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Israel's War on Gaza: Views from Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon

حرب إسرائيل على غزة: الرأي العام في مصر والأردن ولبنان

Abstract: Following Hamas' surprise attack on 7 October 2023, the initial celebratory mood among the Arab public turned into one of despair and anger as Israel declared war and its subsequent ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, leaving widespread destruction and perpetrating countless massacres, amounting to a genocide. The Arab public responded with vigorous economic boycotts, heightened social media activism, and street protests, displaying a mix of solidarity with the Palestinians and anger and outrage toward Israel's conduct of war and Arab governments' inaction. This paper analyses Arab Opinion Index data from a survey conducted between 12 December 2023 and 5 January 2024, focusing on public opinion in Palestine's neighbouring countries, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. The survey reveals that the Arab public is highly affected by the war in Gaza, and that there is a strong sense of solidarity with Palestinians. It also reveals Arab public dissatisfaction with Western support for Israel and growing anti-Western sentiment, particularly toward the United States.

Keywords: Hamas; War on Gaza; Arab Opinion Index; Egypt; Jordan; Lebanon.

ملخص: في أعقاب الهجوم المفاجئ الذي شنته حركة المقاومة الإسلامية «حماس» في 7 تشرين الأول/أكتوبر 2023، تحول المزاج الاحتفالي الأولي لدى الجماهير العربية إلى حالة من اليأس والغضب، حينما أعلنت إسرائيل الحرب على قطاع غزة واجتياحها البري اللاحق، مخلفةً دماراً واسع النطاق ومجازر لا حصر لها ترقى إلى مستوى الإبادة الجماعية. وقد استجابت الجماهير العربية باتباعها مقاطعة اقتصادية قوية، ونشاطاً متزايداً على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، والاحتجاجات في الشوارع، مظاهرة مزيجاً من التضامن مع الفلسطينيين، والغضب والسخط تجاه الإبادة الإسرائيلية وتقاوس الحكومات العربية عن التدخل الفعّال لإنهائها. تتناول هذه الورقة بيانات المؤشر العربي من استطلاع أُجري في الفترة 12 كانون الأول/ديسمبر 2023-5 كانون الثاني/يناير 2024، بالتركيز على الرأي العام في الدول المجاورة لفلسطين، وهي مصر والأردن ولبنان. يكشف الاستطلاع أنّ الشعوب العربية في هذه الدول متأثر بشدة بالحرب في غزة، وأنها تشعر بالتضامن مع الفلسطينيين، كما يبيّن استيائها من الدعم الغربي لإسرائيل والمشاعر المناهضة للغرب على نحوٍ متنامٍ، لا سيما تجاه الولايات المتحدة الأميركية.

كلمات مفتاحية: حماس؛ الحرب على غزة؛ المؤشر العربي؛ مصر؛ الأردن؛ لبنان.

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Introduction

On the morning of 7 October 2023, the Arab public celebrated the operation launched by Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), against Israeli settlements and military installations in the Gaza Envelope. Various hashtags swept across Arab social media as users disseminated news and images of the operation, lauding the bravery of resistance fighters and the humiliation of captured Israeli soldiers. However, this initial euphoria was swiftly dampened when the Israeli army declared war on Gaza, and was completely extinguished with Israel's subsequent ground invasion on 27 October.

The Arab public has responded to Israel's war on Gaza in three main ways. The first is economic boycott, leveraging Arab purchasing power to boycott goods, products, and services sold by companies that support or invest in Israel. This round of boycotts has been notably more committed and radical than previous efforts, with more widespread participation. The second response is social media activism. There has been a massive surge in engagement with and dissemination of war-related news and information, with content shared at unprecedented rates and with increasing intensity.¹ This includes the pursuit of digital boycotts against celebrities and influencers who are perceived as complicit in the genocide in Gaza through their silence or support for Israel, such as the "Blockout 2024", a movement organized online to block celebrities' and social media accounts. It was sparked following the Met Gala event on 6 May 2024, in which attending celebrities have not addressed the war in Gaza. The third response encompasses street protests, which vary in intensity and frequency, and in local authorities' response to them. In some cases, solidarity with Palestine has become a means of expressing local political dissent,² despite efforts by Arab regimes to contain and suppress public dissatisfaction with domestic affairs.

