

War-time perceptions in the West Bank – Palestine

3-9 May 2025



Context

- ❑ The return of the war in Gaza and continued Israeli aggression in the West Bank are devastating the lives of Palestinians in the occupied territories. As regional and international efforts to establish a ceasefire and plan for what comes next, it is crucial to amplify Palestinian voices on issues that will shape their lives for years to come.
- ❑ The Institute for Social and Economic Progress (ISEP) commissioned and conducted a representative poll in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) between 3 - 9 May, 2025.
- ❑ Some findings of this research are contingent on the events that are still unfolding and might change over the course of the war or after.

Executive summary (1/3)

- ❑ This report is made of seven sections, together composing a comprehensive picture of the Palestinian West Bank public's take on the political reality of the day as well as worries, hopes, and expectations for the future:
 - Section (1) feelings and perceptions during the war
 - Section (2) perceptions of the Palestinian Authority role
 - Section (3) support/ opposition for various national leaders
 - Section (4) preferences for different systems of government
 - Section (5) examines attitudes towards the situation in Gaza and post war rule
 - Section (6) views on emigration and international actors
 - Section (7) assesses support for solutions and strategies for national liberation

Executive summary – main findings (2/3)

- ❑ Helplessness, anger, and hatred are the dominant emotions in the West Bank; strong positive emotions are felt strongly by 1 in 3.
- ❑ Two in five in the West Bank do not know the name of the Prime Minister, and over 40% are completely dissatisfied with the performance of the government.
- ❑ Marwan Barghouthi remains the most popular national figure in the West Bank, and the only leader supported by the majority. Mustafa Barghouthi is also popular among a significant minority.
- ❑ The recent appointment of Hussein Al Sheikh as Vice President is unpopular, mainly due to perceived the “undemocratic” nature of the move.

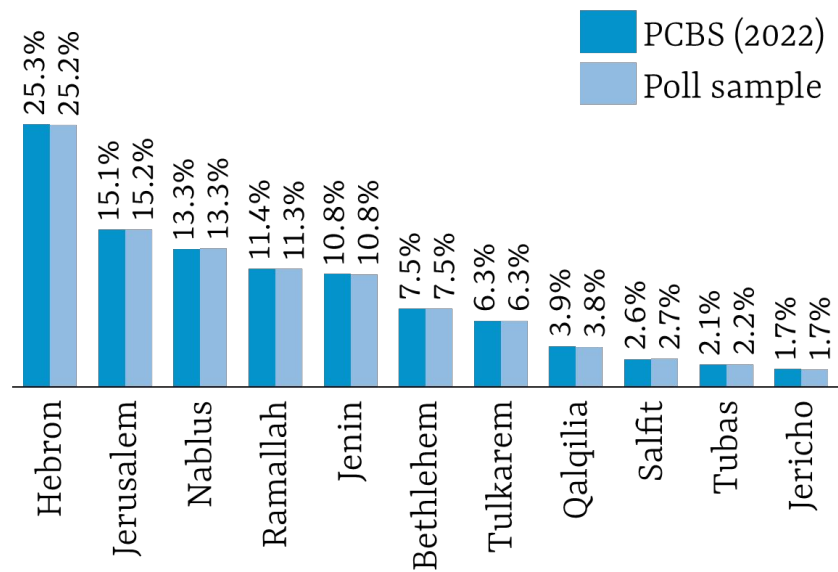
Executive summary – main findings (3/3)

- ❑ In an upcoming election, independents would secure just under a third of the vote; support for Fatah has dropped to its lowest point in years.
- ❑ Most West Bank Palestinians would choose secular over religious rule but many could accept to live under either. A majority sees no contradiction between Islam and democracy.
- ❑ Despite hardships, most Palestinians prefer to remain in their homeland, but those who would emigrate, favor either Canada, Turkey, or the US.
- ❑ Around 50% have heard of France's declaration to recognize Palestine as a state, which may explain the improvement in her popularity.

Sample distribution - Geographical location

Sample distribution

By governorate



Target population:

West Bank (including East Jerusalem)

Aged 15 years or older

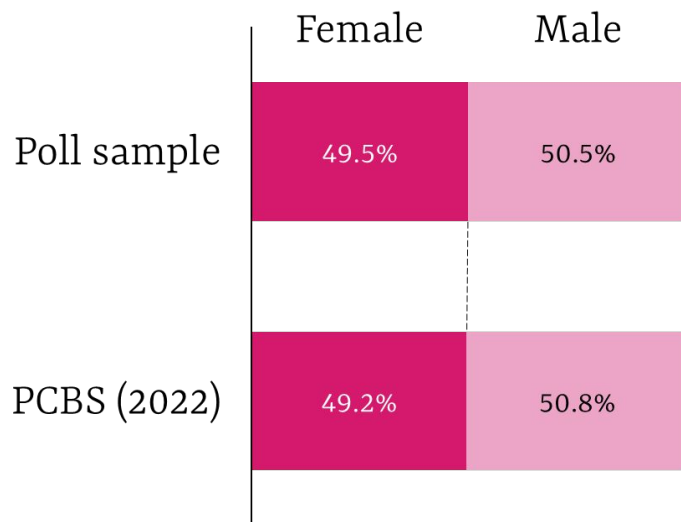
Sample size:

West Bank - 600
respondents from 74 random
locations

Sample distribution - Gender and age

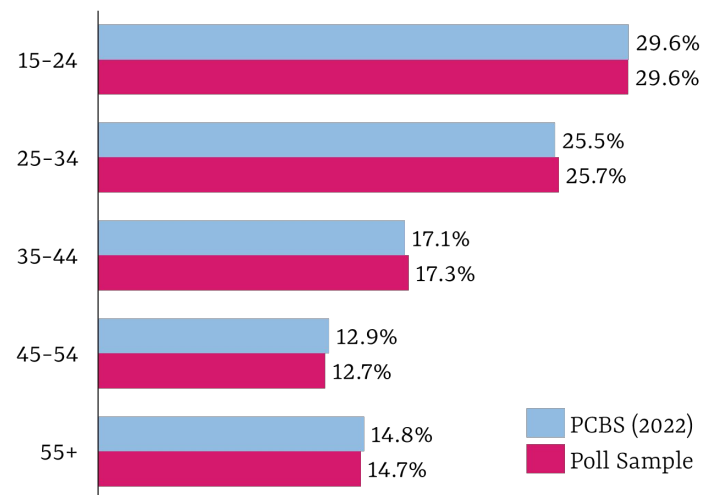
Sample distribution

By Gender



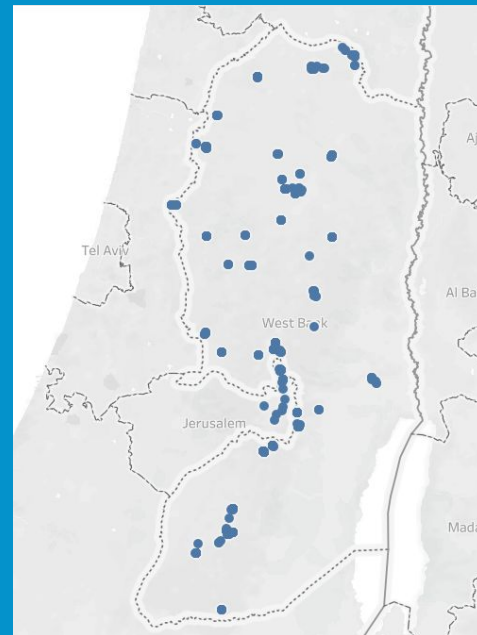
Sample distribution

By age



Methodology

- **Data collection approach:**
- ◆ Street-intercept surveys within counting areas
 - ◆ Face-to-face interviews
 - ◆ 36 close-ended questions
 - ◆ Stratified random sampling

