



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies

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Arab Public Opinion about the Israeli War on Gaza

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Introduction

The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies has surveyed sixteen Arab countries to determine where Arab public opinion stands in relation to the Israeli war on Gaza. The poll is the first of its kind in the region to measure Arab public opinion on the topic.

The telephone survey was conducted with a representative sample of 8,000 respondents during the period from 12 December 2023 to 5 January 2024, in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and the West Bank in Palestine. These countries represent more than 95% of the population across the Arab region.

Each survey used a randomized, stratified, multi-stage, systematic, self-weighted and size-adjusted clustered sampling method. Consequently, every individual in each country surveyed has an equal probability of being included in the sample. The Arab regional opinions were calculated as an average of the results of the sixteen surveyed countries, with each country given the same weight (that is, the relative weight of each country that was not taken into account). All countries were thus treated as similar units with the same population in order to avoid the opinions of citizens of the most populous countries prevailing over others in determining overall public opinion.

About the War on Gaza

The results reveal that the majority of the Arab region follow news about Israel’s war on Gaza and its developments, with 80% of respondents expressing their sustained followship and only 7% not following at all. Respondents in Palestine, Jordan, and Lebanon recorded the highest rates of news followship overall.

Figure (1)

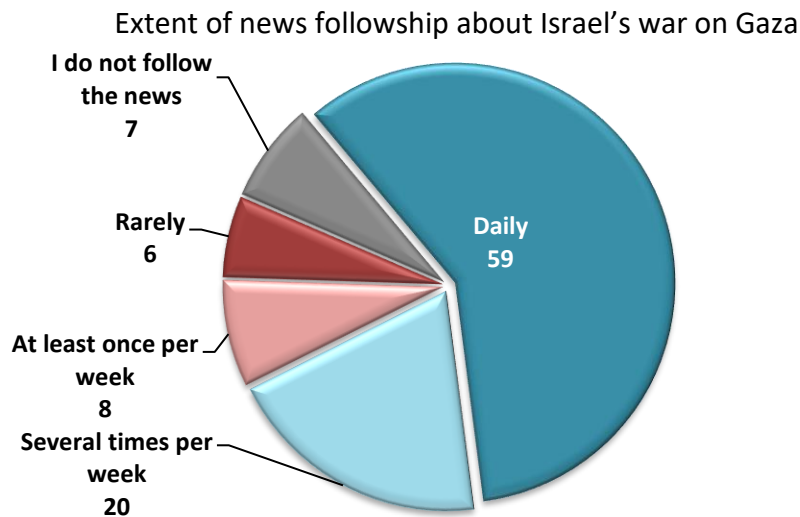


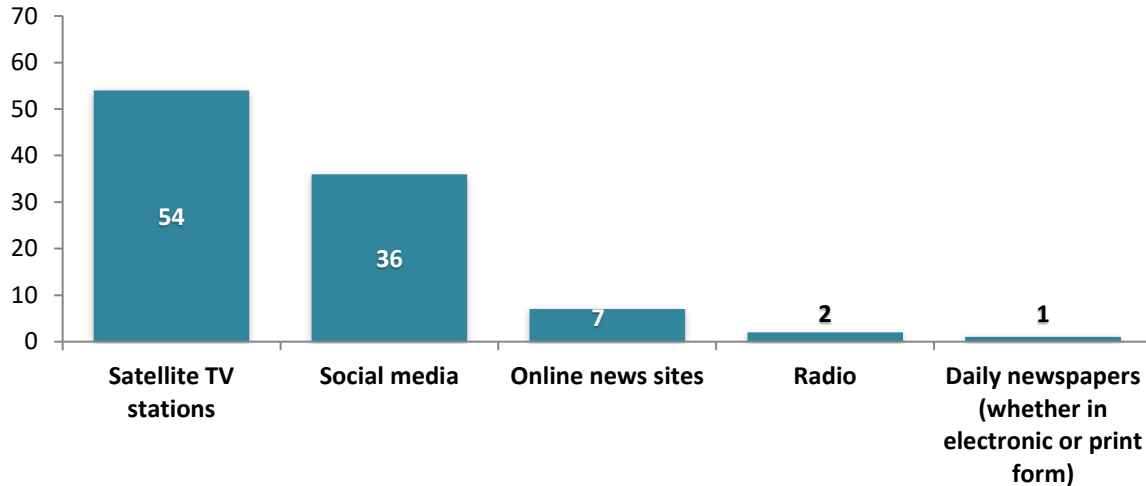
Figure (2)



Regarding information sources, 54% of respondents relied on television, compared to 43% who relied on the internet, the majority of whom reported using social media to follow war events.

Figure (3)

Respondents most important source of information to follow news of the Israeli war on Gaza



Respondents were asked if they felt psychological stress as a result of the Israeli war on Gaza, and 97% of them reported that they did to varying degrees. 84% said that they feel it very much, while 12% said that they somewhat feel psychological stress, 2% said they feel it slightly and a further 2% said that they do not feel it at all. The highest feelings of strong psychological stress were recorded among respondents in Yemen, Libya, Jordan, and Palestine.

Figure (4)

Extent of psychological stress felt during the war on Gaza

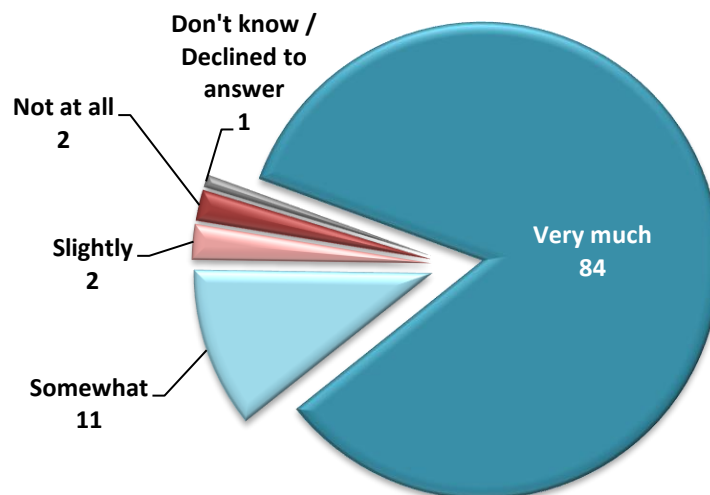
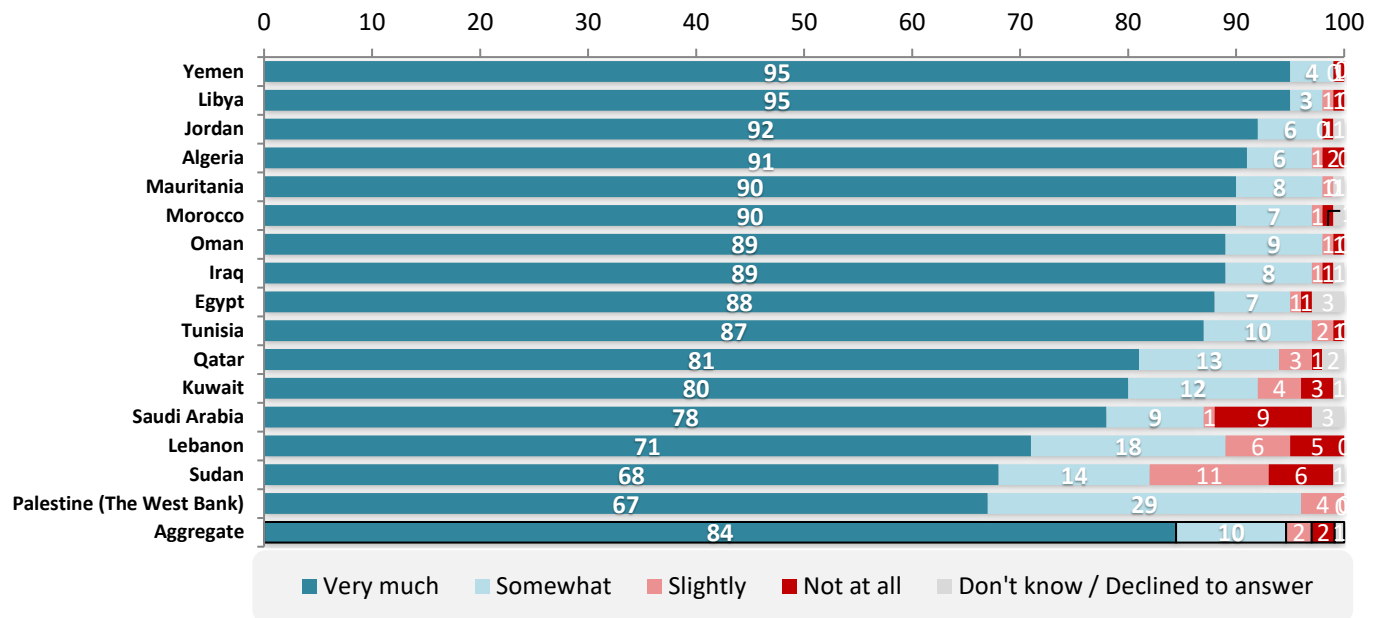


Figure (5)

Extent of psychological stress felt during the war on Gaza by country



Hamas’ Military Operation

The survey included a set of questions about the military operation carried out by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and the reasons behind the operation.

Looking back on the Hamas military operation, the respondents were asked about the most and second most important reasons motivating Hamas. The results demonstrated a diverse range of reasons behind the operation. While 35% of respondents stated that the most important reason was the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, 24% stated that it was in defence against Israel’s targeting of Al-Aqsa Mosque, 8% said it was the ongoing siege on the Gaza Strip, and 5% attributed it to the continuation of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories.

