

Arab Barometer VIII

Jordan Report

April 2024

Executive summary

Arab Barometer's Wave VIII survey captures public opinion in Jordan at a critical time. As the COVID-era restrictions and changes receded, many of the challenges Jordan had been facing over the previous decade returned to the fore. From the early 2010s until Arab Barometer's 2022 survey, there had been consistent declines in views of government and economic challenges continued to mount.

However, in the weeks before the planned survey, the events of October 7, 2023 shook the region, but particularly Jordan as a country bordering Israel. Israel's subsequent military campaign in Gaza deeply affected Jordanian public opinion, particularly given the large number of Jordanians of Palestinian descent. Results from the survey strongly suggest that the impact from the war in Gaza not only shaped views of international actors, but also influenced perceptions of domestic issues in Jordan. In effect, it is difficult to overstate the importance of this issue for Jordanian public opinion or to accurately understand it separately from the situation in Gaza.

As questions on the situation in Gaza make clear, Jordanians are strongly connected to this issue. When asked to describe the situation, the vast majority say it is a "genocide" or a "massacre" rather than a "war" or "conflict". The images seen on television and on social media gave Jordanians, even in the relatively early days of the war, a very strong perception about what was taking place.

Jordanians also center their country on the conflict. Likely reflecting on the strong statements made by King Abdullah in the early days of the war, they see their country as far and away the actor that is most committed to protecting Palestinian rights. Similarly, Jordanians believe that their country above all others is positioned to broker a settlement to the war. In short, Jordanians see themselves and their country as essential toward protecting Palestinians and resolving this issue.

The extent of the conflict has deeply affected views toward foreign relations. Jordanians have turned sharply against Western countries given their vocal and consistent support for Israel. U.S. favorability dropped precipitously since 2022 falling by 23 points while the U.K. fell by 11 points over the same period. At the same time, support for the U.S.'s global competitors increased dramatically. Russia, but especially China, are now viewed significantly more favorably by Jordanians than in 2022. For Russia, this support comes in spite of very limited support for its invasion of Ukraine. However, it is clear that for Jordanians, policy positions toward Gaza far outweigh the situation in Ukraine.

Regionally, none of the countries surveyed have seen a decrease in favorabil-

ity in the wake of the war in Gaza. By contrast, in Tunisia, there was evidence that countries with closer links with Israel before October 7, such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia, had lost support. However, in Jordan this is not the case. Although support for Saudi Arabia is largely unchanged, its de facto leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), has seen a strong increase in favorability. Meanwhile, UAE president Mohammed bin Zayed (MBZ) has also won greater support. Meanwhile, Turkey and its president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have also seen greater support since 2022. Iran, which has strongly embraced the Palestinian cause has not seen a significant increase in favorability, although like for MBS, support for its leader, Ali Khamenei, has notably increased since 2022.

These changes in the international arena are far from the only shifts observed in Jordan. Most notably, the survey finds that long-standing declines in views of the economy and government have reversed. For example, despite a majority of citizens saying the economy is the country's biggest problem, Jordanians are now more likely to rate the economy as good or very good than in 2022. This is particularly surprising given the fact that two-thirds of Jordanians say they have missed a meal in the past 30 days, which is a 20-point increase from 2022.

Jordanians are most likely to blame food shortages on government mismanagement rather than other global issues such as inflation or the war in Ukraine. Nevertheless, they are now more likely to say they have confidence in the government and parliament than they were in 2022. This change reverses a long-standing trend of declining trust in political institutions. Still, fewer than half say they have confidence in the government while only a quarter say the same about parliament.

Ratings of the government's overall performance have also increased, again reversing a declining trend from 2016-2022. In part, this is due to strong ratings in a number of areas including civil defense, provision of key infrastructure, and improving views of education and health services. But, ratings of performance on the economy, including job creation, limiting inflation, and tackling inequality remain extremely poor, which has certainly had a negative impact on views of overall performance.

Still, improved views of government are much broader, including perceptions related to corruption. Jordanians are now less likely to say there is corruption in state institutions at the national level while they are substantially more likely to say that the government is working to tackle corruption. Similarly, there is also a growing perception that corruption is not a problem at the governorate level.

It is possible that domestic reforms and the end of COVID-related challenges has led to increasing support for the government and a more positive outlook for Jordanians more broadly. However, given rising hunger and the continuing importance of economic indicators, which have always tracked closely with rat-

ings of government in Jordan, most likely these improvements are due, at least in part, to another factor. The survey results are also consistent with a so-called "rally-around-the-flag effect", meaning respondents provide more positive assessments during times of crisis in the name of unity.

The crisis in Gaza certainly lead some Jordanians to provide more positive assessment of conditions based on this phenomenon. This is especially true given the perception of Jordanians that their country should play a leading role in resolving this crisis. Likely, the positive views of their government on this issue has had a spillover effect leading to more positive assessments on domestic issues.

However, it is also possible that these changes are more durable and represent shifting attitudes in how Jordanians assess their government. Additional research after the end of the war in Gaza is needed to help determine the degree to which these changes are a rally-around-the-flag effect or a deeper shift in attitudes.

Beyond these changing attitudes, there are also other important shifts. Jordanians are now less likely to say they are considering emigrating than in 2022, but more than four-in-ten still think about leaving their homeland, especially the young and well-educated. Nearly all of these potential migrants cite economic issues as their main reason, again underscoring the need to improve economic outcomes for citizens in the country.

Political engagement has also increased since 2022, most likely an effect of greater engagement due to the war in Gaza. This is also reflected in the fact that most Jordanians say they have boycotted a brand, which is consistent with widespread calls to do so after October 7 for brands associated with Israel. A large percentage, roughly one-in-five, say they have taken part in a demonstration, which again is consistent with an increase in protests due to the situation in Gaza. Increased protest activity likely also explains dramatic increases in the perception that freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are both guaranteed in Jordan compared with the levels observed in 2022.

This survey also finds that Jordanians strongly favor democracy but they understand democracy in a much broader manner than simply regular elections. Most see it as dignity, including ensuring basic human rights and providing basic necessities to all citizens.

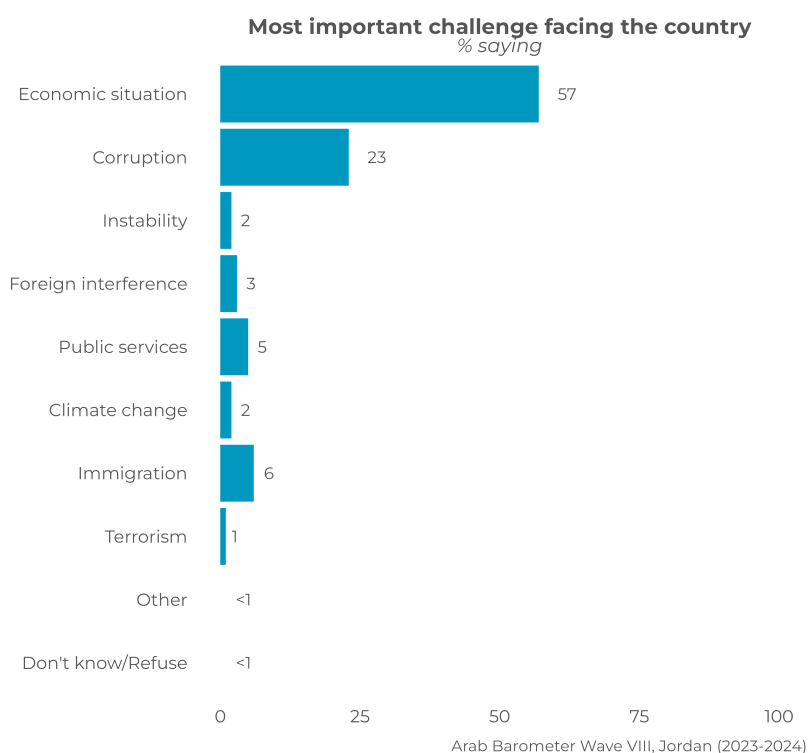
Turning to gender, the survey results show that for the most part, Jordanians are supportive of women's equality. They believe women should have an equal say in the decision to marry, that university education is equally important for men and women, and favor gender quotas in parliament and the cabinet. However, there remain key inequalities, including a perception that men are better at political leadership and that men should have the final say in decisions concerning the family.

Jordanians also exhibit deep concern for the environment, seeing climate change as having a direct impact on their everyday lives as well as their own physical and mental health. Jordanians are most concerned about issues related to water and want their government to address these challenges. They see the private sector and government as being more responsible for climate change than citizens and say both bear the primary responsibility for addressing climate-related challenges. Most favor prioritizing alternative energy development, phasing out fossil fuels, and eliminating polluting vehicles in the future.

These are among the main findings of a nationally representative face-to-face survey conducted in Jordan. The survey included 2,400 randomly selected citizens from across all governorates of Jordan and was fielded from November 29, 2023 to January 10, 2024 using a multistage clustered sample. The margin of error for the reported results is ± 2 percentage points. The surveys are part of Arab Barometer's Wave VIII which is the the largest publicly available survey that captures the sentiments of citizens across MENA amidst the current crisis taking place in the Middle East. Additional information about the surveys can be found at www.arabbarometer.org.

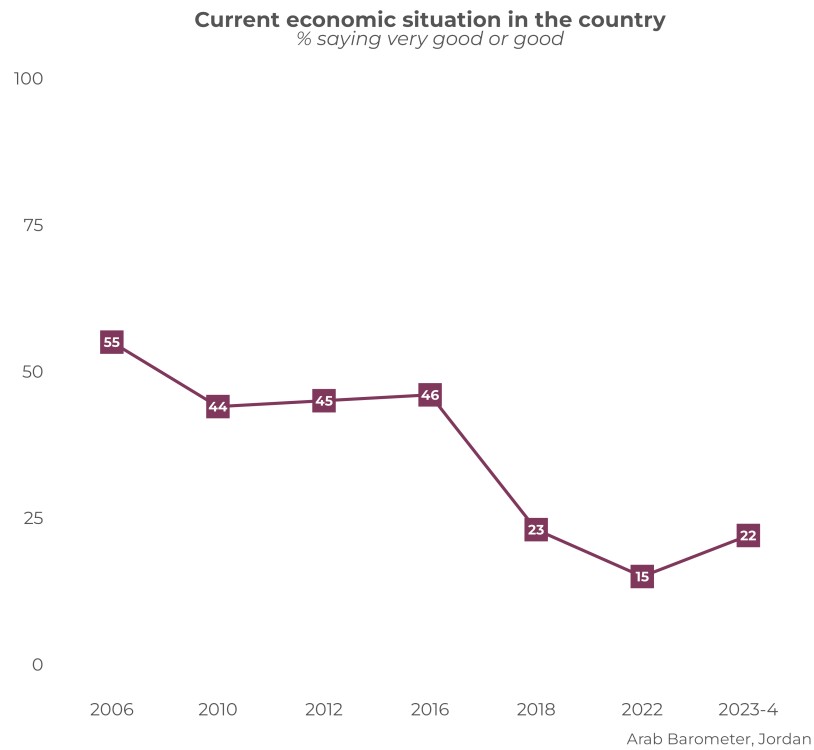
Economy

Overall, the economic situation remains challenging for Jordan. A majority (57 percent) saw that this is the most important challenge facing their country, followed by corruption (23 percent) as a distant second.

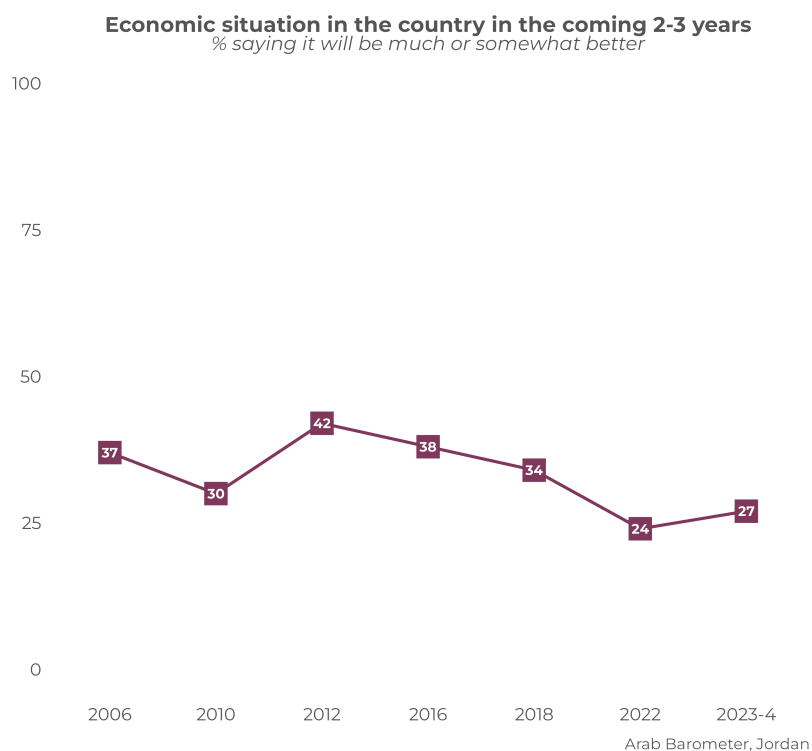


Only 22 percent rate the current situation as good or very good. However, this level represents a meaningful increase since 2022 (7 points) and a reversal of the decline in perceptions about economic conditions observed during the period 2016-2022. The end of COVID or decreasing inflation could account for this change. Alternatively, a form of rally-around-the-flag effect from Jordan's proximity to the Gaza war may help explain this change.

When asked specifically about what represents the biggest economic issue, the most common response is lack of jobs (32 percent), followed by inflation (22 percent), low wages (20 percent), and poverty (14 percent).

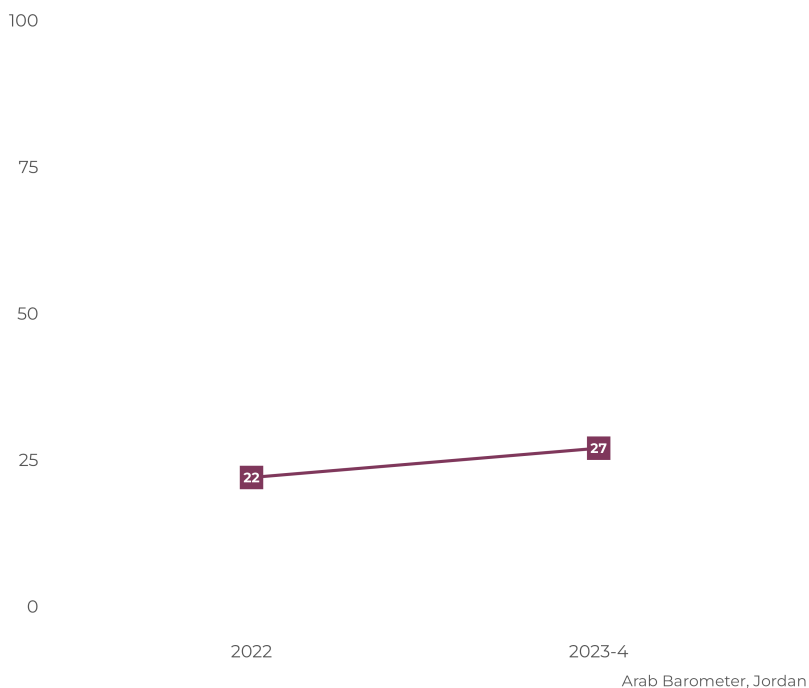


Despite a somewhat improved view of economic conditions, optimism about Jordan's economic future is effectively unchanged at 27 percent, which is three points higher than in 2022. This level remains substantially lower than in 2012 when 42 percent believed the economy would improve in the near future.



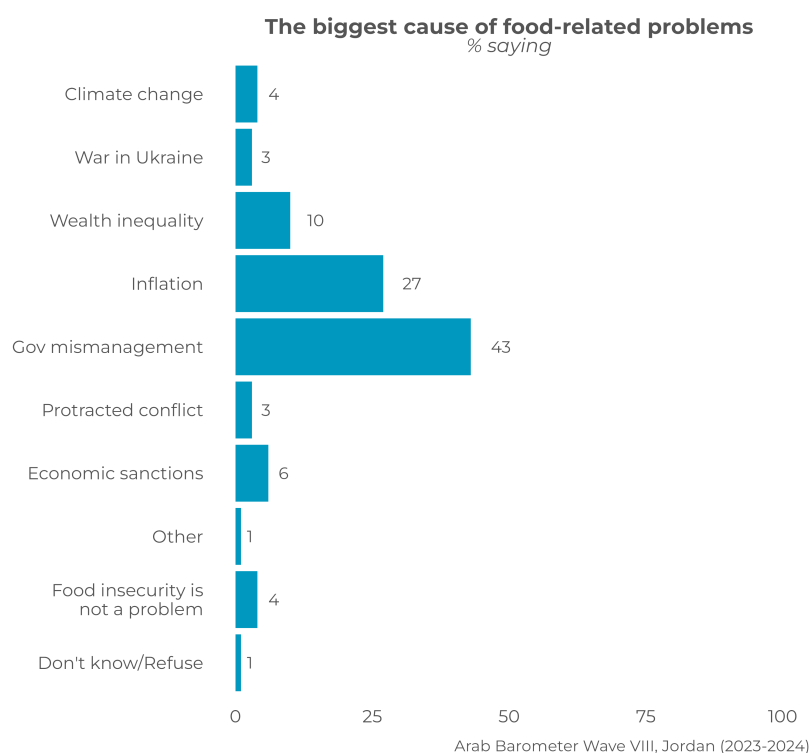
The extent of economic challenges is made clear by food-related challenges. Nearly three quarters (72 percent) of citizens say that the availability of food is a problem to a great or a medium extent while 76 percent say the same about the affordability of food. When asked whether their household had run out of food before they had money to buy more, about two-thirds say this was often (27 percent) or sometimes (40 percent) true in the previous 30 day period. This represents a significant increase of 20 points in just the past two years, highlighting the increasing challenge of securing sufficient food for many Jordanian families.

