



Russia-Ukraine

Where do Arabs stand?

Arab News YouGov Poll:

Russia-Ukraine Where do Arabs stand?

In 2017 Arab News, the Middle East's leading international English-language daily, partnered with YouGov, the world's leading online polling firm, to produce a regular series of surveys capturing the pulse and changing dynamics of the Middle East and North Africa. The regular surveys gauge public sentiment on regional and international events, offering credible, actionable insight into international public opinion and Arab affairs

The partnership has completed nine surveys to date, on issues ranging from

Arab political sentiment and Gulf relations with Qatar, to the Arab image in the US and how Arabs view Japan.

The following executive summary outlines the results of an Arab News/YouGov pan-Arab survey on attitudes toward the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The poll, the ninth in the series, sought to understand how Arabs across 14 countries in the Middle East and North Africa viewed the conflict in Ukraine.

The findings of the Arab News/YouGov polls appear regularly in the pages of Arab News and on arabnews.com.



Our YouGov Ukraine poll exposes deep Arab mistrust of the West

In 2017, Arab News, the Middle East's leading international English-language daily, formed a partnership with the online polling company YouGov to conduct a series of surveys designed to shed light on regional attitudes to international events, in a region where credible statistics can be hard to come by.

As "The voice of a changing region," we felt it incumbent upon us to take the pulse of public opinion in that region, the better to fulfil our 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.

Today, we report the results of our latest collaboration with YouGov: An examination of attitudes on the "Arab Street" to the conflict in Ukraine. The findings offer illuminating insights on the catastrophe unfolding on Europe's eastern flank that will reverberate far beyond the MENA region.

They suggest apathy and disinterest in the Arab world toward this atrocious conflict; 66 percent of respondents said they had no stance on the war, while those who did choose a side were almost evenly divided — 18 percent backed Ukraine and 16 percent Russia.

Most strikingly, perhaps, the findings lay bare the extent of the distrust of the West across all 14 of the countries covered in the survey. Almost a quarter of the 7,835 people surveyed (24 percent) pointed the finger of blame for the conflict squarely at NATO, while more than one in ten (13 percent) said US President Joe Biden was responsible. Only 16 percent blamed Russia.

This can be attributed in part to Russia's massive investment in its own news channels in Arabic, and to a massive online outreach effort. Even before the beginning of the so-called "special military operation" on Feb, 24, a flood of material across numerous social media platforms, in several languages including Arabic, made the case that Russia



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was responding to NATO expansionism and acting only in self-defense.

But underpinning the widespread Arab skepticism on this issue is not so much the success of Russian propaganda, but rather the steady ebbing away of trust in the West over the past two decades.

The region and its people have witnessed the chaos and suffering caused by the "liberation" of Iraq and the subsequent rise of Daesh, the betrayal of the people of Syria and the abandonment of Afghanistan to the Taliban. As Maryam Forum Foundation co-founder Khaled Janahi pointed out at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos last week, Iraqis are still paying the price for the failures of US reconstruction efforts that have left their country "effectively a failed state."

It is telling, also, that from a regional perspective, NATO and the US, currently in the form of President Biden, are seen as virtually one and the same.

This skepticism toward the West and its motives perhaps also informs the apparent indifference of Arabs to the conflict. Nevertheless, that an overwhelming 66 percent take no stance on such a major international event, with its enormous consequences for the wider world, betrays a worrying tendency toward isolationism that is simply not sustainable in today's global economy.

One issue highlighted in the survey that is close to our hearts here at Arab News is the level of trust in the media covering the conflict. Gratifyingly, with the support of 27 percent of respondents, Arabic media emerges as the most trusted, edging ahead of Western media with 21 percent. But in an era of information overload and rampant fake news, that a third of respondents expressed trust in none of the media reporting on the war should serve as a red flag to news outlets of all stripes.

Today, more than ever, trust in media is not a given, but must be earned.

Methodology

The survey was conducted using an online interview administered between April 26 and May 4 among members of a YouGov panel of more than 8 million individuals across the world who agreed to take part in surveys. An email was sent to panelists selected at random, inviting them to take part and providing a link to the survey. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov.

The total sample size was 7,835 Arabic

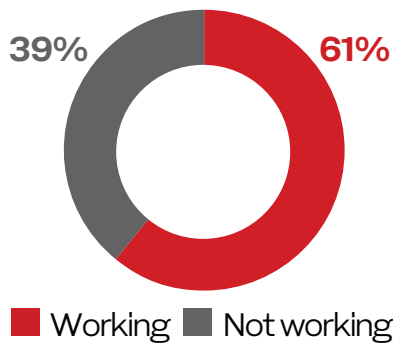
speakers, aged 18 years or above, residing in 14 countries across the Arab world.

The overall margin of error is ± 1.761 percent. The sample was weighted as per the population distribution of all the countries covered. Weighting was also added in line with regional distribution of age groups, and for equal representation of men and women.

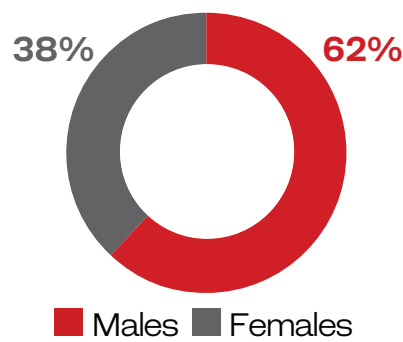
Below is a detailed breakdown of the sample by demographics.

