

Arab Barometer IX

Palestine: Report II Palestinian Perceptions of Domestic Challenges and the Conflict



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Executive Summary:

This report is the second in a series covering the results of the ninth Arab Barometer (AB9) survey in Palestine. It presents findings related to three main issues: perceptions of the challenges confronting Palestinians two years after the Gaza war, attitudes toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and perceptions of regional and international actors. AB9 was conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 8 and 26 October 2025.

The period preceding the survey witnessed several important developments, including the continuation of the war in the Gaza Strip until a ceasefire was reached two days after fieldwork began. In the West Bank, settler violence and attacks continued against vulnerable and unprotected Palestinian communities, often without intervention by either Palestinian or Israeli police. In some cases, these assaults occurred with complicity or even encouragement from the Israeli government, while the Israeli army provided protection primarily to settlers. The army also imposed closures on Palestinian areas and restricted access to main roads throughout the West Bank.

The ceasefire in the Gaza Strip was part of what became known as the 20-point Trump Plan, which made no reference to the situation in the West Bank. The period prior to fieldwork also witnessed a sharp decline in government services due to Israeli punitive measures against the Palestinian Authority (PA), including the seizure of clearance revenues. These measures forced the PA to pay only a portion of public sector salaries and curtailed its ability to provide basic services. Israel also imposed stringent conditions, demanding “reforms” that were widely rejected by Palestinian public opinion, such as changes to school curricula and the halting of payments to the families of prisoners and martyrs.

Methodology:

Interviews for AB9 were conducted face-to-face between 8 and 26 October 2025 with a random sample of 1,655 adults across 160 residential localities in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. The sample included 855 respondents in the Gaza Strip and 800 in the West Bank, distributed across 80 locations in each area. Ten respondents were interviewed in each location. The margin of error was $\pm 3\%$.

All interviews in the West Bank were conducted in “counting areas,” as defined by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. In the Gaza Strip, interviews were conducted in 33 counting areas, while the remainder took place in a representative sample of shelters—including both built-up and tent shelters—selected through systematic random sampling. Quotas were used to ensure representation of areas that were heavily affected by the war as well as areas that were not safely accessible due to Israeli military presence.

PCPSR published the first AB9 report in January 2026, focusing on governance and the domestic balance of power, which can be accessed [here](#).

For comparative purposes, this report also cites findings from the eighth Arab Barometer (AB8), conducted in late September and early October 2023, immediately prior to the events of October 7 and from AB7, conducted two years earlier, in October 2021.

Main Findings:

This report presents key findings from the ninth Arab Barometer (AB9) survey in Palestine, conducted two years after the October 7, 2023 attack and amid the conclusion of the Gaza War—reveals fundamental shifts in Palestinian public opinion across domestic challenges, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and

international relations. This 1,655-person survey across the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem provides critical insights into how sustained conflict, economic devastation, and shifting regional alignments have reshaped Palestinian perspectives at a pivotal moment in the conflict's trajectory.

Priorities and challenges: The war in Gaza dominates public concerns. In the West Bank, it is identified as the single most important challenge facing Palestinians, surpassing traditional concerns such as internal stability, corruption, and economic conditions. This reflects the centrality of ongoing conflict in shaping public priorities. At the same time, settler violence and insecurity remain highly salient, reinforcing a broader sense of vulnerability and instability.

Economic conditions have deteriorated sharply. Overwhelming majorities describe the economy as bad or very bad, marking a significant decline compared to pre-war conditions. Unemployment, rising living costs, and low wages are the most pressing economic concerns. Food insecurity is widespread, with a majority expressing worry about access to food and a substantial proportion reporting having skipped meals. Despite these conditions, expectations about the future are somewhat less pessimistic than before the war, suggesting a modest rebound in public optimism, possibly linked to the ceasefire or shifting expectations.

Palestinian-Israeli conflict: Public preferences regarding solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict show notable developments. Support for a two-state solution has increased and remains the most favored option, particularly in the Gaza Strip. At the same time, support for one-state arrangements remains low, while interest in confederation has grown modestly. These findings suggest a partial return to more traditional frameworks for conflict resolution, even after a period of intense violence.

Attitudes toward Arab normalization with Israel remain overwhelmingly negative. However, opinions are not entirely rigid. While nearly all respondents reject normalization in principle, a significant minority expresses conditional openness

if Israel were to recognize a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. This indicates that opposition to normalization is closely tied to perceptions of political justice and sovereignty.

International relations: Perceptions of international and regional actors reveal important shifts. Qatar and Turkey are viewed most favorably, followed by China and Iran, while the United States and Israel receive the lowest ratings. Notably, Iran's favorability has increased significantly by 14 percentage points since before the war, the largest gain of any country, while Turkey's has declined. Across nearly all measures, respondents in the Gaza Strip express more favorable views of external actors than those in the West Bank, likely reflecting, as explained below, differences in lived experiences and evaluation criteria, particularly the importance of humanitarian assistance.

The United States faces a profound credibility deficit. It is widely perceived as the actor, from among 18 countries and entities, most aligned with Israel and as having a negative influence in the region. In contrast, China is viewed more positively and is consistently rated as outperforming the United States across key domains, including economic development, conflict resolution, and global governance. These perceptions point to a broader shift in how Palestinians view global power dynamics.

Moreover, there is widespread skepticism regarding international law and global institutions. Majorities believe the United States, UN, Russia, Germany, and other major powers have limited or "no commitment at all" to international law, reflecting perception of systematic double standards in the application of international legal principles.

Overall, the findings depict a Palestinian public deeply affected by war and economic hardship, increasingly pragmatic yet still anchored in demands for statehood, and progressively re-evaluating regional and global alignments in light of recent experiences.

West Bank-Gaza Divergence- Two Publics, One National Movement: A critical finding running throughout the survey is the systematic difference between West Bank and Gaza opinions. As mentioned above, Gazans consistently hold more favorable views of nearly all international actors, more positive assessments of foreign leaders' policies, greater willingness to accept compromises including normalization under specific conditions, and more generous assessments of international actors' commitment to defending Palestine and implementing international law.

This divergence reflects different wartime experiences. Gazans endured direct bombardment, humanitarian catastrophe, complete societal destruction, and the total collapse of infrastructure and services, making them more grateful for any assistance provided during the war and more desperate for diplomatic solutions that might prevent future conflicts. West Bankers, while suffering intensified settler violence, military restrictions, economic hardship due to Israeli punitive measures, and the psychological trauma of watching Gaza's destruction, maintained greater societal continuity. This allowed West Bankers to preserve harder-line positions rooted in political principle, historical grievances, and concerns about normalization and Arab state "betrayal," rather than the immediate survival imperatives that dominate Gazan thinking.

The magnitude of these differences is substantial. On favorability ratings, Gazans rate the UAE 43 percentage points higher than West Bankers, Saudi Arabia 35 points higher, Turkey 32 points higher, and Qatar 30 points higher. On assessing whether countries defend Palestine, similar gaps appear. On foreign leaders' policies, Gazans rate Mohammed bin Zayed 36 points higher and Mohammed bin Salman 32 points higher. On the core political question of accepting normalization if Israel recognizes a Palestinian state on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as capital, Gazans are evenly split at 50% support while West Bankers oppose it 68% to 28%—a 22-point gap in support levels.

This divergence poses significant challenges for Palestinian political unity and decision-making. It suggests that any future peace process must address both populations' concerns and that the Palestinian leadership faces the difficult task of reconciling these meaningfully different political orientations. The findings indicate that Gaza's experience of total war has made its population more pragmatic and willing to accept compromises, while the West Bank's experience of watching Gaza's destruction while suffering their own lower-intensity but persistent oppression has, paradoxically, hardened certain attitudes and reduced willingness to compromise with either Israel or Arab states perceived as insufficiently supportive.

At the same time, both populations share core commitments: overwhelming opposition to Israeli occupation as the primary threat (92% in both areas), rejection of abstract normalization without conditions (88% overall with minimal West Bank-Gaza difference), support for the two-state solution as the preferred outcome (though with an eight-point gap), and perception of the United States as defending Israel rather than Palestine. This shared foundation suggests that despite tactical and attitudinal differences shaped by divergent wartime experiences, the two populations remain part of a unified national movement with common ultimate goals, even as they differ on acceptable means and appropriate compromises.

