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# Prospects, Peace and Politics

## Where do Palestinians stand?

Arab News YouGov Poll





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# Prospects, Peace and Politics Where do Palestinians stand?

On the 75th anniversary of the Nakba – the first forced mass displacement of Palestinians from their homes in the wake of the creation of the Israeli state in 1948 – Arab News partnered with YouGov to survey a sample of 953

Palestinians living in both the West Bank and Gaza to get an insight into where they stand in relation to the reality and future of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as well as their outlook on peace prospects.

# Methodology

A total of 953 respondents were surveyed, including a weighted base of 467 men and 486 women.

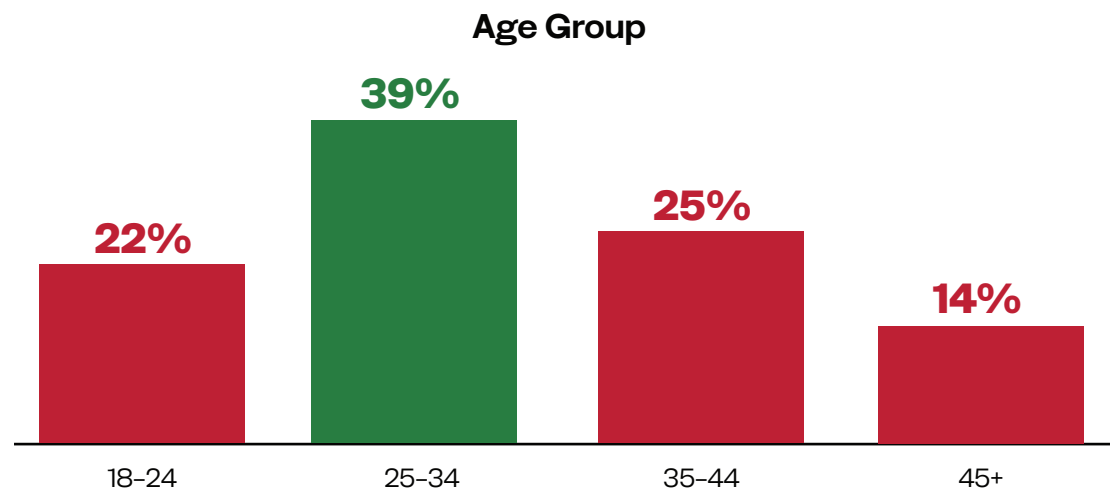
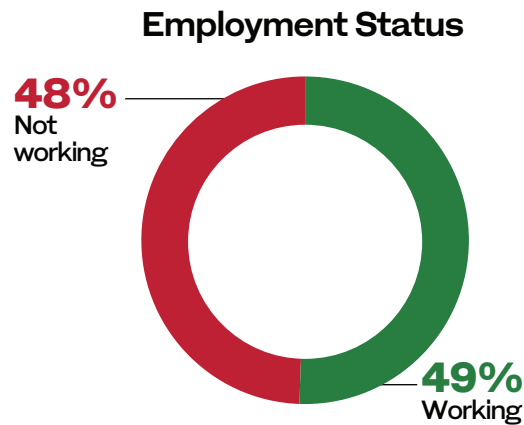
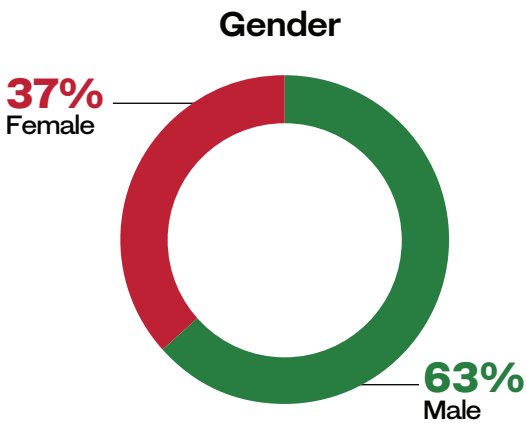
Respondents from all age groups participated in the survey with a weighted base of 276, 300, 243 and 135 in the 18-24, 25-34, 35-44 and 45+ age groups respectively.

Survey respondents also included people from various income brackets and marital statuses. A total of 442 respondents were

employed, while 511 were unemployed.

The survey was conducted online using a structured quantitative questionnaire, and respondents could choose English or Arabic as their preferred language at the start of the questionnaire.