DEMOGRAPHIC SAMPLE OF THE ARAB NEWS/YOUGOV PAN-ARAB SURVEY

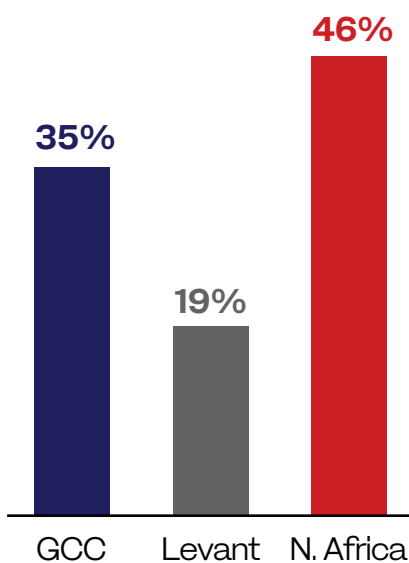
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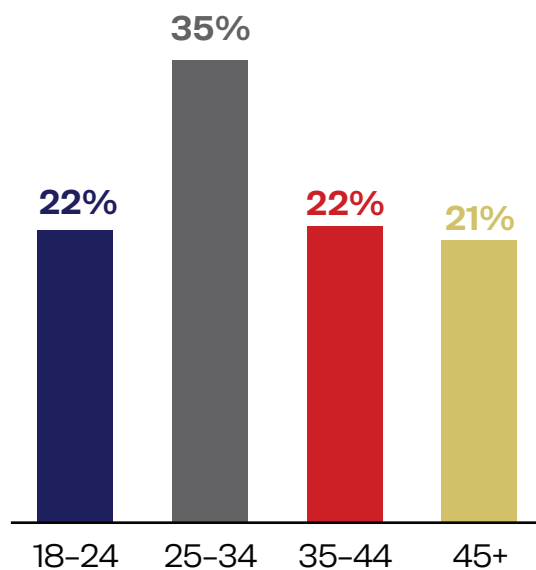
Gender



Region of residence



Age groups

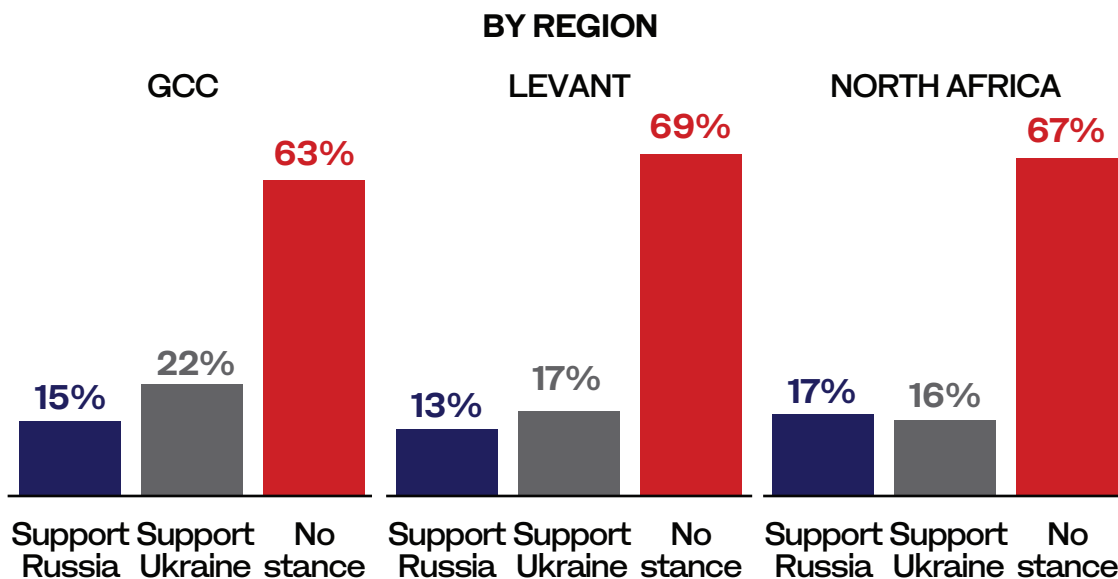
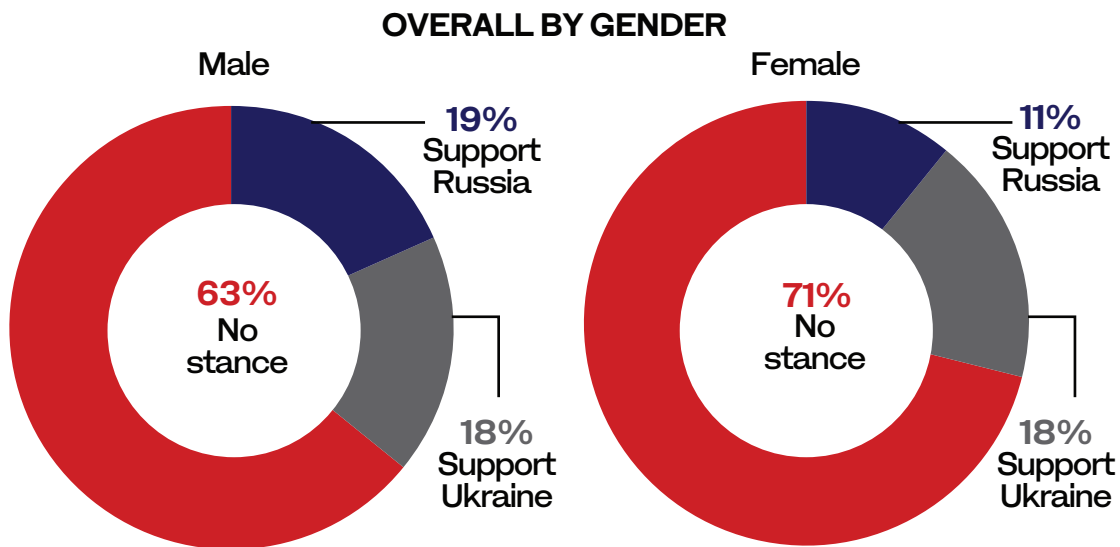
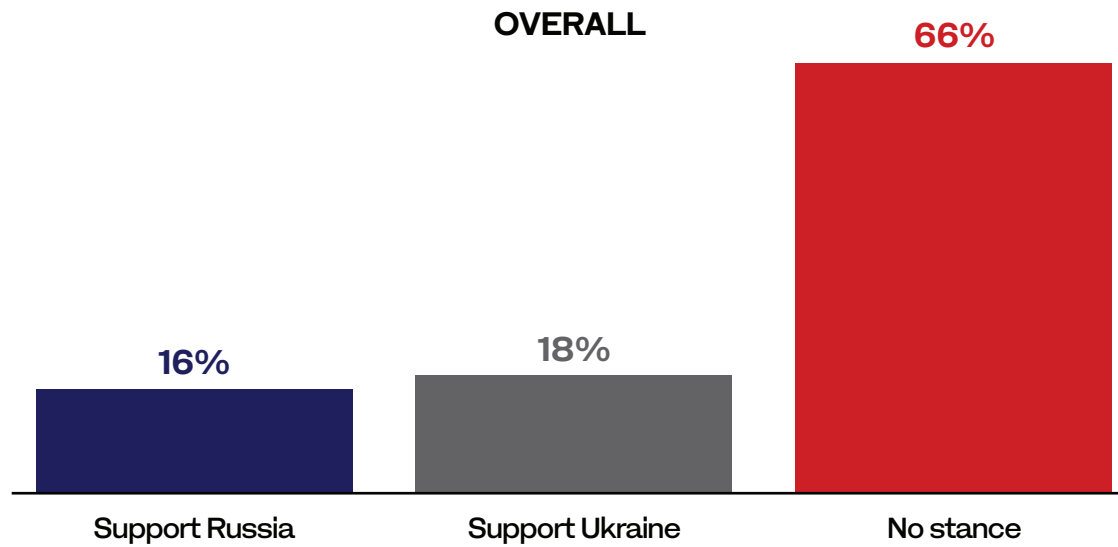






