

NEWS

Poll: Corona effects on food, jobs biggest issues

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Jobseekers in Mombasa. Unemployment has emerged as the fastest growing worry among Kenyans. FILE PHOTO | NMG



The Coronavirus disease remains the biggest challenge facing Kenyans today, with a new opinion poll released Sunday showing that the effects of the virus on food security/ poverty and unemployment are the two issues that are worrying the public the most.

According to the latest survey by Infotrak, 47 percent of the 1,200 respondents said the disease was their biggest concern. The global pandemic had killed over 400,000 people globally and 79 people in Kenya by Sunday, posing a health and economic crisis that has affected the incomes of households while also hurting jobs.

Each respondent was asked to mention three key issues that were of most concern to them and majority identified the virus as their biggest concern, followed by food security/poverty and coronavirus is viewed as a personal finance problem and unemployment is now one of the top three concerns that Kenyans want the government to deal with,” Angela Ambitho, the Infotrak CEO, told the *Business Daily* in an interview on Sunday.

Respondents at the Coast, Western and Rift Valley were the most worried about the virus. Eastern and North Eastern had the least worries about the respiratory disease that has infected over six million people globally and 2,767 locally.

The Coast and Western respondents were also most worried about food security/poverty while those in Eastern, Rift Valley and Nyanza were most worried about unemployment.

Key issues Kenyans are concerned about as in April and June

Concern on unemployment rose by 10% in June compared to April while fear of the Covid-19 pandemic eased.

Source: INFOTRAK • [Get Data](#)



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A similar survey that the pollster conducted in April had indicated that Kenyans were most worried about Coronavirus, food security/poverty and access to healthcare in that order.

That indicates that over the last three months, unemployment has emerged as the fastest growing worry among Kenyans as companies and businesses shed jobs, send workers on unpaid leave and cut back on operations to protect their bottom lines and ride out the worst of the global pandemic.

On Saturday, President Uhuru Kenyatta reduced curfew hours, moving the cut-off time from 7pm to 9pm in a move aimed at ensuring that workers can put in eight hours without having to worry about restrictions on movement. The move is expected to encourage businesses to resume operations and save jobs.

The President, however, said restrictions on movement into and out of Nairobi and Mombasa would continue for another 30 days, meaning that urban families whose incomes have been hurt by the global pandemic cannot move upcountry where the cost of living is lower.

According to the Infotrak survey, only four in ten people said they believed that taking their families upcountry was the best way to protect them from Coronavirus. In both Nairobi and Mombasa, only three out of ten respondents said this would be the best option.

“Due to their fear of the pandemic, most Kenyans are happy to continue with the curfew if it will ensure they remain safe,” Ms Ambitho said.

Across the country, 67 percent of the respondents said they were “extremely worried” about Coronavirus, a significant jump from those who felt the same way in April (50 percent). Nyanza had the highest proportion of people who were extremely worried (89 percent) while Coast and North Eastern had the lowest (76 percent).

Views on the ongoing curfew measures

Source: INFOTRAK • [Get Data](#)

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Majority of Kenyans who were worried about the disease now say they are more worried than before (64 percent). Another 18 percent are worried less than before compared to 11 percent who said they were worried before but are not now. Only seven percent had not changed.

The poll, conducted between May 28 and June 2 was sponsored by Infotrak and was conducted through computer assisted telephone interviews. It had an error margin of plus or minus 2.83 percent and a 95 percent degree of confidence. 69 per cent of the respondents live in rural areas.

The other 31 live in towns. Interestingly, 71 percent of them said the biggest obstacle in the war against Coronavirus was the failure by Kenyans to observe the guidelines given by the government, followed by lack of awareness about the disease and corruption in that order.

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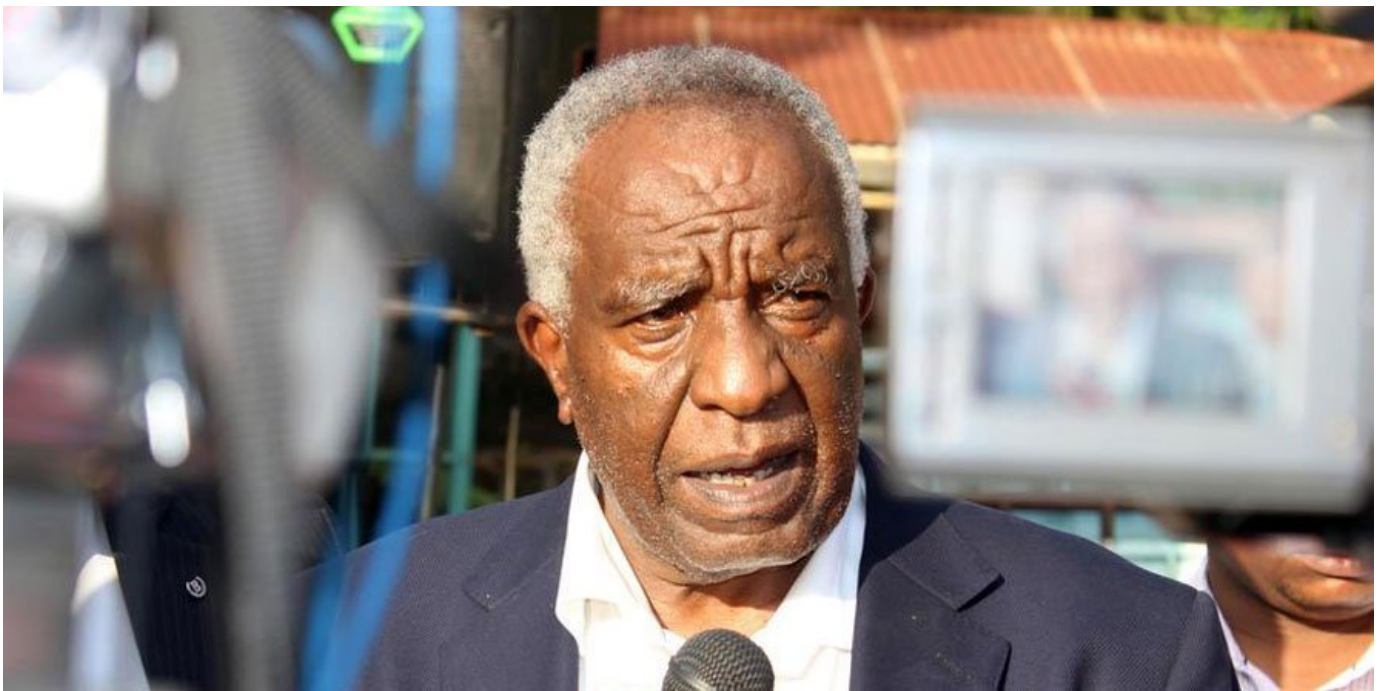
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