

IPSOS POLLING: ATTITUDES ON CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

A 31-country Ipsos
Global Advisor Survey

June 2024

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Introduction: The second annual edition of Ipsos' crime and law enforcement report

Welcome to the second annual edition of Ipsos' polling on crime and law enforcement! This 31-country survey tracks how people around the world see crime playing out in their communities, what they want governments to do, and how much trust they have in law enforcement—among other trends.

This year—2024—is one of the biggest years for democracy in human history. With billions of people heading to the polls, one of the main issues on many people's minds in many countries around the world is their safety, how safe they feel in their communities, the sense of fairness they feel from the criminal justice system and law enforcement, and how these two undercurrents interact with how much trust they have in their systems of government broadly.

[Trust in the system](#) is a key to understanding electoral outcomes, as [global Ipsos polling](#) earlier this year shows. This latest report builds on that research, finding that even as [populism](#) remains a driving force around the world, most support and adhere to the rule of law and norms. More respondents support following laws over breaking them to do the right thing, though there are important regional differences, perhaps driven by different historic norms.

Looking closer to home, however, it is clear that in the 31 countries Ipsos surveyed, people want their government to prioritize the economy over crime, suggesting that [inflation's effects are still pressing](#).

However, perceptions of crime and what actions people feel governments should take sometimes plays out in unexpected

ways. Overall, across the 31 countries Ipsos polled in, more say crime has stayed about the same in the past year, though many note a range of crimes they see in their communities, from vandalism to drug use to trafficking. However, some countries want their governments to prioritize crime even as many have not reported increases in crime, and vice versa, suggesting complicated issue priorities from the public.

Still, a majority trust law enforcement to treat all with respect, on the global level, unchanged from last year. Many also see poverty as a significant driver of crime over ineffective law enforcement. How these various experiences and forces will play out globally will be an important space to watch as election results continue to roll in.



Talking points

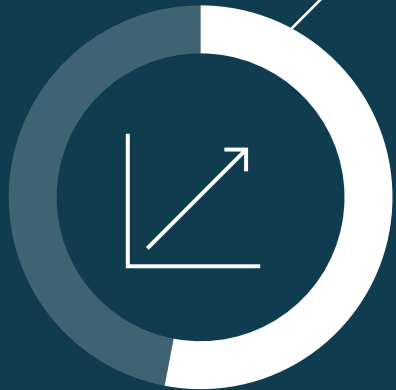


At a glance



23%

of New Zealanders say they want their government to prioritize stopping crime and violence, while **46%** say they want their government to prioritize creating jobs and boosting the economy



62%

say poverty and unemployment are the most significant causes of crime and violence in New Zealand.

31%

say crime increased in their communities in the past year, the same as the global average of 31%.

68%



report that they have trust and confidence in law enforcement to treat all with respect



Two in three

in New Zealand say that people should obey the law, even if it interferes with their interests over breaking the law to do the right thing

Key findings



Economy Trumps Crime

Nearly half of New Zealanders (46%) say that governments should prioritise creating jobs and boosting the economy over protecting local citizens' health and environment (31%) and stopping or reducing crime (23%).



Experience with Crime Stable

Thirty-one percent on average across 31 countries say crime has increased in their communities in the past year. New Zealand is consistent with this global data, also at 31%.



Majority Trust Law Enforcement

Over two thirds (68%) of New Zealanders say they trust law enforcement to treat all citizens with the same respect, higher than the global average of 57%.



Poverty Seen as Root Cause of Crime

Sixty-two percent say poverty and unemployment are the most significant causes of crime and violence. Following that, drug and alcohol abuse are seen as a root cause of crime by 58% in New Zealand.



Respect For Rule of Law

In New Zealand, most feel that people should obey the law, even if it interferes with their interests (62%), over breaking the law to do the right thing (38%).

Data in Context: Perceptions versus "Reality"

Data in Context: Perceptions versus “reality”

Ipsos has been polling on people's perception of different topics, including crime, and how it lines up with reality since 2012.

To illustrate, Ipsos research in 2017 found only a small minority of people in most countries saying the murder rate had declined in their country since 2000 - despite that [being true in most countries](#), with the overall rate across these countries declining by 29%.

When it comes to exploring the “perils of perception” on crime, the first feeling that comes to mind is: *it's complicated*.

When developing the questionnaire itself, it is critical to be mindful of how interconnected different variables are. This is not just a matter of defining and describing different aspects of crime, from low-level infringements to more serious offences. There is a *broader*

context, such as inequality and unemployment, that must be factored in and which are key to understanding what is happening, not least at a local level.

Then there are further questions around *where to find official statistics*, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. Data collected by law enforcement agencies provides part of the picture. But even the most robust measurement systems will not be able to cover unrecorded crime. And for this study, where analysis looks at things internationally, the challenges of sourcing and interpreting international data also come into play.

However, looking at survey data in context allows for better interpretations of the results, boosting understanding of the data. The following section looks at the results through a number of different lenses:

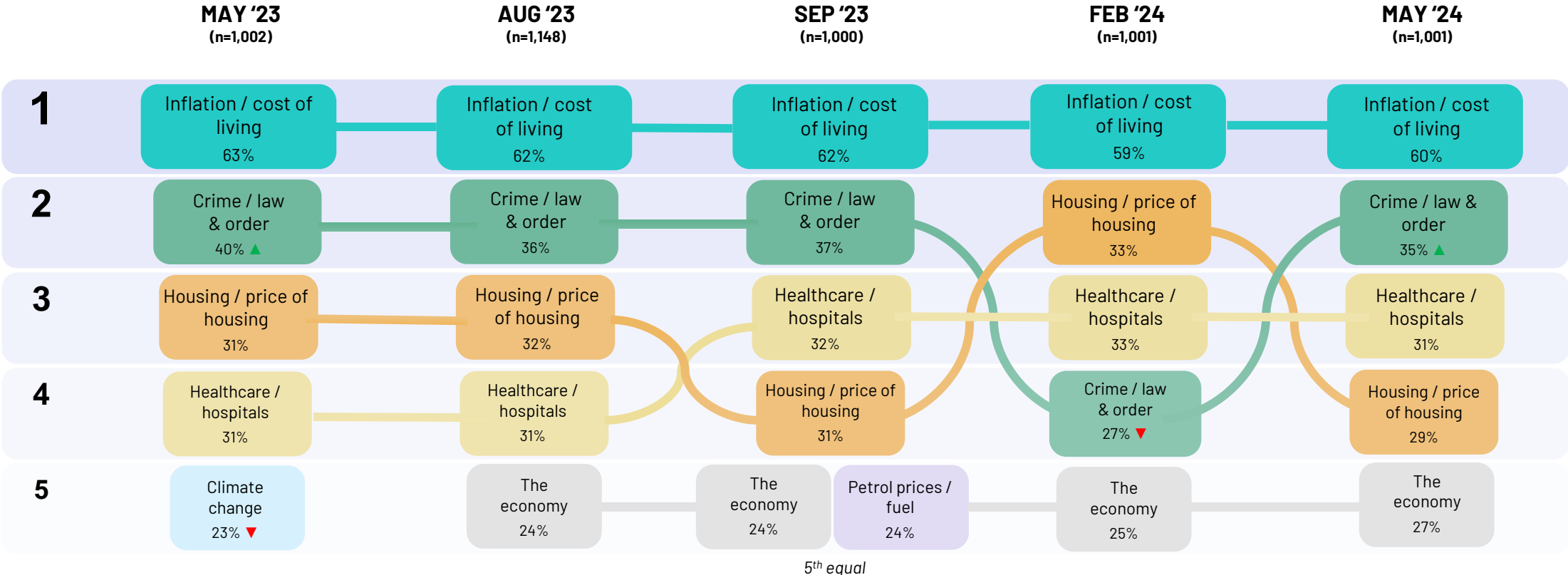
- 1. Trends over Time:** How do the results compare with last year?
- 2. Perceptions and Priorities:** The relationship between attitudes to crime and priorities for governments
- 3. Perceptions versus Realities:** There are two angles here. First, how attitudes to crime compare with externally-sourced data on recorded crime. Second, Ipsos explores the association between how *perceptions of change over time* at neighborhood level connect with a decade's worth of data collected by the United Nations.

People's perceptions are not reality. Things are rarely as they seem. For more information on Ipsos' *Perils of Perception* programme, take a look at the Ipsos [microsite](#).



Top-5 issues facing New Zealanders

Crime / law & order has been a key concern among New Zealanders in the last year*. Following a drop in concern earlier this year, it returned as the 2nd most important issue, behind inflation / cost of living, in May.



▲ / ▼ Indicates significant increase / decrease compared to the previous wave

*Source: Ipsos New Zealand Issues Monitor
 Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today?
 Base: Total sample - May '24 (n=1,001), Feb '24 (n=1,001), Sep '23 (n=1,000), Aug '23 (n=1,148), May '23 (n=1,002)



Data in Context #1: This year versus last year

This chart shows how people’s perspectives on crime and violence have evolved over the last year.

The pattern is far from uniform. Peru, Colombia and Brazil are the three countries showing the biggest increase over the 12-month period. Other countries – such as Japan, Indonesia and Israel – show a movement in the opposite direction.

Base 2023: Representative sample of 24,516 adults aged 16-74 in 29 participating countries, February 17, 2023 – March 3, 2023.

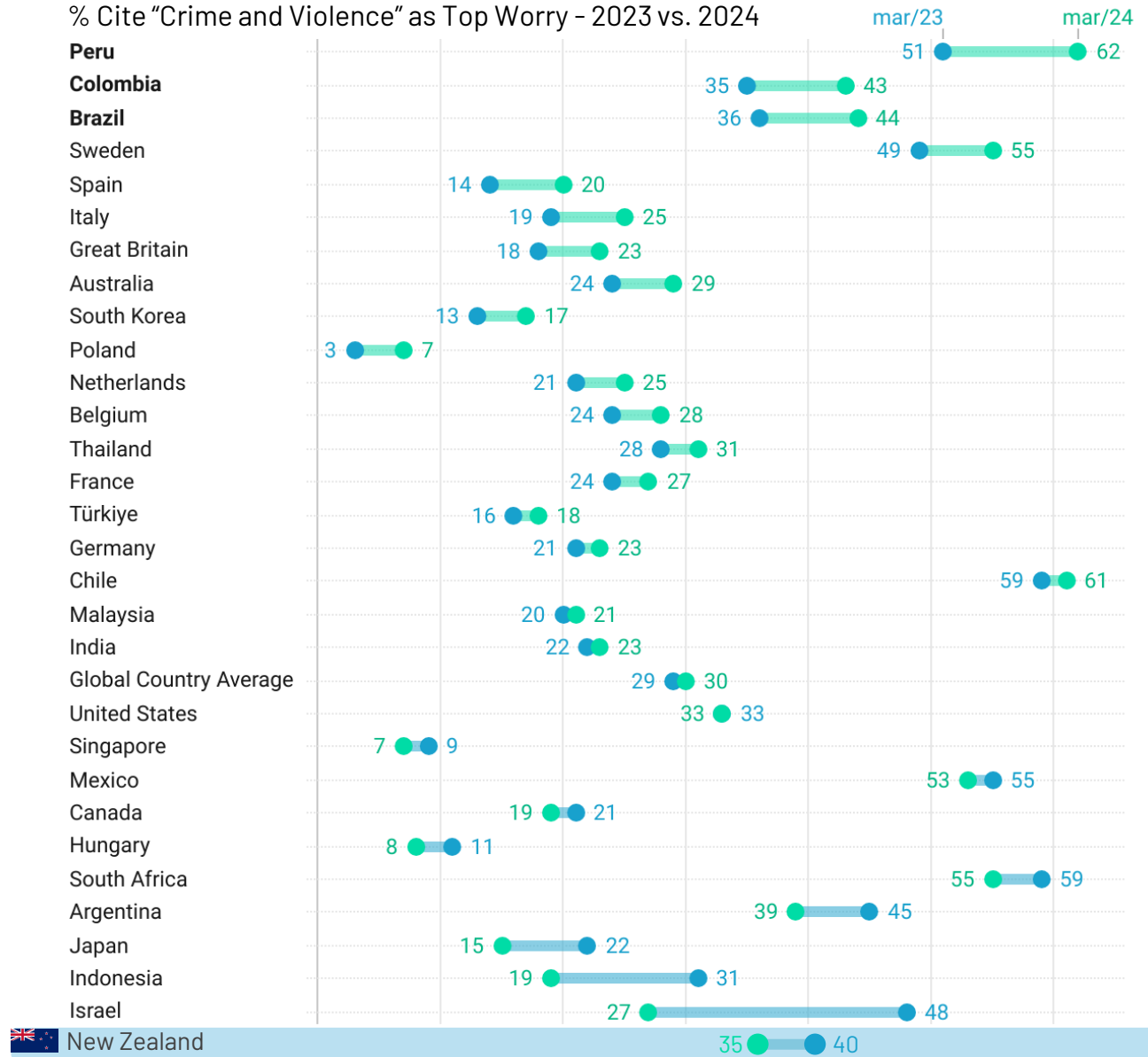
Base 2024: Representative sample of 23,761 adults aged 16-74 in 29 participating countries, February 23, 2024 – March 8, 2024.

Source: Ipsos Global Advisor. *Global score is a Global Country Average. See methodology for details.*

Note: New Zealand data is sourced from *Issues Monitor* May '24 (n=1,001) and May '23 (n=1,002)

“Crime and Violence” as top worry by country

% Cite “Crime and Violence” as Top Worry – 2023 vs. 2024



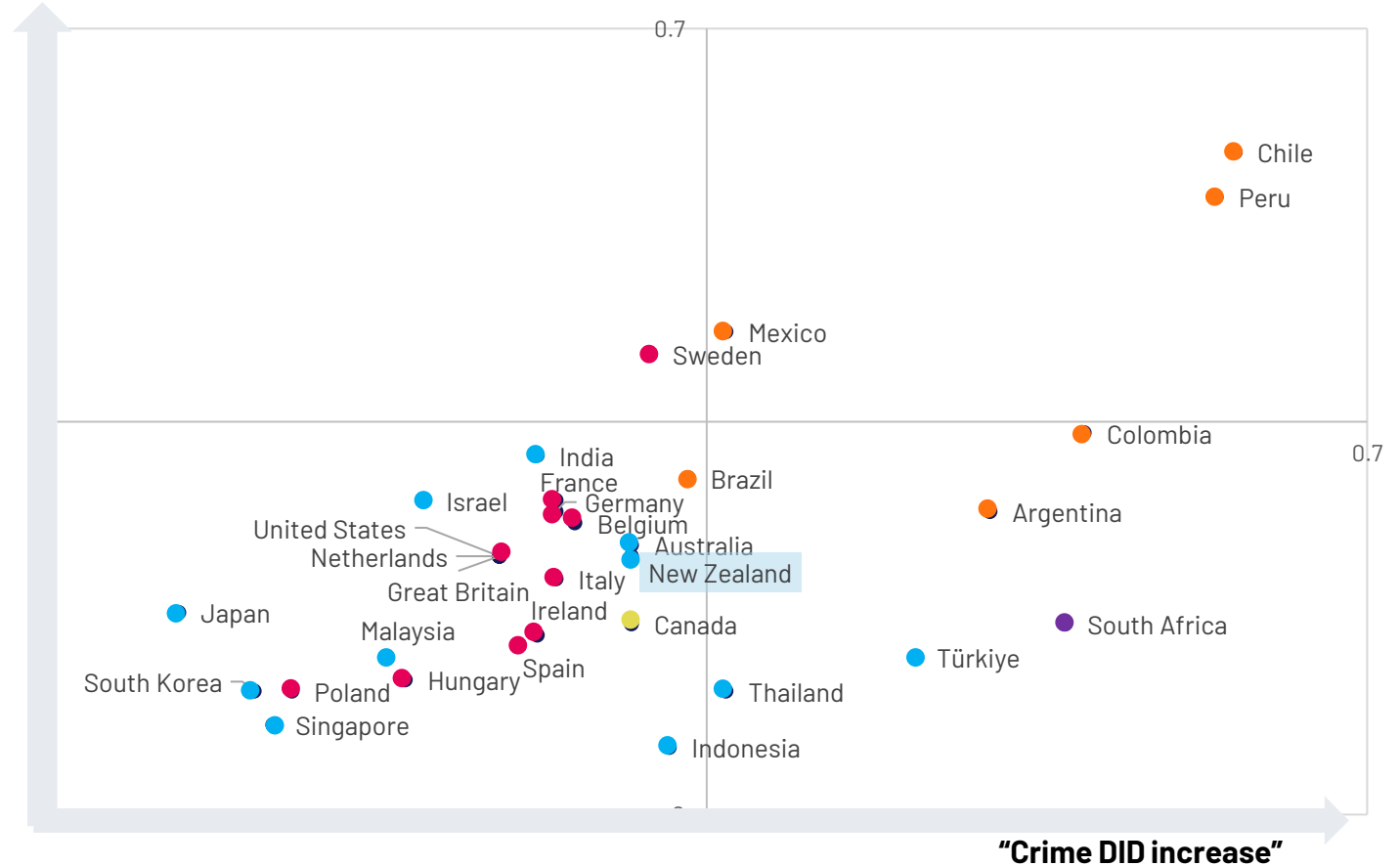
Data in Context #2: Perceptions on crime versus priorities for governments

This chart brings together two different questions from this survey in a “**comparison matrix**.” It sets the % saying priority should be stopping crime vs. *the % saying crime has increased* in the past 12 months.

