

2025

The Salvadoran population's opinion on the year 2025

Security stability versus fragility in the economy

With security at the forefront, 8 out of 10 people perceive that crime decreased in 2025, consolidating security as the main achievement of the year.

The economy is under strain: with 9 out of 10 people consider that the cost of living has increased or has remained the same, reflecting a strong economic distress.

The president, the central government and the security forces concentrate the highest levels of citizen trust, while political parties and the Legislative Assembly are among the lowest records.

Despite the economic difficulties, 7 out of 10 people say they look at 2026 with hope, showing a predominance of positive expectations.



Technical Details

Survey conducted by: Iudop - UCA.

Valid responses: 1,268.

Sampling design: Multi-stage stratified sample design by quotas, which guarantees national representativeness in urban and rural areas. The sample is distributed by department, sex and age groups, following the principle of probability proportional to size (PPS), based on the official population structure.

Sampling Error: $\pm 2.75\%$.

Level of Confidence: 95%.

Methodology:

Individual face to face interviews conducted in respondents' homes.

Fieldwork date: December 2nd – 13th, 2025.

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Introduction

The University Institute of Public Opinion of the UCA (Iudop) presents the results of the most recent national survey conducted at the end of 2025. This study seeks to offer a broad and reliable in-depth study of citizens' perceptions of the situation of the country and families, security, trust in institutions and various current issues.

The survey reflects the Salvadoran population's assessments of the main achievements and problems of the year, as well as their expectations for the immediate future. The aim is to contribute to public debate and understanding of the social dynamics that mark the course of the country.

Beyond the data, this document is an invitation to read the opinions of citizens as a fundamental input for policy formulation and academic analysis, remembering that the opinion of the population is an essential component in the construction of democracy and well-being.

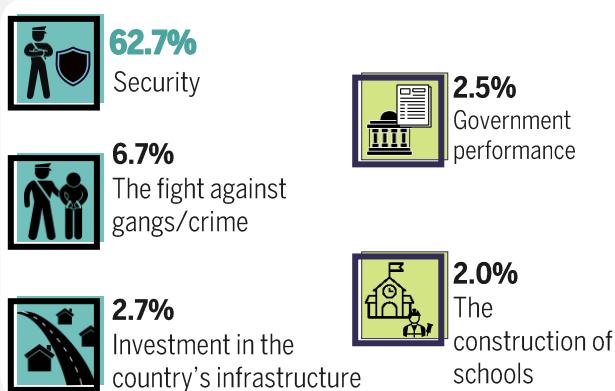
What do the Salvadoran population think about the country's key themes in 2025?

1. On the country's situation

When assessing the best and worst events of 2025, the population maintains a clear position: public security is perceived as the country's main achievement, while the economy is recognized as the principal problem. In El Salvador, 62.7% of respondents identified security as the most positive aspect of the year, in contrast to the 44.9% who pointed to the economy, the high cost of living, and unemployment as the main shortcomings.

Figure 1.

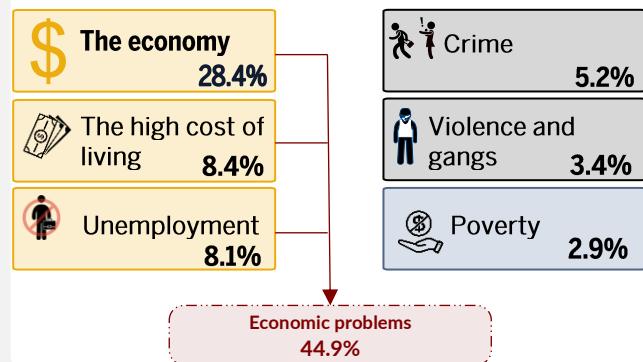
What is the best thing currently happening in El Salvador?



* For further details, see the General Results report.

Figure 2.

