
Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation

December 3, 2023

In-depth survey of Arab society's views on the war between Israel and Hamas

About one-half of the Arab public (47%) feel that the Israeli response to the attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023 is justified; 44% do not feel that way • Most of the Arab public (57%) believe that Hamas militants intentionally harmed women and children in the Western Negev Jewish communities • A significant majority (85%) positively view the initiatives by Arab citizens to provide aid to residents of the Western Negev • 81% of the respondents report feeling less secure as a result of the war and 59% fear being harassed by Jewish citizens • The Arab public feels that Benny Gantz is the best choice to lead the country in the current crisis.

Dr. Arik Rudnitzky

Main Findings

- A large majority (81%) of the Arab public report feeling less secure as a result of the war and 65% report a deterioration in their economic situation.
- Who is responsible for the outbreak of the war? 38% believe that Hamas and Israel bear joint responsibility; 24% place responsibility on Hamas; and 21% place responsibility on Israel.
- Views are divided among the Arab public as to the response of Israel to Hamas' terror attack on October 7th: 47% feel that the response was justified while 44% feel it was not.
- A majority of the respondents (57%) believe that Hamas militants intentionally harmed residents of the Western Negev Jewish communities (kibbutzim), including women and children, while 32% do not believe so.
- One-half of the Arab public (50%) think that the attack by Hamas on October 7 did not contribute to the solution of the Palestinian problem. The rest are divided between those who think it did (21%) and those who think that it had no effect (19%).
- Most of the Arab public (58%) do not feel comfortable sharing their feelings and opinions about the general situation in the country against the background of the war. In contrast, a large majority (74%) believe that Arab citizens should indeed express their opinions about the war in public.
- A large majority of the Arab public (85%) positively view the initiatives of Arab citizens to assist the residents of the Western Negev. One-half (54%) positively view the participation of Arab citizens in Israel's global PR campaign. However, a large majority (70%) feel that solidarity between Arabs and Jews in Israel has been weakened following the events of October 7.

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- A large majority of the respondents (89%) report that they themselves have not been harassed by Jewish citizens; however, more than half (59%) are afraid of that happening against the background of the general situation in the country.
- Most of the respondents (60%) feel that the current government coalition will break up soon after the war. Most (66%) are in favor of an Arab party joining the coalition that will form after the next elections.
- Who is suited to lead the country in the current crisis? Benny Gantz has significant support (21%) relative to the other candidates, including Yair Lapid (8%), Ahmad Tibi (6%), Mansour Abbas (5%), Ayman Odeh (5%), Sami Abu Shehadeh (4%) and Benjamin Netanyahu (3%). On the other hand, 30% feel that there is currently no suitable candidate.
- One-half of the respondents (52%) feel that the two-state solution is the most realistic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 25% feel that there is no solution on the horizon and 14% support a one-state solution “from the sea to the river”.
- The two dominant components of Arab personal identity are Israeli citizenship (33%) and Arab identity (32%). A small number (8%) feel that Palestinian identity is the dominant component in their personal identity.

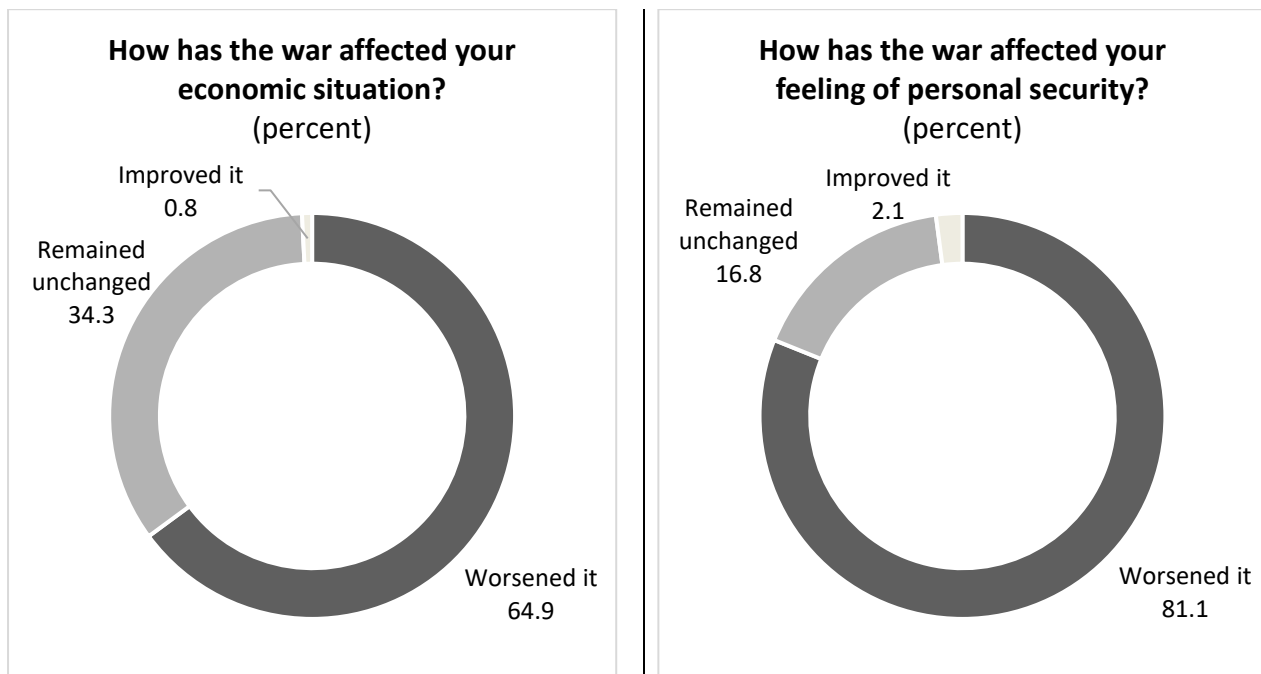
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The effect of the war on the atmosphere among the Arab public

The war that broke out on October 7, 2023, between Israel and Hamas is having a highly negative effect on the feeling of personal security among the Arab citizens of Israel and in addition their economic situation has deteriorated as a result of the war. A decisive majority (81.1%) report feeling less secure as a result of the war and a large majority (61%) report that they feel much less secure. At the same time, about two-thirds of the respondents (64.9%) state that their economic situation has deteriorated as a result of the war. One-third (34.3%) say that their economic situation has remained unchanged.



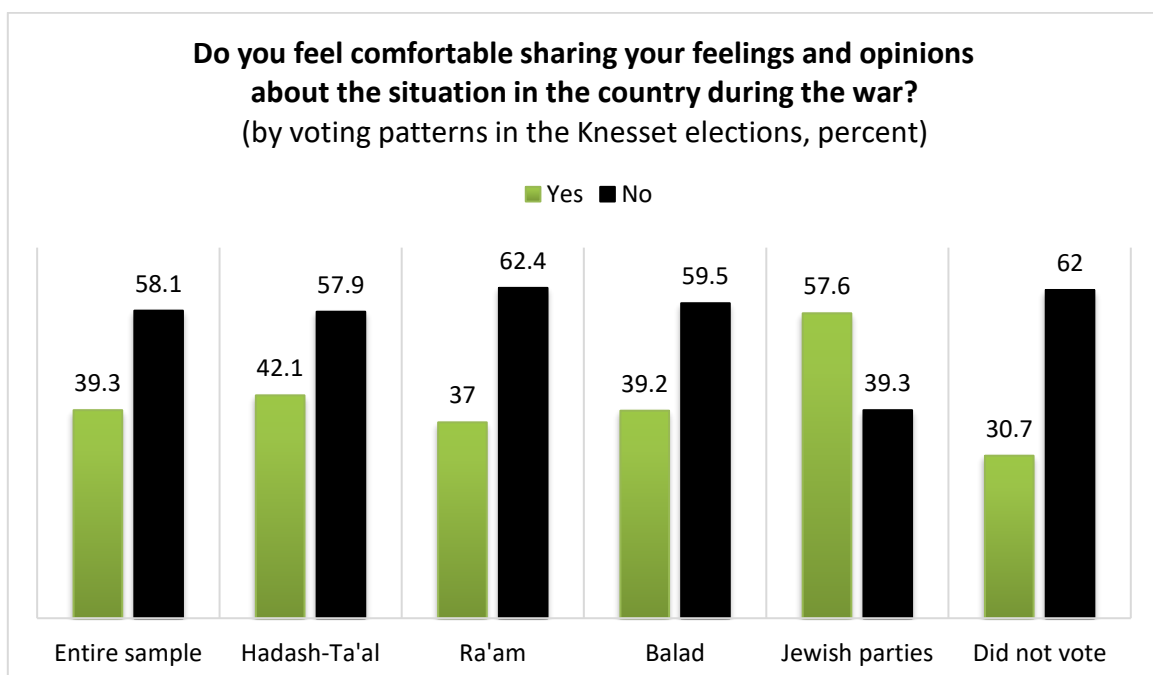
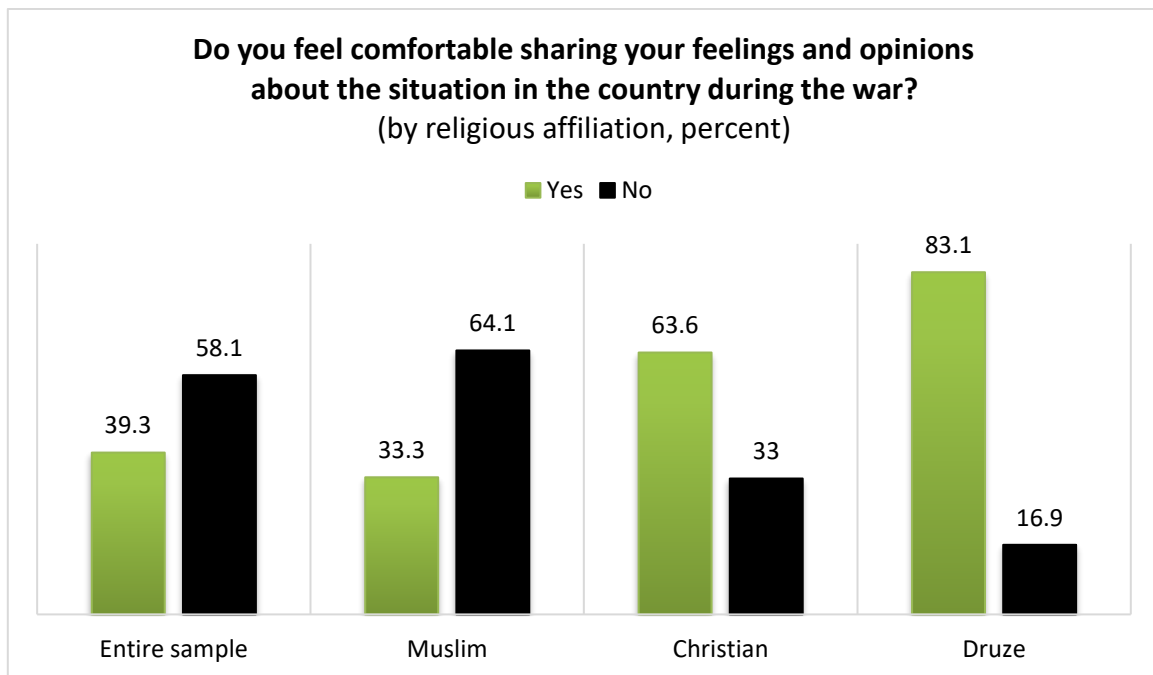
The feelings of the Arab public are another expression of the general concern in Israeli society regarding the dangers of the war. Nonetheless, the feeling of insecurity among Arab citizens is also fed by the concern regarding limits on their freedom of expression during the war. Essentially, many feel that it is better to keep quiet rather than express an opinion out of fear that anything said about the war in general or any identification with the suffering on the Palestinian side may be interpreted negatively by the Jewish majority.

