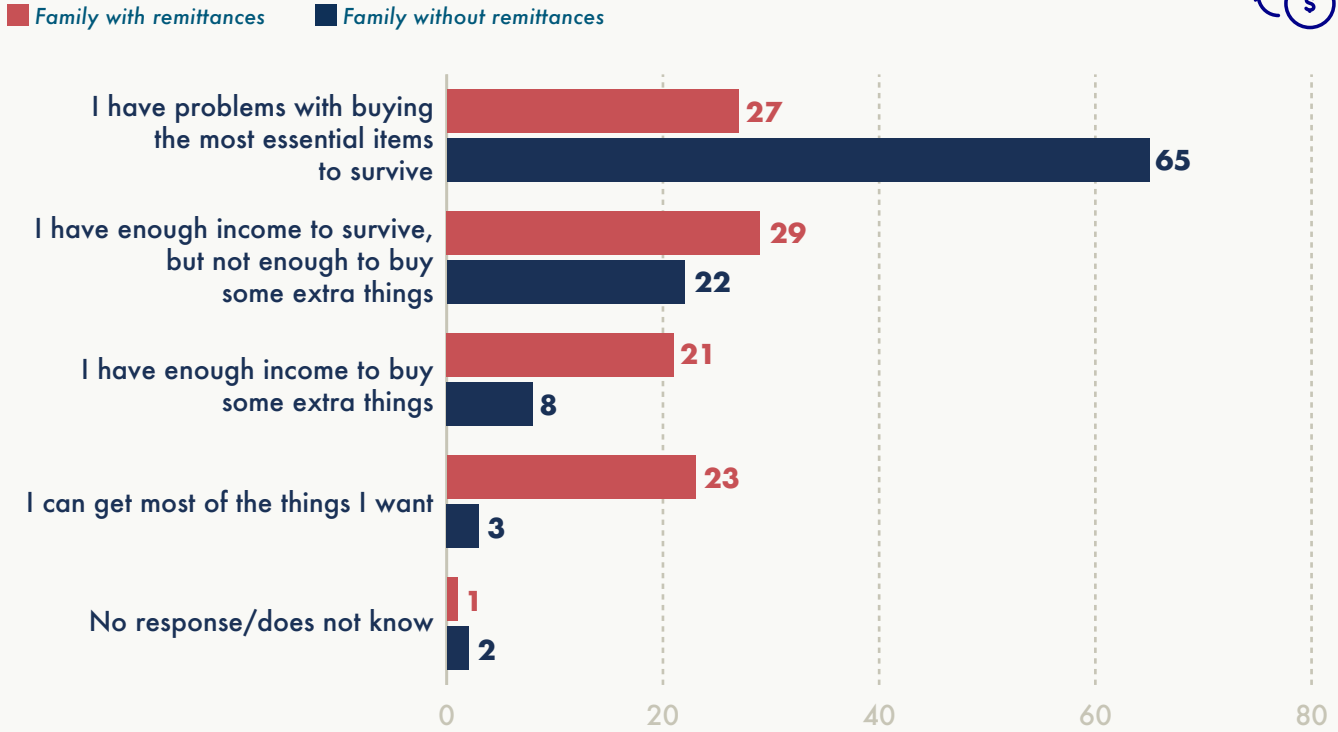
Figure 14. Description of the economic situation of the household (%)



The situation of households significantly improves for those who receive family remittances.