Table (1)

The most important reasons for Hamas to carry out the military operation on 7 October 2023

	Most important	Second most important
The ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land	35	13
Defending al-Aqsa Mosque against attacks	24	21
The ongoing blockade of Gaza	8	12
Ongoing and expanding settlement on Palestinian land	6	8

	Most important	Second most important
Liberating Palestinian detainees and prisoners in prisons Israeli	6	13
Israel's rejection of the establishment of a state Palestinian	4	5
The international community's disregard for rights and the ongoing occupation Palestinian	4	5
The United States' failure to achieve a just peace	2	3
Halting the normalization process between Arab and Israel governments	2	3
Carrying out the plan or agenda of a foreign power Iran such as	2	2
Other	2	1
Don't know / Declined to answer	5	0
No second option	0	14
Total	100	100

Table (2)

The most important reasons for Hamas to carry out the military operation on 7 October 2023 by country

	Kuwait	Lebanon	Tunisia	Yemen	Oman	Jordan	Libya	Mauritania	Qatar	Iraq	Algeria	KSA	Morocco	Sudan	Egypt	Palestine/West	Aggregate
The ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land	50	43	36	35	35	34	34	34	33	33	33	33	33	32	31	24	35
Defending al-Aqsa Mosque against attacks	16	16	24	26	26	26	22	25	26	22	20	20	17	20	26	45	24
The ongoing blockade of Gaza	7	9	5	9	8	9	8	7	10	5	9	11	7	8	6	16	8
Ongoing and expanding settlement on Palestinian land	6	5	7	7	4	2	5	7	11	4	7	2	5	9	4	4	6
Liberating Palestinian detainees and prisons prisoners in Israeli	4	6	9	6	5	5	7	7	3	6	6	3	6	7	4	8	6
Israel's rejection of the establishment state of a Palestinian	4	4	2	3	4	3	4	5	3	4	6	1	4	5	5	0	4
The international community's rights and disregard for Palestinian the ongoing occupation	4	3	4	3	3	3	5	3	4	5	4	2	5	7	4	0	4
The United States' failure to achieve a just peace	2	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	1	6	2	2	2
Halting the normalization process and between Arab governments Israel	1	1	3	2	2	0	3	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	0	2
Carrying out the plan or agenda of a Iran foreign power such as	2	5	2	1	2	1	1	3	1	5	1	4	3	2	2	1	2
Other	1	3	1	3	1	11	1	0	0	3	4	5	5	0	4	0	2
Don't know / Declined to answer	3	4	4	3	8	4	8	6	6	7	5	16	12	2	10	0	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

While 67% of respondents reported that the military operation carried out by Hamas was a legitimate resistance operation, 19% reported that it was a somewhat flawed but legitimate resistance operation, and 3% said that it was a legitimate resistance operation that involved heinous or criminal acts, while 5% said it was an illegitimate operation.

Figure (6)
Assessments of Hamas' military operation on 7 October 2023

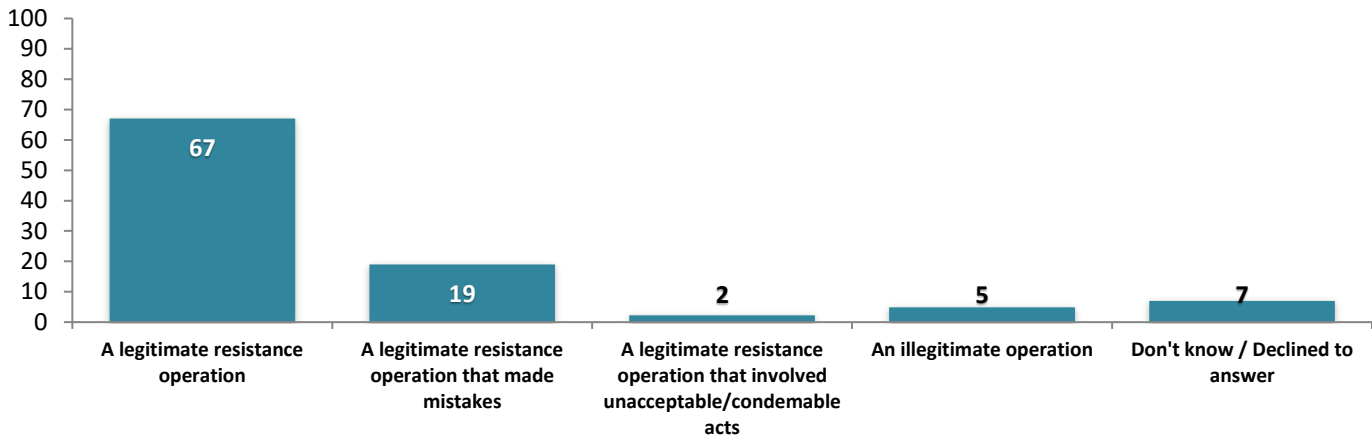
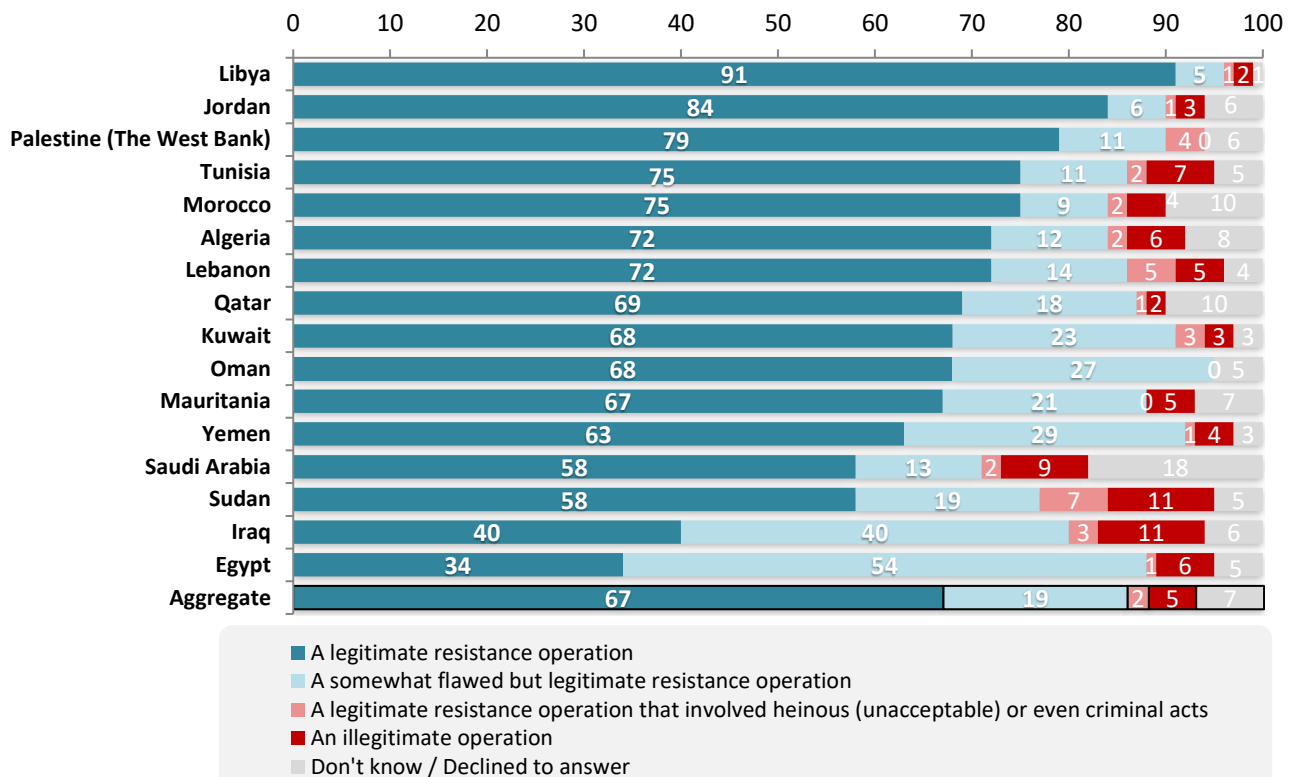


Figure (7)
Assessments of Hamas' military operation on 7 October 2023 by country



During the war on Gaza, some politicians and media personalities have drawn comparisons between Hamas and ISIS. The survey reveals that two-thirds of the respondents consider Hamas completely different from ISIS, while 15% reported that Hamas is very different from ISIS, and just 3% said that Hamas bears resemblance to ISIS.

Figure (8)
Comparisons between Hamas and ISIS

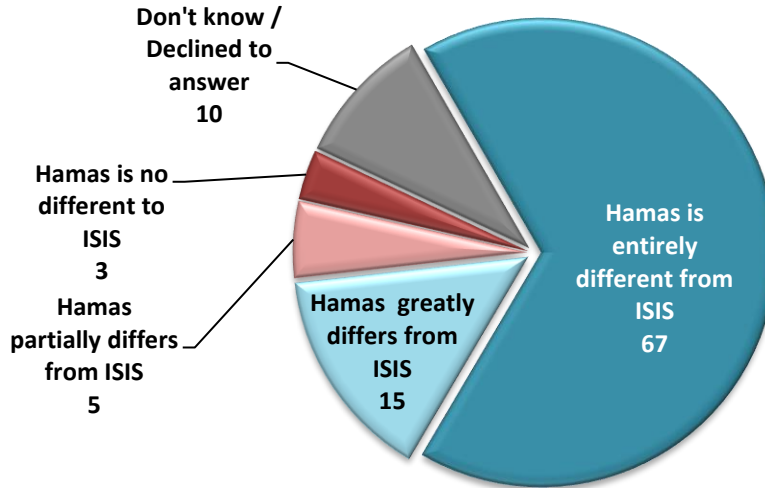
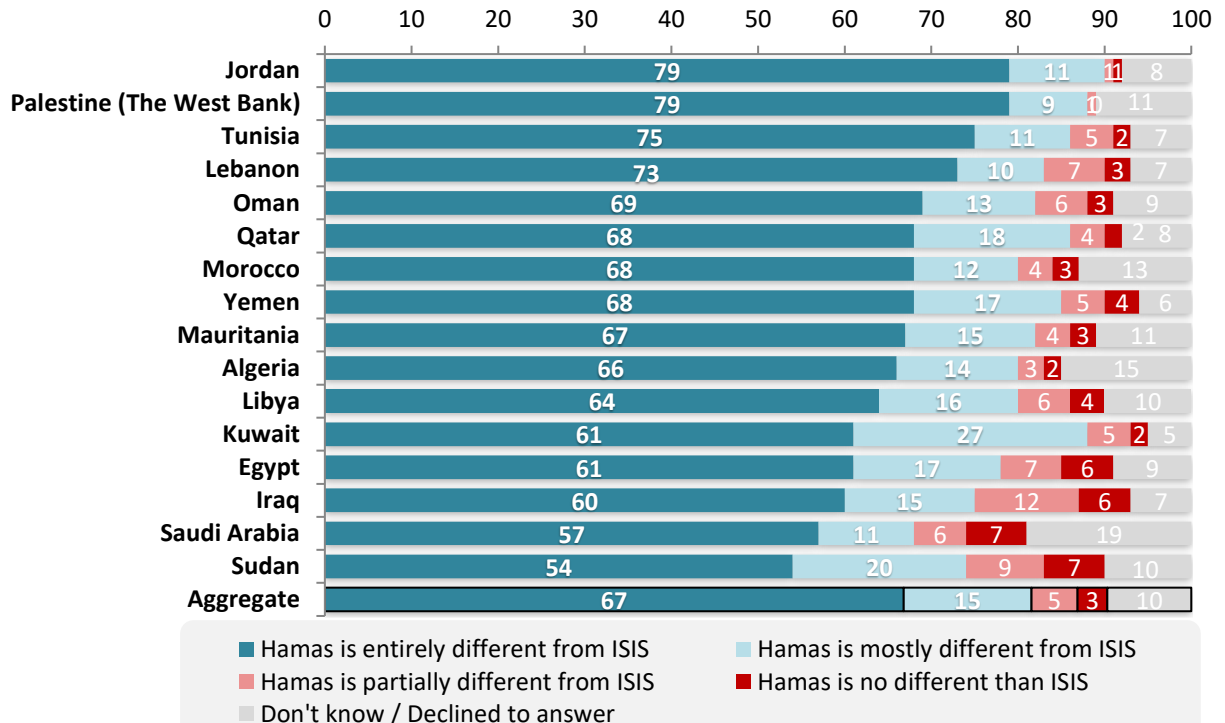


