Foundation

WORLD RISK POLL

Report 2026

The quiet hazards: How everyday risk shapes daily life

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Foreword

The Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll provides a crucial platform for people around the world to voice concerns about their safety, gathering data on everyday risks and harms every two years. By amplifying the voices of those who are often marginalised or underrepresented, the Poll offers invaluable global insights to guide interventions aimed at protecting those most at risk. Developed and conducted in partnership with Gallup and shaped through dialogue with international bodies, sector experts and frontline organisations, the Poll has been built collaboratively from the outset and is intended to be used the same way.

Now in its fourth edition, the Poll has spanned major periods of global and regional change and provides a unique insight into emerging trends in people's perceptions and experiences of risk in turbulent times. With more than 143,000 interviews conducted across 140 countries and territories in 2025, this new edition allows trends first identified in earlier editions to be tested and refined.

The Poll is the starting point for a global insight-to-impact pathway: uncovering where harm is concentrated and where action could make the most difference. To date, Lloyd's Register Foundation has invested £4.5 million in practical interventions to turn these insights into action.

This report focuses on the everyday risks that touch the most lives. Road traffic remains the most common top-of-mind risk to safety around the world, consistent with every previous edition of the Poll. Meanwhile, reported harm from food and drinking water has reached its highest level since the Poll began, suggesting risks many assumed were being successfully managed are quietly resurfacing. Workplace harm has continued its gradual decline, but the picture is uneven: in high-income service economies, worry about workplace harm is increasingly shaped by working hours and psychological strain rather than by physical hazard alone, indicating that occupational safety frameworks designed around physical risk may no longer capture what workers themselves count as harm.

People in countries with the most polluted air report comparatively low levels of worry about it, even as personal experience of harm rises with measured pollution levels. Where exposure does not translate into concern, the public pressure that drives protective action and policy change is weakened, and the cycle of harm is more likely to persist.

Many of the countries most affected by floods and storms are also those most affected by droughts and heatwaves, indicating that compound climate hazards are concentrating around the same vulnerable populations, and that risk management systems designed around single hazards may be poorly matched to the conditions people actually face.

We hope that this report, along with the underlying Poll data, empowers policymakers, businesses, civil society organisations and researchers to shape and target policies and interventions that address both people's worry about, and experience of, risks to their safety. The unique breadth and depth of the Poll allowance the identification of at-risk communities, from global to local, providing a powerful tool to direct action and a strong foundation for the collaborations needed to support the safety of all.

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Acknowledgements

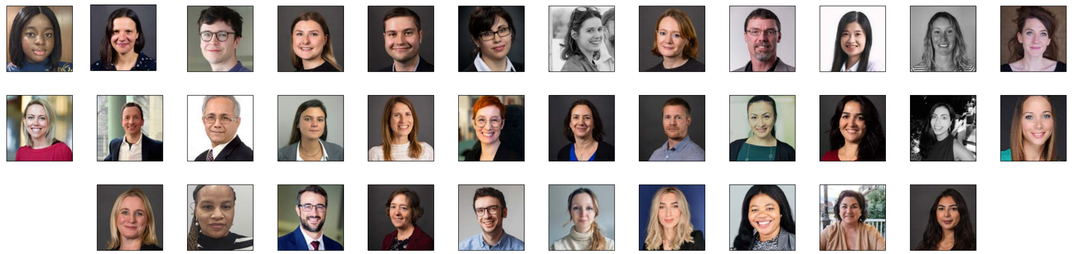
The World Risk Poll is a huge undertaking powered by multidisciplinary teams working across organisations. Lloyd's Register Foundation is grateful to everyone who has contributed to this, and previous versions of the World Risk Poll, and the collaborative spirit in which they work.

We are continually inspired by the enthusiasm of our strategic impact partners who have invested time in developing the questionnaire and are now embedding the data in their work, inspiring and galvanising people to take action.

The Technical Advisory Group for the World Risk Poll was first convened in early 2019, and we are indebted to the ongoing time and effort voluntarily invested by the members in the analysis, planning and reviewing of all our outputs.

Finally, our thanks are extended to the team at Gallup for their efforts in constructing and testing the Poll, and to the local staff in countries across the globe who undertook the fieldwork, often under difficult circumstances. We are particularly grateful to the World Risk Poll delivery and analytical team at Gallup for their ongoing contributions and support.

You can learn more about the Poll and the change it has supported, through the Poll website at: *wrp.lrfoundation.org.uk*.



Additional information

About Lloyd's Register Foundation

Lloyd's Register Foundation is an independent global safety charity that supports research, innovation, and education to make the world a safer place. Its mission is to use the best evidence and insight, such as the World Risk Poll, to help the global community focus on tackling the world's most pressing safety and risk challenges.

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About Gallup

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organisations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 90 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviours of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organisation in the world.

For more information about Gallup, please visit *www.gallup.com*.

Contact us at *www.gallup.com/analytics*.

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Executive summary

The World Risk Poll is the first and only global, nationally representative study of worry about, and harm from, risks to people's safety. The Poll is based on more than 143,000 interviews conducted by Gallup in 140 countries and territories throughout 2025 and covers places with little to no official data on various aspects of safety and risk. This is the fourth edition of a dataset that offers a unique insight into people's experiences with and perceptions of different risks in their lives. These range from the everyday risks facing millions around the world, such as risks of harm from food and water or safety on the roads, to the generational and existential risk of climate change.

The Poll is a unique resource for understanding the nature and scale of safety challenges across the world, as reported firsthand by those who experience them. Governments, regulators, researchers, NGOs and international organisations can (and do) use these freely available datasets and insights to inform policies and interventions that make people safer.

Global stability, but regional variation in perceptions of top risks to safety

- Among people who identify a specific type of risk when asked about the top risk to their daily safety, 'road-related accidents' has remained the top answer across each edition of the World Risk Poll. Around one in seven adults globally (14%) name road accidents as the top-of-mind risk to their safety, higher than personal health conditions (11%) and crime and violence (10%).
- The stability in global perceptions of top risks belies significant regional variation in how people in different parts of the world think about risk. Among the 15 global regions covered by the World Risk Poll, no two regions share the same top three rankings of top-of-mind risks.
- People's perceptions of major risks to their safety are also related to their wellbeing. Road accidents are perceived as a bigger risk for people with higher levels of wellbeing, while those with lower wellbeing are more likely to name the economy and personal finances as a top risk to their safety.

Positive movements in reports of workplace harm, unlike food and water safety

- In 2025, 16% of the global workforce reported personally experiencing serious harm at work in the past two years. This is a slight decline from 18% in 2023 and 19% in 2021, and the lowest total measured since the World Risk Poll began. However, workplace harm remains an issue that weighs most heavily on the most vulnerable, particularly those with low levels of financial resilience.
- Several regions contributed to the decline in harm at work, including Southern Asia, Southeastern Asia, Southern Africa, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand, and Northern America.
- Other everyday risks have become more prevalent around the world. Personal experiences of harm from the food people eat and the water they drink have increased over time. Fourteen percent of the world's adult population reports experiencing harm from food in the past two years, and 13% say the same about drinking water: both record highs globally since the first year of the Poll in 2019.

Widespread harm from weather-related hazards, but evidence of risk habituation among those most exposed

- A significant percentage of the world's adult population has experienced recent hardship from a hazard related to severe weather in the past two years. Nearly one in five adults globally (19%) say they have personally been harmed by severe prolonged weather events such as droughts or heatwaves in the past two years. A similar proportion (17%) reports harm from severe weather events such as floods or violent storms. A further one in 10 report personal harm from the air they breathe (12%), while 8% report personal harm from wildfires.
- However, there is evidence that people can become habituated to risk with increased experience of these hazards. Worry about these hazards typically rises with exposure: people who have not experienced harm are less worried than those who know someone who has been harmed, who, in turn, are less worried than those who have personally experienced serious harm. However, among people with the highest level of experience — those who have personally experienced harm and know someone who has been harmed — worry declines significantly.

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Much of the world not worried about air pollution, despite being exposed to harmful air

- Even though 99% of the world's adult population is exposed to harmful air, according to the WHO, the World Risk Poll finds that nearly half (47%) of adults globally are not worried at all about being harmed by the air they breathe.
- Despite this significant perception gap, many people do make a link between worry about harm from air and overall satisfaction with air quality. This suggests that subjective assessments of air quality are, at least in part, related to perceived personal risk.
- Adults living in urban areas, where the effects of air pollution are most keenly felt, are typically more worried about it than those in towns or rural areas.

Significant overlap in countries most exposed to different forms of extreme weather

- For the first time, in 2025 the World Risk Poll asked two questions about experiences of harm from severe weather events (such as floods or violent storms) and severe prolonged weather events (such as drought or heatwave). Of the 10 countries with the highest reported personal harm from severe weather events, seven — including the Philippines, Chad, Comoros, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia and Malawi — also appear among the 10 most affected by severe prolonged weather events.
- Many of these events were linked, in part, to the El Niño effect, which disrupts normal atmospheric circulation.
- High-income countries are least likely to report harm from these types of severe weather events. As these measures are self-reported, differences do not necessarily imply variation in exposure alone. They may also reflect differences in infrastructure, early warning systems, public health protections or other resilience factors that influence how hazards translate into personal harm.

Policy implications

The findings presented in this report raise several policy-relevant implications across different forms of risk:

- The continued prominence of road-related accidents as a top risk to people's safety underscores the importance of sustained investment in road safety.
- The highly diverse global landscape of risk also shows that regional and national context shapes priorities. Safety strategies need to be locally tailored to account for risk perceptions as well as objective realities, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach to risk communication.
- Despite recent declines across many regions, a significant share of the global workforce continues to face preventable harm at work, particularly the most vulnerable. This reinforces the need to embed occupational safety and health within broader labour and development agendas.
- The overlap of multiple weather-related hazards in many countries calls for integrated risk management systems that address compound and cascading threats rather than treating each hazard in isolation.
- Relatively low levels of worry about risks of air pollution suggest that public health strategies can focus on strengthening risk communication, improving transparency around pollution data and the impact of air pollution on health, and promoting protective behaviours. Policies and regulations that target reducing emissions from sources such as manufacturing, transport and industry remain essential.
- Given the high levels of misalignment in personal and second-order beliefs about climate change in high-income countries, public communication that accurately reflects the true breadth of societal concern may strengthen collective efficacy and support for more ambitious climate policy.

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CHAPTER 1

Top risks to safety

Risks and hazards abound in daily life, causing fatalities, injuries and other harms to people. How people perceive risks shapes not only how they behave towards them, but also the priority they place on addressing them and their support for different types of policies. For those seeking to design and build a safer world, understanding public attitudes to risk is a necessary starting point.

Risk perception literature argues that people evaluate hazards along two dimensions: how frightening and uncontrollable a risk feels ('dread risk'), and how novel or uncertain it appears ('unknown risk')[1]. Interpreting responses through this lens helps explain why certain risks rise to prominence and how others gain salience under changing conditions.

Over the past seven years, the World Risk Poll has asked people around the world on four occasions to name, in their own words, the single biggest risk to their daily safety. This question highlights which risks to safety are most salient globally. The open-ended nature of this question is particularly valuable, as it captures what is 'top of mind' for people without prompting or constraint.

Now, I have a few questions about risk. By RISK, I mean something that may be dangerous or that could cause harm or the loss of something. Risk could also result in a reward or something good … In your own words, what is the greatest source of RISK TO YOUR SAFETY in your daily life?

1 in 7

people name road-related accidents as the biggest risk to their daily safety.

14% of respondents say road-related accidents. Down 2 percentage points on 2023.

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Road-related accidents remain the top perceived risk to safety globally

In 2025, two answers ranked highest globally: 15% said they 'don't know' what the top risk to their safety is, and 14% named road-related accidents/injuries[i]. The percentage of people saying they don't know or who refused to answer was six points higher than in 2023 (9%) but lower than in 2021 (19%). This change was largely driven by India, where the percentage answering 'don't know' fell from 34% in 2021 to 5% in 2023, before rising back to 36%[ii].

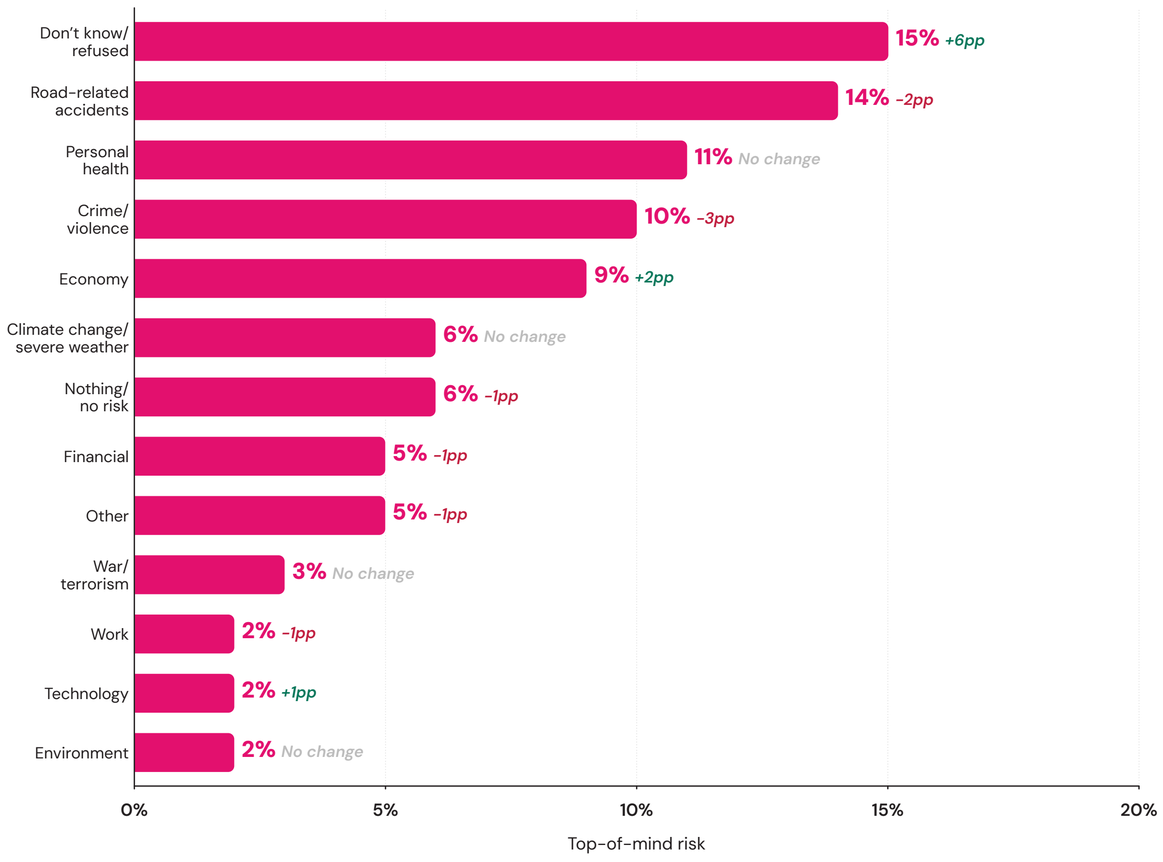
Respondents who said they don't know what the top risk to their daily safety is may be interpreted in several ways[iii]. Some literature interprets this response as limited awareness of hazards faced in daily life, in which people do not recognise the extent of risks to their safety, resulting either from low risk literacy or low risk communication[2]. Other interpretations include risks being difficult to articulate; that risks are normalised to such an extent that they become relatively invisible; or that people are expressing their perceived powerlessness and diminished feelings of control over the risks they face in daily life[iv].

Among those who identify a specific type of risk, road-related accidents has remained the top answer across each edition of the World Risk Poll. In 2025, the global average naming road-related accidents as their greatest source of risk was 14%, down slightly from 2023 (16%) but back in line with the total from 2021 (also 14%). In the 2019 inaugural wave of the Poll, respondents were asked to answer this open-ended question twice, with 16% naming road-related accidents or injuries as their initial answer to the question[v].

Personal health conditions were cited by 11% globally, slightly ahead of crime and violence (10%) and the economy (9%). Climate change or severe weather events were named by 6%, while a further 5% said financial risks were the most salient, slightly ahead of the 3% who said war or terrorism.

Chart 1.1. Top 10 risks to safety in daily life, 2025 (global %)

Road-related accidents are the most-named specific risk for the fourth World Risk Poll running (14%), even as more adults cannot name a top risk at all (15%).