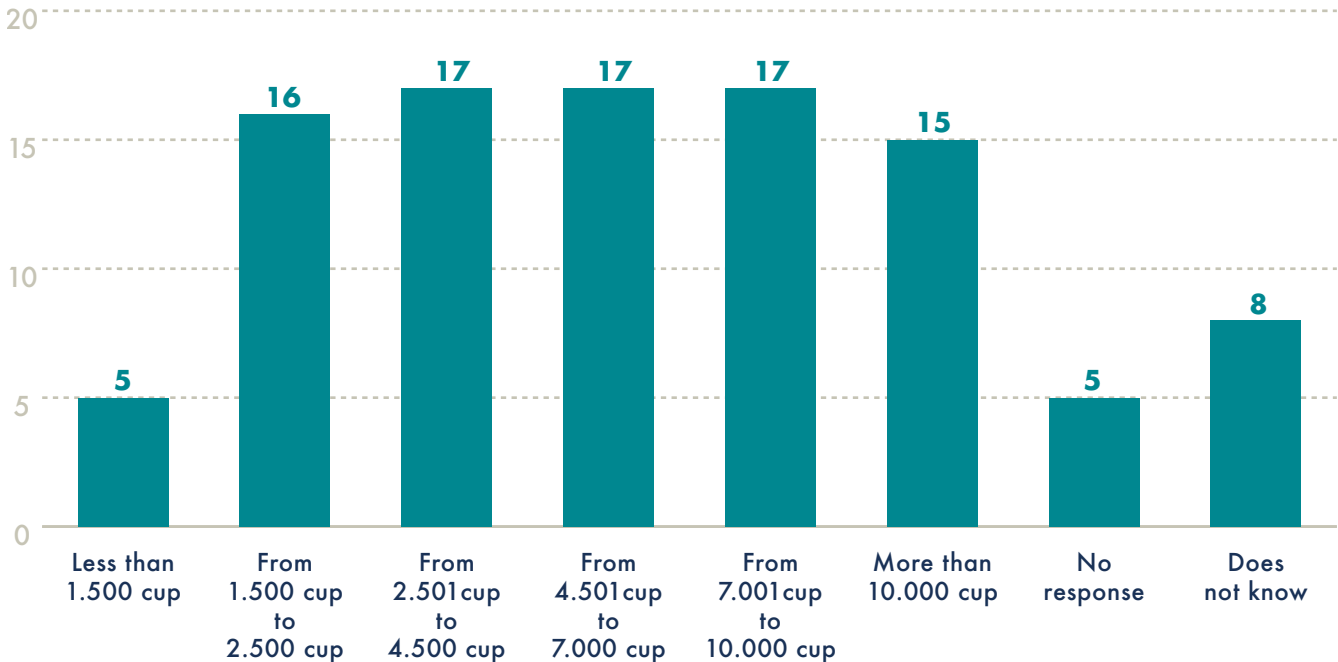
**Figure 15. Situation of the household and those that receive family remittances (%)**



Among respondents living in households that receive remittances, the situation of having problems buying even essential items drops to 27%, a far lower share than among respondents in households that do not

receive remittance: 65% of those have difficulty in acquiring even the essential needs. Only a third of respondents state their households received remittances from abroad during the past 3 months.