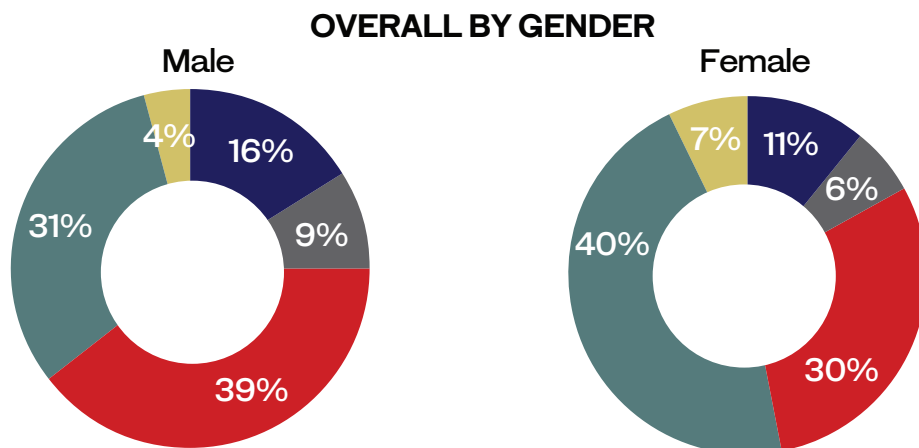
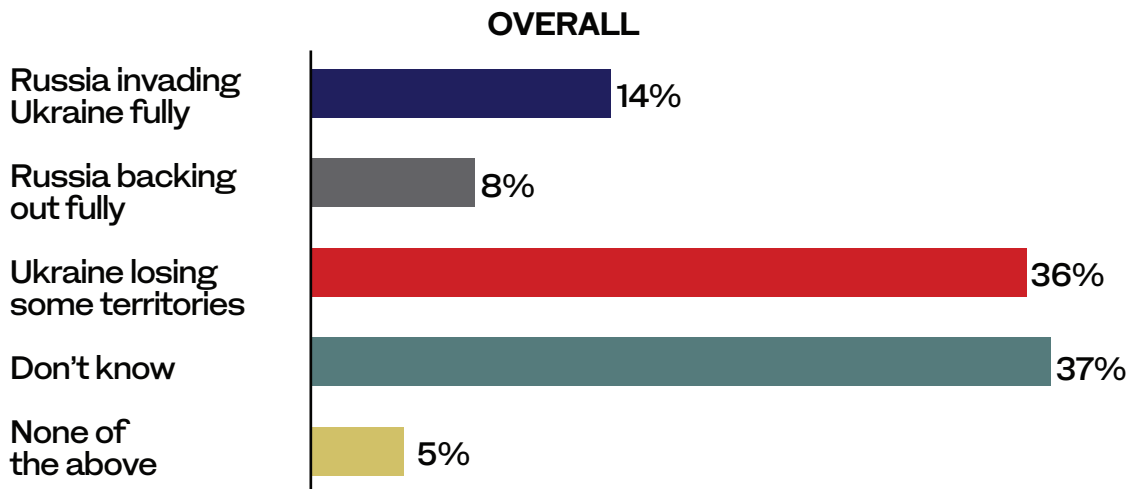
I. Where do you stand on the Russia-Ukraine conflict?

Support for Russia and Ukraine is fairly evenly divided, but the majority (66 percent) take no stance on the conflict.