Main problem currently faced by El Salvador



Regarding specific concerns, 63.8% of respondents consider that the cost of living increased in 2025, while 28.4% believe it remained the same. This indicates that 9 out of every 10 people perceive economic stagnation or deterioration. A similar perception is observed with respect to unemployment, with 8 out of every 10 respondents stating that the cost of living increased or did not change over the course of the year.

Graph 1.

In 2025, do you think the cost of living increased, decreased, or remained the same?

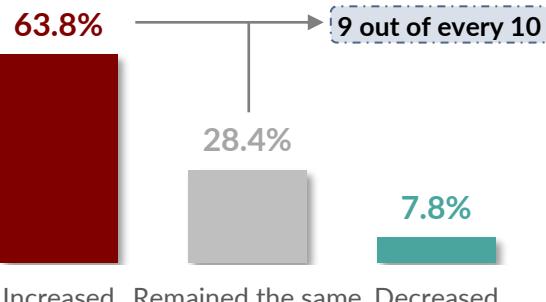
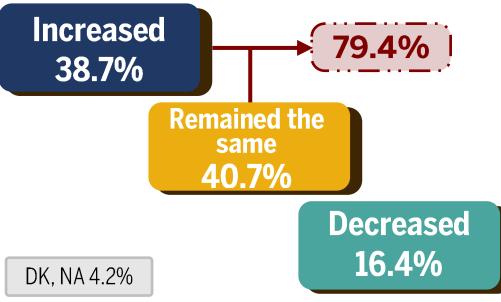


Figure 3.

In your opinion, did unemployment increase, decrease, or remain the same in 2025?



As an economic relief measure, a 12% increase in the minimum wage came into effect in June 2025. However, by the end of the year, public opinion was divided regarding this increase: 54.6% considered it to be of little or no benefit, whereas 42.4% viewed it as positive to some extent.

Graph 2.

In June of this year, the minimum wage increased by 12%. In your opinion, how much has this increase benefited the population: greatly, moderately, slightly, or not at all?

Greatly Moderately Slightly Not at all

19% 23.4% 33.1% 21.5%

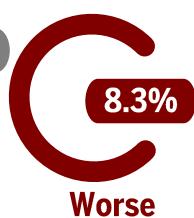
DK, NA: 3%

54.6%

Overall, public security outweighs economic difficulties; by the end of 2025, 61% of the population believed that the country's situation was better than in the previous year, and the government's performance received an average rating of 8.33.

Graph 3.

At the end of 2025, is our country better, the same, or worse compared to last year?



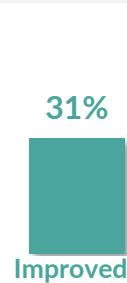
2. On the family situation

When assessing their immediate reality, the population shows diverse perceptions. In 2025, 55.5% consider that their family situation did not change, while 31% perceive some improvement.

Regarding family finances, 60.6% state that their income is sufficient to cover household expenses, whereas 32.5% report that it is insufficient.

Graph 4.

During 2025, did your household's economic situation improve, worsen, or remain the same?



In response to this deficit, many families turn to assistance from relatives, loans, small subsistence businesses, additional work shifts, or they reduce the consumption of certain products.

9 out of 10 individuals perceive that the prices of basic food items either increased or stayed the same.