Question text: *In your own words, what is the greatest source of RISK TO YOUR SAFETY in your daily life?*

Note: *Risks mentioned by fewer than 2% of the global adult population are not shown. Percentage-point change data reflects changes compared with 2023.*

i. The World Risk Poll classed people's open-ended responses about the greatest risk to their safety in daily life as 'road-related accidents/injuries'. From henceforth, this report refers to them as road-related accidents for simplicity. However, there is a growing sense that, as many instances of road-related harm are preventable, the term 'injuries' is more appropriate than 'accidents'.
ii. The percentage answering 'don't know' dipped sharply in India in 2023, while the increase in the perceived risk of traffic accidents increased by a similar degree over time. The 2023 survey was conducted a few months after a major rail collision in Odisha that killed nearly 300 people, which could have played a role in some of the change.
iii. This category also includes people refusing to answer the question. The weighted percentage of refusals (1.8%) was far smaller than the percentage answering 'don't know' (13.6%).
iv. This finding — of lower agency and more risk uncertainty — is supported by World Risk Poll data from 2025. Among people who feel unable to protect themselves from a disaster, a measure of agency, 18% cannot name their most acute risk, compared to 10% of those who do feel able to protect themselves. Those in the first group are also far more likely to have experienced multiple hazards (discussed in the next chapter) than respondents who say they face 'nothing/no risks', further suggesting that a 'don't know' response signals an overwhelming of perceived risks, rather than a lack of them.
v. This calculation is based on those countries or areas that were surveyed in 2025.

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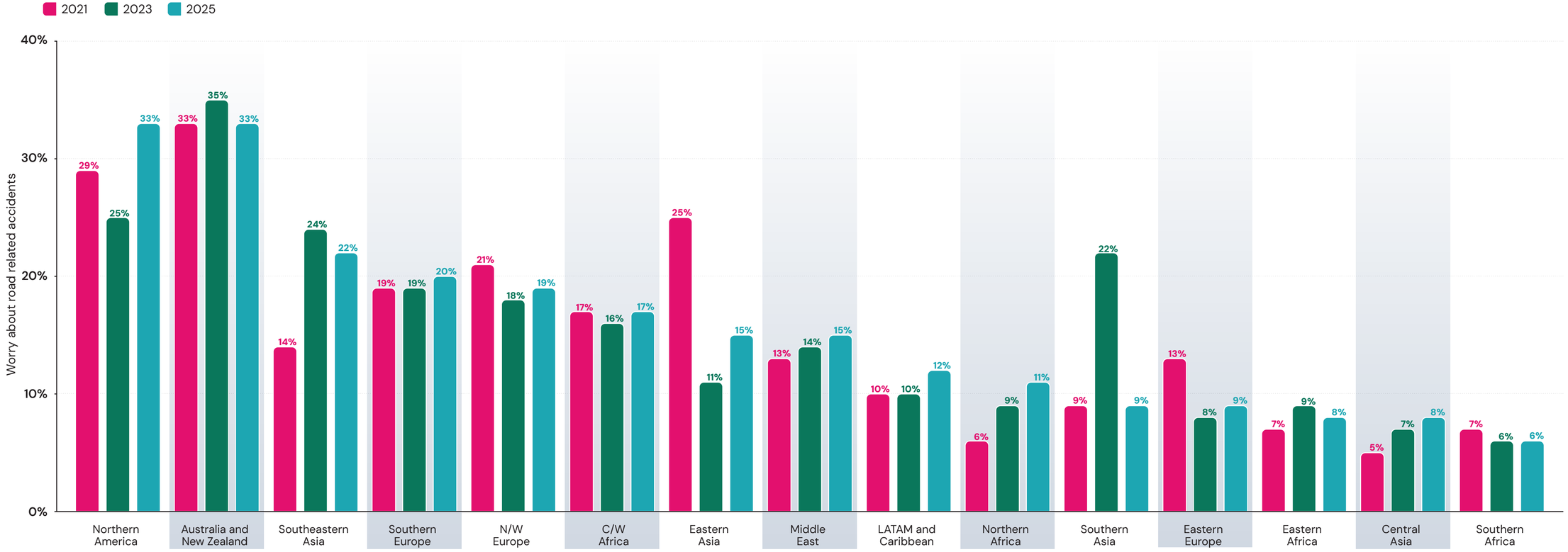
In 2025, 33% of people in Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) and Northern America identified road-related accidents as the top risk to their safety, the highest of any world region. While ANZ was mostly in line with its longer-term average, Northern America increased by eight points on this measure since 2023, to a new record high for the region. In most other regions, levels of concern about road-related accidents were mostly consistent with levels reported in 2023, with the exceptions of Eastern Asia (where China contributed to a four-point increase since 2023) and Southern Asia (where a decline in India pushed the regional average down by 13 points).

Chart 1.2. Percentage who name road-related accidents as the main risk to safety in their daily lives by region, 2021-2025

Australia and New Zealand, and Northern America lead the world at 33%, with Northern America up eight points since 2023 to a regional record.



Question text: *In your own words, what is the greatest source of RISK TO YOUR SAFETY in your daily life?*

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Regional variation in perceived top-of-mind risks

Global averages of how people perceive the biggest risk to their safety mask substantial regional variation. Among the 15 global regions covered by the World Risk Poll, no two regions share the same top three rankings of top-of-mind risks. Road-related accidents ranks among the top three risks in 11 regions and is the single top-mentioned risk in six. Personal health risks are the second-most commonly named risk in Central Asia, Southeastern Asia, Central/Western Africa, Eastern Africa and Southern Europe.

Certain risks rank far higher in some regions than others. For example, 18% in Eastern Asia name the environment[vi] as a top risk; 23% of people in Eastern Europe cite war or terrorism (linked to the war in Ukraine); 10% in Australia and New Zealand cite mental health issues; and 9% in Northern America — the U.S. and Canada — name politics as the top risk to their daily safety.

vi. This environment category includes climate change or severe weather-related events, such as floods, drought, wildfires, etc.

Table 1.1. Top three risks to safety by region in 2025 (%)

No two of the 15 regions share the same top three; crime/violence tops Latin America and the Caribbean, and Southern Africa (both 35%), while road-related accidents lead in six regions.

GLOBAL REGION	TOP RISK		SECOND TOP RISK		THIRD TOP RISK	
Australia and New Zealand	Road-related accidents	33%	Crime/violence	21%	Mental health	10%
Central Asia	Don't know	21%	Personal health	17%	Nothing	14%
Eastern Asia	Environment — climate change/ severe weather	18%	Road-related accidents	15%	Economy	11%
Southeastern Asia	Road-related accidents	22%	Personal health	17%	Don't know	12%
Southern Asia	Don't know	32%	Economy	15%	Road-related accidents, Personal health	9%
Central/Western Africa	Road-related accidents	17%	Personal health	15%	Crime/violence	12%
Eastern Africa	Crime/violence	15%	Personal health	14%	Economy	11%
Southern Africa	Crime/violence	35%	Don't know	21%	Nothing, Other	7%
Northern Africa	Personal health	17%	Don't know, Economy	13%	Road-related accidents, Crime/ violence	11%
Middle East	Don't know	18%	Road-related accidents	15%	Nothing	14%
Eastern Europe	War/terrorism	23%	Don't know	18%	Personal health	12%
Northern/Western Europe	Road-related accidents	19%	Crime/violence	11%	Personal health	10%
Southern Europe	Road-related accidents	20%	Personal health, Crime/violence	12%	Economy	8%
Latin America and the Caribbean	Crime/violence	35%	Don't know	24%	Road-related accidents	12%
Northern America	Road-related accidents	33%	Crime/violence	19%	Politics	9%

Question text: *In your own words, what is the greatest source of RISK TO YOUR SAFETY in your daily life?*

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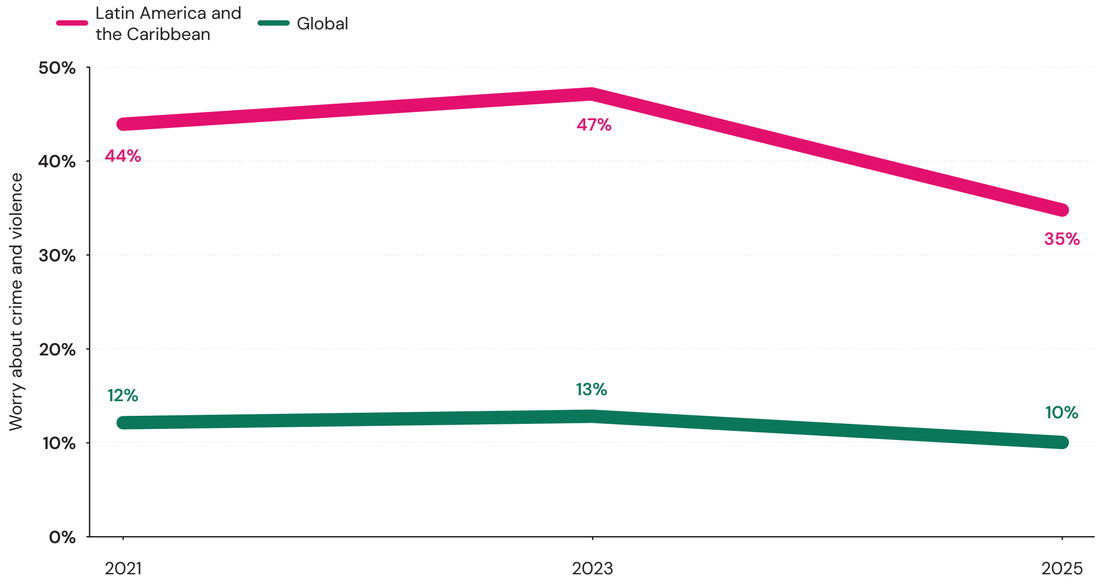
Perceived risk of crime and violence dips in Latin America and the Caribbean

Globally, the proportion of people ranking crime and violence as their top-of-mind risk dipped to the lowest on record (10%) in 2025, down three points from 2023. Much of this decline has been driven by Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that has consistently ranked the perceived risk of crime and violence higher than other regions. In 2025, 35% named crime and violence as the top risk, down from 47% in 2023.

Chart 1.3. Percentage in Latin America and the Caribbean who name crime and violence as the main risk to safety, 2021-2025

Naming crime as the top safety risk falls 12 points in two years, from 47% to 35%, yet it remains the region's leading concern.



Question text: *In your own words, what is the greatest source of RISK TO YOUR SAFETY in your daily life?*

Many of the largest national-level declines in the perceived risk of crime and violence between 2023 and 2025 were in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Honduras, Guatemala, Bolivia and Ecuador all saw double-digit declines in the percentage of adults naming crime and violence as the top risk to their safety (alongside Botswana, Burkina Faso, France, South Korea and Guinea).

Table 1.2. Largest national declines in naming crime and violence as the main risk to safety, 2023-2025 (%)

Botswana records the steepest fall at 29 points; eight of the thirteen largest declines are in Latin America and the Caribbean.

COUNTRY	2023	2025	PERCENTAGE-POINT GAP
Botswana	49%	20%	29
Dominican Republic	46%	22%	24
Venezuela	42%	20%	22
Burkina Faso	20%	5%	15
Argentina	50%	35%	15
Brazil	46%	32%	14
Honduras	35%	21%	14
Guatemala	34%	21%	13
France	27%	15%	12
South Korea	20%	8%	12
Bolivia	36%	24%	12
Ecuador	72%	60%	12
Guinea	23%	11%	12

Question text: *In your own words, what is the greatest source of RISK TO YOUR SAFETY in your daily life?*

Despite these declines, Latin American countries continue to rank higher than most others for the absolute levels of perceived risk from crime and violence. Seven of the top 10 countries globally citing crime and violence as the top safety risk are from the region, including Ecuador (60%), Chile (47%), Costa Rica (44%), Mexico (43%), Peru (38%), Colombia (37%) and Argentina (35%)[vii].

vii. In 2023, eight of the top 10 countries globally citing crime and violence were in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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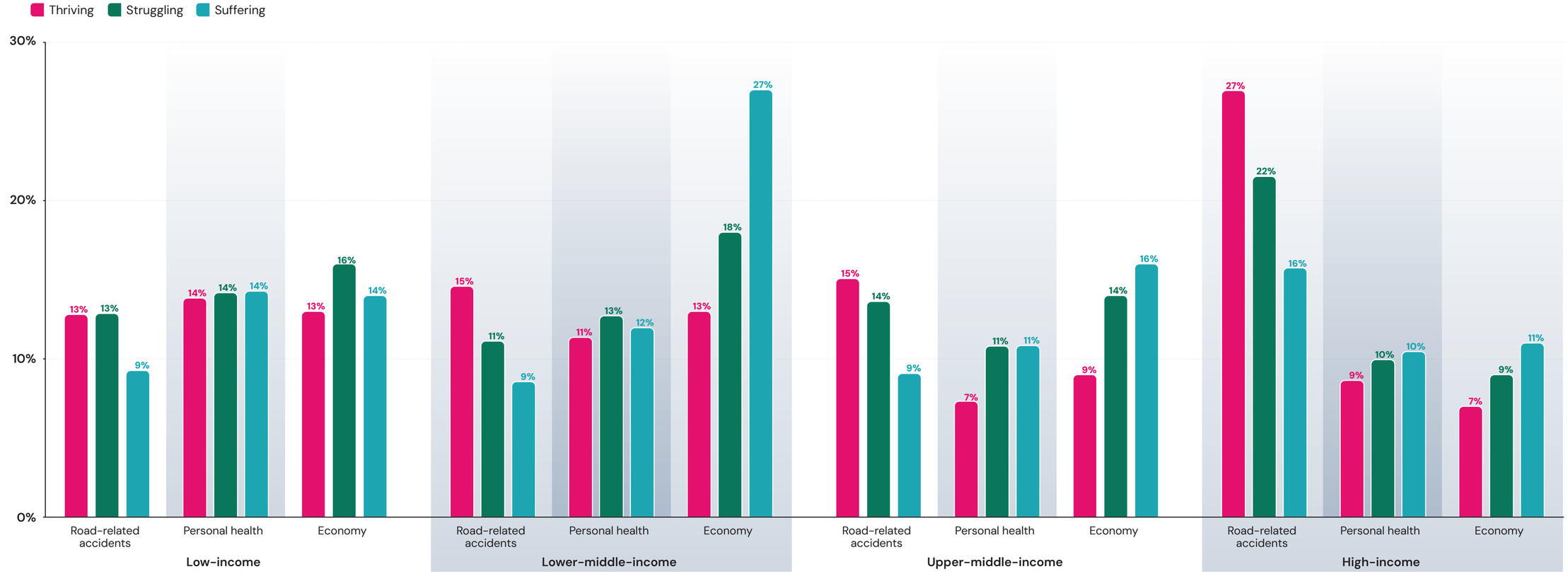
Links between wellbeing, country income and top-of-mind risks

How people think about the biggest risks to their safety appears to be related to their wellbeing as well as the wealth of their country. One measure of wellbeing is the Gallup World Poll's Life Evaluation Index, which classifies respondents into three groups — those who are 'thriving' in their life evaluation (those who rate their current lives as a '7' or higher on a scale between 0-10 and their future lives at an '8' or higher), those who are 'suffering' (rate both their current and future lives at a '4' or less) and those 'struggling' (in between the two poles).

Chart 1.4. Perceived top-of-mind risks by World Bank country income group and Life Evaluation Index

Those thriving worry most about road-related accidents, those suffering about the economy; only concern about personal health holds steady across the wellbeing spectrum.



Question text: *In your own words, what is the greatest source of RISK TO YOUR SAFETY in your daily life?*

Gallup's Life Evaluation Index, based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale, asks people to rate their current and future lives on a ladder from 0 (worst) to 10 (best). Those scoring 7+ for the present and 8+ for five years ahead are 'thriving', while those rating both 4 or below are 'suffering'. Everyone else is 'struggling'.

Note: *Economy category includes both 'economy' and 'financial' responses.*

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Several patterns emerged when analysing top perceived risks by wellbeing and country income group (as defined by the World Bank[3]):

1. Road accidents are perceived as a bigger risk for people with higher levels of wellbeing. Across country income levels, those classed as 'thriving' are more likely than those who are 'struggling' or 'suffering' to name road accidents. The perception gap is widest in high-income countries and narrowest in low-income countries.