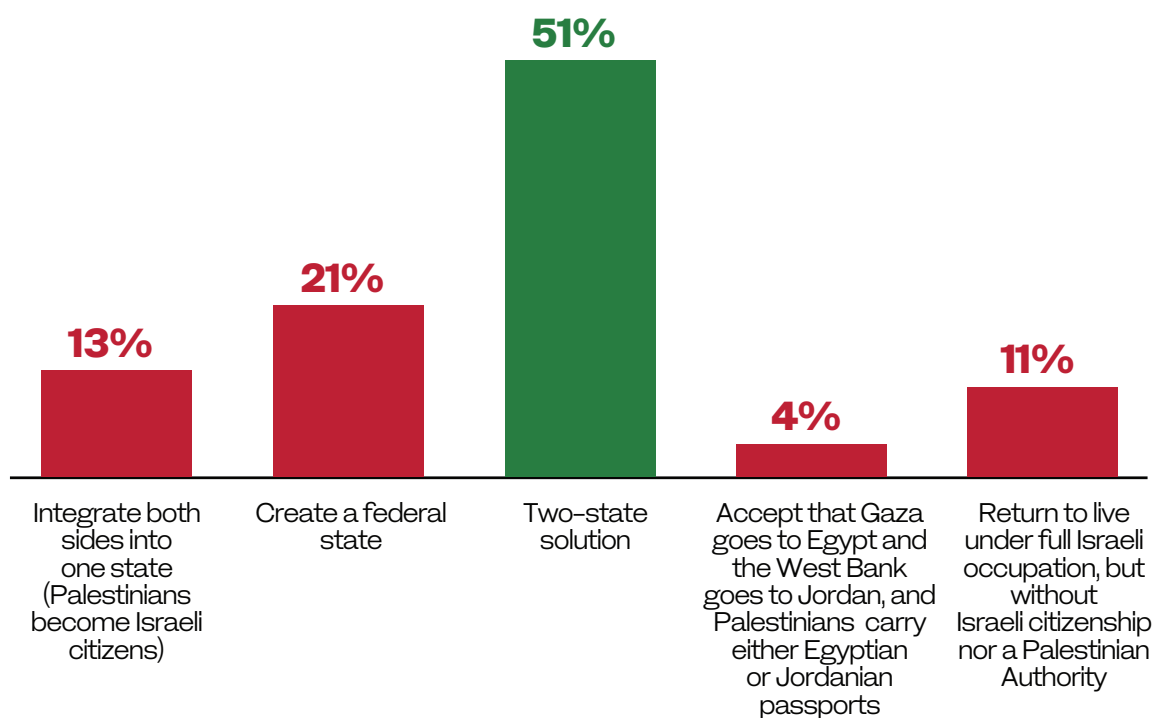
The survey results were rebased, in line with accepted industry standards, to remove “don’t know” or “can’t say” answers to compare only relevant answers.





## I. What do you think is the best solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

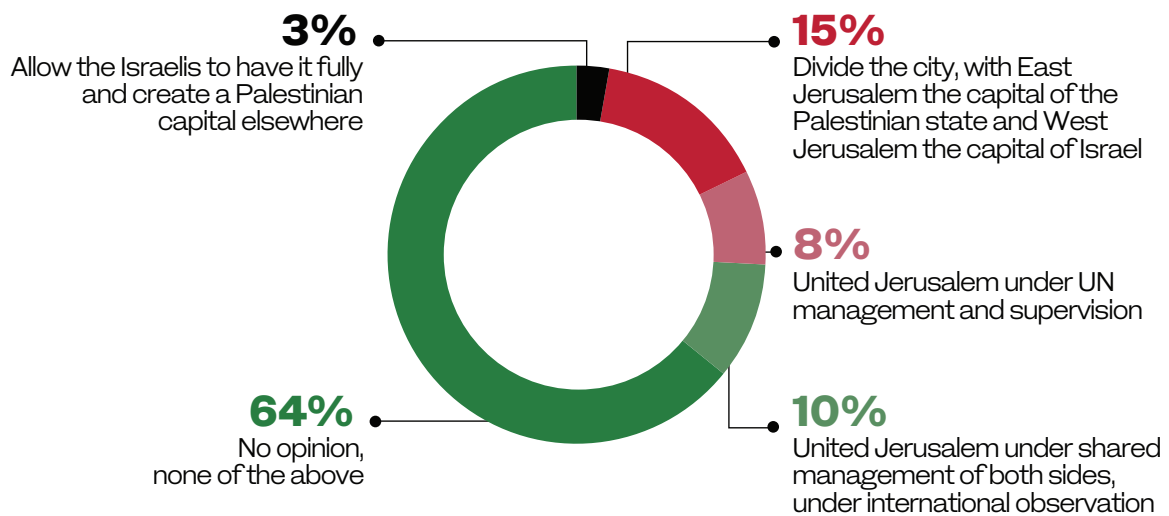
- More than half of the Palestinians (51 percent) opted for a two-state solution. The older respondents were more inclined toward this option; 42 percent of the age bracket 18 to 29 years old and 63 percent of those aged 45 and above preferred a two-state solution.
- Interestingly, about two in 10 respondents (21 percent) preferred a federal state. This preference was highest among females (25 percent) and the youngest age group (26 percent).
- Integrating both sides of the conflict under one state, in which Palestinians could become Israeli citizens, was supported by 13 percent of respondents (and 15 percent of males).