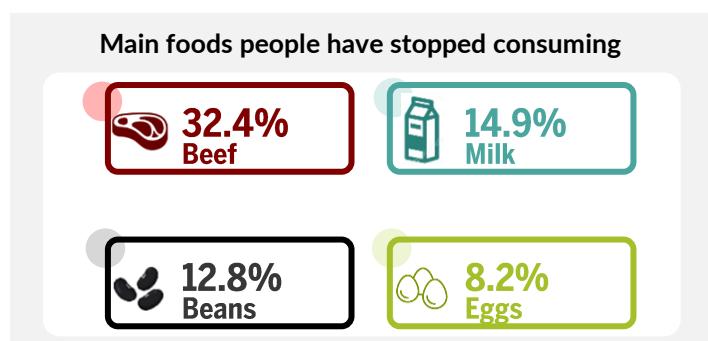
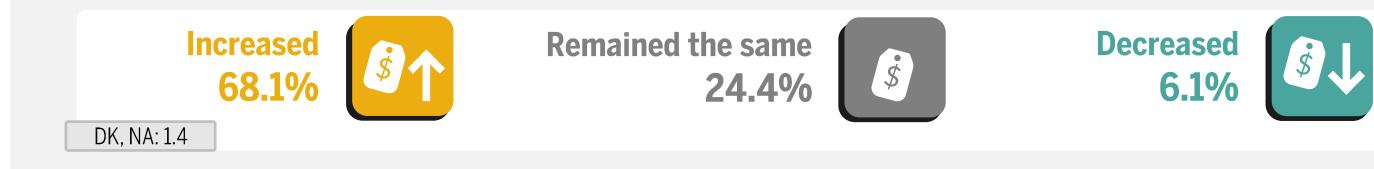
Regarding the prices of basic food items, nine out of ten people perceive that they increased or remained the same in 2025. Among those reporting price increases in food (68.1%), 75.2% stated that this affected their household economy, and within this group, 58.2% had to stop consuming certain products, mainly beef, milk, beans, and eggs.

Table 1.
Could you indicate how you primarily manage to cover your monthly expenses?

Coping strategies	%
Receive help from family/friends/neighbors	20.9
Borrow money	15.5
Make sales/run a small business	11.4
Additional jobs/working overtime	11.2
Stop buying certain food/medications	9.7
Use savings	8
Pay some bills per month and leave others pending	4.6
Skip a meal	4.1
Other strategies*	10.6
No response	3.9

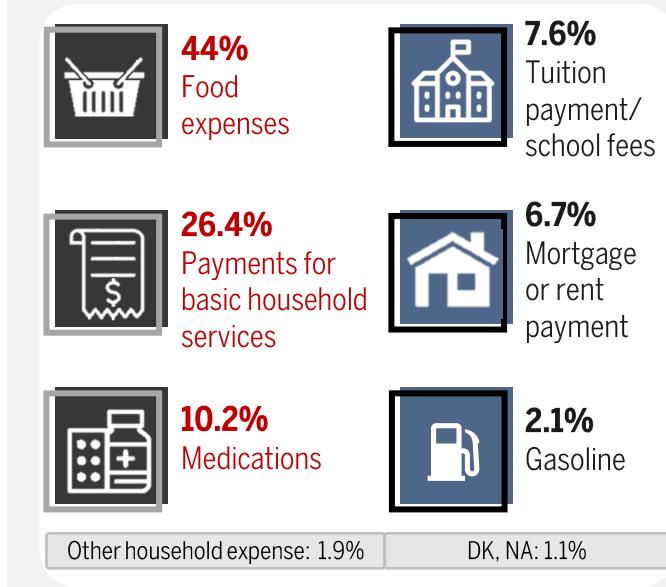
* For further details, see the General Results report.

Figure 4.
In your opinion, have the prices of basic food items (such as beans, corn, sugar, milk, or eggs) increased, decreased, or remained the same during 2025?



Spending on food remains the main category of household expenditure (44%), followed by basic services (26.4%) and medications (10.2%).

Figure 5.
During 2025, what do you consider has been the main household expense?



The information on the minimum wage was expanded based on the results of a specialized telephone survey on the topic:

Box 1

Citizens perception of the minimum wage six months after the 12% increase

Six months after the implementation of the minimum wage increase, the Salvadoran population expressed that the measure has been insufficient in the face of rising living costs. The main findings were:

- **Reasons for insufficiency:** the majority point out that “everything is more expensive” and that the price of the basic food basket continues to rise; in this regard, the salary increase is associated with the perception of a general rise in prices across the national economy, among other factors.