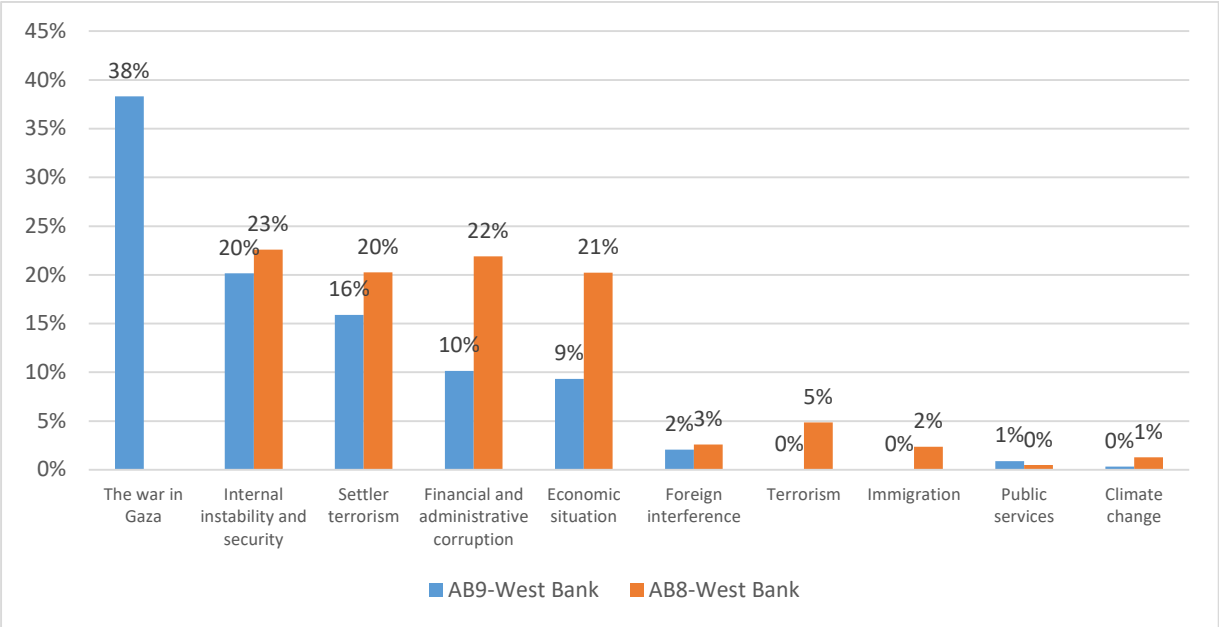
(1) Domestic priorities and the economic crisis:

The survey captures an unprecedented economic crisis in Palestinian society. When West Bankers were asked to identify Palestine's most important challenge, 38% cited the Gaza War—a new category unavailable in the pre-October 7 survey (AB8). This displaced previous top concerns: internal stability and security dropped, as shown in Figure (1) from 22% to 20%, and financial and administrative corruption fell from 21% to 10%. Notably, settler terrorism rose from equal footing

with economic concerns (a fifth in AB8) to become the third priority at 16%, reflecting intensified violence in the West Bank during this period. Economic situation as a priority declined from 21% to 9%, while foreign interference remained marginal at 2%.

Figure (1): What is the most important challenge facing our country today?

Comparing findings of AB8 and AB9



Economic assessments reveal catastrophic deterioration. Only 8% of West Bankers now rate economic conditions as good or very good, down from 28% two years earlier—a 20-percentage-point collapse representing the steepest Palestinian economic perception declines documented in the Arab Barometer series. Conversely, 92% now describe conditions as bad or very bad, up from 71%. The drivers of this perception are clear: 40% identify lack of jobs as the most serious economic issue, a dramatic increase from 22% in AB8. High prices and cost of living, or inflation, were selected by 20% (down from 32% who previously identified this as the primary concern), while low wages were chosen by 18% (down from 27%), and poverty or not having enough money to meet basic needs

was selected by 16% (up from 7%). The gap between rich and poor, which received 4% in AB8, received 1% in AB9.

The human dimension of economic hardship is stark. A majority of 59% of West Bankers reported worrying that they would not have enough food to eat, while 41% said they were not worried. Even more concerning, 41% said they had to skip a meal, though 59% said they did not. These food insecurity indicators were not measured in AB8, making direct comparison impossible, but they reveal the depth of current economic distress.

Despite current hardship, a paradoxical optimism about the future emerges. When asked about expectations regarding future economic conditions, 43% of West Bankers said conditions will be somewhat or much worse, but 34% were optimistic, saying conditions will be much better or somewhat better, with 16% predicting conditions will remain almost the same. It is worth noting that in AB8, Palestinians were considerably less optimistic, as only 16% of West Bankers said conditions would be much better or somewhat better, while 62% predicted they would be somewhat worse or much worse. This represents a doubling of optimism despite far worse current conditions, suggesting that the Gaza ceasefire and potential reconstruction have injected cautious hope despite immediate suffering.

When asked what the Palestinian government should prioritize to improve economic conditions, 42% selected "create more job opportunities," a substantial increase from 31% in AB8. Political stability rose dramatically from 6% to 15%, reflecting awareness that economic recovery requires ending conflict and instability. Similarly, reforming the educational system increased significantly from 5% to 12%. Lowering the cost of living dropped from 25% to 13% and raising wages declined from 26% to 12%. These findings underscore how the war has transformed Palestinian priorities from governance reform and inflation concerns toward job creation, political stability as prerequisites for economic recovery.

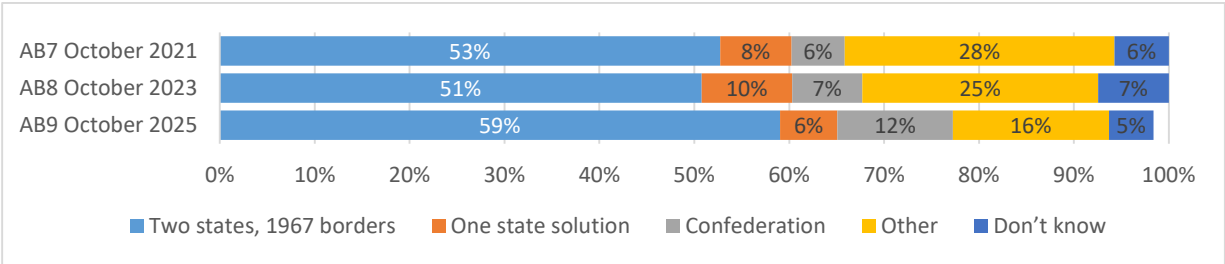
(2) Palestinian-Israeli Relations

Two-state solution: Perhaps the most strategically significant finding concerns solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. AB9 explored aspects of Palestinian-Israeli relations, most importantly support for various solutions to end the conflict as well as Arab normalization with Israel. As in the previous two Arab Barometer rounds, AB9 offered Palestinians three possible solutions to the conflict with Israel—solutions that would help end the conflict between the two sides—and asked which they prefer. All three solutions offered were possible outcomes of peace negotiations, though respondents could opt for "other" solutions if they wished.

The three solutions included a two-state solution, one-state solution, and confederation. It should be noted that the "one-state solution" did not specify that the two sides would have equal rights. Therefore, theoretically one could select this solution regardless of whether Israeli Jews or Palestinians would receive equal rights. As shown in Figure (2), support for a two-state solution received the largest support at 59% overall, with Gazans showing more support than West Bankers, 64% and 56% respectively. This represents a rise of 7 percentage points in the West Bank (from 49% to 56%) and 10 points in Gaza (from 54% to 64%) over the two-year period. This counters narratives suggesting the Gaza War irreversibly radicalized Palestinian opinion against negotiated solutions.

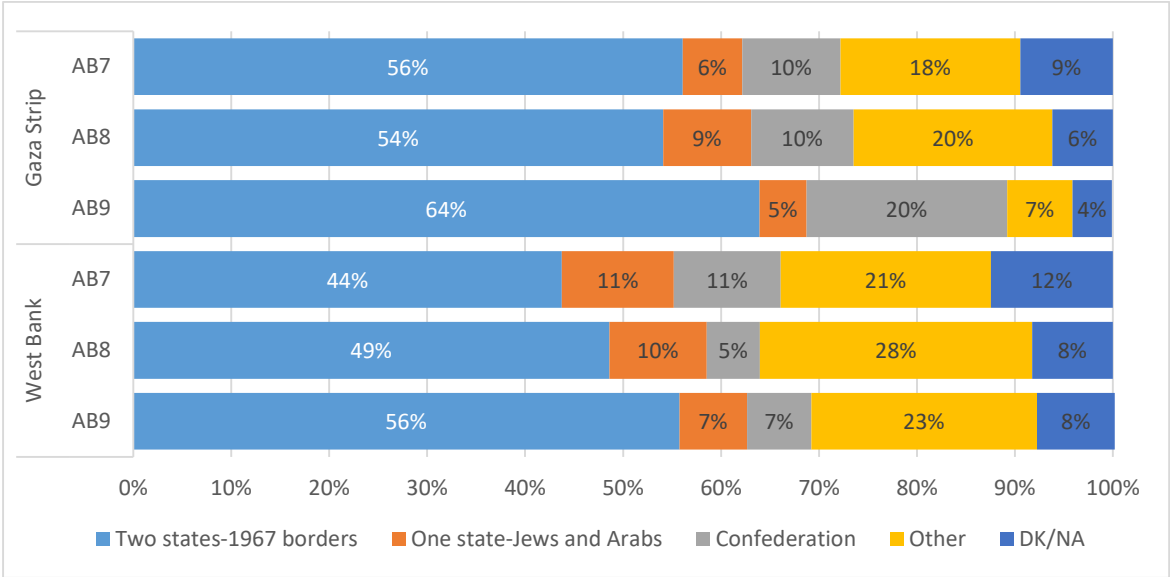
Figure (2): support for three possible solutions to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

"Which solution from among the following you prefer?"