Indeed, according to the survey findings, most of the respondents (58.1%) report that they would not feel comfortable sharing their feelings and opinions about the situation in the country with others—even if they feel close to them, as in the case of family or friends—because of the war between Israel and Hamas. A large proportion of them (42.4%) say that they would not be comfortable at all.

Almost every segment of the Arab population, regardless of demographic characteristics (place of residence, education, and age group) or political views, feels this way. 57.9% of Hadash-Ta'al voters;

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59.5% of Balad voters; 62.4% of Ra'am voters; and 62% of those who did not vote in the last elections report not feeling comfortable sharing their feelings and opinions about the situation in the country.

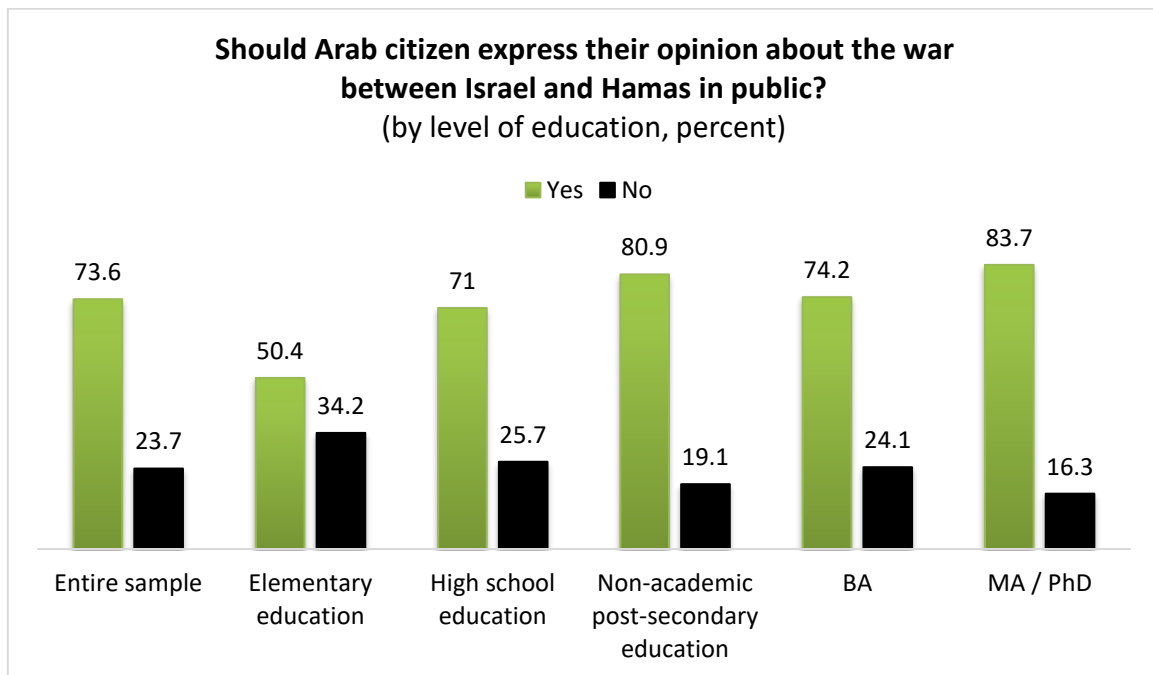


The only characteristic for which significant differences were found is religious affiliation. The uncomfortable feelings among Muslims (64.1%) were significantly more common than among Christians (33%) and even more so than among the Druze (16.9%). Essentially, the vast majority of

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the Druze (83.1%) and a majority of the Christians (63.6%) report that they feel comfortable sharing their feelings about the situation of the country. In the case of the Druze, it can be assumed that since most of them are integrated within the Israeli security forces they are able to participate more easily in public discourse in Israel during the war than are Muslims and Christians.

Nonetheless, a decisive majority (73.6%) of the respondents feel that now it is even more important to express one’s opinion about the war between Israel and Hamas. The support for this idea increases with level of education. For example, only 50.4% of those with a low level of education (elementary school) agree while among those with a high level of education (post-secondary or academic) the support is much higher: 80.9% of those with a post-secondary non-academic education; 74.2% of those with a first degree; and 83.7% of those with a master’s degree or PhD.



An analysis by voting pattern in the last elections shows that the level of agreement that Arab citizens should express their opinions about the war between Israel and Hamas is significantly higher among Hadash–Ta’al voters (78.1%) than among Ra’am voters (73.8%) and Balad voters (73.7%). It should be recalled that during the last month, the police have placed restrictions on public gatherings and joint Jewish-Arab demonstrations, some of whose organizers are identified with the Hadash party. This fact explains the relatively greater desire among Hadash–Ta’al voters to express their opinions even during the war.

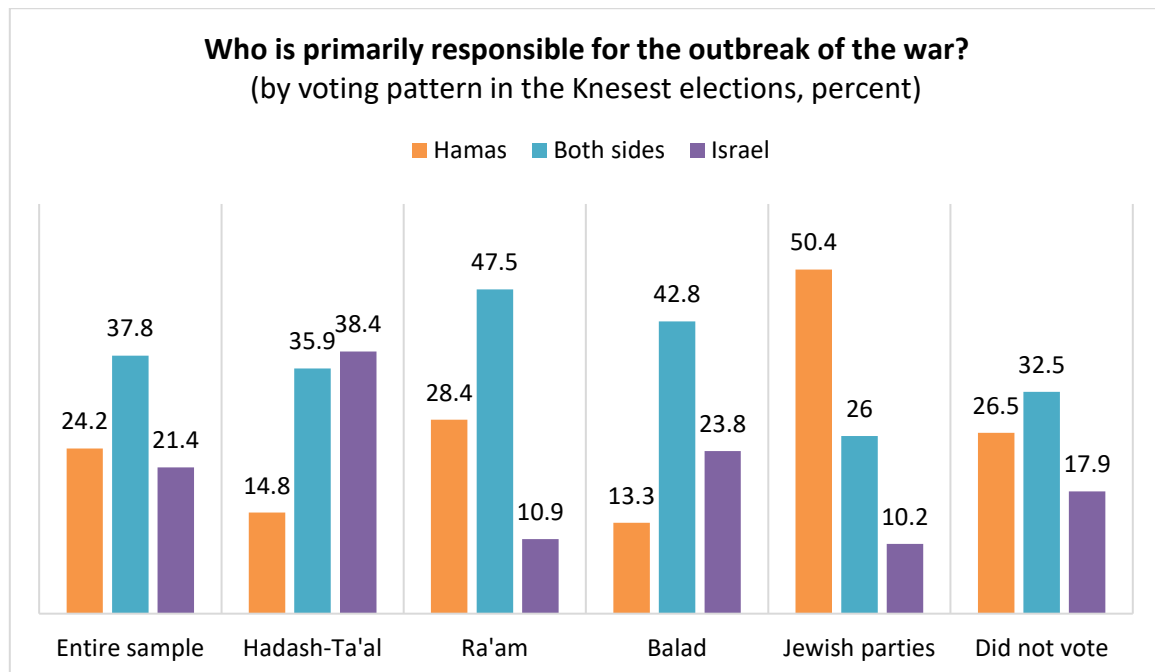
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The attitude toward the war narrative

The “war narrative” is a term that captures the spectrum of opinions and positions regarding the circumstances of the war. The questions underlying the narrative include the following: Who is responsible for the outbreak of the war? Did the attack on October 7 contribute to the solution of the Palestinian problem? Did Hamas militants intentionally harm women and children in the Western Negev? Is the Israeli response to the Hamas attack justified?

The Arab public is divided on the question of who is responsible for the outbreak of the war. A significant proportion of the respondents (37.8%) place the responsibility equally on the two sides, while the rest are divided almost equally between the Hamas (24.2%) and Israel (21.4%).

The responses to this question revealed significant differences according to demographic and political characteristics. Those who place responsibility on Hamas for the outbreak of the war include the Druze (76.2%) and to a lesser extent the Christians (33.7%) and Muslims (19.4%); the 18–34 age group (29.3%) more than adults aged 45+ (19.9% on average); Bedouins in the Negev (29.2%) more than residents of other regions; and Ra’am voters in the last Knesset elections (28.4%) more than Hadash–Ta’al voters (14.8%) and Balad voters (13.3%). On the other hand, Hadash–Ta’al voters (38.4%) and Balad voters (23.8%) place more responsibility on Israel than do Ra’am voters (10.9%).