“The food that we bought did not last and we did not have money to get more”
% saying the statement is often true



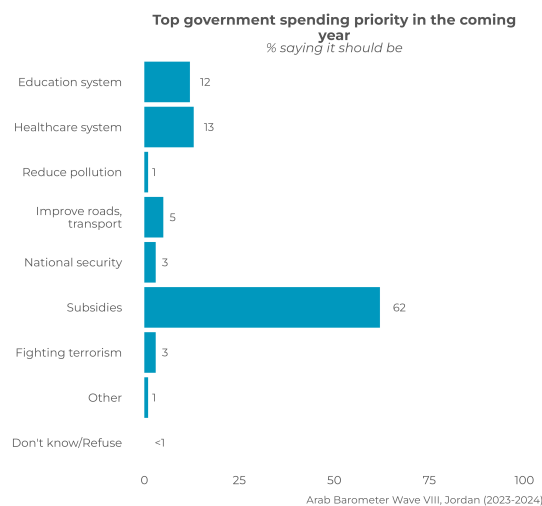
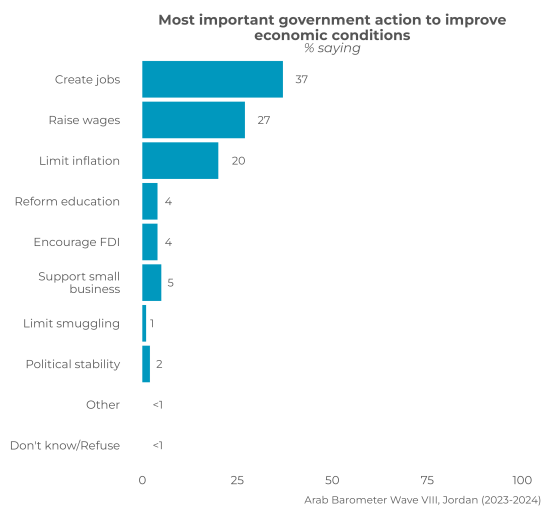
Challenges of food security are problems across much of MENA today.¹ However, many Jordanians see this as a domestic problem. The most common response is that government mismanagement is to blame (43 percent) followed by inflation (27 percent). A further 10 percent cite wealth inequality while only four percent cite climate change and three percent the war in Ukraine, respectively.

¹https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ABVII_Food_Insecurity_Report-ENG.pdf



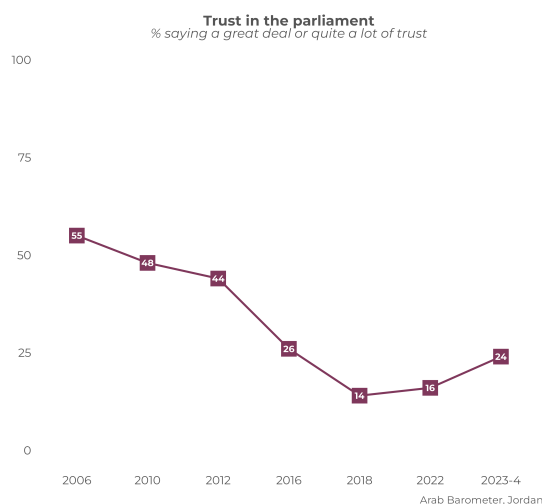
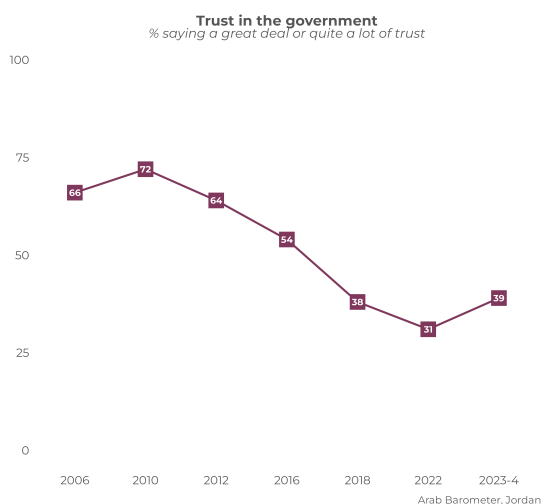
Resolving Jordan's economic challenges will require significant reforms, but there is not a consensus on what the government should do to alleviate these issues. Jordanians are most likely to say that the government should create jobs (37 percent) followed by raising wages (27 percent) and limiting inflation (20 percent). Other possibilities such as educational reform, encouraging foreign direct investment, and supporting small businesses are named by five percent or fewer.

At the same time, there is clarity on what Jordanians want to be the primary focus for government spending in the coming year. A clear majority (62 percent) say the government should make increasing subsidies the main spending priority. By comparison, just 13 percent say it should be health care and 12 percent the educational system. Five percent or fewer cite other priorities like infrastructure or national security. These results make clear that citizens see government efforts that would reduce the cost of daily necessities as most essential, including over longer-term goals of improving the quality of basic services, further highlighting the current economic challenges.



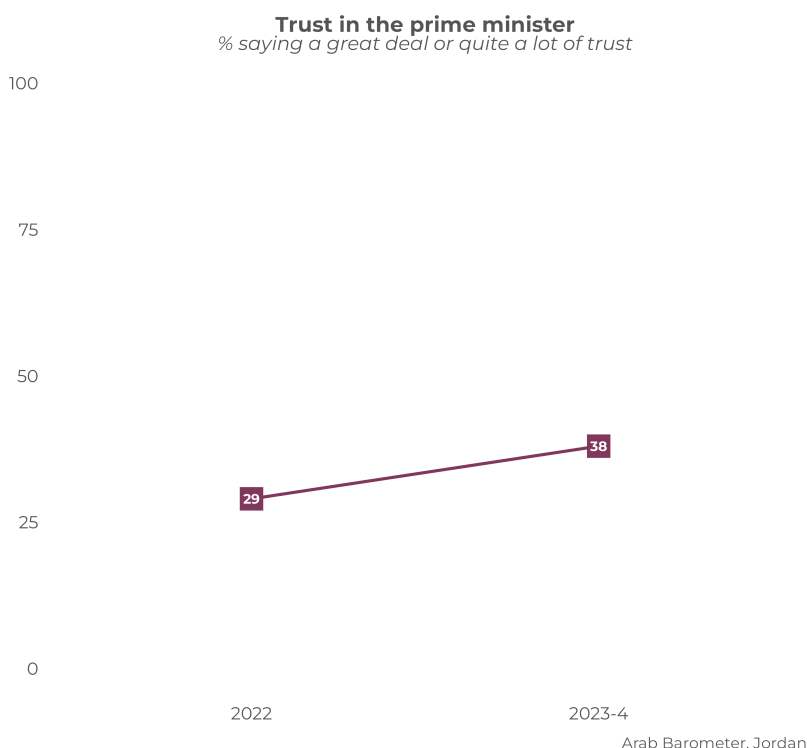
Trust in Political Actors

Trust in many political institutions has been in decline since 2010. For example, at that time, nearly three-quarters (72 percent) expressed confidence in the government, but by 2022 only 31 percent said the same. However, this trend has now reversed with 39 percent of Jordanians expressing a great deal or quite a lot of trust in their government, which represents an increase of eight points. Although still relatively low, the results make clear that citizens have more confidence in their government today than they did two years ago.

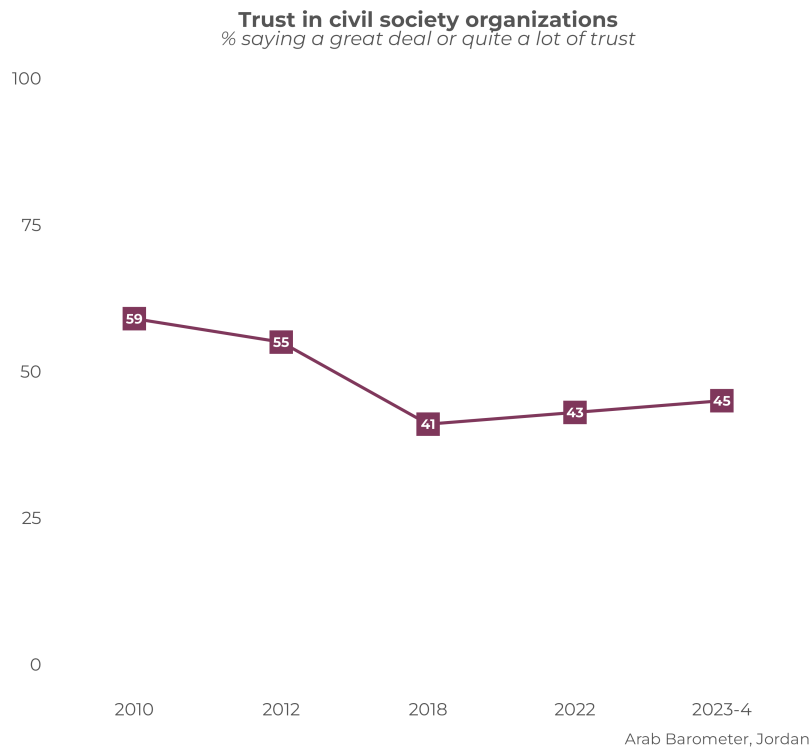


A similar trend is found with trust in parliament. Today, only about a quarter (24 percent) of Jordanians express confidence in their legislature. Although relatively low, this percentage represents an eight-point increase since 2022, demonstrating that stated confidence is also increasing in this institution.

This shift also extends to the Prime Minister. Overall, 38 percent of Jordanians express confidence in PM Bisher Khasawneh, which is very similar to the government overall. However, this too is a meaningful increase since 2022 when just 29 percent had confidence in their PM. In light of the continued economic challenges, it strongly appears that these changes might be a rally-around-the-flag effect linked with Jordan's strong stated support for the Palestinian cause amidst the war in Gaza.

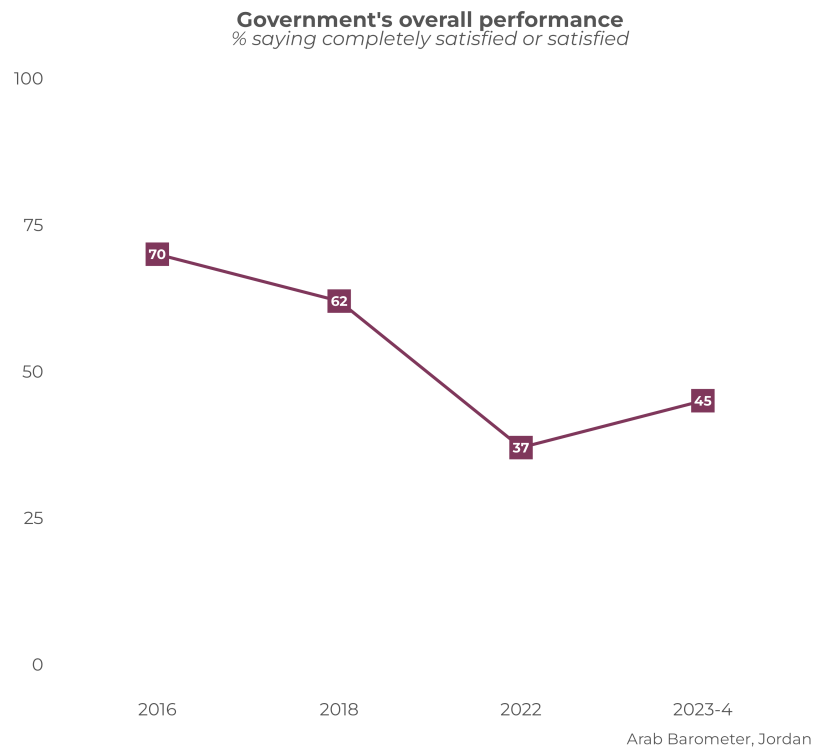


Unlike perceptions of government, trust in civil society remains largely unchanged. Nearly half (45 percent) of Jordanians express a great deal or quite a lot of trust in civil society organizations, which is effectively unchanged since 2022. This result demonstrates that levels of trust in Jordan have not increased across the board, but is limited to views of government.

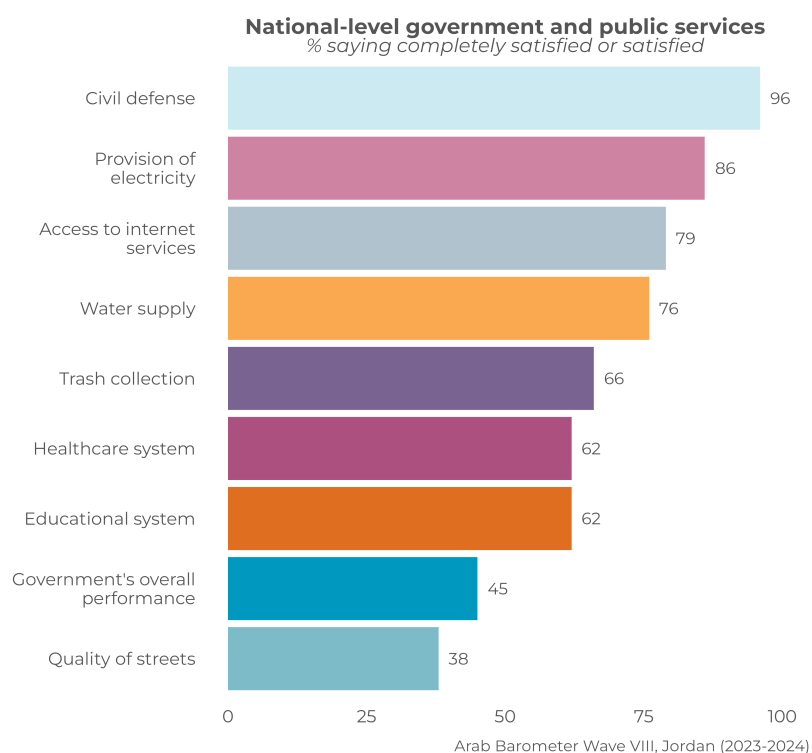


Government Performance

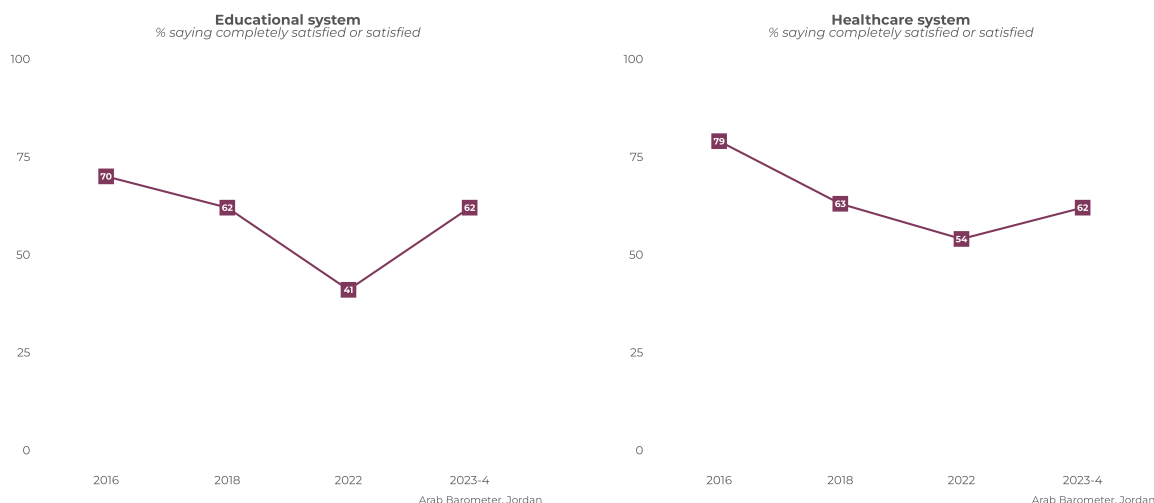
Ratings of government performance exhibit a similar pattern to views of trust in government. Since 2016, ratings of overall government performance in Jordan had declined. However, since 2022 there has been a reversal of this trend with the percentage who are satisfied increasing by eight points to 45 percent. However, not all Jordanians feel the same way. Those living in urban areas and those who are wealthier are more likely to be satisfied with the government.



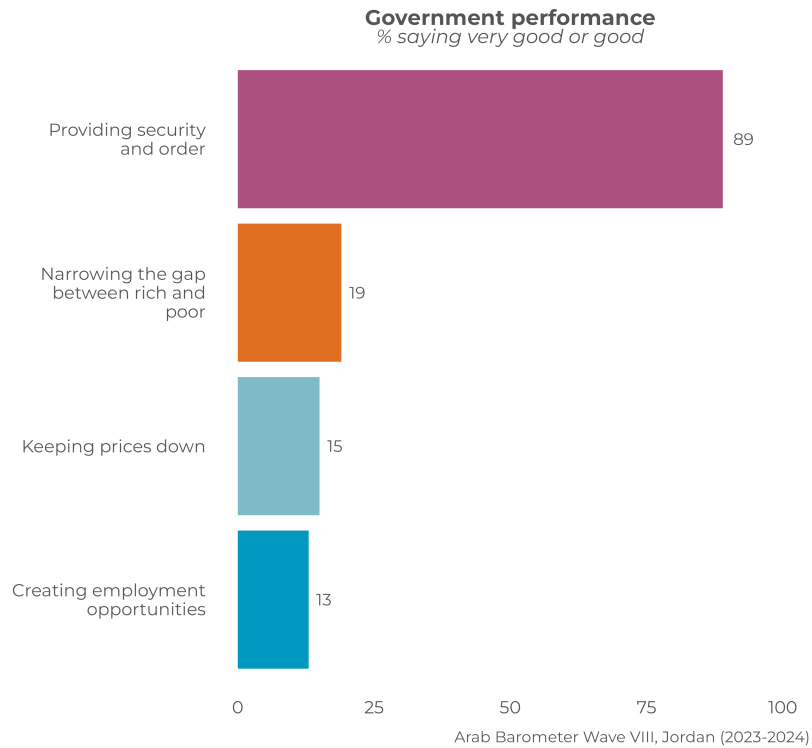
Looking into specific areas of performance, Jordanians are most satisfied with government performance on civil defense (96 percent), followed by electricity provision (86 percent), internet access (79 percent), supply of water (76 percent), and trash collection (66 percent). ratings of the healthcare system and educational system are a bit lower (62 percent, each), but a clear majority remains satisfied. The only key indicator for which a minority are satisfied is the quality of their streets. However, it is notable that overall levels of satisfaction with government (45 percent) trail nearly all individual measures of satisfaction on these individual services.



Like many other aspects related to government, ratings of the health care and educational systems have increased since 2022. For education, ratings have returned to the same level as in 2018, which likely reflects an end to the COVID-related educational challenges endured by students combined with a resolution to the challenges that led the teachers union to strike. For health care, the effective end of the pandemic likely had a similar effect, with levels of satisfaction returning to the level observed prior to the pandemic.