2. How do you see the conflict ending?

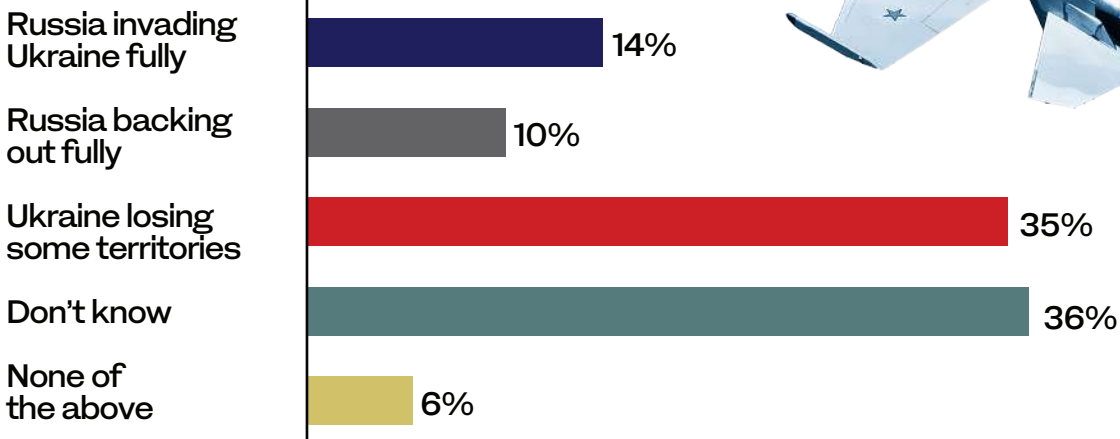
Almost half (49 percent) believe that Ukraine will either lose some territory or will be completely invaded by Russia.