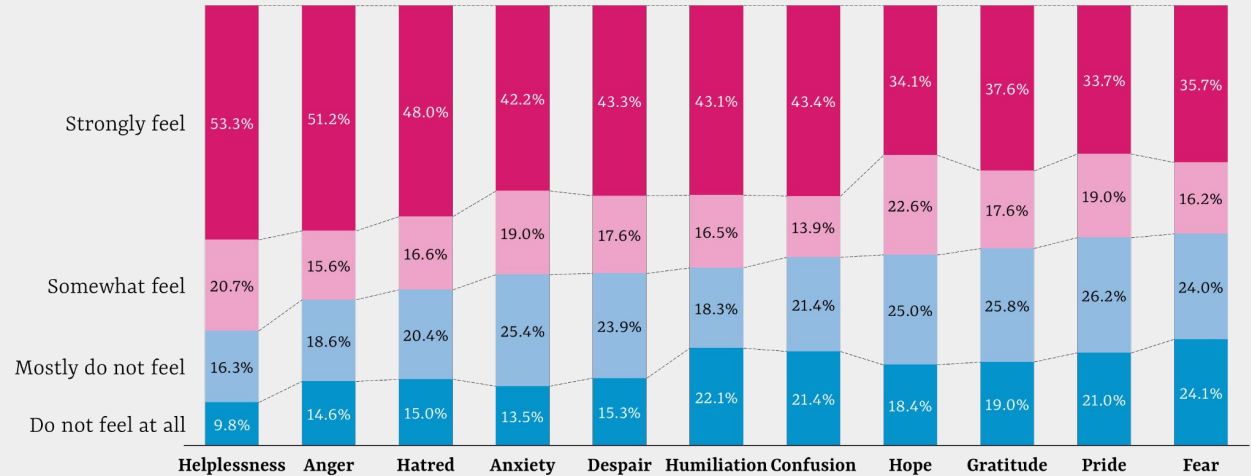


Psychology of war

Feelings and collective hope

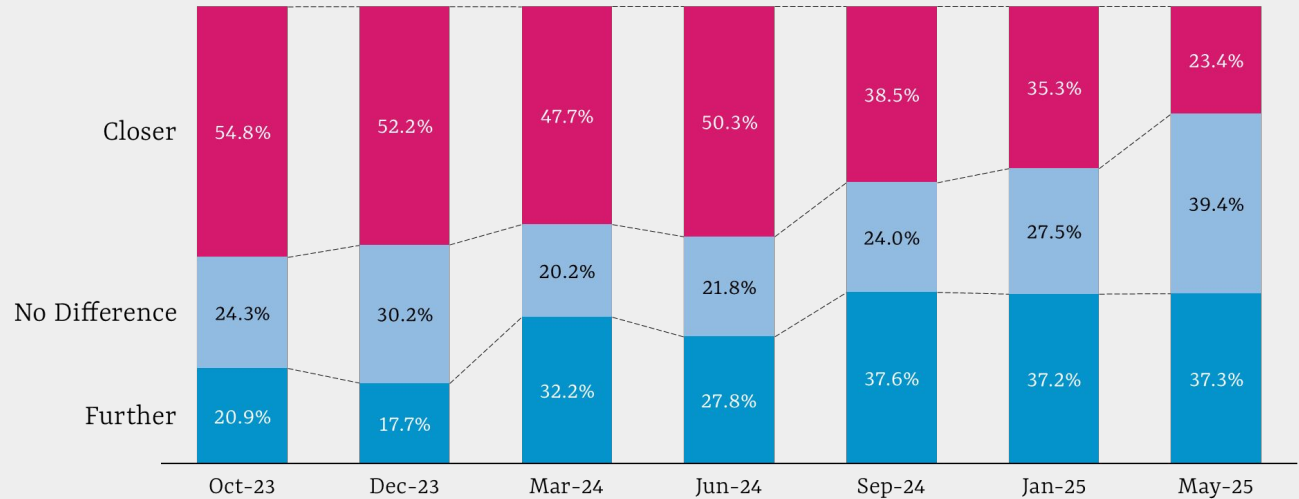
Helplessness is the leading emotion among respondents in the West Bank, followed by anger and hatred

In the current situation, to what extent do you feel the following emotions?



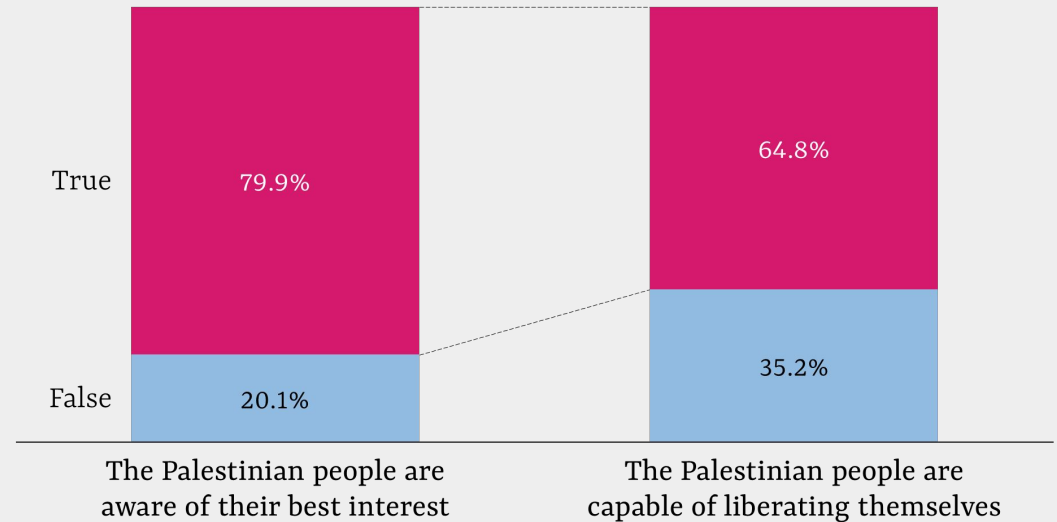
As more time passed without an end to the war, hopes for a closer end to the occupation have significantly declined

Based on recent developments, do you think the end of occupation is closer or further away?



Yet, a majority in the West Bank believes that Palestinians are aware of their interests and have the ability to achieve national liberation

Are the following sentences true or false?



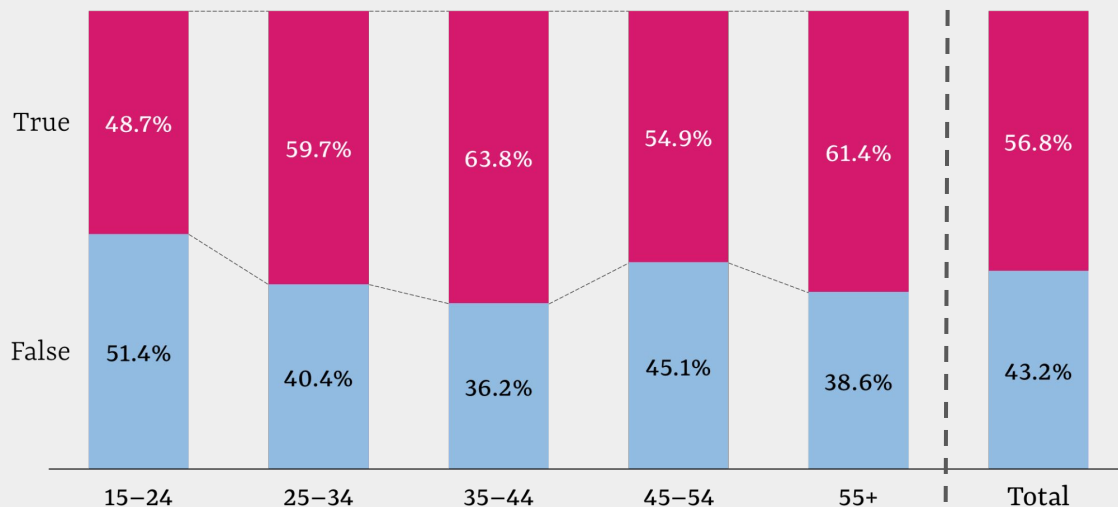
The role of the Palestinian Authority

Approval of government and expectations relating to the PA's future

Over half (56.8%) of respondents believe that the the PA will continue to exist in the following decade

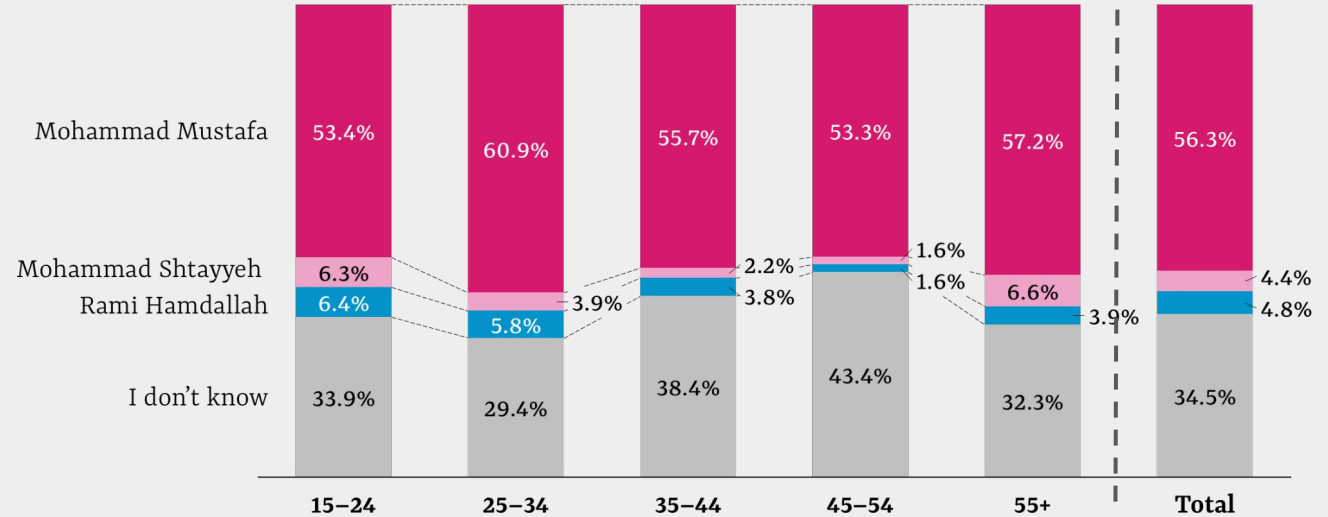
Are the following sentences true or false?