2. Broadly speaking, the risks posed by the economy and personal finances rise in salience as wellbeing falls. In high- and middle-income countries[viii], more people classed as suffering name the economy or personal finance as their biggest risk to safety than those who are struggling or thriving. Other research has shown that national and personal income are tied to wellbeing, particularly at lower levels of income[4], and that economic risks also become more salient among those on lower incomes[5].

3. Of these three global risks, personal health conditions are the universal worry that cuts across country income levels and subjective wellbeing most evenly.

viii. The 27% of those suffering in lower-middle incomes naming the economy is driven primarily by India.

Insight to action

By asking an open-ended question about the greatest perceived risk to safety in daily life, the World Risk Poll yields actionable findings that could help people feel safer, especially given the close relationship between perception and behaviour.

The continued prominence of road-related accidents underscores the importance of sustained investment in road safety. Proven interventions, such as safer road design, lower speed limits, drink-driving legislation, seatbelt enforcement and road safety awareness campaigns, remain critical. Adopting a 'Safe System' approach to road safety that builds layers of protection around drivers, who are liable to make mistakes, can help reduce fatalities, injuries and other harms.

At the same time, the growing tendency to frame economic insecurity as a risk to personal safety highlights a shift in how risk is understood. Notably, those who are struggling or suffering appear more likely to see economic insecurity as their top-of-mind risk, while those thriving are more likely to prioritise risks like road safety. This reinforces the importance of safe, stable employment that provides a fair wage and covers the costs of living.

Emerging top-of-mind risks, such as mental health ranking highly in Australia and New Zealand, or politics in Northern America, suggest that psycho-social risks are becoming more prominent in daily life in some parts of the world. These findings highlight the need for policy and communication responses that address not only physical hazards but also the broader social and psychological dimensions of safety.

The global landscape of risk also shows that regional and national context shapes priorities. Safety strategies need to be locally tailored to account for risk perceptions as well as objective realities.

Finally, the high level of global uncertainty — reflected in the 15% of adults who are unable to name their top risk — warrants attention. Difficulty in identifying a top risk to safety in their daily lives may indicate information overload, a degree of fatalism, the normalisation of risk and hazards, a lack of risk literacy, or discomfort with the topic.

As the Risk Know-How[6] framework notes, not everyone has the opportunity to act upon risks, and what appears to be disengagement may instead be a rational response to complex, overlapping hazards. Clear communication, visible leadership and policies that enhance individuals' sense of agency are essential components of a safer society.

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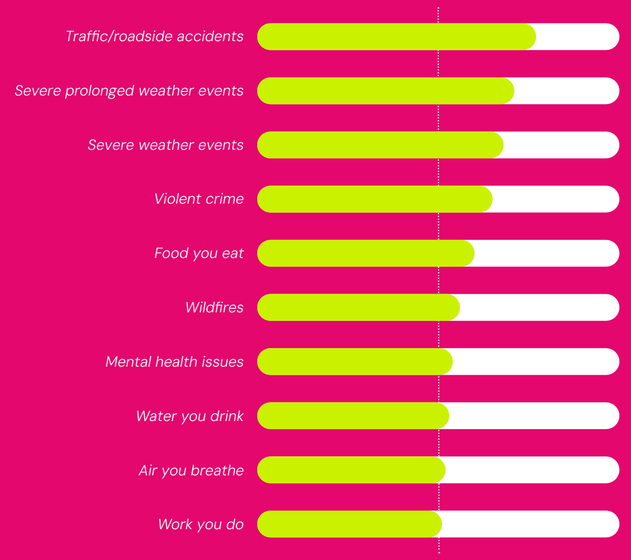
MORE THAN HALF

of the global population are worried about ***ALL*** 10 risks polled



CHAPTER 2

Trends in everyday risk

Beyond perceptions of unprompted top-of-mind risks, the World Risk Poll has also continually measured perceptions and experiences of different everyday risks. Rather than asking about top risks to safety in an open-ended way, as in Chapter 1, these questions force respondents to evaluate individual risks in isolation, offering a different lens on risk perception.

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In 2025, the Poll fielded questions about how much people worry about — and whether they have experienced harm[i] from — 10 different risks:

> **Worry: In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried?**
>
> **Harm: Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?**

- the food you eat
- the water you drink
- violent crime
- being in a traffic or roadside accident
- the work you do
- mental health issues
- the air you breathe
- severe weather events, such as floods or violent storms
- severe prolonged weather events, such as heatwaves or droughts
- wildfires

Investigating gaps between experienced risk and levels of worry is critical, as misalignment can shape behaviour and priorities. When worry exceeds the actual experience of harm, people's attention may shift towards less likely hazards and away from those more likely to cause harm. When worry is low despite the high likelihood and extent of harm, such data signal where preventive efforts need greater focus.

Broadly speaking, the more people experience harm from a certain hazard, the more they worry about being harmed by the same risk. But this relationship varies considerably for the different everyday risks and hazards people face.

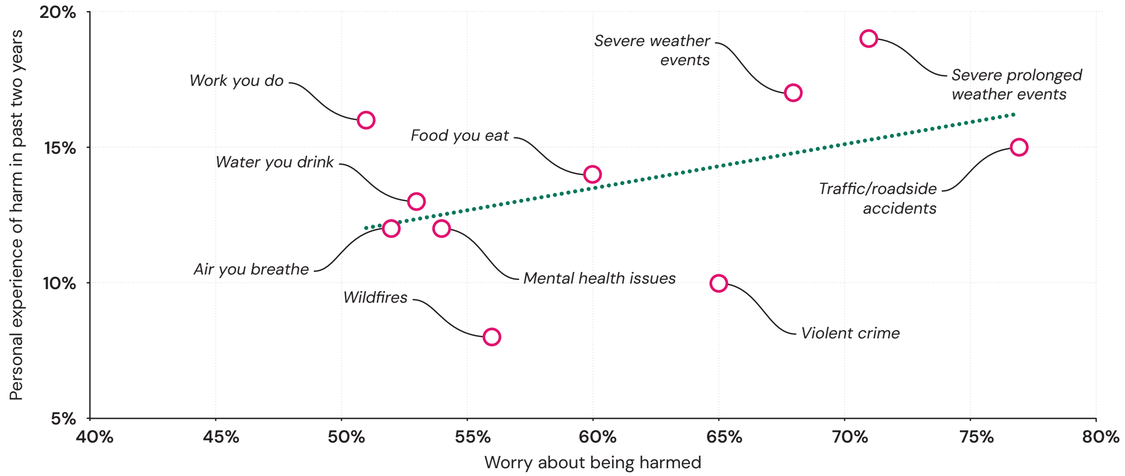
i. Personal experiences of harm account for respondents who answer 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both' (meaning they have both experienced harm and also know someone who has), making the data representative at the population level.

Misalignments in experience of, and worry about, everyday risks

Overall, violent crime and wildfires stand out as two risks people report worrying about, despite relatively few reporting personal harm from them. By contrast, harm at work shows the opposite pattern: few people say they worry about it, given comparitively high levels of recent harm. One in six (16%) of the world's workforce say they personally experienced workplace harm in the past two years, while 51% of current employees are worried about this risk.

Chart 2.1. Percentage of adults worried about harm from a risk vs. the percentage who personally experienced harm from a risk in the past two years

Worry outruns experience for every risk; the gap is widest for violent crime and wildfires, and narrowest for harm at work, which one in six workers report.



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried?*

Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?

Note: *Harm at work questions were only asked to those in the workforce (worry) and currently employed (personal experience). This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

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As ever, global headlines obscure important regional patterns. Across world regions, people do not express worry about or experience the same risks to the same degree. Dividing overall worry about a hazard by personal experience of harm provides a ratio of how much people worry in relation to experience. In some regions, worry about a risk is disproportionately high relative to reported harm. Such perceptions about wildfires stand out in five regions — Southern Asia, Eastern, Southern and Northern Africa, and Eastern Europe.

Worry about violent crime is outsized relative to experience in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Asia, the Middle East, Northern/Western and Southern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Other regional patterns are more specific: Central/Western Africa stands out for its high relative worry about mental health issues, while the gap between worry about and experience of harm from drinking water is particularly large in Northern America.

In other cases, regions are much more aligned on levels of worry and reported experiences of harm from a given risk. Relatively low levels of worry about hazards at work and severe prolonged weather events are common across many regions. Australia and New Zealand and Northern America report less worry about mental health issues compared to rates of harm, while Northern Africa and Southern Asia report less worry about the food they eat and water they drink, respectively, than report levels of harm.

That wildfires often appears in the list of hazards with the biggest ratios between worry and experience, and severe prolonged weather events among the smallest gaps, is notable. Both relate to intense temperature, albeit in different ways: the former is typically associated with shorter-term events that can be caused by human behaviour, and the latter is typically associated with long-lasting[ii] periods of weather, which can in turn make wildfires more likely.

An important caveat to these findings is that everyday risks may involve very different levels of potential harm. For example, harm from breathing polluted air is a more gradual risk that builds with exposure, while traffic accidents or violent crime are typically one-off events. This means that higher levels of worry about lower-frequency risks may still be rational if the potential consequences are more severe.

ii. Prolonged periods of severe weather resulting in drought and heatwaves can also cause wildfires, which as events, tend to last for shorter periods than the underlying drought or heatwave conditions that can give rise to them.

Table 2.1. Biggest and smallest ratios between worry and experience of harm by region

Worry outpaces experience everywhere, but most steeply for violent crime and drinking water and least for work and prolonged heat.

GLOBAL REGION	BIGGEST RATIO BETWEEN WORRY (HIGH) AND EXPERIENCE (LOW)		SMALLEST RATIO BETWEEN WORRY (LOW) AND EXPERIENCE (HIGH)	
Australia and New Zealand	Water you drink	17.6	Mental health issues	2.4
Central Asia	Violent crime	38.3	Work you do	7.3
Eastern Asia	Violent crime	4.0	Work you do	2.2
Southeastern Asia	Violent crime	17.5	Severe prolonged weather events	3.7
Southern Asia	Wildfires	4.8	Water you drink	2.7
Central/Western Africa	Mental health issues	8.2	Work you do	3.4
Eastern Africa	Wildfires	9.2	Severe prolonged weather events	3.9
Southern Africa	Wildfires	11.4	Work you do	4.2
Northern Africa	Wildfires	20.8	Food you eat	4.3
Middle East	Violent crime	21.2	Work you do	5.5
Eastern Europe	Wildfires	27.8	Severe prolonged weather events	5.9
Northern/Western Europe	Violent crime	17.0	Work you do	2.8
Southern Europe	Violent crime	19.5	Severe prolonged weather events	4.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	Violent crime	19.1	Severe prolonged weather events	5.4
Northern America	Water you drink	32.8	Mental health issues	3.5

Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried?*

Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?

Note: *This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

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Worry and experience of most risks steady or higher than in 2023

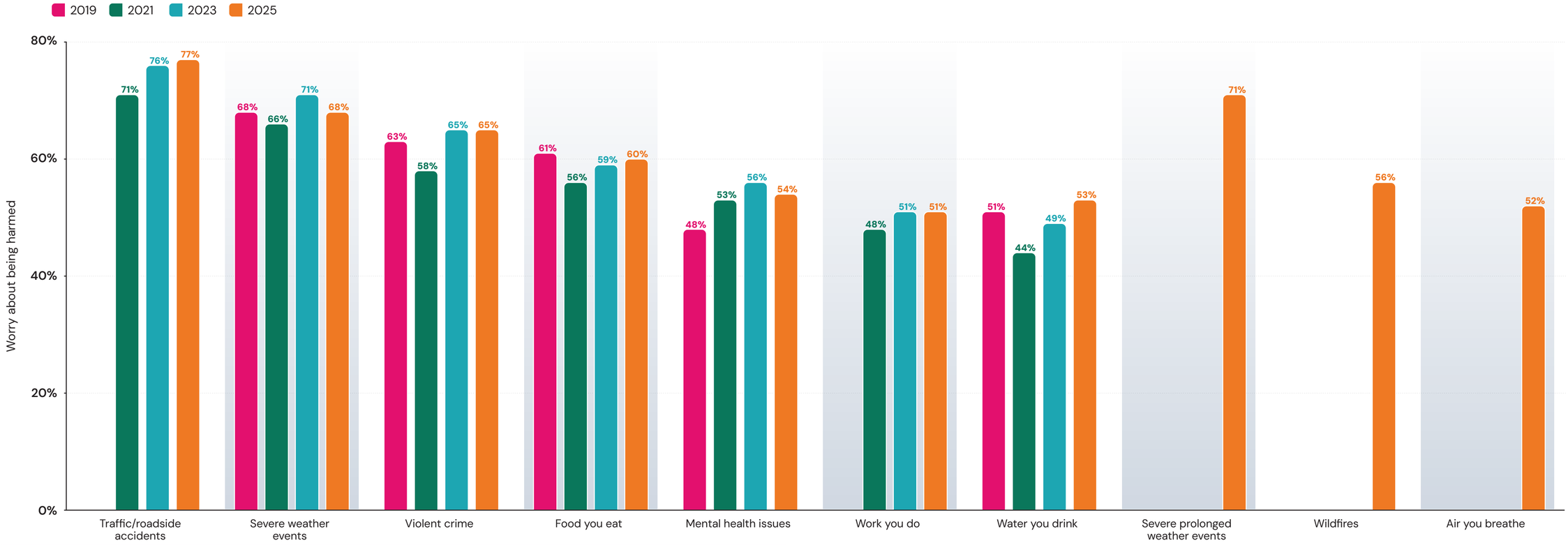
Globally, levels of worry about seven everyday risks are mostly consistent with previous editions of the Poll going back to 2019. Worry about harm from traffic accidents, violent crime, food and work is within one percentage point of the global average in 2023, while worry about severe weather dropped by three points, and worry about drinking water rose by four points.

But for the first time in four editions of the Poll, at least half of the world's adult population is 'very' or 'somewhat' worried by all forms of everyday risk surveyed[iii]. This includes the three new risk types in the 2025 questionnaire. Seven in 10 (71%) say they worry about severe prolonged weather events like droughts or heatwaves — second only to traffic accidents — while slim majorities express worry about wildfires (56%) and the air they breathe (52%).

iii. The Gallup World Poll also finds persistently high levels of worry globally, which though not quite as high as during COVID-19, are higher than many years before the pandemic.

Chart 2.2. Global change in worry about everyday risks, 2019-2025 (% worried)

For the first time, at least half the world worries about each everyday risk measured; severe prolonged weather events now rank second only to traffic/roadside accidents.



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried?*

Note: *Traffic/roadside accidents and work you do were not surveyed in 2019. Percentages shown are the sum of Very worried + Somewhat worried. Worry about harm at work only asked of those currently employed.*

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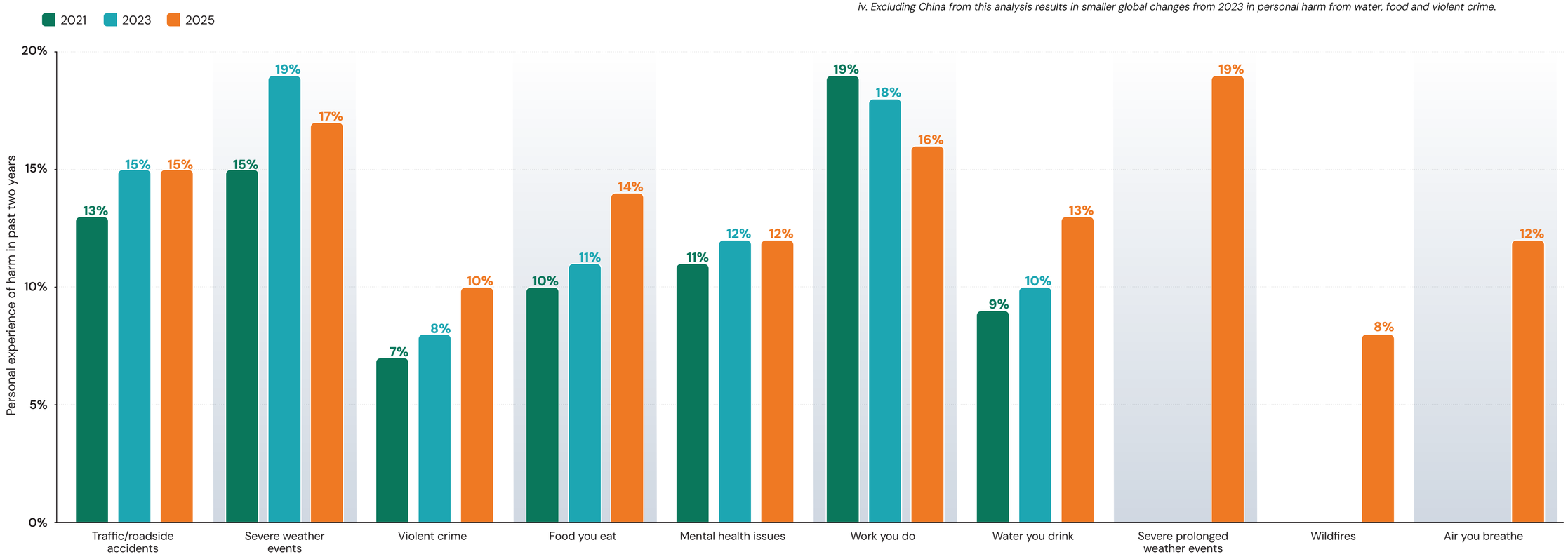
Personal experiences of harm from these hazards — while lower than overall worry levels — have changed relatively more over time. Severe weather events remain a common everyday risk, with 17% of adults reporting experiencing harm from them in the past two years, lower than in 2023 (19%) but higher than in 2021 (15%). Among the current workforce, 16% report being harmed at work in the past two years, lower than in previous years. Harm from traffic/roadside accidents also remains high, at 15% (consistent with 2023 and above 2021).