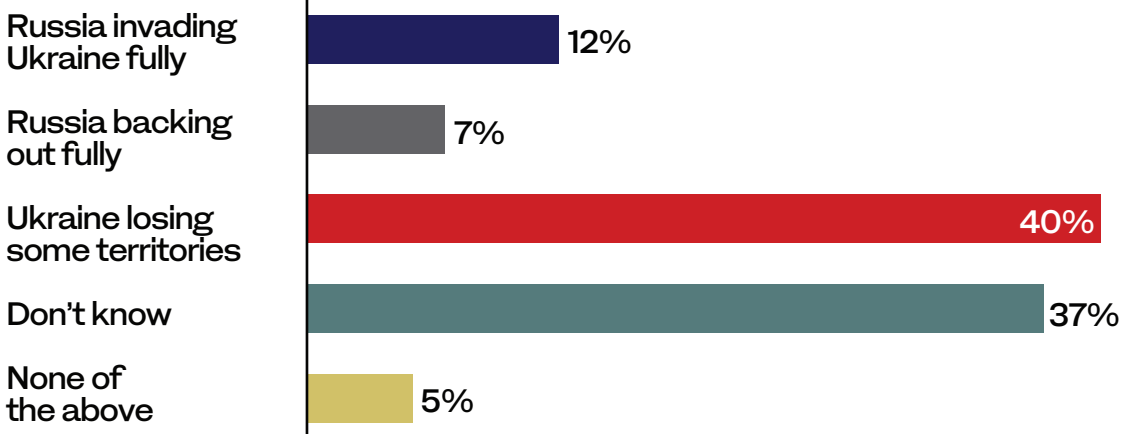


BY REGION

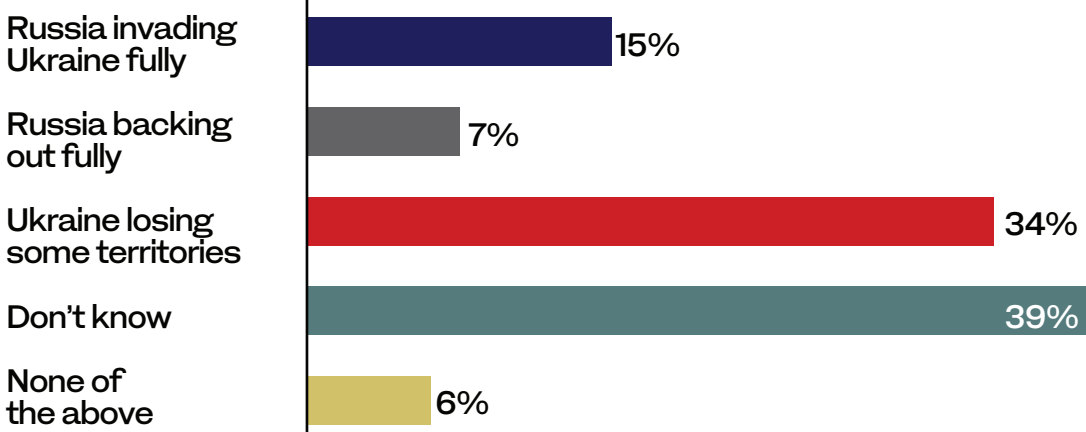
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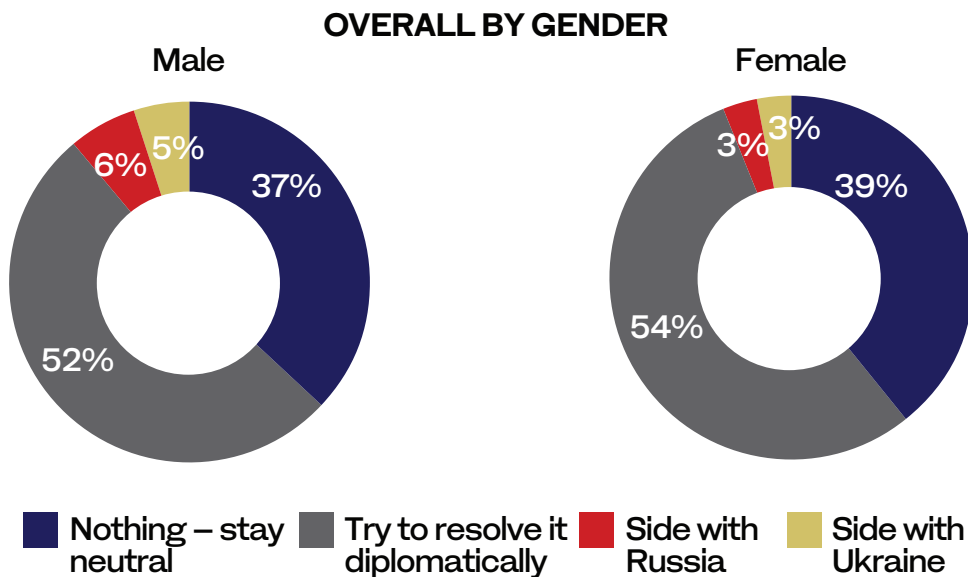
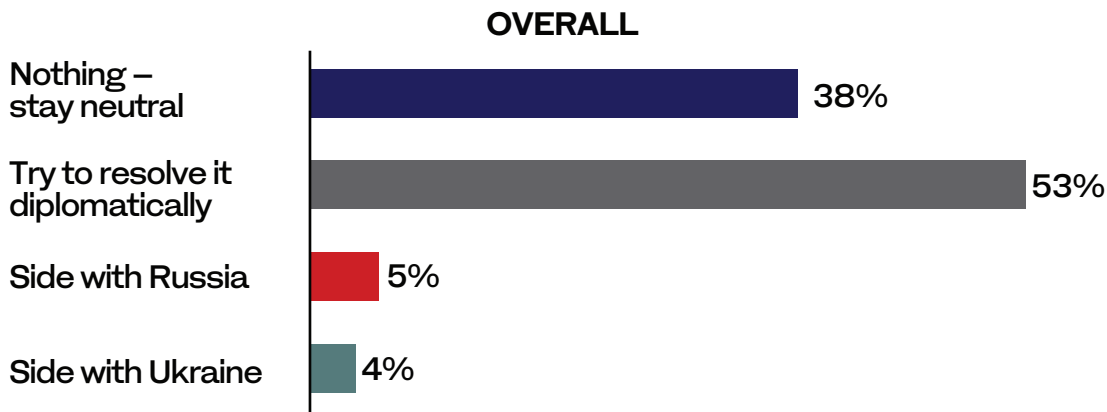
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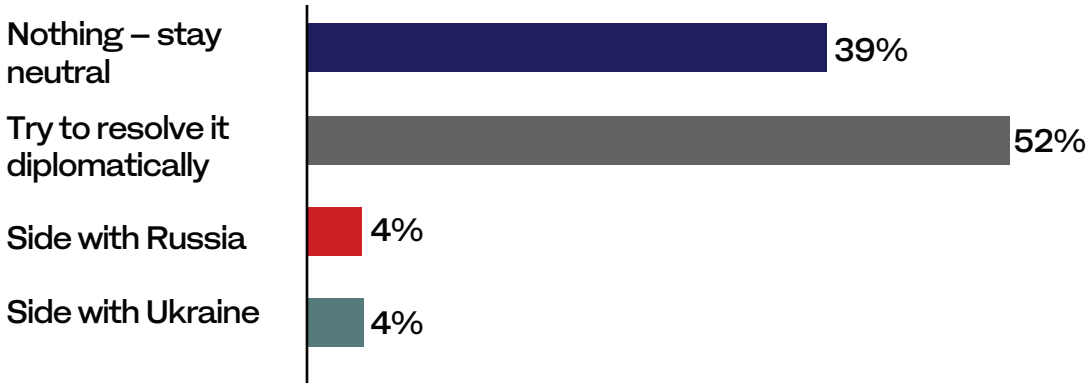
3. What do you think the Arab world should do with regards to the conflict?

More than one-third (38 percent) support maintaining neutrality. But more than half (53 percent) believe that Arab countries should act as mediators to try to resolve the conflict diplomatically.