**Figure 16. Monthly household income (%)**



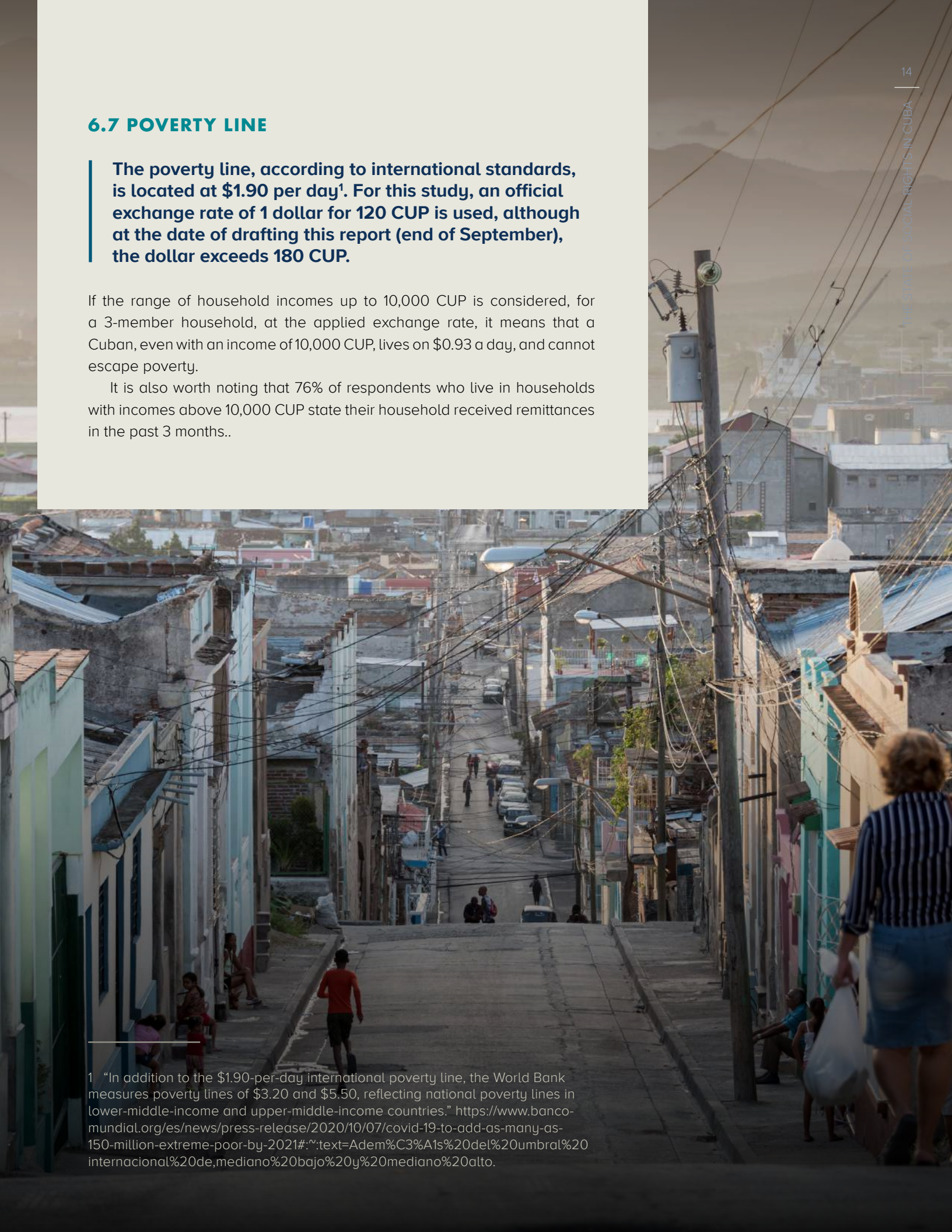
## 6.7 POVERTY LINE

The poverty line, according to international standards, is located at \$1.90 per day<sup>1</sup>. For this study, an official exchange rate of 1 dollar for 120 CUP is used, although at the date of drafting this report (end of September), the dollar exceeds 180 CUP.

If the range of household incomes up to 10,000 CUP is considered, for a 3-member household, at the applied exchange rate, it means that a Cuban, even with an income of 10,000 CUP, lives on \$0.93 a day, and cannot escape poverty.

It is also worth noting that 76% of respondents who live in households with incomes above 10,000 CUP state their household received remittances in the past 3 months..

1 "In addition to the \$1.90-per-day international poverty line, the World Bank measures poverty lines of \$3.20 and \$5.50, reflecting national poverty lines in lower-middle-income and upper-middle-income countries." <https://www.banco-mundial.org/es/news/press-release/2020/10/07/covid-19-to-add-as-many-as-150-million-extreme-poor-by-2021#:~:text=Adem%C3%A1s%20del%20umbral%20internacional%20de,mediano%20bajo%20y%20mediano%20alto>.