# Jerusalem remains a hot topic of dispute

## 2. If Israel refuses to give Jerusalem fully to the new Palestinian state, what compromise would you be most willing to accept regarding the status of Jerusalem if you only had to choose one?

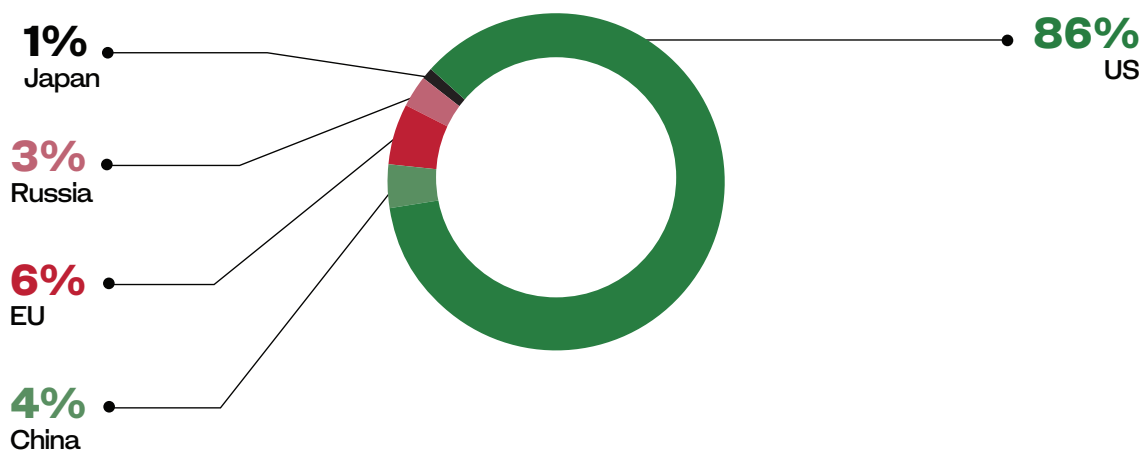
- Nearly two thirds of respondents (or 64 percent) rebutted all the alternatives given should Israel refuse to give Jerusalem fully to the new Palestinian state.
- Moreover, one quarter of respondents were polarized over dividing the city between East (capital Palestine) and West (capital of the Israeli state). A proportion of 15 percent supported the division.
- A united Jerusalem with shared management and international observation was favored by 12 percent.