It illustrates just how much perceptions vary from one country to another. Each of the four “quadrants” contains a number of countries; it’s notable however that **Latin American nations** feature strongly in the top right corner, indicating elevated levels of concern about crime and a strong feeling that governments should act on that issue.

- North America
- Latin America
- Asia-Pacific
- South Africa
- Europe

“Government should prioritize crime”



Base: Representative sample of 23,800 adults aged 16-74 in 31 participating countries, March 22 – April 5, 2024.

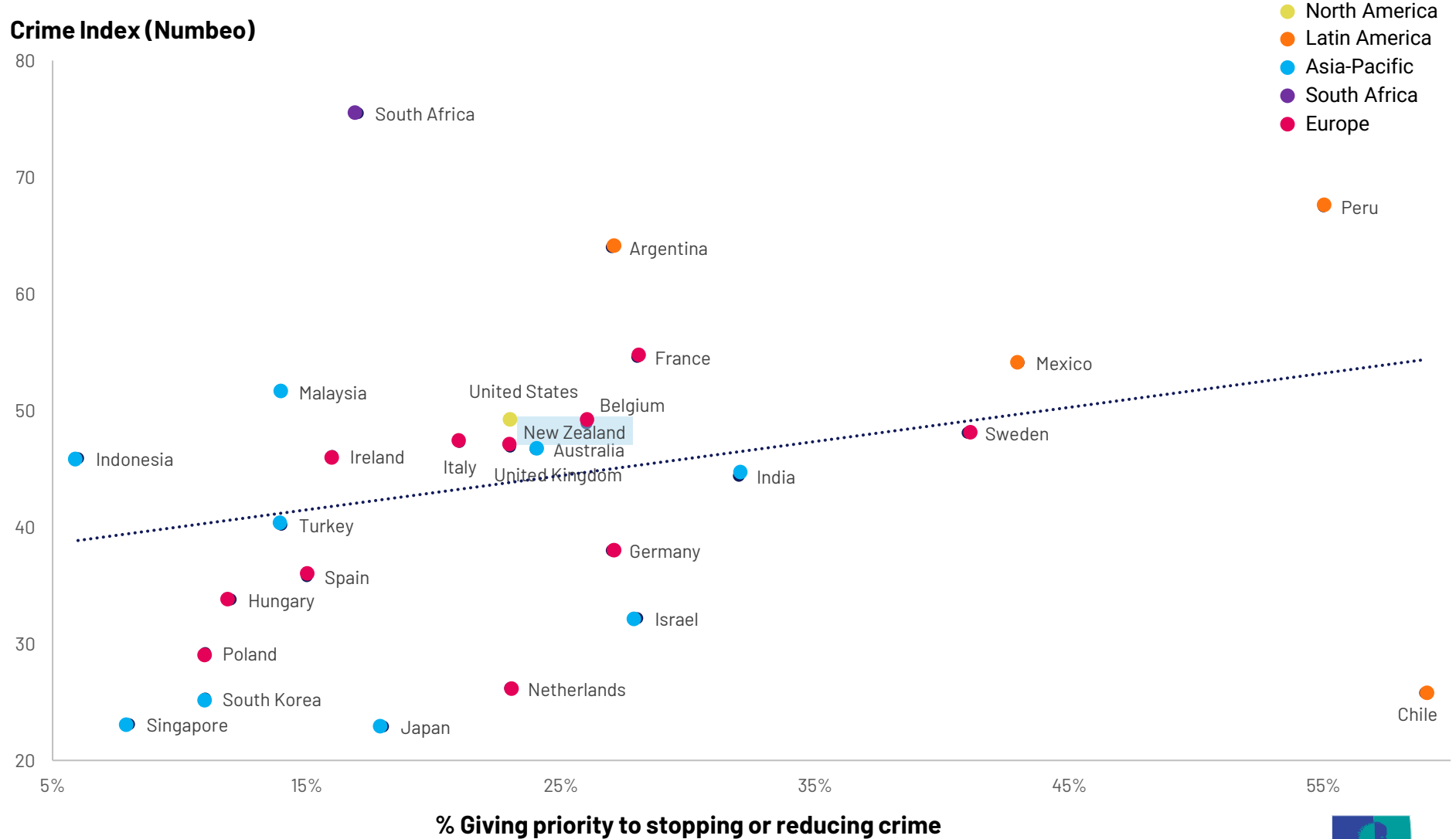
Source: Ipsos Global Advisor. *Global score is a Global Country Average. See methodology for details.*

Q: Which of the following should be the government's main priority for the people who live in your neighbourhood? vs. **Q:** In the past 12 months, has the amount of crime or violence in your neighbourhood increased, decreased, or stayed about the same as the previous year?

Data in Context #3: Crime as a priority versus “actual crime”

This chart brings an external source of data into the equation. The **Crime Index** used here is an estimation of the overall level of crime in a country. It is compiled semi-annually by statistics site [Numbeo](#), and ranges from 0-100. Lower scores are preferable in the Crime Index.

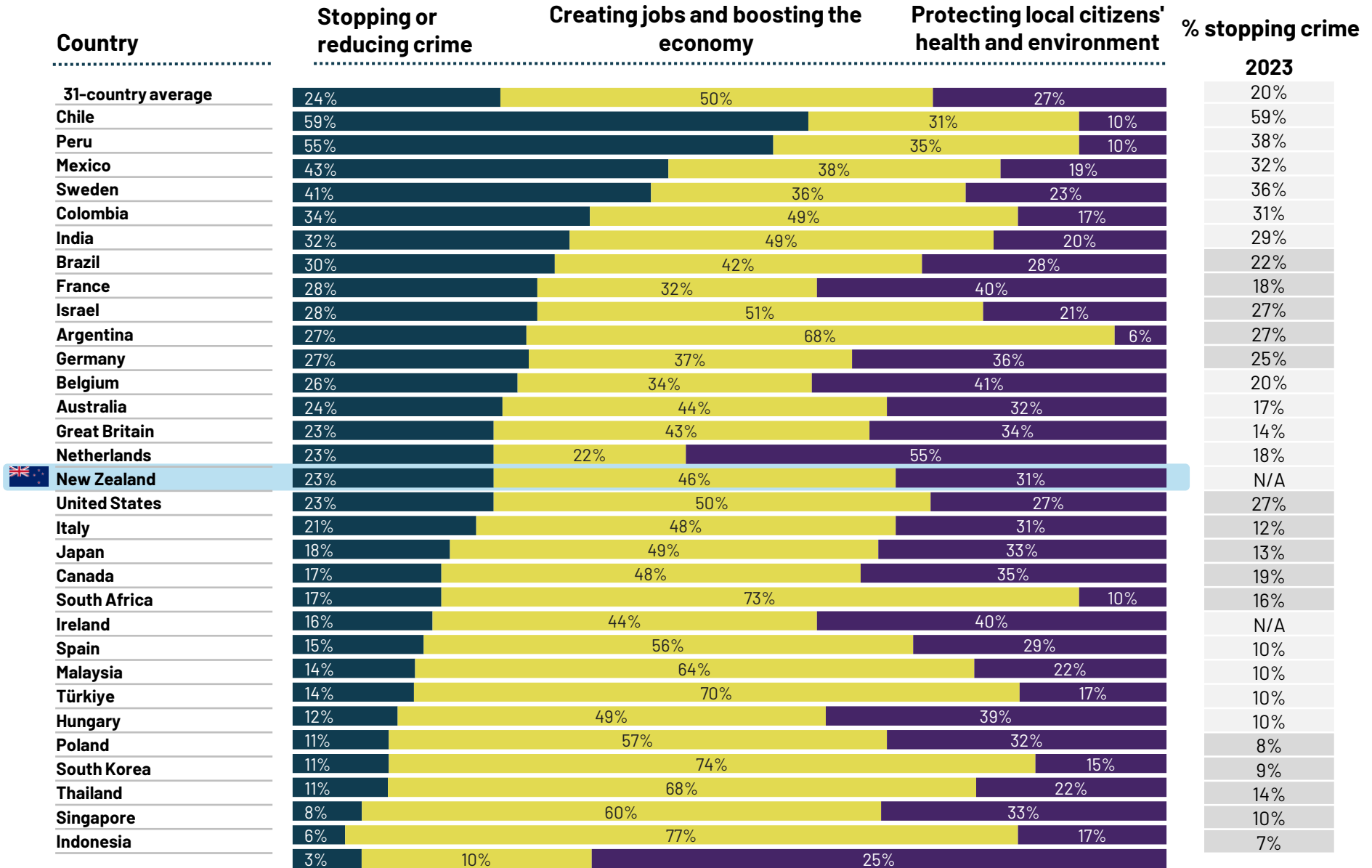
The chart points to a **fairly loose relationship between actual crime levels and the importance attached to reducing crime**. As shown elsewhere in the report, the public are weighing many other priorities. The importance attached by South Africans to job creation being a vivid example of this.



How should governments prioritize the issues

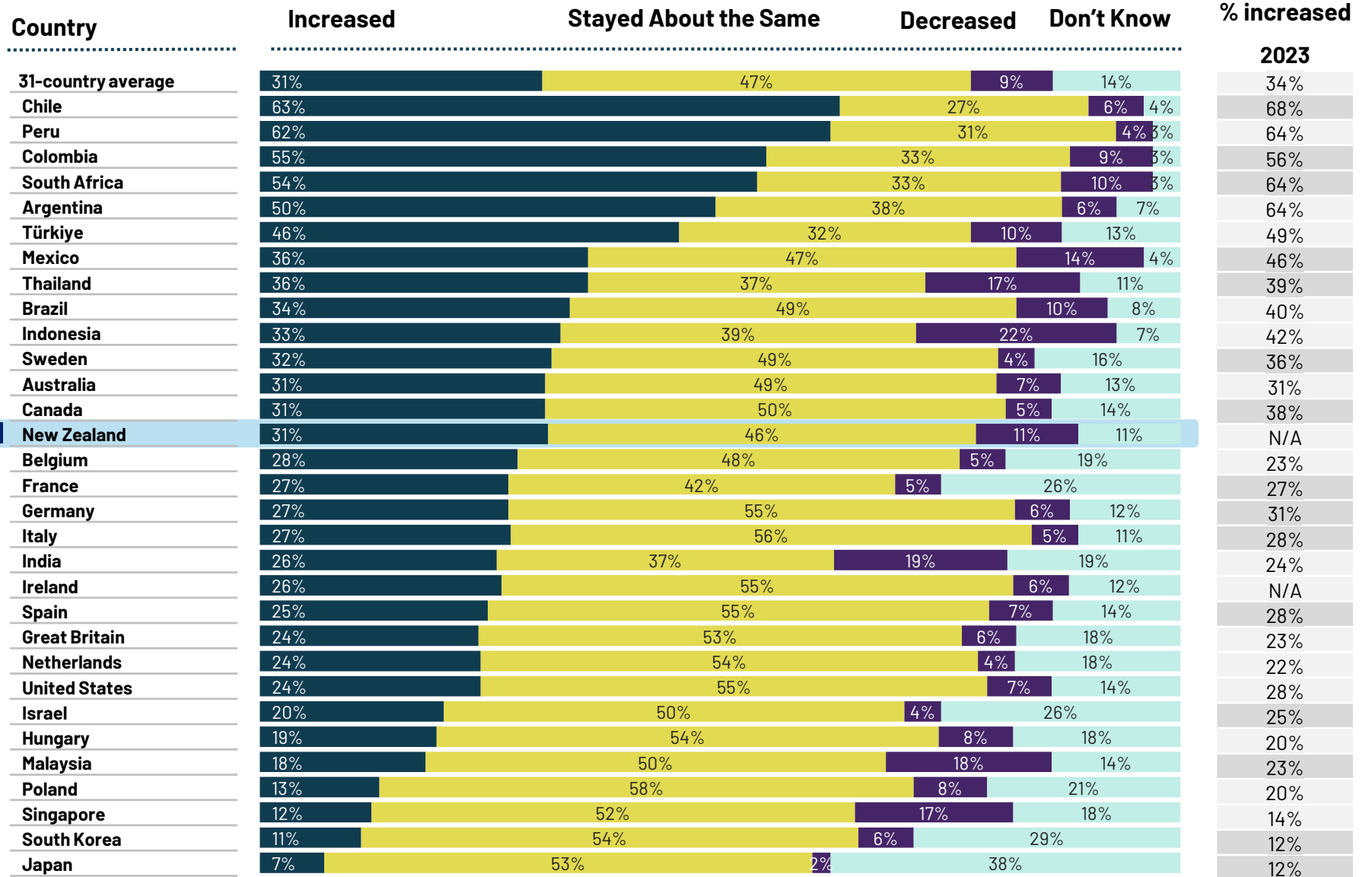
Which of the following should be the government's main priority for the people who live in your neighborhood?

Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024



Perceptions of crime

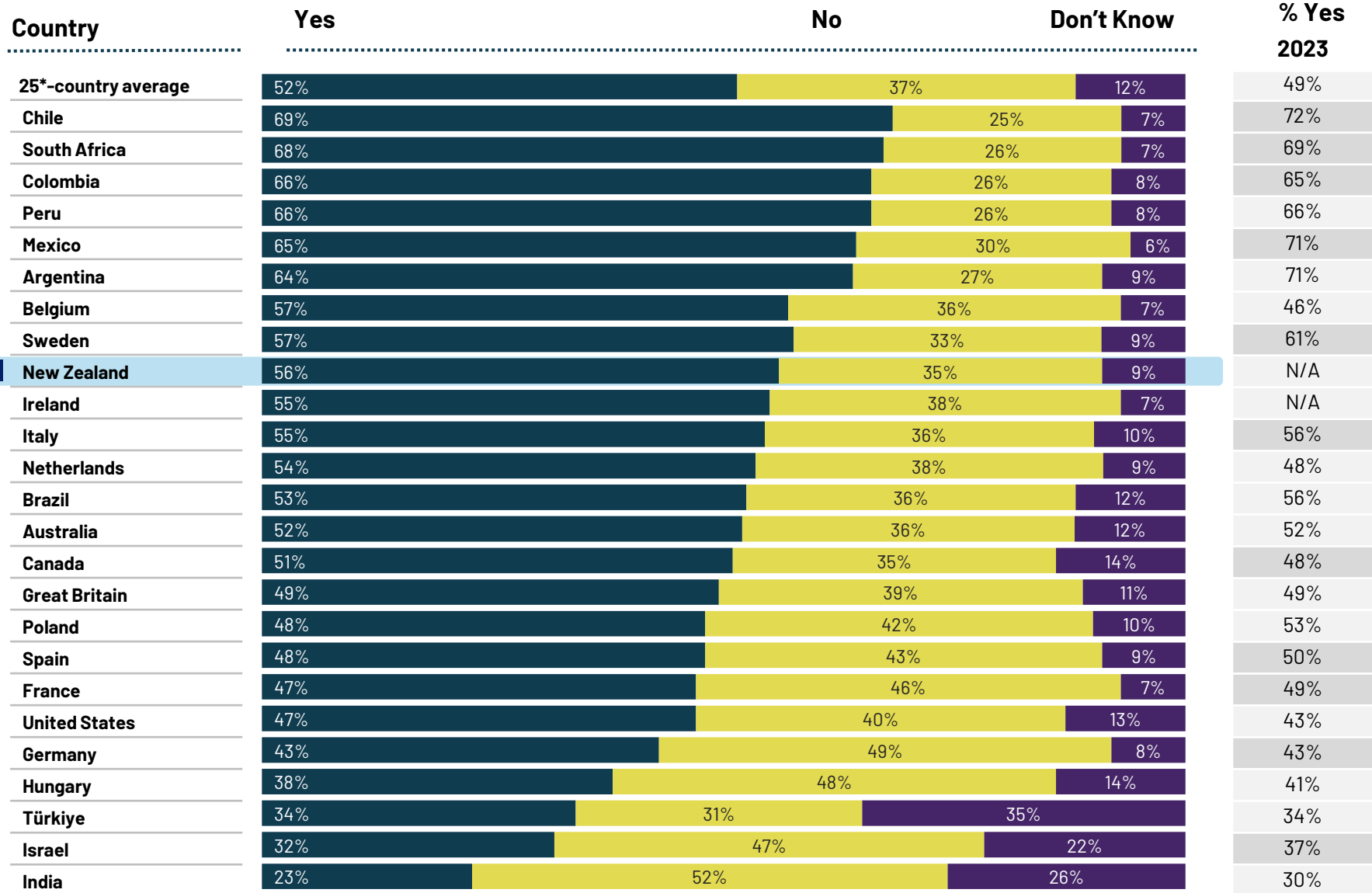
In the past 12 months, has the amount of crime or violence in your neighborhood increased, decreased, or stayed about the same as the previous year?



Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

Vandalism

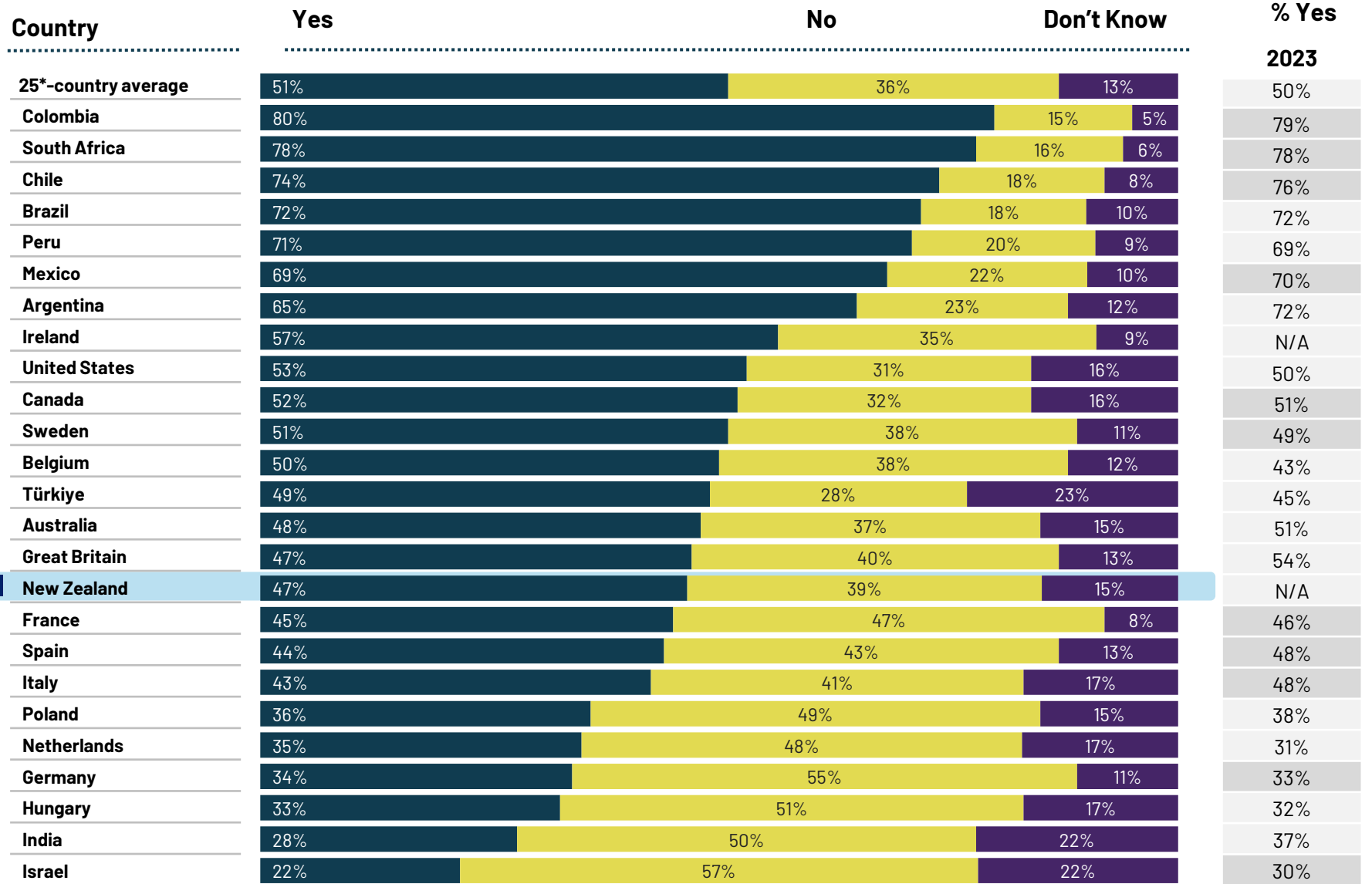


Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 26* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

*Data not included for six countries at this question

In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

People consuming illegal drugs

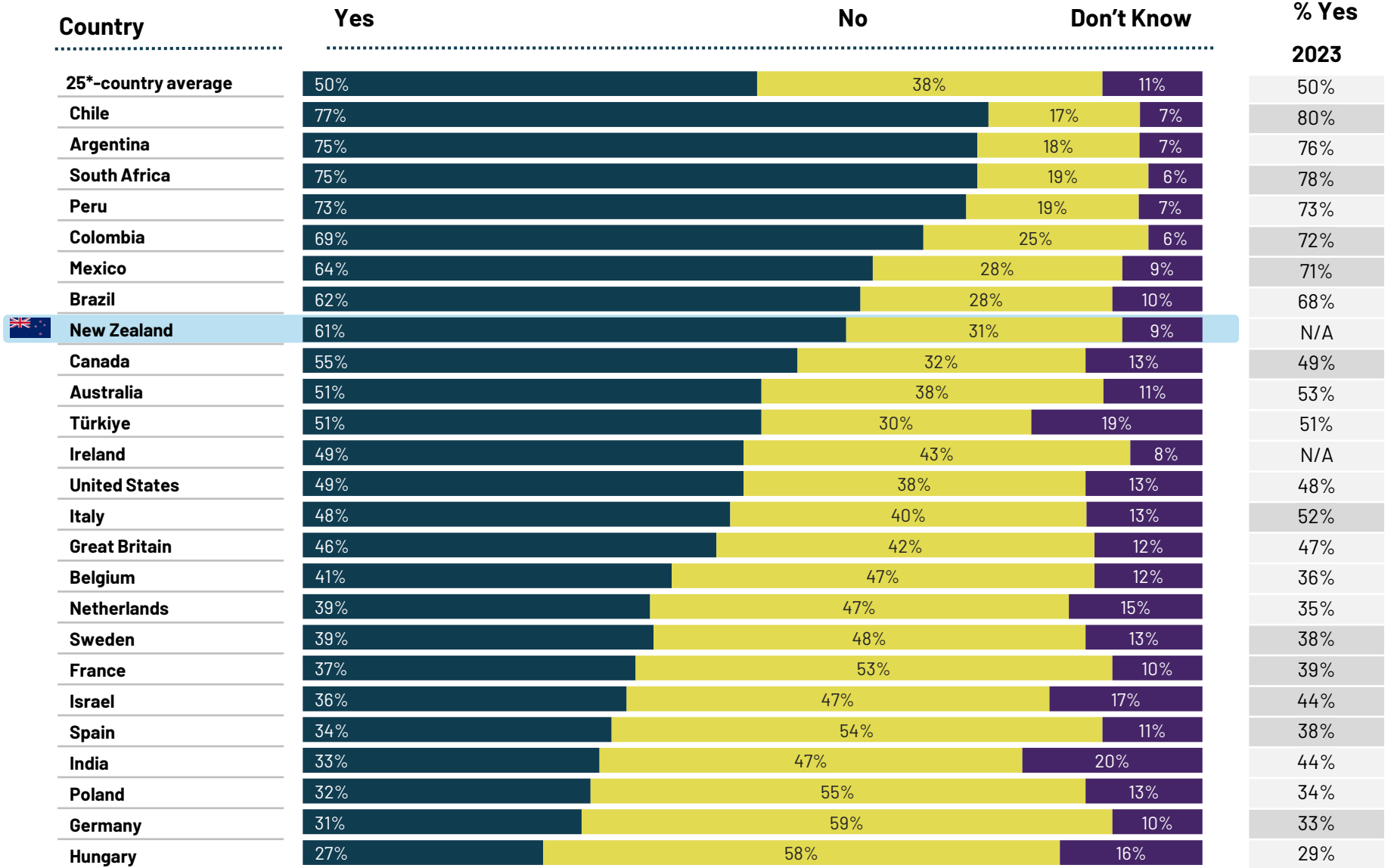


Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 25* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

*Data not included for six countries at this question

In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

Vehicle thefts (cars, motorcycles, etc.)



Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 25* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

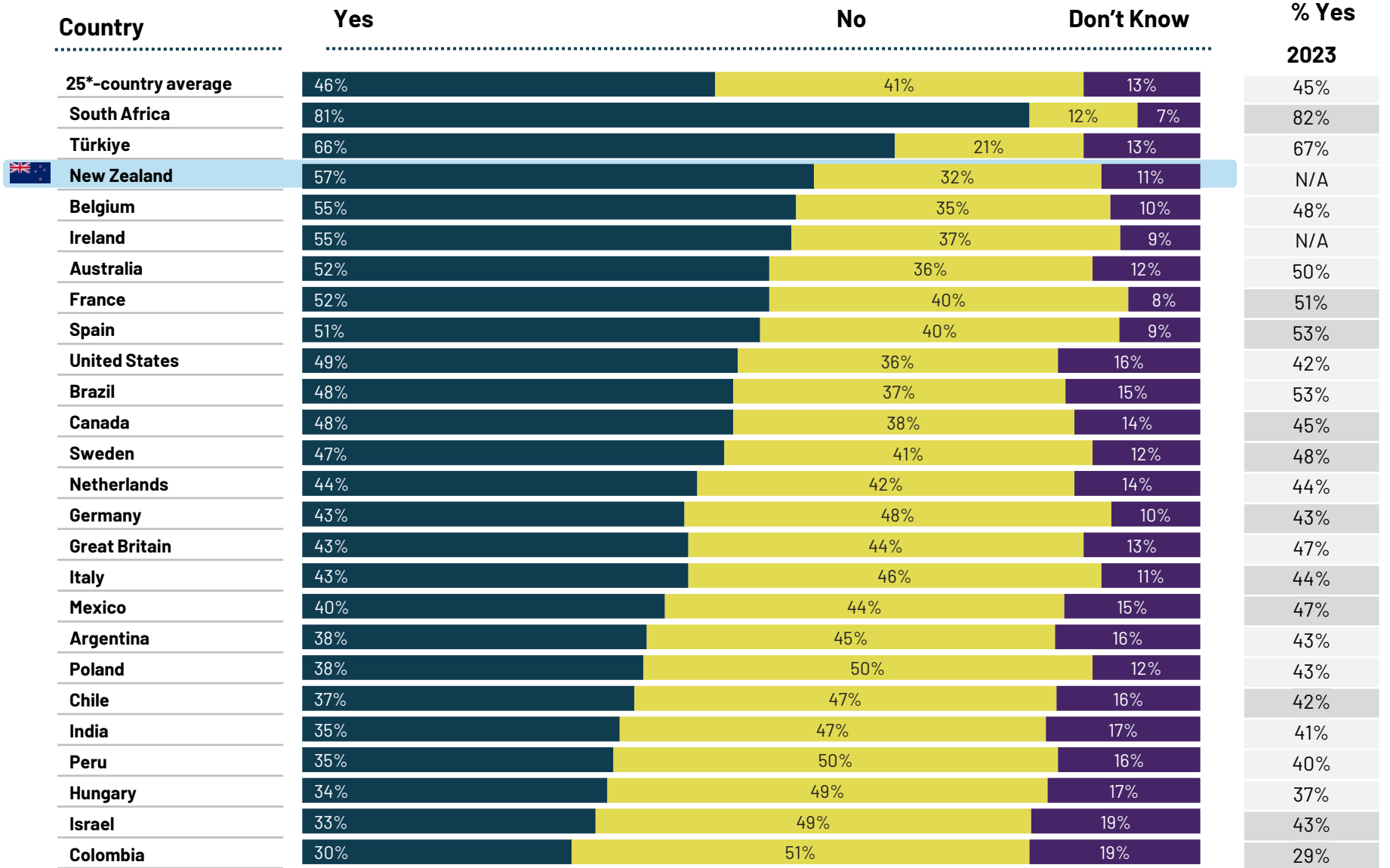
*Data not included for six countries at this question