| The PA will continue to exist in the next 10 years



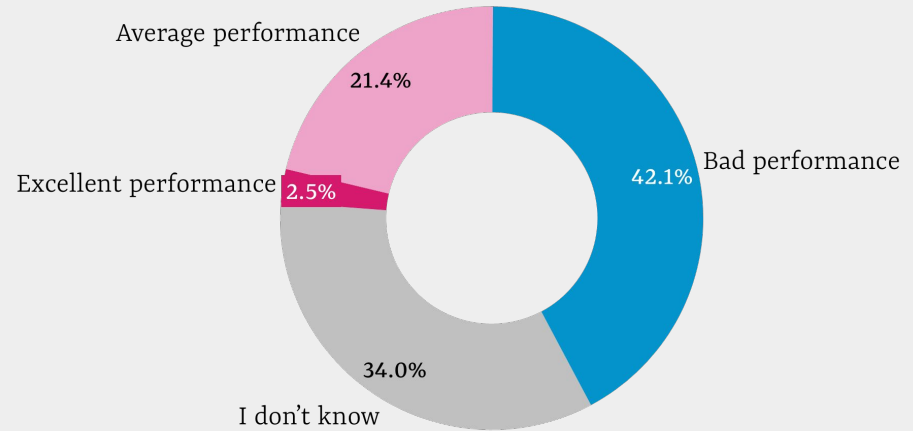
A significant minority (43.7%) in the West Bank and East Jerusalem – do not know who the current prime minister is

*Who is the current
Palestinian Prime
Minister?*



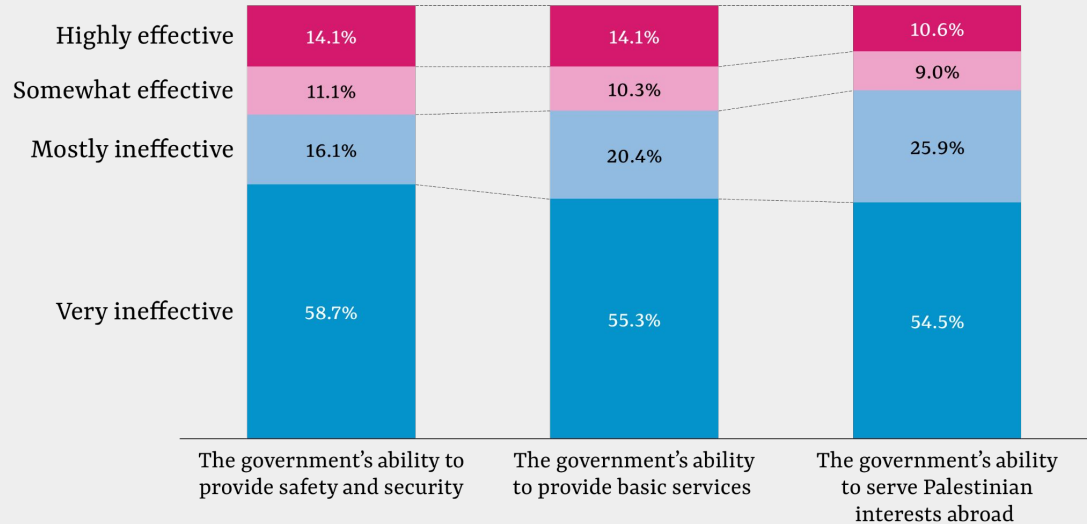
Two in five are dissatisfied with the performance of the current government, and 1 in 5 rate government performance as average

How do you evaluate the performance of the current government led by Mohamed Mustafa?



Over 80% found the government to be ineffective at providing safety, basic needs, and serving Palestinian interest abroad

How do you evaluate the effectiveness of governance in Palestine at the following levels?

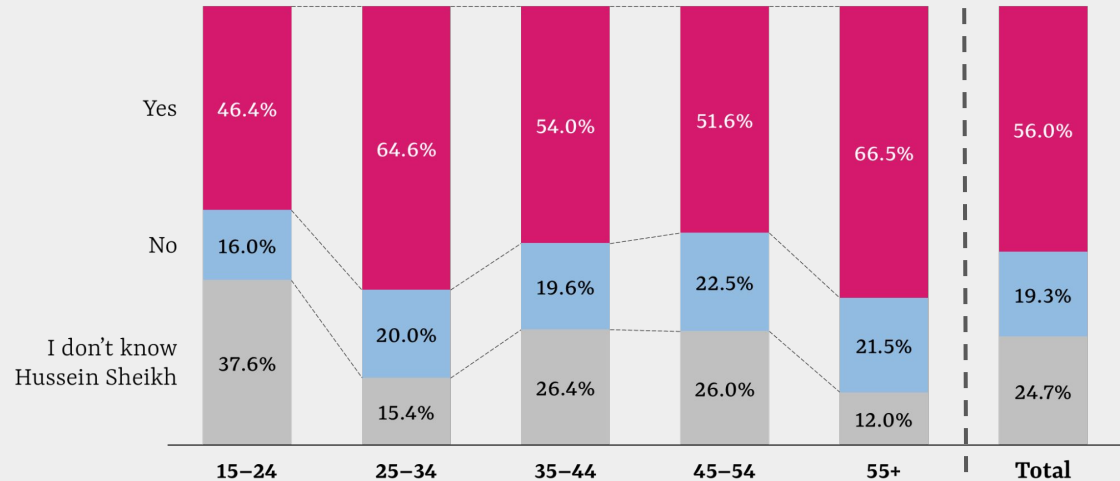


Views on the Palestinian leadership

Support and opposition for Palestinian leaders

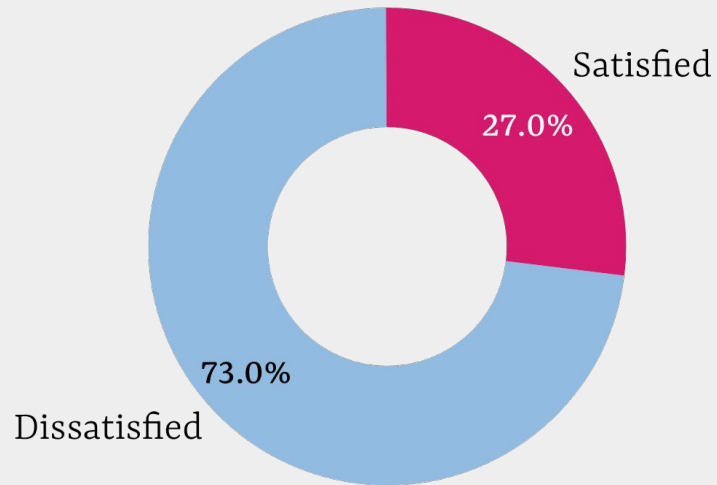
Just over half (56%) of respondents have heard of Hussein Al-Sheikh's appointment as vice president at the end of April

Have you heard about the appointment of Hussein Sheikh as Vice President?



Of those, a large majority (73%) is dissatisfied with the decision

*How satisfied are you
with the decision to
appoint him?*



Dissatisfied respondents cite the 'undemocratic' nature of the appointment as the leading cause for their disapproval

*If you are
dissatisfied, why?*

The decision is undemocratic

57.0%

The person is not suitable for the position

38.0%

He has personal interests that might affect his political decisions

36.5%

His relationship with Israel and the West

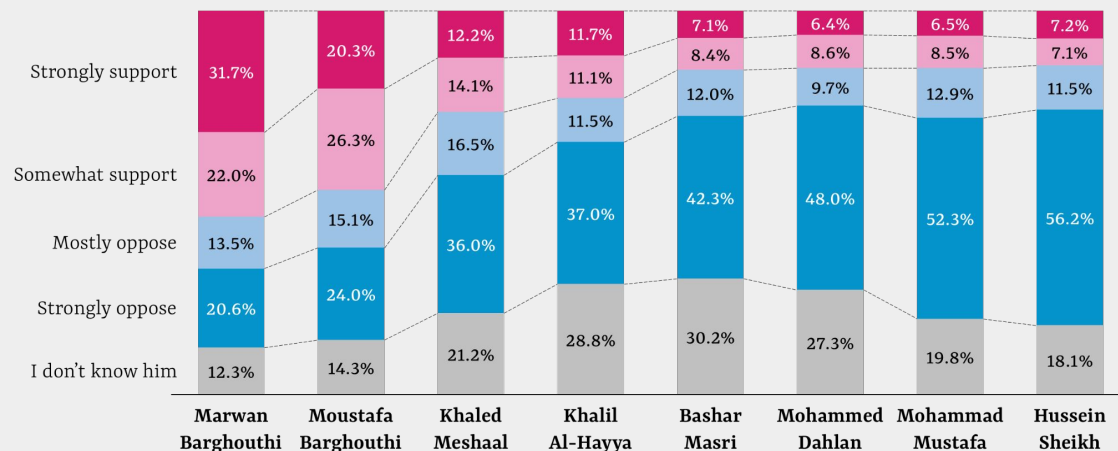
36.2%

Other

22.1%

Marwan Barghouthi is the only leader supported by most (53.7%) in the West Bank, but Mustafa Barghouthi is also popular (46.6%)

How much do you oppose or support these leaders in a post-war referendum?