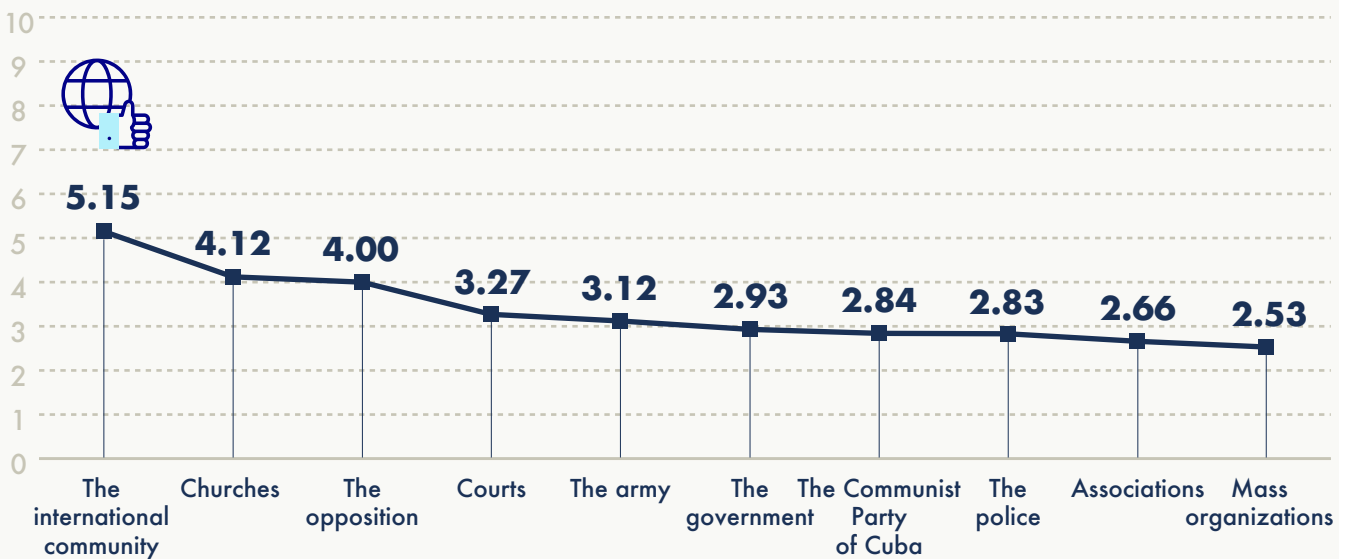


# Trust in, and assessment of, government institutions

## 7.1 TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

In the assessment of trust in institutions, only one has an average value exceeding five points, and that is the international community.

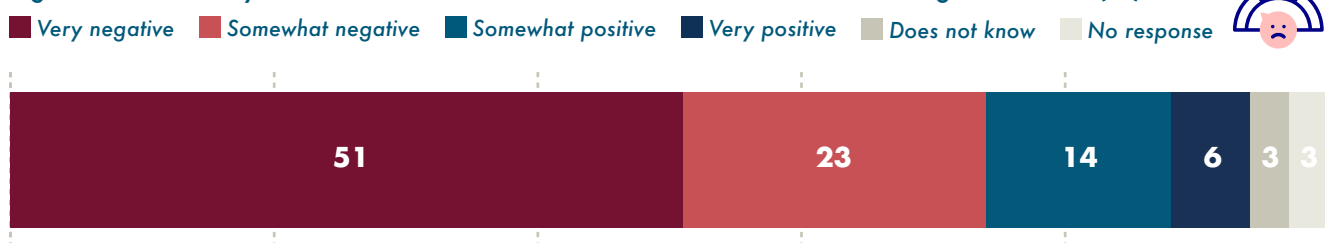
Figure 17. Trust in institutions: average score  
(Scale: 0 "no trust", 10 "maximum trust")



## 7.2 ASSESSMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ADMINISTRATION

74% of Cubans have a negative perception of the economic and social management of the Cuban government; 51% have a "very negative" perception.

Figure 18. How do you assess the economic and social administration of the government? (%)