Figure (8)
Comparisons between Hamas and ISIS by country

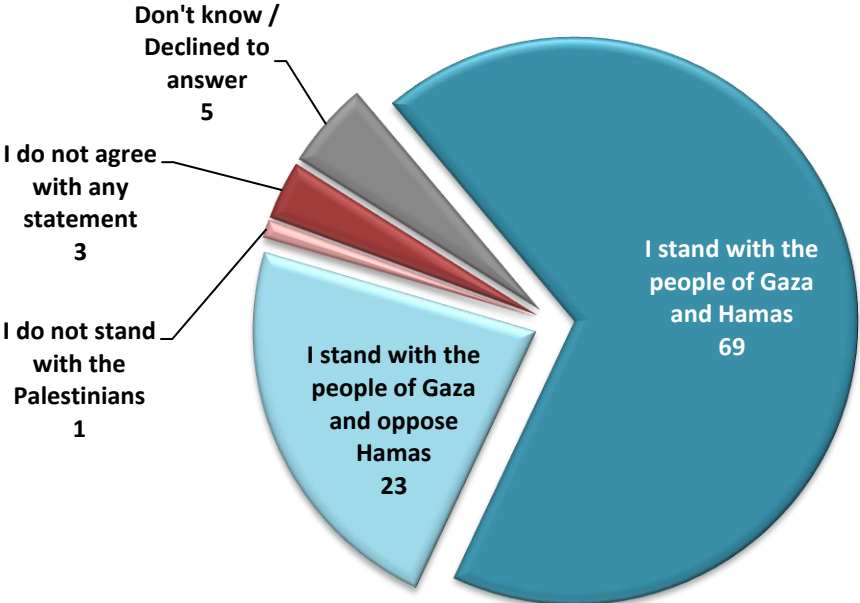


Solidarity of the Citizens of the Arab Region with the Palestinians in Gaza

Regarding the war launched by Israel on Gaza, the results showed that there is an overwhelming 92% consensus on the solidarity of the citizens of the Arab region with the Palestinian people in Gaza. 69% of respondents expressed their solidarity with Palestinians and Hamas, 23% expressed solidarity with Palestinians despite opposing Hamas, and 1% expressed a lack of solidarity with the Palestinians.

Figure (10)

Solidarity with Palestinians and support for Hamas



Factors behind the Continuation of Israel's War on Gaza

Regarding the factors enabling Israel to continue its war on Gaza, 50% indicated that US military and political support is the most important factor, while 14% said the failure of Arab governments to take decisive measures against Israel to stop this war is the most important factor. A further 11% of respondents named the recent normalization agreements between Israel and some Arab governments, while 10% reported that Western governments' support for Israel is the main reason.

Table (3)
Most important factors contributing to Israel's continuation of its war on Gaza

	The most important factor	The second most important factor
US military and political support	50	15
Arab governments' lack of decisive action toward Israel	14	23
Recent normalization (peace) agreements between Israel and some Arab governments (by which diplomatic relations have been restored)	11	18
Western governments' support for Israel	10	17
The UN's lack of decisive action toward Israel	4	11
The Palestinian Authority's lack of practical stances against Israel	2	4
Other	2	1
Don't know / Declined to answer	7	0
No second option	0	11
Total	100	100

Table (4)
Most important factors contributing to Israel's continuation of its war on Gaza by country

	Palestine/ West Bank	Mauritania	Qatar	Lebanon	Morocco	Algeria	Kuwait	Jordan	Tunisia	Oman	Libya	Egypt	Yemen	KSA	Iraq	Sudan	Aggregate
US military and political support	67	62	56	55	54	53	52	50	50	50	48	48	47	43	43	36	50
Arab governments' lack of decisive action toward Israel	9	13	11	15	13	11	13	13	16	16	17	13	18	11	13	18	14
Recent normalization (peace) agreements between Israel and some Arab governments (by which diplomatic relations have been restored)	14	7	12	12	4	10	15	8	12	10	10	7	16	8	14	20	11
Western governments' support for Israel	1	9	9	6	9	13	9	11	13	10	14	13	9	9	14	12	10
The UN's lack of decisive action toward Israel	6	1	4	3	3	3	5	4	3	4	4	4	5	3	5	7	4
The Palestinian Authority's lack of practical stances against Israel	3	1	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	2
Other	0	0	0	3	3	4	0	8	2	0	1	4	1	2	3	0	2
Don't know / Declined to answer	0	7	5	3	13	4	4	5	3	9	5	10	3	23	7	2	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

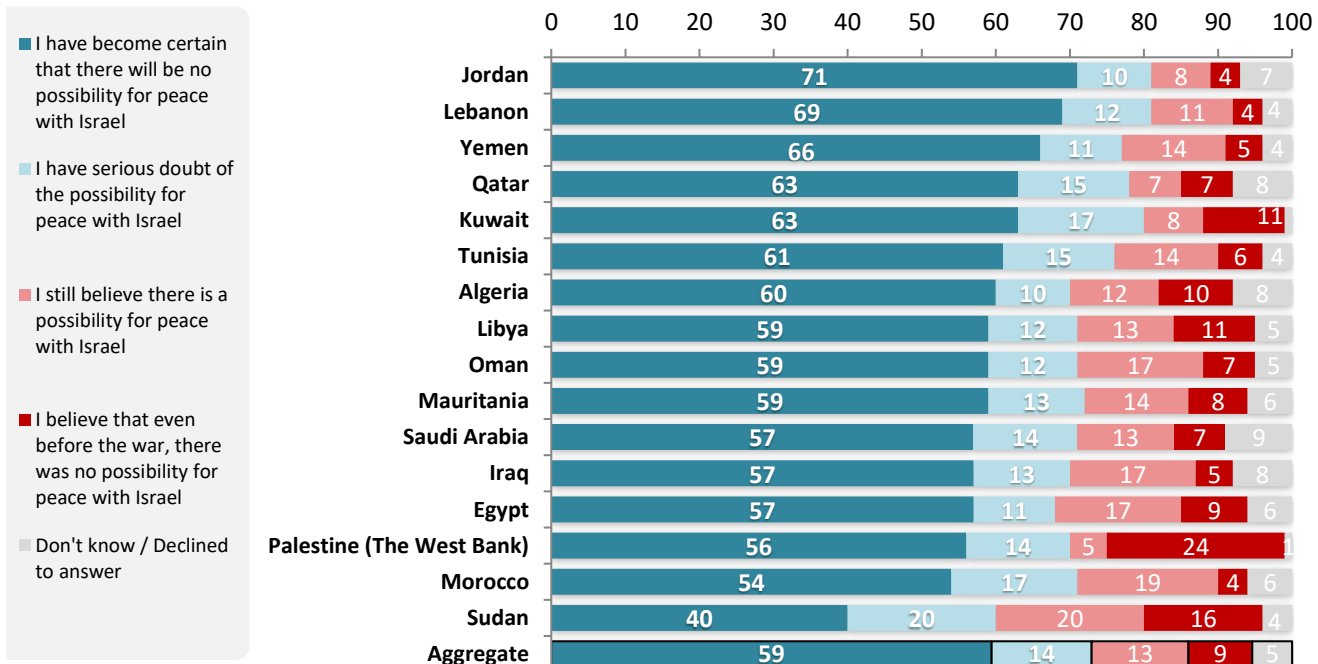
Arab Citizens' Opinion on the Possibility of Peace with Israel

In the wake of the war on Gaza, 59% of respondents reported that they have become certain there would be no possibility for peace with Israel, 14% reported that they have serious doubts, and 9% said that they had not believed in the possibility for peace with Israel in the first place. Only 13% reported that they still believe in the possibility of establishing peace with Israel.

Figure (11)
Impact of the war on prospects for peace



Figure (12)
Impact of the war on prospects for peace by country



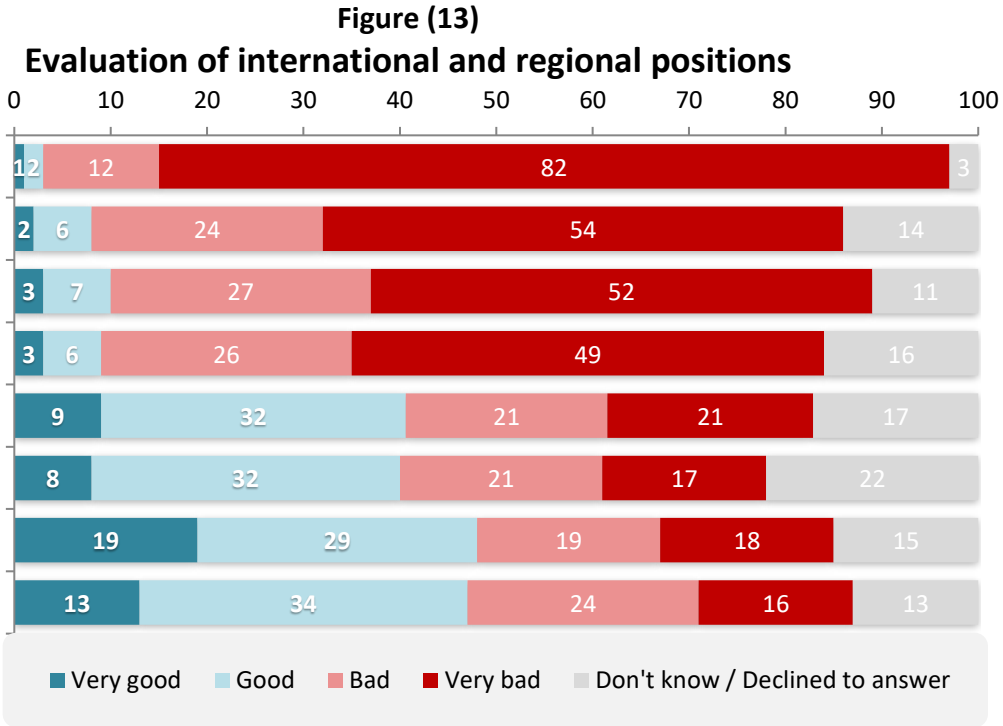
International and Regional Responses

When asked about the responses of regional and international powers to Israel’s war on Gaza, a near consensus of 94% considered the US position to be bad, 82% of which considered it very bad.