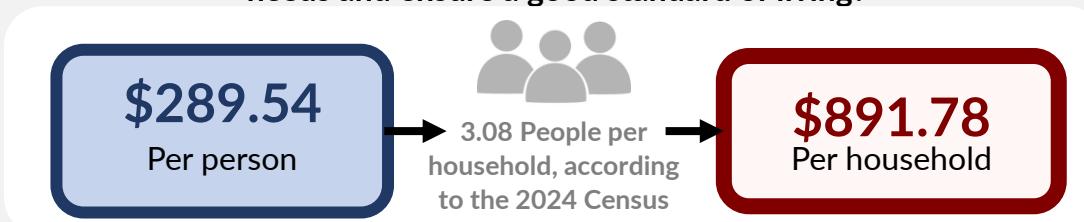
Figure 6.
Why do you consider that the increase in the minimum wage is insufficient?
n= 420



* For further details, see the General Results report.

- **Ideal minimum wage:** if the prices of goods and services remained stable, citizens estimate that the minimum wage should be approximately US\$548. This amount exceeds the current minimum wage for the commerce and services sector, which is US\$408.80, by US\$140.
- **Income per person and per household:** when specifying the required income for each family member, the reported average is US\$289.54. Based on the average household size in El Salvador, according to the latest Population and Housing Census (3.08 members), the minimum monthly income required amounts to US\$891.78 per household.

Figure 7.
How much do you consider should be your household's monthly income to cover your needs and ensure a good standard of living?



3. On justice, security, and trust in institutions

In 2025, citizens' perception of security shows positive results, with 81.7% considering that crime has decreased, 15% believing it remained the same, and only 3.2% perceiving an increase.

Additionally, 95.3% reported not having been a victim of criminal acts; among those who were, thefts, threats, and extortion were the most frequently mentioned crimes they experienced.

Figure 8.
Compared to last year, do you think crime in the country has increased, decreased, or remained the same?

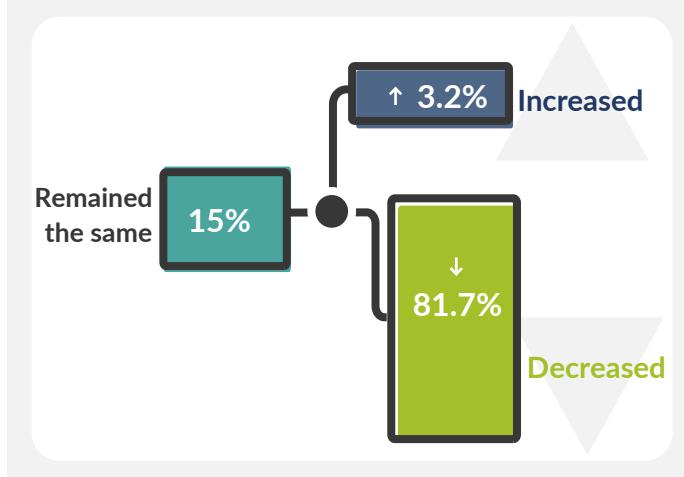


Figure 9.
Thinking about the most recent criminal act you have experienced, what type of crime were you a victim of between January and December 2025?