In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

Burglaries

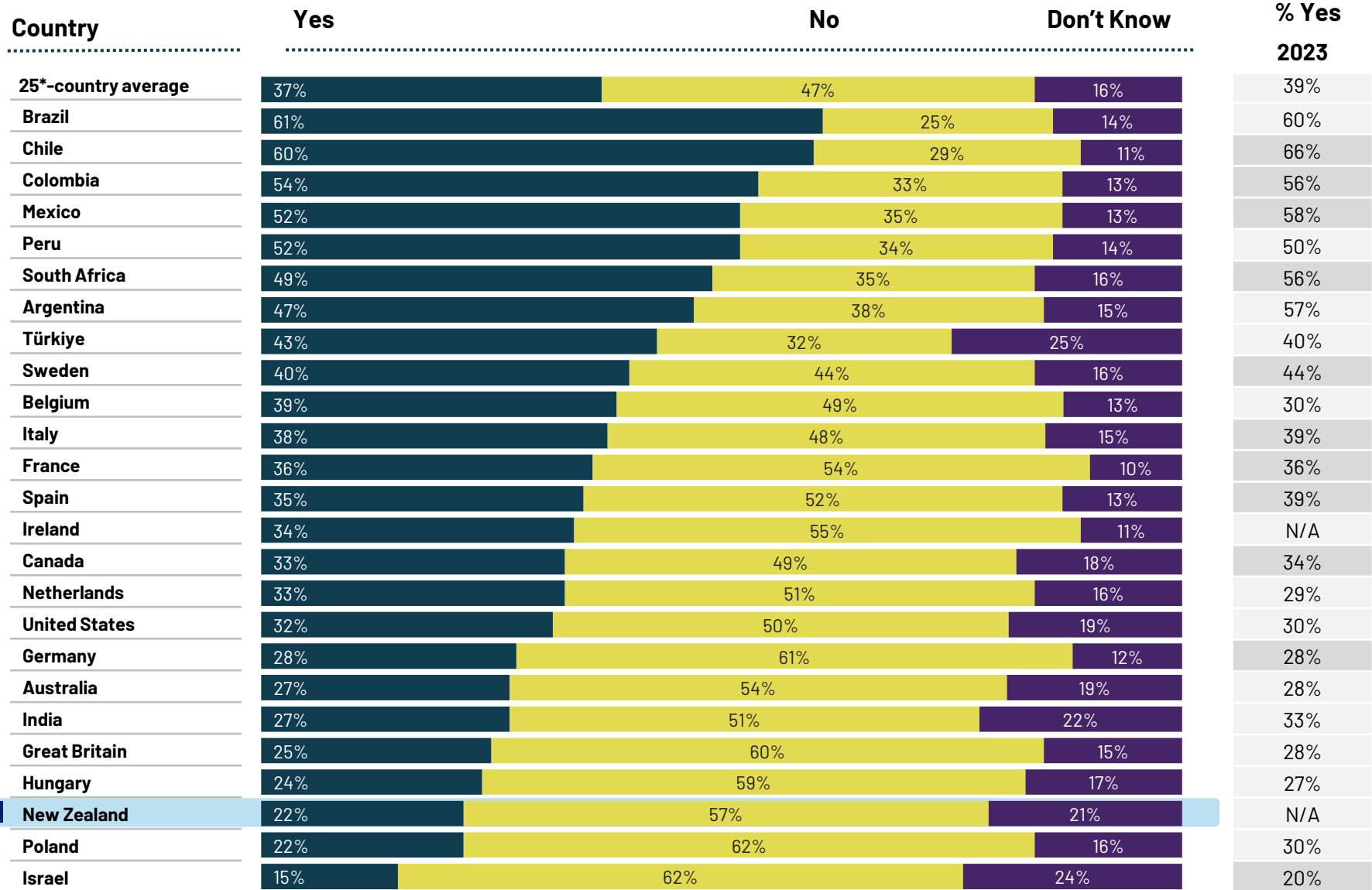
Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 25* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

*Data not included for six countries at this question



In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

Groups or people linked to drug trafficking

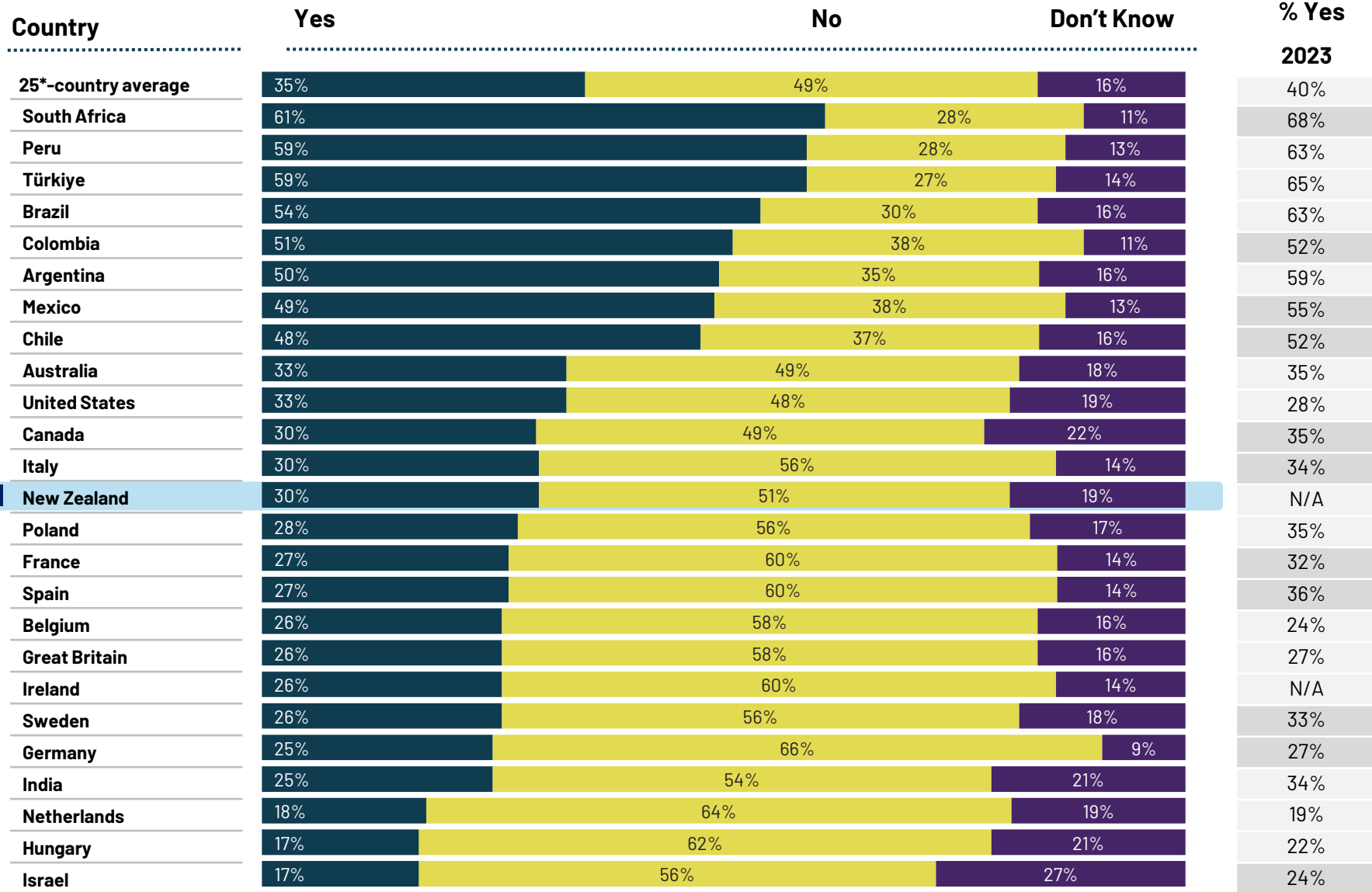


Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 25* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

*Data not included for six countries at this question

In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

Any type of violence against adult women

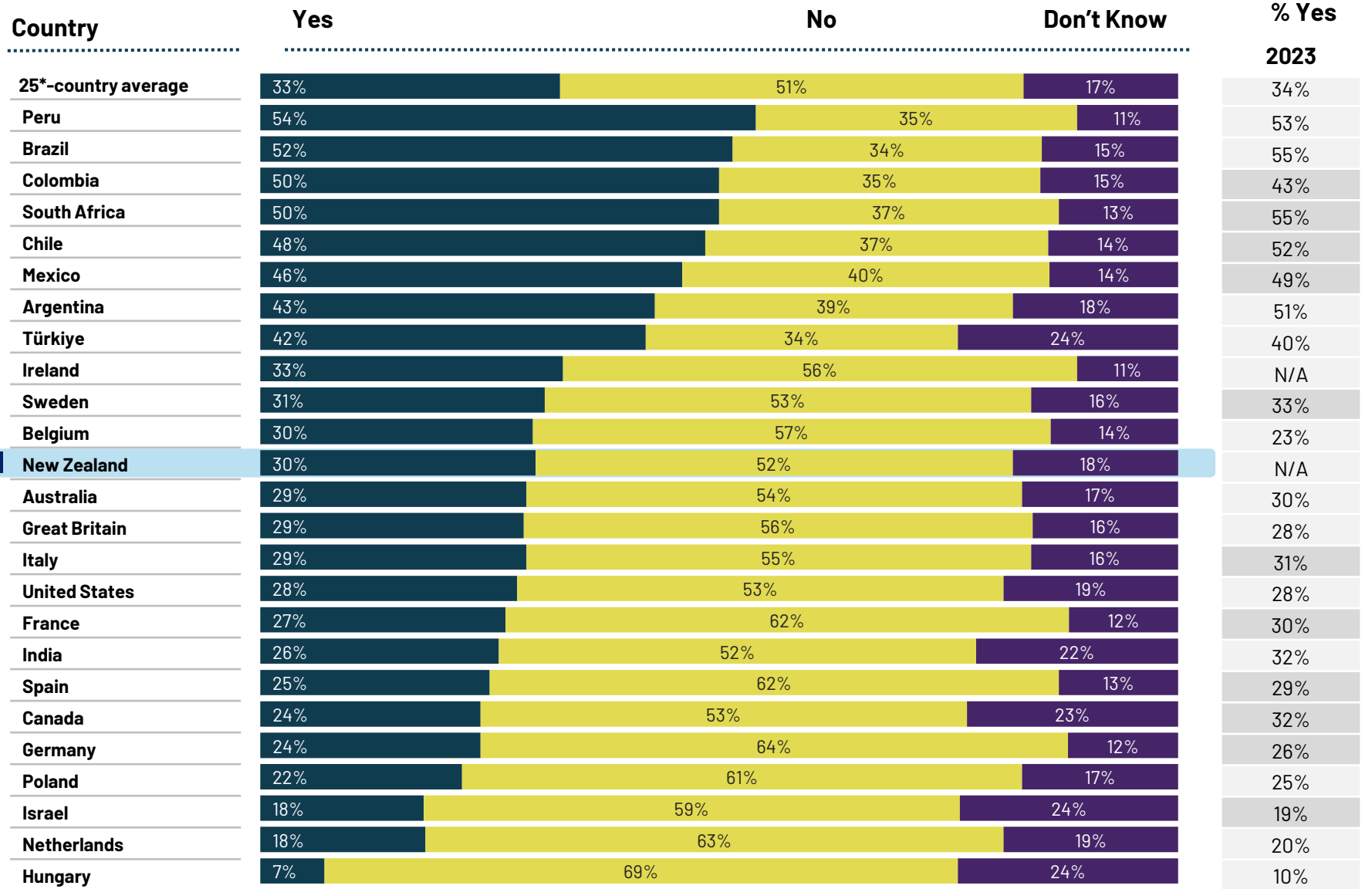


Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 25* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

*Data not included for six countries at this question

In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

Any type of violence against adult men

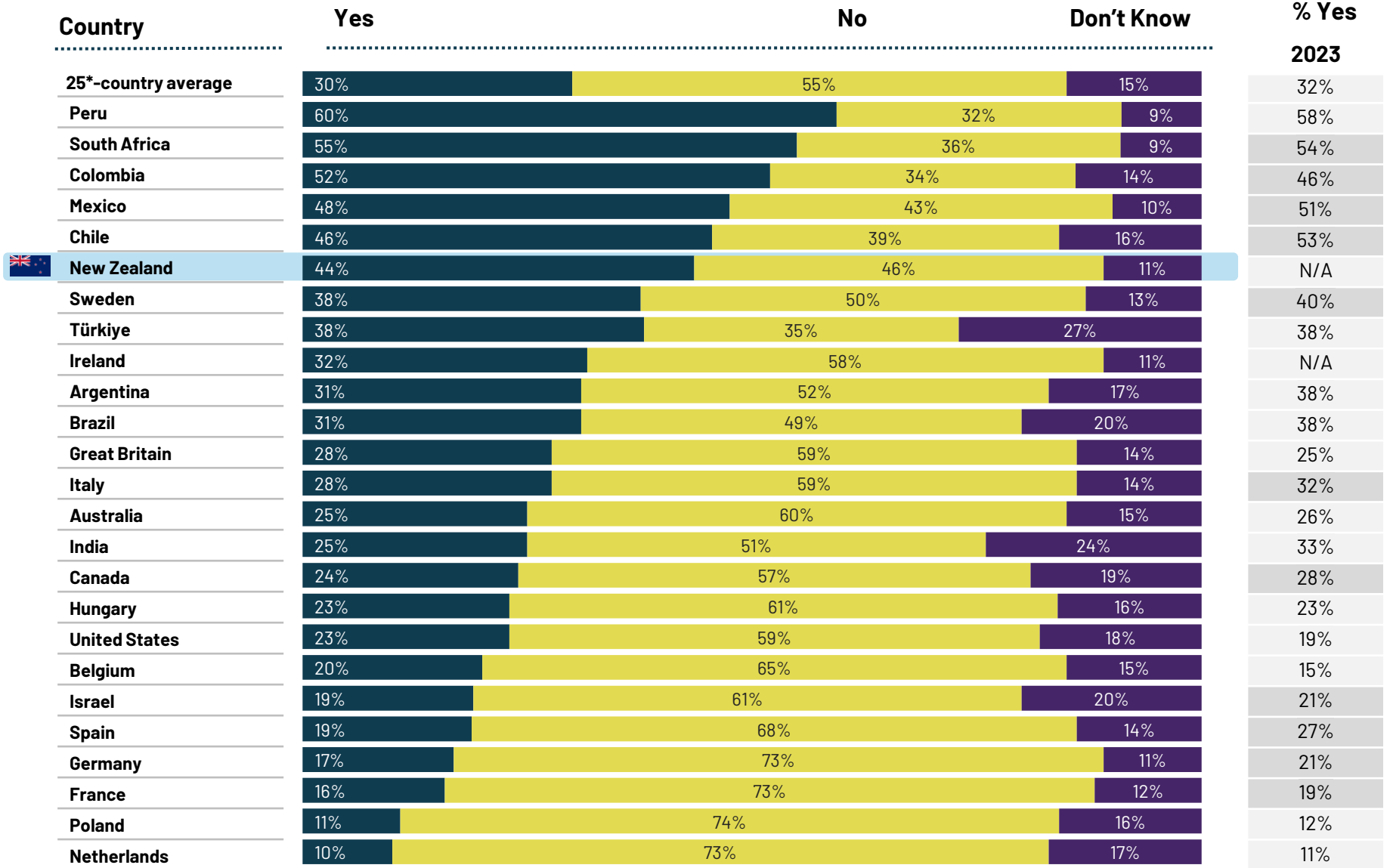


Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 25* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