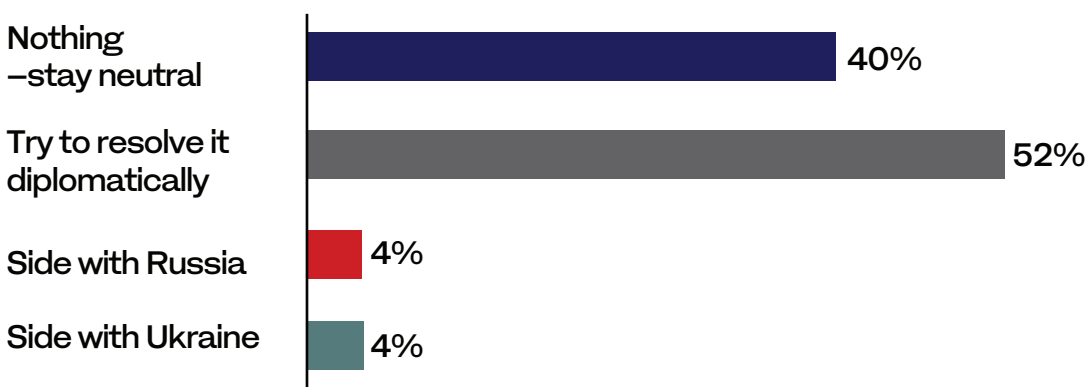


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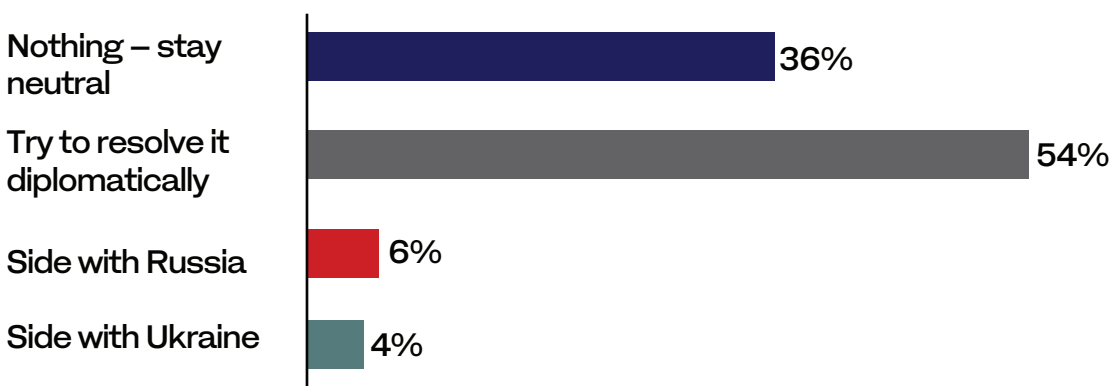
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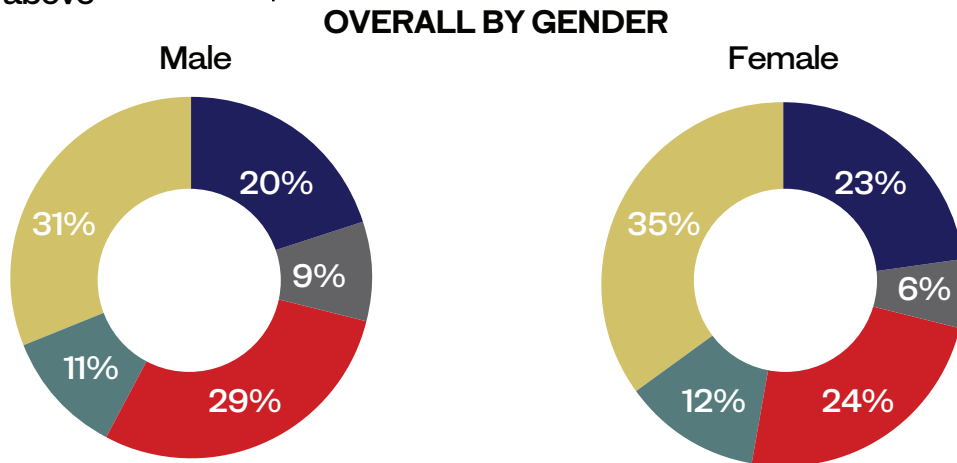
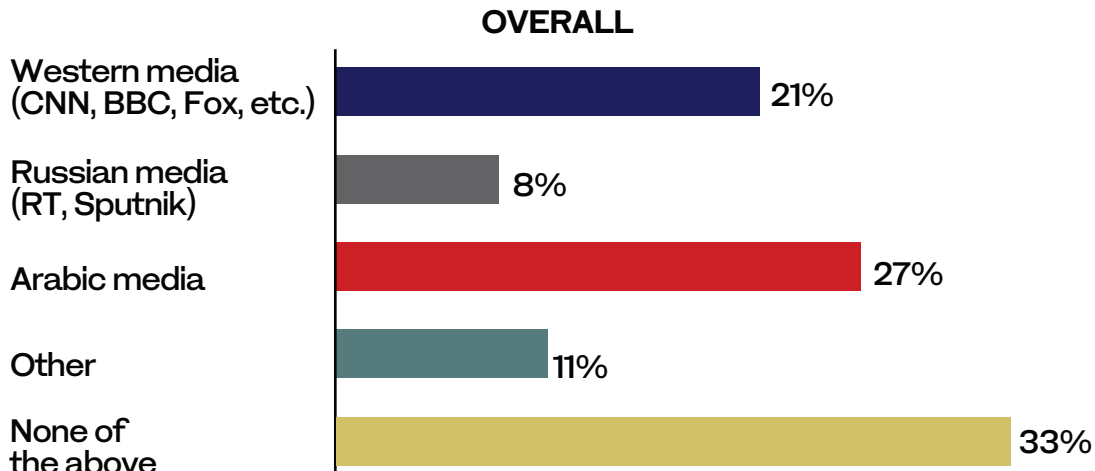
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4. Which media do you trust in covering the conflict?

More than a quarter of respondents (27 percent) have faith in Arab outlets, but one-third (33 percent) trust no media coverage of the conflict.

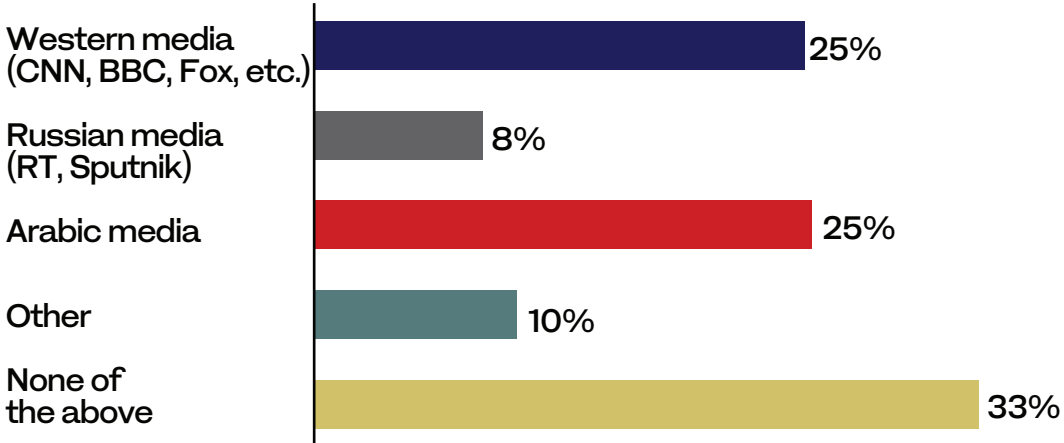


■ Western media (CNN, BBC, Fox, etc.) ■ Russian media (RT, Sputnik) ■ Arabic media ■ Other ■ None of the above