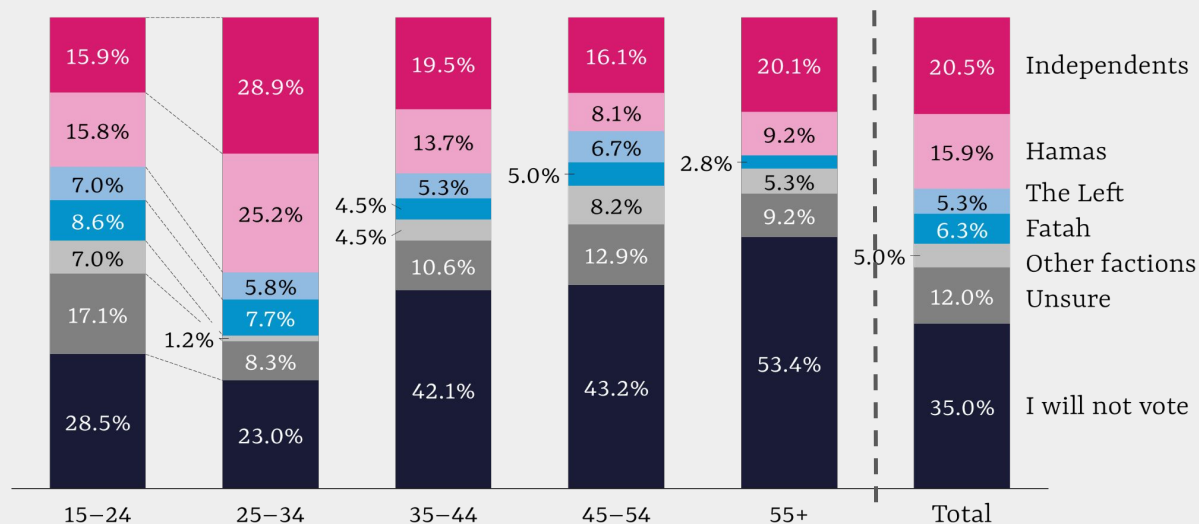


Governance preferences

Voting preferences and nature of the polity

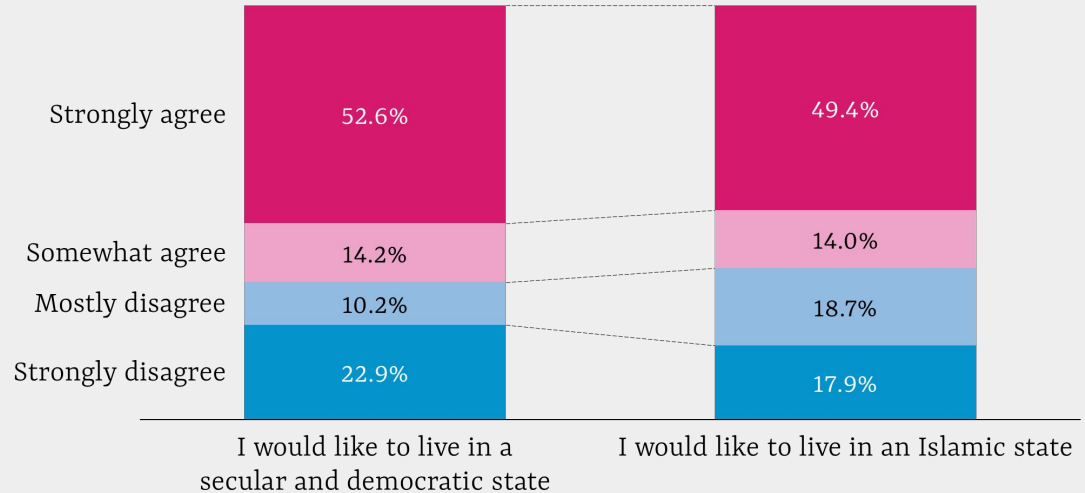
One in five (20.5%) would vote for independents, and support for Fatah is at an all time low (6.3%)

If elections were to be held in the coming months, who would you vote for?



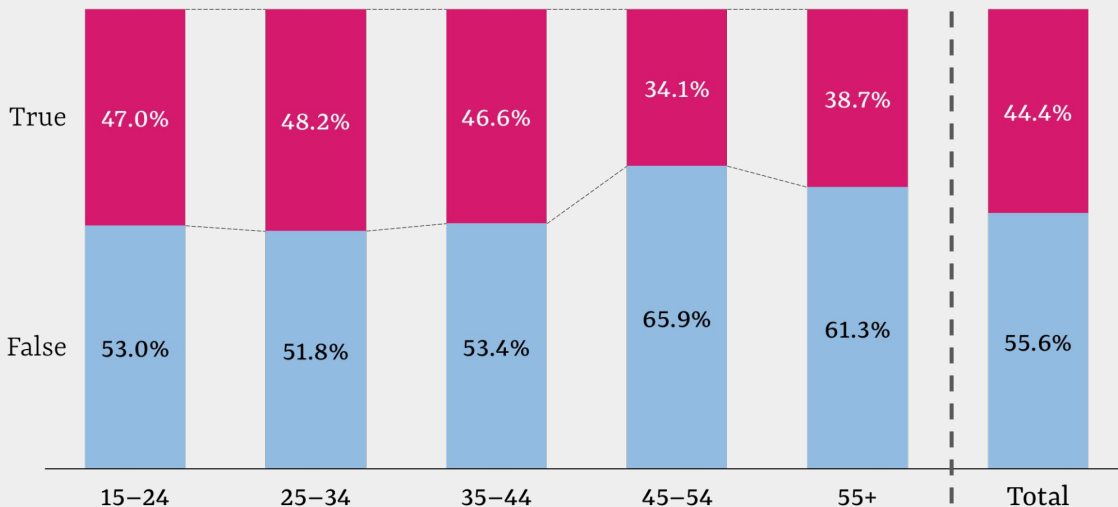
West Bankers have a slight preference for living in a secular state over a religious one, but a majority (59.5%) would live in either

To what extent do you oppose or support these options regarding the system of government in Palestine?



A majority (55.6%) of respondents, especially older age groups (45+), believe that there is no contradiction between Islam and democracy

Are the following sentences true or false?
| There is contradiction between Islam and the democratic system

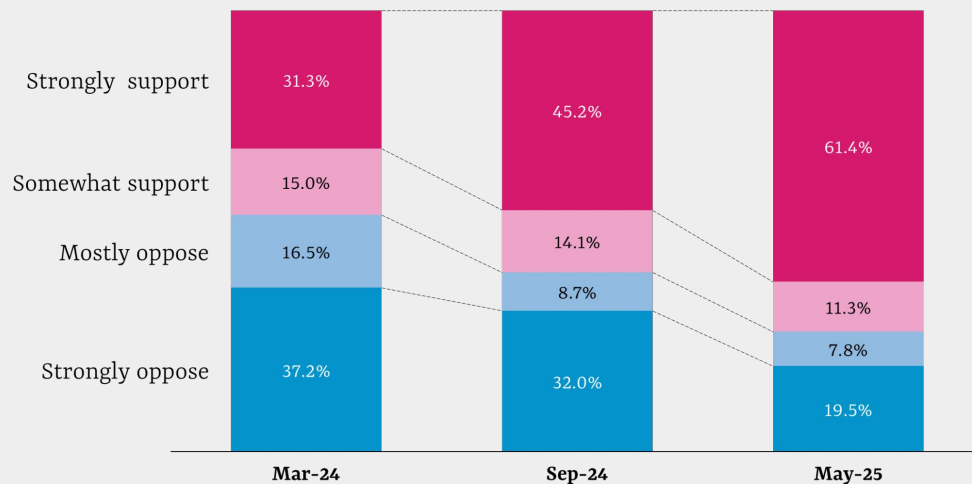


Self-determination

The overwhelming majority (72.6%) would support the two state solution in a post war referendum