*Data not included for six countries at this question

In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

Gangs

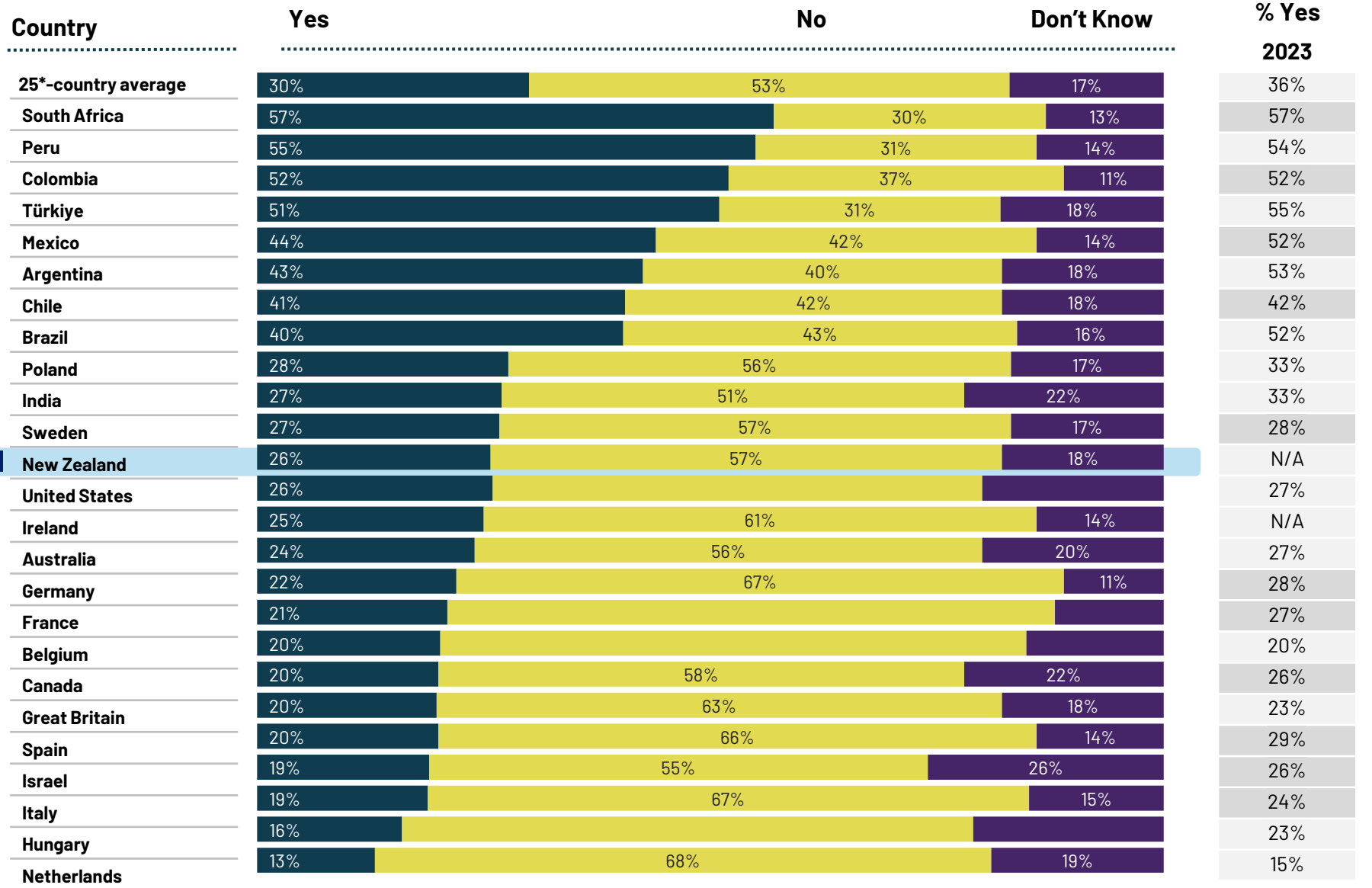


Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 25* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

*Data not included for six countries at this question

In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

Any type of violence against children or adolescents

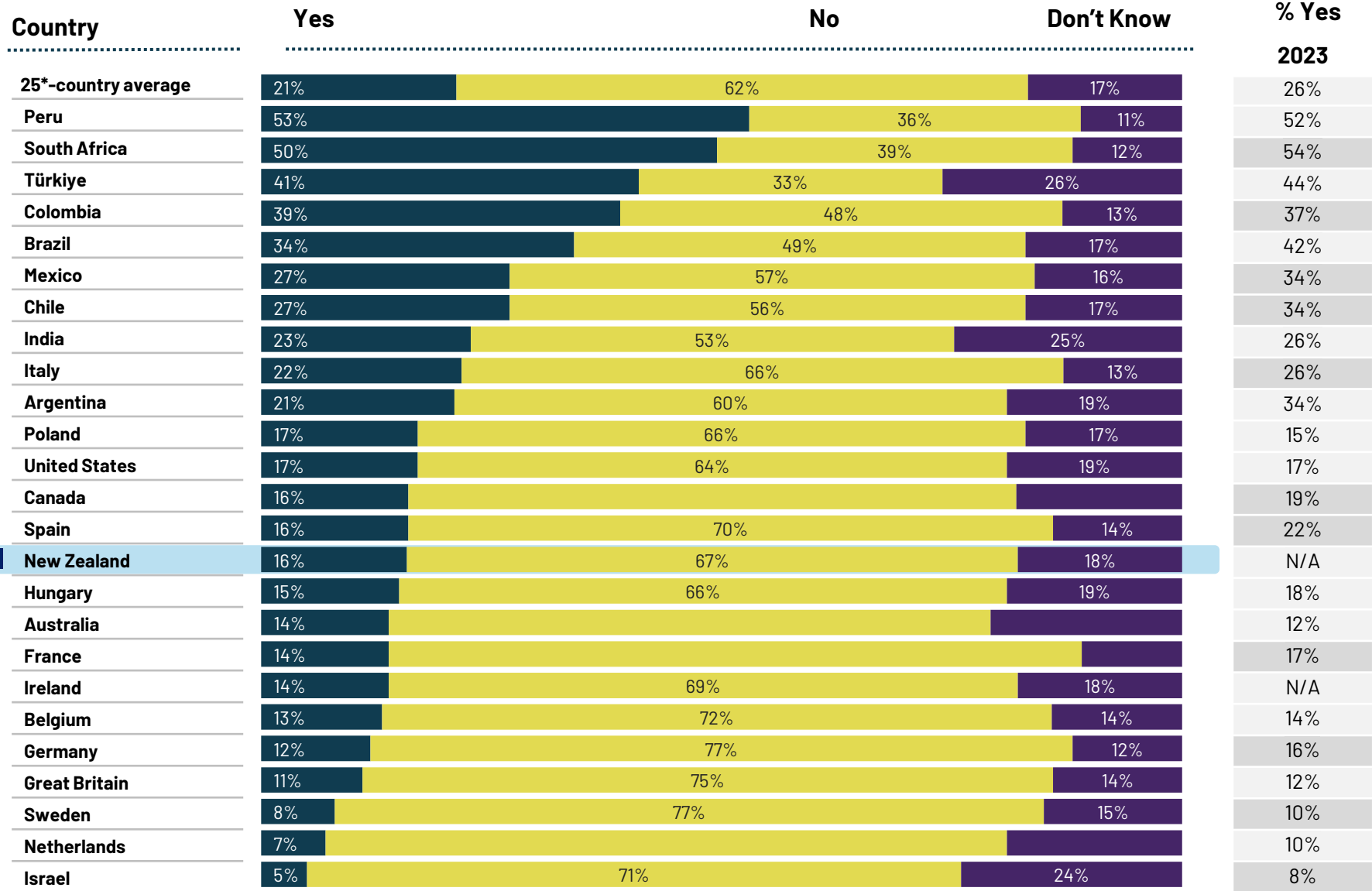


Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 25* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

*Data not included for six countries at this question

In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard about the following happening in your neighborhood?

Prostitution / People prostituting themselves



Base: 19,294 online adults under age 75 across 25* countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

*Data not included for six countries at this question

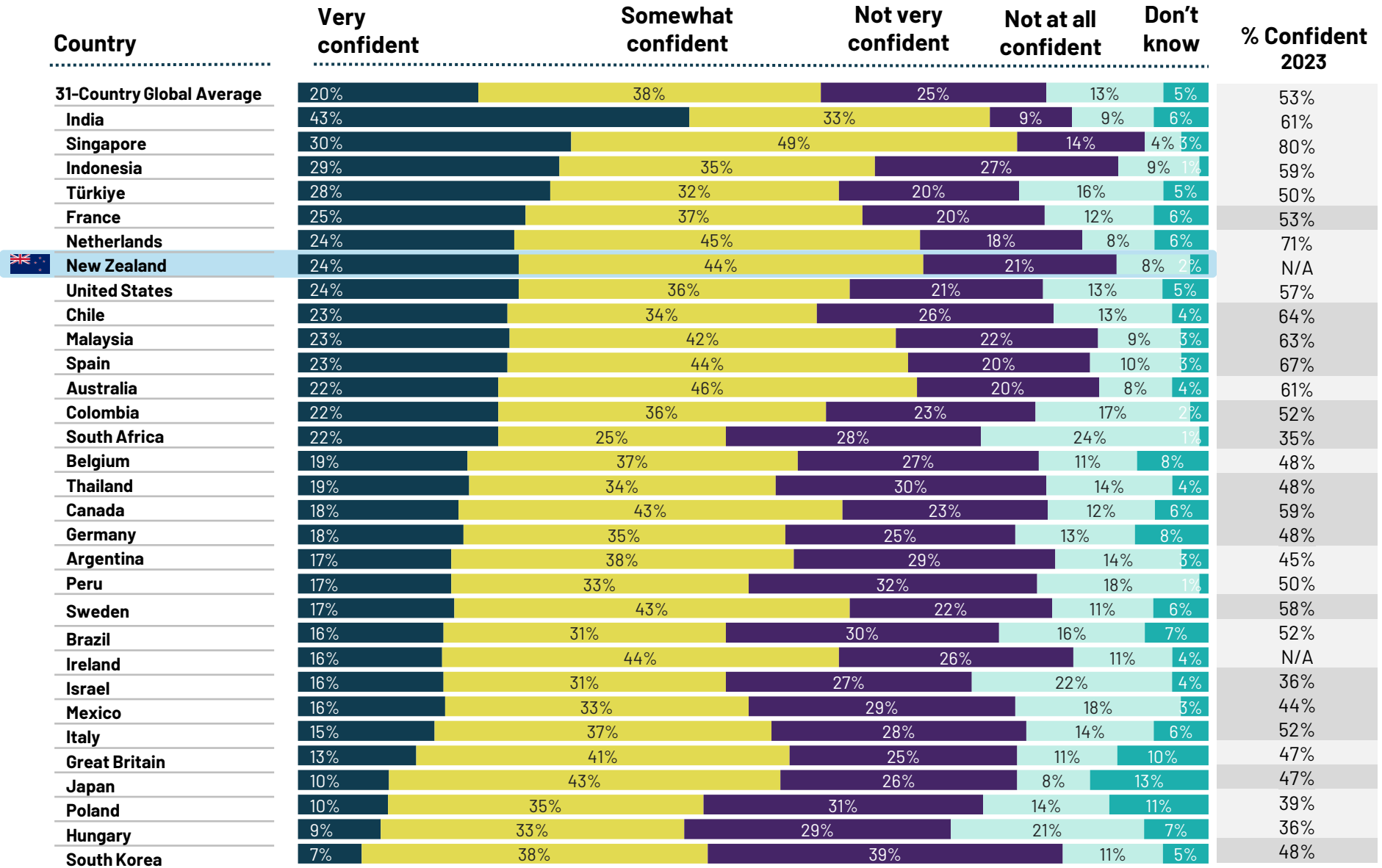
Confidence in law enforcement



How confident are you, if at all, in law enforcement (e.g., the police) to do the following in your neighborhood?

Treating all citizens with the same level of respect

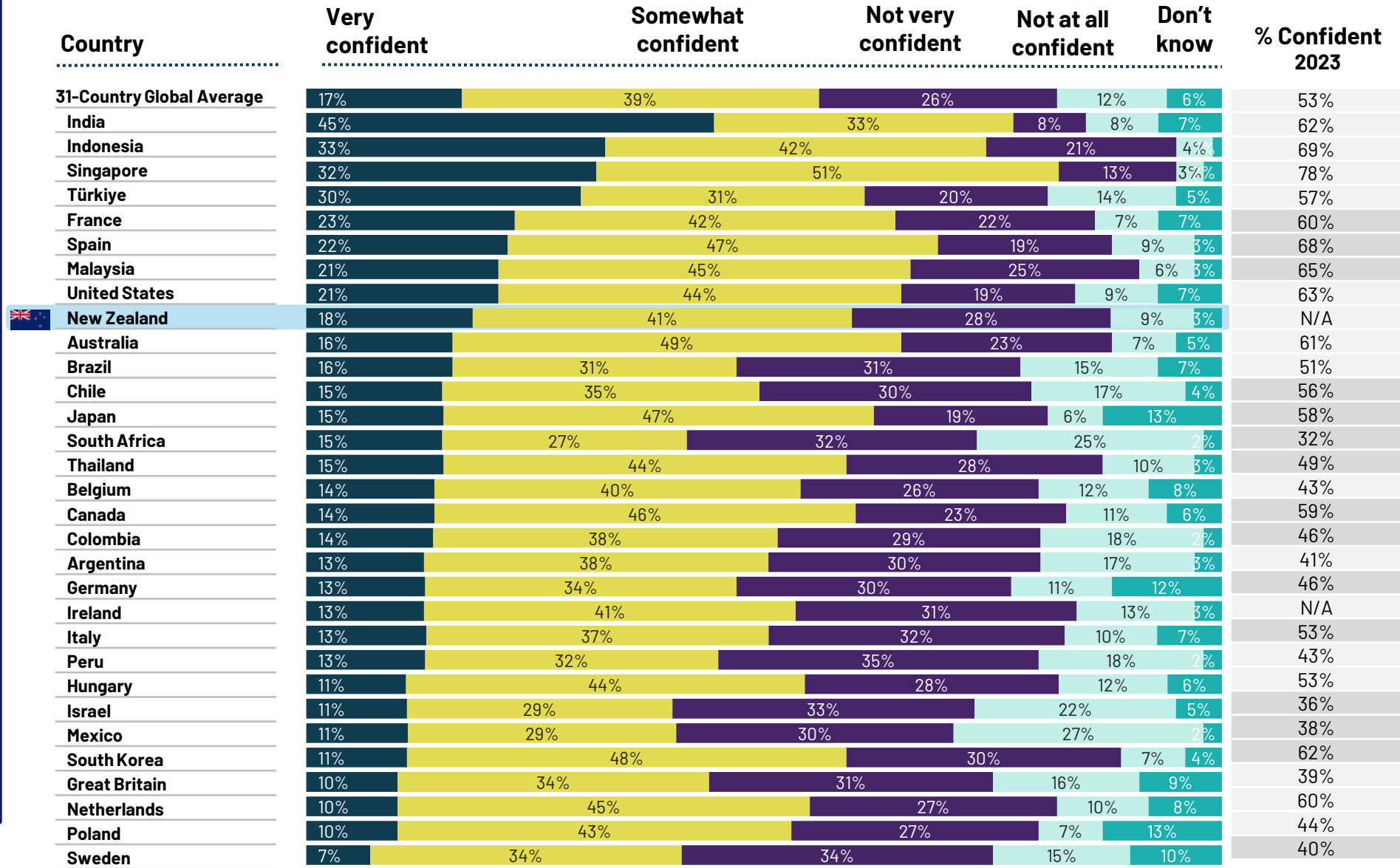
Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024



How confident are you, if at all, in law enforcement (e.g., the police) to do the following in your neighborhood?