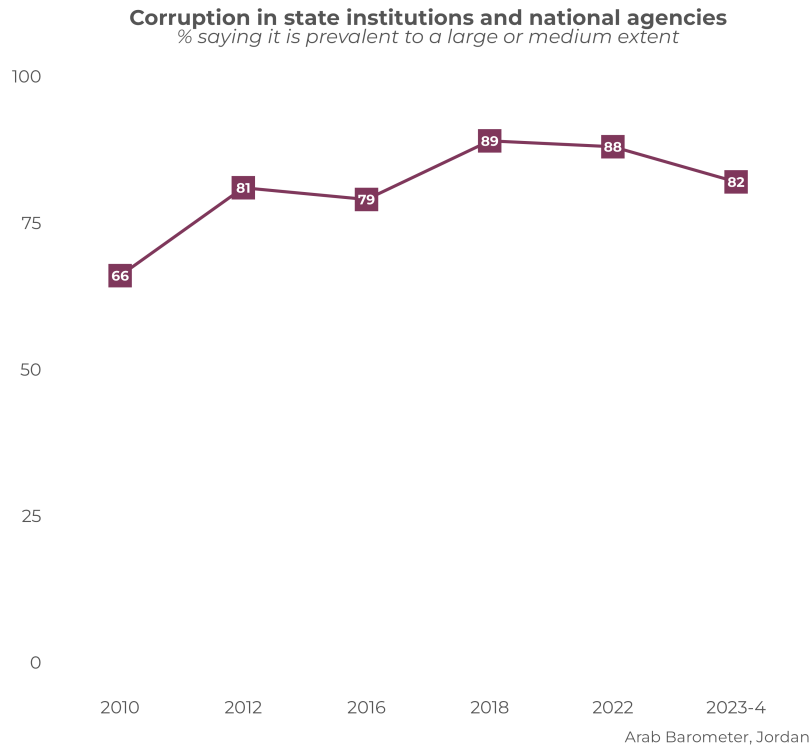


Meanwhile, when specifically asked about how the government is performing on a number of other important issues, ratings of government efforts to address economic issues are very low. Only 19 percent say the government is doing a good or very good job of limiting income inequality. A similar percentage (15 percent) say the government is doing a good job limiting inflation while just 13 percent rate its efforts to create employment opportunities positively. In contrast, roughly nine-in-ten (89 percent) rate the government's provision of security and order positively. These findings strongly suggest that ongoing economic challenges limit overall ratings of government performance.

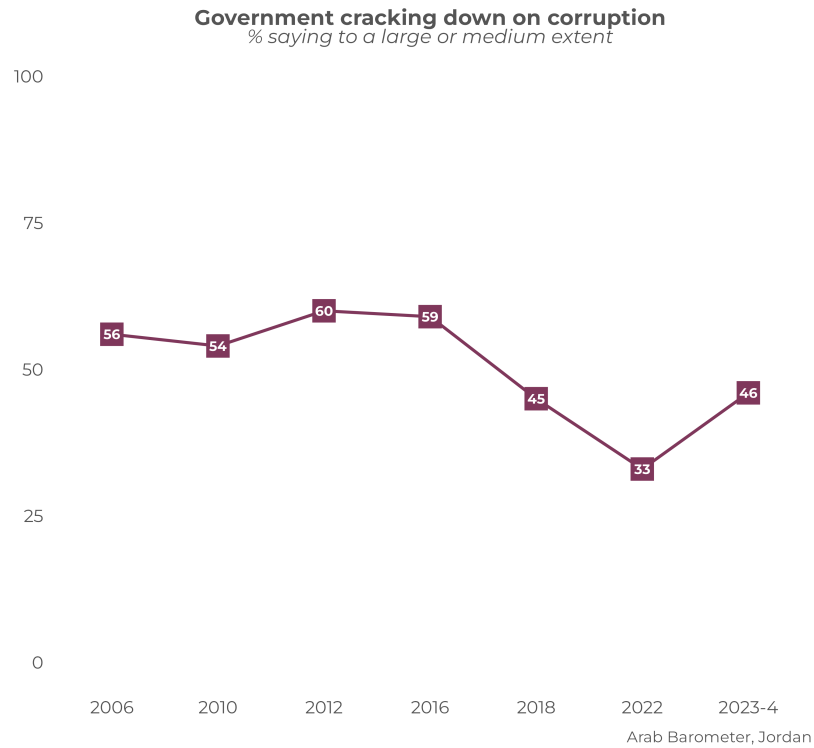


Corruption

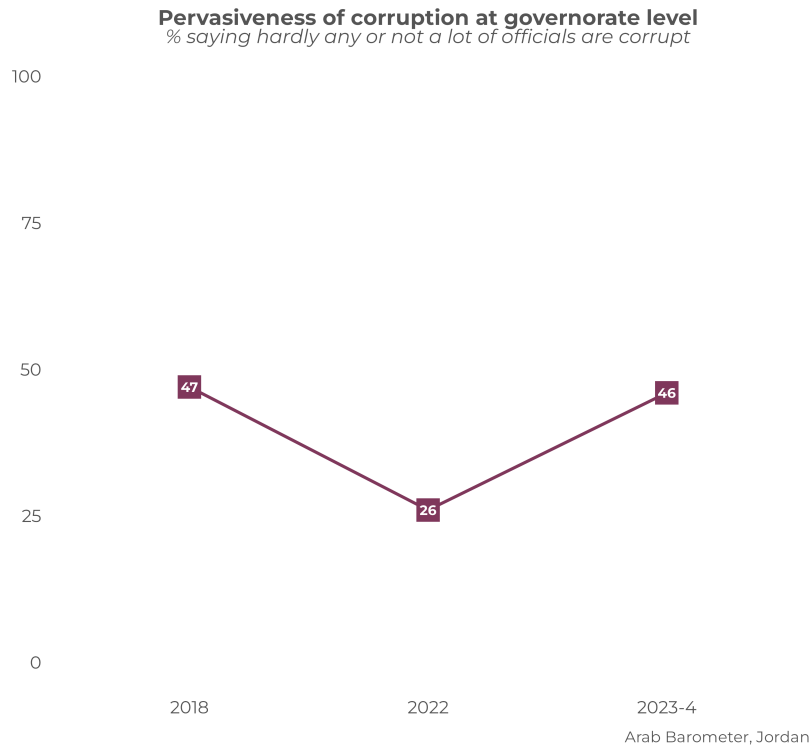
Perceptions of corruption in state institutions remain high. Overall, 82 percent of Jordanians say this problem is present in state and national agencies to a great or medium extent. However, this level has declined slightly in recent years. In 2022, 88 percent believed this to be true, meaning the level has declined by six points since this time.



At the same time, Jordanians are now more likely to say that the government is working to crack down on corruption. In 2022, only a third of Jordanians believed the government was working to tackle this scourge, but this level has now risen to 46 percent. This level is effectively the same as in 2018, but still lower than the percentage observed in 2016 and earlier when a majority of Jordanians believed the government was working to address this problem.

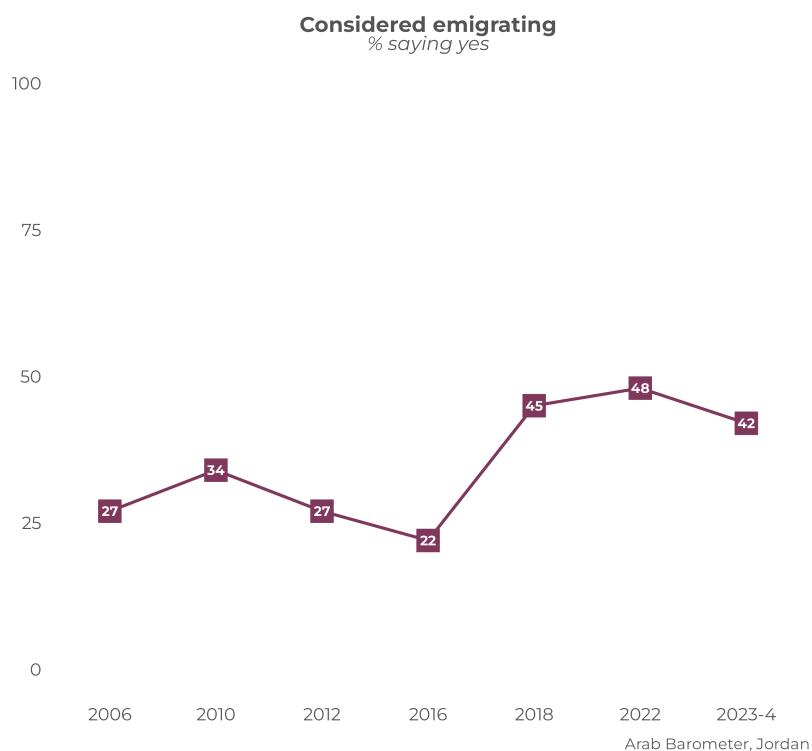


Concern about corruption at the regional level is significantly lower than at the national level. Nearly half (46 percent) say that hardly anyone or no officials at the local level are corrupt. Notably, this is a dramatic increase from 2022 when only 26 percent said the same, but effectively unchanged from 2018 when 47 percent believed few or no local officials were corrupt.



Migration

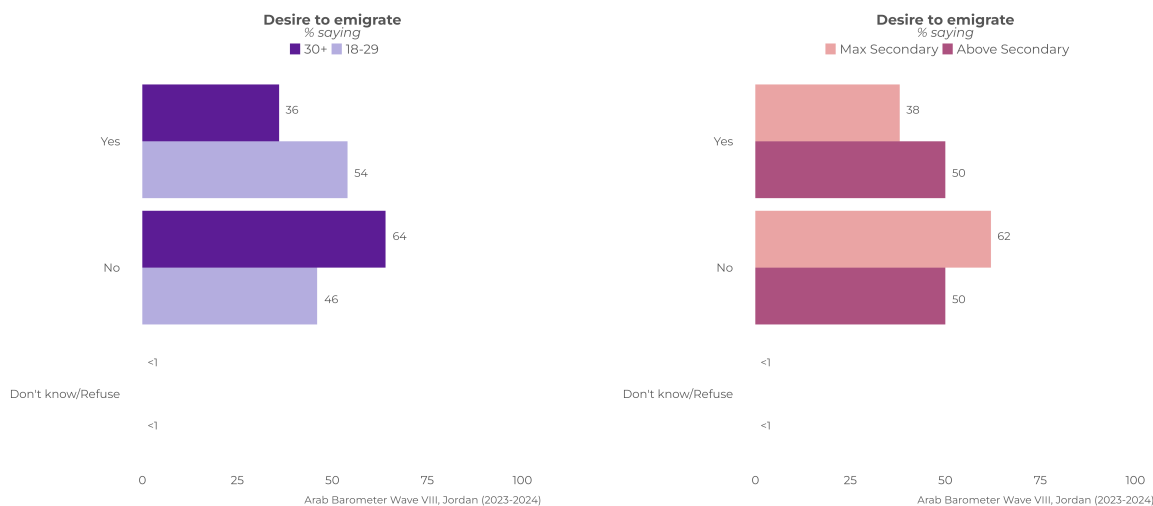
About four-in-ten (42 percent) of Jordanians want to leave their homeland. This level is down from 2022 when 48 percent wanted to emigrate, but it is substantially higher than many years prior. For example, in 2016 only 22 percent were thinking of leaving Jordan, meaning about twice as many are now doing so compared with just eight years prior.



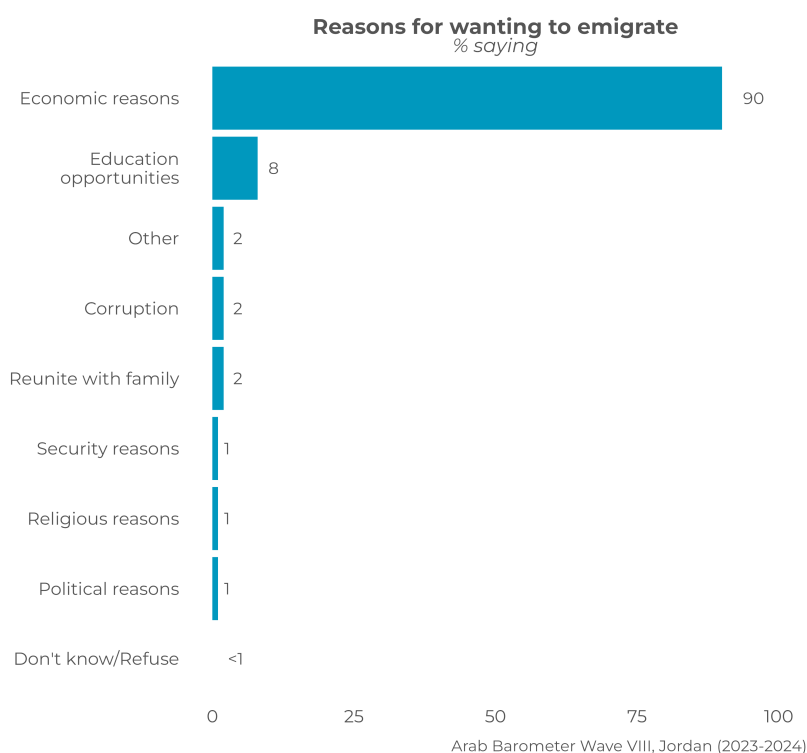
More than half of Jordanians who are ages 18-29 (54 percent) have considered leaving their country, which is far higher than the percentage of those who are 30 and older. Additionally, it tends to be those with higher levels of education that are considering emigrating. Half of those with at least a college degree want to emigrate compared with 38 percent of those with only a secondary degree or less. Men are also substantially more likely than women to have considered emigrating (50 percent vs. 34 percent). Thus, the most common profile of a potential migrant is young, male, and educated.

Arab Barometer – Wave VIII

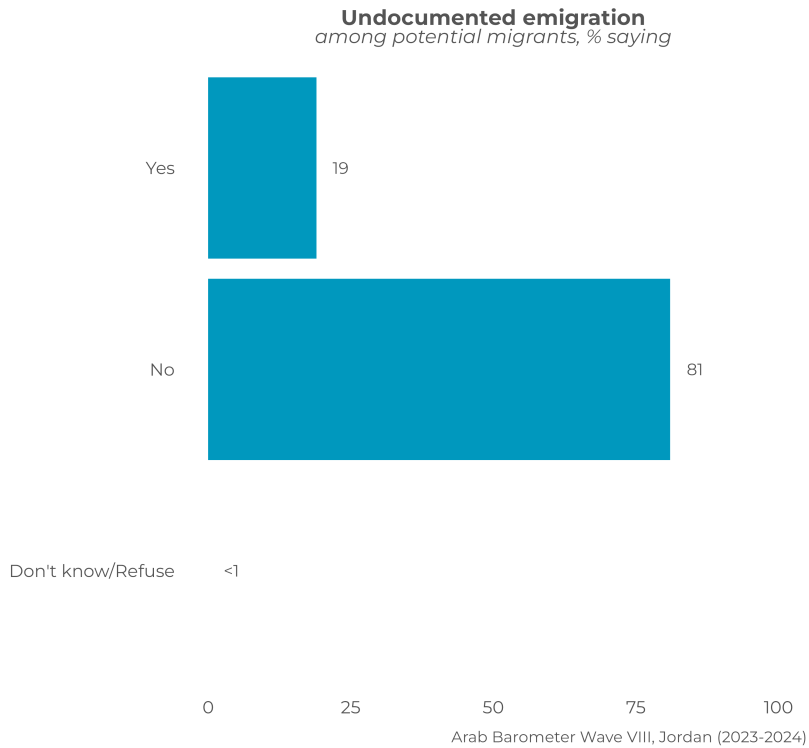
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The main reason Jordanians who want to emigrate provide is economic reasons. Among those considering leaving, 90 percent list economic considerations as a motivation. By comparison, just eight percent say educational opportunities, two percent corruption, and one percent political reasons or security reasons, respectively. In short, improving economic outcomes in Jordan would go a long way toward stemming the tide of potential migrants from the country.

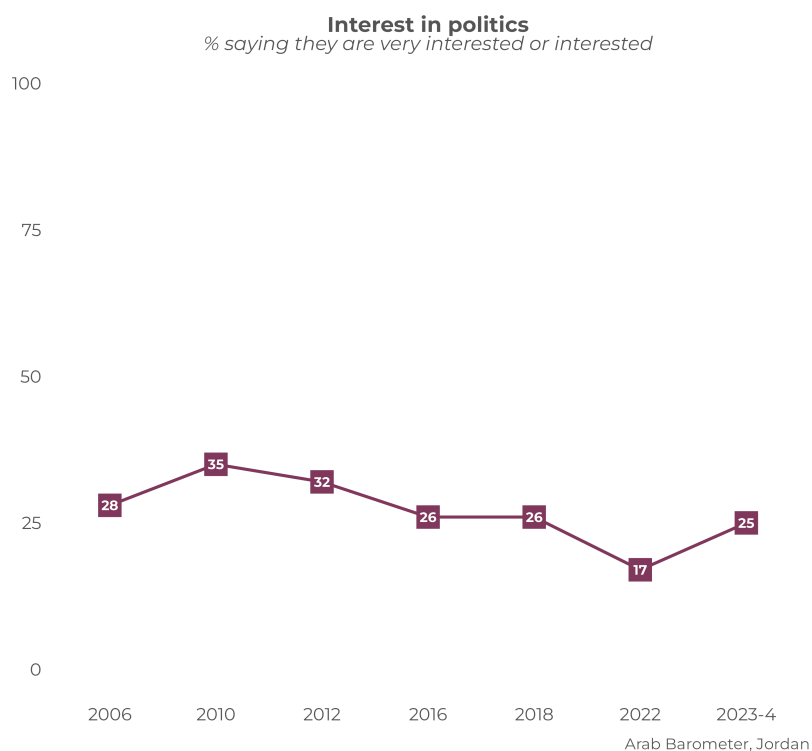


Relatively few potential migrants are willing to leave Jordan if they lack the required papers. Among those considering migration, only 19 percent say they are willing to do so, which is a slight decrease (-7 points) since 2022. Among potential migrants, men are substantially more likely consider leaving without papers than women (23 percent vs. 12 percent) while those who have only a secondary degree or less are somewhat more likely to consider doing so than those who have a university degree or above (22 percent vs. 15 percent). However, there is no difference by the age of potential migrants leaving Jordan without the proper papers.