Chart 2.3. Global change in personal experience of everyday risks, 2021–2025 (% personally experienced)

Reported harm from food (14%) and drinking water (13%) reaches record highs, with China driving much of the rise.



Question text: *Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?*

Note: *Data trended to 2021 for consistency. Experience of harm at work based on those currently in the workforce. This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

Personal experiences of harm from the food people eat and the water they drink have also increased over time. Fourteen percent of the world's adult population report experiencing harm from food in the past two years, and 13% say the same about drinking water — both record highs globally since the World Risk Poll began. The same is true of personal experience from violent crime: 10% of adults say they experienced harm from this risk in the past two years, higher than in previous years.

Across these risks, China saw the largest change in reported personal experience of harm since 2023 and accounts for a large part of the increases in global averages because of its large population[iv]. Irrespective of China's role, the global pattern remains: reported experiences of personal harm from these daily hazards have increased.

iv. Excluding China from this analysis results in smaller global changes from 2023 in personal harm from water, food and violent crime.

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The World Risk Poll's Worry Index and Experience of Harm Index — both measured on a scale from 0-100 — shed light on which countries score highest and lowest overall in terms of experiencing harm and feeling worried. Countries where more people experience harm from these 10 types of everyday hazards also tend to worry more about them. As exposure to harm rises, so too does worry about being harmed, while safer countries tend to worry less about risk.

However, six countries stand out for their disconnect between overall levels of worry about and harm from risk: Somalia, India, China, Comoros, the Philippines and Chad. Each of these countries has a score of at least 20 or above on the Experience of Harm Index, the highest levels in the world (and far higher than the global average of nine), but people are relatively less worried about risks than in most other countries.

Chart 2.4. Country-level relationship between Worry Index and Experience of Harm Index, 2025

Worry tends to climb with harm, but six countries, led by Somalia and India, report the most harm while worrying comparatively little.

Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried?*

Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?

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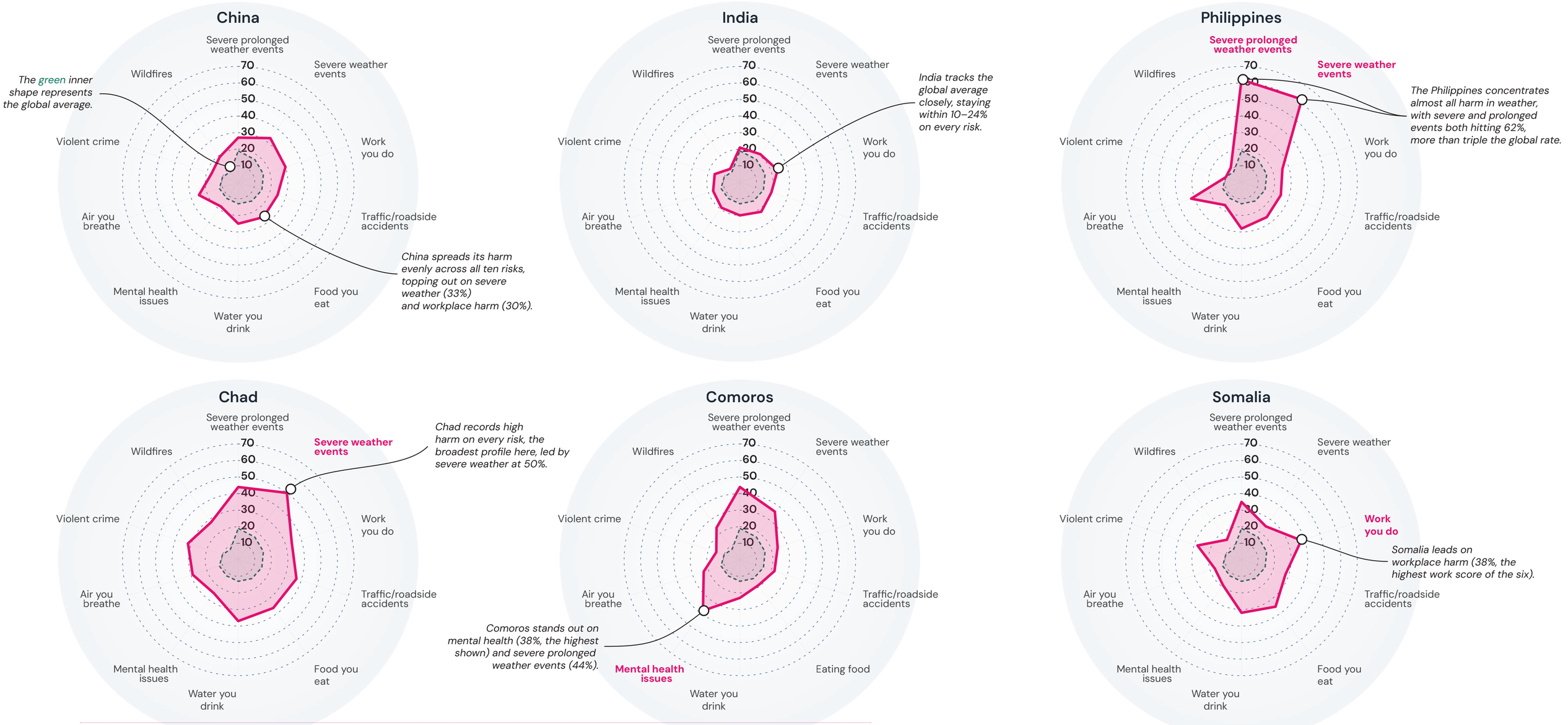
Chart 2.5. Experience of harm from everyday risks in six countries that rank highest on the Experience of Harm Index (% personally experienced)

The six countries reporting the most harm reach their totals by different routes, from severe weather in the Philippines to mental health issues in Comoros.



Question text: *Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?*
Note: *This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

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The social element of exposure to harm

So far, this report has focused on direct personal experiences of harm, incidents where the individual surveyed was themselves affected. But harm also reaches people through those they know personally. The Poll asks the question:

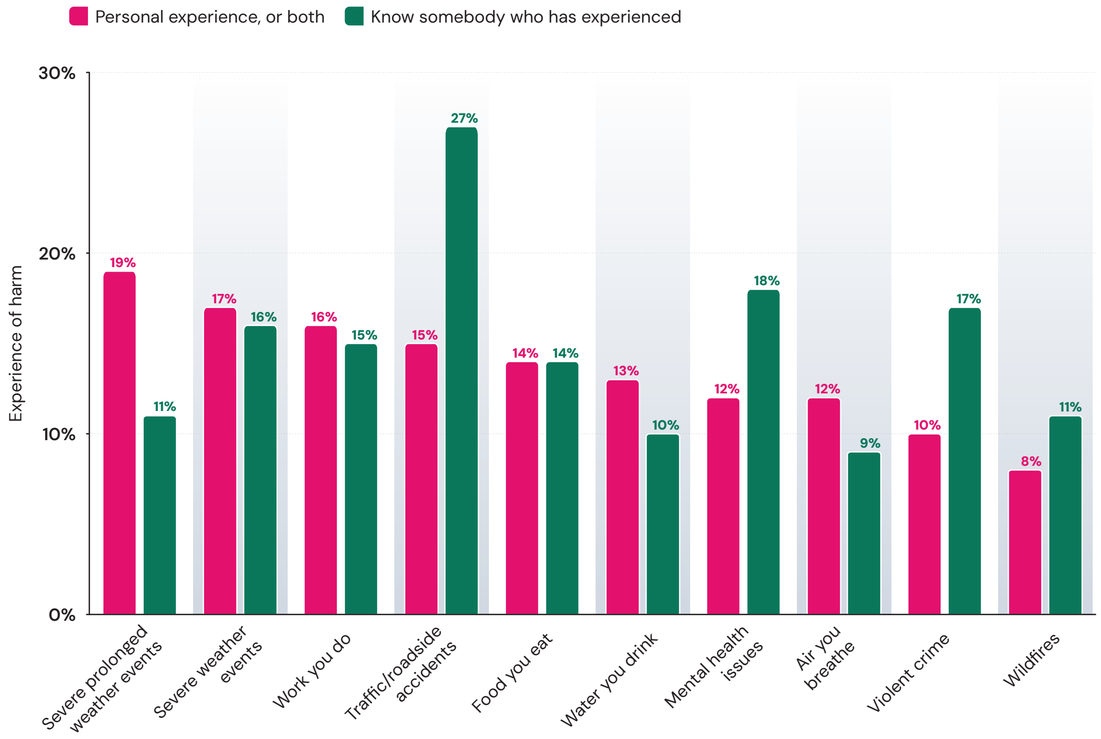
> **Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?**

This social dimension of harm tells a somewhat different story. Severe prolonged weather events rank among the highest causes of personal harm (19%), yet relatively few respondents know others who have been affected (11%). Traffic accidents show the reverse pattern: 27% of adults globally know someone harmed on the road in the past two years, nearly twice the share who have experienced road harm personally (15%). Mental health issues and violent crime similarly show higher rates of social than personal harm.

Understanding how harm spreads through social networks rather than direct experience is important for risk communication. For hazards such as road accidents, crime, and mental health issues, peer influence and community-level messaging may prove more powerful levers for behaviour change than approaches targeting individuals directly.

Chart 2.6. Personal experience of harm and knowing others who have been harmed from everyday hazards (%)

Awareness of harm often travels through others: 27% know someone hurt on the road, nearly twice the 15% hurt themselves.



Question text: *Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?*

Note: *This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

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Life evaluation linked to perceptions and experiences of risk

How people evaluate their lives overall (i.e., subjective wellbeing) is linked to how they perceive and experience risks in their daily lives. In most contexts, more positive life evaluations are associated with lower scores on the Worry and Harm Indexes, meaning that people worry less and report less personal experience of harm from the 10 surveyed hazards. This pattern holds across high-, upper-middle- and low-income countries.

However, lower-middle-income countries show a somewhat different pattern. Experiences of harm are consistent across different levels of wellbeing (averaging 15 on the Experience of Harm Index), although worry about harm rises with positive life evaluation, bucking the global trend. This is caused by a relatively small selection of lower-middle-income countries with large populations, including Egypt, Pakistan, India, Nigeria and the Philippines. This reverse effect between wellbeing, worry and experience of harm remains even after controlling for factors like gender, age, education, subjective income and urbanicity[v].

The relationship between wellbeing and risk perception in much of the world could go both ways: better life evaluations meaning people feel more in control of their lives and able to absorb risks, or lower experiences of harm leading to more positive life ratings. Regardless of the directionality of the relationship, it strengthens the case for integrating wellbeing and risk into policy frameworks.

v. While untangling this complex relationship lies outside the scope of this report, we hypothesise that this is related to the fact that in countries with large populations and recent economic development, emergent middle classes are living better lives than in the past but are also more attuned to how much they potentially have to lose.

Chart 2.7. Average Worry and Experience of Harm Index scores by subjective life evaluation

Worry and harm both fall as life evaluations rise, except in lower-middle-income countries, where worry climbs with wellbeing.

Note: *Gallup's Life Evaluation Index, based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale, asks people to rate their current and future lives on a ladder from 0 (worst) to 10 (best). Those scoring 7+ for the present and 8+ for five years ahead are 'thriving', while those rating both 4 or below are 'suffering'. Everyone else is 'struggling'.*

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Insight to action

Efforts to make the world safer are shaped by how people experience and anticipate risks. Across 10 everyday hazards, worry generally rises with exposure, yet the relationship varies by risk type and context. This creates practical challenges for prevention, preparedness and communication. A one-size-fits-all approach to risk communication will fail, as there is significant variation in global attitudes towards everyday risk.

A first priority involves targeting the risks with high harm and comparatively low worry, such as workplace hazards, which are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Similar attention is warranted for food and drinking water, for which reported harm has reached record global highs compared with any previous edition of the Poll. Levels of worry, however, have not kept pace, perhaps suggesting a degree of complacency over risks that many thought the world was successfully dealing with. A second priority involves managing risks with high worry relative to experienced harm, representing a different sort of policy and communication challenge.

Chart 1.5 specifically demonstrates clear links between individual wellbeing and what people see as the main risk to their safety. This chapter went a step further, showing that in most parts of the world, higher wellbeing is associated with less experience of harm from 10 everyday risks, as well as less worry about them. For policymakers, this again makes evident how questions of living a good life are inseparable from questions of living a safe life.

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Foundation

610 million

workers were harmed on the job in the past two years.

CHAPTER 3

Workplace harm

In 2025, 16% of the global workforce reported personally experiencing serious harm at work in the past two years. This is a decline from 18% in 2023 and 19% in 2021. Note that in 2019, respondents were asked whether they had ever been seriously injured while working, rather than about harm experienced in the previous two years. Additionally, some countries were not surveyed in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

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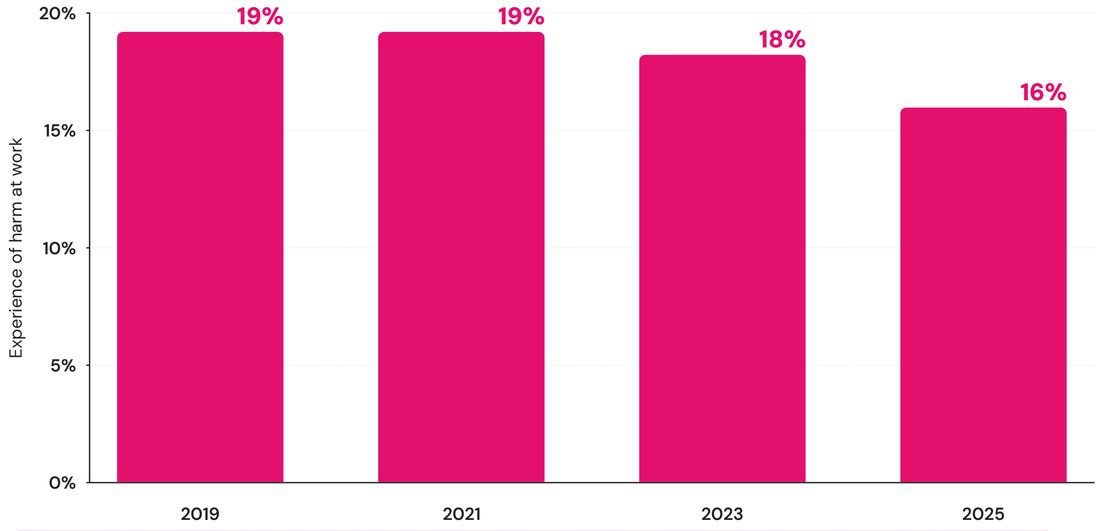
Experience of harm at work drops slightly

Viewed through one lens, this is an encouraging trend. The number of workers reporting workplace harm has fallen for the second consecutive edition of the Poll. But it is also true that 16% is still an unacceptably high number, equivalent to 610 million people. There is a long way to go before all workers can go to work safely. Another important caveat is that this survey only captures harm at work that people survive. By definition, it does not capture the view of people killed in workplace fatalities, a total that the International Labour Organization estimates to be around 3 million annually[7].

Chart 3.1. Global experience of workplace harm among the current workforce (% personally experienced)

Reported harm at work falls for a second wave running to 16%, the lowest the Poll has recorded, though that still equates to 610 million workers.