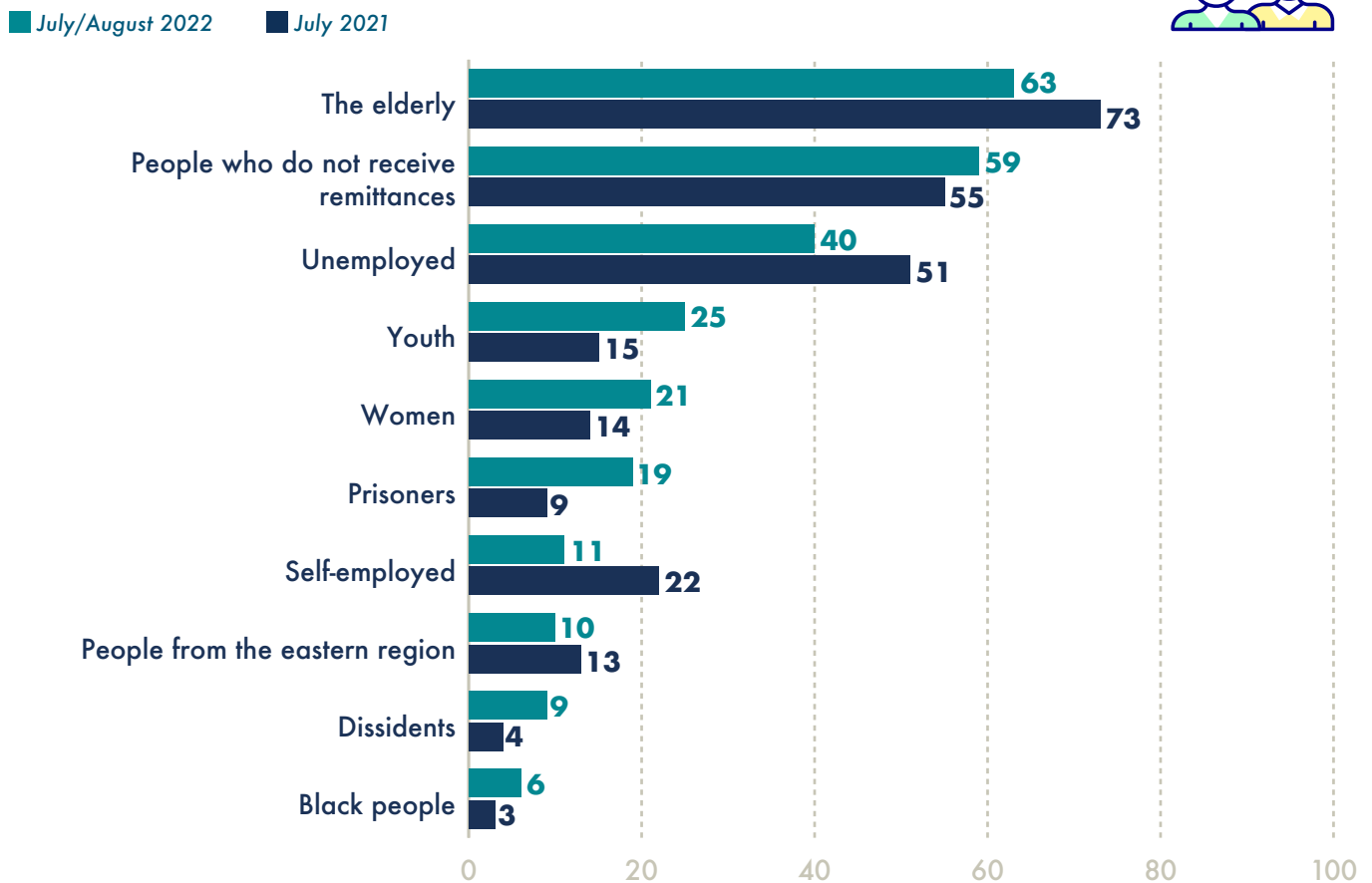


# Population sectors most affected by social issues

The three main sectors affected: the elderly, people without remittances and the unemployed.

The perception of prisoners as a group of Cubans who are in a bad situation increased (occupying the sixth place), an increase when compared to the previous survey (June/July 2021).

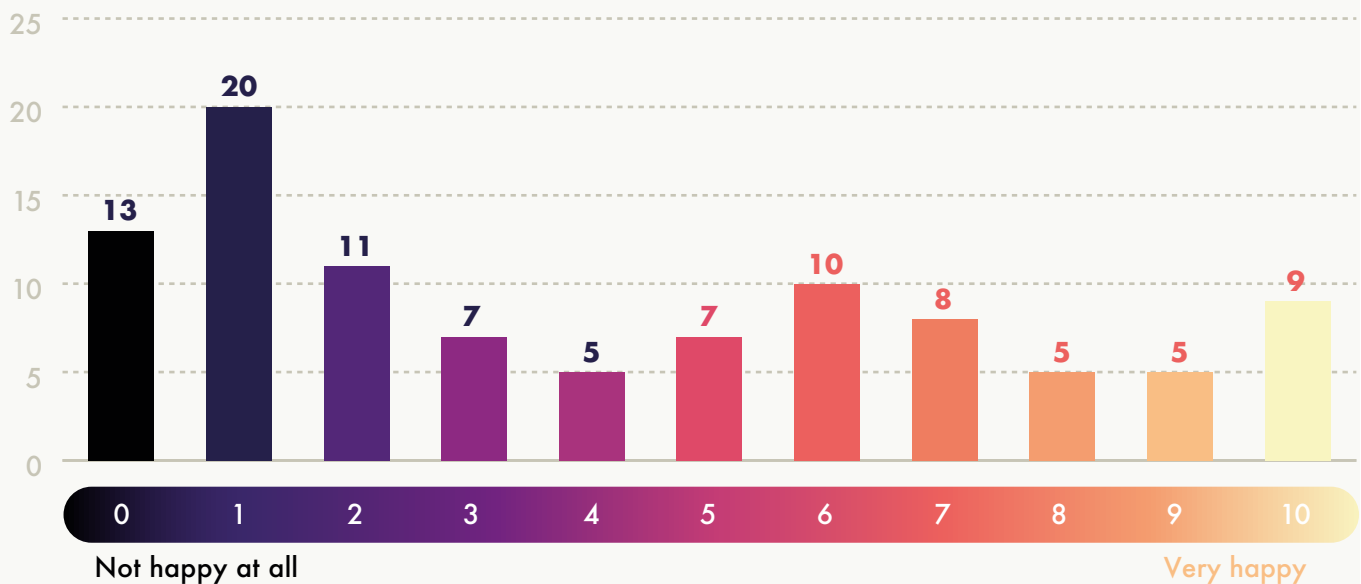
Figure 19. Sectors of the population who are in bad situation – 2021-2022 (multiple choice, percentages)