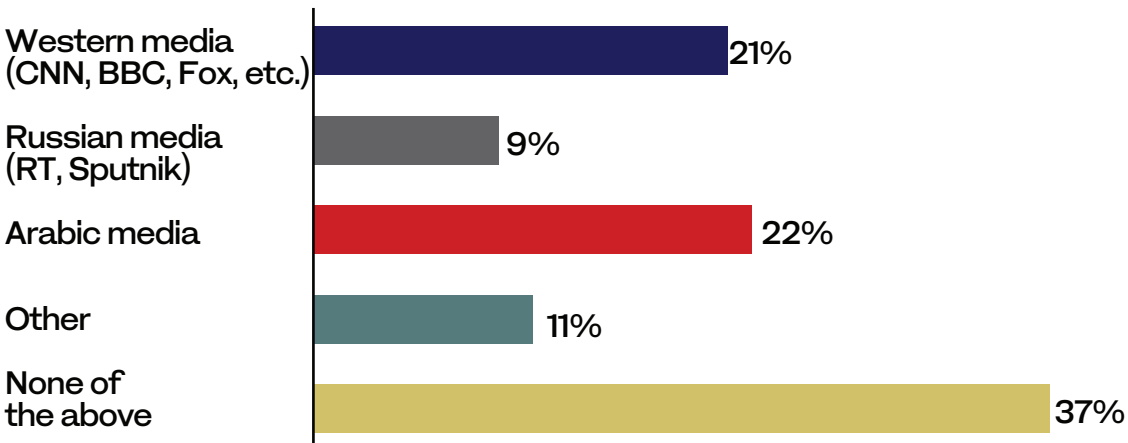


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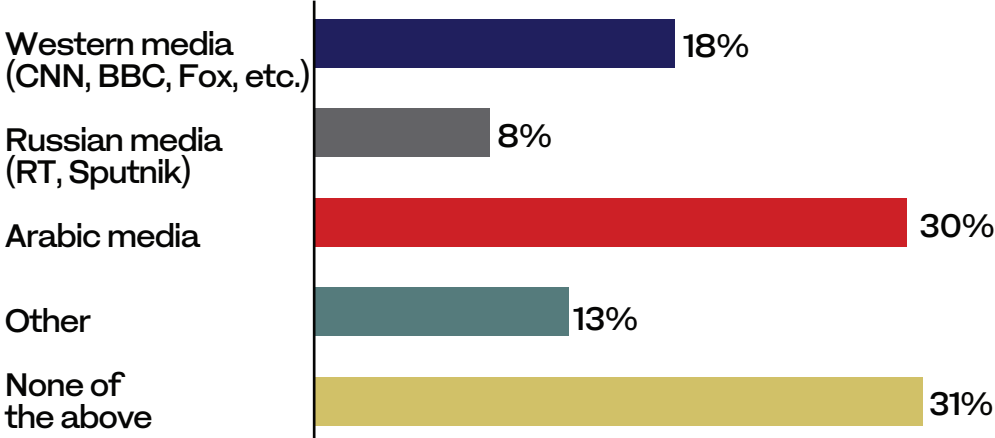
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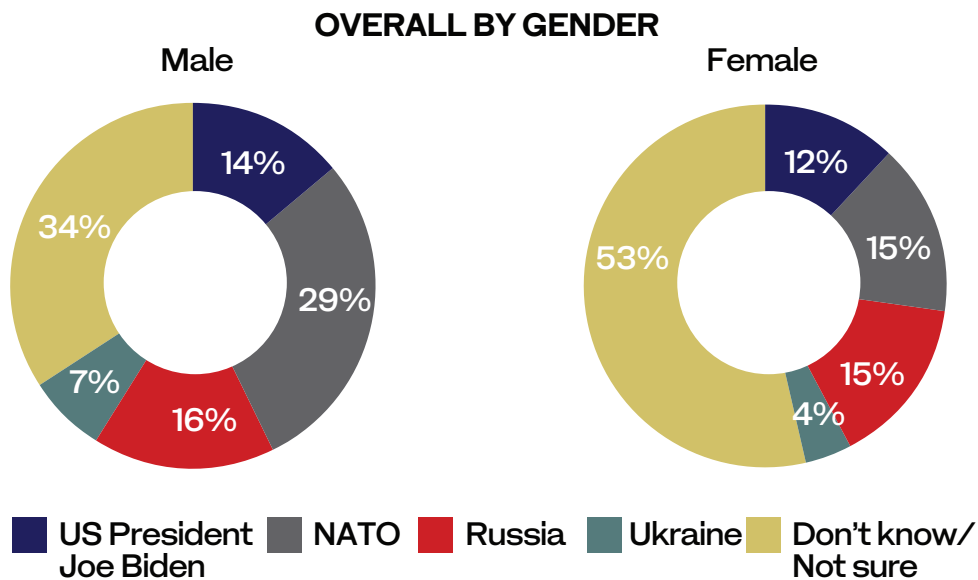
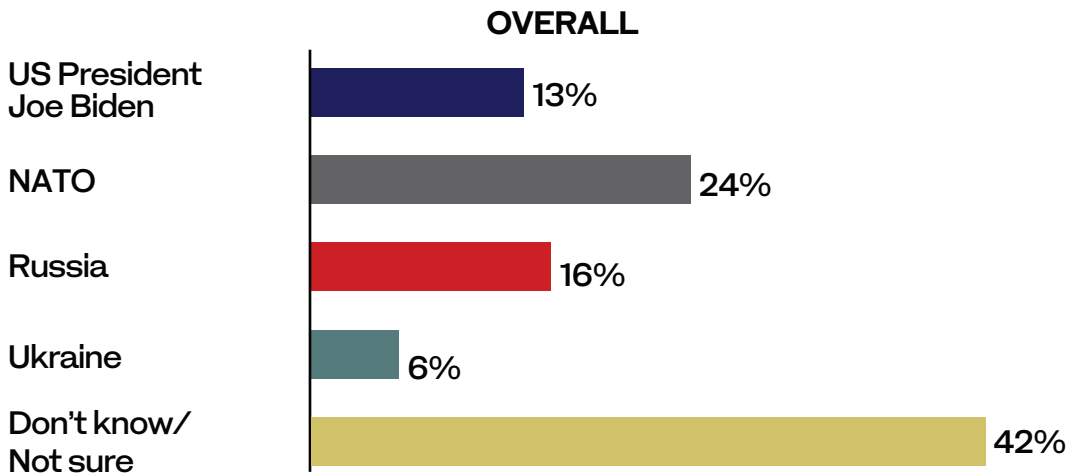
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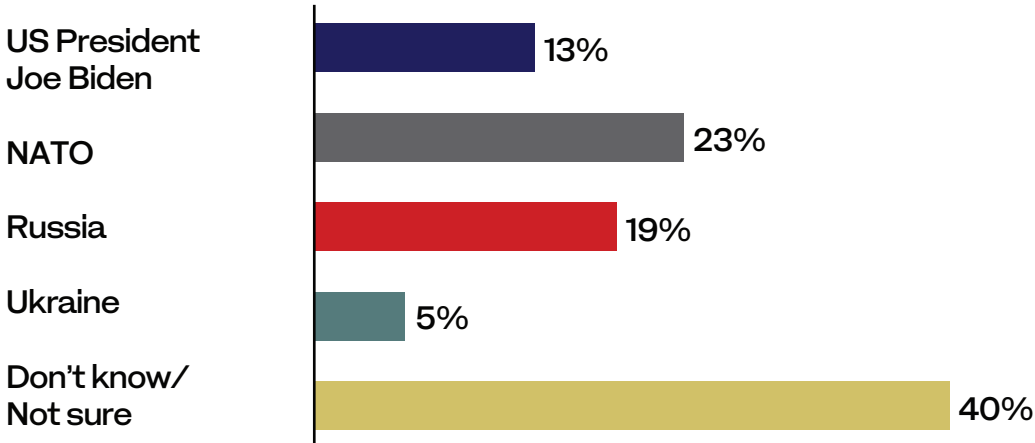
5. In your opinion, who do you think is responsible for the conflict?