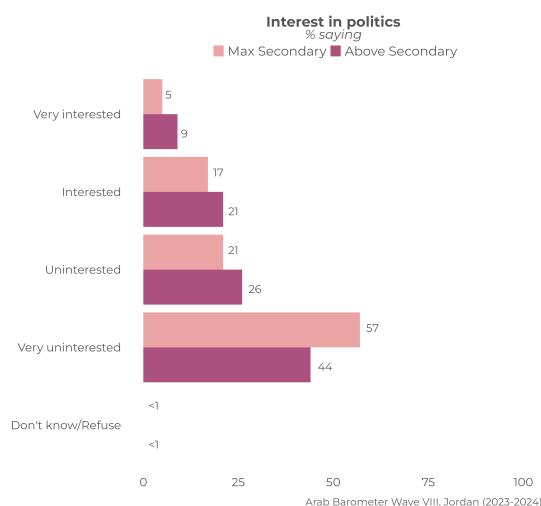
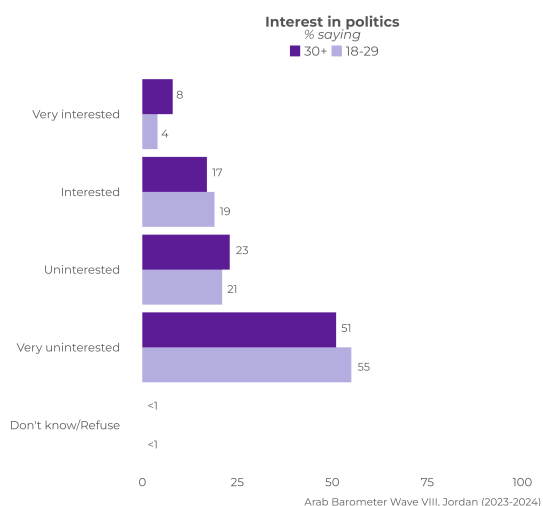


Political Engagement & Civil Rights

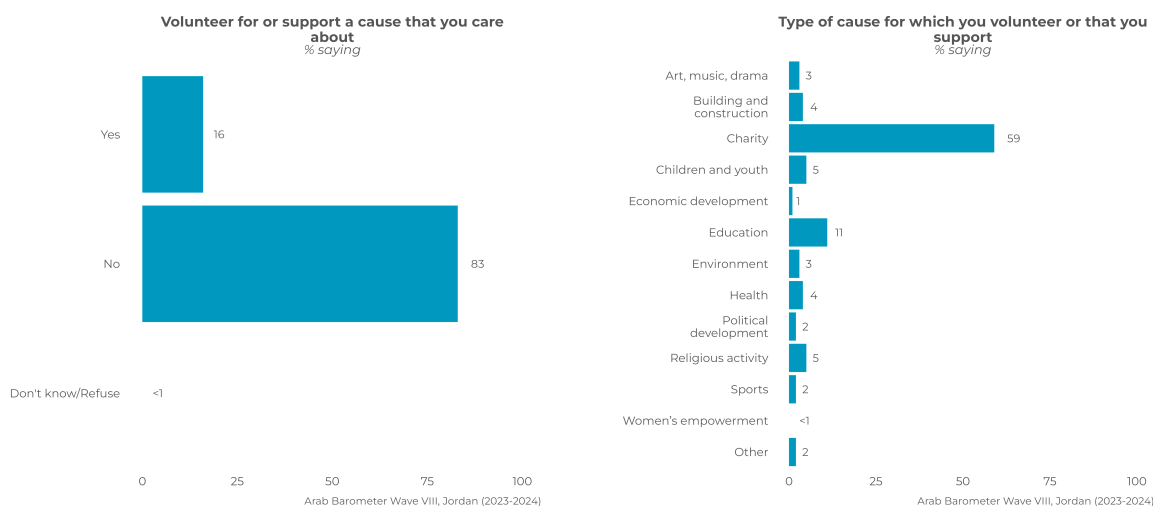
Interest in politics is low in Jordan but is now higher than its nadir in 2022. In Arab Barometer Wave VIII, a quarter of Jordanians say they are very or somewhat interested in politics. This level represents an eight point increase in the last two years.



Unlike in many countries in MENA, youth are about as likely to be engaged as those who are older. However, the main difference relates to level of education. Among those with a secondary degree or less, a majority (57 percent) say they are very disinterested in politics compared with 44 percent of those with a university education.



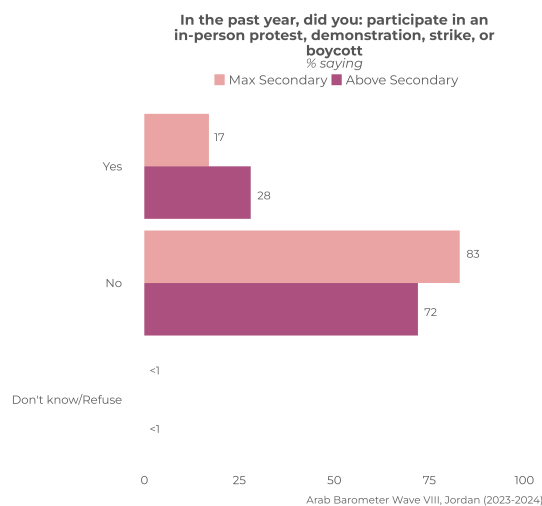
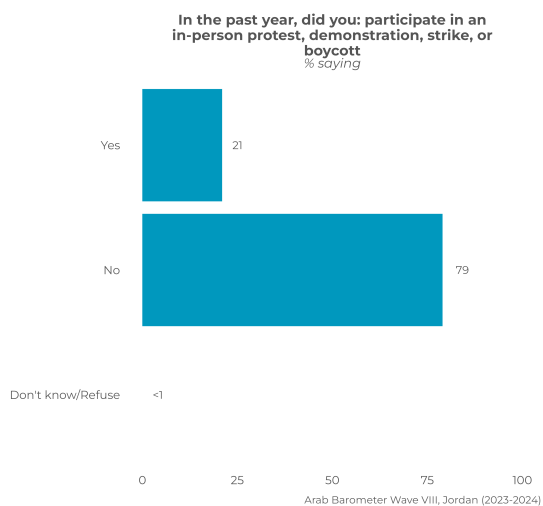
Jordanians tend to be less engaged in their communities than most citizens of most other MENA countries surveyed. Only 16 percent say they have volunteered to support a cause in the last 12 months. Among those who have, charities are the primary cause (59 percent) for which they are engaged in their communities. A further 11 percent say they are engaged in education while five percent or fewer say they are involved with other types of volunteer activities.



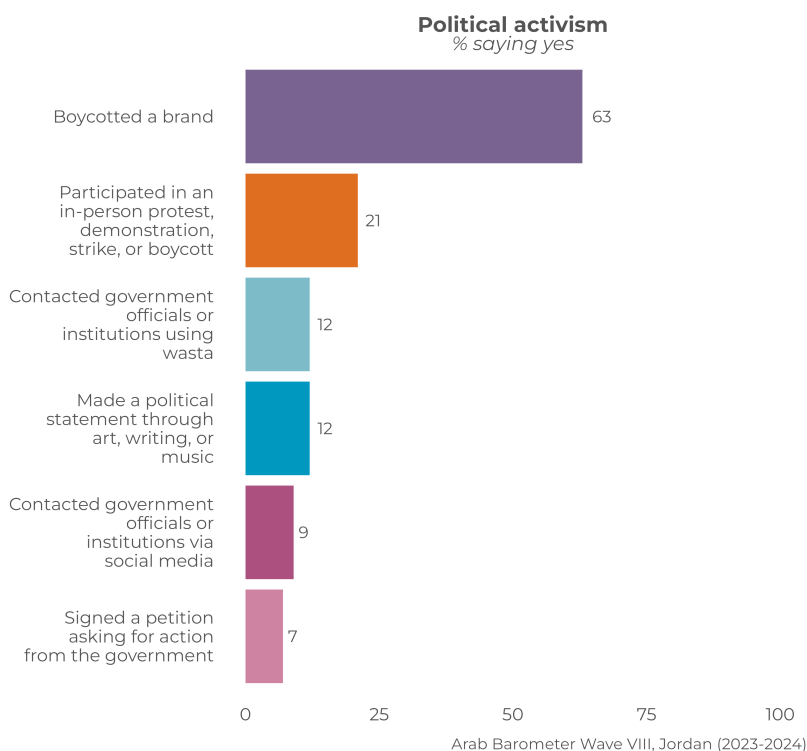
Although levels of civic engagement are relatively low, by other measures Jordanians are relatively engaged in politics. One such measure is taking part in peaceful demonstrations. About one-in-five (21 percent) say they have done so in the past 12 months, which is relatively high by global standards. It is also much higher than in 2022 when only three percent said they had done so. This change likely reflects an easing of COVID-era restrictions and the strong public response to the war in Gaza. Those with a college degree or above are 11 points more likely to have demonstrated peacefully than those with a secondary degree or less. However, there are not meaningful differences by age or gender in terms of who is most likely to have taken part in a peaceful protest.

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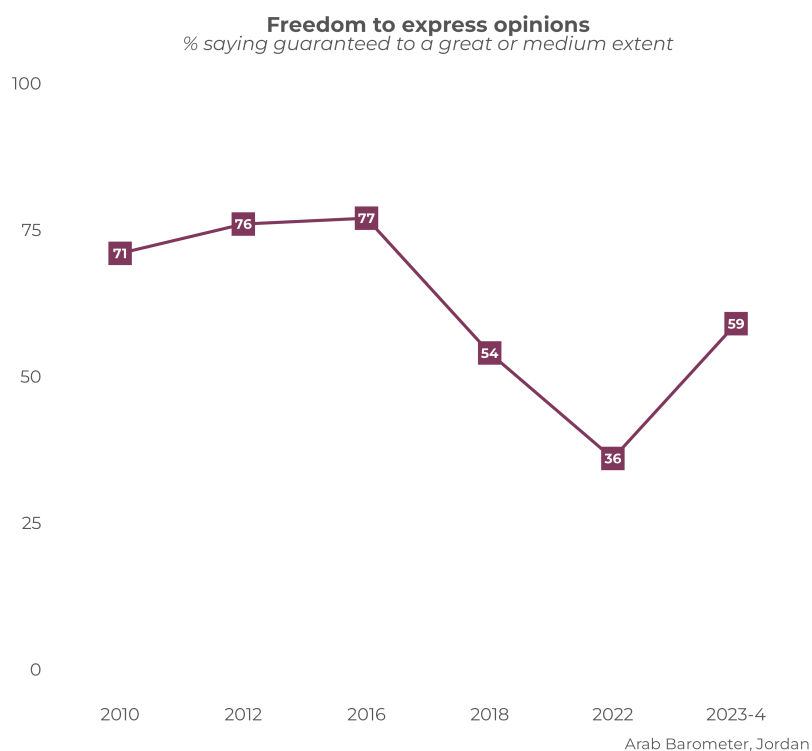
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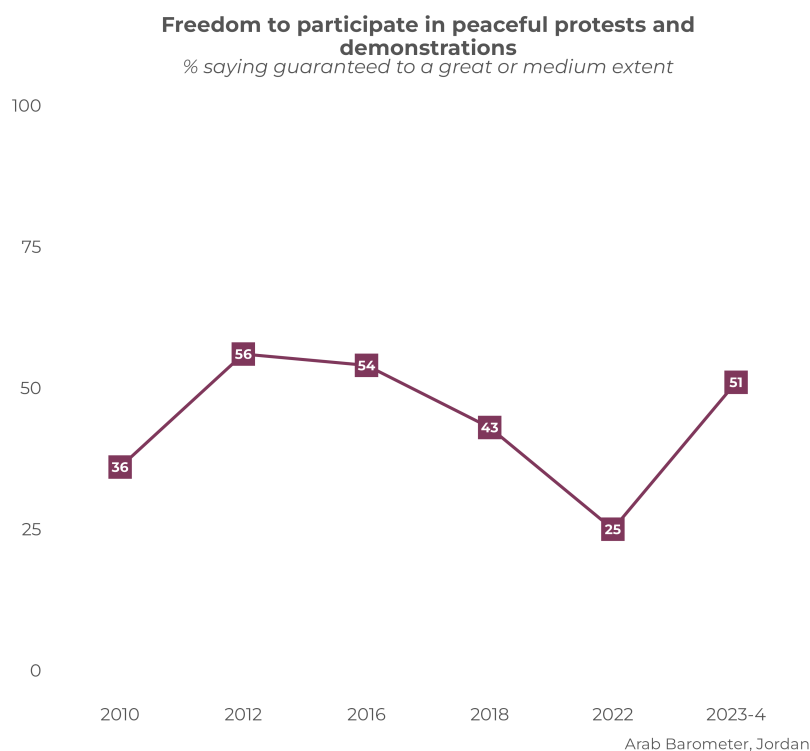
Turning to other forms of political engagement, the most common action Jordanians reported was boycotting a brand (63 percent). Given the timing of the survey after the outbreak of the war in Gaza, it is possible that this level was elevated given calls to boycott brands seen as supportive of Israel. Among other actions, 12 percent report contacting government officials using *wasta* while nine percent did so using social media. Meanwhile, 12 percent made a political statement through an artistic endeavor and seven percent signed a petition calling for action from the government.



Political engagement depends in large part on the political environment. Those that are more restrictive are likely to correspond with lower levels of engagement. In recent years, Jordanians' perceptions that they enjoyed many basic freedoms declined. For example, the percent saying that freedom of speech was guaranteed to a great or medium extent fell from 77 percent in 2016 to 36 percent in 2022. This level likely reflected certain restrictions brought about by the COVID pandemic. However, since 2022 there has been a dramatic recovery to 59 percent. This level is well below the levels observed from 2010-2016, but slightly higher than in 2018 when 54 percent said they enjoyed the right to freedom of expression.

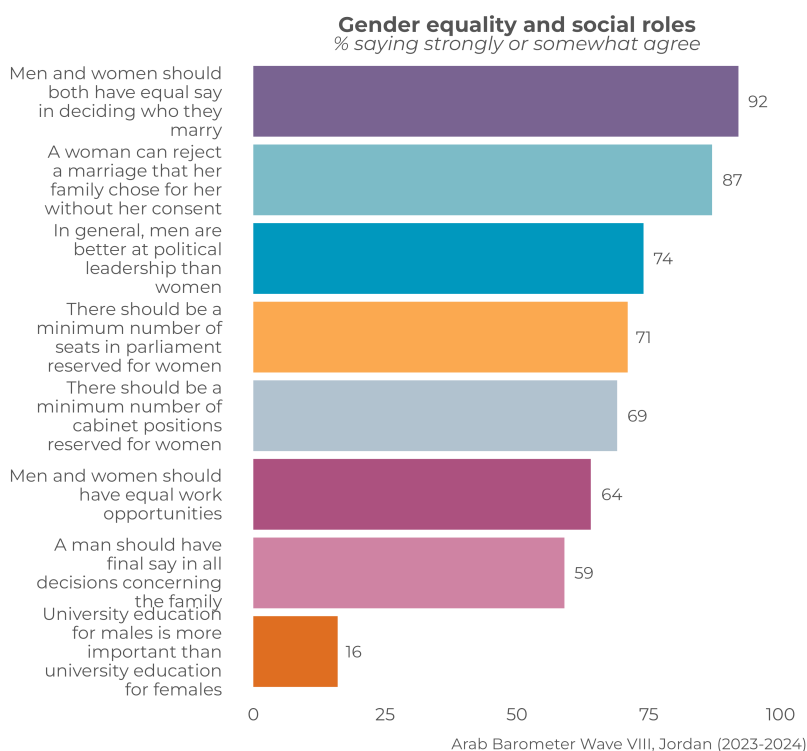


Turning to perceptions about the freedom to demonstrate peacefully, there has been a similar shift in the last few years. Over the decade from 2012-2022, perceptions of the right to demonstrate dropped dramatically, falling from a majority (56 percent) to just 25 percent who said this right was guaranteed to a great or medium extent. In 2022, this percentage was likely low given it came in the aftermath of COVID-related restrictions on public gatherings. However, in the last two years, Jordanians have become far more likely to say they have this right, with about half (51 percent) saying it is guaranteed. Likely, some of this perception relates to the increase in highly visible protest activities taking place against the Israeli military campaign in Gaza, which were taking place across Jordan at the time of the survey.



Gender

By a number of measures, most Jordanians remain committed to gender equality. For example, 92 percent affirm that men and women should have equal rights in deciding whom they should marry. Meanwhile, 87 percent agree that a woman should be able to reject a marriage agreed upon by her family. Within politics, more than two-thirds agree that there is a need for a women's quota for parliament, which does exist in Jordan, while 69 percent favor a minimum number of cabinet seats being reserved for women. A relatively similar percentage (64 percent) say men and women should have equal opportunities to work while only 16 percent believe a university education is more important for men than for women. However, there remains some clear examples of bias against women. Three-quarters (74 percent) believe that men are better than women at political leadership while 59 percent believe men should have the final say concerning family decisions.



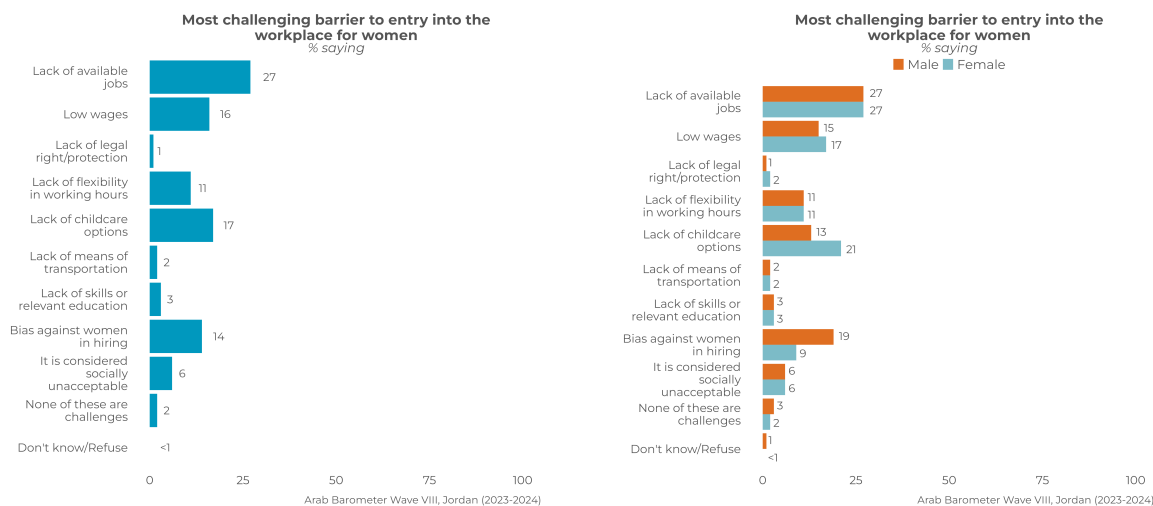
In 2022, about a quarter of women (24 percent) in Jordan were active in the labor force,² which is a far lower rate than men. To better understand the gender gap in employment, Arab Barometer included questions on perceived barriers to women's employment. Overall, there is not agreement upon a single factor limiting women's employment. The most commonly cited barriers are a lack of available jobs (27 percent) followed by a lack of childcare (17 percent) and low wages (16 percent). A further 14 percent cite bias against women as being the main barrier while 11 percent say inflexible working hours. Among other potential barriers, none are named by more than one-in-ten Jordanians.

Views of men and women are surprisingly similar on this topic. A roughly equal percentage cite a lack of available jobs, low wages, and inflexible working hours. The primary differences are found in views of lack of childcare and bias against women. For the former, women are nearly twice as likely to say childcare is a barrier than men (21 percent vs. 13 percent) while women are about half as likely to say bias against women than are men (9 percent vs. 19 percent).