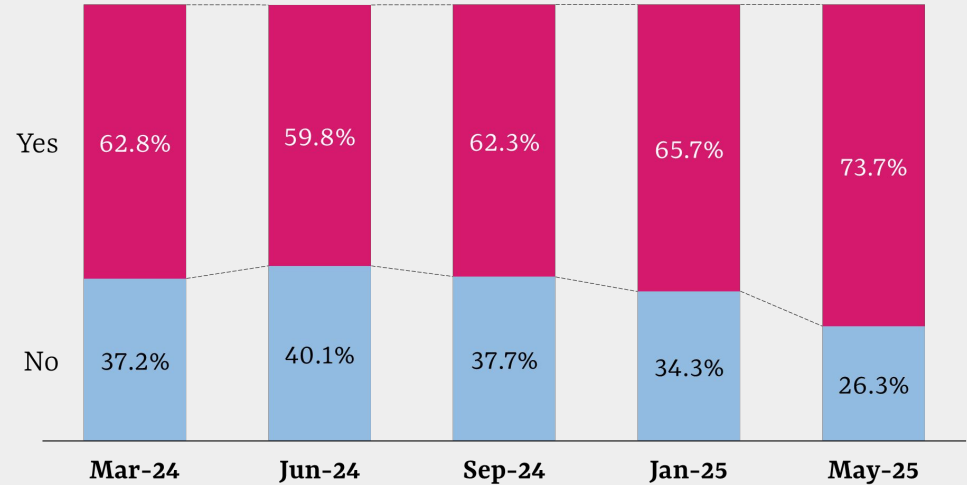
How much do you oppose or support the following solutions in the post-war referendum?

| A Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital



...and willingness to accept the solution has increased over the past four months

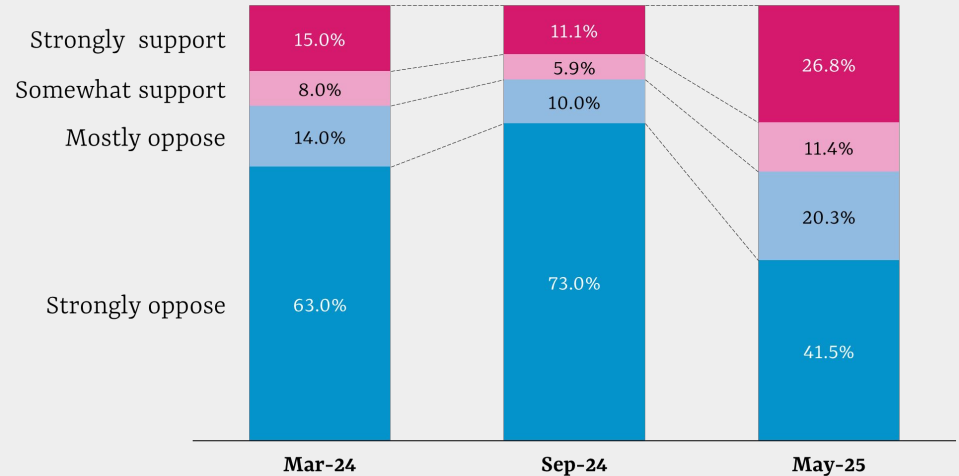
In the event of serious negotiations, would you accept a state on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as the capital?



Additionally there has been an increase in support for the one state solution

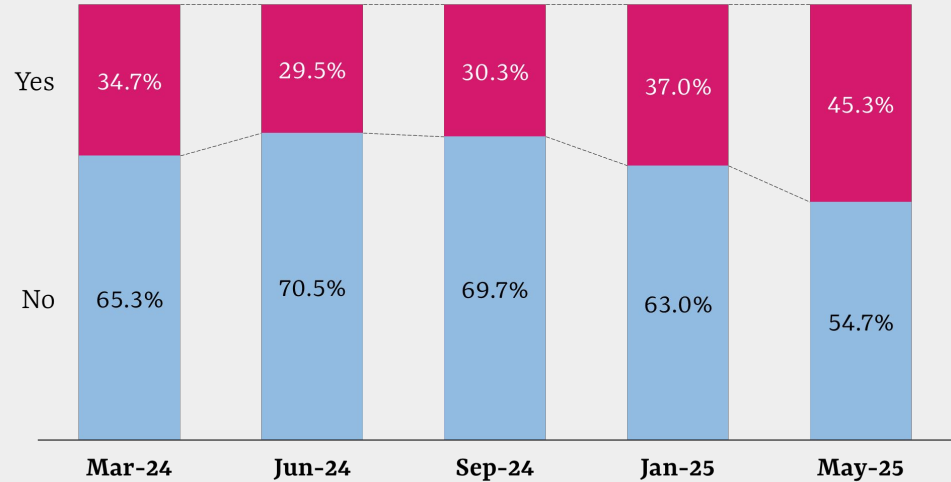
How much do you oppose or support the following solutions in the post-war referendum?

| One state where
Palestinians and Jews enjoy
equal rights and freedoms



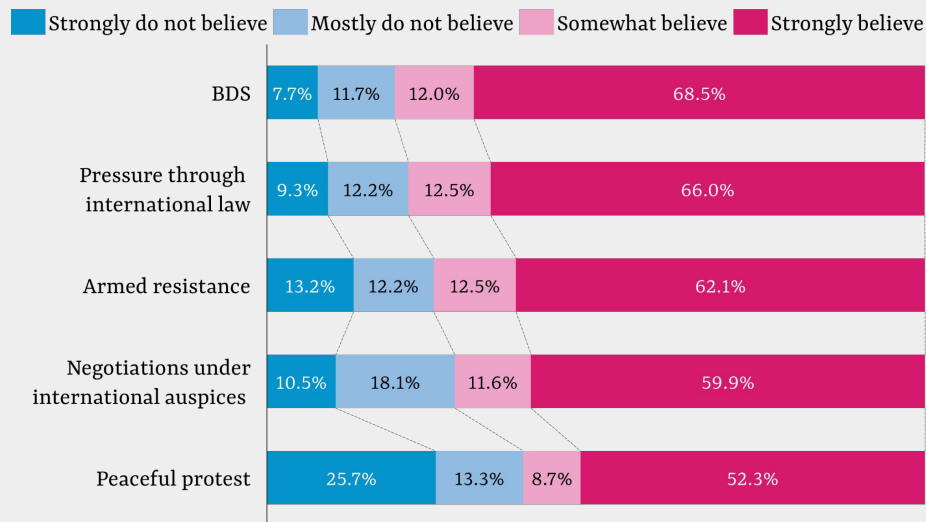
...willingness to accept the one state solution has also been steadily increasing

In the event of serious negotiations, would you accept living in one state with equal rights and freedoms between Palestinians and Jews?



Boycotting, divestment, and sanctions are the most popular method to achieve positive results in the struggle for liberation

To what degree do you believe each of the following actions can achieve positive results concerning the Palestinian struggle for liberation?