The respondents were asked whether they thought that the actions of Hamas on October 7 contributed to the solution of the Palestinian problem. The question used the term “actions” (or “what Hamas did”) rather than other terms or descriptions that are used in the Hebrew-speaking media. This was done so that the respondents would relate to the content of the question—namely

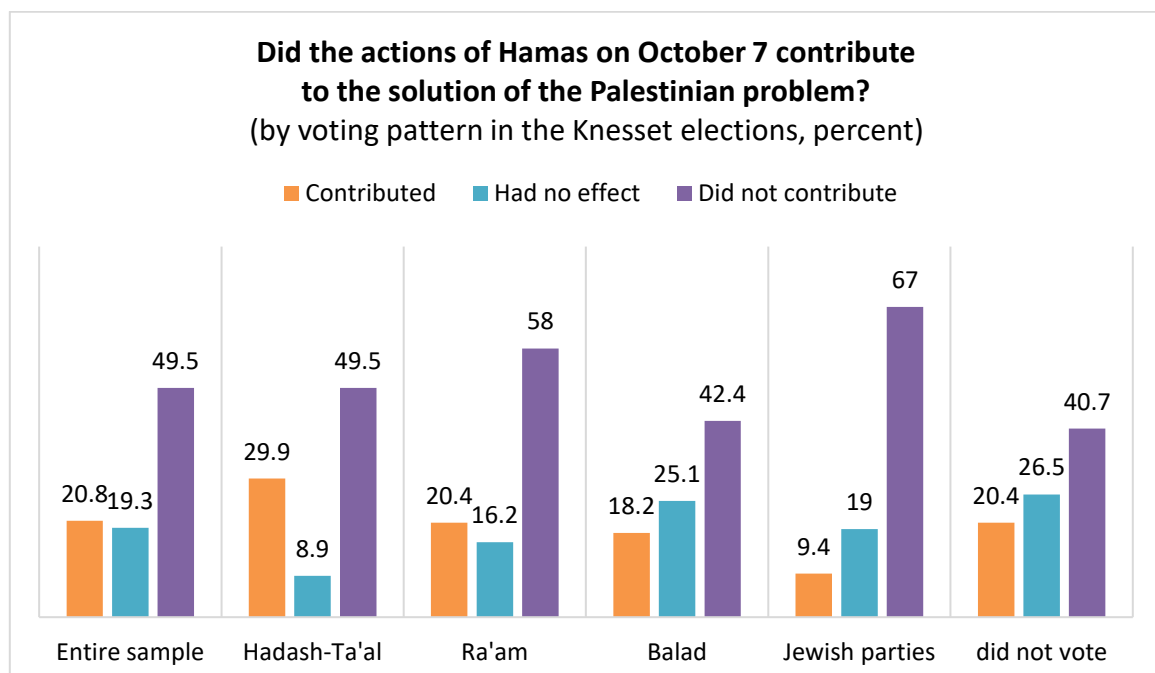
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the contribution or damage to efforts to find a solution to the Palestinian problem—rather than the wording of the question, which is liable to bias the respondents and in turn their responses.

One-half of the respondents (49.5%) feel that the actions of Hamas on October 7 did not contribute to the solution of the Palestinian problem. Most of them (42.8%) feel strongly about this. The rest are divided between the view that their actions indeed contributed to the solution of the Palestinian problem (20.8%), of which 8.4% feel that they contributed to a large extent, and the view that they had no effect on the solution of the Palestinian problem (19.3%).

The responses to this question revealed significant differences by demographic and political characteristics. The Druze (79.9%) believe that the actions of Hamas did not contribute to the solution of the Palestinian problem more than the Christians (62.7%) and the Muslims (46%) do; the Bedouins in the Negev (59%) more than residents of the North of the country (49%), residents of the Triangle region (47.6%) and residents of the mixed cities (44.5%); and voters for Jewish parties (67%) and Ra’am voters (58%) more than Hadash–Ta’al voters (49.5%), Balad voters (42.4%) and those who did not vote in the last Knesset elections (40.7%).

It is worth mentioning that the proportion of Hadash–Ta’al voters who think that the actions of Hamas on October 7 contributed to the solution of the Palestinian problem (29.9%) is significantly higher than the proportion of Ra’am voters (20.4%) and Balad voters (18.2) who feel that way. At the same time, the proportion of Balad voters (25.1%) and of those who didn’t vote in the last Knesset elections (26.5%) who feel that the actions of Hamas on October 7 did not have any effect on the solution of the Palestinian problem is significantly higher than that of Ra’am voters (16.2%) and Hadash–Ta’al voters (8.9%).



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One of the core issues related to the war narrative is that of targeting civilians (to kill or kidnap them), and in particular women and children, in the Israeli communities (kibbutzim) of the Western Negev. The Israeli PR campaign and media are continually emphasizing the targeting of Israeli civilians by Hamas during the October 7 events and accuse the Hamas of intentional murder and kidnapping of women and children while Hamas rejects these accusations outright.

Although the horrors carried out by Hamas are documented in a PR film prepared by the IDF spokesman, which includes graphic depictions of the events in the Western Negev on October 7, certain segments of the Arab public have a hard time accepting or believing that this is the way things actually happened. This can be seen in the words of MK Iman Khatib Yassin (Ra'am) in an interview with the Knesset Channel on November 5. Even though she did not herself watch the film, she expressed doubt that women and children were intentionally harmed during the October 7 events. The interview occurred a week prior to the survey.

Most of the respondents (56.8%) believe that Hamas intentionally harmed civilians in the Israeli communities of the Western Negev during the October 7 events. In contrast, 32% do not believe this to be true while a minority (11.2%) do not have any opinion on the issue.

The groups that believe it to be true include primarily the Druze (89.1%, of which 86.7% strongly believe so) and Christians (88.9%, of which 62.5% strongly believe so); individuals aged 18–34 (66.5%); residents of the Negev (64.9%); residents of the mixed cities (64.1%); Ra'am voters (63.3%, of whom 34.4% strongly believe so); and voters for Jewish parties (82.2%).

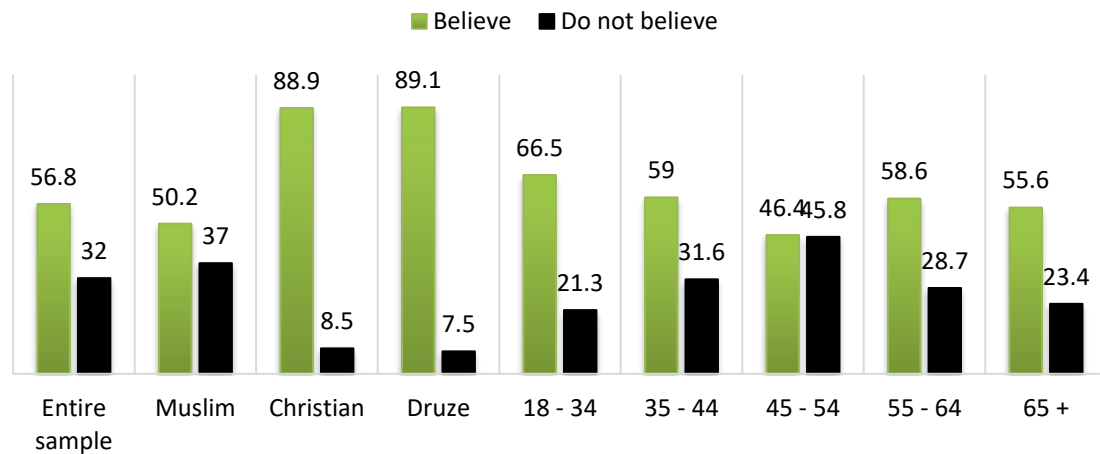
Those who do not believe it to be true include primarily Muslims (37%, of which 26.1% do not believe it at all); residents of the Triangle (46.4%, of which 36% do not believe it at all); Balad voters (39.3%, of which 30.9% do not believe it at all) and Hadash-Ta'al voters (36.7%, of which 25.4% do not believe it at all).

The Arab public is divided on the question of whether Israel's response to the actions of Hamas on October 7 was justified. 47.4% of the respondents feel that in principle the Israeli response was justified as opposed to 44% who do not. These responses should be viewed against the background of the ongoing war (which had lasted more than a month at the time of the survey) and the fact that the number of casualties on the Palestinian side is continually rising and the IDF has begun a ground invasion of Gaza.

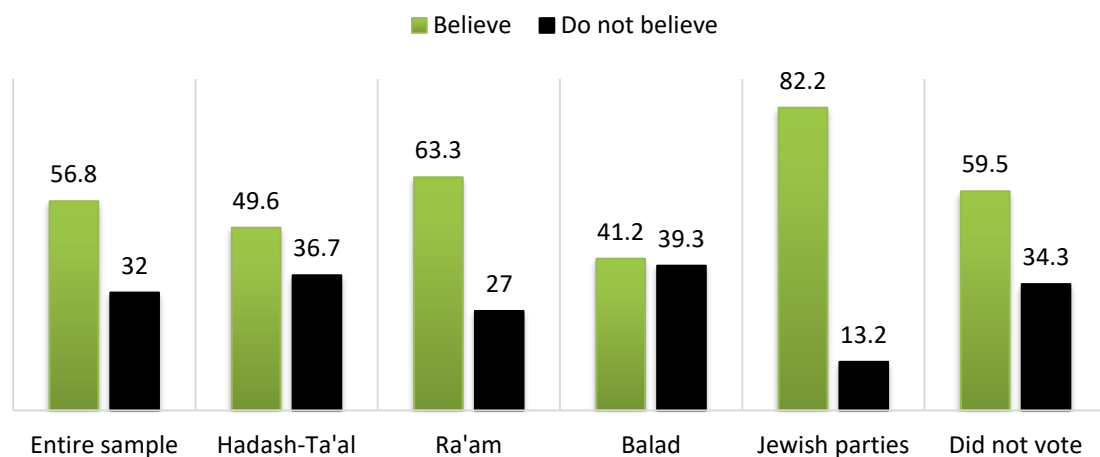
Among those that feel the Israeli response is justified are mainly the Druze (86.8%) and Christians (54.3%); the residents of the Negev (which suffered casualties during the October 7 events; 57.9%); Ra'am voters (54.2%) and voters for Jewish parties (78.5%). Those who do not feel that Israel's response was justified include mainly Muslims (47.6%); residents of the Triangle (64.5%) and residents of the mixed cities (60.7%); and Balad voters (63.6%) and Hadash-Ta'al voters (52.9%).