A majority of 79% of respondents viewed the French position as bad or very bad as opposed to 10% who said it was good or very good. Similarly, 78% of respondents reported that the British position was bad and very bad, compared to 8% who reported it positively. Another 75% of respondents saw Germany’s position as bad or very bad, compared to 9% who saw it positively.

The results indicate split opinions on the position of Russia and China. 42% of respondents evaluated the Russian position as negative (very bad and bad), while 41% evaluated it as positive (very good and good). While 21% said it was very bad, 9% said it was very good. 38% of respondents saw the Chinese position negatively, 40% of responses were positive, and about a quarter of respondents reported that they did not know.

Against 48% of respondents who expressed a positive view of the Iranian position, 37% held a negative view. Meanwhile 47% evaluated the Turkish position positively, against 40% who evaluated it negatively.



Respondents were asked whether there was a shift in their attitude toward the United States following the Israeli war on Gaza. While 76% reported that their position had become more negative, 19% said that their position had not changed, and 1% reported that their position had become more positive.

Figure (14)

How opinion on US policy in the Arab region has changed since the war on Gaza

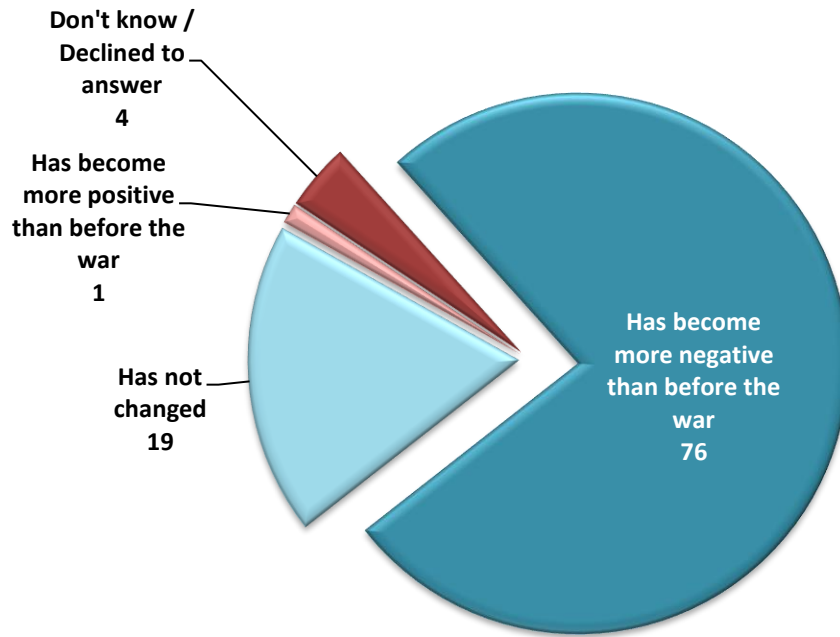
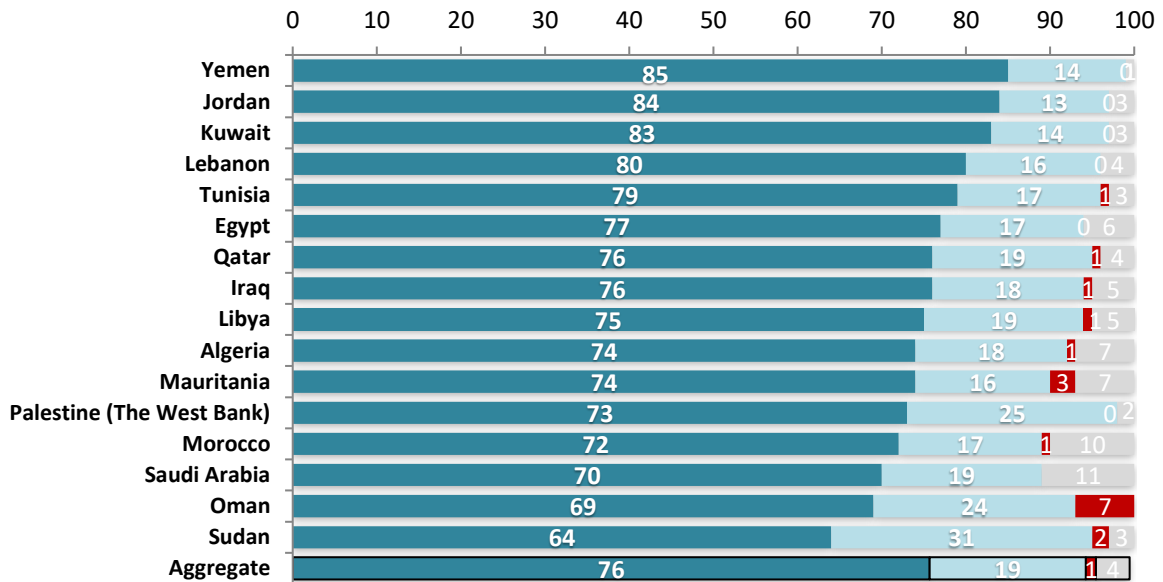


Figure (15)

How opinion on US policy in the Arab region has changed since the war on Gaza by country



When asked about their confidence in the seriousness of the United States in working to establish a Palestinian state in the territories occupied in 1967, respondents demonstrated a near consensus (81%) in their belief that the US government is not serious in working to establish a Palestinian state in the 1967 occupied territories, against just 14% who said the opposite.

Figure (16)
Evaluation of US response to the Israeli war on Gaza

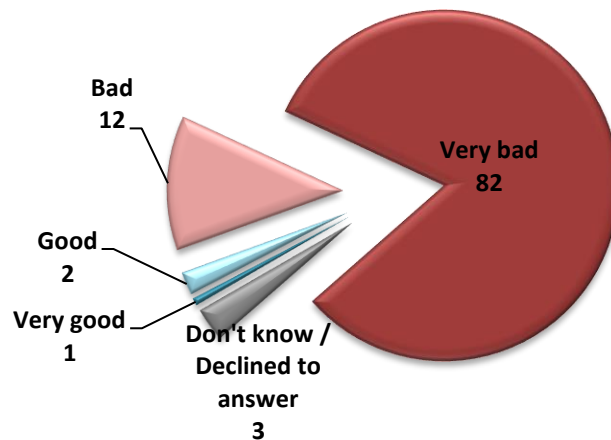


Figure (17)
Evaluation of US response to the Israeli war on Gaza by country

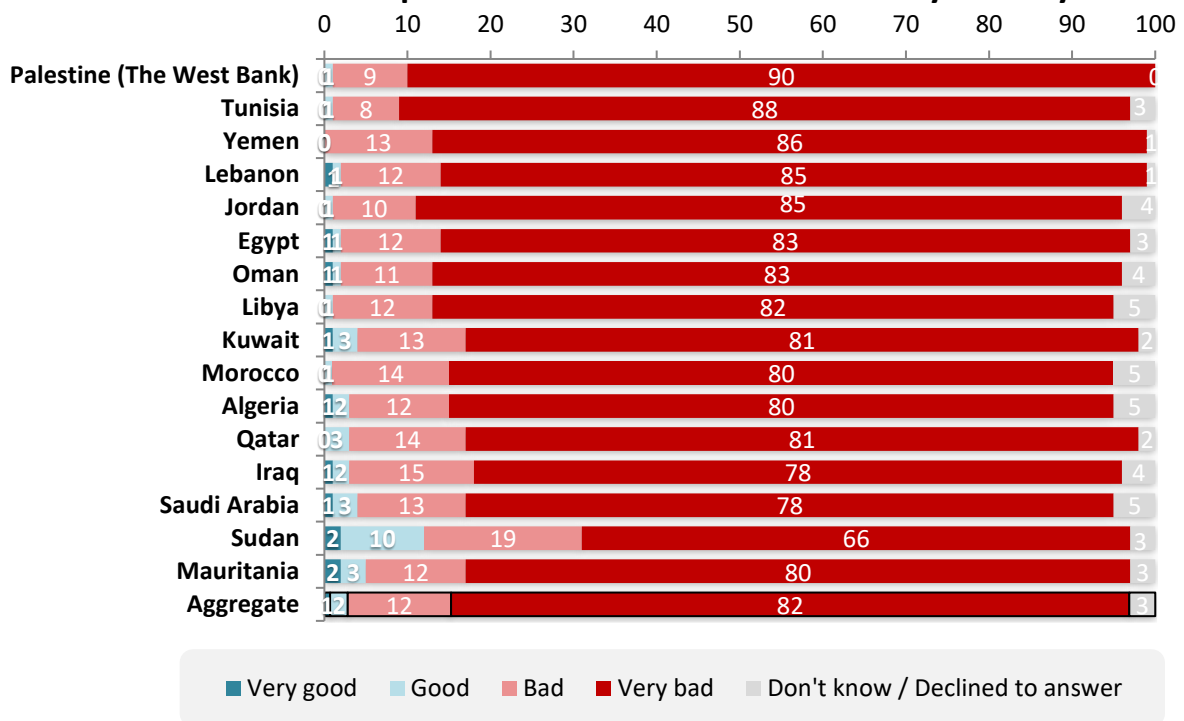


Figure (18)
Evaluation of US seriousness in establishing a Palestinian state in the 1967
Occupied Palestinian lands