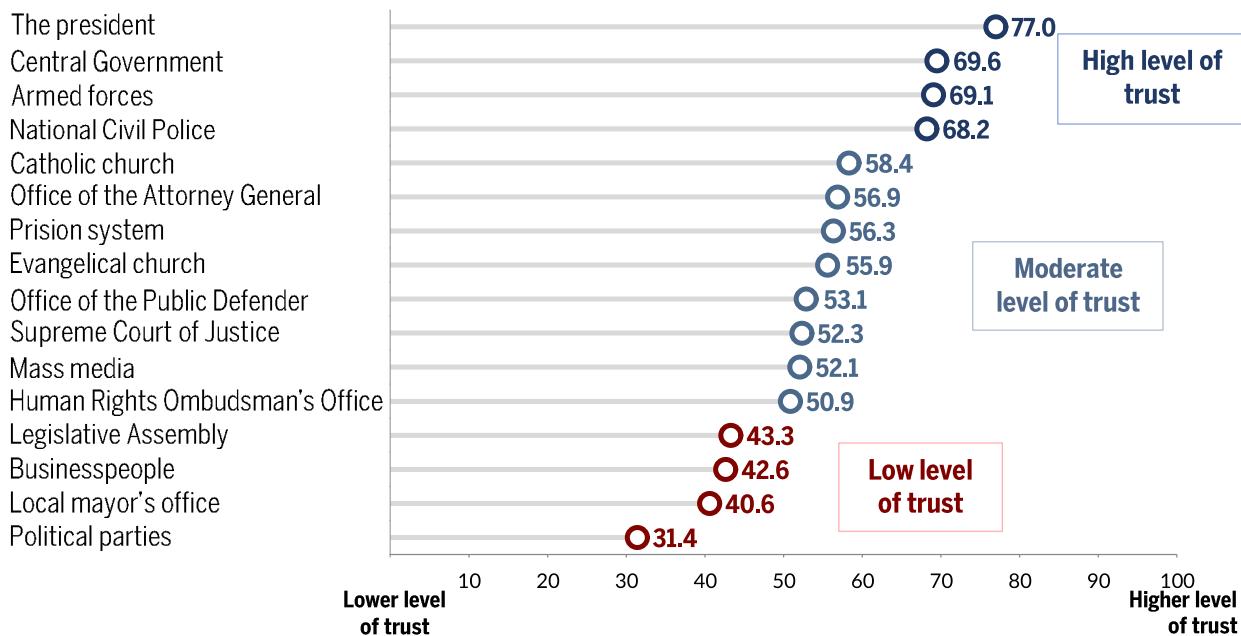
n = 59

	Theft without a weapon, without aggression, and without physical threat (petty theft)	47.5%
	Threats	15.3%
	Extortion or protection racket	10.2%
	Physical assault without theft	6.8%
	Theft without a weapon, with aggression or physical threat	6.8%
	Theft with a weapon	5.1%
	Scamming	3.4%
	Property damage	1.7%
	Forced displacement to leave their home or property	1.7%
		No response 1.7%

The sense of security is intricately linked to the levels of trust in public and social institutions:

- **Citizens express the highest level of trust** to the President of the Republic, the Central Government, the Armed Forces, and the National Civil Police.
- **Notable institutions with a moderate level of trust**, include the Catholic Church, the Attorney General's Office, the prison system and Evangelical churches.
- Finally, the institutions which received the **lowest level of trust** from the public are the Legislative Assembly, the business sector, municipal governments, and political parties.

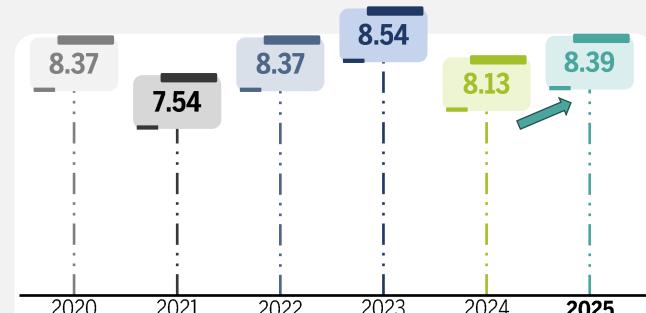
Graph 5.
Level of trust in the country's institutions and social actors
[Scale 0 – 100]



The perception of low crime levels and high confidence in the president, his government, and security institutions explain the positive assessment of Nayib Bukele's administration in 2025, with a score of 8.39.

This result exceeds by 0.26 points the score of 8.13 obtained in 2024, reflecting a recovery in the year's evaluation.

Figure 10.
Score assigned to the president's performance
(Comparison 2020-2025)
Scale 0 - 10



4. Citizens knowledge and opinions on current issues in 2025

Remittances: although seven out of ten people were unaware of the 18.2% increase in remittances, 60.4% expressed concern about the country's high dependence on this source of income.