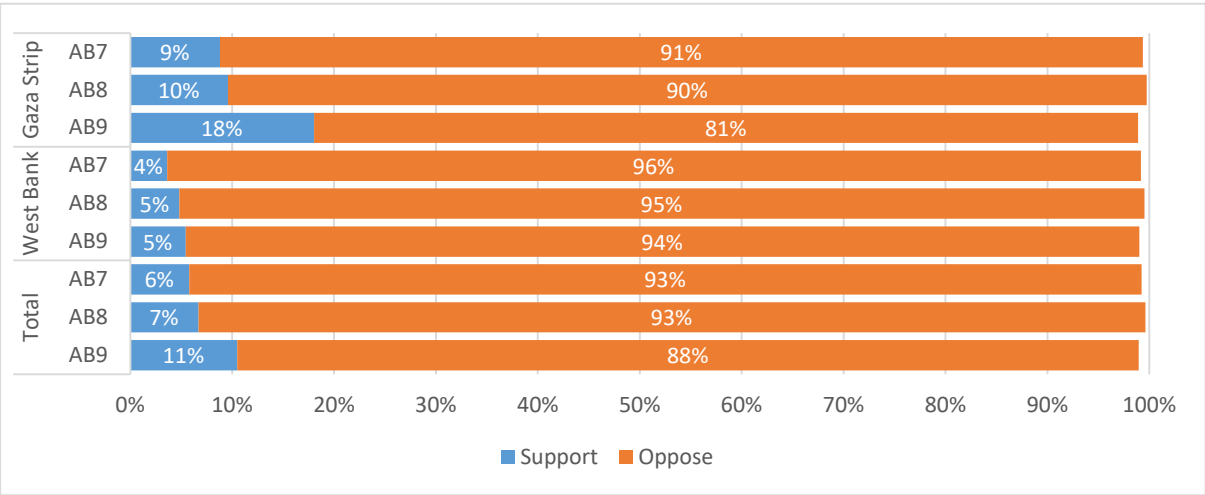
The one-state solution received 6% support overall (7% in the West Bank and 5% in the Gaza Strip), representing a decline from AB8 in both areas. Confederation received 12% support (7% in the West Bank and 20% in the Gaza Strip), with support increasing slightly in the West Bank but significantly in the Gaza Strip. The "other" category received support from 16% overall (23% in the West Bank and 7% in the Gaza Strip). The percentage of those who opted for other solutions decreased in the West Bank by 5 points and in the Gaza Strip by 13 points compared to AB8.

Figure (3): West Bank and Gaza Strip differences in support for three possible solutions to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:



Arab-Israeli normalization: This support for the two-state solution is nuanced and conditional. On the question of Arab-Israeli normalization, Palestinian attitudes remain overwhelmingly negative. The survey asked about support and opposition to Arab normalization with Israel in three ways. The first repeated a question asked twice before, in AB7 and AB8. For this repeated question, findings show that public attitudes regarding normalization remain extremely negative, with 88% expressing opposition. The findings in the West Bank, as shown in Figure (4), remain essentially unchanged since 2021, while in the Gaza Strip, opposition has softened slightly, declining nine points during the same period.

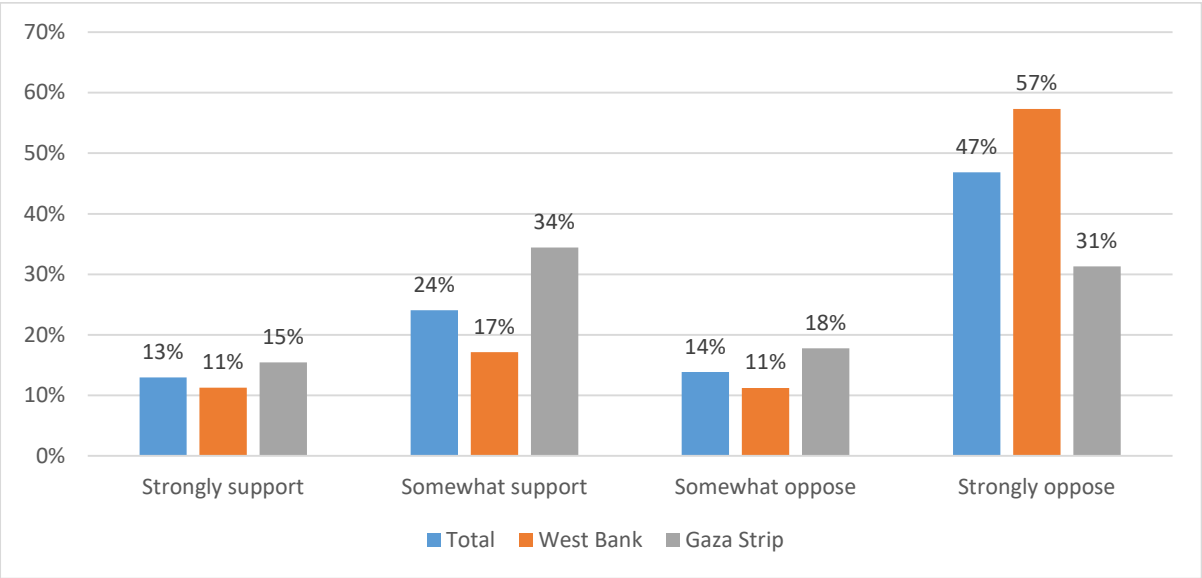
Figure (4): To what extent you favor or oppose the normalization of relations between Arab states and Israel?



However, when asked whether there are any conditions under which respondents would support normalization with Israel, an even greater percentage—95%—said "no," while only 2% said "yes." Only minor differences between West Bankers and Gazans were found on this question. This suggests near-universal rejection of normalization as an abstract concept.

Yet when the survey provided a clear context for normalization—"Israel recognizes an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital"—findings were dramatically different. While the majority of the public, 61%, continued to express opposition, 37% expressed support. This conditional acceptance is revolutionary. It is worth noting that while Gazans were divided equally on the matter between support and opposition at 50% each, West Bankers' opposition was much greater than support, 68% and 28% respectively.

Figure (5): Support Arab-Israeli normalization if Israel recognizes Palestine in 1967 border and East Jerusalem as its capital



This 22-point gap between West Bank and Gaza responses highlights internal Palestinian divisions while suggesting that a half in Gaza and nearly three-in-ten in the West Bank would accept normalization within a comprehensive peace framework meeting core Palestinian demands. This provides a potential pathway for future diplomacy, though the divergence between the two populations presents challenges for unified Palestinian decision-making.

(3) Regional and International Relations:

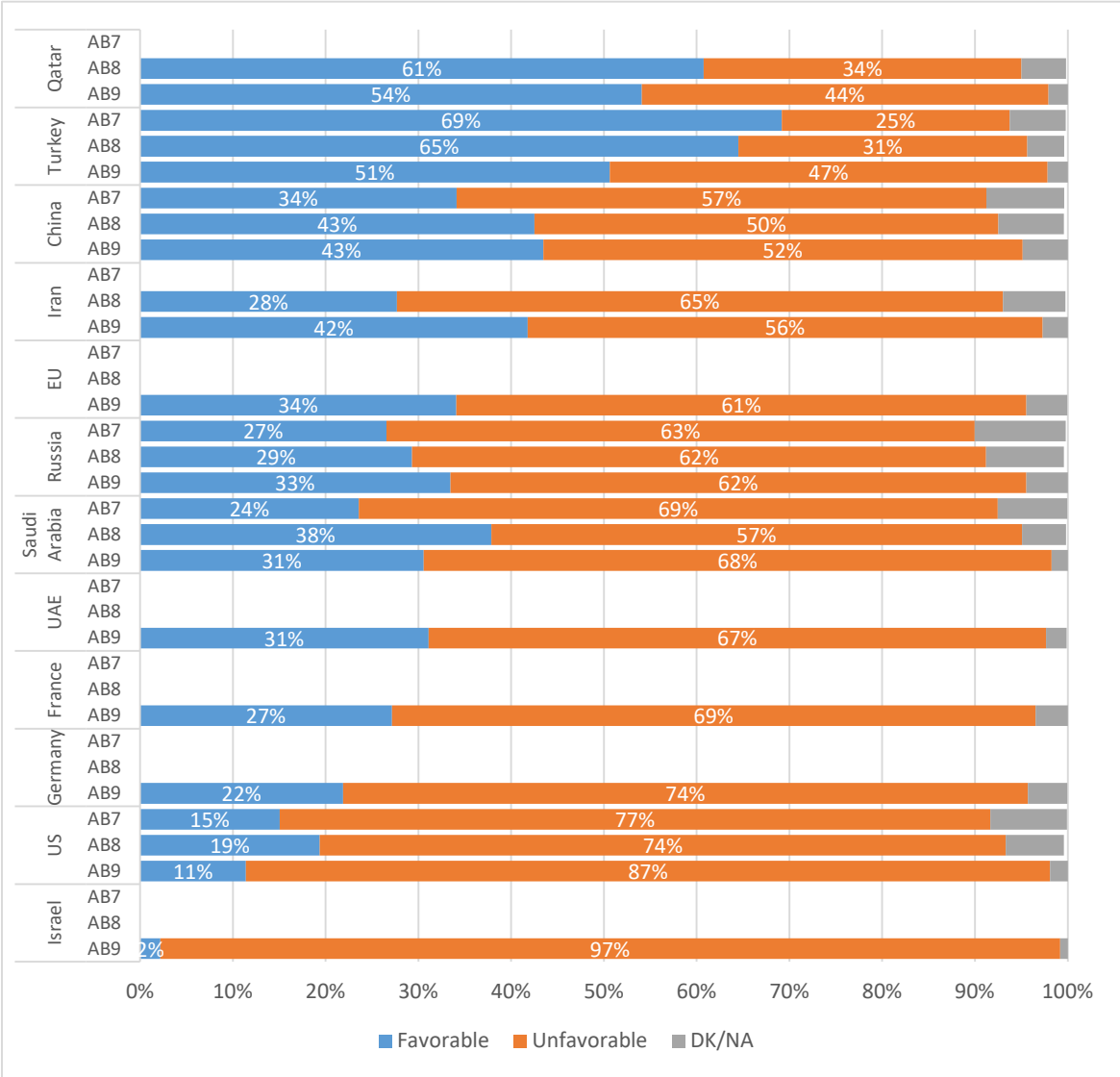
AB9 explored public perception of various regional and international issues. These issues included favorability of selected countries, Palestinian threat perception, the evaluation of the foreign policy influence of various countries on the Middle East region, perception of the foreign policies of regional and international leaders, comparing American and Chinese policies, preferences for areas to receive foreign aid, who stands in defense of Palestine and who stands in defense of Israel, which countries are the most appropriate to mediate the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in a fair manner for both sides, and commitment to implementing international law.