Question text 2021-25: *Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years? Work*

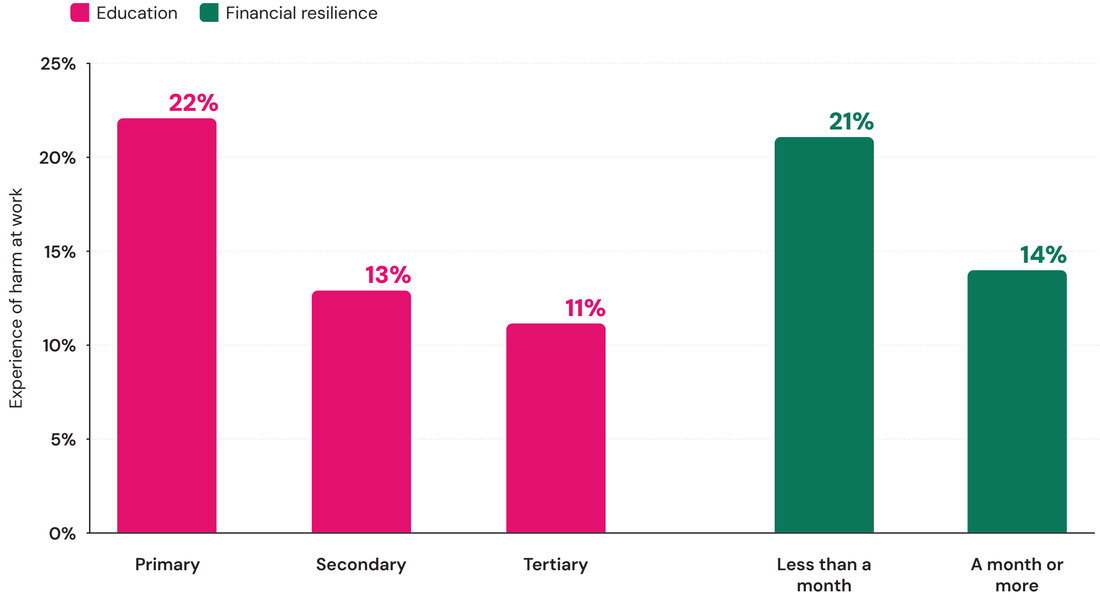
****Survey question 2019:*** *Have you ever been seriously injured while working?*

Note: *This calculation is based on people in the workforce, defined as being employed full-time for an employer, employed part-time, self-employed or unemployed. In 2021, this detail of employment questions was not possible in China, so it was excluded from the global estimates that year. This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

Workplace harm remains an issue that weighs most heavily on the most vulnerable. Among workers who say they could survive for one month or less if they lost their household income, one in five (21%) report experiencing harm at work in the past two years. This compares with 14% among those who say they could survive for one month or more. Rates of harm are also significantly higher among those with primary education (22%) than among those with secondary (13%) or tertiary (11%) education.

Chart 3.2. Personal experience of workplace harm among the current workforce by education and financial resilience (% personally experienced)

Harm falls hardest on the least secure: 21% of those who could not survive a month without income, and 22% of those with only primary education, compared with 11% of the best resourced.



Question text: *Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years? Work*

Suppose your household suddenly lost all income and had to survive only on savings and things that could be sold. How long would your household be able to cover all the basic needs, such as food, housing, and transportation? Would you say less than a month or a month or more?

Note: *This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'*

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How the World Risk Poll measures and reports workplace harm

The World Risk Poll asks the following questions to understand people's experience of serious harm at work:

> **Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past two years? The work you do**
>
> **If 'yes': Did this happen to you, someone you personally know or both in the past two years? Yes, personally experienced - Yes, know someone who has experienced - Both - No - (Don't know/Refused)**

This report calculates personal experience of workplace harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'. The wording of the question defines workplace harm broadly — as defined by the respondents themselves. The question was not framed solely in terms of physical harm and, therefore, does not distinguish between physical and psychological harm. As a result, when people report personally experiencing harm at work, it could encompass a range of harms from their point of view, from occupational accidents and diseases to psychological harm related to work.

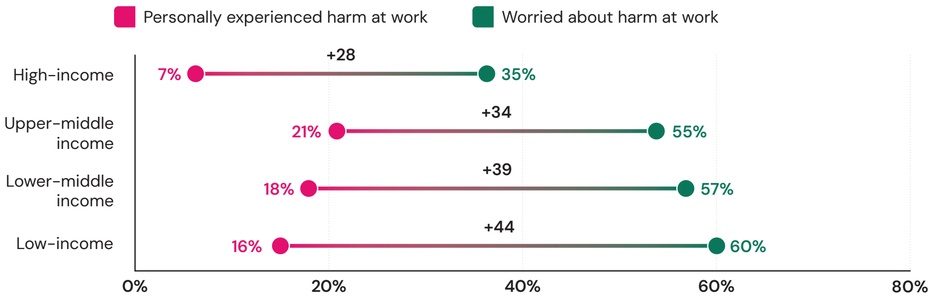
As the World Risk Poll collects nationally representative data about the adult (aged 15+, non-institutionalised) population, this report is able to disaggregate the data by employment status and focus on the perceptions of the current (2025) global workforce. Of the global population surveyed, 35% are classified as 'out of the workforce', meaning the workplace harm findings in this report are based on the roughly two-thirds of the world's adult population currently in the workforce.

Workplace risk perception gaps vary across income levels

Levels of worry about, and experience of, harm in the workplace vary considerably by country income level. In low-income countries, one in six workers (16%) report being harmed at work in the past two years, while 60% say they worry about future harm, a gap of 44 percentage points. Rates of harm increase slightly in lower-middle and upper-middle-income countries (18% and 21%, respectively), while levels of worry dip by similar magnitudes (to 57% and 55%, respectively). In high-income countries, 7% of workers report experiencing harm, and 35% report worry, a gap of 28 percentage points — substantially lower than in lower-income settings.

Chart 3.3. Experience of harm and worry about being harmed at work, by World Bank country income group (%)

Worry about workplace harm far outstrips experience in poorer countries, a 44-point gap in low-income nations compared with 28 points in high-income ones.



***Question text**: In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? Work*

Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years? Work

***Note:** Experience of harm is based on all adults in the workforce, and worry about harm is based on current employees. Worry statistics encompass those who are 'very worried' or 'somewhat worried'. This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

As well as having a higher share of their workforces in the service sector, high-income countries are much more likely to have national occupational safety and health (OSH) policies, programmes and protections in place than low-income countries[8]. The 2024 World Risk Poll report on OSH found that workers in low-income countries reported lower levels of safety training and lower rates of reporting harm to their employers or relevant agencies. These structural differences may help to explain variation in both reported harm and perceived risk[9].

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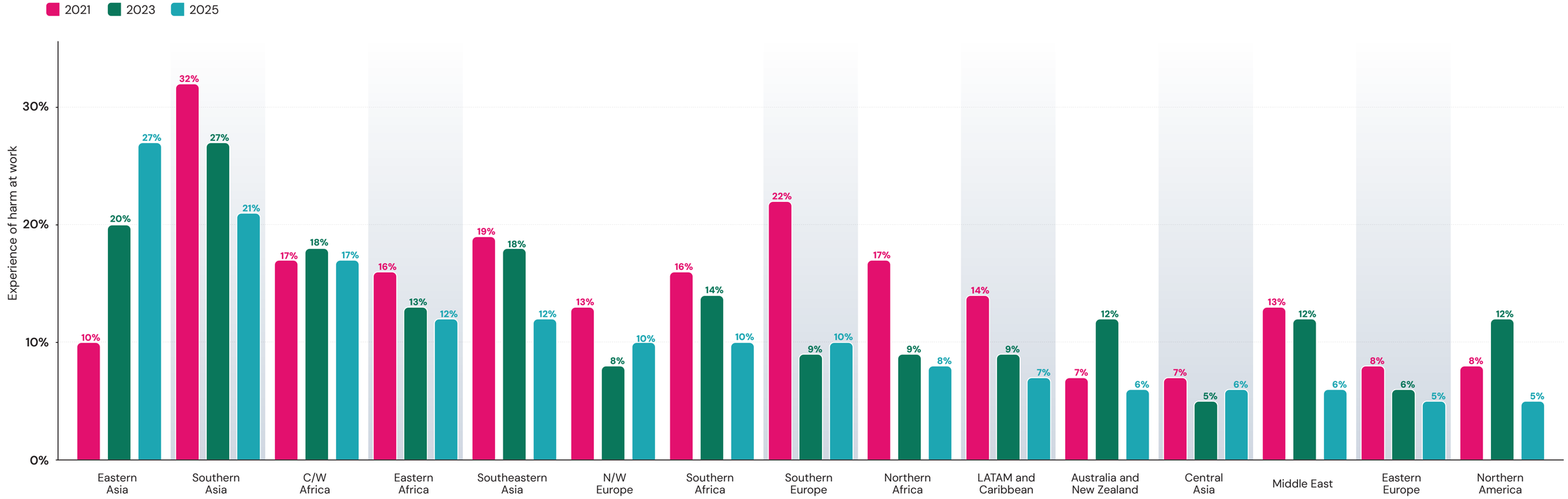
Several regions report a decline in workplace harm

At the global level, rates of workplace harm among the current workforce dipped marginally from 18% to 16%, with declines observed across most regions. However, two regions — Eastern Asia (20% to 27%) and Northern/Western Europe (8% to 10%) — saw notable increases in workplace harm since the 2023 edition of the Poll. Of these, only Eastern Asia reported more workplace harm among the workforce in 2025 than in 2021.

Chart 3.4. Experience of workplace harm by region, 2021–2025 (% personally experienced)

Most regions report less harm at work since 2023, but Eastern Asia bucks the trend, climbing from 20% to 27%.



Question text: *Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years? Work*

Note: *This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

By contrast, several regions recorded significant declines in workplace harm in the past two years. These include Southern Asia (-6-point decline, driven mostly by India), Southeastern Asia (-6 points), Southern Africa (-4 points), the Middle East (-6 points), Australia and New Zealand (-6 points) and Northern America (-7 points).

Despite persistently high global levels of workplace harm, these regional declines offer cause for encouragement. The 2023 and 2025 editions of the Poll are broadly comparable in terms of country coverage, survey mode administration and question wording, and these changes alone are not sufficient to disentangle what is driving improvements in OSH. This is also partly because the 2025 Poll did not ask again about rates of safety training or reporting of harm, as in 2023. However, a new question introduced in the 2025 World Poll sheds further light on workplace harm in relation to working conditions.

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Hours worked and workplace harm

Across the global workforce, there is little overall relationship between hours worked per week and reported harm or worry about it. Perceptions and experiences of workplace harm are relatively consistent, irrespective of how long people spend at work[i].

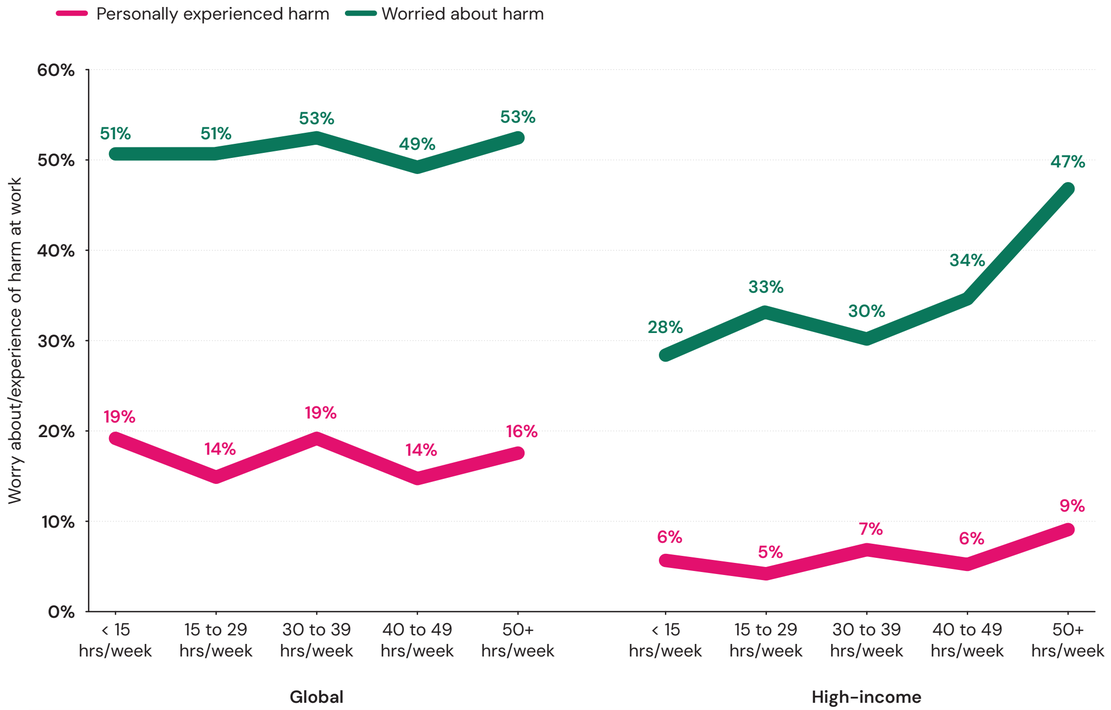
At first glance, this finding is not unexpected. Time spent working is only one consideration among many in the makeup of workplace harm and does not account for factors such as regulations, safety standards, protective equipment, or the sector in which people work. As the 2024 World Risk Poll report on OSH found, sectors such as fishing, construction and mining have much higher levels of workplace harm than service-based industries. A 35-hour working week in mining is likely to be more dangerous than a 50-hour work week behind a desk.

However, the picture changes in high-income countries. Among those who work fewer than 50 hours per week in high-income countries, only around one in three adults (ranging from 28% to 34%) say they are 'very' or 'somewhat' worried about being harmed at work. But among workers in high-income countries who spend at least 50 hours per week at work, 47% express worry about being harmed — significantly higher than people who work fewer hours and bringing them more in line with levels of worry among employees in lower income countries. This could be related to greater awareness about psycho-social harms and poor work-life balance. Those working more than 50 hours per week in high-income countries are significantly more likely to be part of high-earning households[ii].

i. Among the global workforce in 2025, the largest share of workers (36%) spent an average of 40-49 hours at work each week. A further 27% worked for 50 hours or more, meaning that 63% of workers spent at least 40 hours or more at work each week. Seventeen percent spent an average of 30-39 hours a week at work, while 10% worked between 15-29 hours and 8% fewer than 15 hours per week.
ii. In high-income countries, 29% of those who work 50+ hours per week are within the top quintile of household incomes in their respective country, compared to 19% of those who work 30-39 hours per week and 14% of those who work less than 15 hours per week.

Chart 3.5. Worry about and experience of workplace harm by average hours worked per week (% global and in high-income countries)

Hours worked barely change harm or worry worldwide, yet in high-income countries, worry jumps to 47% once the work week passes 50 hours.



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? Work*

Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years? Work

In a typical week (7 days), how many hours do you work IN TOTAL?

Note: *This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

This finding suggests the existence of a 'threshold effect' in high-income countries. Working 50 or more hours per week is associated with higher perceived workplace vulnerability and emotional distress, even though reported harm among this group (9%) is no higher than among those working 30-39 hours. This could be down to various factors, such as job intensity and fatigue, and tied to differences in what people consider harm at work.