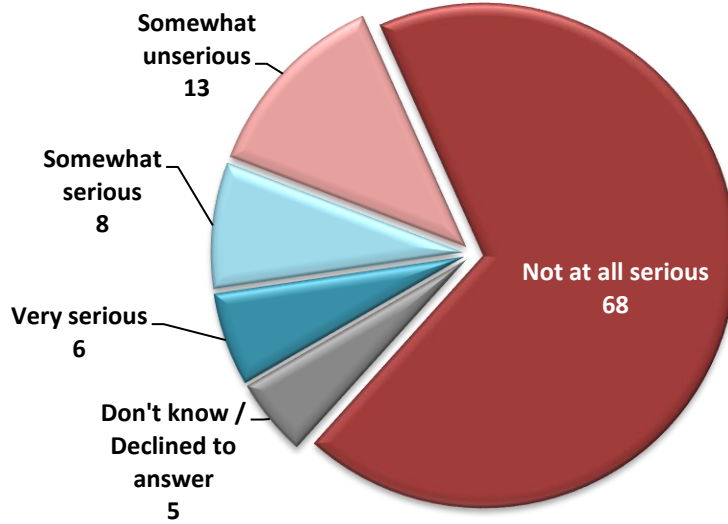
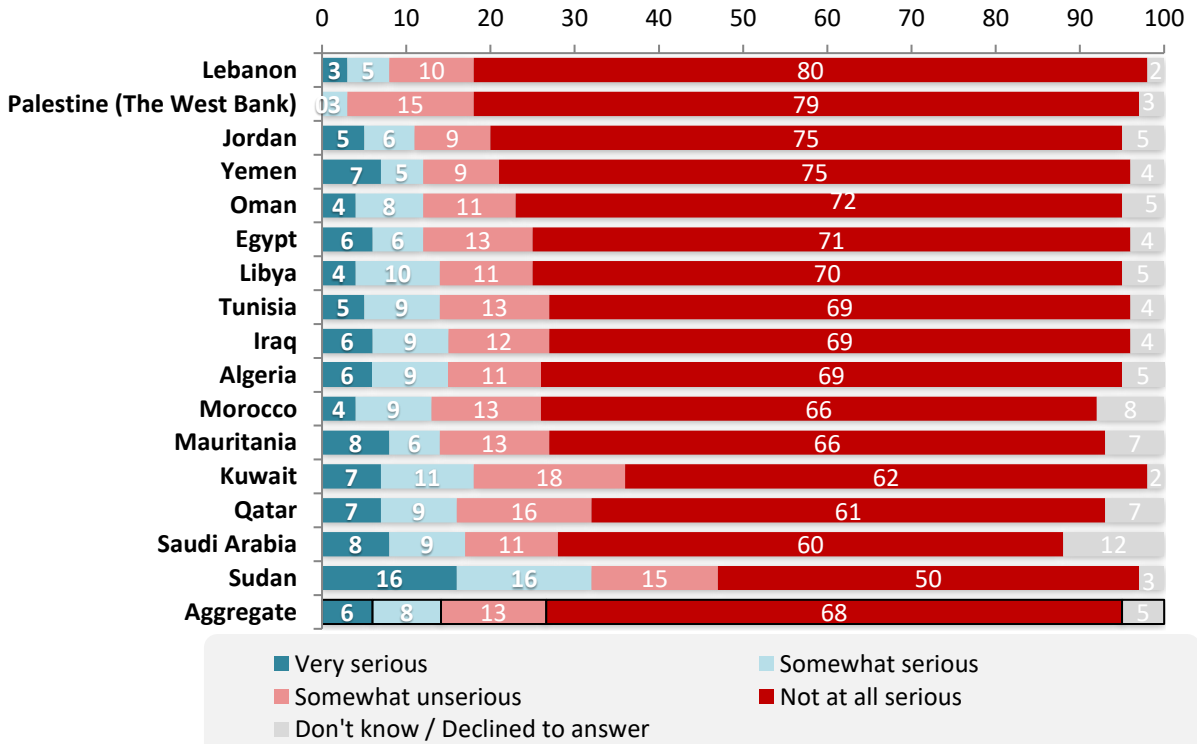


Figure (19)
Evaluation of US seriousness in establishing a Palestinian state in the 1967
Occupied Palestinian lands by country



Respondents' Assessment of the American Media's Coverage of the war on Gaza

In the same context, respondents were asked for their impressions regarding the US media's coverage of the war on Gaza. While 82% reported that they believed that it was biased towards Israel, only 7% believed that it was neutral/unbiased, while 4% reported that it was biased towards Palestine.

Figure (20)
Evaluation of US media coverage of the war on Gaza

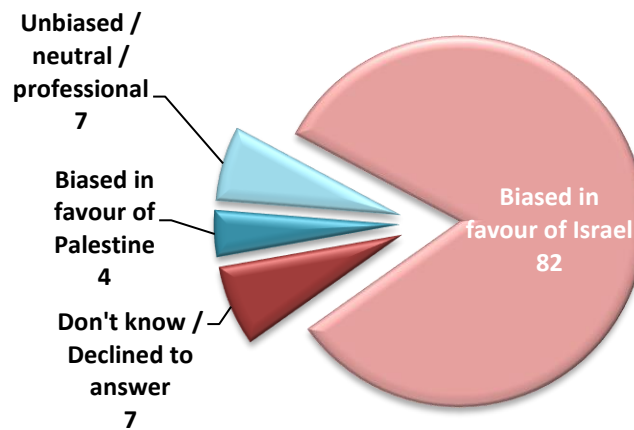
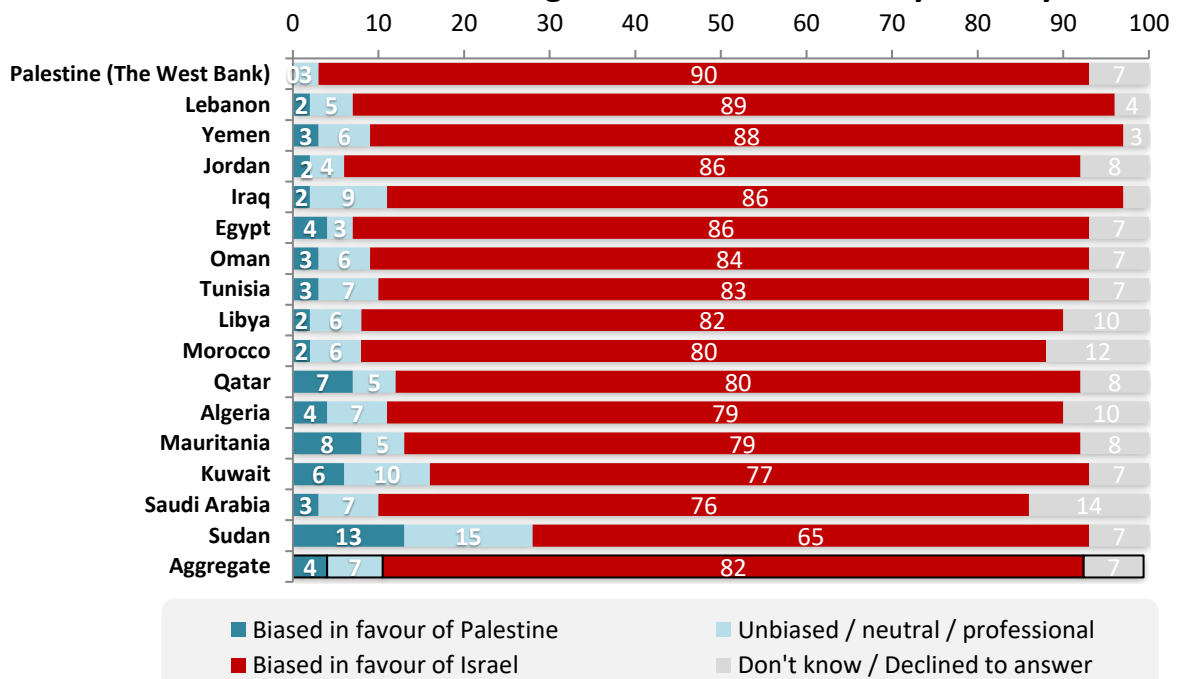


Figure (21)
Evaluation of US media coverage of the war on Gaza by country



Threats to the Security and Stability of the Region

The Arab public's evaluation of responses towards the war on Gaza is reflected in their opinions towards the countries that most threaten the security and stability of the Arab region. While 51% of respondents said that the policies of the United States are the most threatening, followed by Israel with 26%, 7% of respondents said that Iranian policies are the most threatening and 4% said Russian policies.

Table (5)
Biggest threats to the peace and stability of the region

	Greatest Threat				Second Greatest Threat			
	Gaza war	2022	2020	2018	Gaza War	2022	2020	2018
United States	51	39	44	43	25	25	23	28
Israel	26	41	37	37	33	28	38	40
Iran	7	7	10	13	10	13	19	15
Russia	4	6	2	3	8	8	4	7
France	2	2	2	1	10	5	3	1
Turkey	2	2	2	1	3	2	5	2
China	1	2	1	0	2	2	2	0
Other	1	--	--	--	2	--	--	--
Don't know / Declined to answer	6	1	2	2	0	--	--	--
No second option	0	--	--	--	7	17	6	7
Aggregate	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table (6)
Biggest threats to the peace and stability of the region by country

	Algeria	Mauritania	Oman	Iraq	Yemen	Tunisia	Morocco	Lebanon	Egypt	Libya	Sudan	Kuwait	Jordan	KSA	Palestine/West Bank	Qatar	Aggregate
United States	62	58	57	55	55	54	53	52	52	50	49	49	46	45	45	43	51
Israel	17	21	22	21	22	26	21	30	26	24	22	25	33	16	51	40	26
Iran	2	4	8	11	9	5	4	6	6	5	6	13	9	17	2	4	7
Russia	4	5	4	3	4	3	2	2	3	5	12	5	2	3	1	2	4
France	4	3	1	2	1	3	3	1	0	2	4	1	0	1	1	1	2
Turkey	1	3	2	1	3	3	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	2	0	1	2
China	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	1
Other	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0		1
Don't know / Declined to answer	8	6	4	5	4	4	15	6	9	10	3	3	8	14	0	9	6
Aggregate	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Arab Public Opinion on the Palestinian Cause

The Palestinian Question and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The results indicate that public opinion sees the Palestinian cause as an Arab issue, and not exclusively a Palestinian issue. There is almost a consensus among citizens of the countries included in the survey, at 92%, that the Palestinian question concerns all Arabs and not just Palestinians. On the other hand, 6% said that it concerns the Palestinians alone and they alone must work to solve it. It is worth noting that this percentage is the highest recorded since 2011, when the Arab Center began asking this question in its surveys.

Comparing this poll with the 2022 poll indicates that the attitudes of citizens of the Arab region regarding the idea that the Palestinian Cause concerns all Arabs has increased by 16 percent. In contrast, the percentage of those who stated that the Palestinian question concerns Palestinians alone and that they alone must work for its resolution decreased by 10 percent, from 16% in the 2022 poll. This expresses a statistically significant change in public opinion.