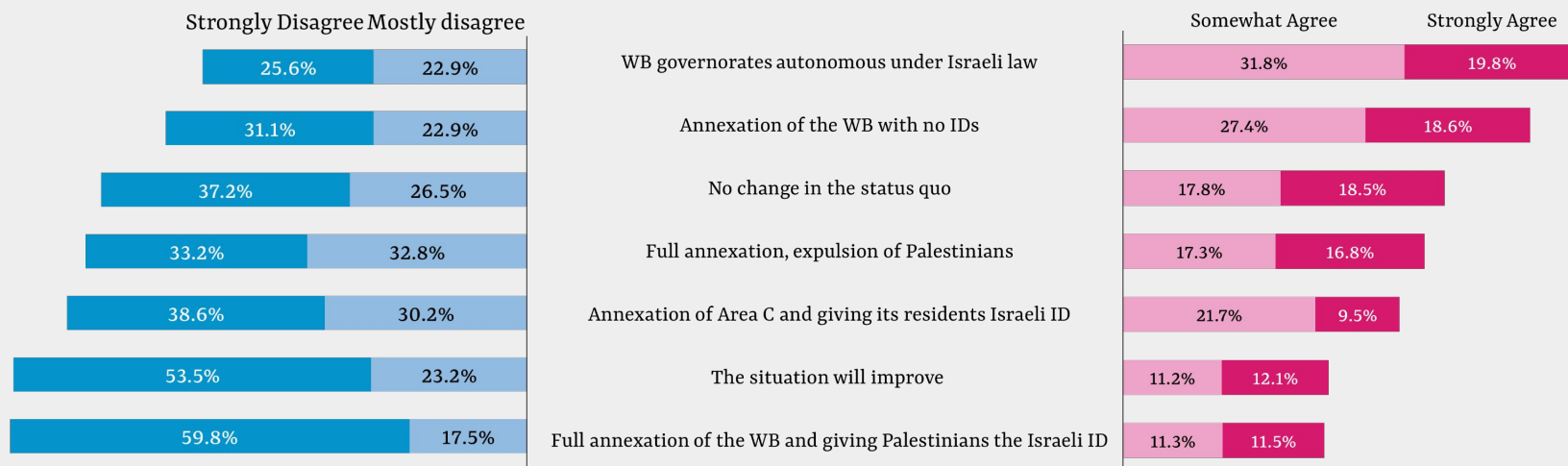


The Future in the West bank and Gaza

Expectations for governance, aid, and political transition

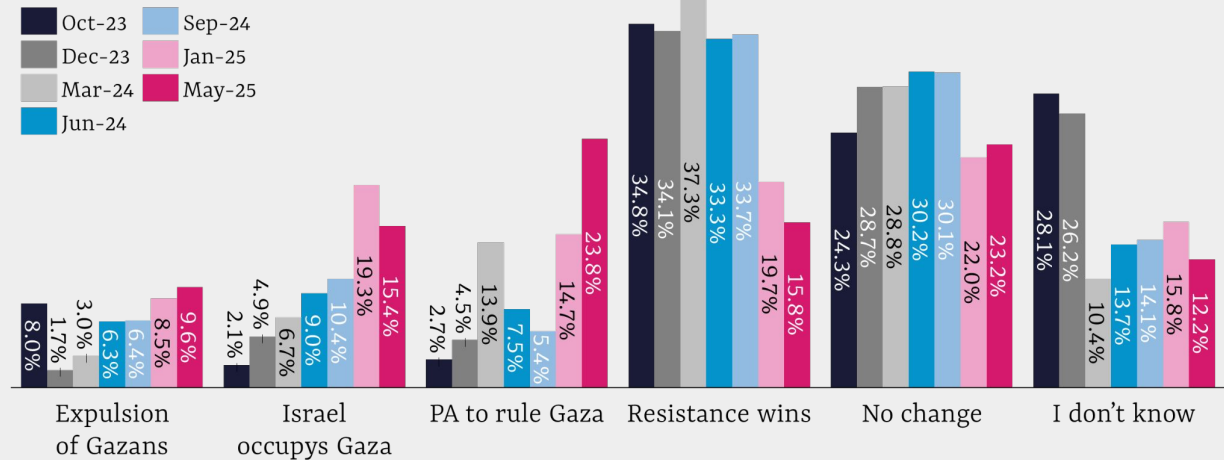
One in two people (51.6%) believe that the future of the West Bank is the governorates being autonomous under civil rule

How likely are the following scenarios when it comes to the future of the West Bank?



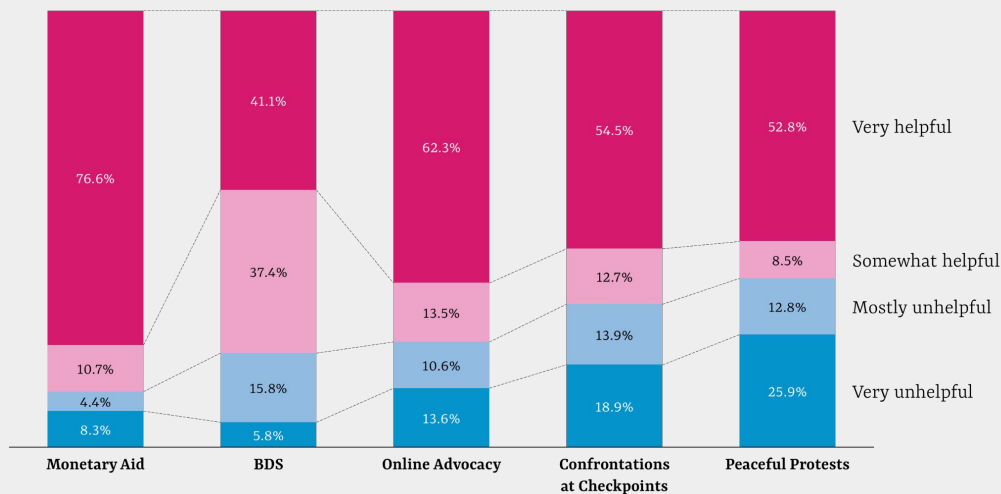
There has been an increase in respondents believing that the war will end with the PA taking over the Gaza Strip

In your opinion, what is the most likely outcome of the war in the Gaza Strip?



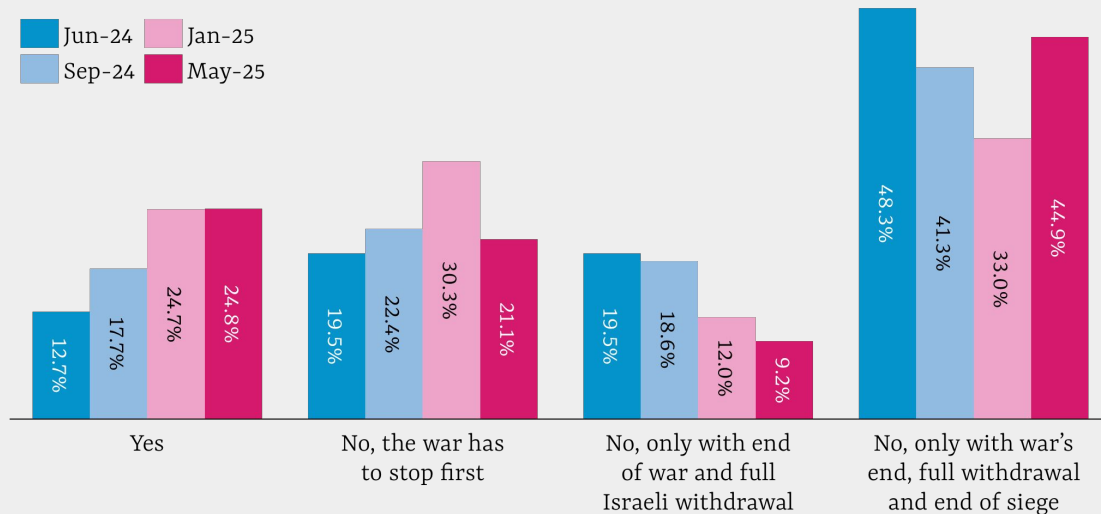
...and monetary aid continues to be perceived as the most effective measure to help Gaza Palestinians

How effective are the following measures when it comes to helping people in Gaza?



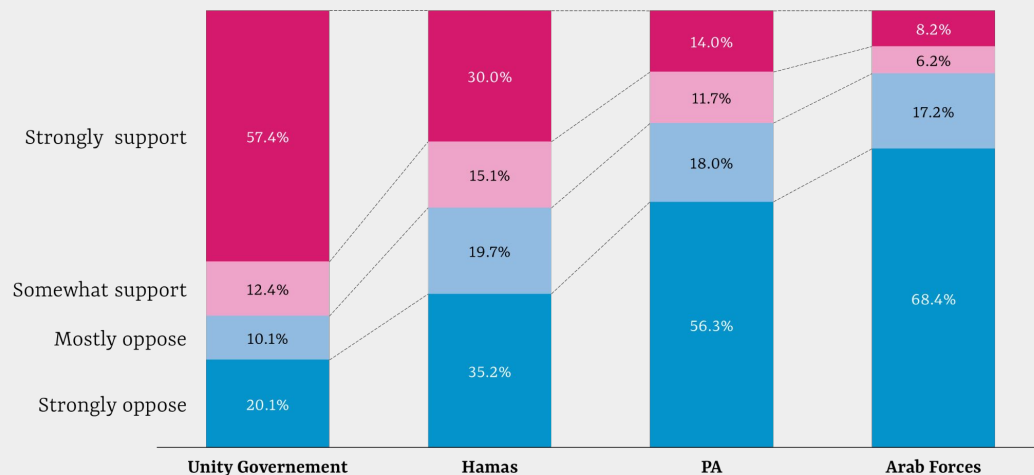
The overwhelming majority (75.2%) believe that Hamas should accept a ceasefire only if it is permanent

Regarding war negotiations, should Hamas accept a temporary truce?