Mass deportations: 51.8% stated that the threat of deportations from the United States influenced the increased flow of remittances. Additionally, nearly eight out of ten citizens expressed concerns about the impact of these deportations on Salvadoran families.

Traffic accidents: seven out of ten people were aware of the record of more than 19,000 accidents in 2025. 67.2% considered that road safety measures were very or somewhat effective, while 30.8% rated them as slightly or not at all effective.

Natural reserves: regarding the construction of a new CIFCO (International Center for Fairs and Conventions) at Finca El Espino, 56.9% reported being unaware of the matter. Regardless of knowledge about the details, seven out of ten people expressed disagreement with using the natural reserve for construction purposes.

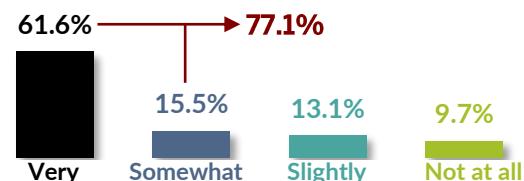
Figure 11.

How concerned are you about our country's heavy reliance on remittances?



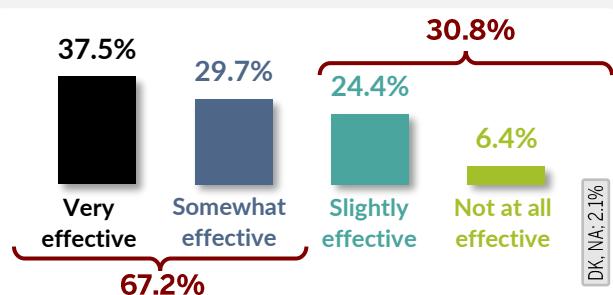
Graph 6.

How concerned are you that mass deportations may affect Salvadoran families?



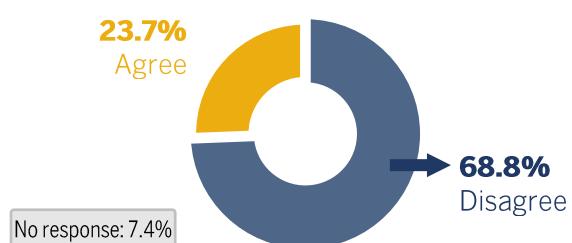
Graph 7.

How effective do you consider the country's current road safety measures to be?



Graph 8.

Do you agree or disagree with the decision to construct the new CIFCO in an area considered a natural reserve?



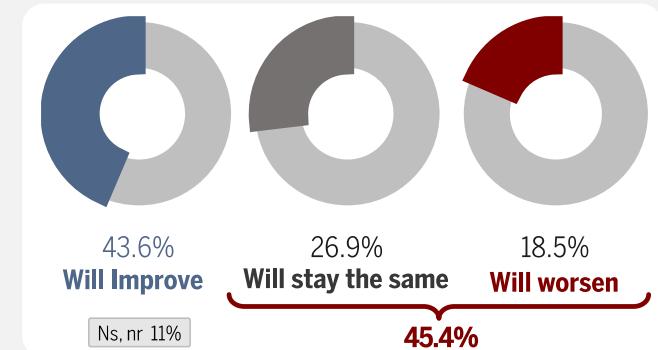
Healthcare services with artificial intelligence (AI): more than seven out of ten people were aware of the DoctorSV application. 43.6% believe it will improve the quality of service, while 45.4% think it will remain the same or that quality will worsen.

Metallic mining: one year after the approval of the General Metallic Mining Law, 67.3% of people consider that it has benefited the population little or not at all.

Judicial processes under the state of emergency: in a context of arrests that include religious leaders, environmentalists, and legal professionals, 53.5% believe they should be released if there is insufficient evidence or granted alternative measures. In contrast, 34% think they should remain in detention until their cases are resolved in court.