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Links between worry about harm at work and harm from mental health issues

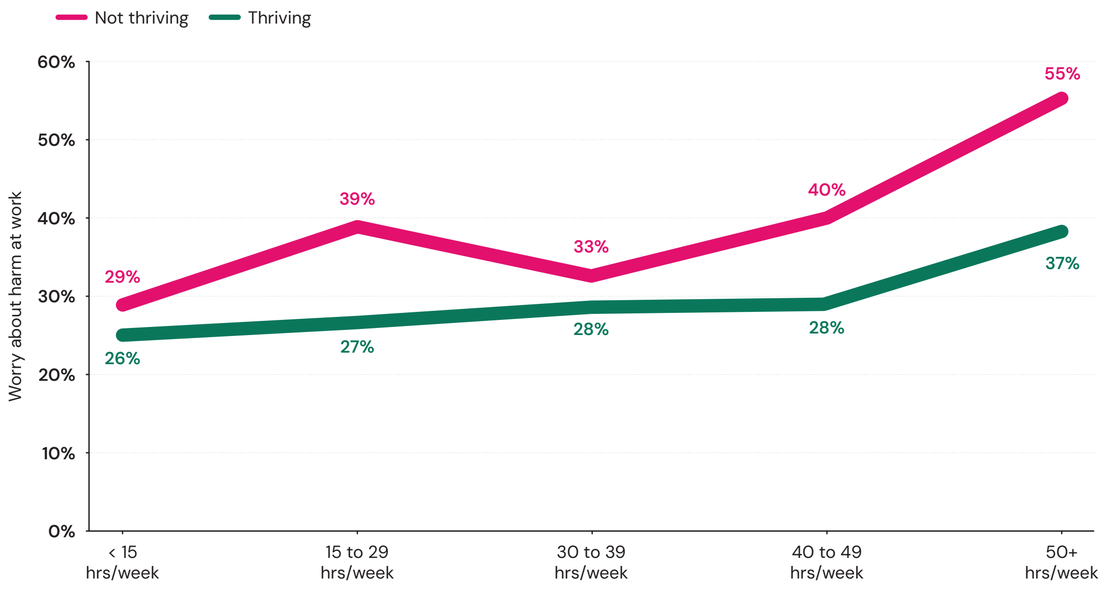
Advanced statistical regression models can help show the strength of the relationship between hours worked and being worried about harm at work in high-income countries. After controlling for a range of demographic factors, such as age, gender, education, income quintile, employment status and urbanicity, adults working 50 or more hours each week have significantly higher odds (65%) of being worried about experiencing harm at work than those working 40-49 hours (who also have higher odds (37%) of being worried than those who work fewer than 15 hours).

Including worry about harm from mental health issues adds a further layer of context to this model. Those in high-income countries who are somewhat worried about experiencing harm related to mental health issues have 143% higher odds of being worried about harm at work than those who are not worried at all about harm related to mental health. Further, those who are 'very worried' about harm related to mental health have 293% higher odds of being worried about harm at work than those who are not worried about mental health harm.

There is also a clear overlap between wellbeing, hours worked and worry about workplace harm in high-income countries. Among workers doing fewer than 40 hours per week, worry about workplace harm is relatively even among those thriving and not thriving. But as hours climb beyond 40 and 50 per week, the gap widens considerably. Over half (55%) of employees in high-income countries who are not thriving (i.e., struggling or suffering) and who work more than 50 hours worry about workplace harm, compared to just over a third (37%) of thriving employees working the same hours. Long hours appear to intensify existing stress and vulnerability.

Chart 3.6. Worry about workplace harm among workers in high-income countries by wellbeing and hours worked (%)

Long hours and low wellbeing compound: 55% of struggling workers in high-income countries on 50-hour weeks worry about harm, compared with 37% of those who are thriving.



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? Work*

In a typical week (7 days), how many hours do you work IN TOTAL?

The causal direction here is difficult to establish. It is unclear whether people suffer because they work long hours or whether those already struggling are more likely to work in roles that require long hours; most likely, both dynamics reinforce each other. What the data does make clear is that workers — particularly in high-income countries — think about occupational risk as more than just physical injury.

Where office-based and service sector work predominates, long hours, psychological strain and burnout become more pressing hazards[10]. Many high-income countries have legal limits on working time, though enforcement and opt-out provisions vary considerably. These findings suggest that hours-reduction policies are unlikely to benefit all workers equally. Instead, they would especially help those who are already most vulnerable, for whom the burden of overwork amplifies the stresses and struggles they already carry.

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Insight to action

Workplace harm remains a high-frequency, systemic risk that requires sustained policy focus. Despite recent declines across many regions, a significant share of the global workforce continues to face preventable harm, underscoring the need to embed OSH within broader labour and development agendas.

Prevention should remain the foundation of occupational safety strategies. Proactive hazard identification, safe systems design and worker engagement are central to reducing risk, and strengthening these elements across national legislation, enforcement and sector standards can improve protections and accountability.

The findings also show that economic vulnerability shapes experiences of harm. Workers with lower levels of education and limited financial resilience report higher rates of harm, often reflecting the sectors and workplaces they occupy. This highlights the need for OSH frameworks and enforcement strategies that explicitly prioritise those at greatest risk through targeted inspections, frequent safety training and accessible reporting channels to support more equitable protection. Lower levels of harm in higher-income settings, where OSH frameworks are more established, appear to illustrate the difference comprehensive regulation and enforcement can make. In low- and middle-income countries, particularly, continued investment in safety literacy, regulatory capacity and whistleblower protections remains essential.

Finally, workplace harm encompasses physical and psychological dimensions. In higher income contexts, long working hours are associated with elevated concern, particularly among workers with lower wellbeing. Integrating mental wellbeing into OSH standards and enforcing working-time protections can likely help reduce the excess strains already weighing on too many workers, particularly the most vulnerable.

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Foundation

CHAPTER 4

Weather-related risks

Weather-related hazards are increasingly prominent in public perceptions of risk worldwide. This chapter examines how often people report personal harm from four weather-related risks — wildfires, severe weather events, severe prolonged weather events such as drought and heatwaves, and harmful air — and how these experiences relate to levels of worry and broader perceptions of safety. By comparing survey responses with select external datasets, the chapter explores where subjective perceptions align with, and diverge from, objective measures of exposure.

1 in 2

people are ***NOT*** worried about the air they breathe.

99%

of the global population breathe air that is beyond safe World Health Organization limits.

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Worry and experience of wildfires, prolonged heat, severe weather and polluted air

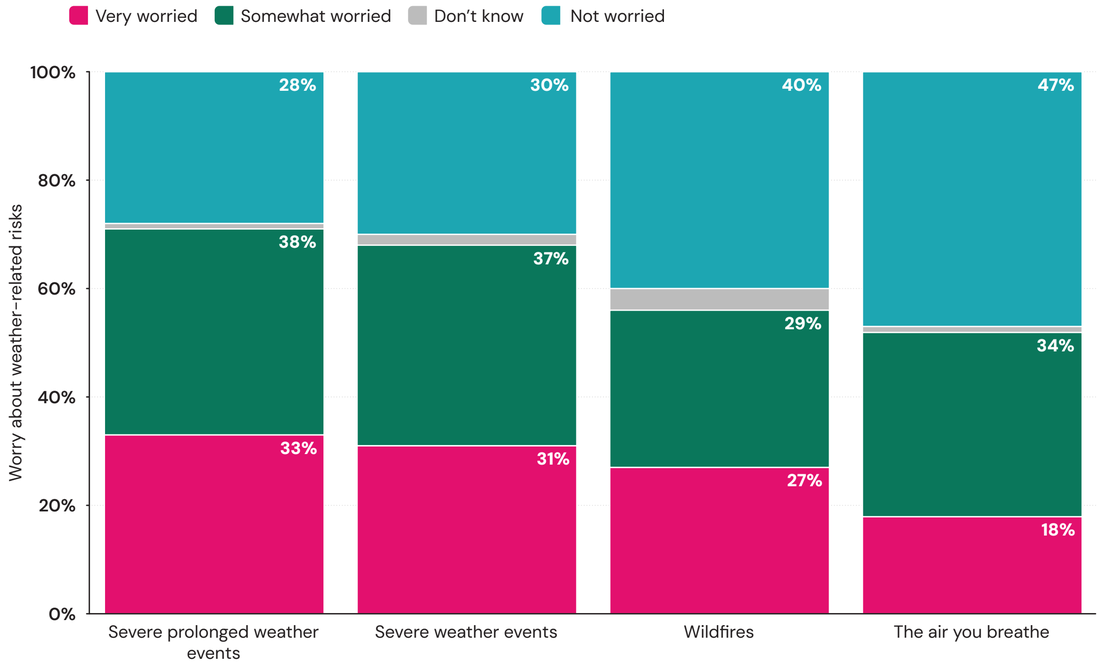
In 2025, nearly one in five adults globally (19%) said they have personally been harmed by severe prolonged weather events such as droughts or heatwaves in the past two years. A similar proportion (17%) reported harm from severe weather events such as floods or violent storms. A further one in 10 experienced personal harm from the air they breathe[i] (12%), and 8% reported personal harm from wildfires. In short, a significant share of the world's adult population experienced recent hardship from weather-related risks[ii].

People's levels of worry about these same risks follow a broadly similar pattern. A majority (71%) of adults express worry about being harmed by severe prolonged weather events such as droughts or heatwaves, slightly more than the 68% who worry about other severe events, including floods and storms. Slim majorities worry about wildfires (56%) and the air they breathe (52%). Of these four weather-related risks, air stands out for having the highest proportion (47%) of people expressing no worry at all, despite warnings from the World Health Organization (WHO) that 99% of the world's population breathes air that exceeds WHO air quality limits[11].

i. Harm from the air people breathe and wildfires are not always directly caused by extreme weather. For example, human actions can start wildfires and contribute considerably to levels of harmful air pollution through construction, manufacturing, transport emissions and many others. However, their effects are often linked to extreme weather and can be exacerbated by weather conditions, so have been included with the two types of severe weather risks in this analysis.
ii. Around one-third (32%) of adults globally experienced personal harm from at least one of these four hazards in the past two years. Of those who did, most experienced harm from only one of these four hazards (16%), while 9% experienced two hazards, 5% experienced three hazards, and 2% of adults globally were harmed by all four.

Chart 4.1. Levels of worry about weather-related daily risks (% global)

A majority now worries about each weather hazard, led by severe prolonged weather events (71%); only air pollution leaves nearly half unworried (47%).



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried?*

Note: *Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.*

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From worry to salience: How experience reframes risk perceptions

Levels of worry about weather-related hazards vary by personal proximity to harm. Across all four weather-related hazards, worry increases in a relatively consistent way from people with no direct experience to those who know someone who has been harmed to those who have personally experienced harm from this hazard in the past two years. Direct experience appears more strongly associated with elevated worry than second-hand exposure.

However, there is evidence of risk habituation among those with the most proximity to each hazard: reporting personal harm and also knowing others who have been harmed. The clearest evidence of risk habituation is in relation to temperature-related weather events (wildfires and severe prolonged weather events like droughts and heatwaves). For both hazards, 60% of those harmed say they are very worried about them, with similar percentages somewhat worried (wildfires: 30%; prolonged weather: 34%).

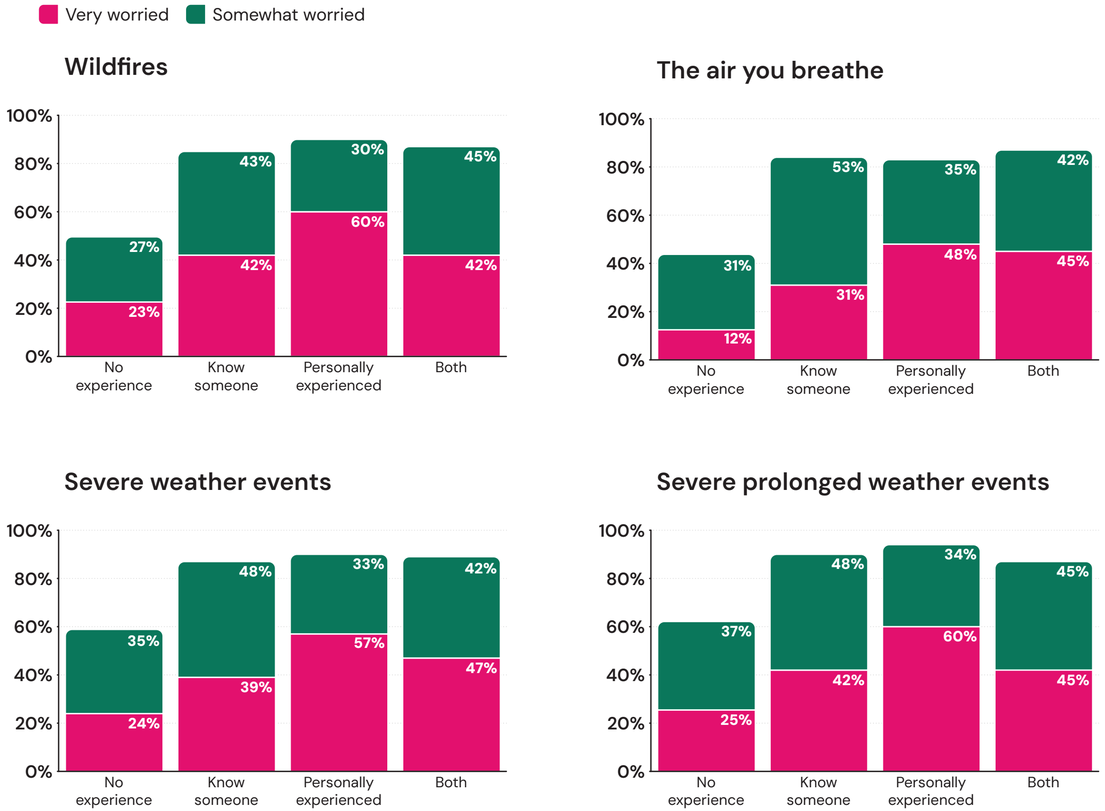
But among those who have experienced harm and also know others who have been harmed, the percentage who are very worried falls sharply to 42% and 45%, respectively, while overall levels of worry (including 'somewhat') stay mostly stable. Severe weather events show a similar pattern — albeit with a slightly shallower decline among those closest to the hazard. For harmful air, those with the greatest proximity express levels of worry similar to those with only personal experience of harm.

One explanation for this pattern is risk habituation or normalisation. Unlike more individualised risks, which tend to affect people one at a time and are more dispersed across time and space, weather-related hazards are often concentrated in certain areas and experienced by many people at the same time. Whole regions or communities may be simultaneously exposed to wildfire smoke, prolonged heat, or severe storms.

In places where exposure to these risks is frequent and widely shared, individuals may incorporate these risks into everyday expectations of living there. When many people regularly experience the same hazard, it can start to feel 'normal'. That may reduce how alarming it seems, even when the damage is serious. This relationship holds for all weather-related hazards measured, but particularly so for wildfires and severe prolonged weather events.

Chart 4.2. Relationship between personal experience of weather-related harms and being worried about them (%)

Worry rises with proximity to harm, then falls among the most exposed - most sharply for wildfires and prolonged heat, a sign of habituation.



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried?*

Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?

Note: *Respondents who answered "don't know" or refused are not included in this analysis.*

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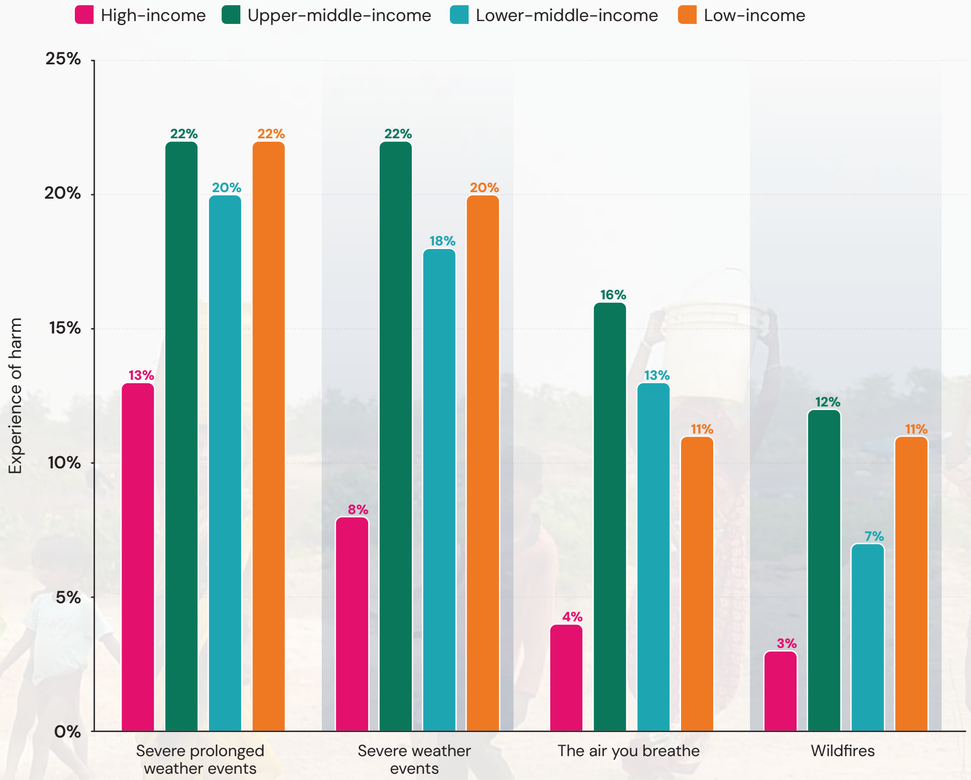
High-income countries report lower exposure to harm from recent weather events

Reported exposure to weather-related harm varies across country income groups. Adults living in high-income countries report lower levels of personal harm across all four hazards than those in upper-middle-, lower-middle- and low-income countries. In high-income countries, 13% report personal harm from severe prolonged weather events in the past two years. Smaller proportions report harm from severe weather events (8%), harmful air (4%) or wildfires (3%).