Public opinion in each of the countries surveyed demonstrates a similar rate of agreement that the Palestinian cause is an Arab issue, with the highest percentages recorded in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Iraq, where more than 90% of respondents agreed.

It is useful to point out that a fundamental change has occurred in the opinions of respondents in specific Arab countries. In 2022, 68% of Sudanese respondents saw the Palestinian issue as a concern for all Arabs, soaring to 91% in this poll. The same applies to Saudi Arabia, where the percentage was 69%, reaching 95%, while in Morocco, the percentage increased from 59% to 95%.

Figure (22)
Consideration of the Palestinian Cause as an Arab issue

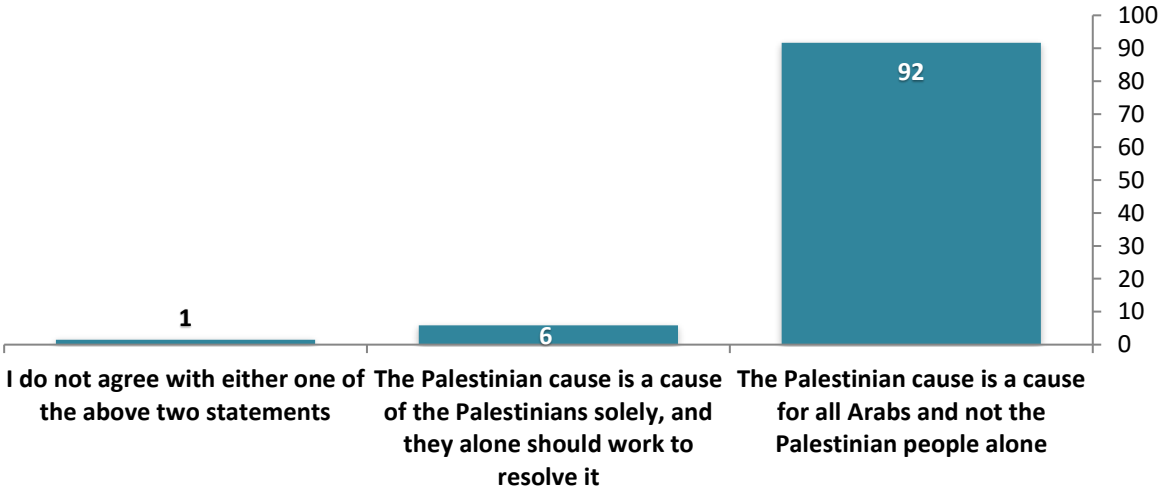


Figure (23)
Consideration of the Palestinian Cause as an Arab issue by country

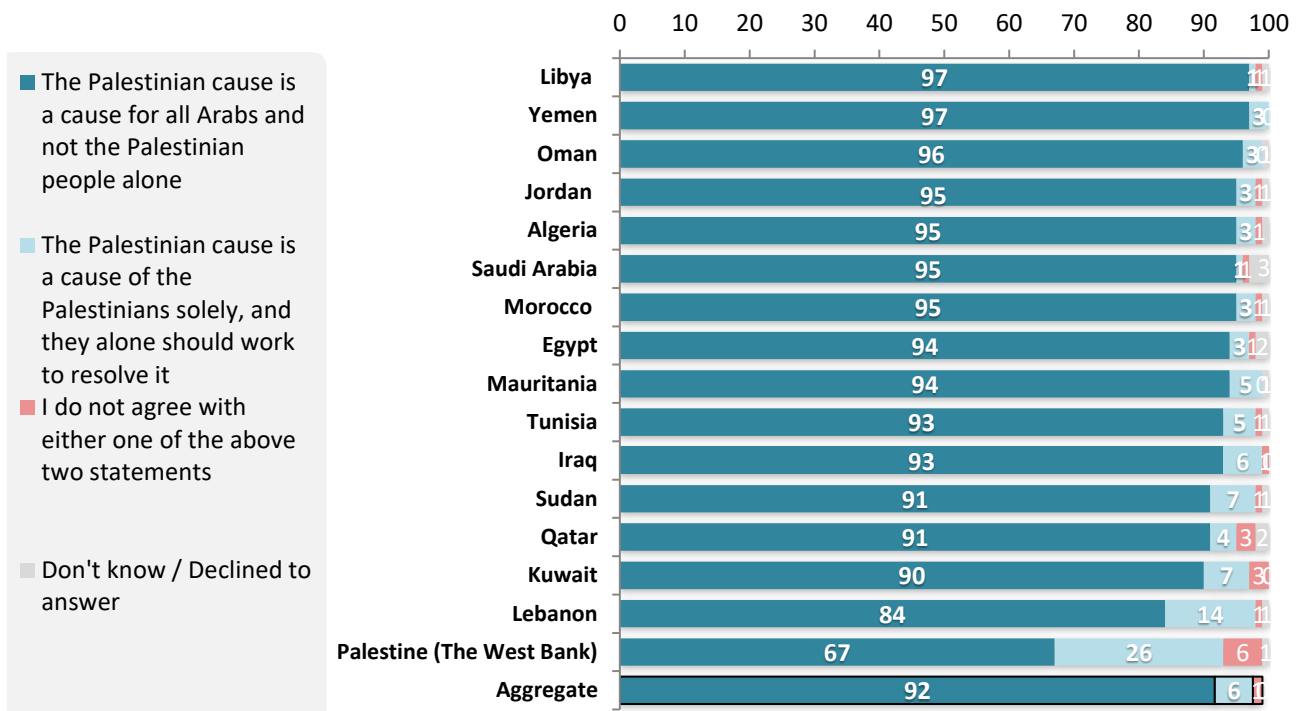


Figure (24)
Consideration of the Palestinian Cause as an Arab issue over time

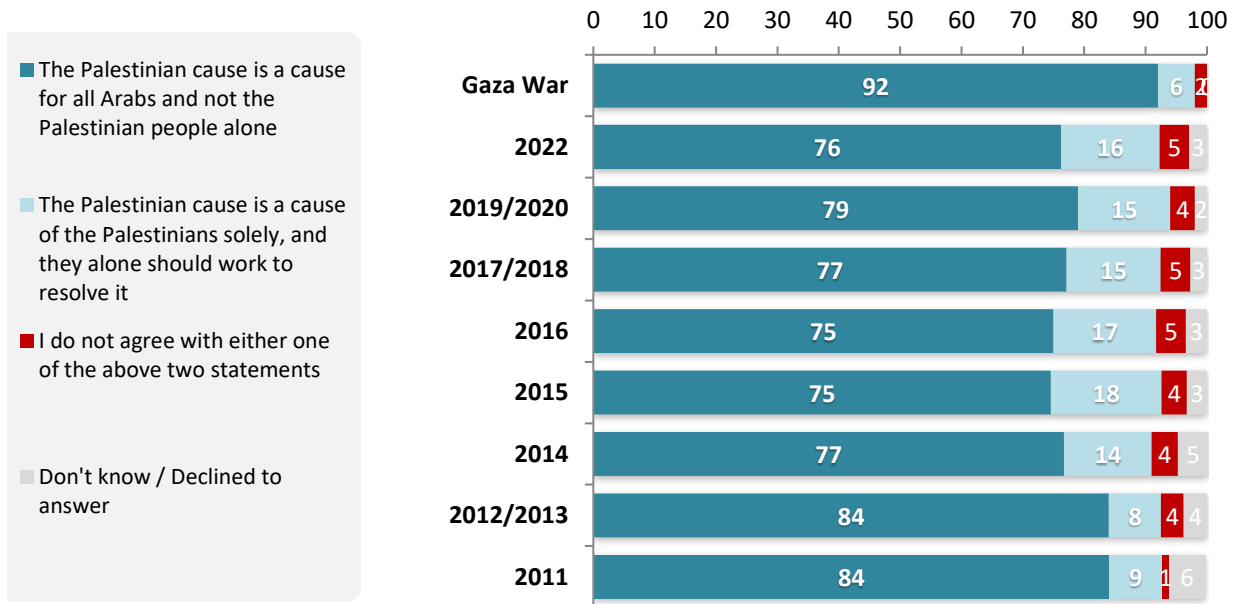
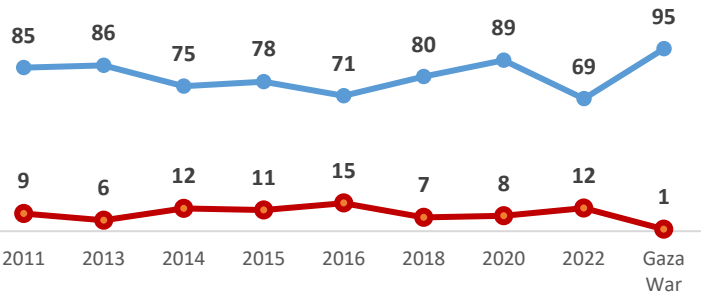


Figure (25)
Considering the Palestinian Cause as an Arab issue over time by country

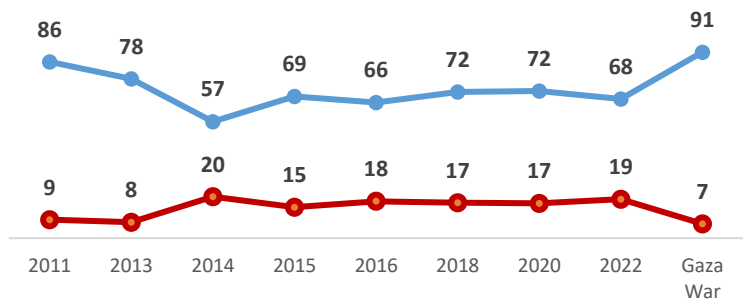
—●— The Palestinian cause is a cause for all Arabs and not the Palestinian people alone

—●— The Palestinian cause is a cause of the Palestinians solely, and they alone should work to resolve it