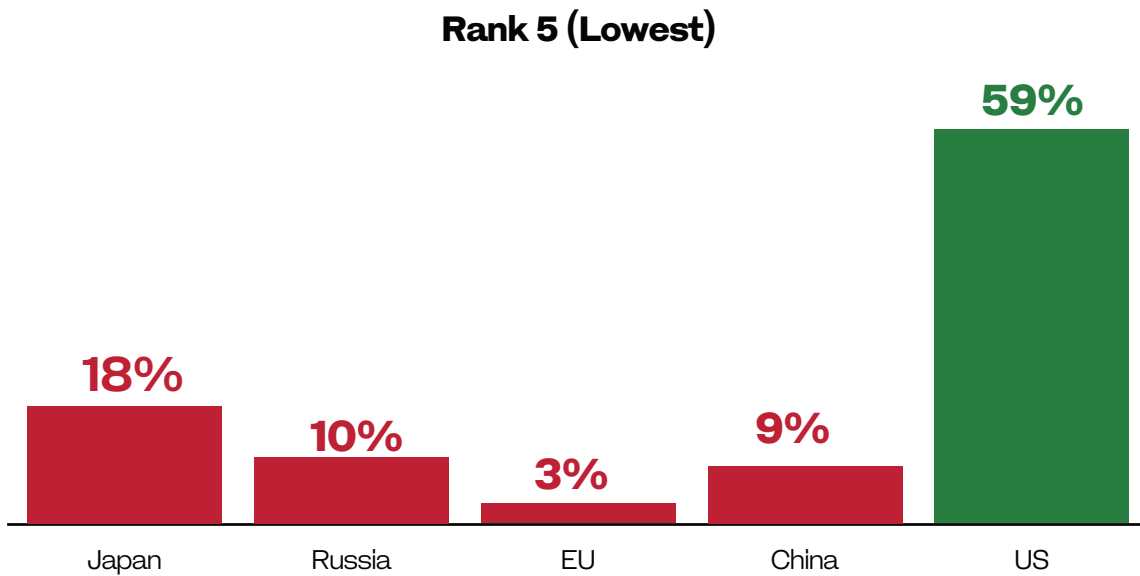
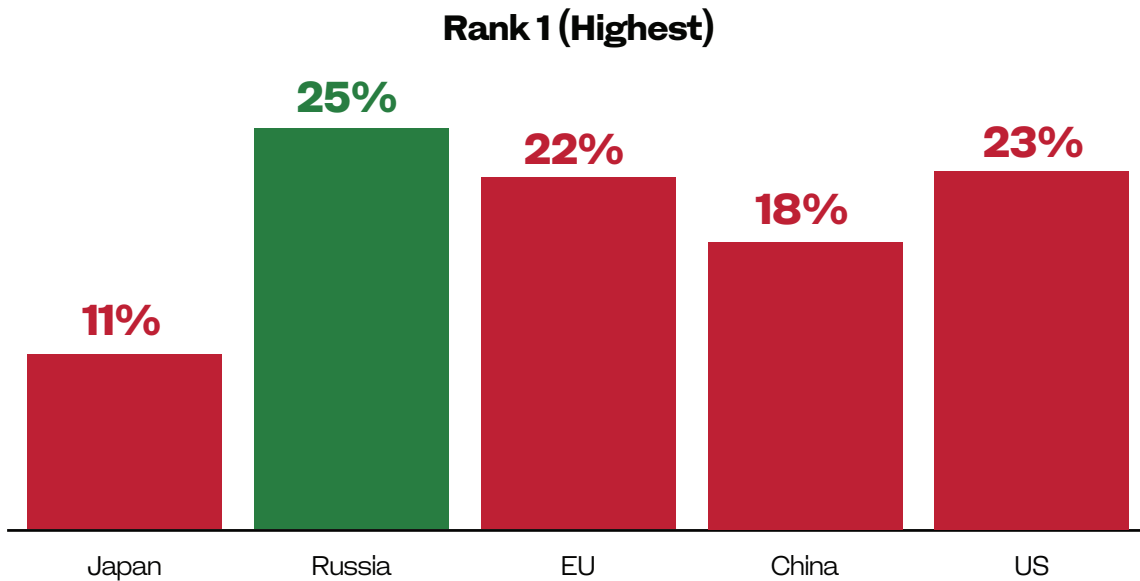
### 3. Which of these world powers do you think has the most influence over Israel?

Unsurprisingly, the majority of Palestinians (86 percent) believe that the US has the most significant influence over Israel compared to China, EU, Russia and Japan. This belief was strongest among the older generation (aged 45+), with 90 percent supporting this view.



#### 4. Which of these world powers do you trust most as the fairest mediator between Palestinians and Israelis?

Palestinians opted for Russia as the most trusted potential peace broker, followed by the EU and China. But most respondents (59 percent), unsurprisingly, had no faith in the US.



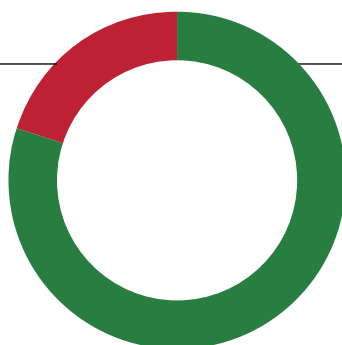


## Perception of China as a mediator

**5. China recently offered to mediate between Israel and the Palestinians. Given their mediation success (so far) between Saudi Arabia and Iran, would you support a Chinese role in resolving the conflict with Israel?**

China is viewed positively by Palestinians as a potential mediator in their conflict with Israel, with 80 percent supporting a potential role. The highest support came from male participants (86 percent).