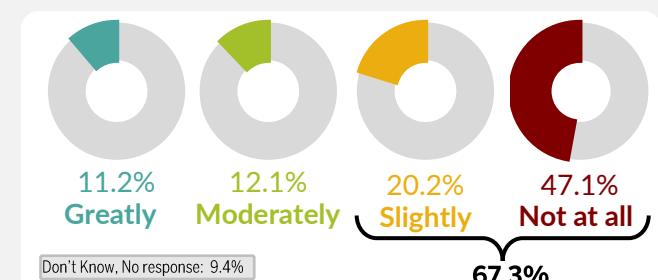
Graph 9.

In your opinion, will the creation of this digital health platform, DoctorSV, improve the quality of care, maintain it at the same level, or worsen the quality of care?



Graph 10.

One year after the approval of the General Metallic Mining Law in El Salvador, to what extent do you believe this law has benefited the Salvadoran population in 2025: greatly, moderately, slightly, or not at all?

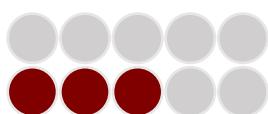


Graph 11.

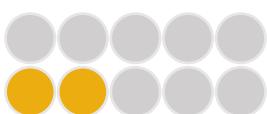
In your opinion, what judicial outcome should individuals imprisoned this year under the state of emergency, including religious leaders, environmentalists, and legal professionals face regarding their legal proceedings?



36.8%
They should be released if there is insufficient evidence against them



34%
They should remain in detention until their case is resolved in court



16.7%
They should be granted alternatives to detention (house arrest or bail)



7.7%
It depends on each case, based on the available evidence

No response: 4.7%

5. Population expectations for the year 2026

When asked about people's main concerns and how they expect them to evolve in 2026, the results are:

- **National economic situation:** 34.5% believe it will improve, while 33.6% consider it will remain the same.
- **Household economy:** 41.8% expect improvements, compared with 40.7% who anticipate stability, with no substantial changes in this regard.
- **Hope or fear regarding the country's future:** the response is clear and distinct; at the end of 2025, seven out of ten people look at the future with hope, while three out of ten feel fear when thinking about what lies ahead.

Graph 12.

In general, how do you think the country's economic situation will be next year: better, about the same, or worse?

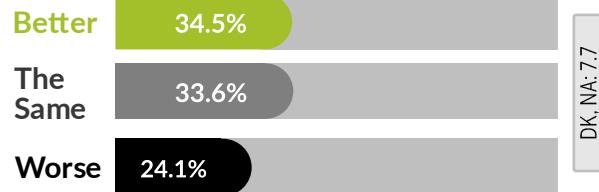


Figure 12.

How do you think your household's economic situation will be next year: better, about the same, or worse?



Graph 13.

On the other hand, when you think about the country's future, what is the first feeling that comes to mind: hope or fear

Hope



Fear



Neither: 3.3%

6. Key takeaways

The survey conducted at the end of 2025 reflects a country that combines advances in security with persistent economic and social challenges. The majority of the population acknowledges the reduction in crime and expresses high levels of confidence in the president, the government, and security institutions, resulting in a positive assessment of government performance.

However, issues related to the cost of living, unemployment, and insufficient household income continue to be the main concerns. Many families report having had to adjust their consumption of basic goods, particularly of basic food items, in response to rising prices.

As for current issues, citizens express concern over dependence on remittances, potential deportations from the United States, and decisions regarding the use of natural reserves. Divisions of opinion are also observed concerning new measures in healthcare and metallic mining, as well as the judicial processes arising from the state of emergency.

Looking ahead, the population maintains moderate expectations: while some people anticipate economic improvement, others expect the situation to remain the same. Nevertheless, a sense of hope prevails regarding the country's direction: seven out of ten individuals look at 2026 optimistically.

This contrast between stability in security and fragility in the economy invites reflection on the need for comprehensive public policies capable of balancing these two areas. The prevailing hope among the population regarding the country's future represents a valuable form of social capital, but it also poses a challenge: transforming that expectation into tangible improvements in the economy and in the quality of life of the Salvadoran population.

Antiguo Cuscatlán, January 27, 2026.

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