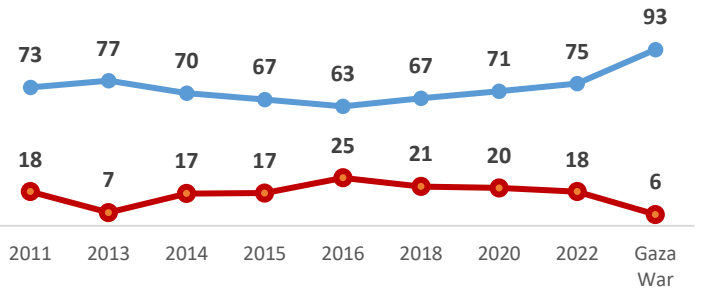
KSA



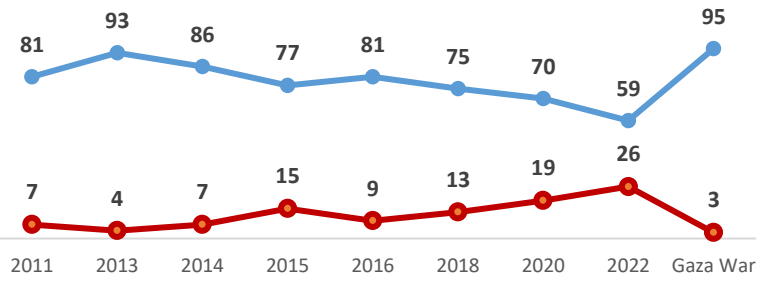
Sudan



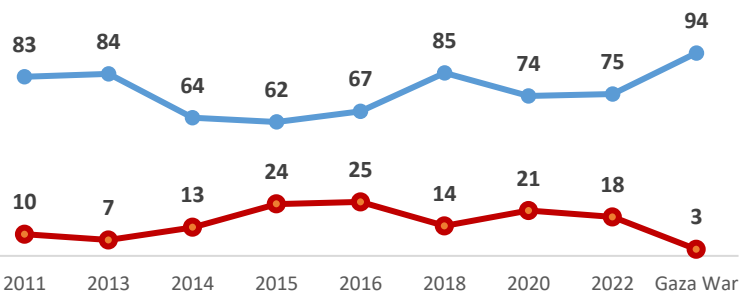
Iraq



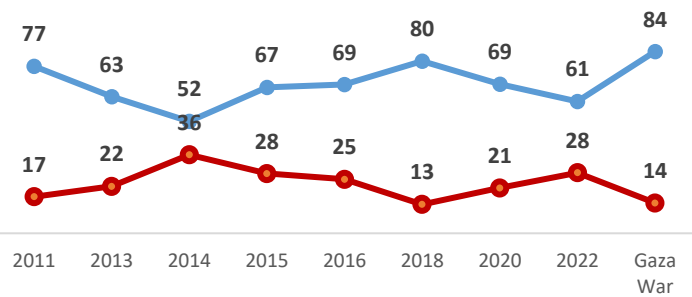
Morocco



Egypt



Lebanon



Recognizing Israel

In the context of identifying Arab public opinion trends on the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is important to gauge citizen opinions regarding the recognition of Israel, which goes beyond the idea of supporting or opposing peace agreements. The results show that Arab public opinion is almost unanimous in rejecting recognition of Israel, at a rate of 89%, compared to only 4% who support its recognition. Comparing the results of the poll since the war on Gaza with the results of the 2022 poll indicates a 5 percent increase of those opposing recognition, from 84% in 2022 to 89% in the most recent poll.

In fact, this consensus among the citizens of the Arab region not to recognize Israel is important, especially in the context of the consensus of public opinion in the region that the Palestinian issue concerns all Arabs, and not Palestinians alone, representing a practical test.

This poll has recorded significant changes in public opinion across all surveyed countries. Of particular note is the increase in the percentage of those who refuse to recognize Israel in Saudi Arabia from 38% in the 2022 poll to 68% this round. Such a statistically significant increase also applies to other countries such as Morocco, where the percentage rose from 67% to 78%, and Sudan, where it increased from 72% to 81%.

It is important to note that the majority of respondents from countries whose governments have signed peace agreements with Israel – Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, and Morocco, which recently joined a process of normalizing political relations, as well as Sudan – oppose their countries recognizing Israel. There is a near consensus in Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt opposing its recognition.

Figure (26)
Recognition of Israel

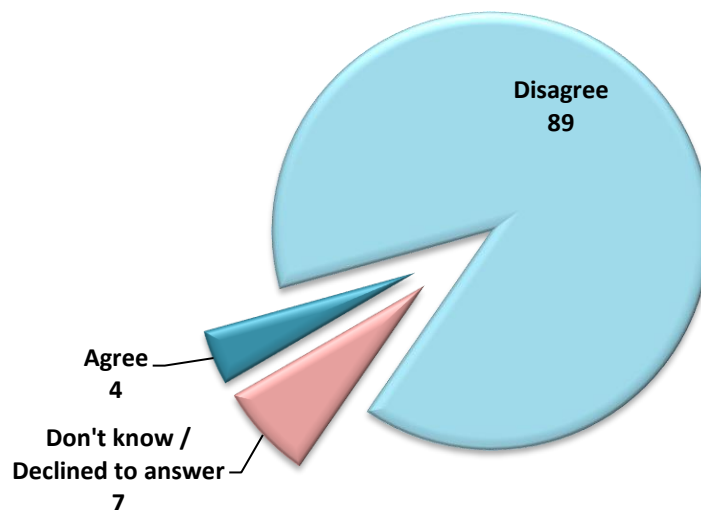


Figure (27)

Recognition of Israel by country

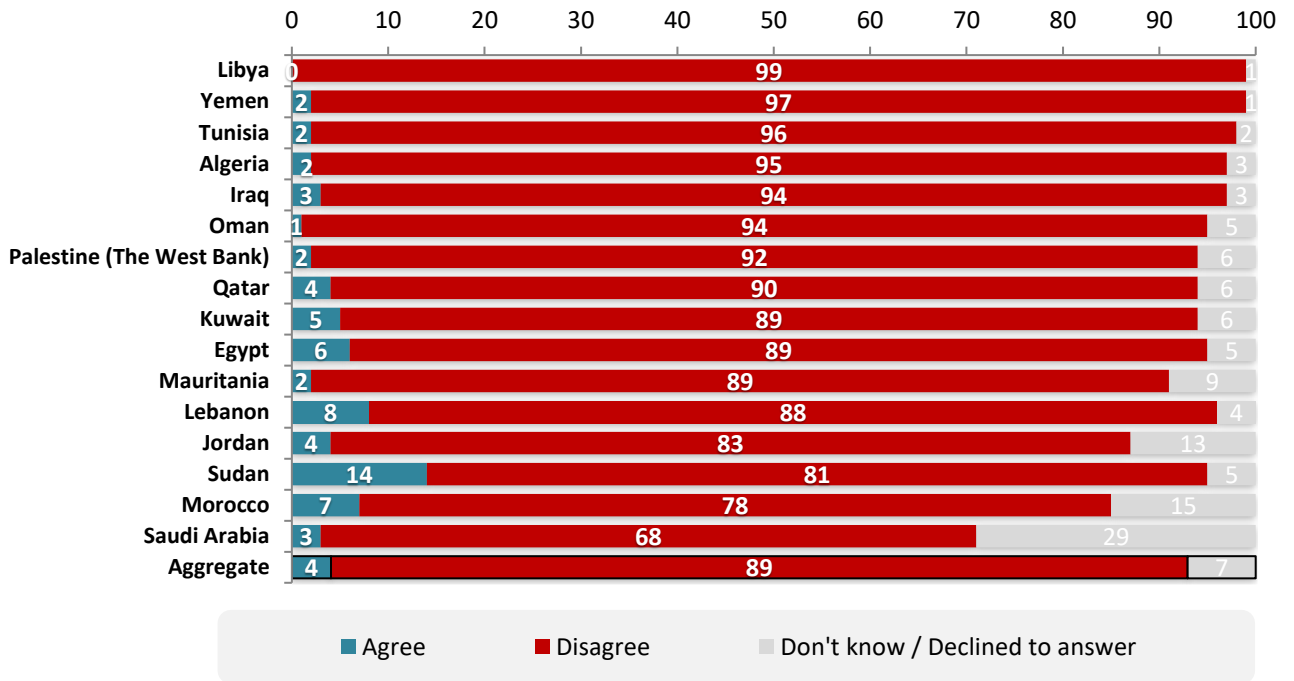


Figure (28)