Finding and arresting the correct criminal after a crime

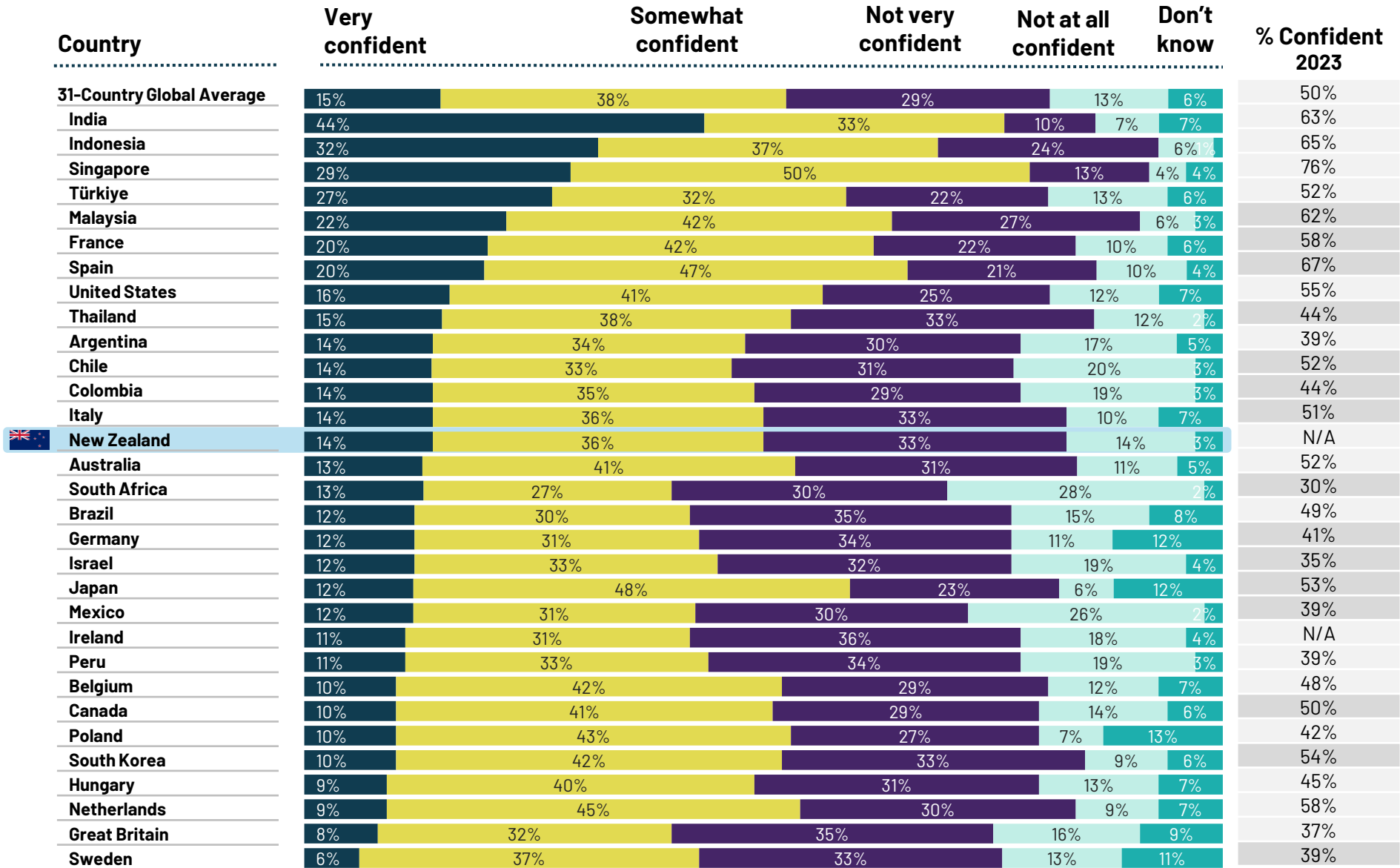
Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024



How confident are you, if at all, in law enforcement (e.g., the police) to do the following in your neighborhood?

Stopping violent crimes from happening

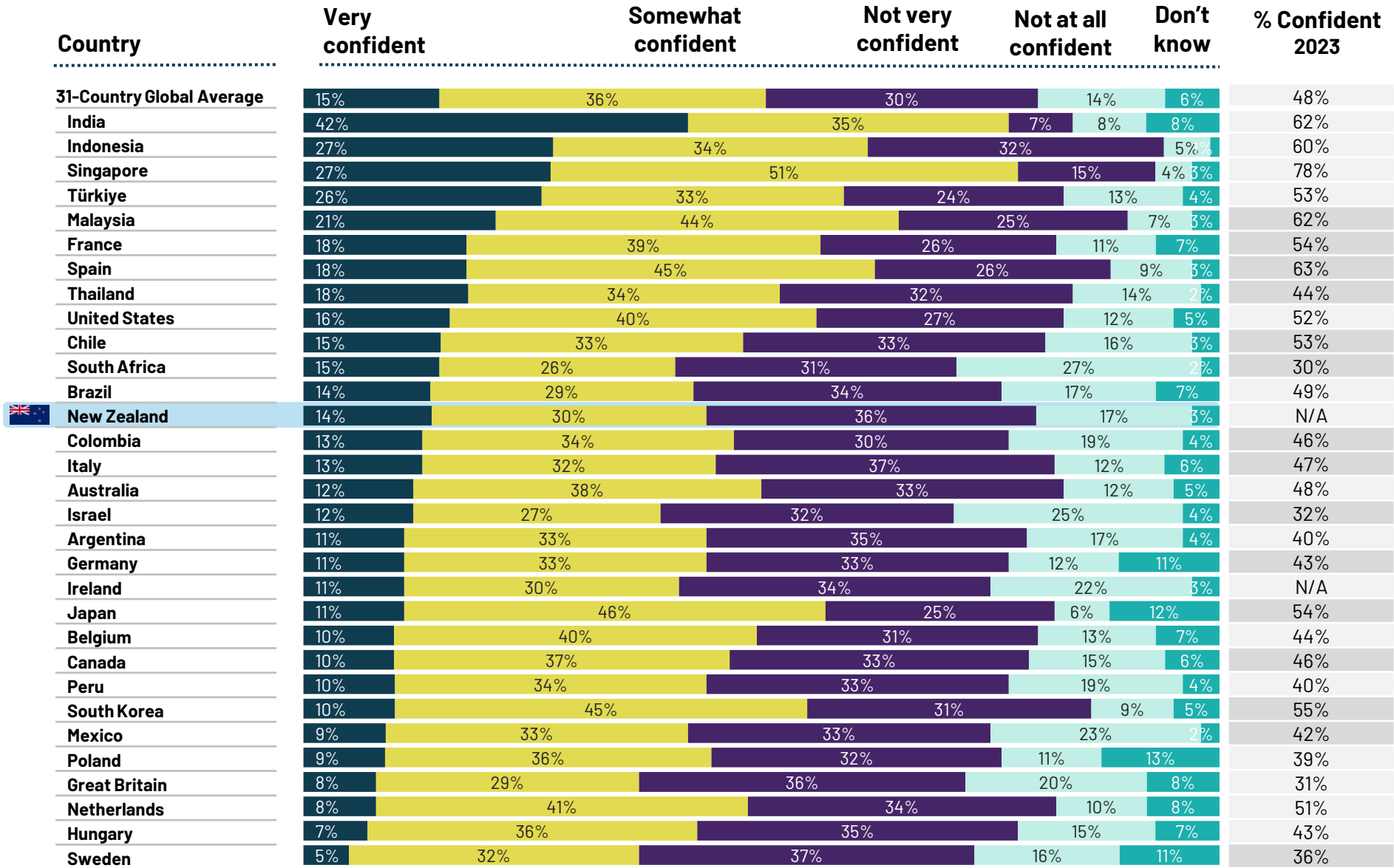
Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024



How confident are you, if at all, in law enforcement (e.g., the police) to do the following in your neighborhood?

Stopping non-violent crimes (e.g., burglaries, thefts or fraud) from happening

Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

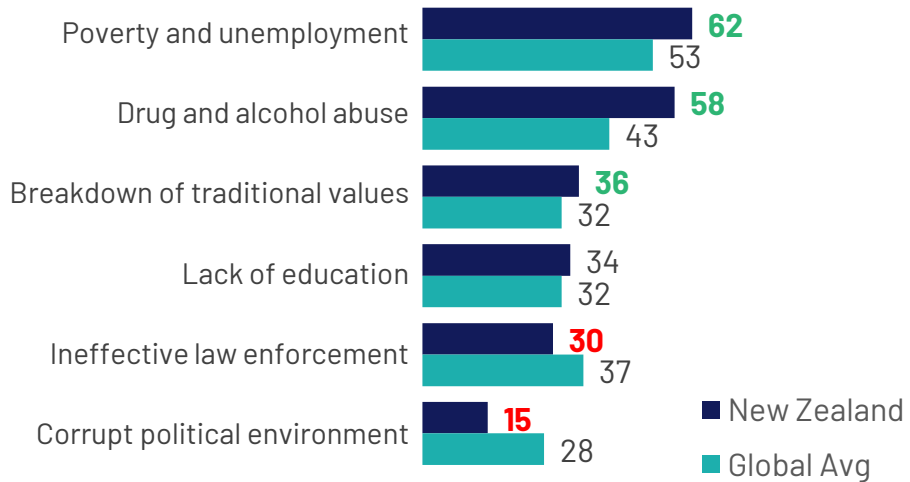


What drives crime?

Poverty, Substance Abuse Top Crime Causes

In New Zealand, almost two thirds of respondents polled believe poverty and unemployment are the main cause of crime and violence in their area.

% Top Causes of Crime in Neighborhood



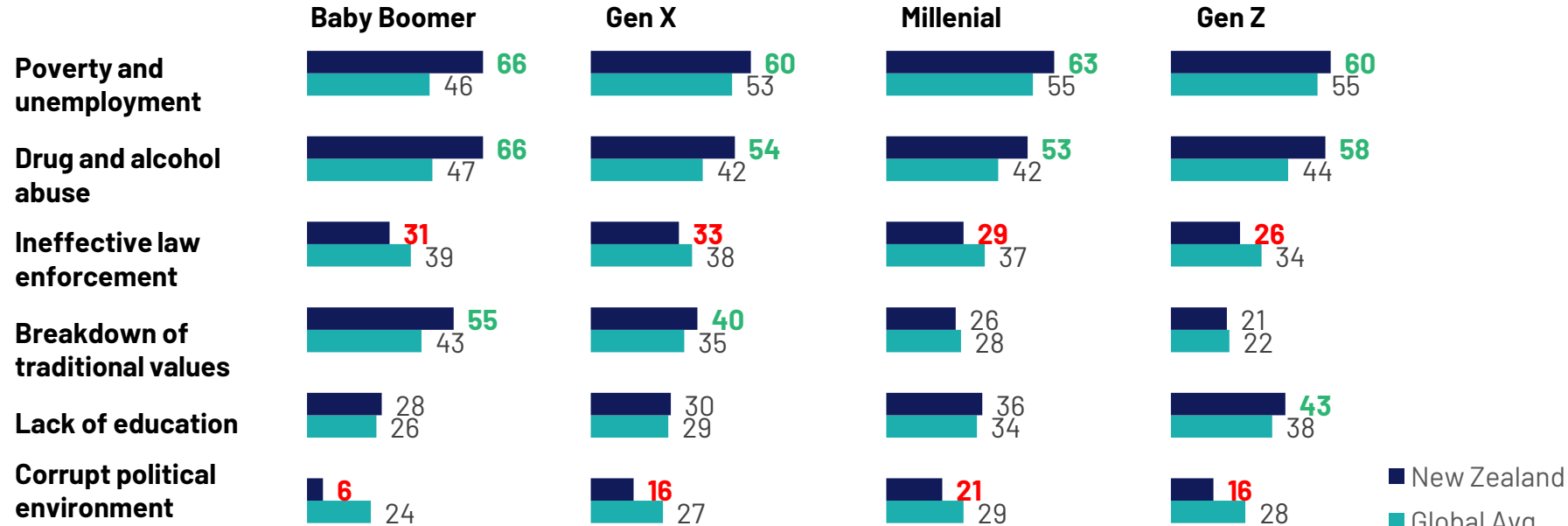
Q: Which of the following do you believe are the most significant causes of crime and corruption in your neighborhood? Please choose up to three causes.

Green / red indicates significantly higher / lower than the Global Average



Gen Z and Boomers stand out... for different reasons

All generations see poverty and unemployment as leading causes of crime and corruption in their neighborhoods, though Boomers are equally likely to see crime being driven by drug and alcohol abuse. Gen Z emphasizes a lack of education as a driver of crime in their community.



Q: Which of the following do you believe are the most significant causes of crime and corruption in your neighborhood? Please choose up to three causes.

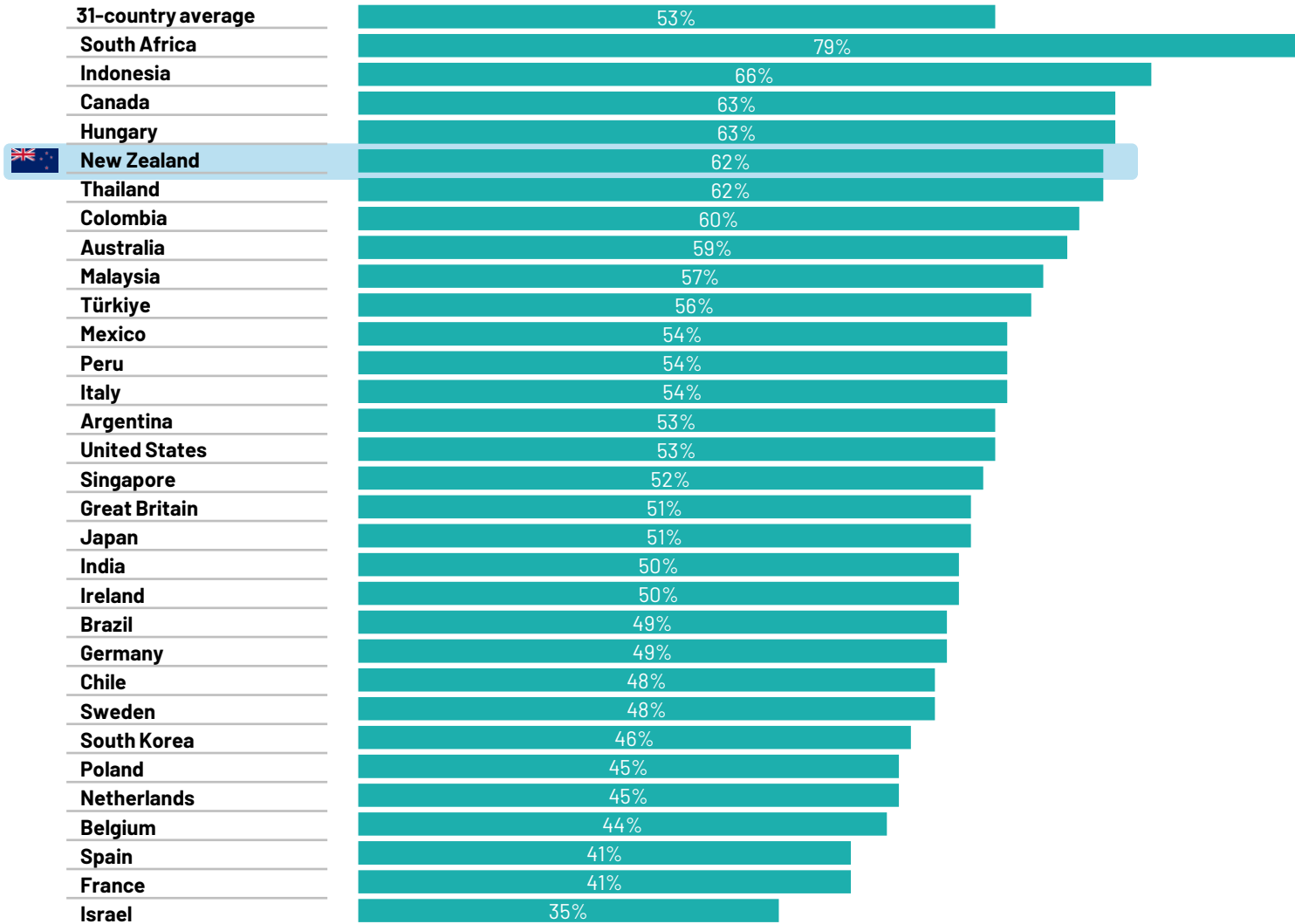
Green / red indicates significantly higher / lower than the Global Average

Which of the following do you believe are the most significant causes of crime and corruption in your neighborhood? Please choose up to three causes.