# Level of happiness and future expectations

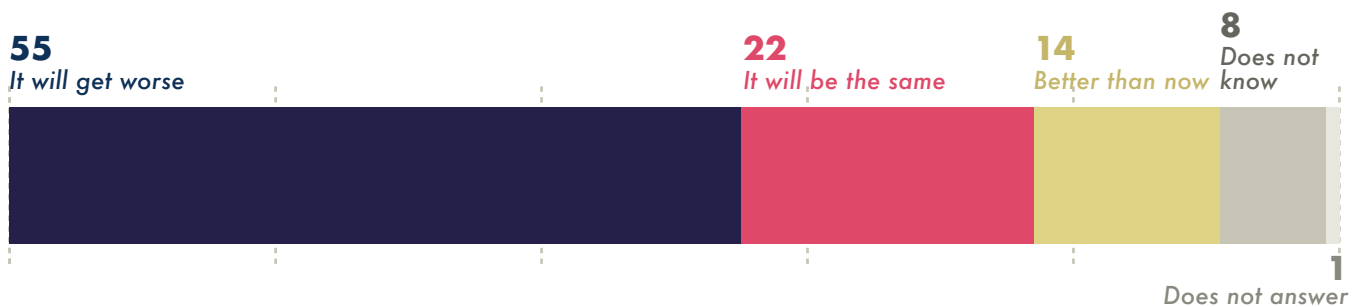
57% of the respondents are predominantly unhappy; and a 13% stands out who state to be completely unhappy.

Figure 20. How do you assess your level of happiness right now? (0-10 scale, percentages)



Only 14% of Cubans expect their personal situation to improve in the near future. 55% say it will get worse.

Figure 21. In the next 6 months, What do you expect will happen to your personal situation? (%)





# Young people between 18-30 years

57% believe that **there is discrimination in obtaining jobs**, and they are the ones who believe themselves most discriminated against because of their political ideas.

**They are the fourth worst-off sector**, rising from 15% (2021) to 25% (2022); and 37% of them think that youth are in a bad situation.

Among young people, **25% mentions that prisoners are in a bad situation**.

**Only two out of ten think that their situation will get better**.

For 54%, the **economic and social administration conducted by the government is very negative**.

They refer significantly more to the **political system (42%) as one of the 3 main issues**.

Like the 2020 and 2021 surveys, the **highest trend among young people who work to be self-employed** remains unchanged.



# The elderly

For 45% of those between 61 and 70 years old, there have been **long periods without access to some basic foods** in the ration booklet.

**Only 16%** of those over 70 years of age have managed to **have continuous access to basic foods with the ration booklet**.

**Only 20% of those over 60 who needed medicines in the past three months have obtained those from pharmacies**.

The elderly **declares to be the most disadvantaged sector**: 76% of people aged 61 to 70 years old, and 78% for those over 70 years old.

In the older population (between 61 and 70 years old and over 70 years old) more than 60% also have **problems buying even the most essential goods to live**.

The elderly **resort to the help of relatives and friends** to get their medicines (31% in the group of 61 to 70 years).

Among those over 60 years old, the **cases of houses in danger of collapsing increases up to 18%**.

Those over 70 years old refer more to **housing (17%) and the embargo (14%) as issues affecting the country**.