1. Favorability of major international and regional powers before and after the October 7 attack and the Gaza war:

Favorability ratings show dramatic shifts driven by perceptions of support during the Gaza War. AB9 asked about favorability of 12 countries. The most favored are Qatar and Turkey, receiving majority approval at 54% and 51% respectively, followed by Iran and China receiving similar favorability rates at 42% and 43% respectively. The next tier includes the EU at 34%, Russia at 33%, Saudi Arabia at 31%, and the UAE at 31%, receiving approximately one-third approval. France and Germany follow, receiving approval of slightly over or slightly less than one-quarter, at 27% and 22% respectively. Finally come the United States at 11% and Israel at 2%.

Seven of these countries were among those asked about two years earlier in AB8, and five were among those asked about in AB7. The most notable change generated by the Gaza War is the change regarding the favorability of Iran, which increased by 14 percentage points from 28% on the eve of October 7 to 42%—the most significant change measured. This reflects Iran's material and rhetorical support during the conflict, particularly through Hezbollah and other proxies. By contrast, Turkey's favorability dropped 14 points from 65% to 51%, and Qatar fell 7 points from 61% to 54% despite both countries' diplomatic efforts, suggesting Palestinians prioritize material resistance over mediation. In addition to Iran, Russia gained favorability, rising from 29% to 33%. The countries that lost favorability included Saudi Arabia, declining from 38% to 31%, and the United States, falling from 19% to 11%.

Figure (6): Please tell me if you have a favorable (very favorable and somewhat favorable) or an unfavorable (somewhat unfavorable and very unfavorable) opinion of the following country (AB7, AB8, and AB9)



AB9 findings indicate that Gazans have more favorable views of all the countries asked about in the current round compared to West Bankers. The gap, as shown in Table (1), is widest for the following countries: UAE (43 percentage points, with 57% of Gazans holding favorable views versus 14% of West Bankers), Saudi Arabia (35 points, 52% versus 17%), Turkey (32 points, 70% versus 38%), and Qatar (30 points, 72% versus 42%). The gap is narrowest for Israel (3 points, 4% versus 1%),

Iran (11 points, 48% versus 37%), the United States (14 points, 20% versus 6%), China (16 points, 53% versus 37%), Russia (18 points, 44% versus 26%), and France and Germany (23 points each, 41% versus 18% and 36% versus 13% respectively), with the EU at 25 points (49% versus 24%).

Table (1): Comparing Gazans' and West Bankers' favorable views of selected countries

Country	Gazans	West Bankers
Qatar	72%	42%
Turkey	70%	38%
UAE	57%	14%
China	53%	37%
Saudi Arabia	52%	17%
EU	49%	24%
Iran	48%	37%
Russia	44%	26%
France	41%	18%
Germany	36%	13%
US	20%	6%
Israel	4%	1%

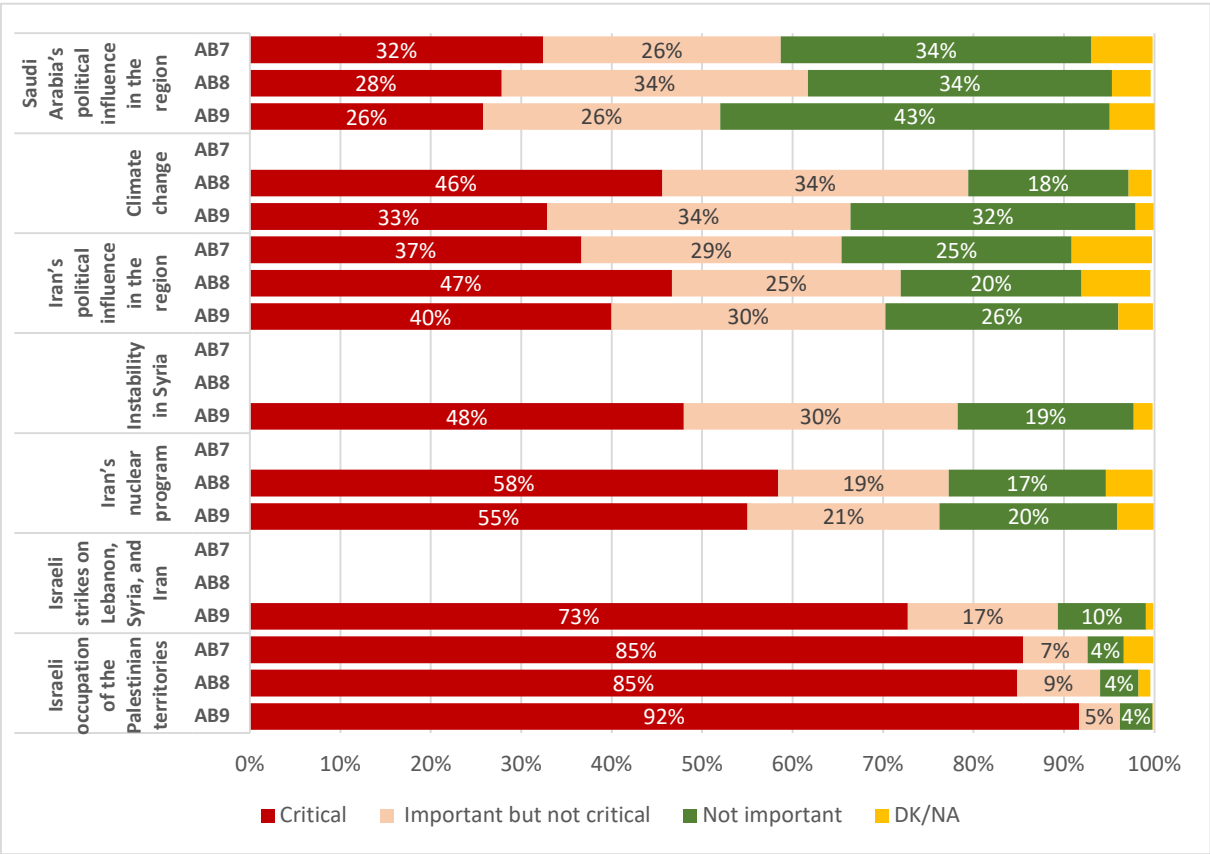
The gap is widest probably because West Bankers use a political criterion—normalization with Israel by the UAE or potential normalization by Saudi Arabia—in measuring favorability, while Gazans use criteria focused primarily on humanitarian service delivery to Gazans during the war. The gap is narrowest for the two countries that are most disliked by both sides, Israel and the United States, suggesting shared core political orientations despite different assessments of regional actors.

2. Regional and international threat perception:

Threat perceptions remain dominated by Israeli occupation but now include regional escalation. When asked about various sources of possible threats to the national security of Palestine, the continued Israeli occupation remained the most critical, with 92% selecting it in AB9 compared to 85% in both AB8 and AB7. A new threat category posed in AB9—Israeli strikes on Lebanon, Iran, and Syria—came second in severity at 73%, demonstrating how regional escalation resonates with Palestinians. Iran's nuclear program, which came second in AB8, now stands at 55%, followed by Iran's political influence in the region at 40%, climate change at 33%, and Saudi political influence in the region at 26%.

It is worth noting that despite the higher favorability of Iran in the Gaza Strip, more Gazans than West Bankers view the following Iranian threats as critical or important: Iran's nuclear program (85% versus 70% respectively) and Iran's political influence in the region (81% versus 63% respectively). This creates a paradox whereby Gazans simultaneously hold more favorable views of Iran yet perceive greater threats from its nuclear program and regional influence, suggesting a complex assessment that separates appreciation for Iran's support from concerns about its broader regional ambitions.

Figure (7): To what extent do you see each of the following as a threat to the national security interests of Palestine?