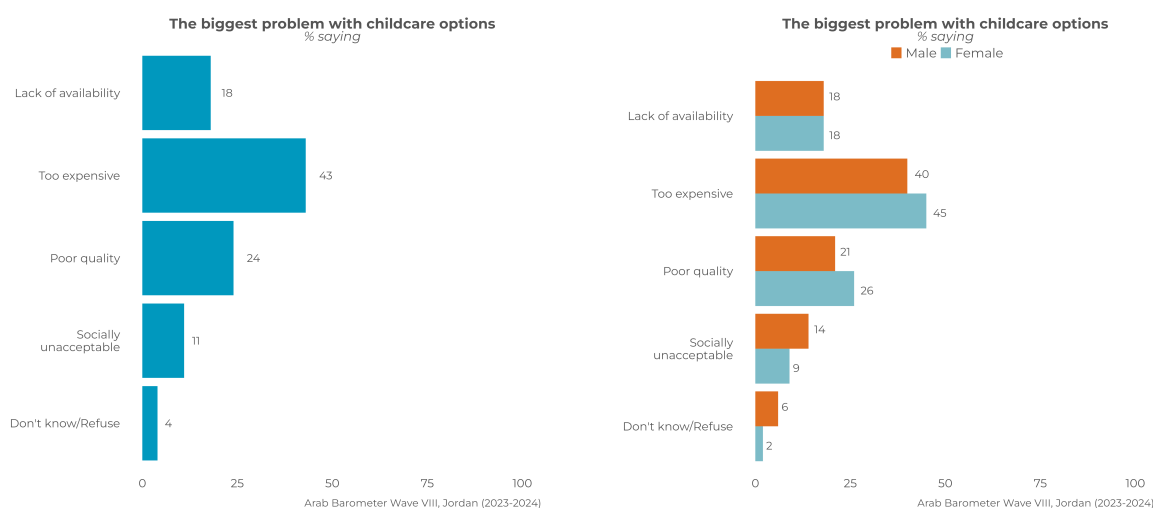
²<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.ACTI.1524.NE.ZS?locations=JO/>

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Jordan Report

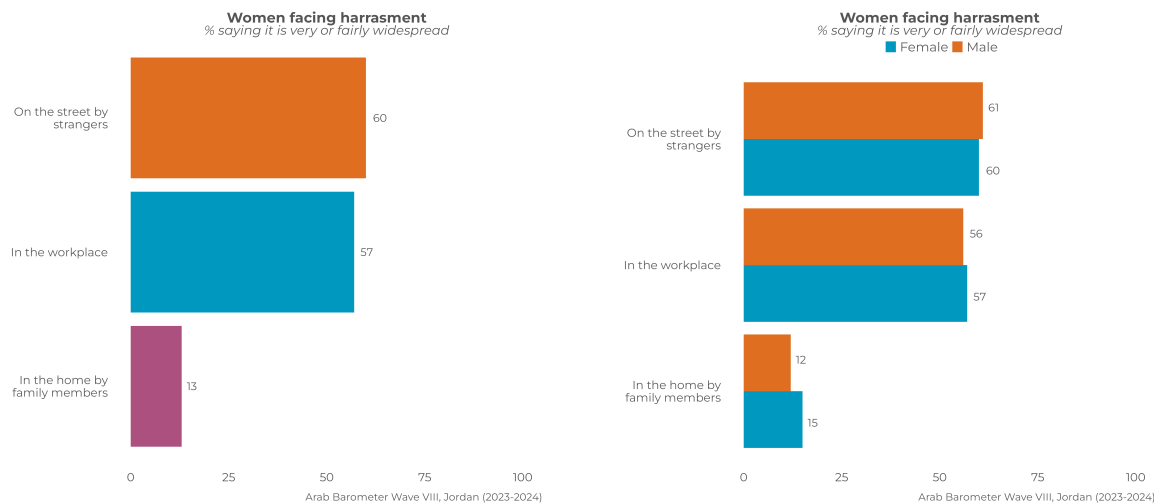


More closely examining the issue of childcare, Jordanians say the biggest challenge is cost (43 percent), followed by poor quality (24 percent), lack of availability (18 percent). Meanwhile, 11 percent say that it is socially unacceptable to put children into day care. Views do not vary widely between men and women on these issues, but women are somewhat more concerned about cost and quality (+5 points, respectively), while women are somewhat less concerned about it being socially unacceptable (-5 points).



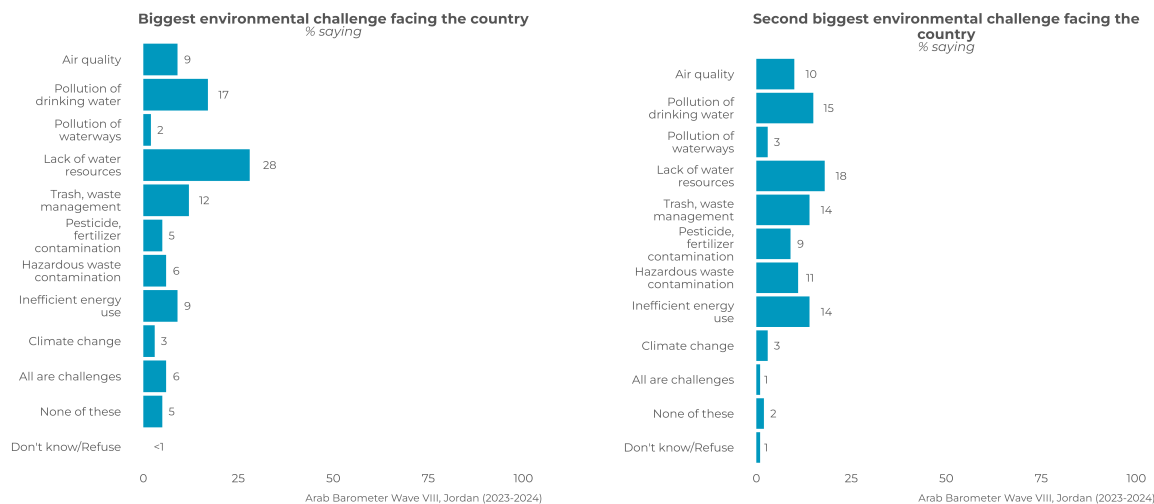
Harassment is another significant problem affecting women in Jordan and may discourage women from joining the workforce. A majority (60 percent) say that harassment of women on the street by strangers is very or fairly widespread. A similar percentage say that harassment of women is a problem in the workplace (57 percent), meaning women may be subject to unwanted remarks at work and on their way to work. Notably, it is not just women who feel this way.

Both men and women are equally likely to hold this perception about harassment of women. However, there is a general consensus that women do not face harassment in the private sphere within their homes with only 13 percent of Jordanians saying this is a problem.

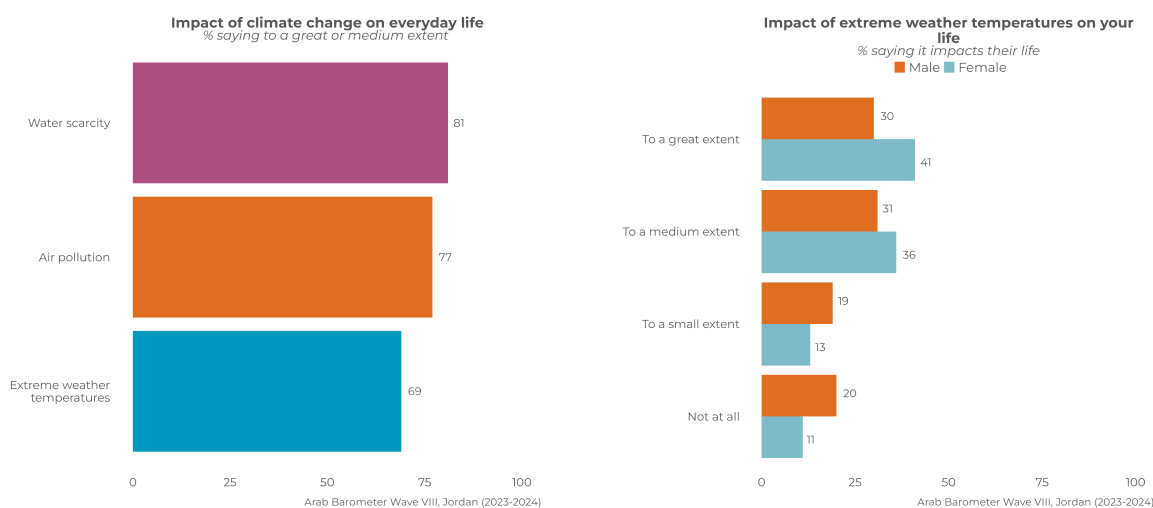


Environment

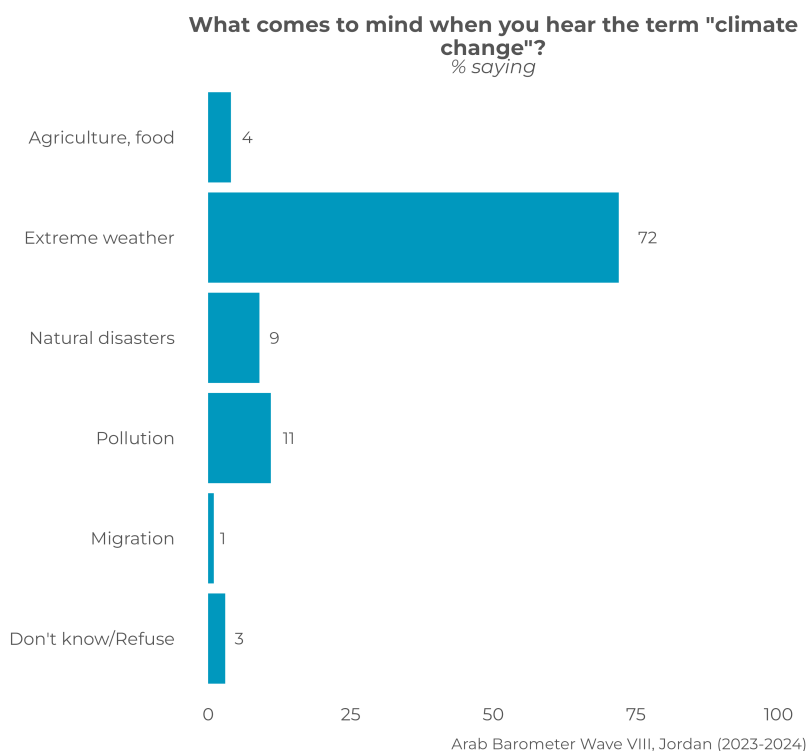
Jordanians perceive many different issues to be of environmental concern. However, the most common challenges relate to water. About half (47 percent) say that the greatest challenge is a lack of water resources (28 percent), pollution of drinking water (17 percent), or pollution of waterways (two percent). Other commonly cited issues include trash or waste management (12 percent), air quality (nine percent), and inefficient use of energy (nine percent).



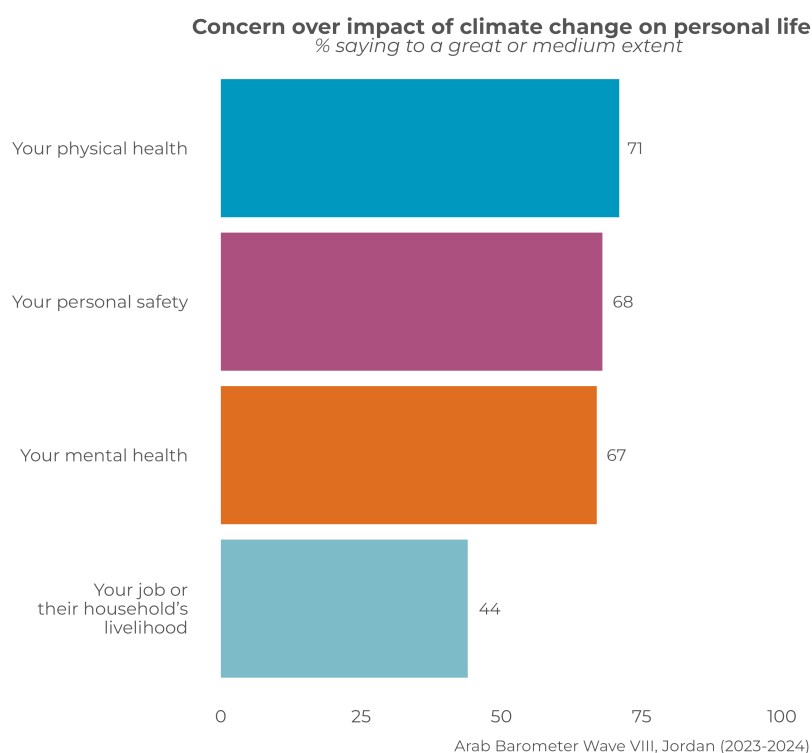
Jordanians widely perceive that some of the issues related to climate change have a significant effect on their daily lives. Four-in-five (81 percent) say that their daily lives are affected by water scarcity, while 77 percent say the same about air pollution. A strong majority (69 percent) also say that extreme weather temperatures affect their everyday life. Notably, this perception is stronger among women than men. Women are especially likely to say extreme temperatures affects their daily life. Overall, 77 percent of women say that extreme temperatures affect their lives to a great or medium extent compared with 61 percent of men.



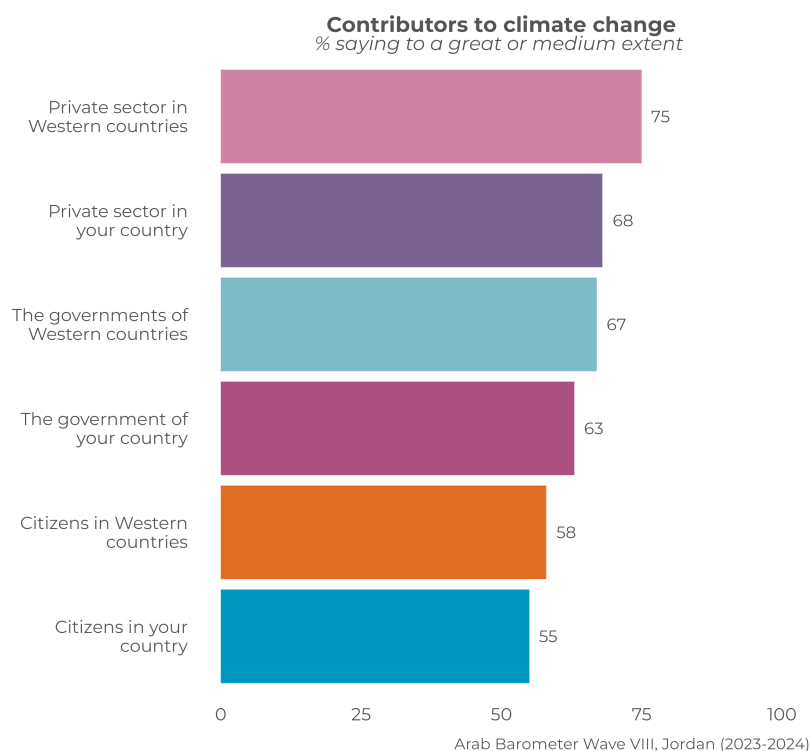
When asked to describe their understanding of the term “climate change” in their own words, by far the most common understanding is extreme weather at nearly three-quarters (72 percent). Far fewer believe it relates to pollution (11 percent) or natural disasters (nine percent), while relatively small percentages say it relates to agricultural production (four percent) or migration (one percent). Notably, only three percent of Jordanians say they did not know how to define it, which is lower than in some other MENA countries surveyed.



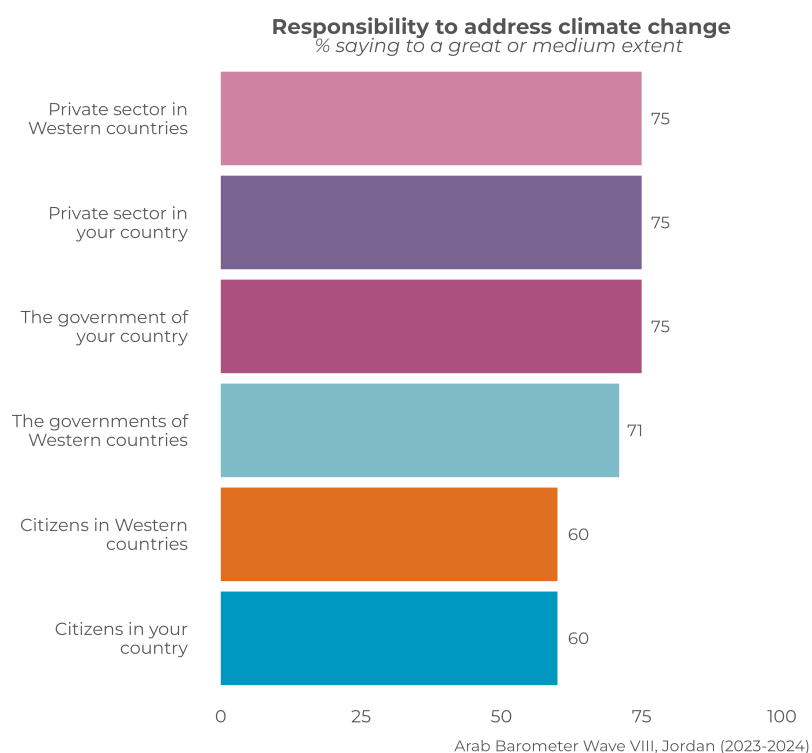
Jordanians widely perceive that climate change is having a severe effect on their personal lives. About seven-in-ten (71 percent) say they are concerned about the effects of climate change on their physical health to a great or medium extent, while a similar percentage says the same about their personal safety (68 percent) and their mental health (67 percent.). Far fewer are concerned about the effects on their job or household's well-being (44 percent), although this level still represent nearly half of all citizens.