But while the Arab public has engaged these three areas with vigour, this activism has yet to significantly influence the war on Gaza. Meanwhile, comparisons between Arab and Western public responses to the war have sparked debate, with Arabs often criticizing themselves for falling short, especially in light of ongoing protests in the West, whether on the streets or on university campuses.

This paper examines the latest Arab Opinion Index survey conducted by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies between 12 December 2023 and 5 January 2024 to measure Arab public opinion toward the Israeli war on Gaza.³ In particular, it focuses on public opinion in the countries surrounding Palestine, dubbed "ring of Palestine" – Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon – excluding Syria due to data unavailability. The paper analyses how these results were reflected in these populations' stance on the war through protests and boycotts. Although the survey was conducted in the early days of the war, its findings nevertheless offer valuable insights into public sentiment at the time and can still be relevant to the present situation.

A War on Gaza, a War on Everyone

Arab public response has been notably vocal through street demonstrations. Of the 4,200 pro-Palestine demonstrations worldwide, about 1,400 occurred in the MENA region during the first three weeks of the

¹ Desiree Adib, "Amid Israel-Hamas conflict, 'information war' plays out on social media, experts say," *ABC News*, 24/11/2023, accessed on 25/8/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/4jpp5p2y>; Tamara Kharroub, "Disinformation and Hate Speech on Social Media Contribute to Inciting War Crimes Against Gaza," *Arab Center Washington DC*, 13/10/2023, accessed on 25/8/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/rmpy57e6>

² Dana El Kurd, "Although Limited, Arab Public Protests Against the War in Gaza Continue," *Arab Center Washington DC*, 30/4/2024, accessed on 9/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/dpp9zj9z>

³ See AOI results on: ACRPS, "Arab Public Opinion about the Israeli War on Gaza," *Arab Opinion Index*, accessed on 7/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/bddsuvth>

war.⁴ Before the Israeli invasion of Gaza, the largest Arab demonstrations were held on 13 October 2023, immediately after the Israeli army ordered the evacuation of northern Gaza.⁵ Subsequent protests surged after the tragic massacre at the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital on 17 October 2023, further reflecting the intensity of public support and solidarity.⁶

Egypt, where public demonstrations are highly significant given the country's authoritarian rule, witnessed protests in Cairo, Alexandria, and several other governorates. It is worth noting here that Palestinian cause has been a central focus of political mobilization in Egypt over the past decades. For instance, protests and demonstrations organized in solidarity with the Second Intifada (2001-2005) influenced the emergence of the January 2011 revolution.⁷ In the Gaza war context, some demonstrations were even planned by the Egyptian government itself, especially after Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi met with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on 18 October 2023, where Sisi noted that "millions of Egyptians are ready to protest any attempts to displace Palestinians from Gaza", implicitly encouraging Egyptians to take to the streets.⁸

Consequently, pro-government parliamentarians organized protests in various places, including Tahrir Square in Cairo, where demonstrators were transported by buses emblazoned with pro-Palestine and pro-Egypt slogans alongside images of Sisi.⁹ However, the Egyptian authorities have "arbitrarily detained and prosecuted dozens of peaceful protesters" especially after they chanted slogans expressing dissatisfaction with the Egyptian government and demanded social justice and freedom.¹⁰ Between 20 and 24 October 2023, Egyptian security forces arrested at least 87 individuals who had participated in Palestine solidarity protests in Cairo and Alexandria, and between the 3 and 4 April 2024, around 16 more protesters were arrested following demonstrations at the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate.¹¹

In Jordan, hundreds of protesters first took to the streets on 7 October 2023 in celebration of Hamas's attack. The demonstration took place near the Israeli embassy in Amman and was organized by the National Forum for Supporting Resistance and Protecting the Homeland. Protests continued on 8 October in different areas of Amman and Aqaba, as well as in Palestinian refugee camps such as Al-Wehdat in Amman, Baqa'a north of Amman, and Irbid, demanding that the Jordanian government terminate the Wadi Araba Treaty that normalized ties with Israel, halt economic agreements with Israel, and shut down the Israeli embassy.¹²