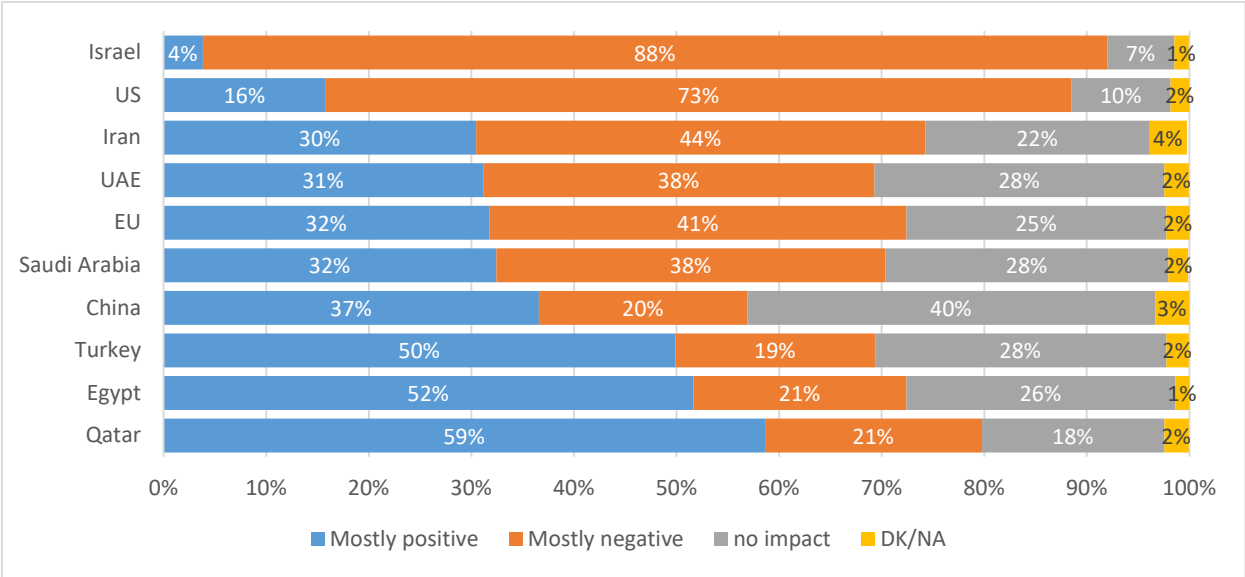


3. The evaluation of the foreign policy influence of various countries on the region:

Regional influence assessments reveal which countries are seen as having positive or negative impacts on the Middle East. The findings of AB9 indicate that Qatar, Turkey, and Egypt are the three countries seen as having the most positive influence on the Middle East. Qatar has been selected by 59% (42% in the West Bank and 71% in the Gaza Strip), followed by Egypt, selected by 52% (29% in the West Bank and 69% in the Gaza Strip), and Turkey, selected by 50% (33% in the West Bank and 62% in the Gaza Strip). The next group consists of China at 37% (34% in the West Bank and 39% in the Gaza Strip), Saudi Arabia at 32% (18% in the West Bank and 43% in the Gaza Strip), the EU at 32% (26% in the West Bank and 36% in the Gaza Strip), the UAE at 31% (15% in the West Bank and 43% in the Gaza

Strip), and Iran at 30% (24% in the West Bank and 35% in the Gaza Strip). Finally come the United States and Israel, selected by an overwhelming majority as the two having the most negative influence on the region, with 73% and 88% respectively viewing their influence as negative.

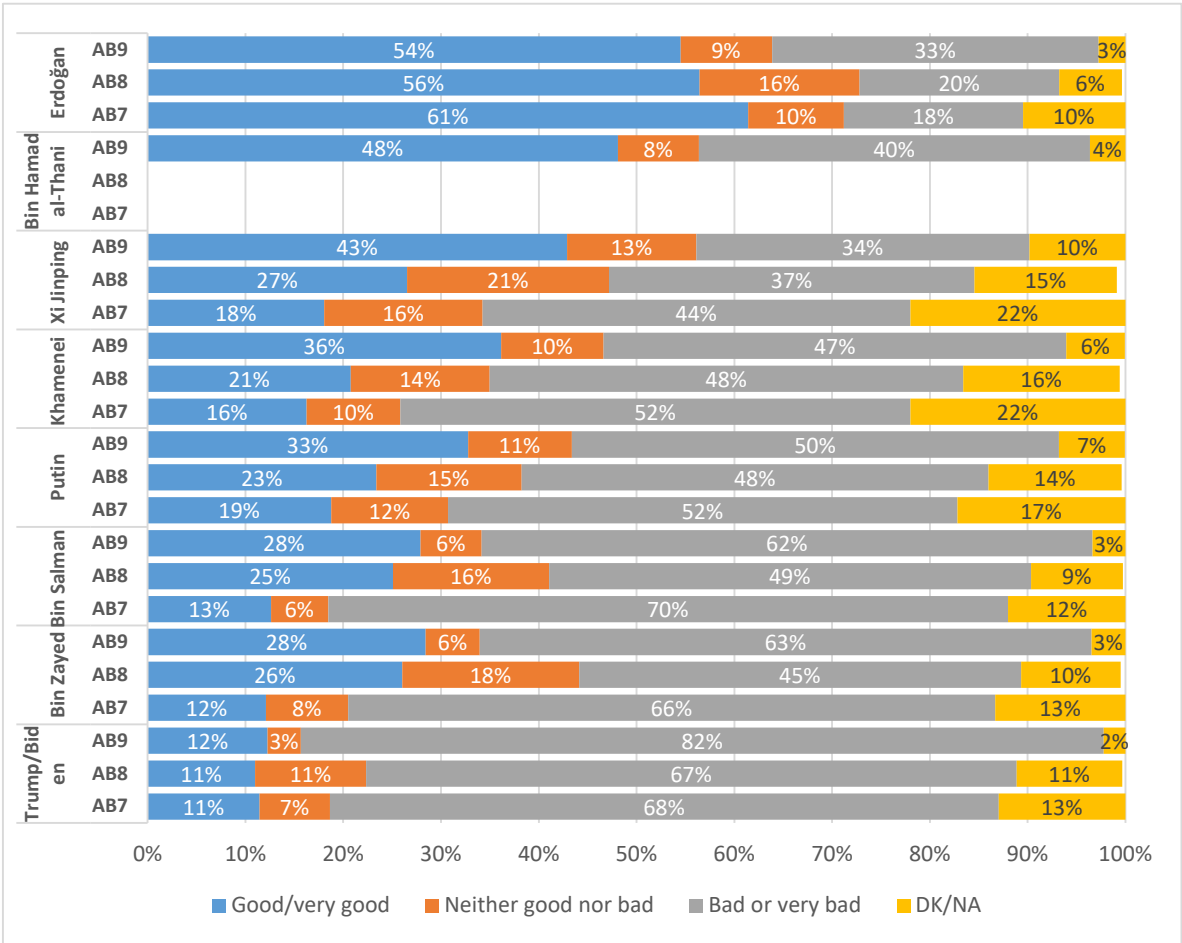
Figure (8): Attitudes regarding the of foreign policy influence of major international and regional countries



4. Attitudes regarding the foreign policy of regional and international leaders:

Foreign policy preferences for regional and international leaders show consistency across Arab Barometer rounds. Public attitudes are consistent when it comes to preferences regarding foreign policies of various international and Arab leaders. Turkey's Erdoğan comes on top in all three AB rounds with a very slight decline in public preference—a much smaller decline compared to the decline in favorability of Turkey itself. Qatar's leader Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, who was a newcomer to the list, comes next, followed by the Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Iran's Ali Khamenei, Russia's Putin, Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman, UAE's Mohamed bin Zayed, and finally Trump, the president of the United States.

Figure (9): Do you think the foreign policies of the following leaders have been very good, good, bad, or very bad for the Arab region?



The hierarchy of foreign policy preferences is very similar to what was seen two years earlier, but it is worth highlighting the major differences between the assessments of West Bankers and Gazans. The hierarchy in the Gaza Strip is very different from that in the West Bank. As with favorability ratings, Gazans tend to share West Bankers' assessment of Turkey's Erdoğan (71% of Gazans and 43% of West Bankers rate his foreign policy as good or very good), Qatar's bin Hamad al-Thani (62% and 39% respectively), and the US president (20% and 7% respectively), but disagree significantly on bin Zayed (50% of Gazans versus 14% of West Bankers), bin Salman (47% versus 15%), Khamenei (39% versus 34%), and Putin (38% versus 29%). This again reflects Gaza's greater appreciation for actors who

provided material assistance during the war, regardless of their broader political alignments.

Table (2): Comparing Gazans' and West Bankers' positive assessment (good and very good) of the foreign policy of selected leaders