**20%**  
No



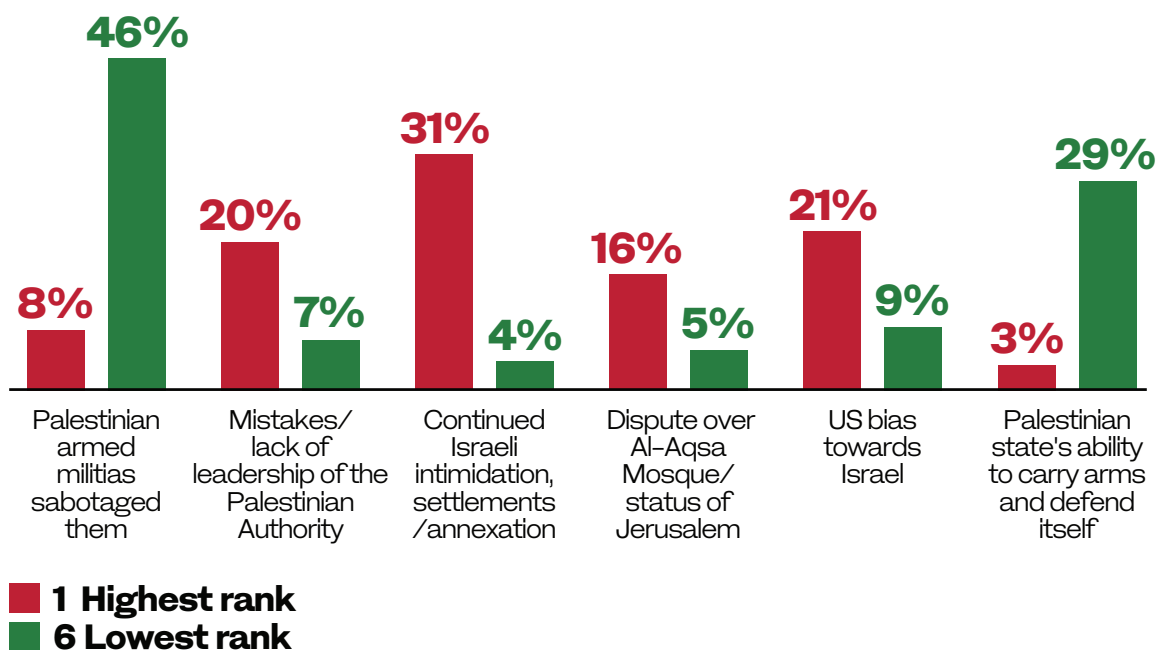
**80%**  
Yes



# Peace talks and initiatives

## 6. Rank in order the main reasons why all previous peace talks and initiatives have failed.

- Palestinians blame the continued Israeli intimidation, settlements and annexation on the repeated failures of previous peace talks and initiatives. US bias toward Israel ranked second, followed by the dispute over the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the status of Jerusalem.
- Moreover, Palestinians blamed the mistakes and lack of leadership of the Palestinian authority, followed by the Palestinian state's ability to carry arms and defend itself.
- The final blame was placed on the Palestinian armed militias for sabotaging peace initiatives.