Pro-Palestine demonstrations have occurred nearly every Friday in Amman and other Jordanian cities such as Salt, Irbid, Aqaba, Mafraq, the Jordan Valley, and Karak. Early Friday demonstrators have attempted to reach the Jordanian-Israeli border, but security forces prevented them, setting up security barriers along the road and deploying tear gas against the protesters. By April 2024, Jordanian authorities had arrested more than 1,500 protesters, 500 of whom were arrested in March 2024 as protests around the Israeli embassy in Amman intensified.¹³

⁴ "Mapping the conflict in Israel and Gaza: Protests sweep around the globe as Israel's war in Gaza grinds on | Reuters," *ACLEDE*, 13/11/2023, accessed on 24/1/2024, at: <http://tinyurl.com/yex22fbw>

⁵ "Israel orders 1.1 million people in Gaza to move south: What to know," *Aljazeera*, 13/10/2023, accessed on 24/1/2024, at: <http://tinyurl.com/yecvf9s2>

⁶ "Where in Gaza is al-Ahli Arab Hospital, the site hit amid war with Israel?" *Aljazeera*, 18/10/2023, accessed on 24/1/2024, at: <http://tinyurl.com/pzvbvwek>

⁷ Hesham Sallam, "The Egyptian Public and the War on Gaza," *MERIP*, no. 309 (Winter 2023).

⁸ "Egypt's President Sisi affirms solidarity with Palestinians, rejects displacement attempts," *Ahram Online*, 18/10/2024, accessed on 15/4/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/4rrzsh78>

⁹ Abdullah Hamid, "Mā Ahdāf al-Sulṭa al-Miṣriyya min Da'wat Muwāṭinīhā lil-Tazāhur li-Ajl Ghazza?," *Aljazeera*, 25/10/2023, accessed on 3/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/339je84h>

¹⁰ "Egypt: Dozens of Peaceful Protesters Detained," *Human Rights Watch*, accessed on 15/4/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/58byy3jt>

¹¹ "Ḥālāt al-Istiyqāf wa-l-Qabḍ 'alā Khalfiyyat al-Taḍāmun ma' Filasṭīn 2023-2024," *ECRF*, accessed on 3/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/fdsdcsfv>

¹² "Masīrāt fī Mudun Urduniyya Da'man li-'Amaliyyat 'Tūfān al-Aqṣā'," *Aljazeera*, 8/10/2023, accessed on 3/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/4mu9yh7a>

¹³ "Jordan: Stop cracking down on pro-Gaza protests and release those charged for exercising their freedoms of assembly and expression," *Amnesty International*, 11/4/2024, accessed on 6/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/2npsdfej>

In Lebanon, various protests were held in Sidon, Beirut, Tripoli, Beqaa, and other cities, some of which were called by Hezbollah whose involvement in the war by bombarding northern occupied Palestine is believed to be providing a support front for Hamas.¹⁴ Hezbollah's role has sparked debates and impacted its popularity regionally and domestically.¹⁵ This paper was written indeed as discussions intensify about the possibility of the ongoing clashes between Hezbollah and Israel expanding into a full-scale war and an Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Hezbollah has been involved in the war since 8 October 2023, but initially, its participation was largely confined to the border area between Lebanon and Israel. This limited engagement led to significant criticism on social media, with some accusing Hezbollah of not being more actively involved, leading it to almost lose its Arab popularity due to this stance. Adham Saouli analysed Hezbollah's position through the lens of Ontological Security Theory. According to Saouli, if Hezbollah abstained from supporting its Palestinian allies, it would threaten its ontological security, compromising its core being, reputation, and role as a resistance movement. Conversely if it engaged in extensive warfare, it would endanger its physical security.¹⁶ However, clashes between Hezbollah and Israel intensified in early June 2024, particularly after Hezbollah targeted the Israeli army's "Miron" airbase, striking important targets and downing drones such as the "Hermes 900". This escalation continued with the deployment of the "Hudhud" reconnaissance drone, which exposed sensitive Israeli sites, military bases, weapons and missile storage facilities, naval ports, and airports. In response, Israel escalated by eliminating quality targets in Lebanon, including the assassinations of top Hezbollah military commanders Mohammed Naimah and Fuad Shukur.