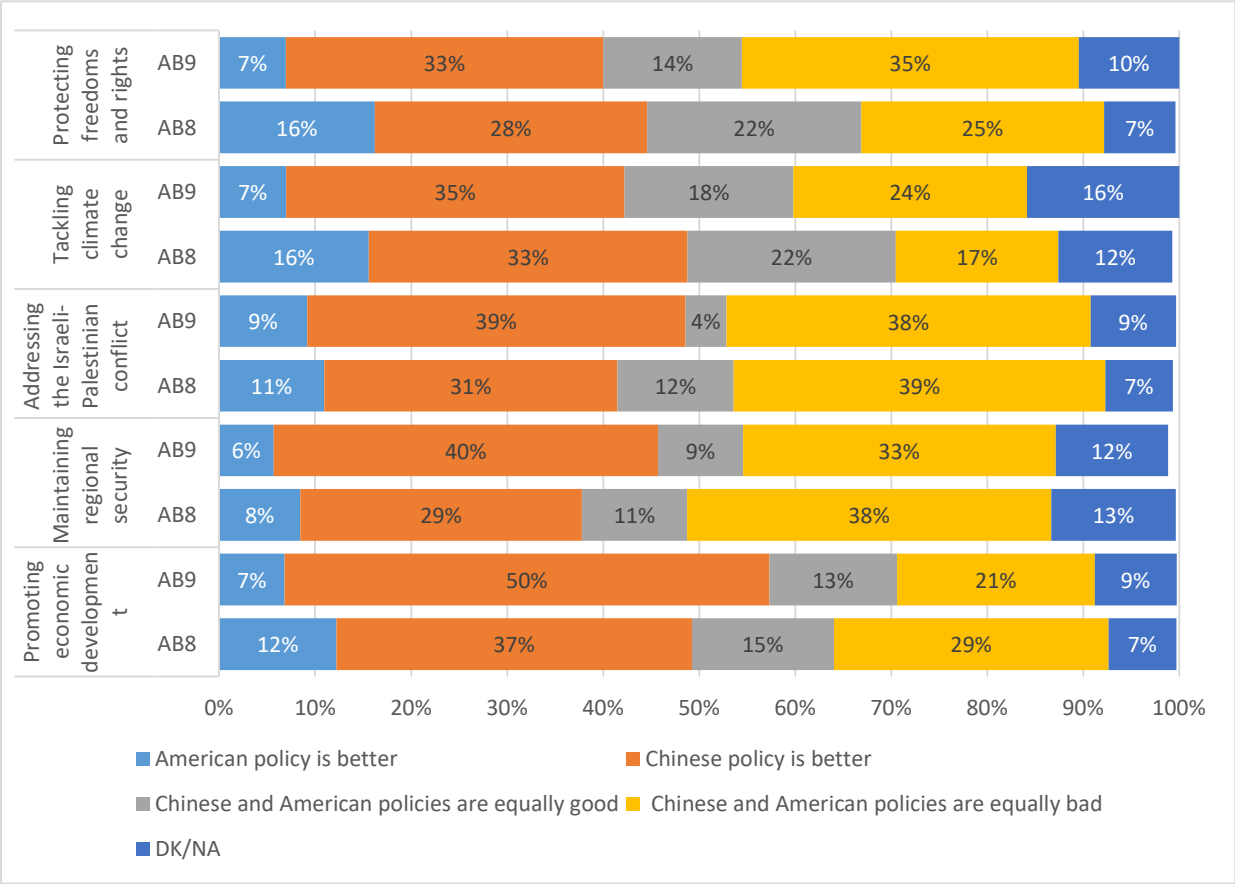
Leaders' foreign policy	Gaza Strip	West Bank
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	71%	43%
Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani	62%	39%
Mohammed bin Zayed	50%	14%
Xi Jinping	48%	39%
Mohammed bin Salman	47%	15%
Ali Khamenei	39%	34%
Vladimir Putin	38%	29%
Donald Trump	20%	7%

5. Comparing American and Chinese policies:

Comparing American and Chinese policies reveals a comprehensive preference for China over the United States. For the second time, when asked to compare American and Chinese policies on certain issues, West Bank Palestinians (Gazans were not asked this question) viewed Chinese policy as better than that of the United States on all issues under examination. These included promoting economic development (50% for China versus 7% for the United States), maintaining regional security (40% versus 6%), addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (39% versus 9%), tackling climate change (35% for China versus 7% for the United States), and protecting freedoms and rights (33% versus 7%). The findings,

as shown in Figure (10) indicate that while American standing has declined in all areas compared to AB8, that of China has improved in all areas. It is worth mentioning that large percentages said that the policies of the two countries are equally bad when it comes to the two issues of addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (38%) and maintaining regional security (33%), suggesting deep skepticism toward both powers on core Palestinian concerns even as China is preferred.

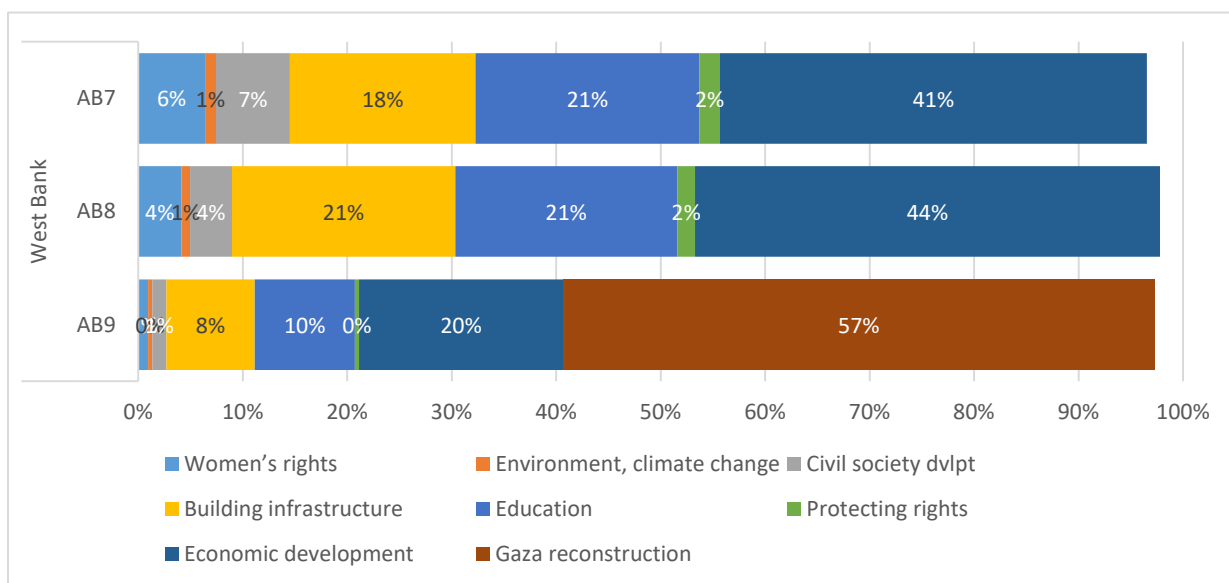
Figure (10): For each of the following issues, please tell me if you think Chinese policy is better, American policy is better, Chinese and American policies are equally good, or Chinese and American policies are equally bad (*West Bank only*)



6. Preferences for areas of foreign aid: Findings show reconstruction as the top priority. As in the two previous rounds, AB9 asked Palestinians in the West Bank (Gazans were not asked this question) about the areas most preferred for foreign

aid to be dedicated. In this round, a new area was added: Gaza reconstruction. West Bankers indicated preference for the newly added area, with 57% selecting it, followed by economic development at 20%, education at 10%, and building infrastructure at 8%. All other areas, including environment, women's rights, protecting rights, and civil society development received very little preference, each below 5%. These responses cannot be compared directly to the findings of AB7 and AB8, which did not include Gaza reconstruction as an option. Nonetheless, the order of the three areas other than the newly added priority that received significant support—economic development, education, and infrastructure—remained relatively unchanged from previous rounds.

Figure (11): To which of the following areas would you most prefer foreign aid to Palestine be dedicated? *West Bank only*



7. International Alignment: Defending Palestine or Israel:

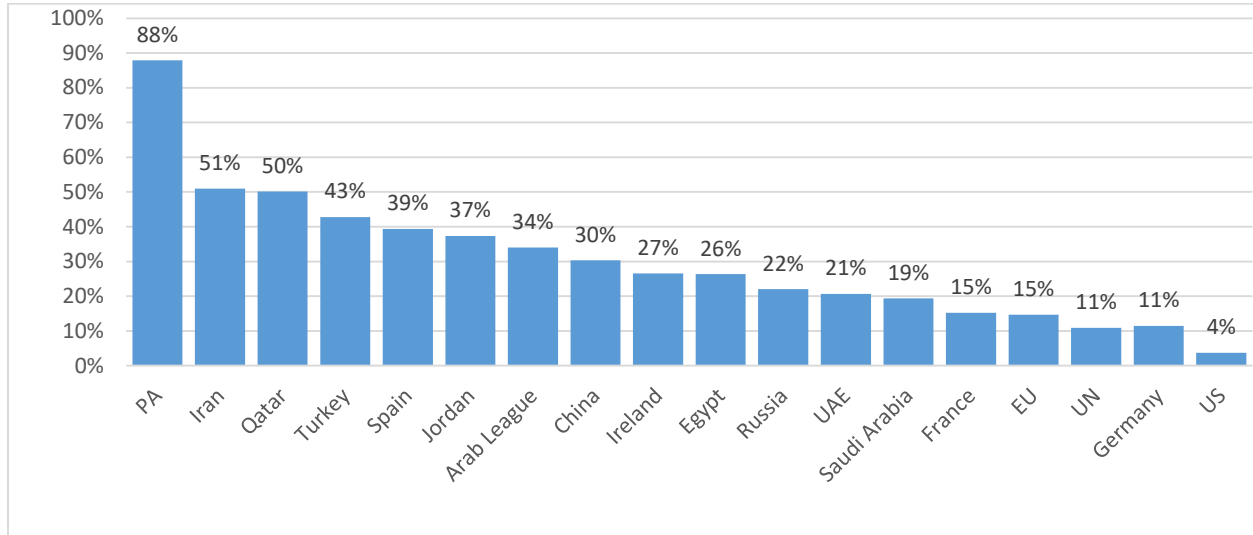
The survey asked the public about its perception of the positions of 18 countries and entities, including the Palestinian Authority, regarding the defense of Palestine versus the defense of Israel. This reveals Palestinians' geopolitical

perceptions and their assessment of which actors genuinely support Palestinian interests versus Israeli interests.