As these measures are self-reported, differences do not necessarily imply variation in exposure alone. They may also reflect differences in infrastructure, early warning systems, public health protections or other resilience factors that influence how hazards translate into personal harm. Air pollution is also unique among hazards in that prolonged exposure can damage health over the long term, but harm may not be experienced in the short term (within two years).

Chart 4.3. Experience of recent harm from weather-related hazards, by World Bank country income group (%)

High-income countries report the least harm on every hazard, from 13% for severe prolonged weather events down to 3% for wildfires.



Question text: *Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?*

Note: *This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

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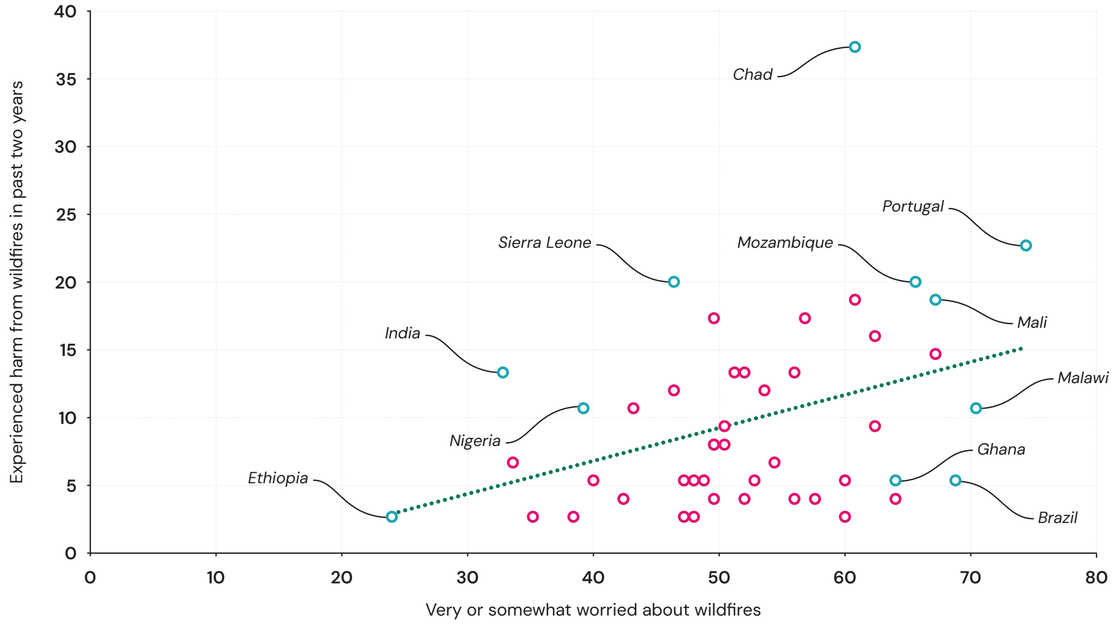
Wildfires: Exposure and worry

Data from the Global Wildfire Information System (GWIS)[12] indicate that 46 countries surveyed by the World Risk Poll had at least 2% of their land area burned by wildfires in 2025. Across these countries, there is a moderate positive association (r = 0.37) between reported personal harm from wildfires and levels of worry about future harm. This suggests that, to some extent, subjective experience of wildfires and perception correspond with objective measures of exposure.

Chart 4.4. Relationship between worry and experience of harm from wildfires in countries most affected* by wildfires in 2025 (%)

Across the 46 countries where wildfires burned most, experience and worry move loosely together (r = 0.37).



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? Wildfires*

Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years? Wildfires

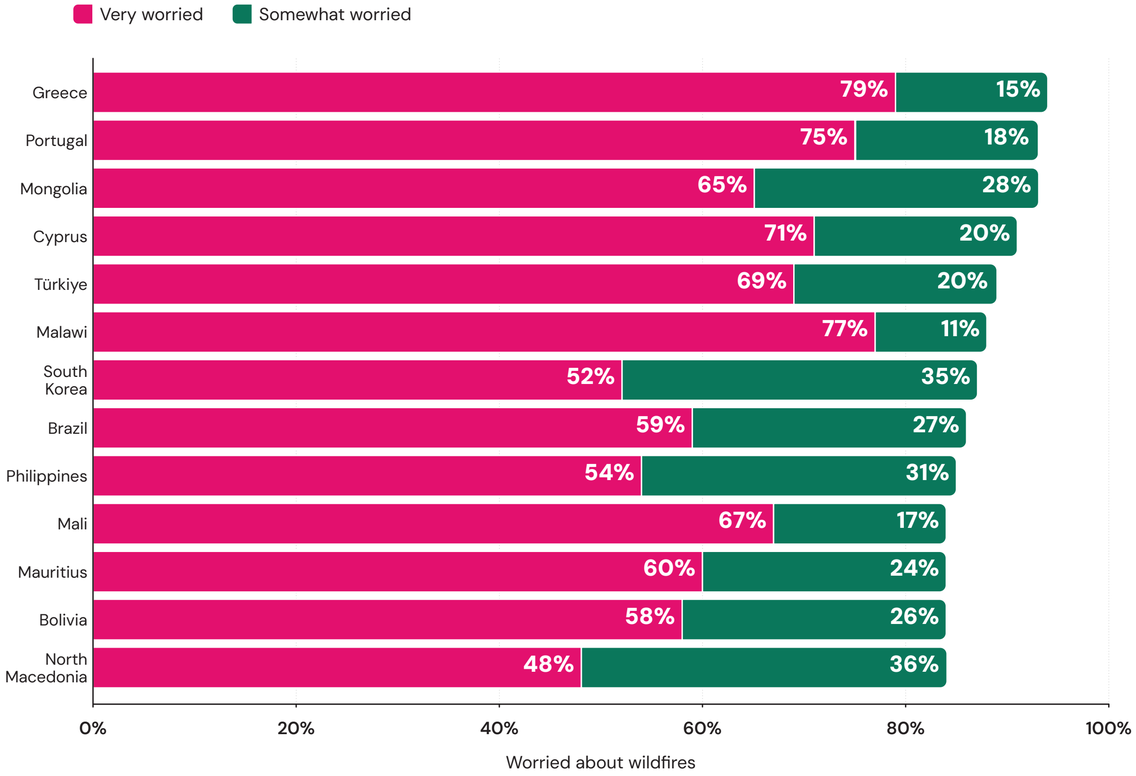
** Most affected defined as those where at least 2% of the land area of each country was burned by wildfires in 2025.*

Note: *This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

However, the countries with the highest share of land area burned are not always those with the highest levels of worry. This is not unexpected if large portions of the areas of land burned by fires are sparsely populated. Eight of the 10 countries with the greatest area burned are in sub-Saharan Africa: Zambia, Mozambique, Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Tanzania. By contrast, the highest levels of worry about wildfire harm were recorded in Greece (94%), Portugal (93%), Mongolia (93%), Cyprus (91%), Türkiye (89%), Malawi (88%), South Korea (87%), Brazil (86%), the Philippines (85%) and Bolivia (84%). Exposure, experience and perceived risk do not align in a uniform way across the world.

Chart 4.5. Countries most worried about wildfires (%)

Greece (94%) and Portugal (93%) top the world for wildfire worry, while the countries that actually burned most barely feature.



Question text*: In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? Wildfires*

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U.S. regional variation in wildfire concern

The World Risk Poll surveyed the U.S. in August and September 2025, several months after wildfires devastated parts of Los Angeles and made global headlines in January 2025. Overall, 46% of Americans expressed worry about wildfires in 2025, placing the U.S. 109th out of 140 countries on this measure. However, there is significant regional variation in levels of worry: 83% of Americans in the West of the country saysay they areare worried about wildfires, more than twice the rate of any other region (Northeast: 40%, South: 36%, Midwest: 25%). Wildfires stand out among other weather-related hazards in the U.S. for the high degree of regional variation in levels of worry.

Chart 4.6. U.S. regional worry about weather-related hazards (% very or somewhat worried)

Wildfire worry splits the United States: 83% in the West worry more than double any other region.

Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried?*

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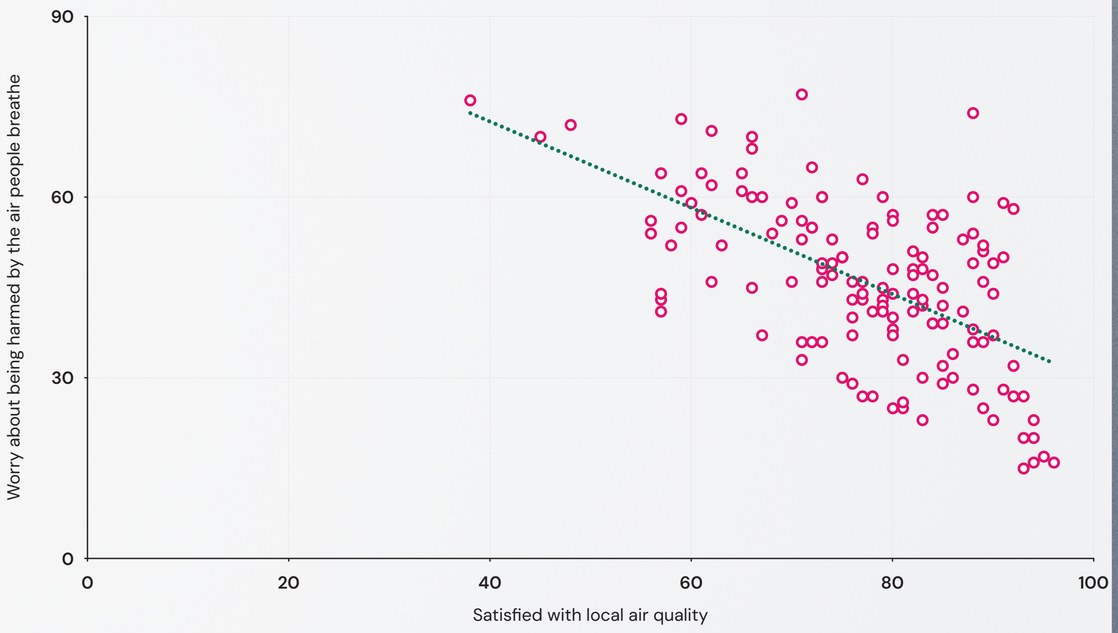
Air quality: Perception and measured pollution

Air pollution is associated with increased risk of non-communicable diseases such as cancer, stroke and respiratory illness and is estimated to have contributed to nearly 8 million global deaths in 2023[13]. It also imposes substantial economic harm, costing around $6 trillion USD in annual health expenses and reducing global GDP by nearly 5%, according to the World Bank[14].

Countries where adults express greater satisfaction with air quality tend to report lower levels of worry about being harmed by the air they breathe. Conversely, lower satisfaction with air quality is associated with greater worry, a strong negative correlation. This suggests that subjective assessments of air quality are, at least in part, related to perceived personal risk.

Chart 4.7. Country-level association between satisfaction with air quality and worry about being harmed (%)

The less satisfied people are with their air, the more they worry about being harmed by it, a strong negative correlation across countries.



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? The air you breathe*

In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of air?

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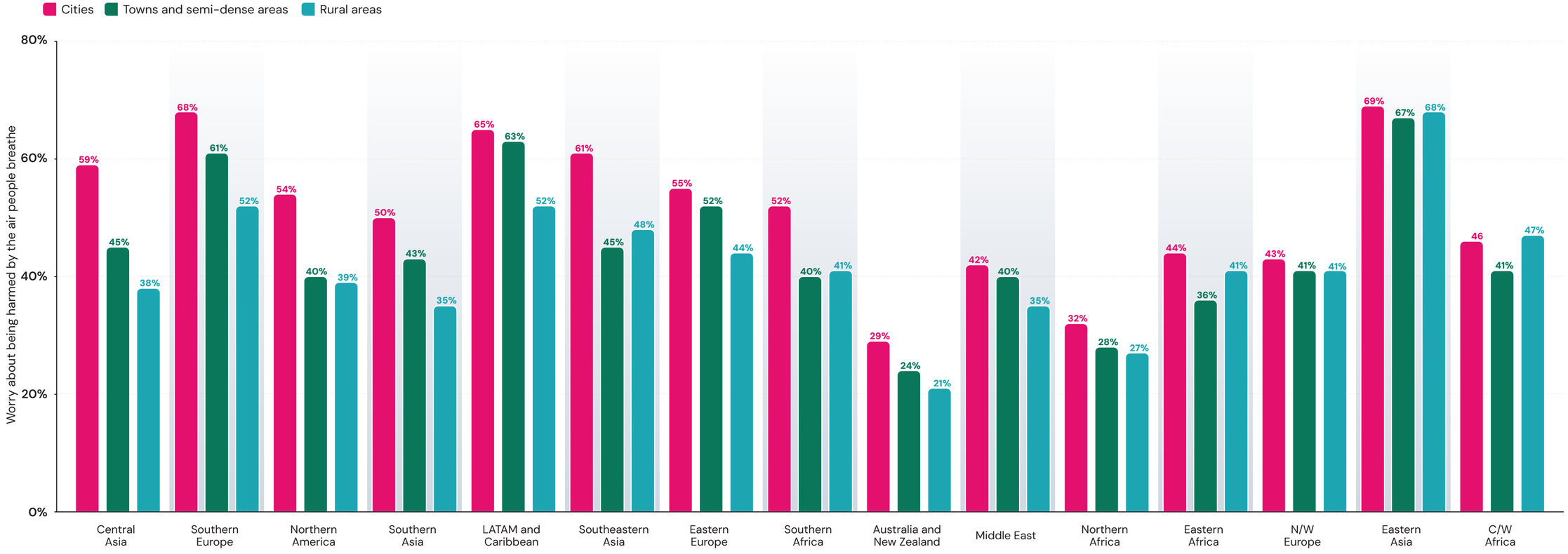
Concern about being harmed by poor air is higher in cities than in towns or other rural areas[iii]. Though the pattern varies somewhat from region to region, broadly speaking, people become more worried about being harmed by air pollution as they move from rural areas to towns to cities. This tallies with World Health Organization data on air pollution by urbanicity. Globally, people living in cities are exposed to more harmful air pollution than those in towns or rural areas[15].

Chart 4.8. Relationship between urbanicity, region and worry about being harmed by air (% worried)

Worry about harmful air climbs steadily from rural areas to towns to cities, tracking where pollution is worst.



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? The air you breathe*

iii. See the 2024 World Risk Poll report based on household waste, in particular, Chapter 4 about the open burning of household waste, which has detrimental effects to both public and environmental health through the release of toxic chemicals.

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Large urban divides in air pollution worry in Central Asia and the Balkans

Central Asia and Southern Europe show the largest urban-rural divides in worry about air quality across world regions. Several countries in these regions have particularly wide gaps. Of the 10 countries with the largest urban-rural gaps in worry about harmful air, three are in Central Asia (Armenia, Georgia and Uzbekistan), while four are in the Balkans (Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and Kosovo). Urban pollution and industry are highly concentrated in cities across these countries, where smog problems are much more prevalent compared to rural areas, which tend to be more sparsely populated and agricultural[16]. Additionally, many Balkan cities are located on plateaus surrounded by mountains, a geography that can trap pollution and contribute to stagnant air.

Table 4.1. 10 largest national divides in worry about air pollution by degree of urbanicity (%)

Mongolia shows the widest split, with 97% of city-dwellers worried about the air vs. 49% in rural areas.