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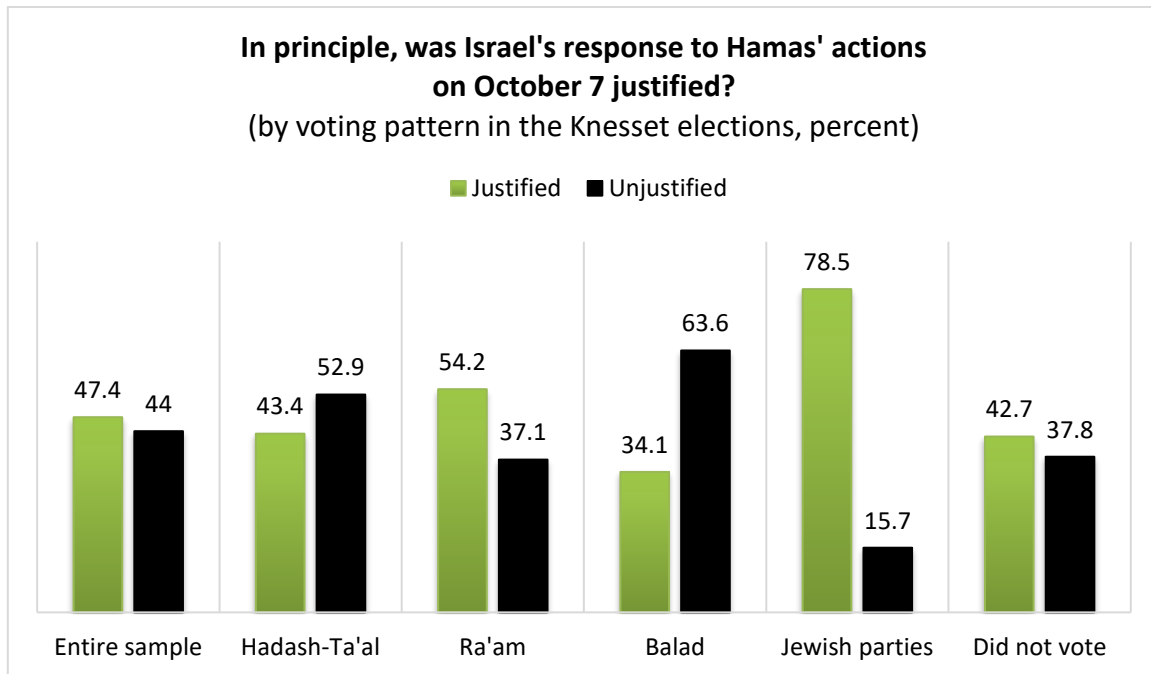
Do you believe the claim that during the October 7 events Hamas militants intentionally harmed civilians, including women and children, in the Israeli communities of the Western Negev?
(by religious affiliation and age, percent)



Do you believe the claim that during the October 7 events, Hamas militants intentionally harmed civilians, including women and children, in the Israeli communities of the Western Negev?
(by voting pattern in the Knesset elections, percent)



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The impact of the war on relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel

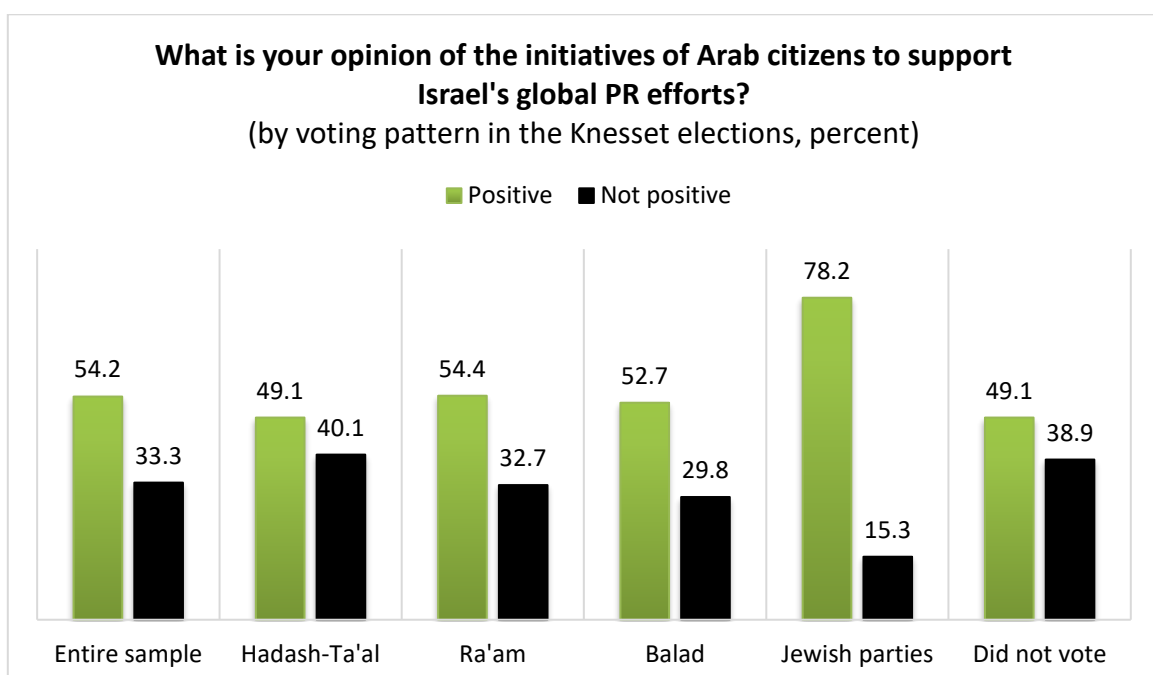
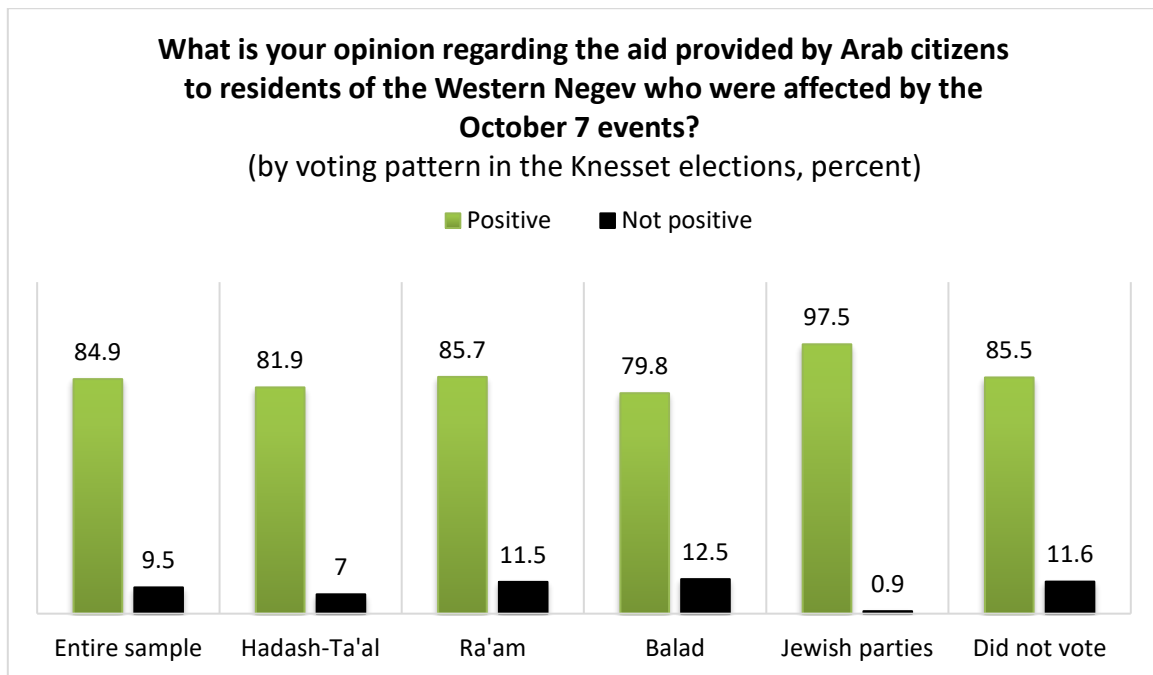
The relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel are affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and they are put to the test primarily during rounds of violence between Israel and the Palestinians. The violence between Arabs and Jews within Israel in May 2021 continues to resonate in the consciousness of many and therefore tension has been felt in the relations between the two populations since the outbreak of the war. Nonetheless, the events in October 2023 differ to a great extent from those that occurred in May 2021.

On the positive side, it should be mentioned that the vast majority of the respondents (84.9%) view the initiatives of Arab citizens to help residents of the Jewish communities in the Western Negev who were affected by the October 7 events in a positive light, and 58.1% view them very positively. Moreover, one-half of the respondents (54.2%) view the initiatives of Arab citizens to support Israel's global PR efforts in a positive light. Only one-third of them (33.3%) do not view these initiatives positively.

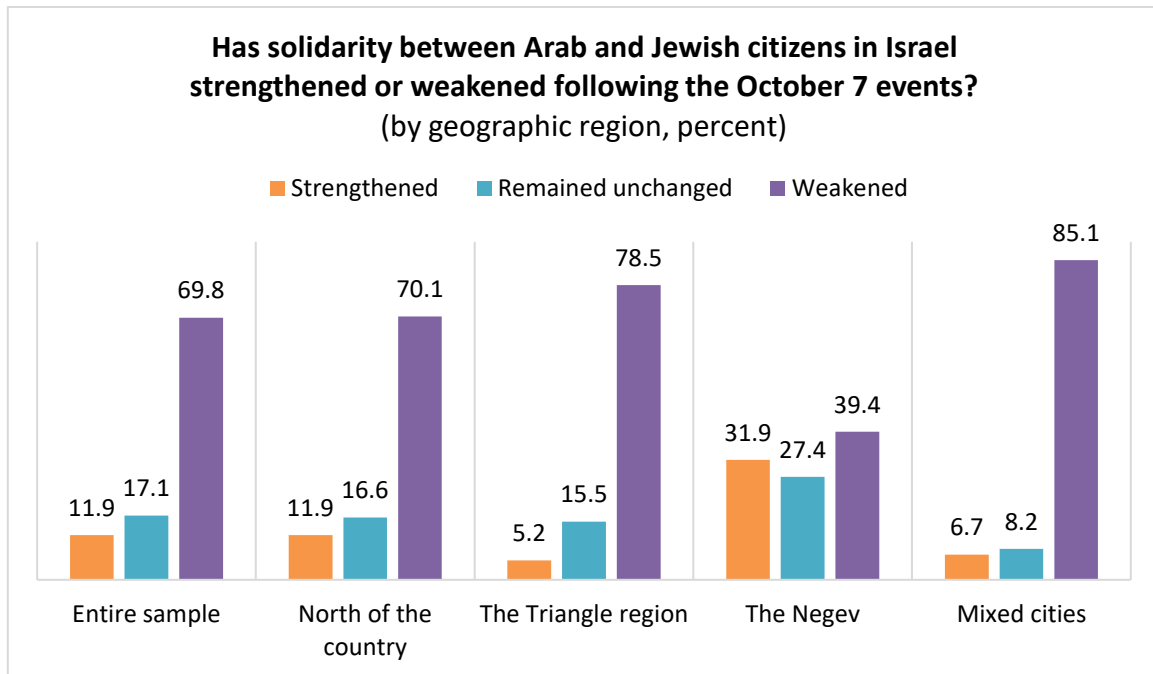
Those that positively view the initiatives of Arab citizens to help residents of the Western Negev primarily include the Druze (93.9%), residents of the mixed cities (95.1%) and the Negev (87.6%); those with a higher education (master's degree or PhD, 92.6%); and Ra'am voters (85.7%), voters for the Jewish parties (97.5%) and those who did not vote in the last Knesset elections (85.5%). Those who positively view the initiatives by Arab citizens to support Israel's global PR efforts include primarily the Druze (79%) and Christians (69%), and also residents of the Negev (59.7%) and residents of the mixed cities (59.2%).