Poverty and unemployment

Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

Country

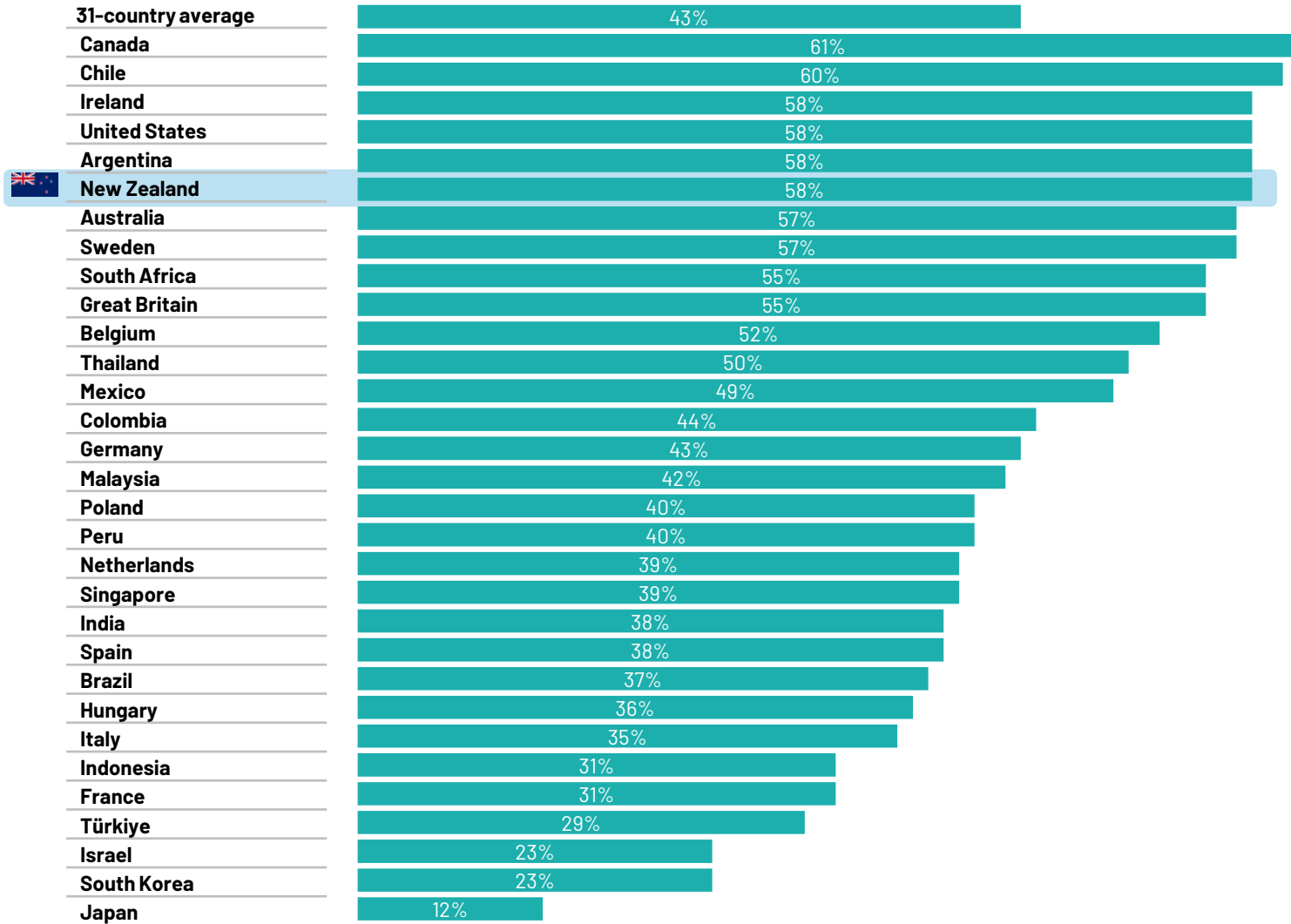


Which of the following do you believe are the most significant causes of crime and corruption in your neighborhood? Please choose up to three causes.

Drug and alcohol abuse

Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

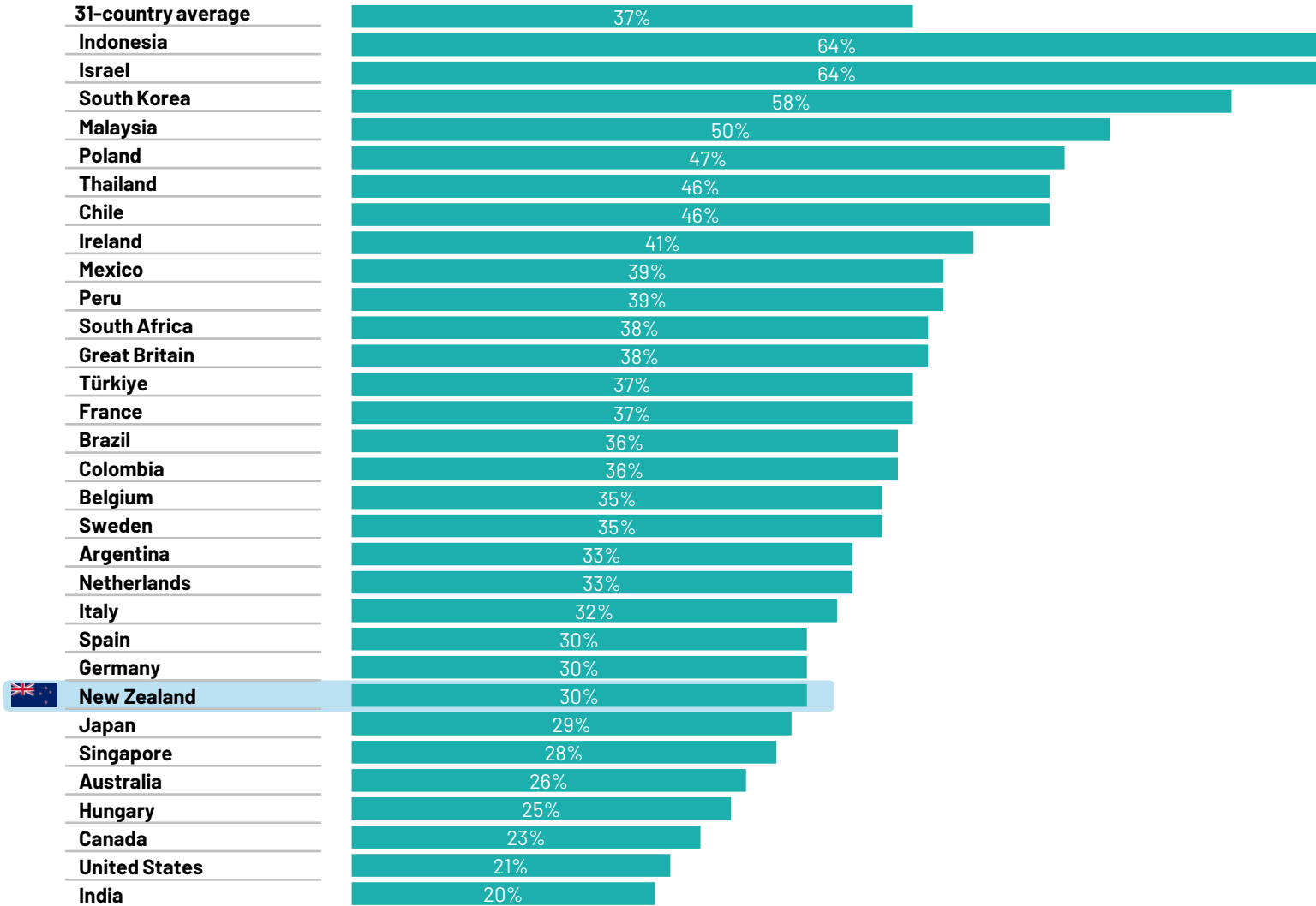
Country



Which of the following do you believe are the most significant causes of crime and corruption in your neighborhood? Please choose up to three causes.

Ineffective law enforcement

Country



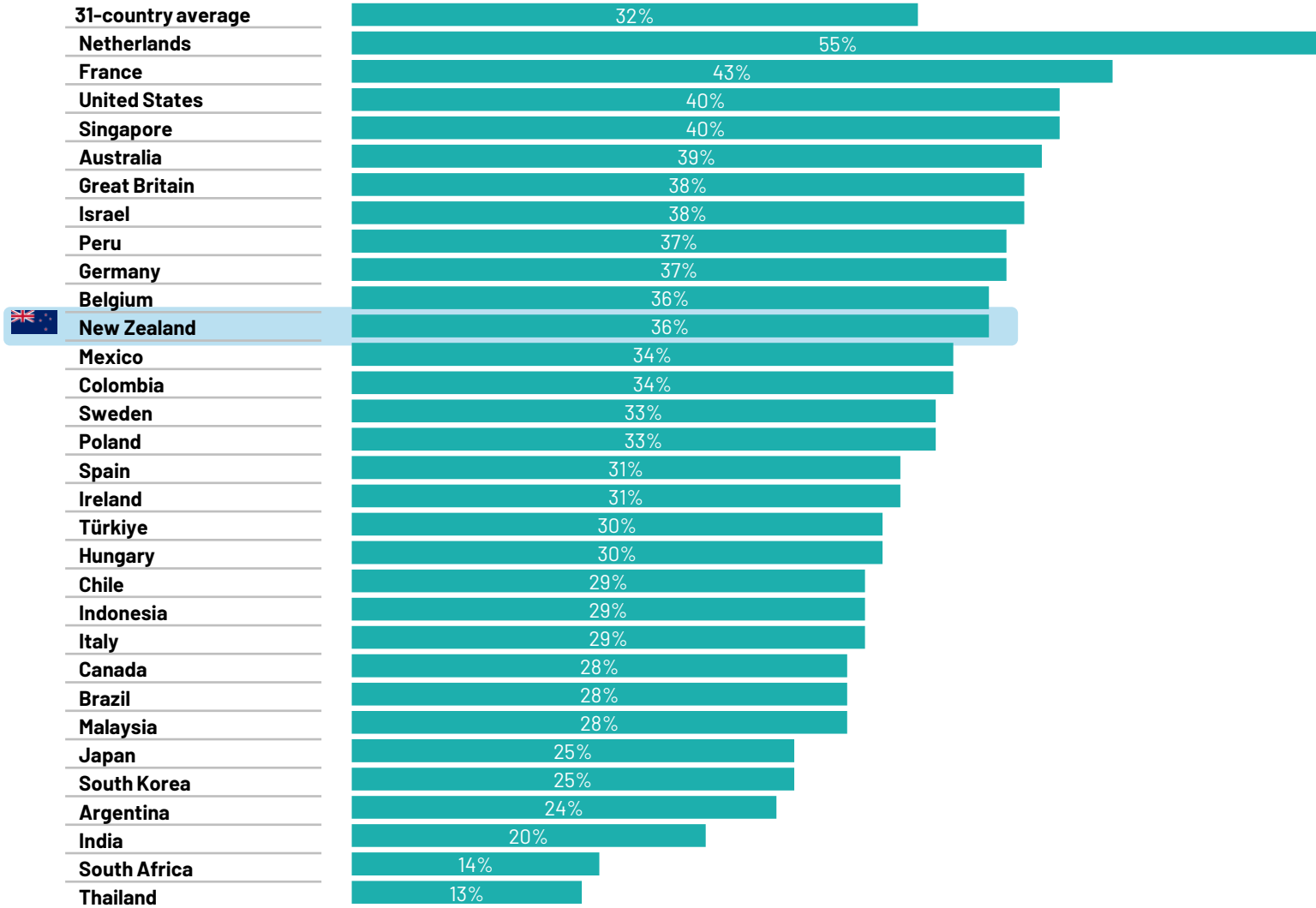
Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

Which of the following do you believe are the most significant causes of crime and corruption in your neighborhood? Please choose up to three causes.

Breakdown of traditional values

Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

Country

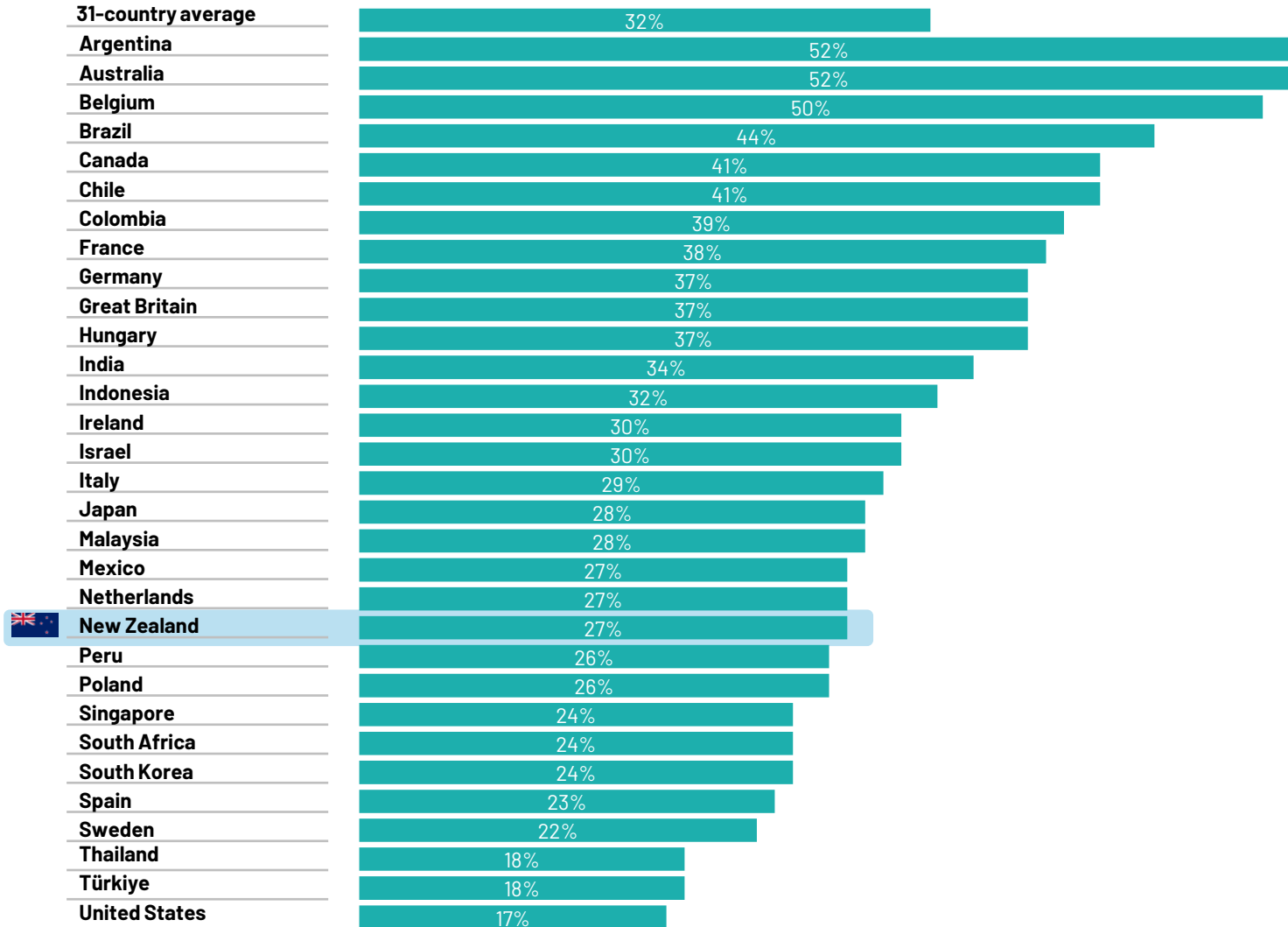


Which of the following do you believe are the most significant causes of crime and corruption in your neighborhood? Please choose up to three causes.