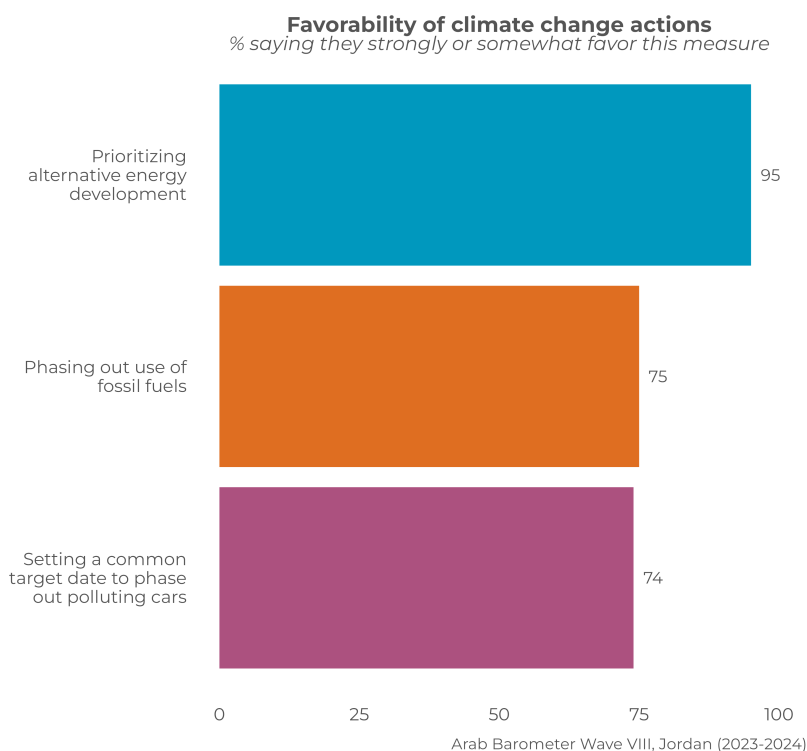
Jordanians perceive that private corporations are the greatest contributors to climate change, regardless of whether they are local or international. Three-quarters say that the private sector in Western countries contributes to climate change to a great or medium extent while roughly two-thirds (68 percent) say the same about the private sector in Jordan. A clear majority of Jordanians also hold government responsible for climate change. Two-thirds say that Western governments are contributors to climate change while 63 percent say the same about the Jordanian government. Jordanians are least likely to hold individual citizens responsible for contributing to climate change, although a majority still say they play a role with 58 percent believing those in Western countries do so compared with 55 percent who say the same about their fellow citizens in Jordan.



There appears to be a strong link between the parties that Jordanians believe are contributing to climate change and those who they believe should be responsible for addressing the problem. Three-quarters say that the private sector in both Western countries and in Jordan are responsible for taking steps to solve climate change. The same percentage say the Jordanian government bears responsibility for addressing climate change while 71 percent say the same about governments in Western countries. Again, a majority believe that citizens should work to tackle climate change, but the percentage is lower than for the private sector and for governments. Six-in-ten Jordanians say that citizens living in Western countries and their fellow citizens must bear responsibility for addressing climate change.



When asked about whether they favor taking specific actions that could help mitigate climate change, the vast majority of Jordanians indicate their support. Nearly all Jordanians (95 percent) favor prioritizing alternative energy development. Given the potential for solar energy in Jordan, this step could represent a benefit to both the climate and the local economy. Meanwhile, three quarters say they support the phasing out of fossil fuels (75 percent) and setting a common date to phase out polluting cars (74 percent). Thus, most Jordanians demonstrate a willingness to make critical changes in the name of helping to save the environment.



Democracy

Prior to the 2021-2022 Arab Barometer survey, Jordanians had demonstrated a strong commitment to democracy and relatively few reservations about this system of governance. Like in other countries across the region, this perception changed dramatically in Arab Barometer's Wave VII with significant increases in the percentage of citizens across MENA who were skeptical about democracy's benefits.³ However, over the last two years it appears that the tide may have turned as Jordanians are now no more likely to see problems with democracy than they were in 2022 while they are more supportive of this system overall.

When asked if economic performance is weak under democracy, half of Jordanians say that it is. This percentage is a 7-point decrease since 2022, but still higher than in any Arab Barometer survey in Jordan from 2006 to 2018. Meanwhile, the perception that democratic governments are indecisive remained effectively unchanged from 2022 at 54 percent. Similarly, this level is higher than any other survey in Jordan from 2006-2018, but the upward trend from 2018-2022 appears to have leveled off.

³https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ABVII_Governance_Report-EN-1.pdf

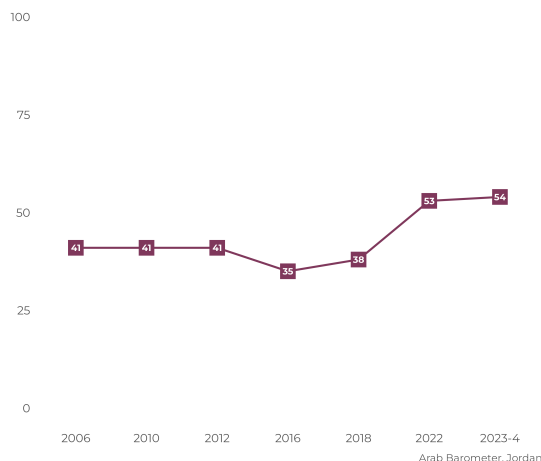
Arab Barometer – Wave VIII

Jordan Report

Under a democratic system, the country's economic performance is weak
% saying they strongly agree or agree

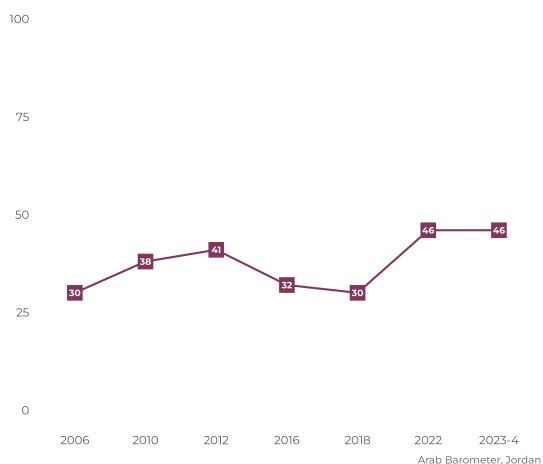


Democratic regimes are indecisive and full of problems
% saying they strongly agree or agree

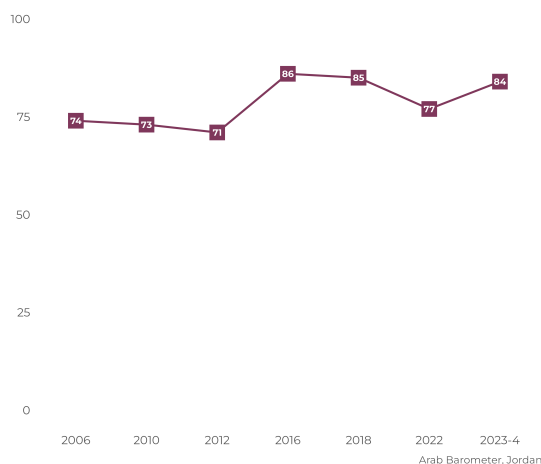


Concern that democracy is not effective at maintaining stability and order reveals a similar trend. This perception is far higher than from 2006-2018, but is unchanged since 2022 at 46 percent. However, while roughly half worrying about the effect democracy may have on the economy, decisiveness, and stability, the vast majority of Jordanians remain supportive. When asked if despite potential problems, is democracy better than other systems, 84 percent agree representing a 7-point increase since 2022. Moreover, this level is similar to the highest levels ever found in Jordan in 2016 (86 percent) and 2018 (85 percent). Even if many Jordanians realize democracy is not perfect, the vast majority believe there remains no better system of governance.

Democratic systems are not effective at maintaining order and stability
% saying they strongly agree or agree

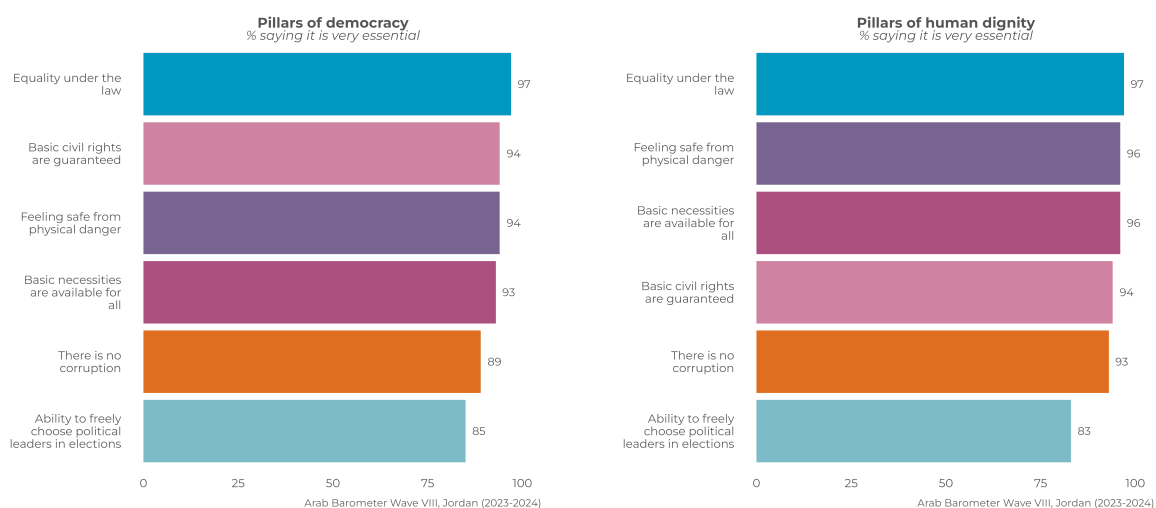


Democratic systems may have problems, yet they are better than other system
% saying they strongly agree or agree



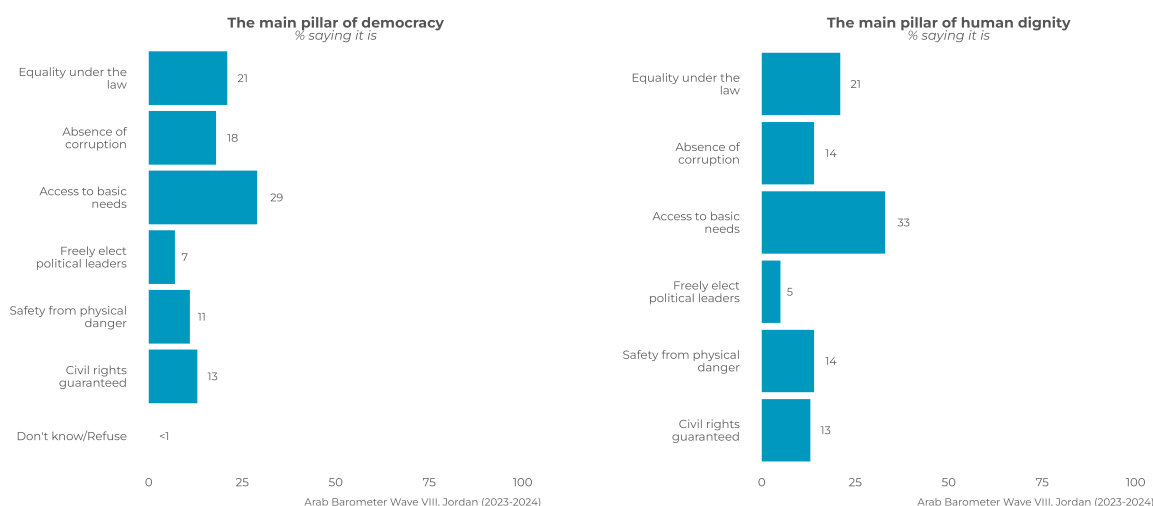
Given the increasing concerns about democracy observed between the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 regional surveys, Arab Barometer developed a new battery to better understand how citizens across MENA perceive democracy. Although often researchers and policymakers define democracy primarily in terms of free and fair elections, ordinary Jordanians understand it much more broadly. Although most say that elections are essential to democracy, among six characteristics named elections is viewed as the least important. Instead, an experimental design reveals that ultimately, Jordanians effectively understand democracy (*dimuqratiya*) to be equivalent to dignity (*karama*)

Arab Barometer designed the survey instrument so that half of the respondents received questions about the degree to which certain features are essential to democracy. The other half received the same list of features, but were asked the degree to which they were essential to dignity. The list of items was as follows: 1) basic necessities available for all; 2) feeling safe from physical danger; 3) equality under the law; 4) basic civil rights are guaranteed; 5) no corruption; and 6) the ability to freely choose political leaders in elections.



The similarity of the two concepts is striking with the results strongly suggesting that the concept of democracy is integrally linked with the concept of dignity. Nearly all Jordanians say that equality under the law is "very essential" to both democracy and dignity (97 percent, each). At the same time, more than nine-in-ten say that basic civil rights, freedom from danger, and the provision of basic necessities to all is very essential to both democracy and dignity, respectively. Additionally, about nine-in-ten say that an absence of corruption is essential to democracy (89 percent) and dignity (93 percent). Meanwhile, the

feature that was least likely to be deemed "very essential" for both was the ability to freely choose leaders in elections at 85 percent for democracy and 83 percent for dignity.

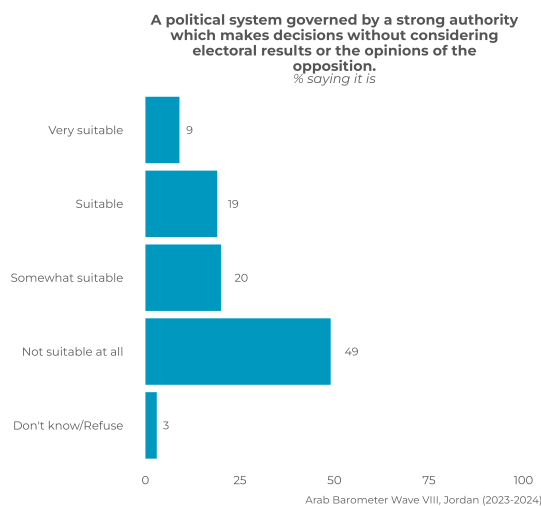
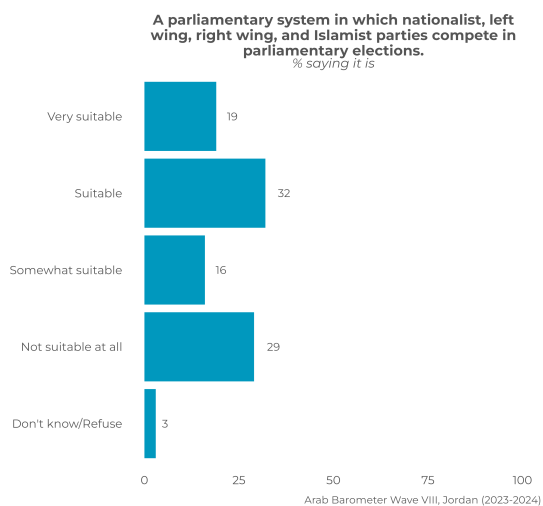


The results make clear that Jordanians see all six elements as very essential to both democracy and dignity, but following this we asked them to choose which of the six represented the most essential element for each respective concept. As before, the results are highly similar for each idea. The most commonly cited primary characteristic for democracy is the provision of basic needs to all (29 percent), which is also true for dignity (33 percent). Equality under the law comes in second for both at 21 percent for each. An absence of corruption is third for both democracy (18 percent) and dignity (14 percent) while those citing safety from physical danger and the guarantee of civil rights are slightly more than 10 percent for each. For both, the freedom to elect political leaders comes in last. For the most essential characteristic of democracy, seven percent of Jordanians cite this feather while five percent do for dignity. Once again, by this measure, there is very little distinction between how Jordanians perceive democracy and dignity.

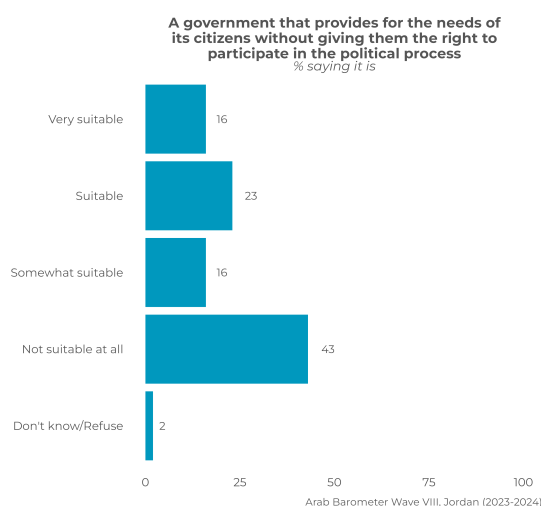
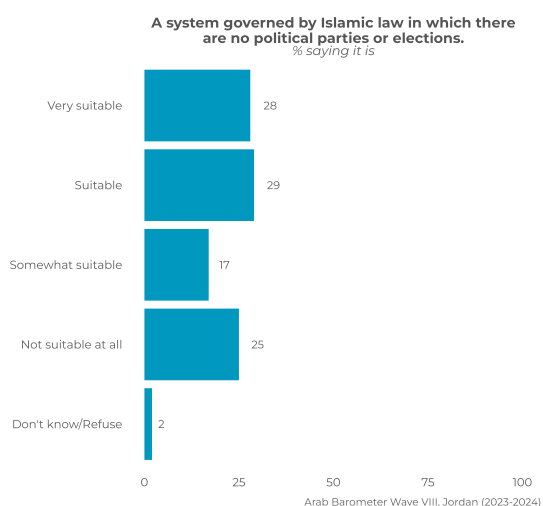
Although Jordanians indicate their support for democracy, there is less consensus about the precise type of political institutions they would prefer. When asked whether a parliamentary system where parties of all orientations compete in selections, only half (51 percent) say it is very suitable for Jordan. At the same time, there is a broad rejection of a system governed by a strong authority that does not consider the opposition with only about a quarter (28 percent) saying it is suitable while half (49 percent) say such a system is not suitable at all.

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Jordan Report



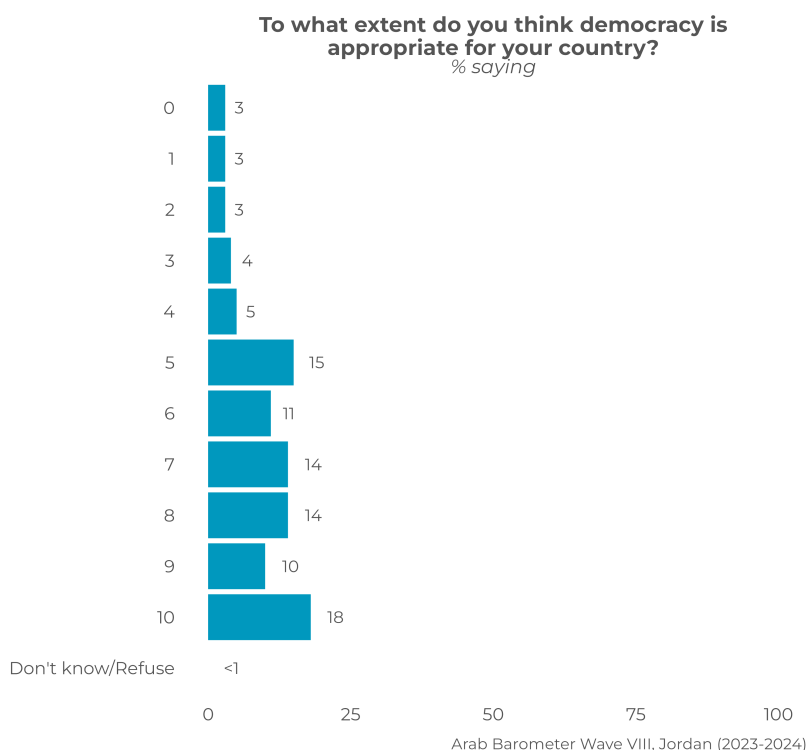
Yet, when asked about a system governed by Islamic law (*shari'a*) without elections, a majority (57 percent) say it is suitable or very suitable, highlighting the importance to many citizens of a system that conforms with traditional legal principles. Yet, it remains clear that most Jordanians do want a say within their political system as even if a government were to provide for all their basic needs but not grant them political rights, only 39 percent say this would be a suitable system while the plurality (43 percent) say it is not suitable at all.