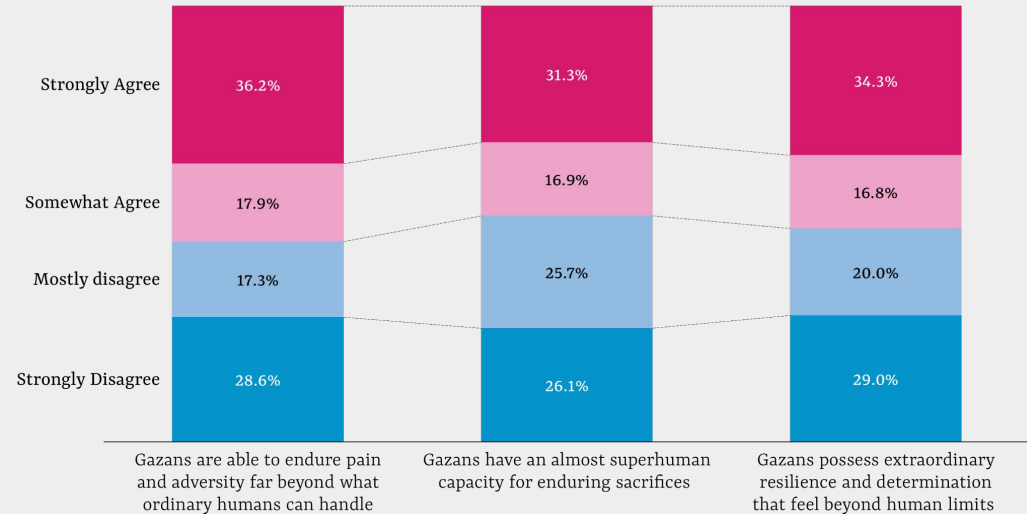
Two in three (68.8%) would support a unity government to rule the Gaza Strip post war

If a transitional period is approved in Gaza after the end of the war, who will you choose to govern Gaza?



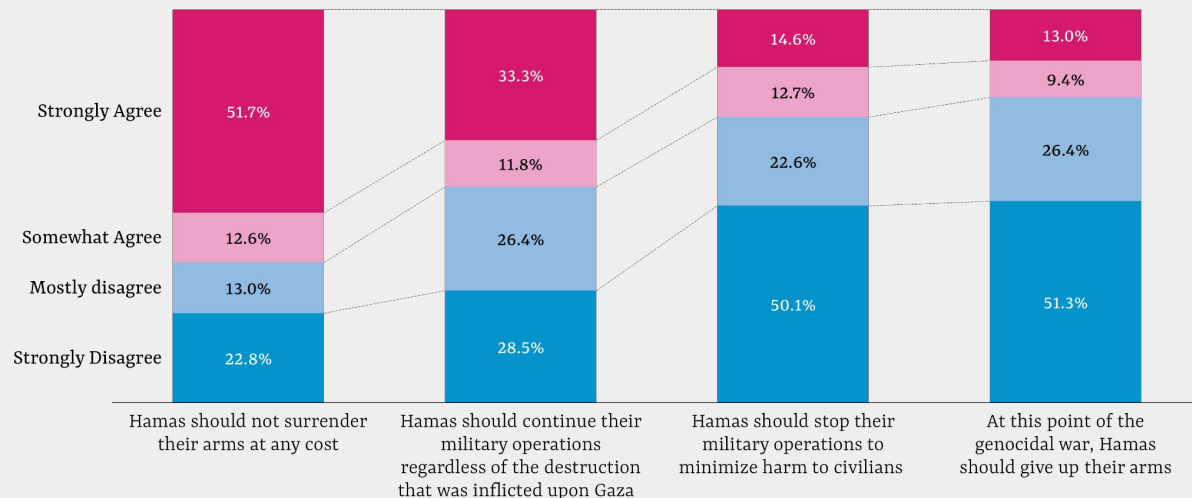
Half of respondents believe that Gazans have superhuman abilities when it comes to endurance and resilience

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



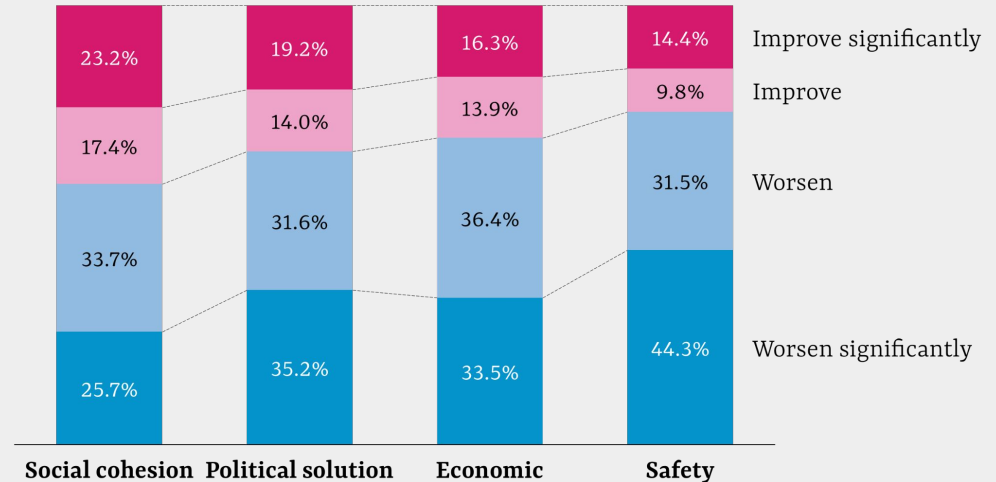
...and the grand majority (64.3%) believe that Hamas should not surrender their arms at any cost

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



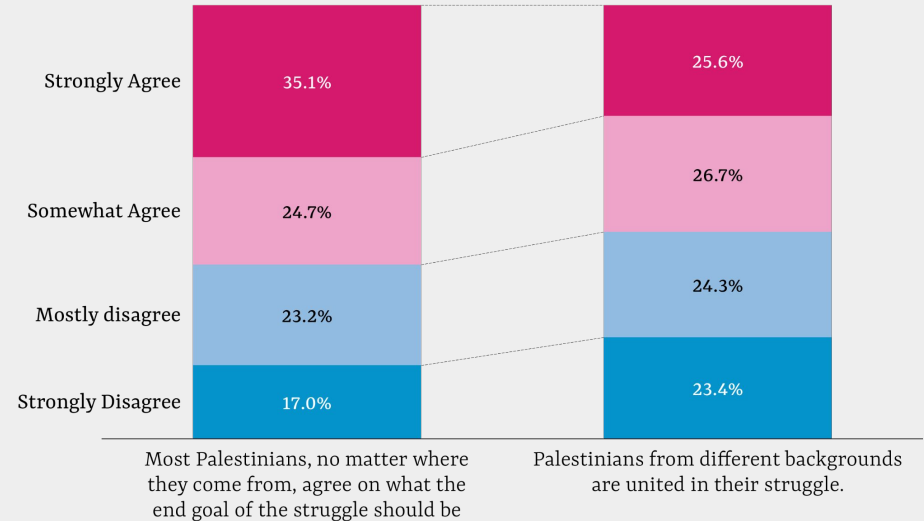
...and over half believe the status of Palestinians will get worse on all fronts in the 5 coming years

To what degree do you think the status of Palestinians will improve or worsen in the 5 years to come on the following fronts?



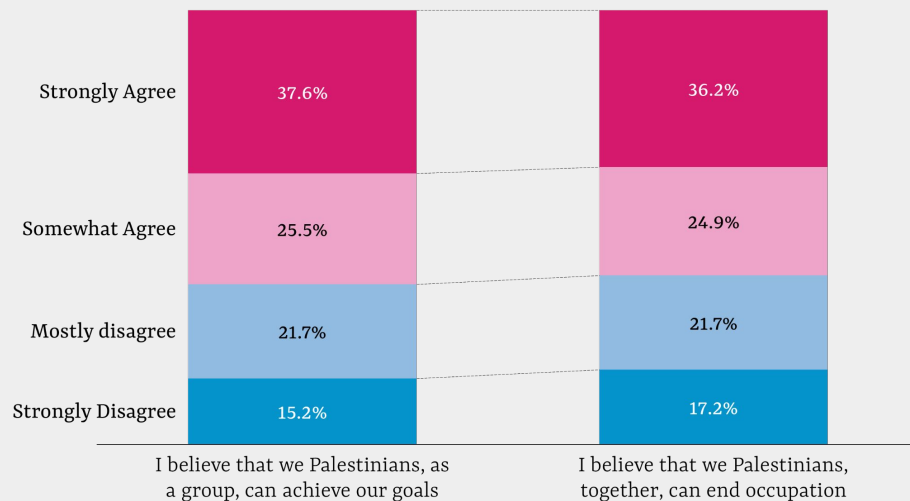
The majority (59.8%) believe Palestinians have consensus over the end goal of the struggle