Lack of education

Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

Country

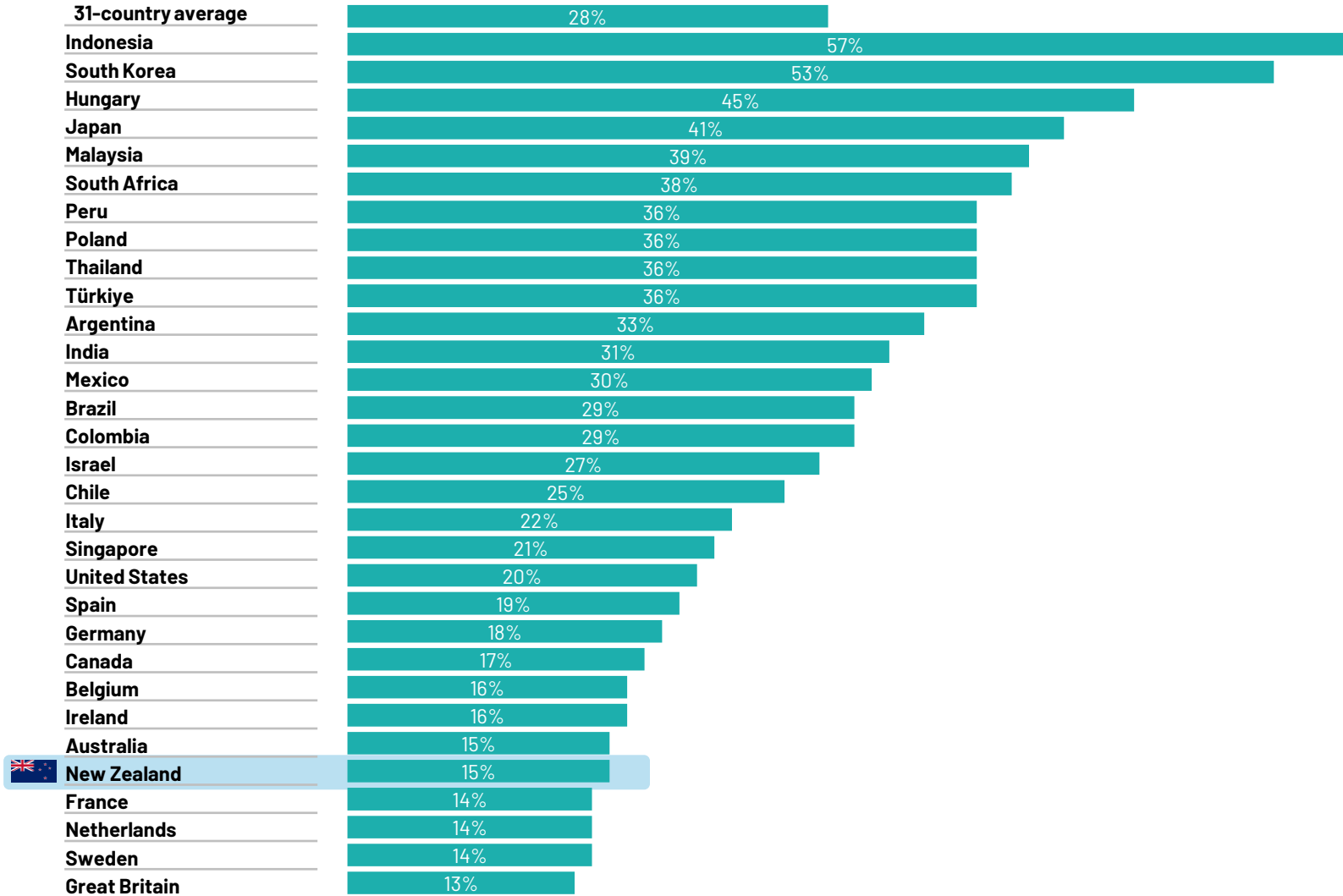


Which of the following do you believe are the most significant causes of crime and corruption in your neighborhood? Please choose up to three causes.

Corrupt political environment

Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024

Country

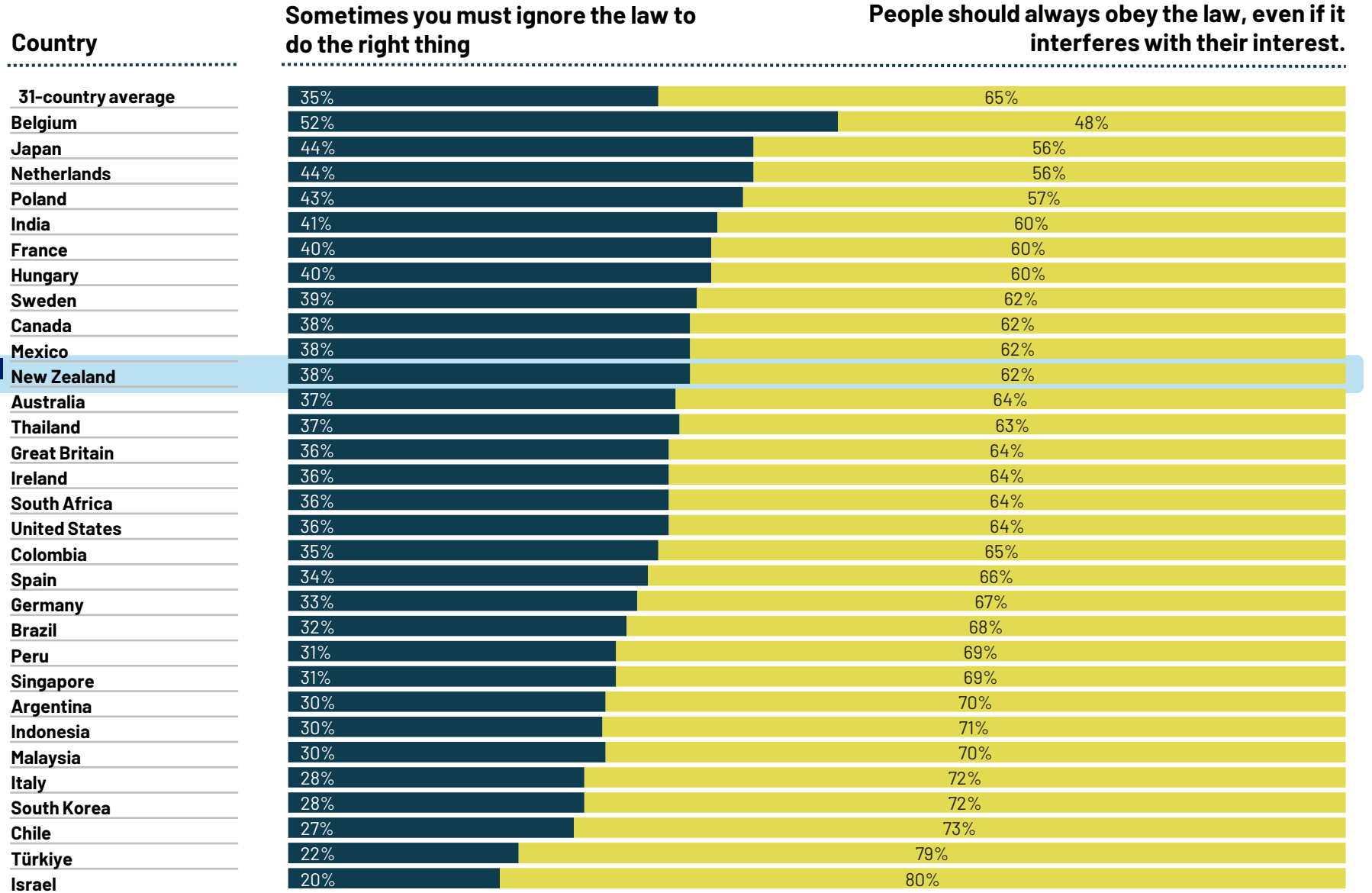


Weighing obeying the law over breaking it to do what's right



Please read the following two statements and indicate whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right. There are no right or wrong answers, answer according to your opinion.

Base: 23,800 online adults under age 75 across 31 countries, interviewed March 22 – April 5, 2024



Majority Favor Law Obedience Over Personal Interest

An average of 35% of respondents across all 31 countries agree with the statement "Sometimes you must ignore the law to do the right thing," while 65% believe that "People should always obey the law, even if it interferes with their interests."

The majority of surveyed individuals favor obeying the law at the expense of their personal interests, indicating a respect for the established legal order. But, this changes based on country and region. Countries like Israel (80%), Türkiye (79%), and Chile (73%) are most likely to express strong adherence to law and order. On the other hand, Belgium (52%), the Netherlands (44%), and Japan (44%) are more likely to say that

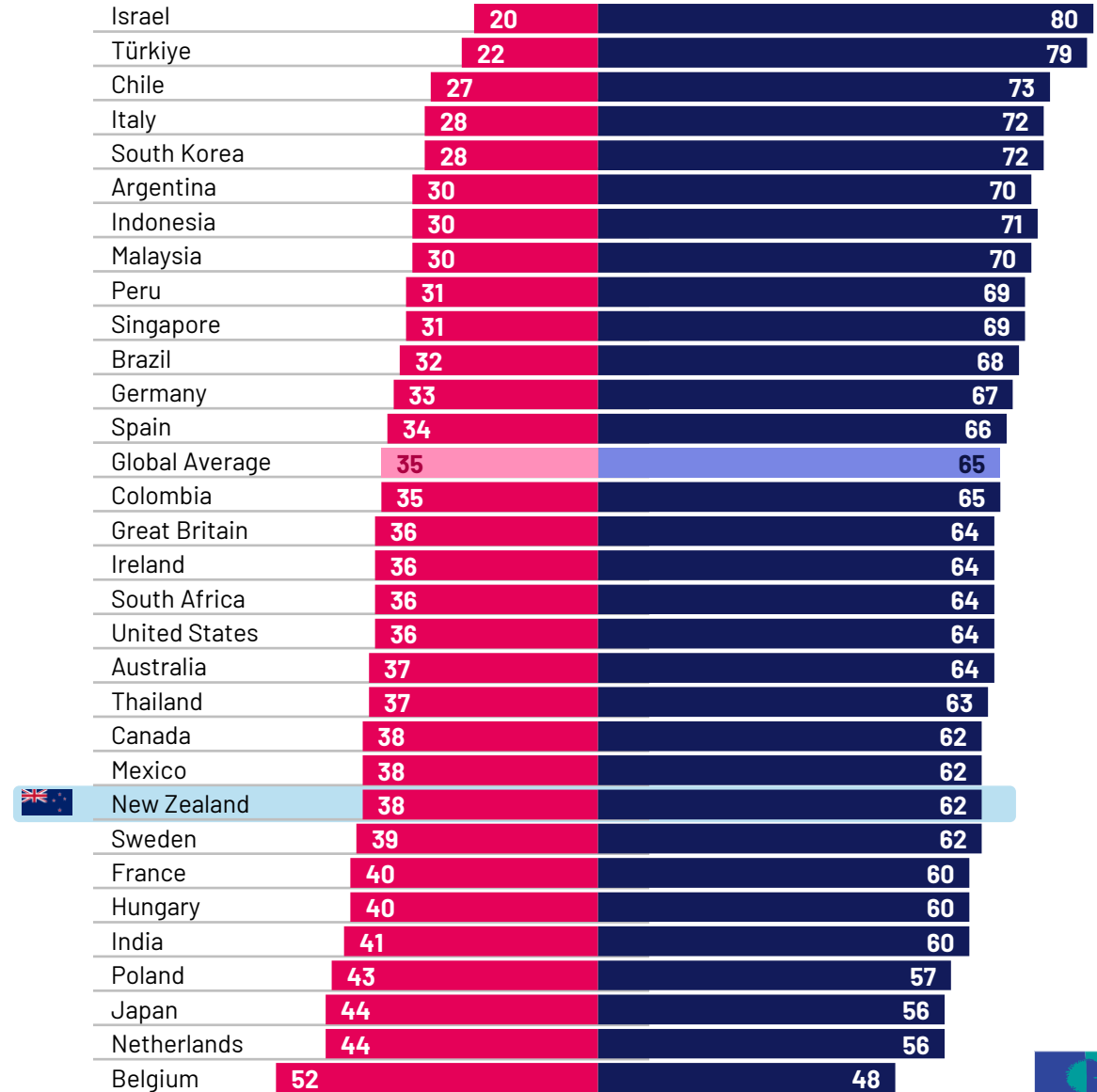
sometimes the law must be ignored to do the right thing. Flexibility towards obeying the law suggests a more malleable approach to justice in these societies.

This sense of justice, the law, and fairness may be influenced by historic political norms. For instance, countries with a more authoritarian past, like Chile and Türkiye, show a higher tendency towards law obedience, possibly reflecting the societal norms influenced by their historical experiences. However, countries with more liberal traditions, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, demonstrate a higher tolerance for ignoring the law when necessary.

Countries ranked by agreement with...

Sometimes you must ignore the law to do the right thing

People should always obey the law, even if it interferes with their interest.



Methodology

Methodology

These are the results of a 31-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform and, in India, on its IndiaBus platform, between Friday, March 22 and Friday, April 5, 2024. For this survey, Ipsos interviewed a total of 23,800 adults aged 18 years and older in India, 18-74 in Canada, Republic of Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, South Africa, Türkiye, and the United States, 20-74 in Thailand, 21-74 in Indonesia and Singapore, and 16-74 in all other countries.

The sample consists of approximately 1,000 individuals each in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain, and the U.S., and 500 individuals each in Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden,

Thailand, and Türkiye. The sample in India consists of approximately 2,200 individuals, of whom approximately 1,800 were interviewed face-to-face and 400 were interviewed online. Samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S. can be considered representative of their general adult populations under the age of 75. Samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Türkiye are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more “connected” segment of their population.

India’s sample represents a large subset of its urban population — social economic classes A, B and C in metros and tier 1-3 town classes across all four zones.

The data is weighted so that the composition of each country’s sample best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data. “The Global Country Average” reflects the average result for all the countries and markets in which the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country or market and is not intended to suggest a total result.

When percentages do not sum up to 100 or the ‘difference’ appears to be +/-1 percentage point more/less than the actual result, this may be

due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of “don’t know” or not stated responses.

The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll where N=1,000 being accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of where N=500 being accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos' use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

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