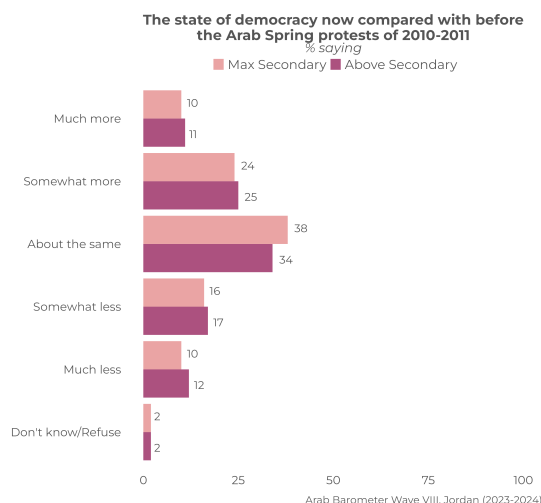
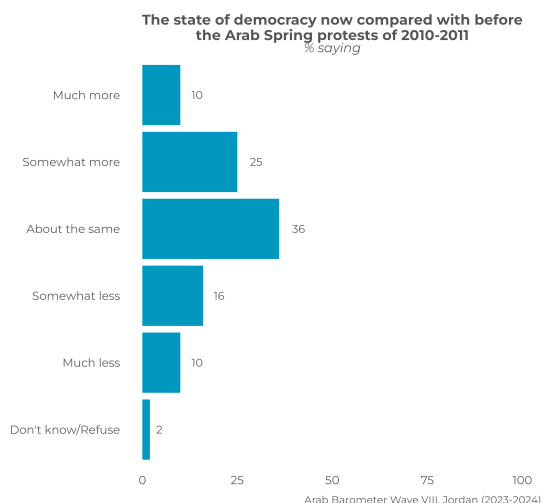
These results reveal a somewhat conflicting pattern. The majority of Jordanians do not want a system that completely excludes their voice. Yet, a political

system that includes all voices only has support of half of the population. This seeming contradiction may be due to the fact that many Jordanians have low levels of confidence in parliament and are worried about allowing any party to run. There remains relatively strong support for a system that is based on Islamic law, suggesting that many may not want all parties to be able to compete in elections. Thus, Jordanians appear to want say but with some guardrails that protect some aspects of traditional governance.

Despite these questions about the exact form of political system, two-thirds of Jordanians (67 percent) say that democracy is an appropriate system for Jordan. On a scale of 0-10, with zero being not appropriate and 10 being completely appropriate, 54 percent provide a response of 6 or higher. An additional 15 percent say five, representing the midway point. Fewer than a fifth (18 percent) say that democracy is less appropriate for their country with a rating from 0-4.



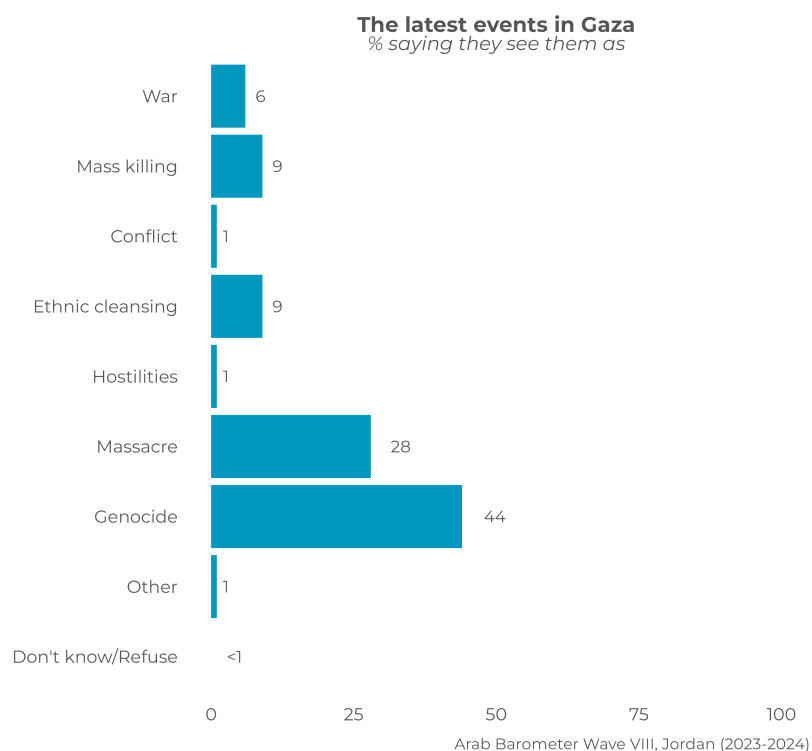
Finally, Jordanians may perceive that they are making some progress toward being more democratic. When asked if their country is more, less or equally democratic compared with the period before the Arab Spring protests of 2011, 35 percent say Jordan is now more democratic while 36 percent say the situation is about the same. Only 27 percent say the country is now less democratic than before 2011. Notably, there is no major difference by education or age on this question, suggesting few demographic differences on this question.



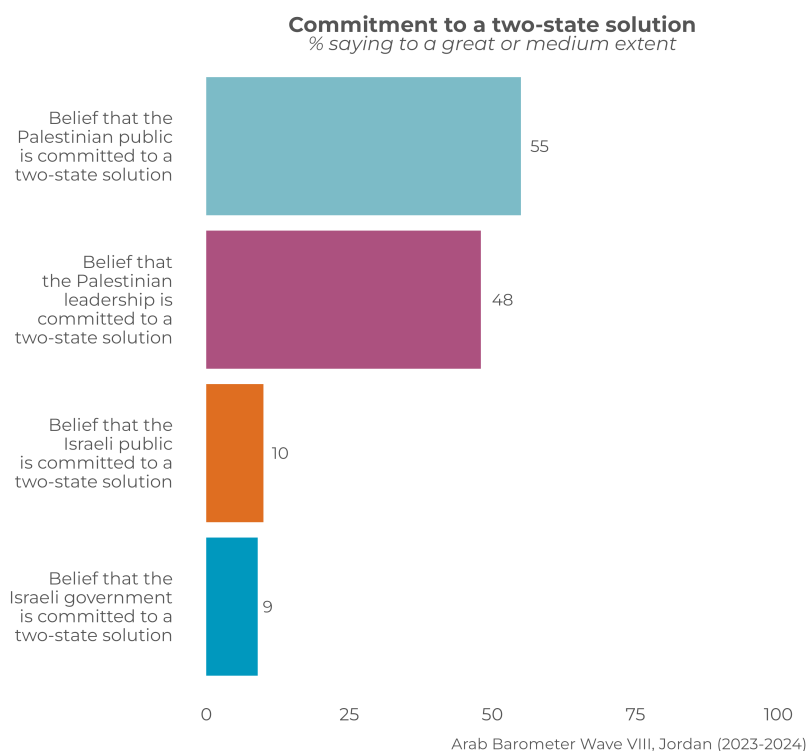
International Relations

Fieldwork for this survey took place after the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks in Israel. It began about seven weeks after Israel's subsequent military campaign in Gaza and concluded about three months after the original attacks. The images coming out of Gaza had a profound effect on views of Jordanians on regional events and broader international relations. To help assess the impact, Arab Barometer developed a new set of questions directly related to the events in Gaza.

The first question asks Jordanians how they perceive the events unfolding in Gaza. The most common response is "genocide" (44 percent) followed by massacre (28 percent). A further nine percent said it represented ethnic cleansing and mass killing, respectively, while six percent describe it as war. Just one percent say it is either a conflict or hostilities. This response pattern underscores the severity of the situation in the eyes of Jordanians in the relatively early days of Israel's military campaign in Gaza.



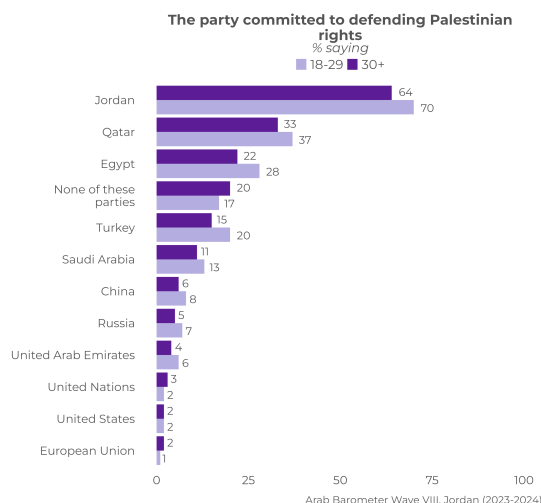
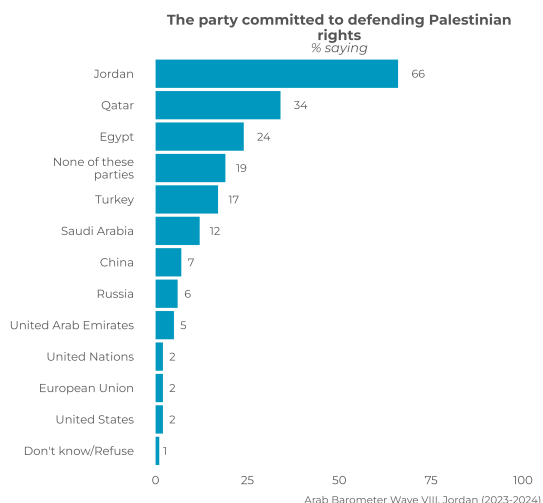
Regarding the two-state solution, Jordanians believe that Palestinians are far more committed than Israelis. However, relatively few Jordanians believe either side is committed to this outcome. A slight majority (55 percent) say that the Palestinian people remain committed to the two-state solution while not quite half (48 percent) say that the Palestinian political leadership supports this outcome. By contrast, only about one-in-ten say the same about Israel, with 10 percent affirming that the Israeli public favors a two-state solution and nine percent for Israel’s government.



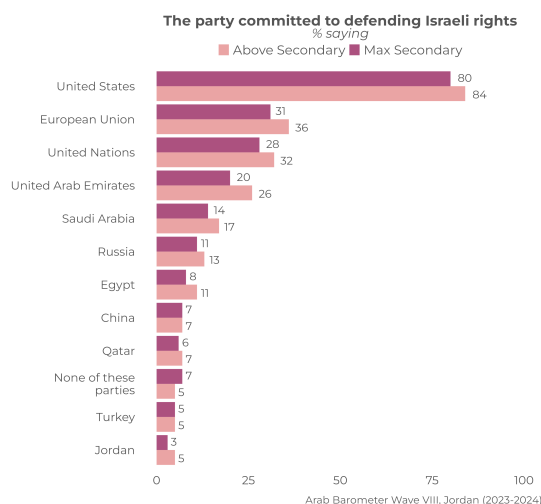
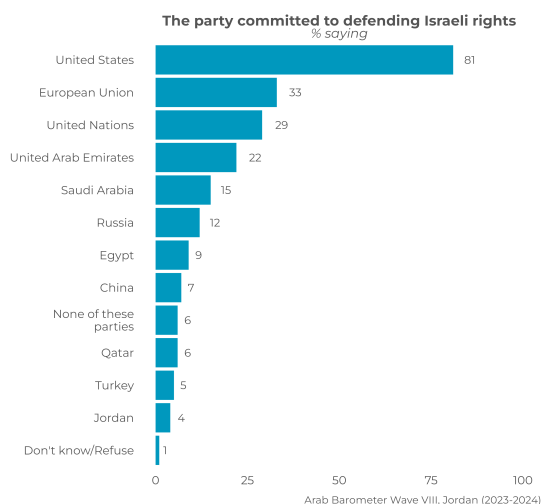
In terms of understanding how Jordanians view support for different actors, the questionnaire asked a question about which actors are committed to defending Palestinian and Israeli rights. Overall, Jordanians perceive that their country is doing far more to defend Palestinian rights than any other country. Two-thirds (66 percent) hold this perspective with Qatar falling a distant second at 34 percent. About a quarter (24 percent) say Egypt is defending Palestinian rights while 17 percent say the same about Turkey, and 12 percent for Saudi Arabia. Fewer than one-in-ten believe other actors are doing so, including China (seven percent), Russia (six percent), and the UAE (five percent). Meanwhile, just two percent say that the United Nations, the European Union, or the United States is committed to protecting Palestinian rights. Notably, youth ages 18-29 are more likely to say that countries including their own, Qatar, and Egypt are taking such steps, likely reflecting the information they are getting on social media about the conflict and the specific actions taken by these different countries.

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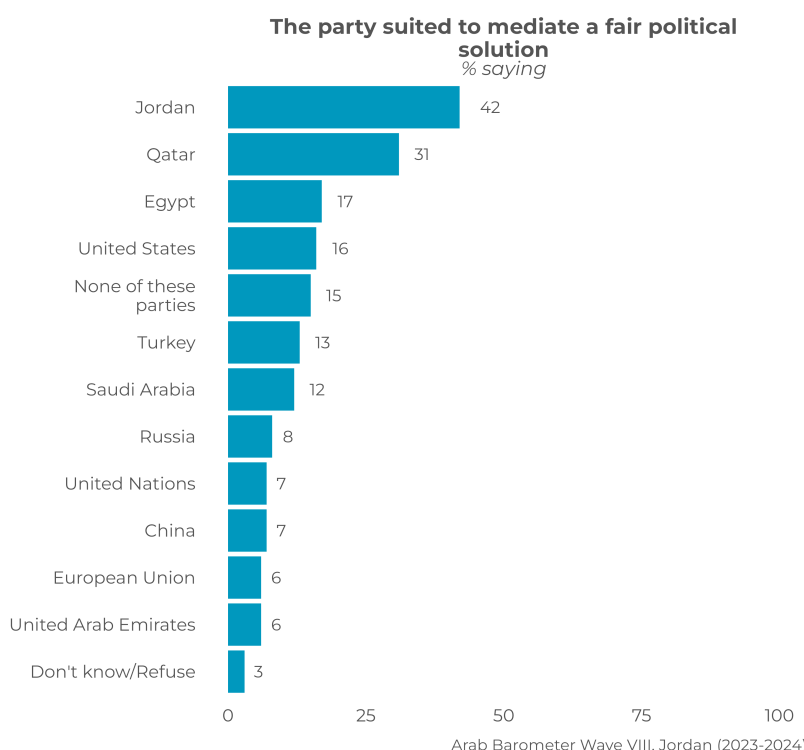
Jordan Report



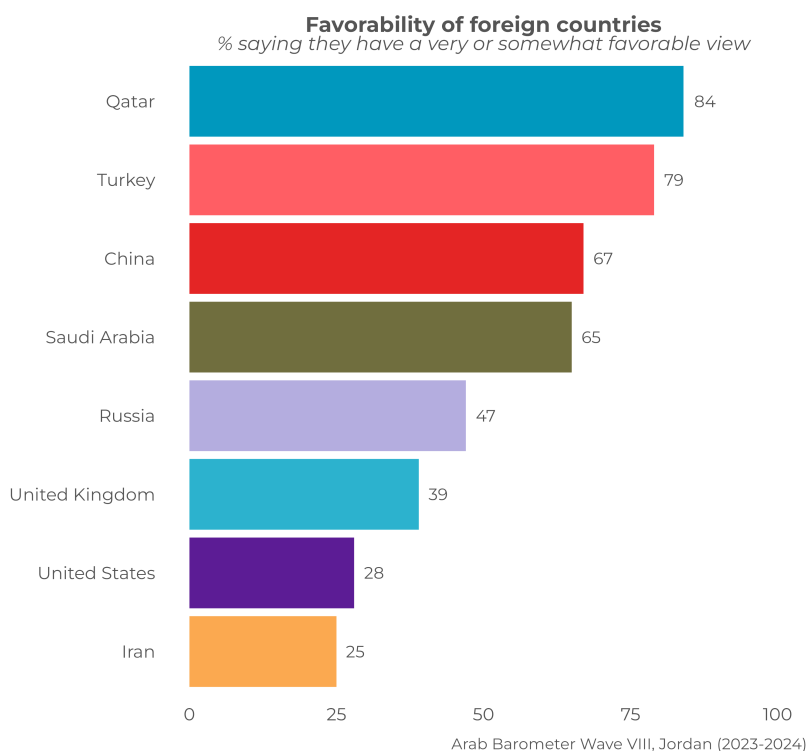
When asked about who is defending Israeli rights in the conflict, the results are largely reversed. The U.S. is very clearly seen as the primary country committed to protecting Israeli rights with 81 percent of Jordanians holding this view. Jordanians say that the E.U. is the next most committed to Israeli rights (33 percent) followed by the U.N. (29 percent), the UAE (22 percent), and Saudi Arabia (15 percent). The latter two likely reflect the recent normalization of relations with Israel for the former and the perception the latter was close to the same before the attacks. Among other actors, 12 percent say Russia is committed to defending Israeli rights, nine percent for Egypt, seven percent for China, six percent for Qatar, five percent for Turkey, and four percent for Jordan. Although these attitudes vary little by age, those who have a higher level of education tend to be somewhat more likely to perceive support for protecting Israel's rights for nearly all of these political actors.



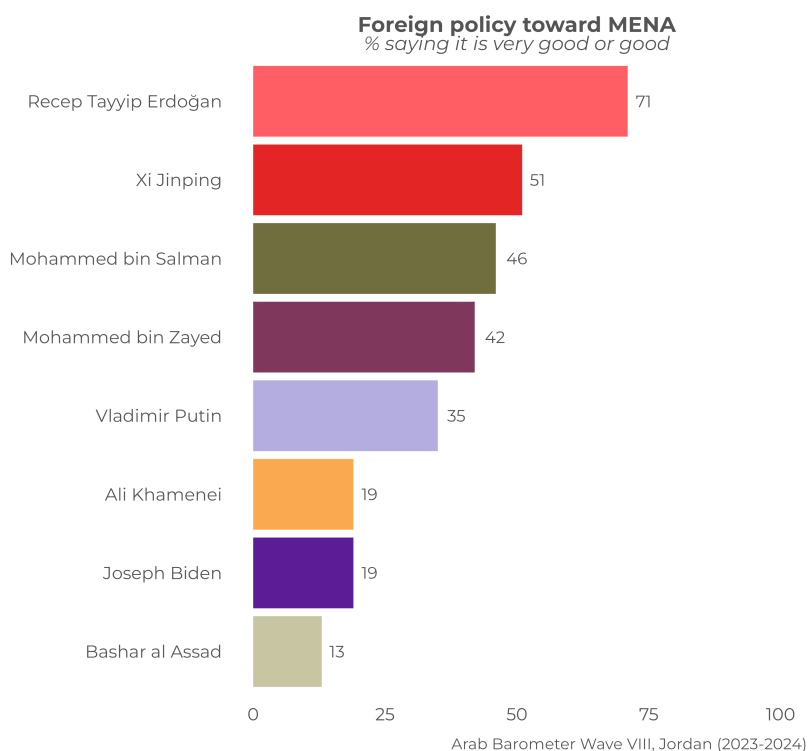
When it comes to reaching a fair solution to the current crisis in the Middle East, Jordanians perceive their country to be the best suited to mediation. Overall, 42 percent say that Jordan is best placed followed by Qatar at 31 percent. Egypt (17 percent) and the U.S. (16 percent) trail substantially and are followed by Turkey (13 percent), and Saudi Arabia (12 percent). Fewer than one-in-ten look to any other actor, including Russia (eight percent), the U.N. (seven percent), China (seven percent), the E.U. or the UAE (six percent, respectively). There are not major differences in attitudes by age or level of education, suggesting that these views are largely held equally across Jordanian society.