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It is worth mentioning that about one-half of Ra'am voters (54.4%) and Balad voters (52.7%) and a fairly large percentage of Hadash-Ta'al voters (49.1%) and those who did not vote in the last elections (49.1%) view the participation of Arab citizens in Israel's global PR efforts in a positive light. Thus, the fundamentally positive view in this context has gained solid support in the political mainstream of Arab society.



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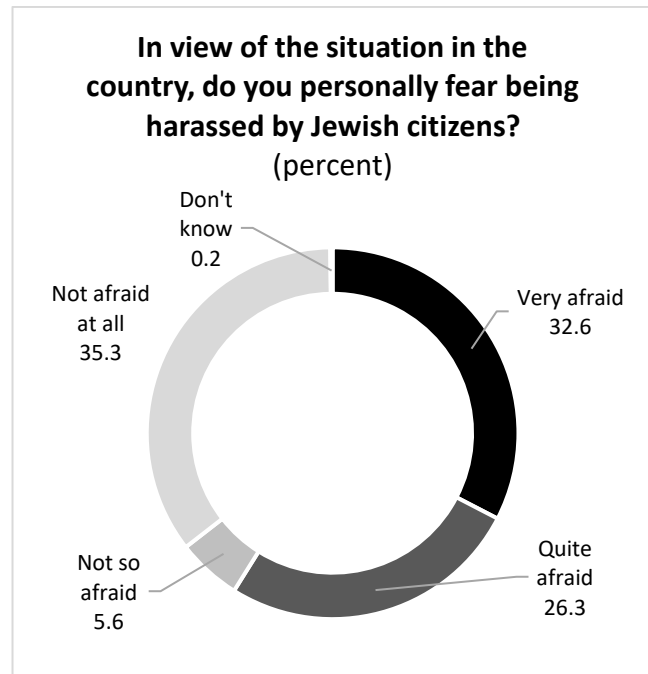
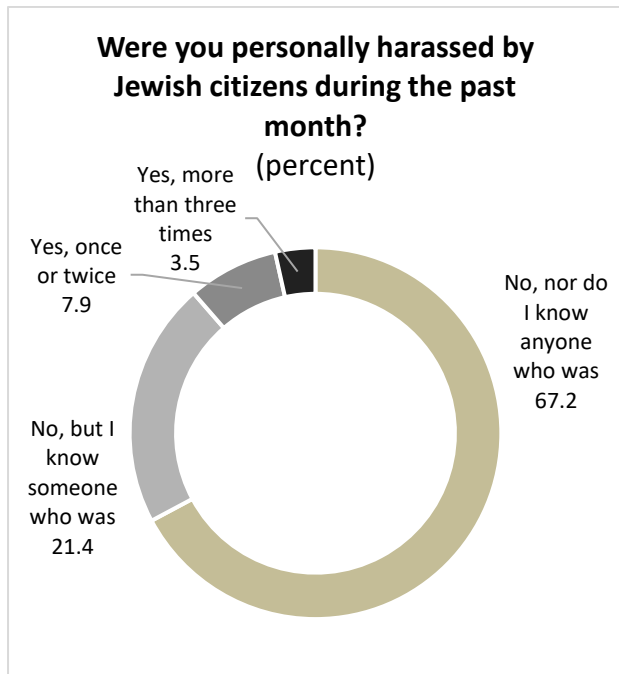


On the negative side, A large majority of the respondents (69.8%) feel that the solidarity between Arabs and Jews has weakened as a result of the October 7 events, of which almost half (49.6%) feel that it has weakened considerably. Only 11.9% feel that solidarity has in fact strengthened, while 17.1% feel that it has remained unchanged.

It is worth mentioning that among the Bedouins in the Negev, who live in the shadow of the war like their neighbors in the South of Israel and who also suffered casualties in the October 7 events, there is a relatively high proportion who report a strengthening of solidarity. In contrast, among the residents of the Triangle and even more so among the residents of the mixed cities who are in daily contact with their Jewish neighbors and who themselves have experienced the social tension as a result of the war, there is a feeling that solidarity has weakened considerably.

In this context, a majority of the respondents (58.9%) report that as a result of the situation in the country they fear being harassed by Jewish citizens while 40.9% report that they do not fear being harassed. Although the vast majority of the respondents (88.6%) claim that they themselves have not been harassed by Jewish citizens—and a majority of them (67.2%) do not have friends or relatives who have been harassed in any way—a not insignificant proportion of the respondents (11.4%) state that they themselves have been harassed by Jewish citizens. It is worth mentioning that a relatively high proportion of those reporting that they were harassed at least once by Jewish citizens were in the 18–34 age group (20.2%) which is almost double the rate for the entire sample.

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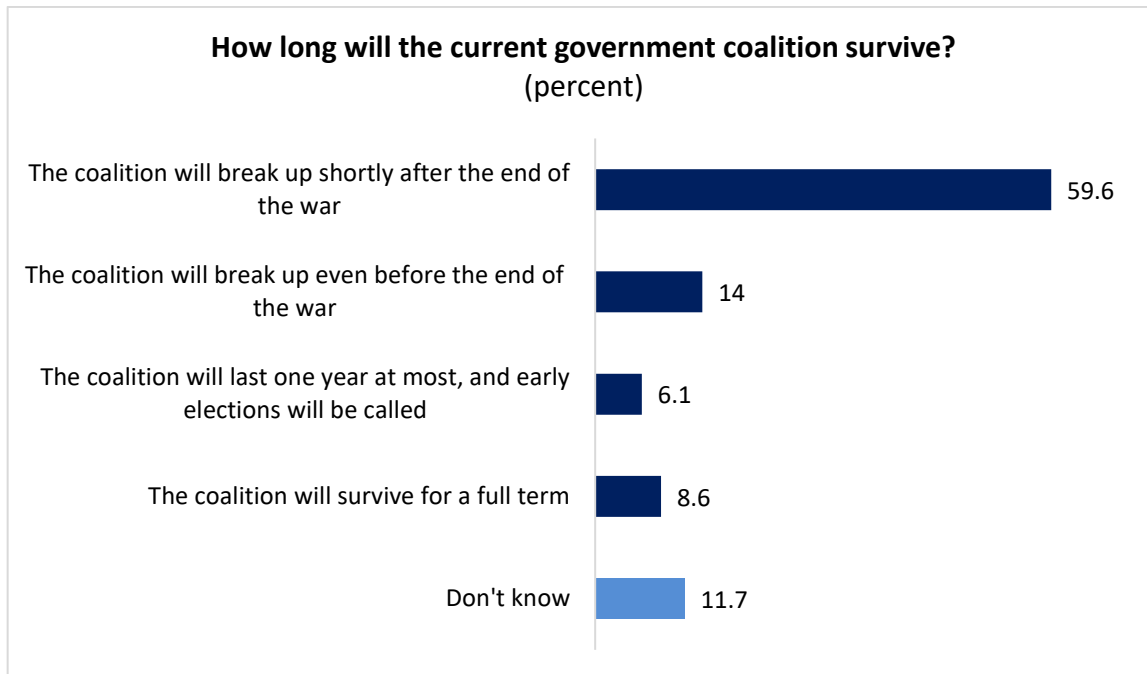


Opinions regarding the government coalition and participation in a future government

During the first week following the outbreak of the war, an emergency government coalition was formed when members of the National Unity party, headed by Benny Gantz, joined the government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu. The respondents to the survey were asked how long they think the coalition would survive. The text of the question did not explicitly mention the “emergency government” but rather the current coalition more generally.

A majority of the respondents (59.6%) feel that the coalition will break up shortly after the end of the war (i.e. at the end of the emergency government and the subsequent exit of the National Unity party). 14% feel that the coalition will break up even before the end of the war (i.e. the breakup of the emergency government in its current expanded format). Only 8.6% believe that the coalition will survive for a full term (i.e. the government that was created by Netanyahu at the end of 2022 will survive until the elections for the 26th Knesset, which are meant to take place in October 2026).