Defending Palestine: The Palestinian Authority was overwhelmingly seen as committed to the defense of Palestine, at 88%, while only 2% saw it as committed to the defense of Israel. The others saw it either as "equally committed to defending both Palestine and Israel" at 4%, or indicated that it is unclear regarding its commitment to defending either Palestine or Israel, at 5%. Among other actors, the countries seen as closest to the defense of Palestine include Iran and Qatar, each selected by approximately half of the public at 51% and 50% respectively, followed by Turkey at 43%, Spain at 39%, and Jordan at 37%, selected by more than one-third. The Arab League and China were selected by about one-third or slightly less, at 34% and 30% respectively. Ireland and Egypt were selected by slightly over one-quarter, at 27% and 26% respectively, followed by Russia at 22%, UAE at 21%, and Saudi Arabia at 19%, selected by about one-fifth. At the bottom come France at 15%, the EU at 15%, the UN at 11%, Germany at 11%, and finally the United States at 4%.

Figure (12): Countries seen by Palestinians as **defending Palestine**, not Israel:

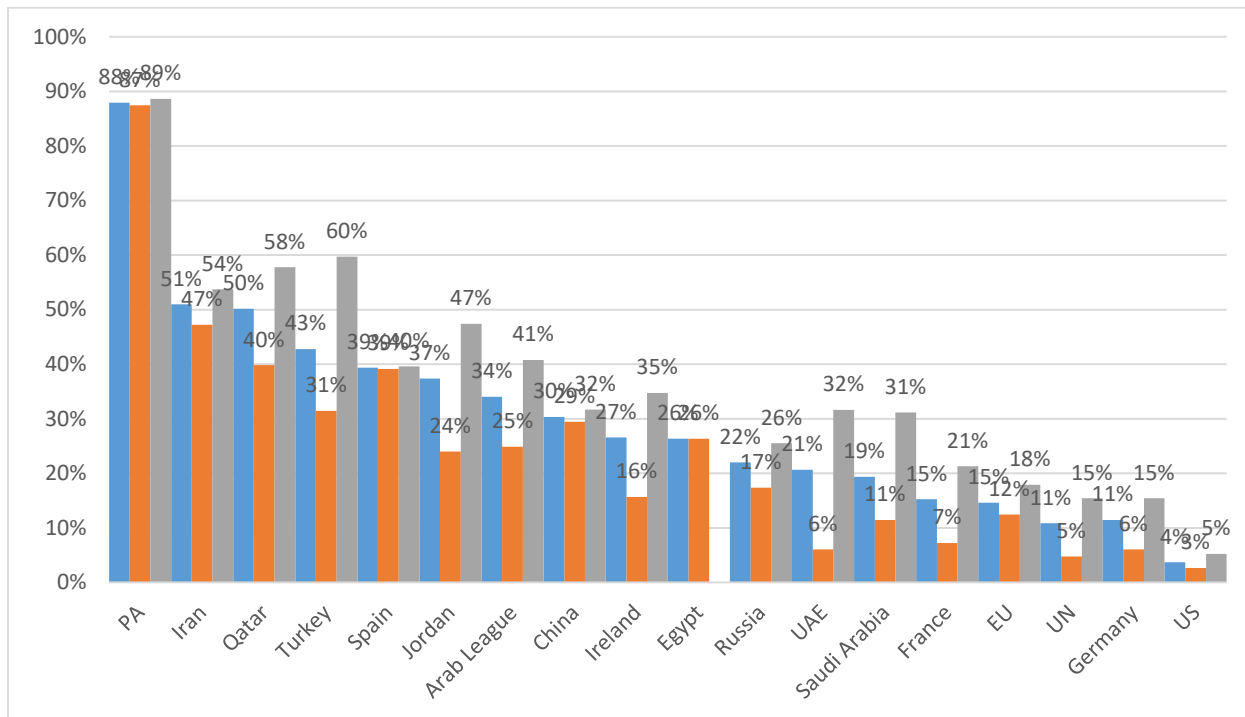
Only two countries, other than the PA, are seen as defending Palestine by 50% or more of the Palestinians



Although these findings were in general similar in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Gazans were more likely in every single case than West Bankers to grant all 18 countries and entities higher marks for defending Palestine. For Gazans, Turkey and Qatar came next after the Palestinian Authority, while Iran came third. It is worth noting that Gazans were not asked about Egypt, which provides partial explanation for its relatively low standing overall.

Figure (13): Countries seen by West Bankers and Gazans as **defending Palestine**, not Israel:

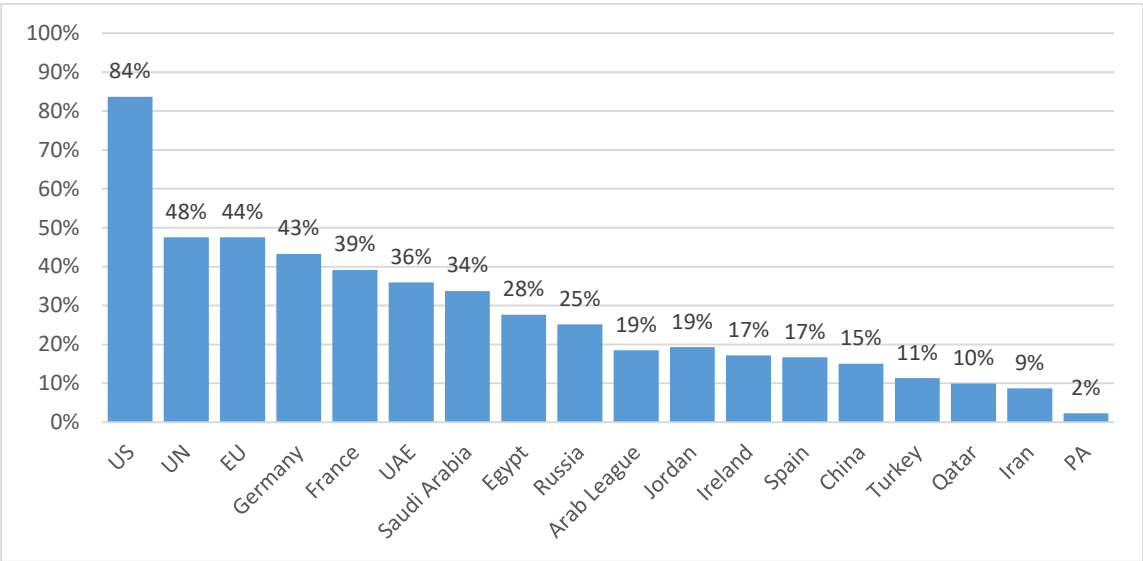
No country, other than the PA, is seen by a majority in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as defending Palestine



Defending Israel: By contrast, those seen as defending Israel are led by the United States, selected by 84% of the public, followed by the UN and the EU, selected by approximately half at 48% and 44% respectively, and Germany, France, and the UAE, selected by 43%, 39%, and 36% respectively. Saudi Arabia comes next, selected by one-third at 34%, followed by Egypt and Russia, selected by one-quarter or more at 28% and 25% respectively. The Arab League and Jordan come next, selected by about one-fifth, at 19% and 19% respectively. Ireland, Spain, China, Turkey, Iran, Qatar, and the Palestinian Authority come last, selected by 2% to 17%.

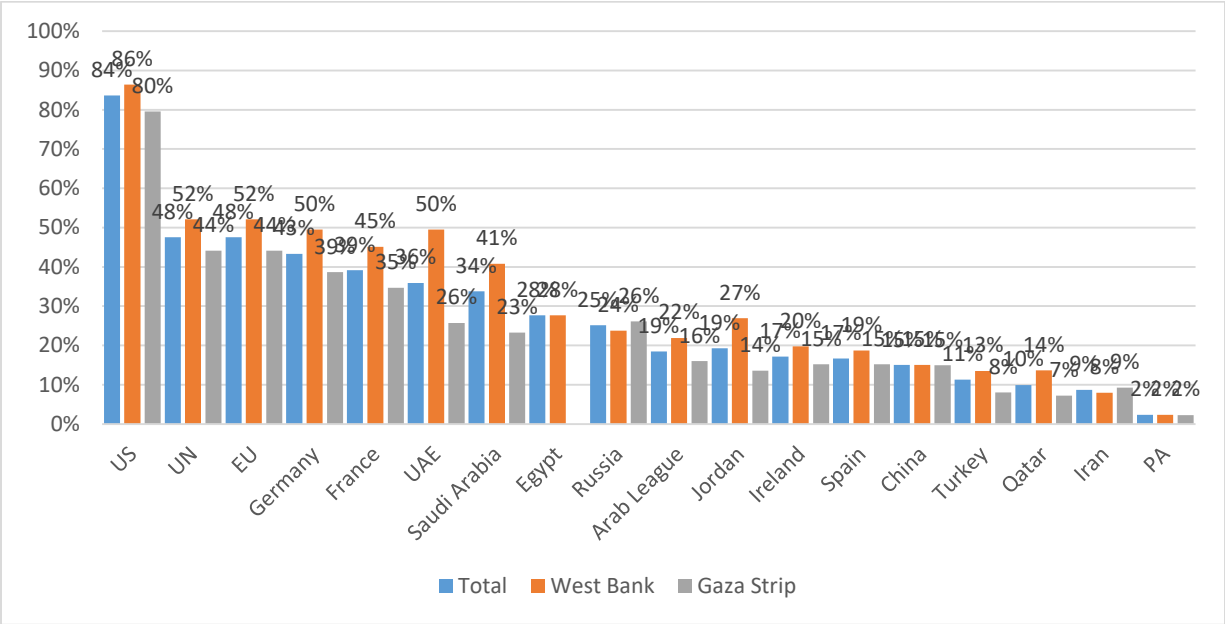
Figure (14): Countries seen by Palestinians as **defending Israel**, not Palestine:

The US stands as the most likely to defend Israel



Here too, Gazans differ from West Bankers despite the fact that the overall trend is similar. Gazans, as shown in Figure (15) are less likely in all but three cases than West Bankers to grant these countries and entities higher marks for defending Israel. This is particularly true for countries like the UAE, where 50% of West Bankers believe it defends Israel compared to 26% of Gazans—a 24-point gap. Similarly, for Saudi Arabia, 41% of West Bankers versus 23% of Gazans see it as defending Israel (18-point gap), and for Jordan, 27% versus 14% (13-point gap). This reflects West Bankers' greater sensitivity to normalization and perceived betrayal by fellow Arab states.