Almost a quarter (24 percent) echo the Russian view that NATO is to blame for the conflict, while 13 percent point the finger of blame directly at US President Joe Biden.

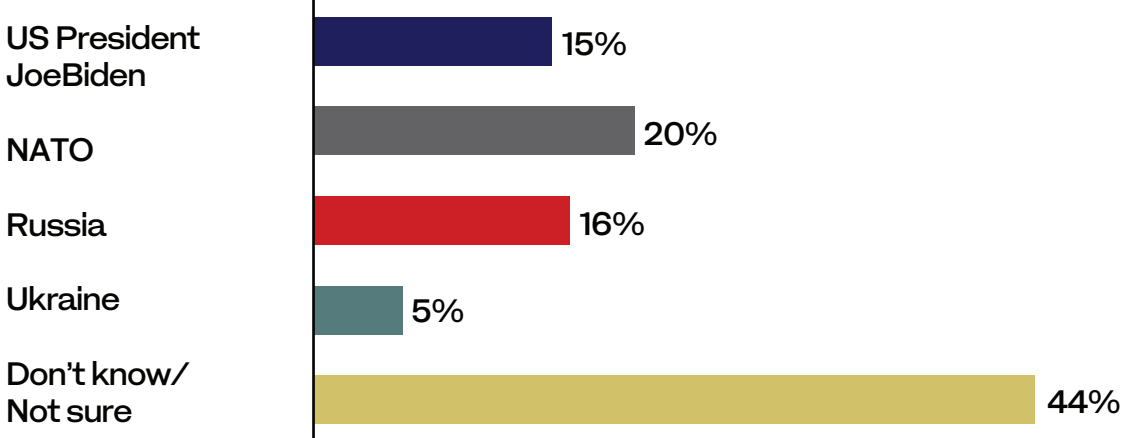


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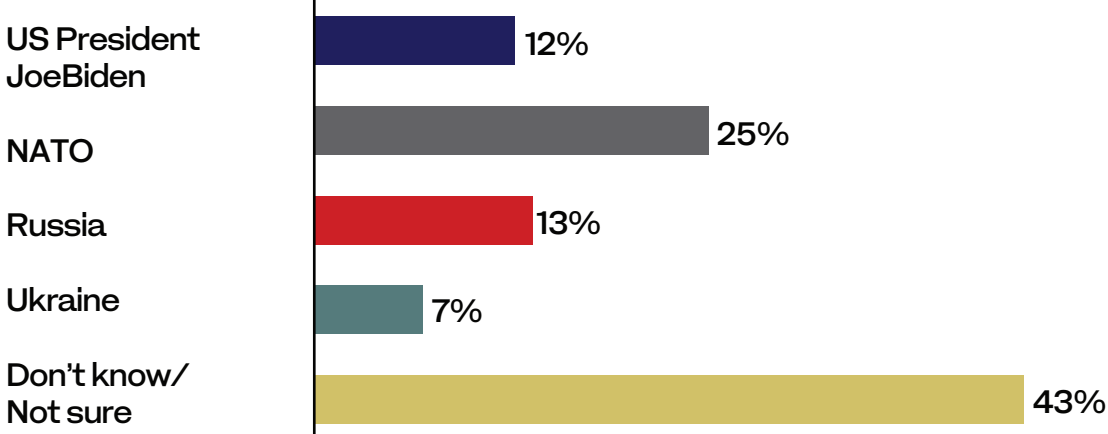
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