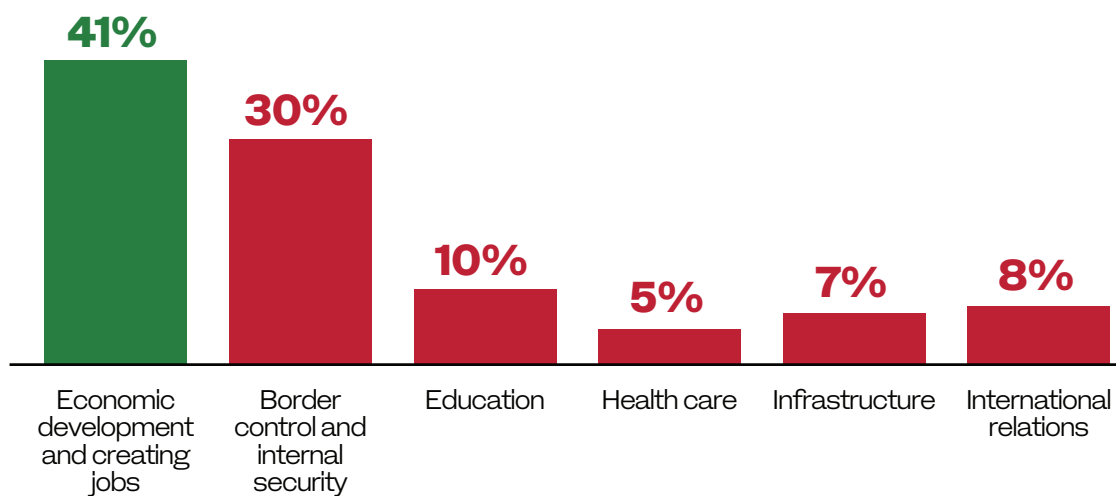




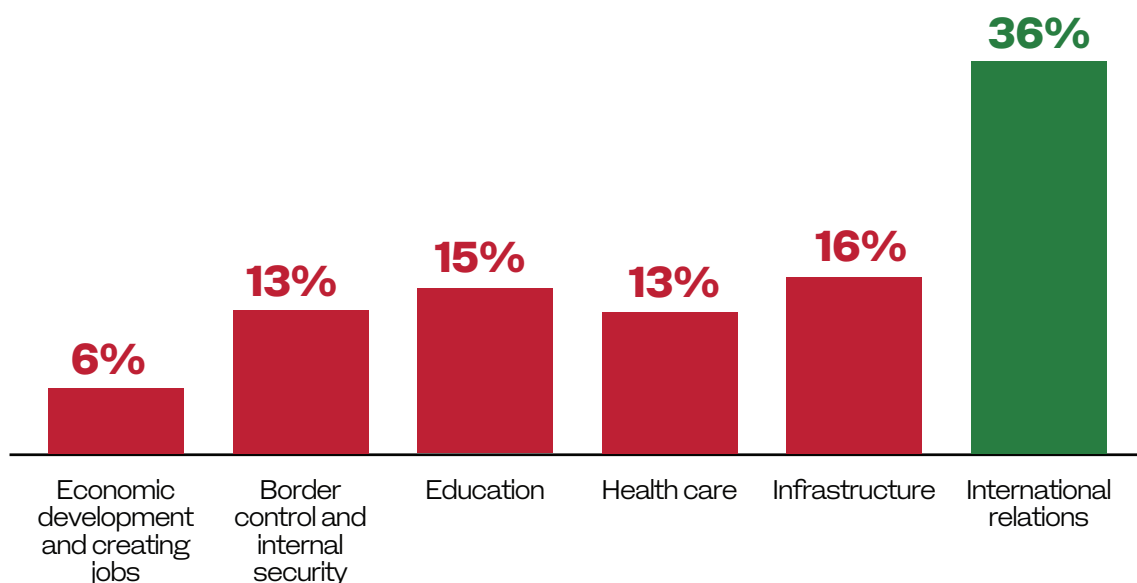
## 7. If the Israelis and Palestinians sign a new peace plan, and an independent Palestinian state is established, what should the priority of Palestinian leaders be?

- If a peace plan is reached between the two parties, Palestinians would expect their potentially established state to prioritize the economic development and creation of jobs above all. This was a heightened priority by residents of Gaza in comparison to residents of the West Bank.
- The second priority was border control and security, while the third was education, driven primarily by residents of the West Bank.
- The remaining priorities were infrastructure, health care and the development of international relations.
- The below chart displays the expected actions by order of priority based on the average ranking score.

### Rank 1 (Highest priority)

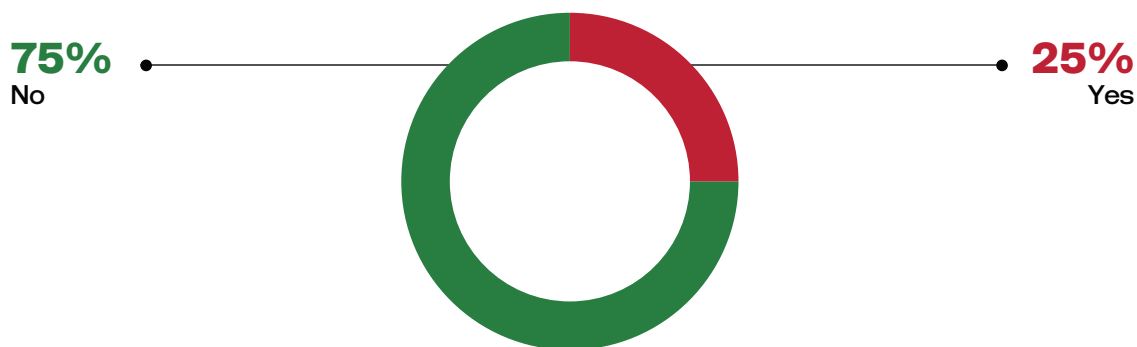


### Rank 6 (Lowest priority)



## 8. Do you think the current Palestinian leadership is capable of successfully negotiating a peace deal with Israel?

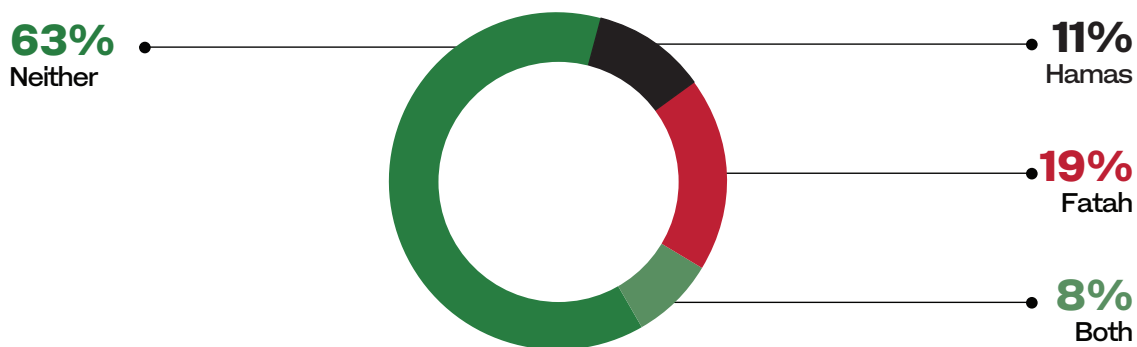
- More than half of the Palestinians (75 percent) did not trust their current leadership to successfully negotiate a peace deal with Israel.
- This lack of trust in leadership is highest among male respondents (73 percent), those aged 35 to 44 years (76 percent), and residents of the West Bank (77 percent) compared to 73 percent in Gaza.