COUNTRY	CITIES	TOWNS, SEMI-DENSE AREAS	RURAL AREAS
Mongolia	97%	68%	49%
Albania	82%	59%	37%
Georgia	76%	65%	34%
Armenia	73%	55%	33%
Greece	83%	55%	44%
Bulgaria	70%	50%	33%
Kosovo	60%	42%	27%
Madagascar	88%	62%	55%
Namibia	63%	32%	32%
Uzbekistan	58%	44%	32%

Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? The air you breathe*

Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years? The air you breathe

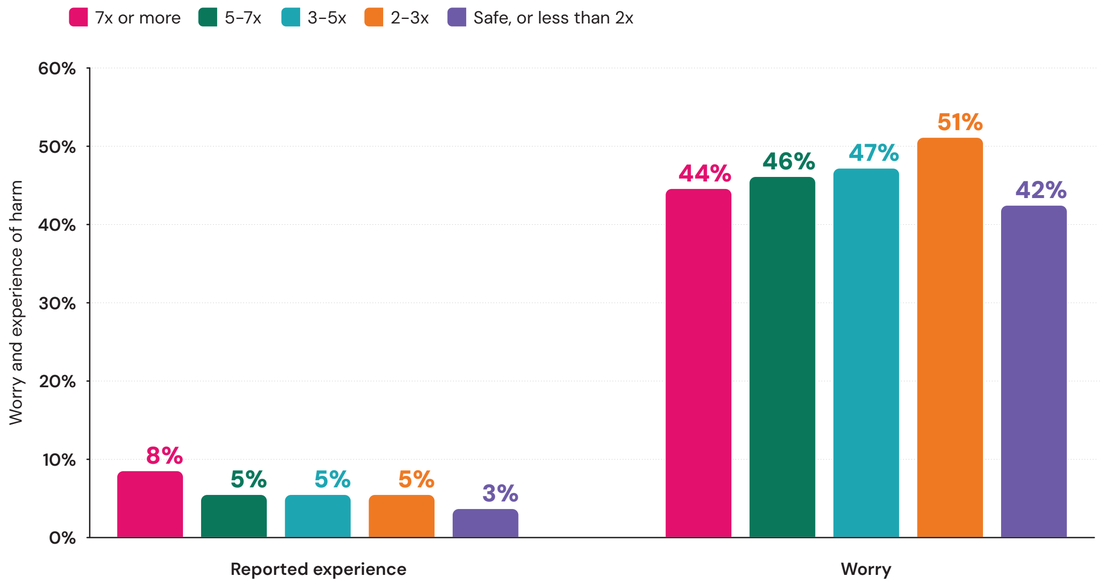
Data from the Air Quality Index (AQI) that capture the national average of air pollution (PM2.5) concentrations shed further light on the complex relationship between personal experience and worry. Overall, median[iv] levels of personal harm from air pollution are highest in countries with the most polluted air (8%), which exceeds WHO guidelines by at least seven times. Among countries where PM2.5 levels are between two- and seven-times above guidelines, median levels of harm drop to 5% and then to 3% in countries with lower levels of pollution.

iv. This analysis uses the median, as AQI data focus on the level of the country, rather than the individual. As such, it makes more sense to look at how much a country exceeds its average AQI level, treating each country as "equal" for analytical purposes.

However, worry about harm from air pollution follows a broadly opposite pattern, with median levels of worry rising from 44% in countries at least seven times over WHO guidelines to 51% in countries that exceed limits by only two or three times. While people living in the most polluted countries report more harm from air pollution, they are among the least worried about it.

Chart 4.9. Experience and worry about harm from air pollution based on how much PM2.5 exceeds WHO guidelines (% medians)

People in the most polluted countries report the most harm (8%) yet worry the least (44%).



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? The air you breathe*

Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years? The air you breathe

Note: *AQI PM2.5 data are from 2024, the most recent available. Scores based on annual average PM2.5 concentration (μg/m³).*

This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.

This pattern may reflect differences in awareness, media coverage, adaptation, competing priorities, or normalisation of risk across settings. This carries important implications because if those most exposed are also least concerned, they may not take action to mitigate the effects of air pollution — either at a personal level, such as wearing masks, checking air quality data or adapting their plans, or at a broader community/societal level by supporting policy change to reduce air pollution — thereby reinforcing cycles of harm. It could also feed through into how governments prioritise air quality policies relative to other hazards, further reinforcing people's risk perceptions.

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Significant overlap between experience of harm from severe weather events and from severe prolonged weather events

For the first time in 2025, the World Risk Poll distinguished between[v]:

> **Severe weather events, such as floods or violent storms**
>
> **Severe prolonged weather events, such as heatwaves or droughts**

At the country level, there is substantial overlap in reported harm from these two types of severe weather. Of the 10 countries with the highest reported personal harm from severe weather events, seven — the Philippines, Chad, Comoros, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia and Malawi — also appear among the 10 most affected by severe prolonged weather events.

v. In technical terms, floods and droughts are not weather events themselves, but the result of a weather event (intense rainfall, prolonged dry periods, respectively). However, as most survey respondents do not consider these technicalities, and the items worked well in cognitive testing, these examples were used in fieldwork to aid respondent understanding.

Table 4.2. Top 10 countries experiencing harm from severe weather events and severe prolonged weather events (%)

Seven countries, led by the Philippines (62% on both), rank in the most affected 10 for storms and floods and for drought and heat alike.

SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS (E.G., FLOOD, STORM)		SEVERE PROLONGED WEATHER EVENTS (E.G., DROUGHT, HEATWAVE)	
Philippines	62%	Philippines	62%
Chad	50%	Comoros	44%
Comoros	36%	Chad	44%
Niger	35%	Zambia	37%
China	33%	Somalia	35%
Madagascar	28%	Malawi	33%
Mozambique	27%	Lesotho	32%
Bangladesh	26%	Madagascar	32%
Somalia	25%	Mozambique	29%
Malawi	25%	France	29%

Question text: *Have you or someone you PERSONALLY know, EXPERIENCED serious harm from any of the following things in the past TWO years?*

Note: *This report calculates personal experience of harm by combining the answers 'Yes, personally experienced' and 'Both'.*

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report outlines:

> **"Human influence has likely increased the chance of compound extreme events since the 1950s. Concurrent and repeated climate hazards have occurred in all regions, increasing impacts and risks to health, ecosystems, infrastructure, livelihoods and food. Compound extreme events include increases in the frequency of concurrent heatwaves and droughts; fire weather in some regions; and compound flooding in some locations. Multiple risks interact, generating new sources of vulnerability to climate hazards, and compounding overall risk. Compound climate hazards can overwhelm adaptive capacity and substantially increase damage."**[17]

Many of the countries that rank highest in experience of different severe weather events, spanning floods and storms to droughts and heatwaves, have been hit by multiple forms of extreme weather in recent years, made more likely by anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change.

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The Philippines[vi]:

- ***Severe weather events:*** The Philippines experienced a notable sequence of tropical cyclones in October and November 2024. In a period of less than a month between 24 October and 17 November, five tropical cyclones made landfall in the Philippines, all crossing the island of Luzon (and in some cases other islands), while a sixth passed close enough to the coast to have significant impacts[18].
- ***Severe prolonged weather events:*** Earlier in 2024, the Philippines was afflicted by extreme heat and drought, with large parts of the country receiving only 45%-75% of their expected rainfall for the first third of the year[19], with the El Niño effect — a periodic climate phenomenon in which warm ocean surface temperatures in the Pacific disrupt normal atmospheric circulation — contributing to this lower rainfall total[20].

Chad:

- ***Severe weather events:*** Torrential rain and flooding in July 2024 killed 576 people and left nearly 2 million homeless[21], also due in part to the El Niño effect[22].
- ***Severe prolonged weather events:*** Several droughts and periods of extreme heat in recent years have hit agricultural production in Chad[23], affecting 2.4 million people and contributing to rapid desertification in the north of the country[24].

Comoros:

- ***Severe weather events:*** In December 2024, Cyclone Chido left many Comoros residents without food and shelter[25]. Parts of Comoros also experienced excess precipitation in 2024[26].
- ***Severe prolonged weather events:*** In recent years, residents have also suffered from extreme heat far above regional averages[27], impacting their water supply[28].

Madagascar:

- ***Severe weather events:*** In late 2024 and early 2025, Madagascar was hit by Cyclones Dikeledi and Hondo, causing widespread flooding that affected roughly 7,000 people[29].
- ***Severe prolonged weather events:*** In 2024, linked to the El Niño effect, nearly 3 million people in Madagascar were affected by drought, contributing to widespread hunger[30].

vi. For more context on the Philippines, see the Lloyd's Register Foundation funded project 'Contextualising disaster resilience in archipelagic environments'.

Mozambique:

- ***Severe weather events:*** Cyclone Chido killed at least 120 people in December 2024, damaging thousands of homes[31].
- ***Severe prolonged weather events***: In 2024, El Niño brought below-average rainfall to much of the country, as well as unusually high temperatures[32], resulting in drought during the 2024-25 season.

Somalia:

- ***Severe weather events:*** Floods towards the end of 2023 displaced 1.2 million people from their homes and killed more than 100 people[33].
- ***Severe prolonged weather events:*** In recent years, Somalia has been gripped by drought after five consecutive seasons of poor rainfall[34]. Extreme heat conditions have also led to food shortages and negatively impacted livelihoods and access to education[35].

Malawi:

- ***Severe weather events:*** Malawi was hit by Cyclone Freddy in 2023, which affected many thousands of properties and square kilometres of important cropland,[36] and was struck again by Cyclone Chido in December 2024.
- ***Severe prolonged weather events:*** In 2024, Malawi suffered from its worst drought in at least two decades amid the El Niño cycle[37].

These examples highlight how high-impact events can occur in quick succession within countries, increasing the complexity of preparedness and response. As the Lloyd's Register Foundation-funded project, *Improving Household Preparedness in Multi-Hazard Contexts*[38], finds:

> **"Different hazards can also take place at the same time or one after the other, placing significant pressure on already limited services and infrastructure. Reducing the impacts of disasters in such 'multi-hazard' contexts requires interventions, including household preparedness plans, to recognise these interrelationships and complexities."**

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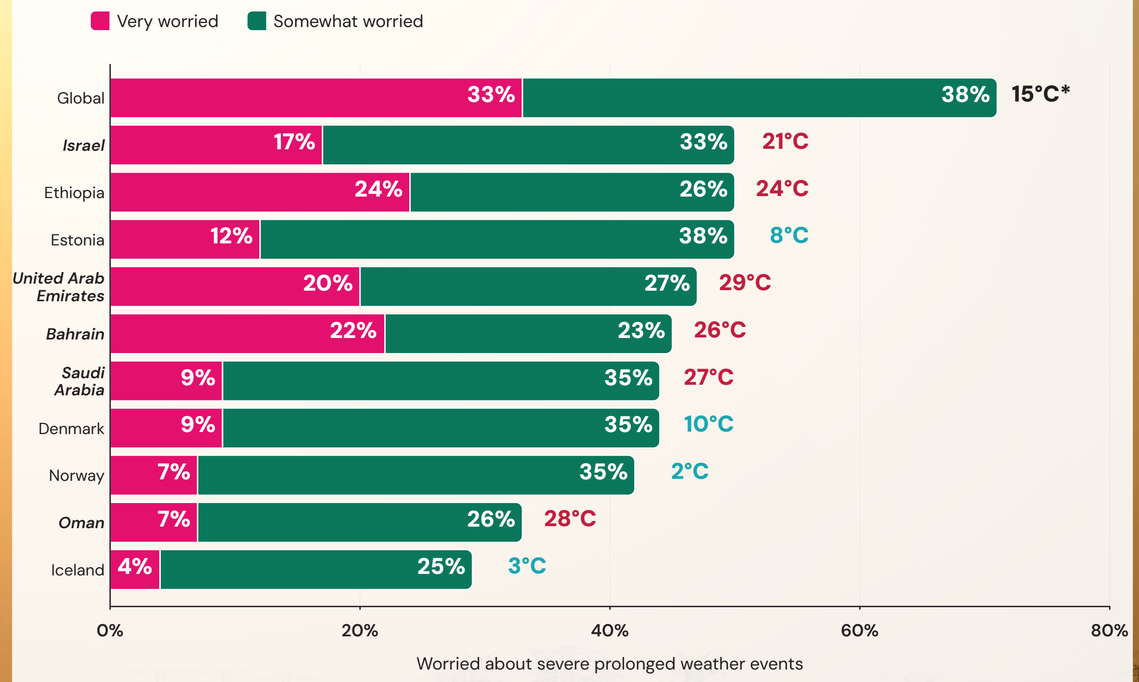
Gulf countries not worried by extreme heat

Globally, one-third (33%) of adults say they are 'very' worried about being harmed by severe prolonged weather events such as droughts or heatwaves, and a further 38% say they are 'somewhat' worried. Many countries expressing the lowest levels of worry have cold climates, including Iceland, Norway, Denmark and Estonia. However, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates also feature among the least worried countries, despite having some of the highest average annual temperatures globally.

This could, in part, reflect higher levels of adaptation to extreme heat and normalisation of heat as a simple part of life. Much of the Gulf has infrastructure that reduces direct exposure to extreme heat, such as air conditioning and a reliance on desalinated water rather than rain-fed agriculture. At the same time, it could also be linked to the low perceived threat of climate change. Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — all major oil producers and greenhouse gas emitters — are also among the five countries where most adults (at least 29% or more) say climate change poses no threat at all to their countries in the next 20 years.

Chart 4.10. Countries least worried about severe prolonged weather events (%)

Cold-climate nations sit among the least worried, alongside the Gulf states, despite some of the world's highest temperatures.



Question text: *In general, how WORRIED are you that each of the following things could cause you serious harm? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried? Severe prolonged weather events*

Note: **Average annual temperature measured 2 metres above the ground*[39].

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Insight to action

Weather-related risks shape daily life across the world. The World Risk Poll shows that large shares of adults report personal harm from severe storms, flooding, droughts, heatwaves, harmful air and wildfires. In many countries, these hazards can occur in quick succession, with hydrological extremes and prolonged extreme temperatures affecting the same populations within short timeframes. This overlap calls for integrated risk management systems that address compound and cascading threats rather than treating each hazard in isolation. National and local preparedness strategies should align early warning systems, emergency response, climate adaptation planning and social protection to reflect the reality of multiple, interacting risks.

Differences in reported harm across income groups also point to the protective role of infrastructure and institutions. Adults in high-income countries report lower levels of personal harm from weather-related hazards, likely reflecting the contributions of more resilient infrastructure, effective early warning systems, public health capacity and greater preparedness. This indicates that expanding investment in these areas can reduce the scale of individual harms from everyday environmental risks.

The findings on air quality highlight the importance of pairing objective and subjective data. While reported personal harm from air pollution rises with measured pollution levels, worry does not follow the same pattern. In many countries, large proportions of adults express little or no concern about the air they breathe, even though levels of harmful particulate matter exceed safe levels by a huge distance. Several factors may lie behind this disconnect. Air pollution is, for much of the time, an invisible threat, and in many developing countries communities have internalised frequent high-pollution episodes and learned to live with them, a form of acquired resilience, while policy responses are often slow or deprioritised against other pressing needs. This normalisation should not be mistaken for the absence of a problem.

At the same time, the picture is not static. A growing number of citizen science groups and grassroots movements are working to raise awareness, improve local monitoring and propose solutions, and there is a rising number of legal cases in which governments are being challenged over their failure to ensure access to clean air. Low expressed concern may therefore understate a deeper and shifting public engagement. Public health strategies can build on this momentum by strengthening risk communication, improving transparency around pollution data and the impact of air pollution on health, and promoting protective behaviours. Alongside and leading these efforts, policies and regulations that target reducing emissions from sources such as manufacturing, transport and industry remain essential.

Conclusion

This first report based on 2025 findings only begins to scratch the surface of the World Risk Poll dataset, now in its fourth edition. Even so, several consistent patterns have emerged from this growing body of trended data that offer valuable starting-point evidence for policymakers. Road traffic continues to dominate global perceptions of risk, while worry about violent crime remains high relative to harm levels, and workplace harm is of less concern despite greater prevalence.

The report also points towards some more hopeful trends. Though it remains a major issue, experiences of harm at work are showing signs of decline in many regions, while overall recognition of the threat of climate change has reached its highest point recorded by the Poll.

New questions introduced in the 2025 World Risk Poll provide even more insights. Wildfires generate disproportionate levels of worry relative to their lower levels of reported experiences of harm, even as the world is expected to see more of them in the coming years. The findings also point to a high degree of overlap between countries most harmed by extreme weather events, like floods and cyclones, and those most affected by prolonged events, including drought and heatwaves, highlighting the risks posed by compounding hazards in the same areas. At the same time, half of the world's population expresses no worry about air pollution, despite widespread exposure to unsafe air.

Ultimately, the World Risk Poll continues to shed light on the risks that shape our world, from everyday hazards to existential threats. We hope that providing data and insights highlighting these dimensions of global risk will help policymakers, governments, researchers and safety professionals design more effective, tailored solutions to make the world safer for everyone.

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