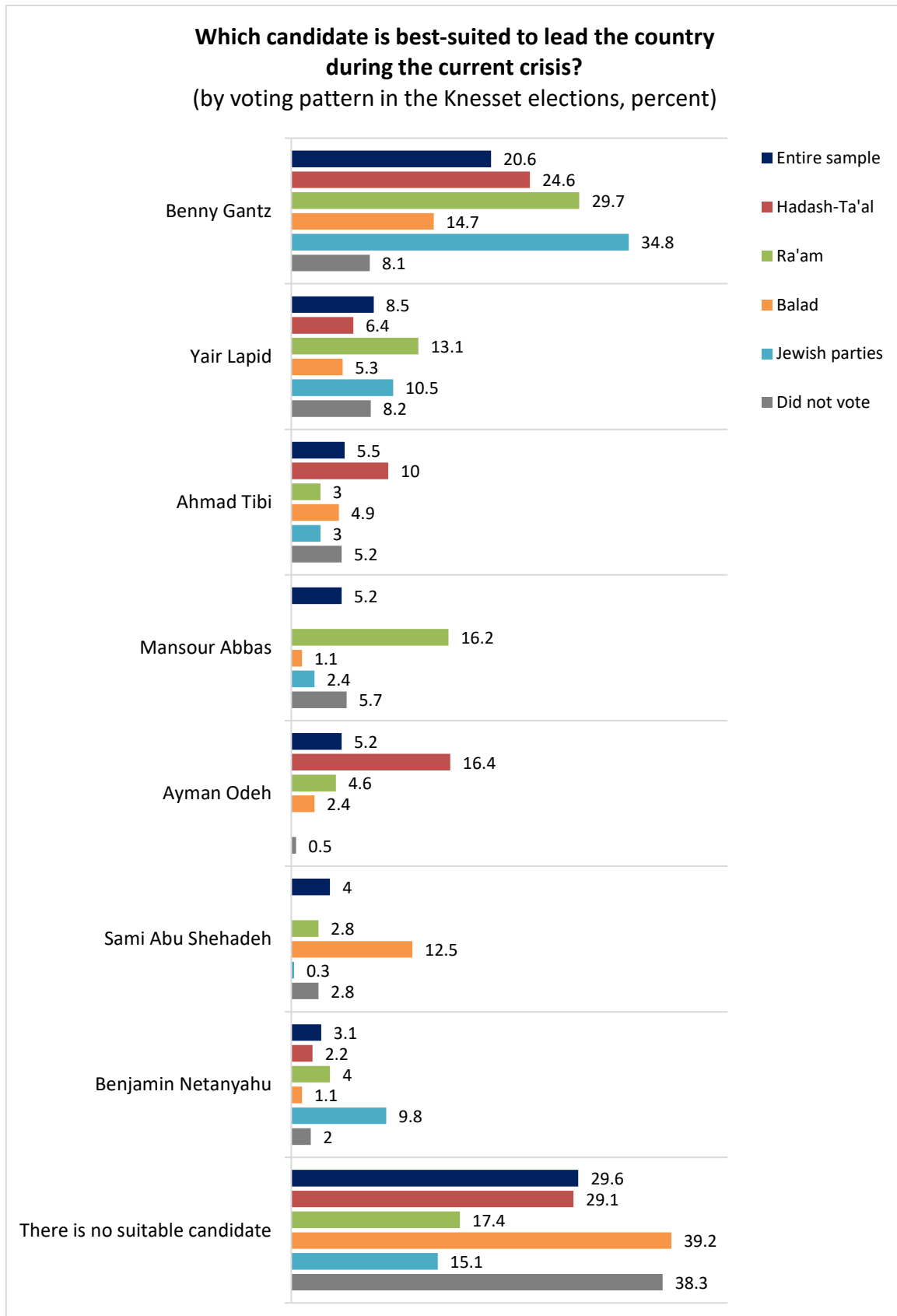
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The respondents were asked which politician or Member of Knesset, whether Jewish or Arab, is best suited to lead the country during the current crisis. It appears that a large proportion of the respondents (29.6%) believe that there is no suitable candidate at the moment. Nonetheless, Benny Gantz, the leader of the National Unity party, has a reasonable level of support (20.6%), which is significantly higher than that for Yair Lapid, the leader of the Yesh Atid party and head of the Knesset opposition (8.5%) and Benjamin Netanyahu, the head of the government and the leader of the Likud (3.1%). Each of the leaders of the Arab parties has a statistically identical level of support: Ahmad Tibi (Ta'al, 5.5%), Mansour Abbas (Ra'am, 5.2%), Ayman Odeh (Hadash, 5.2%) and Sami Abu Shehadeh (Balad, 4%).

Those who feel that there is no suitable candidate to lead the country during the present crisis primarily include Christians (34.6%) and Muslims (29.7%); the 18–34 age group (42.8%) and the 65+ age group (37.2%); and Balad voters (39.2%) and those who did not vote in the last elections (38.3%). The support for Gantz is primarily among the Druze (33.5%) and the Christians (31%); those with an elementary school education (34.1%) and those with an academic education (master's degree or PhD, 22.9%); and among supporters of the Jewish parties (43.6% on average), Ra'am (29.7%) and Hadash-Ta'al (24.6%).

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With respect to the long-term political situation following the next Knesset elections, two-thirds of the respondents (65.8%) support the participation of an Arab party in the government coalition that will form: of those 46.9% support the participation of an Arab party in any coalition that forms and not just a Center-Left coalition. In contrast, a not insignificant minority (20.2%) strongly oppose the idea of Arab parties joining the coalition or supporting it from the outside (by means of an “obstructive bloc” in the Knesset).

Should an Arab party join the coalition that forms after the next elections? (percent)

Yes 65.8

Any government that forms after the next elections, **46.9**

Only a Center-Left government, **18.9**

No 27.4

But an Arab party may support the coalition from the outside in exchange for real benefits to Arab society, **7.2**

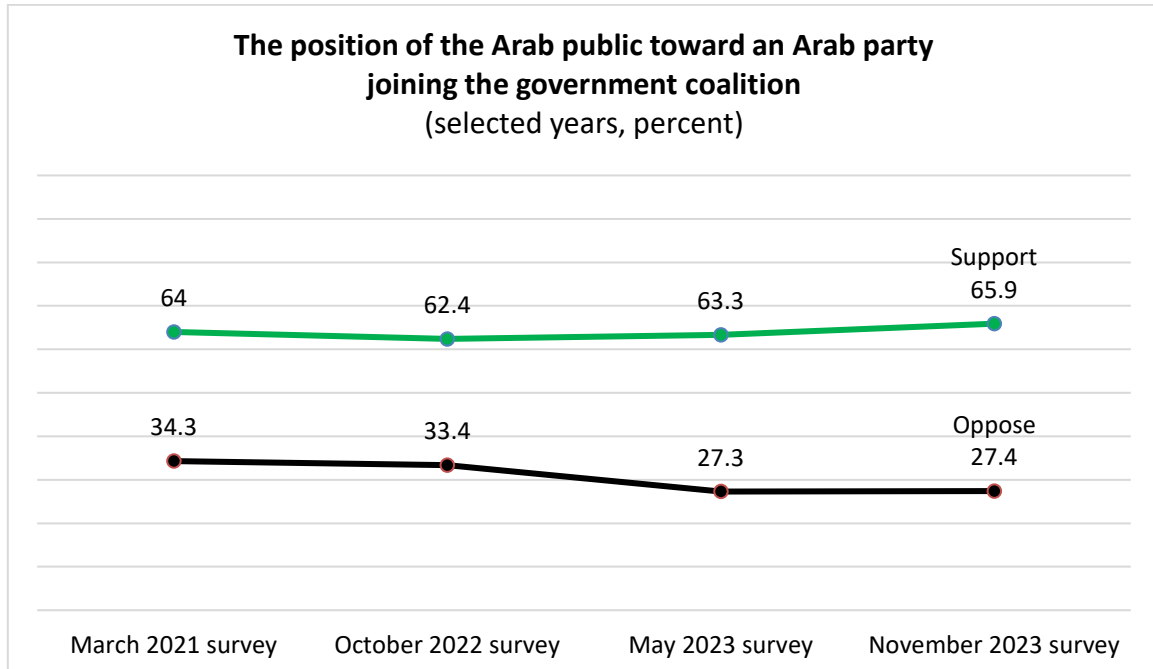
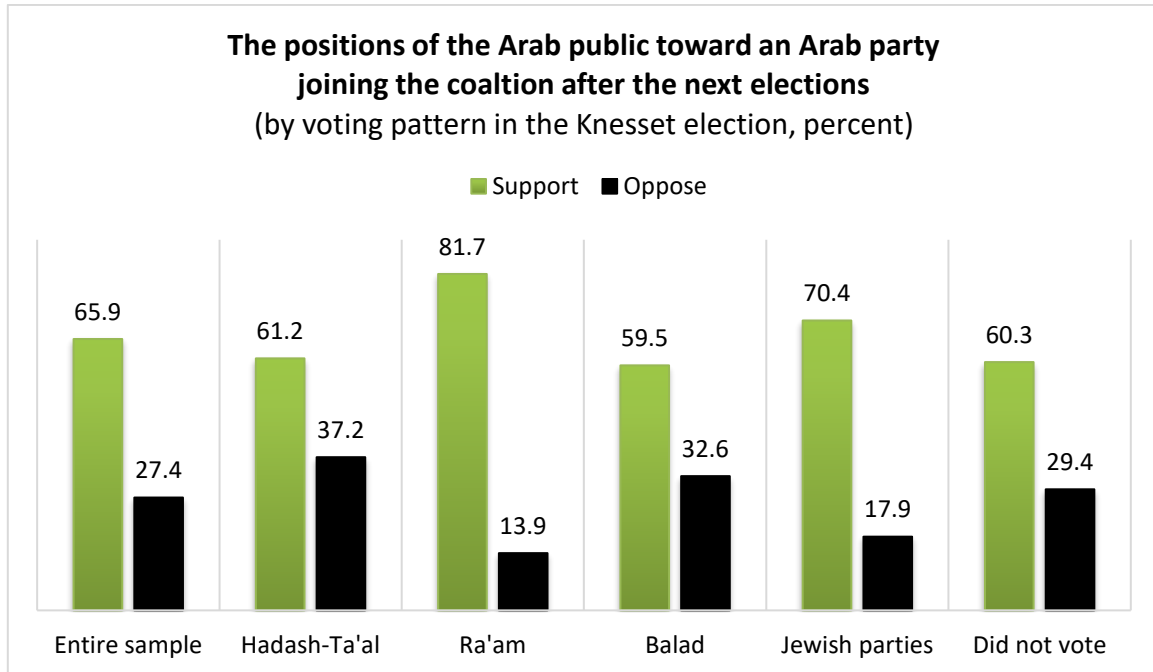
An Arab party should not join the coalition nor support it from the outside, **20.2**

The supporters of an Arab party joining any coalition that forms after the next elections (and not just a Center-Left coalition) include primarily the Druze (73.7%); the 18–34 age group (58.1%); and Ra’am voters (56.9%) and those who did not vote in the last elections (54%). It is worth mentioning that one-third of Hadash–Ta’al voters (34.6%) and Balad voters (34.7%) support the participation of an Arab party in any coalition that forms after the next elections.

The opponents of an Arab party joining the coalition or supporting it from the outside include primarily the 55+ age group (28.3%); residents of the mixed cities (28.2%) and of the Triangle (24.7%); as well as Balad voters (28.2%) and Hadash–Ta’al voters (27.2%). It is worth mentioning that the proportion of opponents among Ra’am voters is the lowest in the sample (7.3%), which is even lower than the average proportion measured among voters for the Jewish parties (16.9%).

The findings with respect to support for an Arab party joining the coalition are consistent with those of past surveys by the Konrad Adenauer program, even before the participation of Ra’am in the Bennet-Lapid government and also after it. It can be concluded that the political compass of the Arab public has not been affected by the war. They distinguish between developments in the general conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and political developments within Israel that directly affect them and which they can influence.