\* These percentages are based on respondents who provided an opinion.

## 9. Which Palestinian political faction represents you the most?

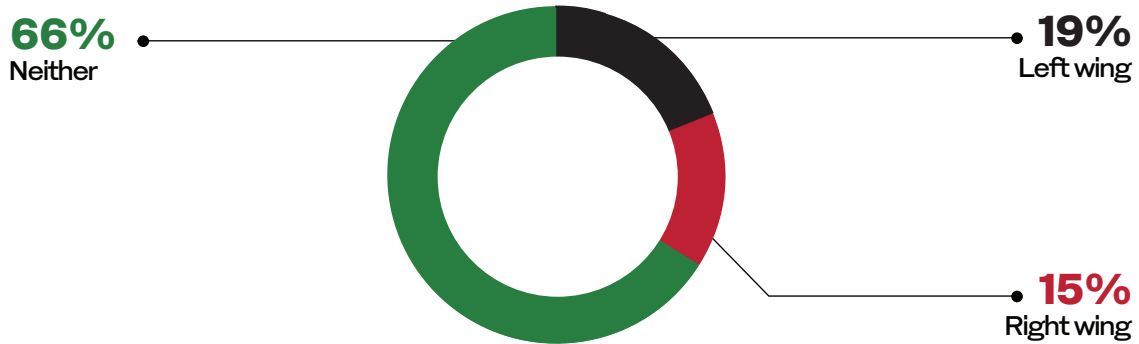
For Palestinians, the perceived lack of trust in their leadership was coupled with a lack of affiliation with a specific faction for 63 percent of respondents, who could not see themselves being represented by Fatah or Hamas.





## 10. What type of Israeli government is more likely to sign a peace deal?

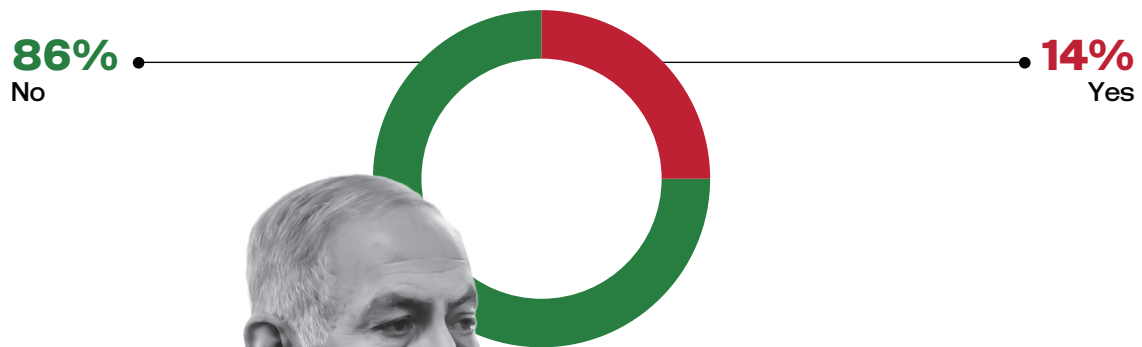
Most Palestinians (66 percent) believed that neither a right- nor left-wing government would make a difference to the likelihood of signing a peace deal.



\* These percentages are based on respondents who provided an opinion.

## 11. Do you think the current right-wing Israeli government under Benjamin Netanyahu is serious about signing a peace deal with Palestinians?

A proportion of 86 percent believed that there was no chance the current Netanyahu-led cabinet was serious about signing a peace deal with the Palestinians.