Views of the war in Gaza are very strong in Jordan and have affected views of international relations more broadly, particularly toward Western countries. Among a list of foreign countries, Qatar is viewed the most favorably by Jordanians with 84 percent having a very or somewhat favorable view. Qatar is followed by Turkey (79 percent), China (67 percent), and Saudi Arabia (65 percent), which are all viewed overwhelmingly positive. Views of Russia are mixed, with 47 percent having a positive view while the United Kingdom (39 percent), and the United States (28 percent) lag behind. Support for the U.S. is about on par with Iran, which is only viewed favorably by a quarter of Jordanians.



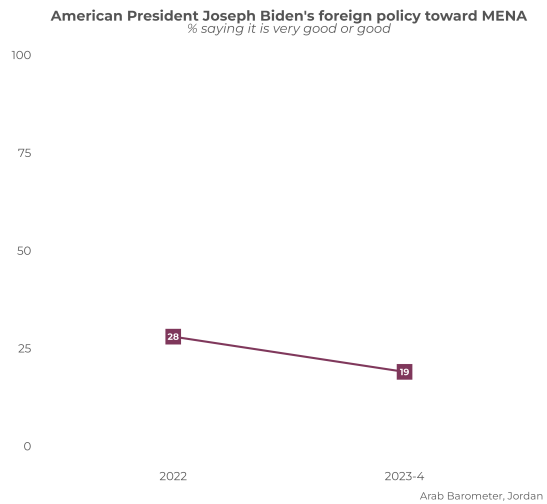
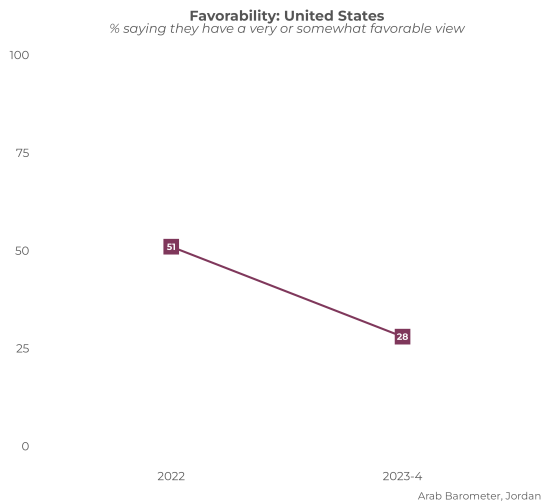
Views of foreign leaders present a relatively similar picture, although their foreign policies tend to be viewed less favorably than the image of their country overall. The clear winner in the eyes of Jordanians is Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at 71 percent, which is well above any other world leader included in the survey. Meanwhile, about half support the foreign policies of Chinese President Xi Jinping (51 percent) and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (46 percent), while support is somewhat lower for UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The favorability of U.S. president Joe Biden is the same as Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, while Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is the lowest at 13 percent.



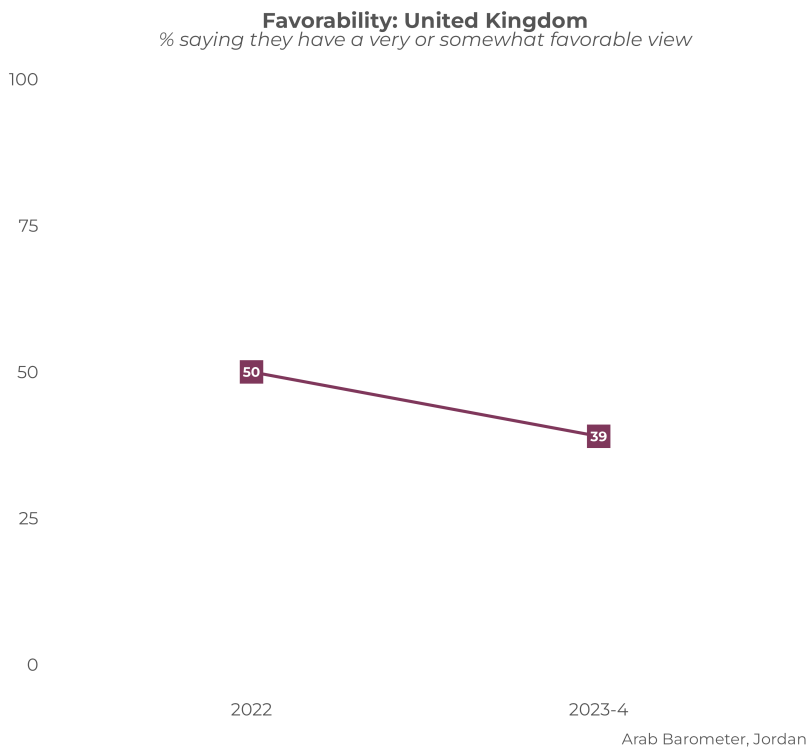
Given the timing of the previous 2022 survey in Jordan and the current survey in Jordan, it is not possible to isolate the effect of the war in Gaza on Jordanian attitudes toward foreign powers. However, with this being the dominant news story at the time of the current survey and the one that is most likely to have shifted opinions about foreign actors in the previous two years, it is likely that much if not most of the differences observed are linked to this event.

For the U.S. there has been a dramatic decrease in favorability. Positive assessments of the U.S. have dropped by 23 points since 2022 to 28 percent. A similar trend is observed for President Biden, whose ratings have dropped by nine points during this period to just 19 percent.

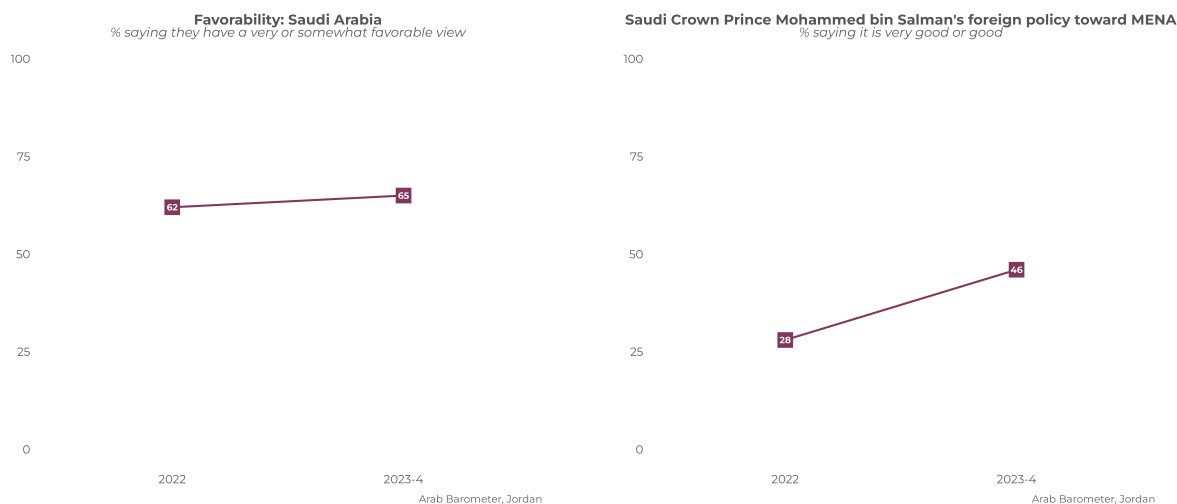
Arab Barometer – Wave VIII Jordan Report



Views of the U.K., a close U.S. ally, have also dropped substantially in Jordan since 2022. At that time, half of Jordanians had a positive view of the U.K. compared to just 39 percent now, a decline of 11 points.



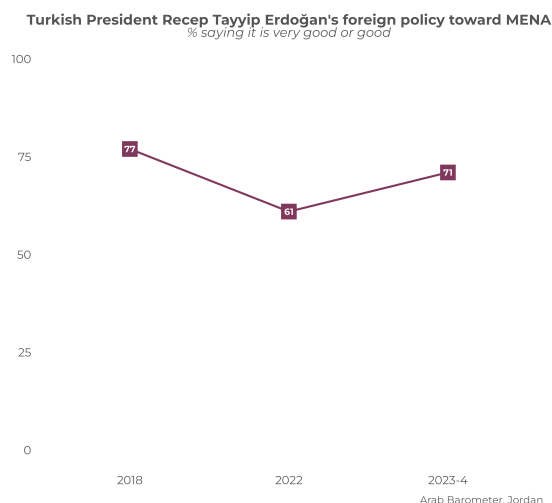
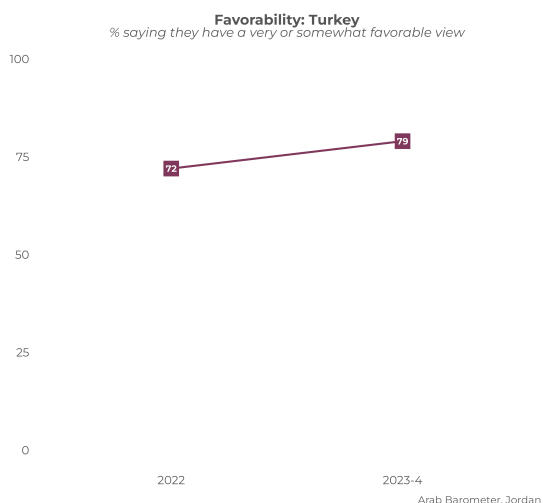
Yet, this trend does not extend to U.S. allies in the region. For example, views of Saudi Arabia have remained largely unchanged (+3 points) since 2022 despite its increasingly close relationship with Israel prior to October 7. Meanwhile, the favorability of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman increased dramatically during this period rising by 18 points. It appears that MBS's delayed but ultimately strong statements in favor of the Palestinians likely led to an increase in his favorability.



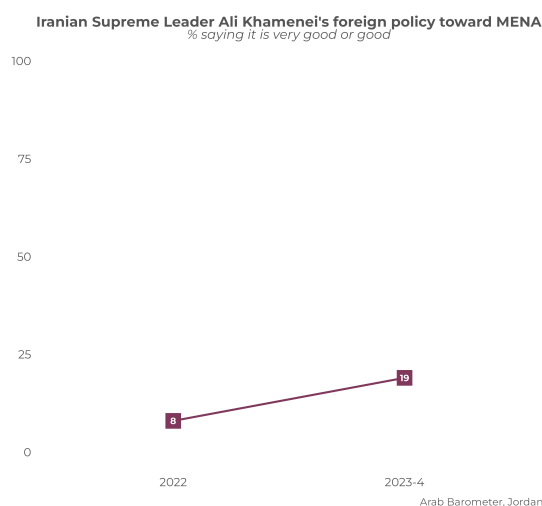
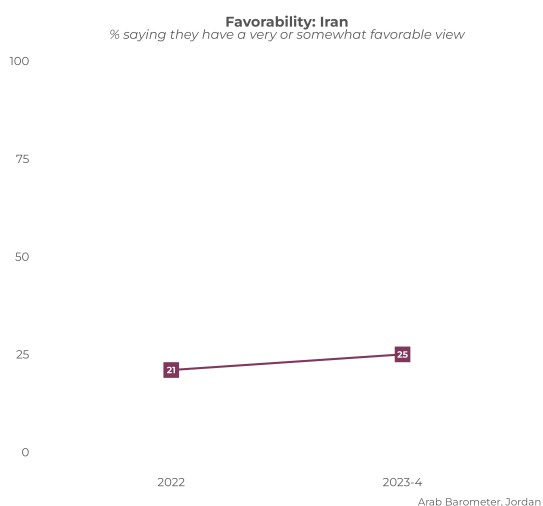
Support for Turkey has also increased since 2022 despite being already widespread in Jordan. Favorable attitudes toward Turkey have increased by seven points during this period. Similarly, favorability of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has risen during the same period by ten points. These trends suggest that Turkey's strong support for the Palestinian cause have likely led even more Jordanians to signal support for the country and its leader as a result of the war in Gaza.

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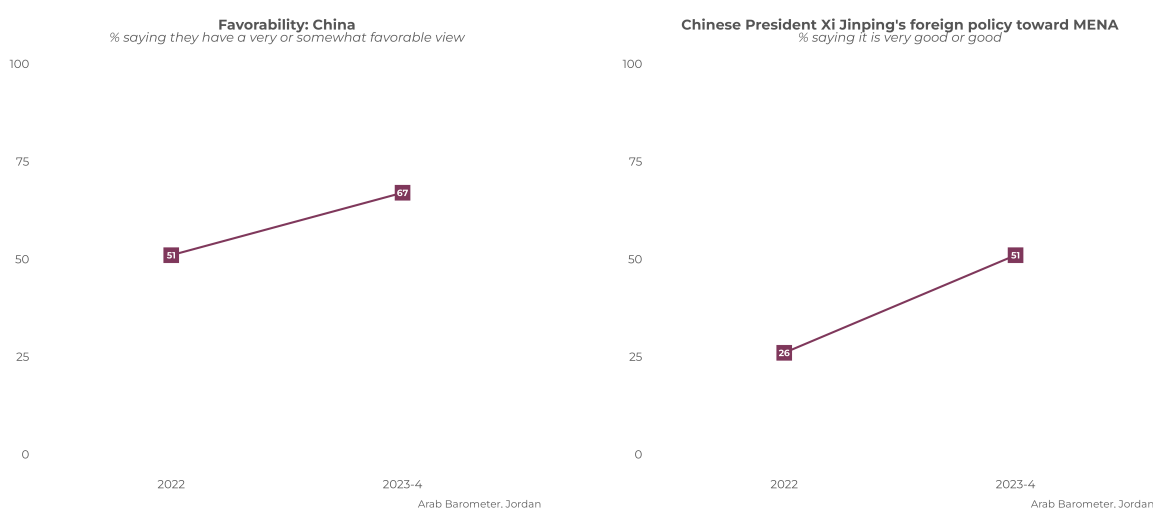
Jordan Report



Support for the Palestinian cause does not directly translate into support for a country, at least in the case of Iran. Despite Iran's defiant stance toward Israel and support for Gaza, the country's favorability has only increased by four points since 2022, which is only slightly greater than the margin of error. However, support for Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has increased by 11 points during the same period, bringing support for his foreign policies much closer to support for Iran overall than in previous surveys. Most likely, his strong personal statements about Gaza, including calling Israel's actions "genocide" on October 17, won him somewhat greater support among Jordanians who view the war through a similar lens.

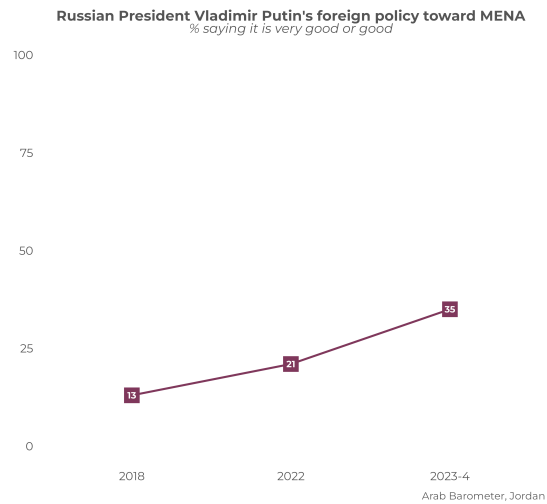
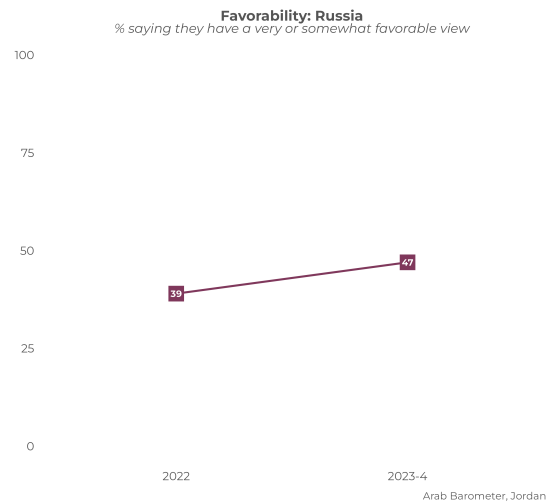


The effects of the Gaza war appear to extend beyond the region itself. Views of global powers have shifted remarkably. In the case of China, favorability has increased by 16 points since 2022. Positive views toward President Xi Jinping have doubled in just two years, increasing from 26 percent to 51 percent. These dramatic shifts are likely to have occurred due to two factors. First, China has remained supportive of the Palestinian issue in its public outreach and votes on the U.N. Security Council. Second, as a global competitor to the United States, which has strongly supported Israel, it is likely that to an extent the logic of "my enemy's enemy is my friend" is also having an effect on the views of Jordanian opinions of China.



Although not as dramatic as the rise for China, Russia also exhibits an increase in favorability since 2022 of eight points. Meanwhile, positive evaluations of President Vladimir Putin's foreign policies increase by 14 points during the same period, reinforcing this result. Given that only 14 percent of Jordanians favor Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it strongly appears that Russia's policy on Gaza, particularly compared with those of the U.S. and European powers, is likely driving the increase in support for Russia overall.

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About Arab Barometer

Arab Barometer is the leading and most influential research network on public opinion in the Middle East and North Africa. We are nonprofit and nonpartisan, hosted at Princeton University and the University of Michigan.

Founded in 2006, we are the longest-standing research network that conducts rigorous and nationally representative public opinion surveys in the Arab world. We disseminate the findings through analyses and reports to deepen public conversations and facilitate data-driven solutions to the pressing problems facing ordinary citizens across MENA.

Our public opinion surveys give ordinary citizens a stronger voice, and our analysis, highlighting key demographic differences and changing trends, help comprehend MENA citizens' shifting views, attitudes, and behaviors.



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