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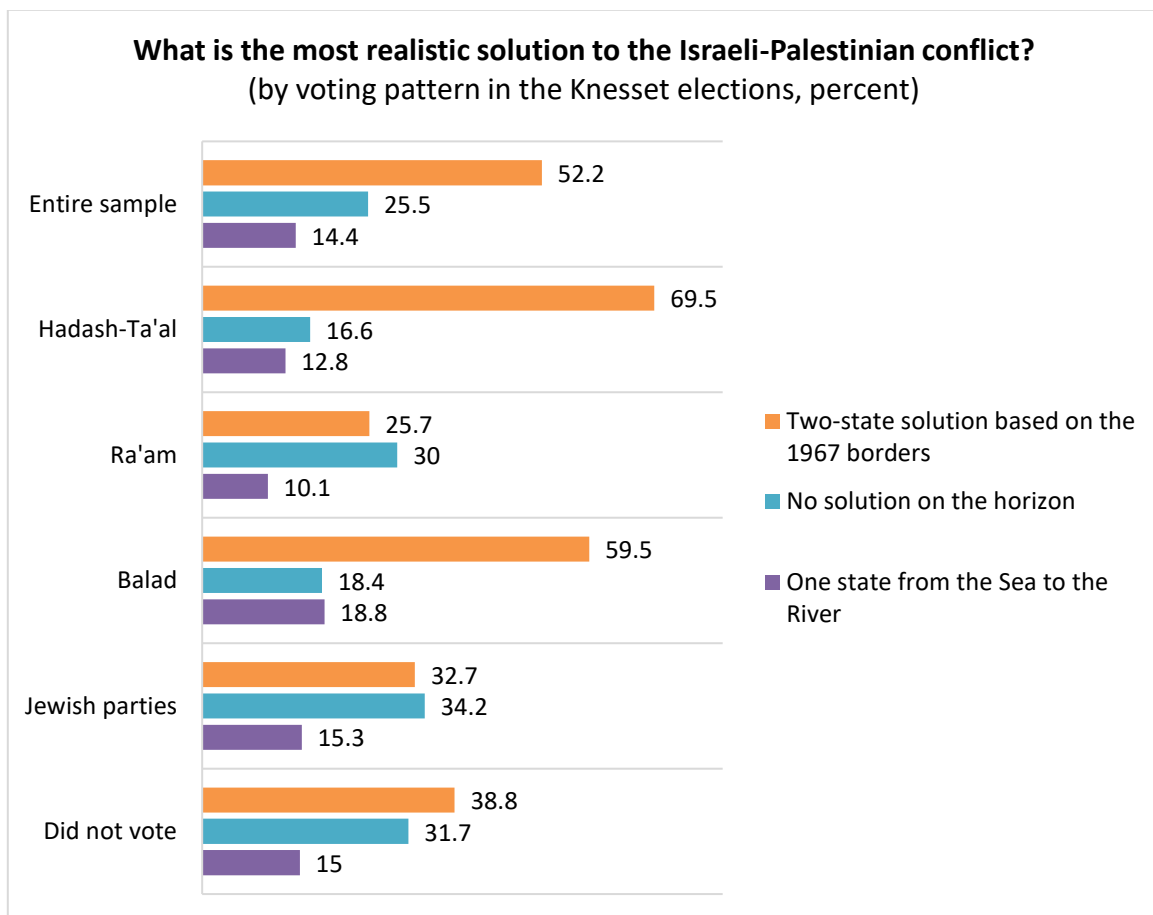


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The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Arab public's political agenda

As a result of the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ways to resolve it have reappeared on the global agenda. In this context, the respondents were presented with the following question: What is the most realistic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? One-half (52.2%) said a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders, while one-quarter (25.5%) don't believe there is a negotiated solution on the horizon. A small proportion (14.4%) stated that a one-state solution for both Jews and Arabs—from the sea to the river—is the most realistic solution.

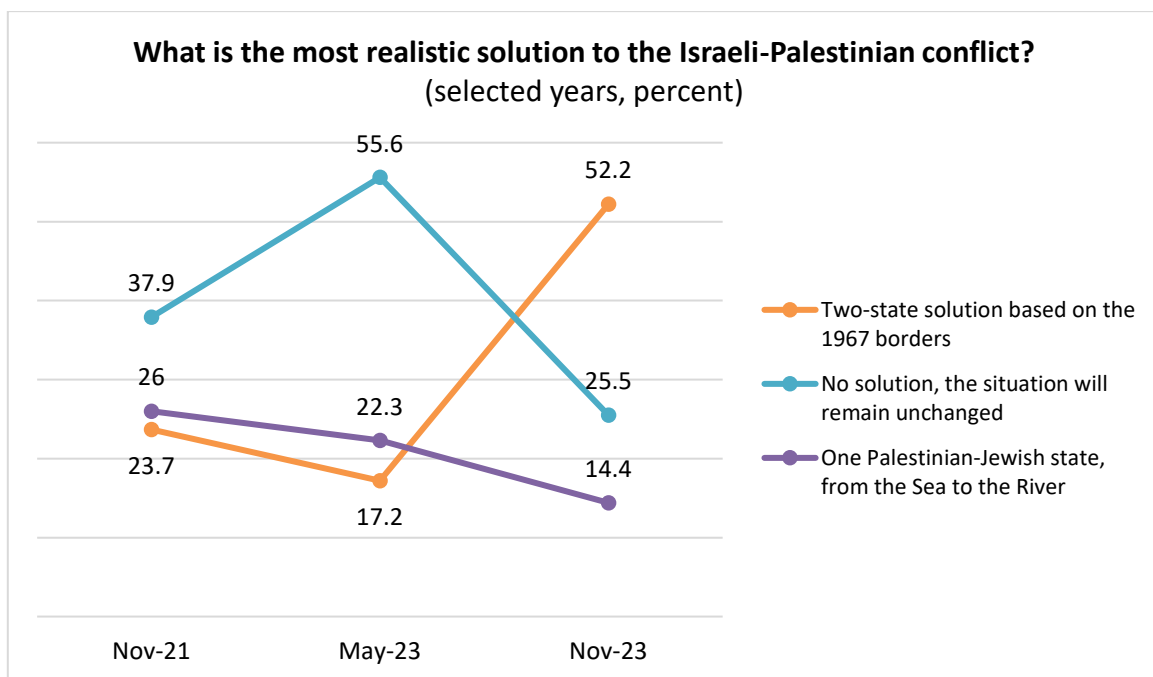
In the responses to this question, there were significant differences observed according to voting patterns in the last Knesset elections. The proportion of Hadash-Ta'al voters who believe that a two-state solution within the 1967 borders is the most realistic (69.5%) was significantly higher than the proportion of Balad voters (59.5%) and of Ra'am voters (52.7%). In contrast, the proportion of Ra'am voters who believe that there is no negotiated solution on the horizon (30%) is significantly higher than the proportion of Balad voters (18.4%) and Hadash-Ta'al voters (16.6%).



This question has been presented several times in the in-depth surveys carried out by the Konrad Adenauer program in recent years among the Arab public in Israel. They showed a continuous

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downward trend in the belief in a two-state solution as the most realistic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the survey carried out in November 2021, only 23.7% of respondents believed that the most realistic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a two-state solution and 37.9% felt that there is no solution.¹ In the survey carried out in May 2023, only 17.2% of the respondents believed that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be resolved by a two-state solution and one-half (55.6%) believed that there is no solution.² The findings of the current survey (November 2023) therefore provide evidence of a significant change in the opinions of the Arab public with respect to the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is apparently a result of the war.

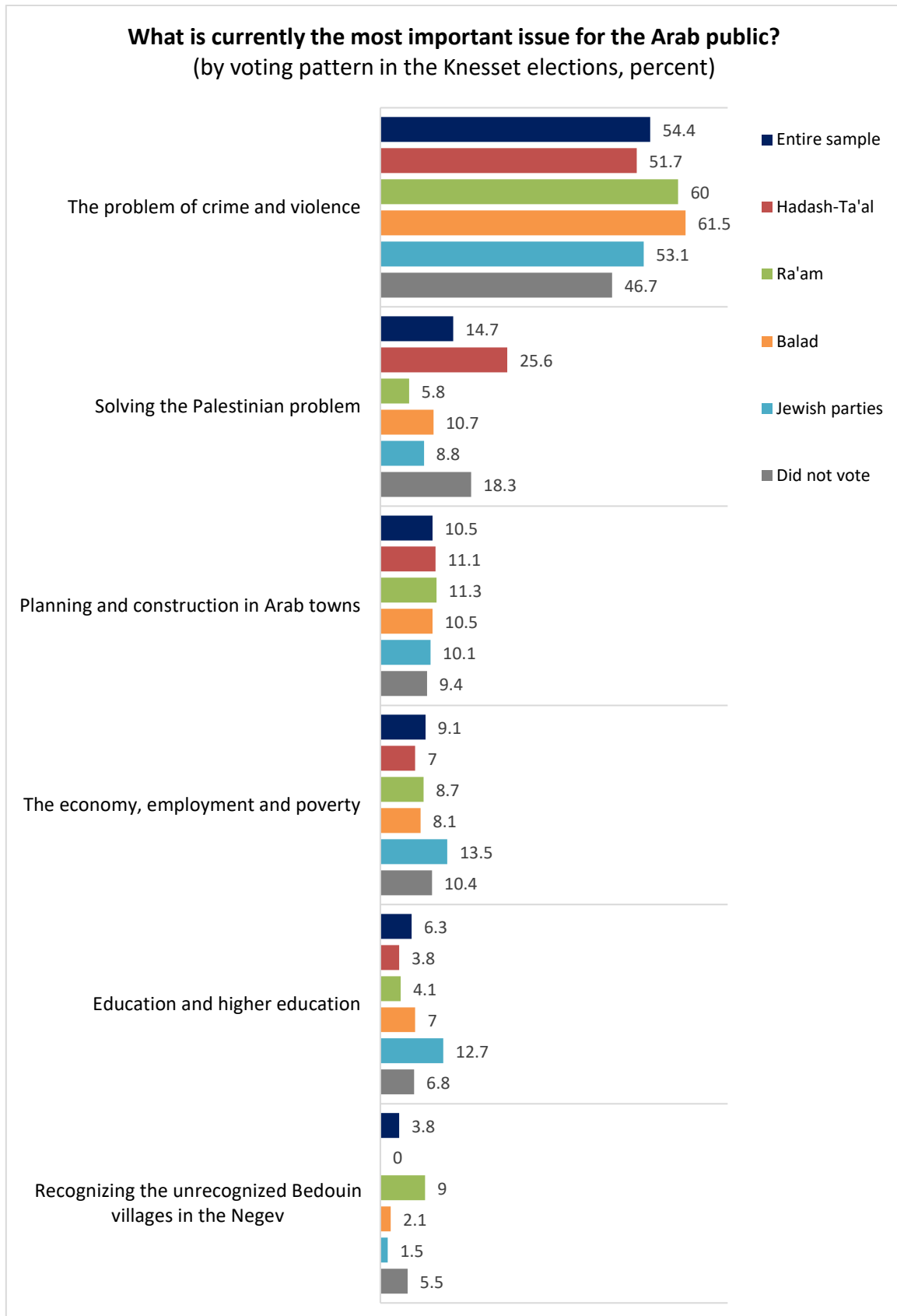


What is the most important issue for the Arab public at the moment? About one-half of the respondents (54.4%) feel that the most important issue is the problem of violence and crime. Issues of secondary importance include the solution of the Palestinian problem (14.7%), planning and building in Arab towns (10.5%), the economic situation, employment and poverty (9.1%), education and higher education (6.3%) and the recognition of unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev (3.8%).