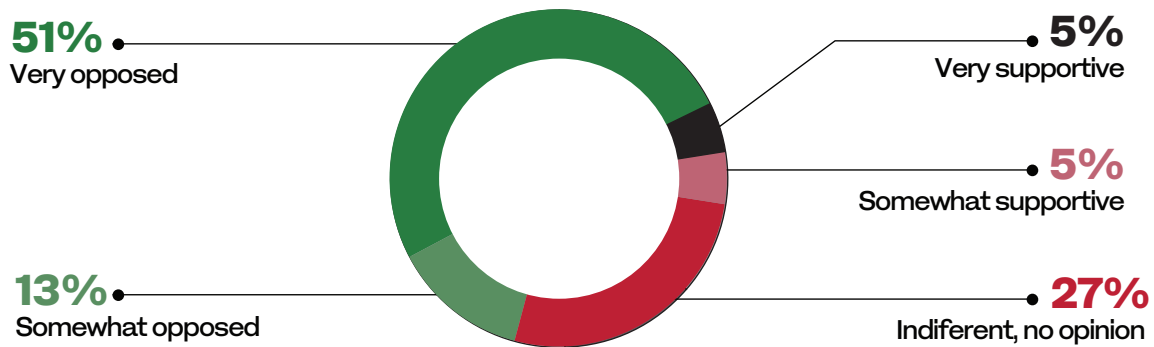




# Abraham Accords

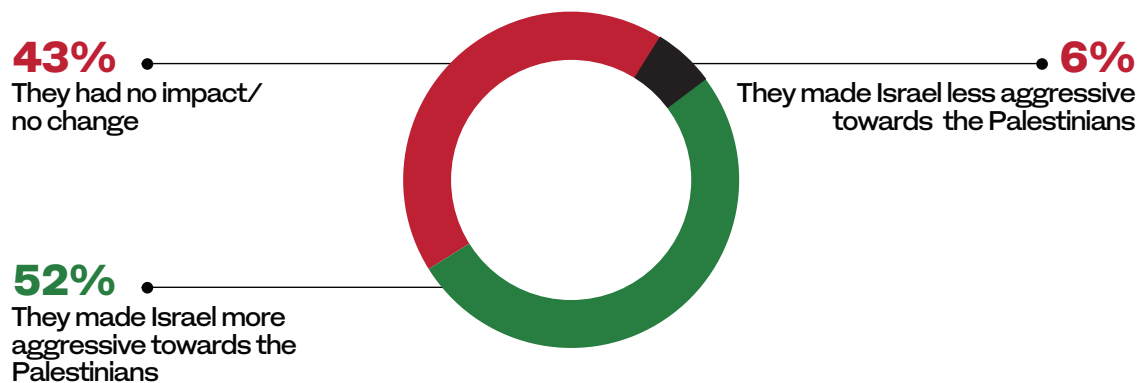
## 12. How supportive were you of the Abraham Accords countries (UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco) unilaterally normalizing ties with Israel without resolving the Palestinian issue first?

- Almost two thirds (64 percent) of interviewed Palestinians opposed the Abraham Accords, which prioritized unilaterally normalizing ties with Israel before resolving the Palestinian issue.
- A total of 63 percent of the 18–24-year-old respondents were extremely opposed to the Accords, and about one third of females (32 percent) in the sample felt indifferent.



## 13. How do you think the Abraham Accords impacted the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Palestinians seem to be polarized over how the Accords had affected the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with half of the respondents (52 percent) blaming the Accords for increased Israeli aggression toward them and 43 percent not seeing much of an impact.





# The People Have Spoken: What Palestinians Think

**T**o mark the 75th anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba, which occurred on this day in 1948, the Arab News Research and

Studies Unit decided to commission leading global polling firm, YouGov, to conduct our latest landmark study: Prospects, Peace, and Politics. Where do Palestinians stand?

The poll — which included 953 respondents of both genders with ages ranging from 18 to 45 — within the Palestinian Territories, comes at a time where there is little optimism of achieving peace or justice for them.

This is due to facts on the bitter reality on the ground which includes divisions among Palestinians themselves, an ultra-right-wing government in Israel, and a current lack of a serious global effort to move the status quo forward.

Still, it is now more important than ever before to obtain credible data and insight relating to the views and sentiments of the average Palestinians, since their voices are rarely heard — despite that it is their cause that is often being debated worldwide on their behalf.

After 75 years, and with so much grief, failed peace attempts, and a continued illegal occupation, it comes as no surprise that the pulse on the Palestinian street sees itself further from peace — or a form of respectable resolution — than ever before.

Indeed, it reveals a painful reality that the average Palestinian has no confidence in his/her own government — with 75 percent stating that their current leadership was incapable of negotiating peace. The same applied to the current Israeli government, for



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which 86 percent felt was not serious about signing a peace treaty.

Unsurprisingly as well, the majority of Palestinians (66 percent) did not trust any Israeli government — neither left-wing nor right-wing — to successfully reach a peace agreement with their government.

Interestingly too, most respondents surveyed (63 percent) found themselves relating neither with Fatah nor Hamas.

The study showed that while the two-state solution was still the preferred option for the majority, a significant number of Palestinians said they would not mind a federal option (21 percent), merging into one state and getting Israeli citizenship (13 percent), or going back to live under full occupation (11 percent).

Unsurprisingly, the US — although a majority of Palestinians admit has the most influence over Israel — was the least trusted as a fair mediator, while a whopping 80 percent welcomed the recent Chinese offer to mediate a solution. Given the so far successful Chinese effort between Saudi Arabia and Iran, this is not a surprise.

As I mentioned back in 2017 when we started our collaboration with YouGov, these polls that our Research and Studies Unit commission are consistent with our wider journalistic mission: To be a credible source of information about the Arab world for regional and international readers, and to provide insights about the Middle East and North Africa to English speakers worldwide.

We hope this Arab News/YouGov study sheds important light on what is in the hearts and minds of Palestinian people and aids decisionmakers in finding a solution for their plight.

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