Figure (15): Countries seen by West Bankers and Gazans as **defending Israel**, not Palestine:
West Bankers are more likely to give higher marks to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan



The countries and entities seen as defending both sides equally include the EU, the UN, the Arab League, Russia, and the UAE, selected in each case by approximately 18% of the public. The countries or entities seen as "unclear on their commitment to defending either Palestine or Israel" include substantial percentages for most actors: China at 35%, Egypt at 33%, Russia and Iran at 32% each, Saudi Arabia and Ireland at 30% each, Turkey at 29%, the Arab League and Jordan at 28% each, Germany and France at 27% each, the UAE at 25%, Spain at 23%, the UN at 22%, Qatar at 22%, and the EU at 21%. This widespread perception of ambiguity or lack of clarity suggests that for most international actors, Palestinians remain uncertain about their true commitments, with only the United States clearly seen as pro-Israel and only Iran, Qatar, and Turkey clearly seen as pro-Palestine by significant majorities.

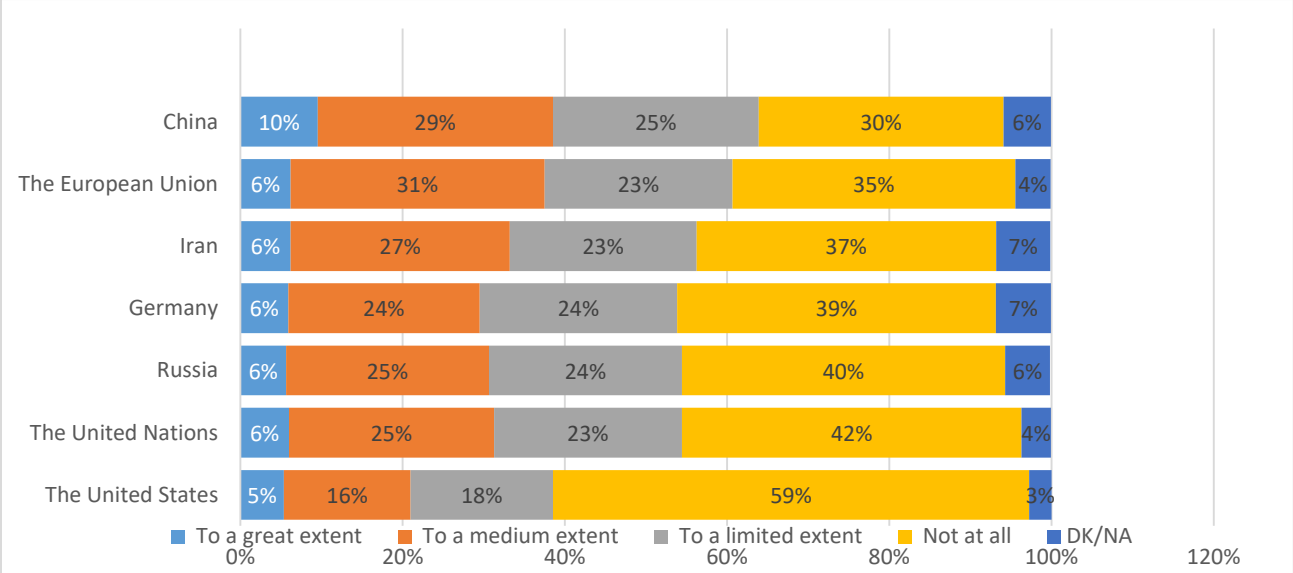
8. Appropriate mediators:

When asked which of these 18 countries and entities are the most appropriate to mediate the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in a fair manner for both sides, the countries most selected were Egypt at 31%, Qatar at 30%, and Turkey at 19%. The countries that were seen as inappropriate for mediation included Germany at 98%, France at 96%, the UAE and Ireland at 94% each, Russia at 93%, China and the UN at 92% each, Saudi Arabia at 91%, and Spain at 90%. This creates a dilemma for any future peace process: Palestinians trust regional actors as mediators but recognize that effective mediation requires engagement with Western powers, particularly the United States, which hold the greatest leverage over Israel. Yet these Western powers are precisely the ones Palestinians view as most committed to defending Israel and most inappropriate to serve as fair mediators.

9. Commitment to implementing international law:

Given increased concerns about international double standards when it comes to Israel-Palestine, AB9 asked about the extent of commitment of six of these 18 countries to the implementation of international law. The United States comes at the bottom, with only 21% indicating that it is committed to a great or medium extent, while China comes at the top with 39%. Russia received 31%, the EU 37%, Germany 30%, Iran 33%, and the UN 31%. Only the United States is perceived by the majority of Palestinians as having no commitment to international law "at all," at 59%, followed surprisingly by the UN at 42%, Russia at 40%, Germany at 39%, Iran at 37%, the EU at 35%, and China at 30%.

Figure (16): Perceptions of commitment to implementing international law



As in other findings, Gazans tend to be more generous than West Bankers on the issue of international commitment to law. As shown in Table (3), this is true for all the countries in question. The gap between West Bankers and Gazans is widest regarding Russia (24 percentage points, with 45% of Gazans saying Russia is committed to a great or limited extent versus 21% of West Bankers), the UN (21 points, 44% versus 23%), China and Germany (19 points each, 50% versus 31% and 41% versus 22% respectively), and the United States (18 points, 32% versus 14%). The gap is narrowest regarding Iran at 13 points (41% versus 28%) and the EU at 16 points (47% versus 31%).

Table (3): Gazans are more likely than West Bankers to say countries abide by international law to a great or limited extent

countries	West Bankers	Gazans
China	31%	50%
EU	31%	47%
Iran	28%	41%
Germany	22%	41%
Russia	21%	45%
UN	23%	44%
US	14%	32%

This widespread perception that major international actors fail to implement international law, or do so selectively, fundamentally shapes Palestinian skepticism toward international institutions and explains why Palestinians increasingly view resistance rather than international legal frameworks as the path to achieving their rights. The fact that even China, the most positively rated on this measure, receives only 39% saying it is committed to international law demonstrates the depth of Palestinian disillusionment with the international system.

10. The Trump Administration and regional dynamics:

The survey captured Palestinian assessments of the Trump administration's second term and recent regional developments. One question, asked only in the

West Bank, concerned the impact of Trump's tariffs. The vast majority, 77%, said the impact in general is mostly negative, while only 4% said it is mostly positive, with 16% saying it has no impact. On the impact of these tariffs on one's own household's ability to provide for basic needs, approximately two-thirds, at 64%, said it was negative, only 4% said it was positive, and 29% said there was no impact. This indicates that Trump's economic policies are perceived as directly harming Palestinian households already suffering from the economic devastation of the war and Israeli punitive measures.

A second question asked the public to compare the Trump administration's policies toward the Middle East and North Africa to those of the Biden administration. Overall, 53% said Trump's policies are worse than Biden's (38% in the Gaza Strip and 62% in the West Bank), 33% said they are the same (40% in the Gaza Strip and 29% in the West Bank), and 11% said they are better (20% in the Gaza Strip and 6% in the West Bank). This represents a substantial partisan gap, with Gazans being three times more likely than West Bankers to view Trump's policies as better than Biden's. This likely reflects Gaza's desperation for any policy change that might improve their situation, combined with Trump's role in brokering the ceasefire that ended the immediate warfare, versus West Bank's more ideologically consistent rejection of U.S. policies regardless of administration.

Finally, the survey asked about the impact of the 12-day war between Israel and Iran on Iran's position in the region. Palestinians are divided in their assessment: 41% think it strengthened Iran's regional position (46% in the West Bank and 35% in the Gaza Strip), 30% think it weakened it (26% in the West Bank and 36% in the Gaza Strip), and 25% think it had no effect. This division reflects uncertainty about whether Iran's direct military engagement with Israel—launching missiles and drones at Israeli territory and absorbing Israeli strikes on Iranian facilities—enhanced deterrence and demonstrated Iran's willingness to confront Israel directly, or exposed vulnerabilities in Iran's defenses and strategic limitations. The

fact that West Bankers are more likely to see it as strengthening Iran while Gazans are slightly more likely to see it as weakening Iran may reflect West Bankers' greater ideological investment in resistance narratives versus Gazans' more pragmatic assessment of military capabilities and outcomes.



ABOUT ARAB BAROMETER

Arab Barometer is a nonpartisan research network that provides insight into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world.

We have been conducting rigorous, and nationally representative public opinion surveys on probability samples of the adult populations across the Arab world since 2006 across 15 countries.

We are the longest-standing and the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. Our findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics.



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