¹ See the findings of the survey on the Moshe Dayan Center site, December 14, 2021. <https://dayan.org/content/comprehensive-survey-political-opinion-among-arab-public>

² See the findings of the survey on the Moshe Dayan Center site, June 26, 2023. <https://dayan.org/content/survey-among-arab-public-israel>

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Also, in the case of this question there were significant differences according to voting patterns in the Knesset elections. The proportion of Balad voters (61.5%) and Ra'am voters (60%) that rank the problem of violence and crime as the most important issue for the Arab public is significantly higher than the proportion of Hadash-Ta'al voters (51.7%). In contrast, the proportion of Hadash-Ta'al voters who believe that solving the Palestinian problem is the most important issue for the Arab public (25.6%) is significantly higher than that of Balad voters (10.7%) and Ra'am voters (5.8%). Ra'am voters feel that the recognition of unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev (9%) is far more important than do Ra'am voters (2.1%) and Hadash-Ta'al voters (0%).

The importance of the problem of violence and crime is not surprising given the fact that the number of murders in Arab society has skyrocketed since the beginning of 2023 to an unprecedented level: more than 215 men and women (as of the end of November 2023). Nonetheless, a not insignificant proportion of the Arab public views the solution of the Palestinian problem as the most important issue. It outranks by a small but statistically significant difference other civic problems that have been on the agenda of the Arab public for a long time, such as planning and building, employment, poverty, and education and higher education.

Moreover, the findings of the current survey indicate a significant increase in the ranking of the Palestinian problem on the Arab public's political agenda relative to previous years. Thus, in the survey carried out by the Konrad Adenauer program in December 2020, only 2.7% of the respondents thought that the most important issue for the Arab public is progress toward a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. It is worth mentioning that the elimination of violence and crime was at the top of the Arab public's agenda in that survey as well (51.9%).³

In conclusion, the solution of everyday issues occupies the most important slots on the political agenda of Arab citizens. However, as a result of the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas the resolution of the Palestinian problem and achieving a two-state solution have returned to a relatively significant position on their political agenda.

³ See the findings of the survey at the Moshe Dayan Center, December 6, 2020: <https://dayan.org/content/public-opinion-poll-among-arab-citizens-israel>

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The question of personal identity

The respondents were asked to choose the most important component of their personal identity. The survey produced an interesting finding: The proportion of respondents who mentioned their Israeli citizenship (33.2%) is similar to the proportion who mentioned their Arab identity in the definition of their personal identity (32.1%). For 22.6% of the respondents, the most important component is religious affiliation (Muslim, Christian or Druze). Only 8.2% mentioned Palestinian identity as the most important component of their identity.

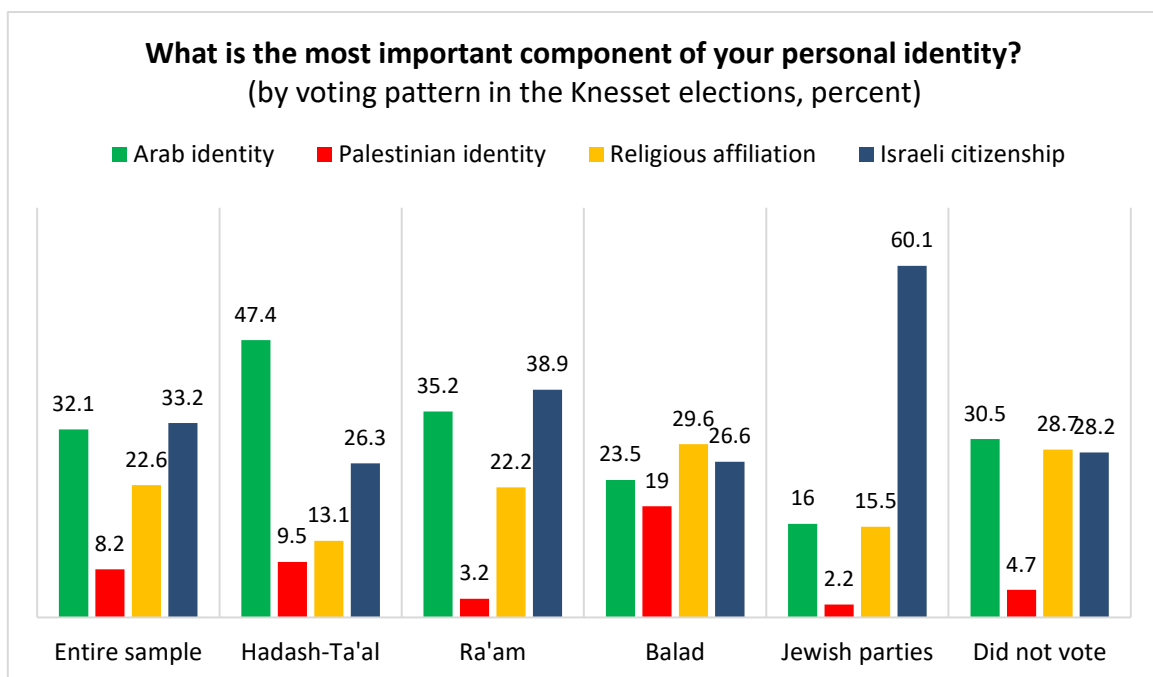
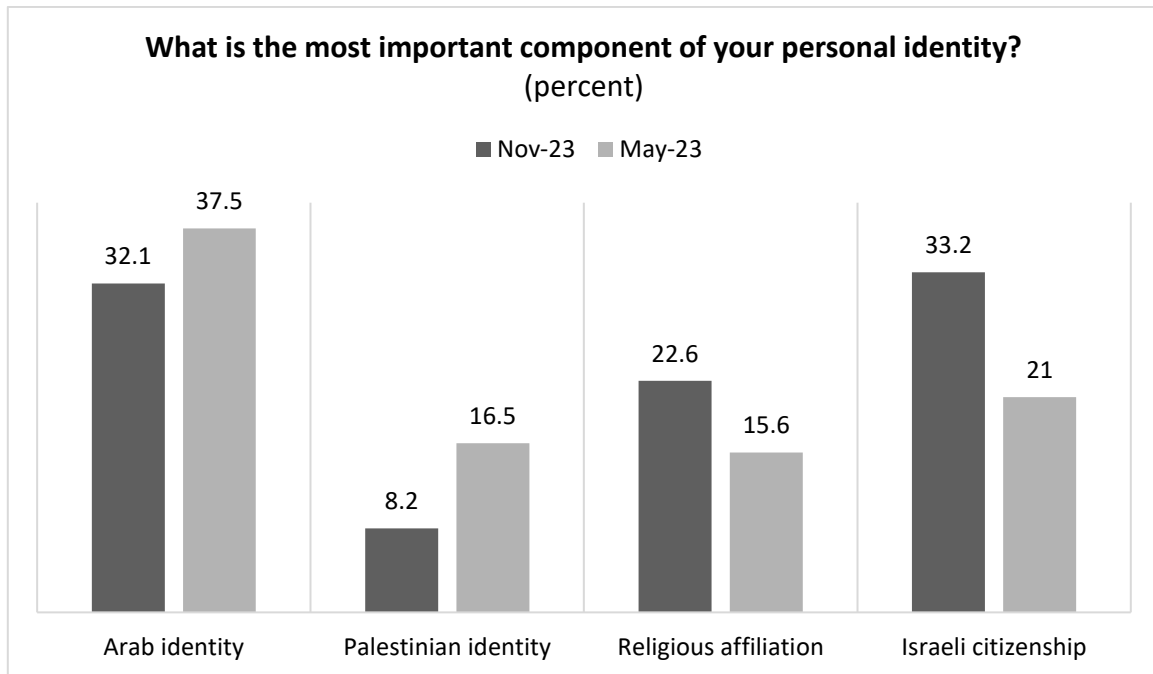
It is worth mentioning that the Israeli component was presented to the respondents using the term “citizenship” rather than “identity”. In other words, the respondents were asked to assess the significance of the instrumental component of Israeli citizenship and not necessarily its emotional significance. Nonetheless, for many in Arab society the issue of Israeli citizenship fulfills a no less important role than their collective Arab identity, which is the most deeply-rooted and includes other types of meaning: nationality, culture, tradition, language, and values.

The findings of the current survey are even more significant given those of the survey carried out six months ago (May 2023, see above), in which the dominant component in the identity of Arab citizens was Arab identity (37.5%). It had a significant lead over the other components of identity: Israeli identity (21%), Palestinian identity (16.5%) and religious affiliation (15.6%).

Significant differences were found in the responses according to demographic and political parameters. The component of Israeli citizenship is dominant primarily among the Druze (69.7%). Religious affiliation is the most important component in the identity of the 18–34 age group (38.4%) while for the 55+ age group Israeli citizenship is the most important component (39.3%, on average). The most important components of identity for residents of the Triangle are Arab identity (32.6%) and religious affiliation (29.4%), while for residents of the Negev they are religious affiliation (35.1%) and Israeli citizenship (33.6%). For residents of the mixed cities, national identity components are the most important, namely Arab identity (49.1%) and Palestinian identity (22.8%).

For Ra’am voters, the most important components are Israeli citizenship (38.9%) and Arab identity (35.2%) and for Hadash-Ta’al voters the most dominant component is Arab identity (47.4%) which leads Israeli identity (26.3%) by a large margin. The most important component for Balad voters is in fact religious affiliation (29.6%). Although Palestinian identity is less important than other components of identity for Balad voters, the proportion of them who reported that Palestinian identity is the most important component of their identity (19%) is the largest within the entire sample.

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The survey was initiated by the Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, in cooperation with the Israel Office of the German Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

The survey was carried out by the Stat-Net Research Institute under the direction of Yousef Makladeh.

The data were collected during the period November 12–16, 2023 in a telephone survey carried out in Arabic among a representative sample of the adult Arab population (aged 18+).

Size of the sample: 502. Sample error: ± 4.35 percent.