The Egyptian and Jordanian governments have adopted cautious stances on the Israeli war on Gaza due to three key factors: First, there is significant concern about the possible influx of refugees from the Gaza Strip into these two countries, with Egypt perceiving itself as more vulnerable. Second, some protesters in these countries, particularly in Jordan, have posed security concerns, particularly when they attempted to approach the border with Israel. Third, public demonstrations have been met with stringent measures from security forces, complicating the task of balancing relations with Israel amid ongoing pro-Palestine protests. Lebanon, on the other hand, is not only a neighbouring country to Palestine, but also hosts between 250,000-300,000 Palestinian refugees¹⁷ and armed factions that are part of the broader

¹⁴ "al-Jaysh Yatadakhkhal li-Faḍihā. Muẓāharāt Ghāḍiba fī Muḥīt al-Safāra al-Amīrkiyya," *Alaraby*, 18/10/2023, accessed on 3/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8hp2ur>

¹⁵ According to a survey conducted by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) from 14 November to 6 December 2023, 17% of Shia, 63% of Sunnis, and 69% of Christians in Lebanon strongly or somewhat agreed that the early events of the war revealed hesitation on the part of Iran, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other allies to assist the Palestinians for various reasons. Nevertheless, Hezbollah's popularity showed some increase compared to November 2020. The survey revealed that 93% of Lebanese Shia viewed Hezbollah positively, compared to only 89% in 2020. Among Lebanese Sunnis, positive views of Hezbollah rose to 34%, a significant increase from just 8% in 2020. Additionally, 29% of Lebanese Christians held a positive view of Hezbollah by the end of 2023, up from 16% at the end of 2020. See: Catherine Cleveland, "In the Shadow of Hezbollah-Israel Escalation, Poll Shows Slim Majority of Lebanese Still Want Focus on Domestic Reforms over "Foreign Wars"," *Policy Analysis*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 9/1/2024, accessed on 4/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/5n986235>. However, it is important to note that WINEP is a Washington-based American research centre established in 1985 by AIPAC, with the aim of supporting Israeli positions through research. See: Mahmoud Ayoub, "Ma' had Wāshintun'.. Adā li-Ṣun' al-Siyāsa al-Amīrkiyya bil-Mantiqa al-'Arabiyya," *Maarif Center for Cultural Studies*, 1/12/2017, accessed on 16/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/58ymbmdw>. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting data from WINEP, as its findings may be influenced by political objectives. The survey results included here are presented for informational purposes and should not be taken as exclusively reliable or as endorsements of WINEP's credibility.

With regard to Hezbollah, popularity does not necessarily signify deep support for Hezbollah, and it may merely be due to its response to Israel's genocide in Gaza. An Arab Barometer survey also shows that "despite being a driving force in Lebanese politics and enjoying high levels of support among the country's Shiite population, which is concentrated in the south and east, Hezbollah does not command widespread support across the country". While 85% of Shia Lebanese say they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in Hezbollah, by comparison, just 9% percent of Sunnis and Druze, respectively, and 6% percent of Christians say the same. Furthermore, 78% of Lebanese Shia rate Hezbollah's role in regional affairs as positive, compared with only 13% of Sunnis, 12% of Christians, and 16% of Druze. See: MaryClare Roche & Michael Robbins, "What the Lebanese People Really Think of Hezbollah," *Foreign Affairs*, 12/7/2024, accessed on 8/8/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/yt2twhn9>

¹⁶ Adham Saouli, "Identity, Anxiety, and War: Hezbollah and the Gaza Tragedy," *Al-Muntaqa: New Perspectives on Arab Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (January/ February 2024), pp. 99-114.

¹⁷ According to the World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples. See: "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Lebanon: Palestinians," *refworld*, accessed on 25/8/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/4jb2fue6>

“Axis of Resistance”, with a substantial involvement of Hezbollah in an attempt to reinforce the “unity of the fronts”, further influencing its role in the war.¹⁸

Continued war, rising casualties, brutality of the scenes, and unresponsive governments widened public frustration, as reflected in the AOI survey responses. A significant percentage of people in the three countries reported experiencing considerable psychological pressure, with the lowest being in Lebanon at 71%, followed by Egypt at 88%, and the highest in Jordan at 92%. Interest in following war news also underscores the high levels of stress, with Jordanians being the most engaged. A remarkable 92% of Jordanian respondents reported following news daily or several times a week.¹⁹ Lebanese respondents also exhibited a high level of daily news consumption at 72%, followed by Egyptians at 58%.