Support/opposition for recognizing Israel over the years

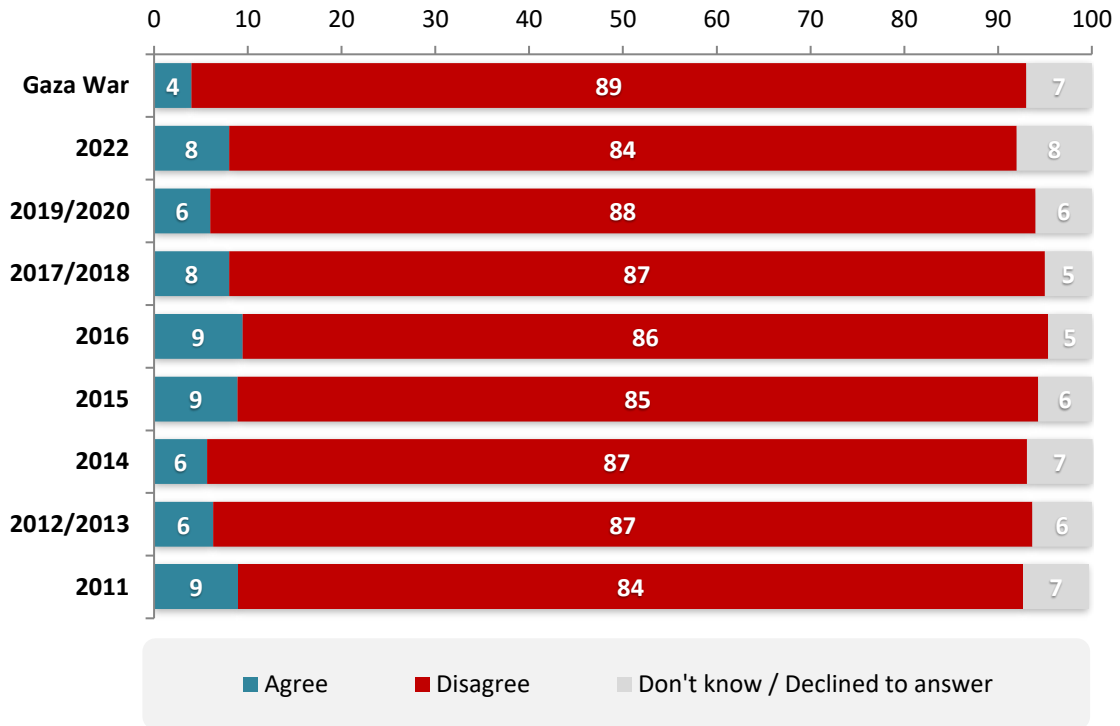
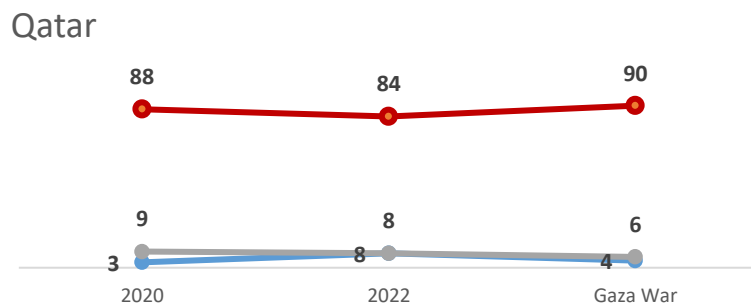
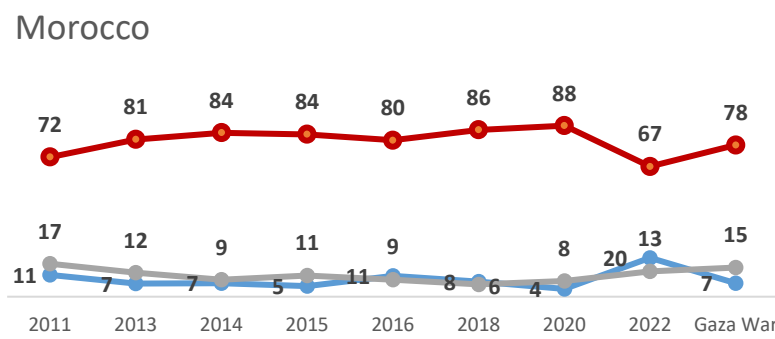
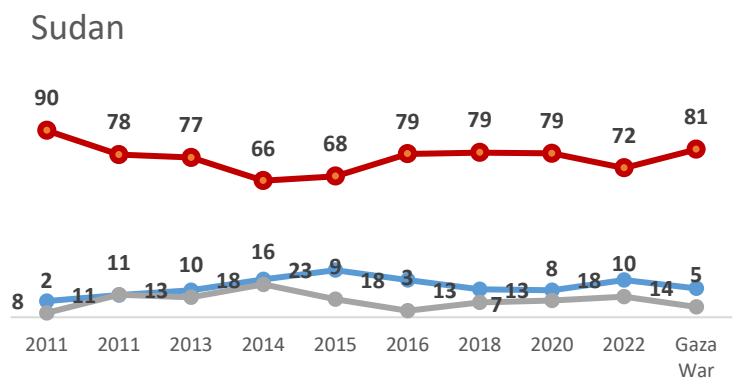
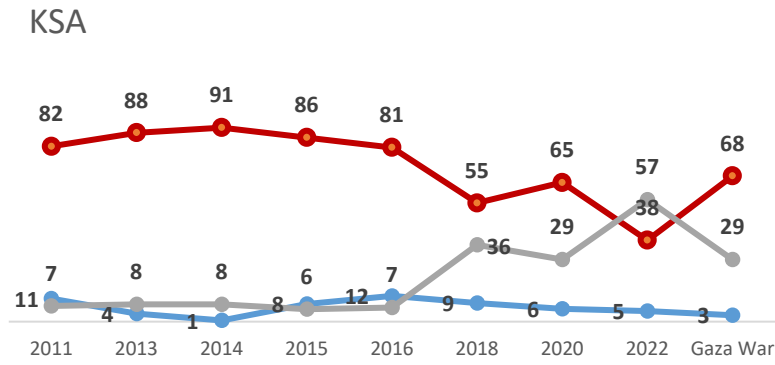


Figure (29)
Support/opposition for recognizing Israel over the years by country

—●— Agree —●— Disagree —●— DK/ Declined to answer



Trends in Arab public opinion towards the positions of some Arab governments

When asked about their opinions on what measures Arab governments should take in order to stop the war in Gaza, respondents' attitudes varied. While 36% of respondents stated that Arab governments should cancel all relations or normalization processes with Israel, 14% of them stated that aid and support should be brought into Gaza without Israeli approval, and 11% believed that Arab governments must use oil as a weapon to pressure Israel and its supporters. Meanwhile 9% believed that Arab countries should establish a global coalition to boycott Israel, and 8% expressed that Arab governments must provide military support to the people of Gaza.

Table (7)
Measures that must be taken by Arab governments to stop the war

	Most important measure	Second most important measure
Suspend relations or normalization with Israel	36	15
Deliver aid to Gaza without Israeli approval	14	16
Use the oil weapon to pressure Israel and its supporters	11	13
Establish a global alliance to boycott Israel	9	11
Provide military aid to Gaza	8	10
Announce military mobilization	5	6
Reconsider relations with the United States	4	6
Reconsider relations with states that support Israel's war on Gaza	3	5
Build alliances with states that have taken practical steps against Israel	3	4
Other	3	2
Don't know / Declined to answer	4	0
No second option	0	12
Total	100	100

Table (8)
Measures that must be taken by Arab governments to stop the war by country

	Kuwait	Lebanon	Mauritania	Qatar	Palestine/West Bank	Yemen	Tunisia	Libya	Algeria	Oman	Jordan	Sudan	Iraq	Egypt	Morocco	KSA	Aggregate
relations or Suspend normalization with Israel	49	44	43	41	41	38	36	36	35	35	33	33	33	33	29	21	36
Deliver aid to Gaza without Israeli approval	12	18	13	13	22	10	11	11	11	11	13	17	11	13	13	20	14
Use the oil weapon to pressure Israel and its supporters	9	9	12	5	18	10	16	12	14	11	15	5	9	10	13	3	11
Establish a global alliance to boycott Israel	6	6	8	15	7	10	9	7	6	10	10	13	14	11	9	8	9
Provide military aid to Gaza	5	3	8	5	4	11	11	10	12	9	6	7	9	11	7	11	8
Announce military mobilization	5	5	3	6	2	7	5	5	4	5	4	7	6	3	4	6	5
Reconsider relations with the United States	4	5	4	6	2	3	3	4	5	3	2	5	3	2	4	6	4
Reconsider relations with states that support Israel's war on Gaza	5	1	2	2	3	2	4	4	2	4	1	3	3	2	5	7	3
Build alliances with states that have taken practical steps against Israel	3	2	3	3	1	4	1	3	2	5	2	6	2	4	3	5	3
Other	1	5	0	0	0	4	2	2	6	2	8	1	6	7	5	2	3
Don't know / Declined to answer	1	2	4	4	0	1	2	6	3	5	6	3	4	4	8	11	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Palestinians' Assessment of their Conditions in the West Bank

There is a near consensus among Palestinian respondents from the West Bank and Jerusalem, exceeding 95%, that safety and freedom of movement between the governorates and cities of the West Bank and their sense of security and personal safety have been affected.

While 60% of Palestinian respondents in the West Bank said that they had been subjected to or were witnesses to raids by the occupation army forces, 44% said that they were subjected to arrest or interrogation by the Israeli army, while 22% reported that they were subjected to harassment or harassment by settlers.

Figure (30)

Negative effects experienced in the West Bank since 7 October 2023

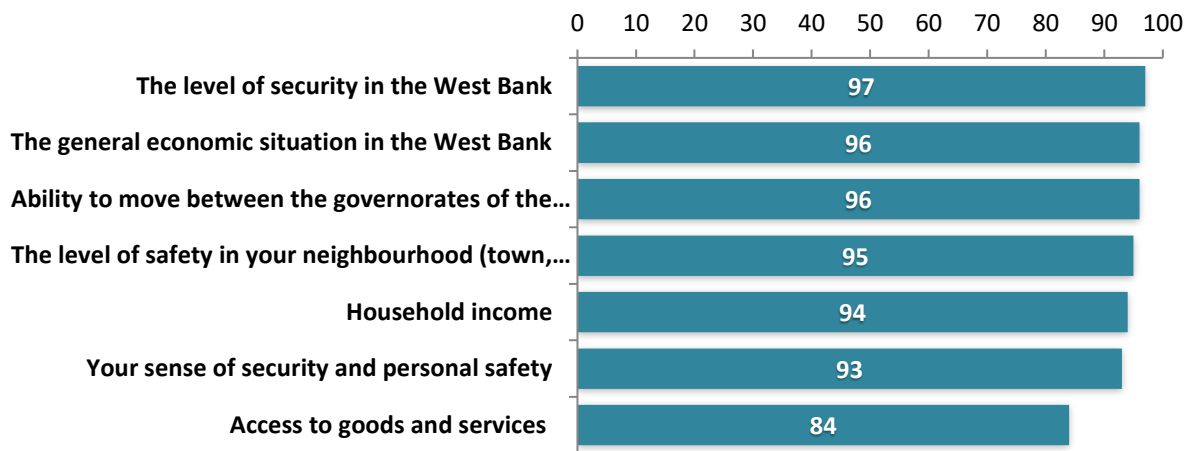
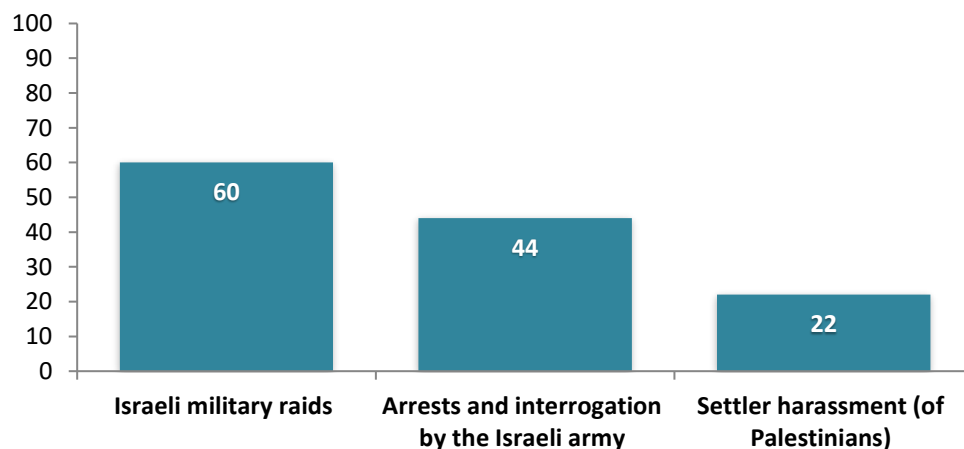


Figure (31)

Frequency of witnessing or happening upon incidences of raids, arrests, or settler harassment in the West Bank since 7 October 2023



In the wake of the continuation of the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, respondents were asked whether Israel will succeed in executing a second Nakba of Palestinians in Gaza. 80% of the respondents from the Westbank and Jerusalem reported that Israel will fail to execute a second Nakba of Palestinians in Gaza, while 15% believe Israel will succeed.

Figure (32)

Assessment of whether Israel will succeed in executing a second Nakba of the Palestinians in Gaza