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



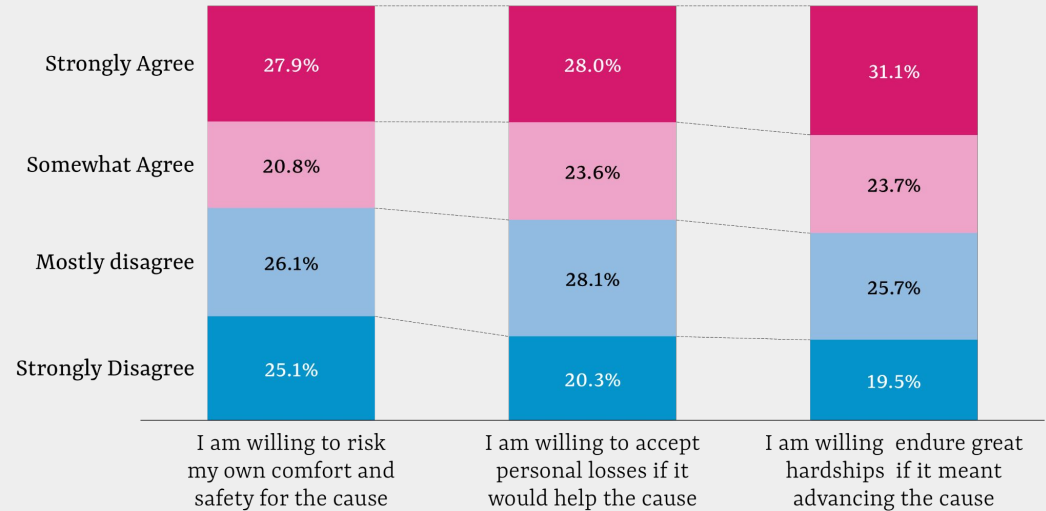
Furthermore, the majority believes that Palestinians have agency and can achieve their goals and end the occupation

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



Around half of respondents are willing to take personal risks for the sake of the cause

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

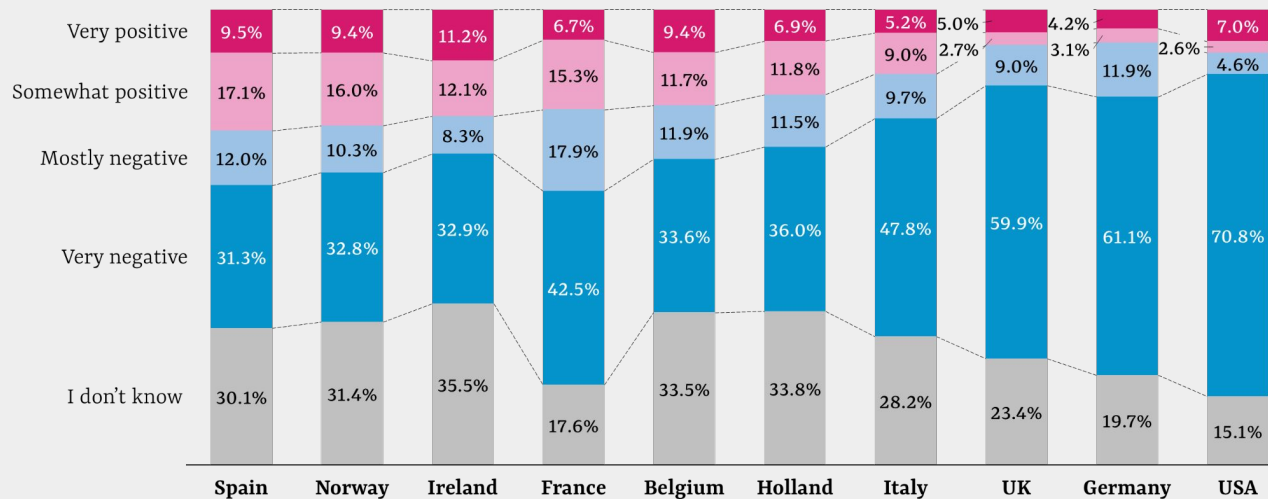


International affairs

Views on the roles of international actors and
appetite for immigration

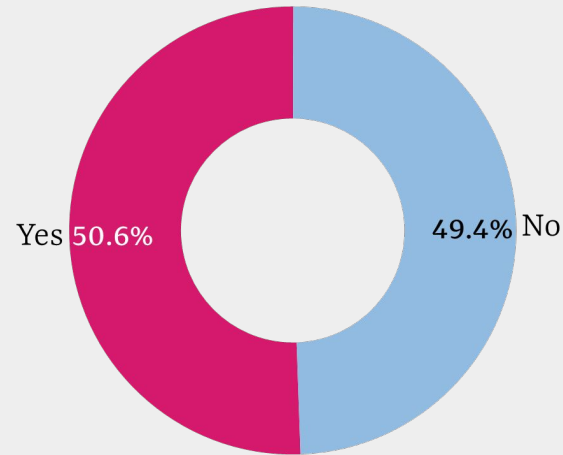
The West's role is viewed negatively, but countries with a history of supporting the Palestinian cause are viewed more favourably

Evaluate the role of the following countries regarding the Palestinian issue



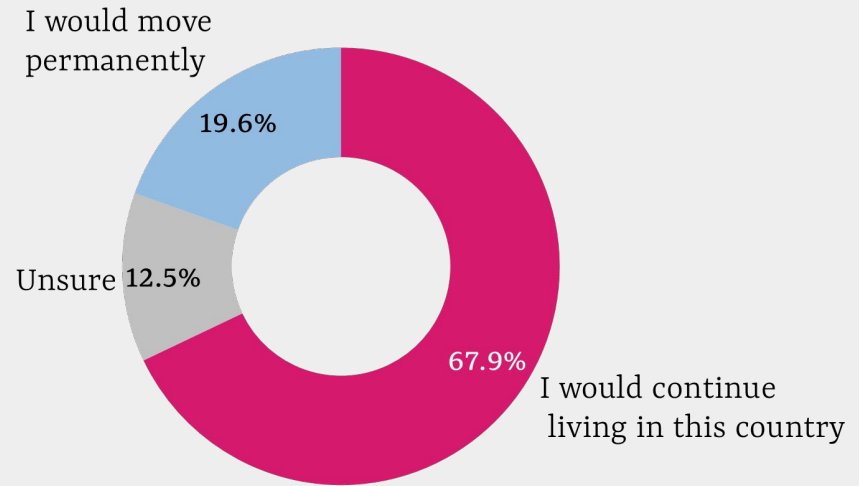
Half (50.6%) are aware of France's declared intention to recognise Palestine as a state

Have you heard about France's intention to recognize Palestine in the coming months?



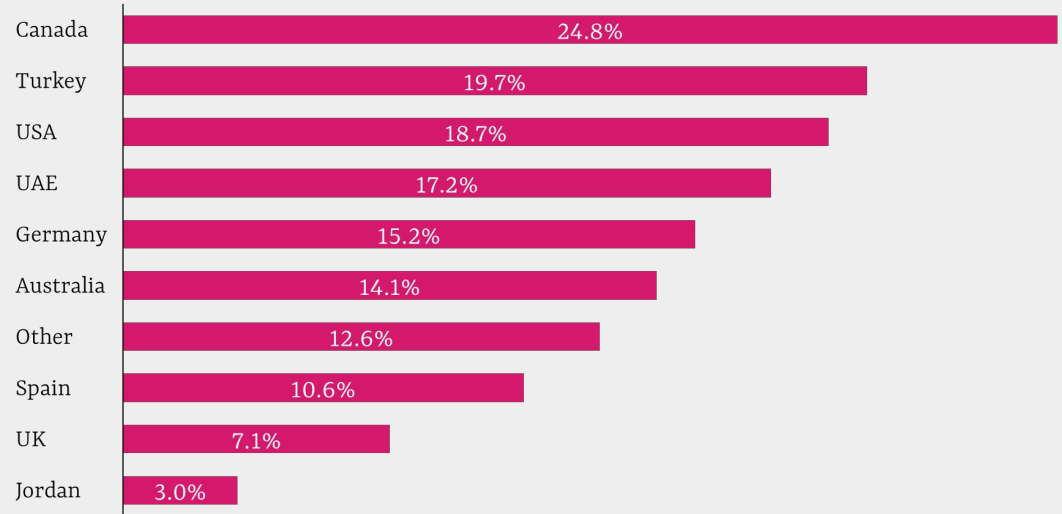
A majority in the West Bank state that they would continue living in Palestine even if given the opportunity to immigrate

Given the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?



...but those who would immigrate view Canada most favorably

If you had the opportunity, which of the following countries would you choose?



Conclusions

- A majority of West Bank Palestinians expect the PA to continue to exist in the upcoming decade but are dissatisfied with its “undemocratic” decision-making.
- A significant minority (2 in 5) are unaware of who the Prime Minister is and have not heard of Hussein Al-Sheikh’s appointment, which may be due to under-communication between the government and the public.
- In a future election, the biggest camp of voters would support independence, and Fateh’s popularity is at an all time low.
- A majority of West Bank Palestinians (68%) would not leave the country even if they had an opportunity to emigrate; around 20% wish to emigrate and another 12% are unsure.
- Half of West Bank respondents are aware of France’s intention to recognize Palestine in the near future, which may explain improvement in her image.



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