Figure (1): Psychological stress due to war(%)

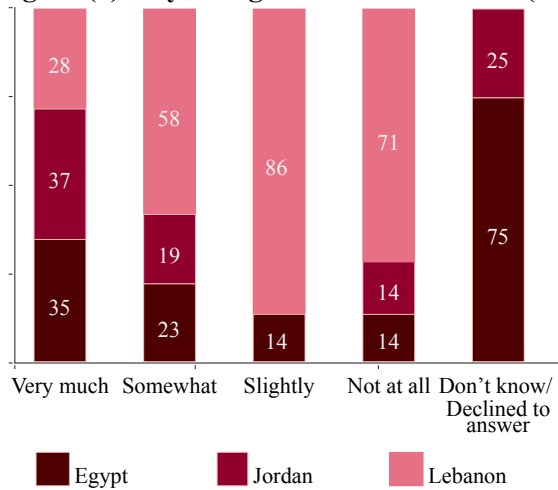
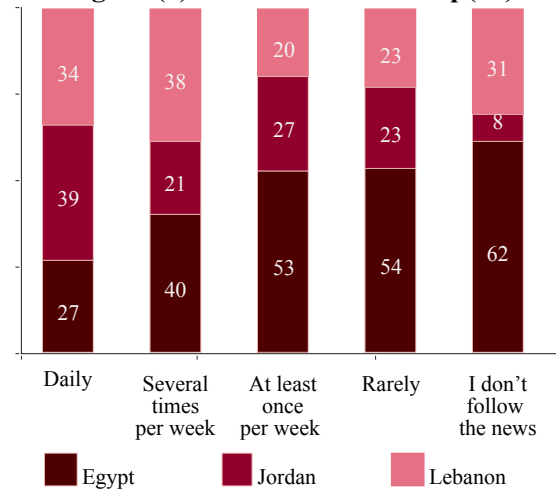


Figure (2): War news followship(%)



Views on 7 October in Cairo, Amman, and Beirut

The majority of respondents in Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon attribute the 7 October attack by Hamas primarily to the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, with Israeli attacks on the Al-Aqsa Mosque cited as the second reason. Respondents chose other reasons at lower rates, such as the ongoing blockade of Gaza, the expansion of settlements in Palestinian territories, Palestinian detainees and prisoners in Israeli jails, Israel’s refusal to establish a Palestinian state, the United States’ failure to achieve a just peace, the international community’s disregard for Palestinian rights and the ongoing occupation, halting the normalization process of Arab governments with Israel, and the implementation of an external actor’s agenda, such as Iran.

Opinions on the operation itself varied significantly. In Egypt, 34% of respondents viewed 7 October as a legitimate act of resistance, while the majority (54%) considered it a legitimate operation that involved some mistakes. In Jordan and Lebanon, respondents were more inclined to see it as entirely legitimate

¹⁸ For a discussion about the “unity of fronts” and the “axis of resistance”, see: Kassem Kassir, “The Phrases ‘Unity of Fields [of Battle]’, ‘Unity of Fronts’ or ‘Axis of Resistance’: Between Slogan and Reality,” *Policy Paper*, Institute for Palestine Studies, 20/11/2023, accessed on 2/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/45crmpcu>

¹⁹ In a survey conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies in Jordan on the Gaza War from 13-23 November 2023, involving a sample of 1,200 Jordanian citizens and 100 experts, 79% of Jordanians reported that they have been closely following the events in Gaza since the war began. All participating experts also confirmed this, with 100% of them agreeing. See: “Ḥarb Isrā’īl al-Musta’irra wa-’Udwānīhā ‘alā Ghazza,” *Public Opinion Survey*, Center for Strategic Studies, 26/11/2023, accessed on 4/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/33cyayja>

(84% in Jordan and 72% in Lebanon), with fewer respondents in both countries regarding the operation as legitimate but flawed – 6% in Jordan and 14% in Lebanon.²⁰

Figure (3): Why Hamas conducted 7 October(%)²¹

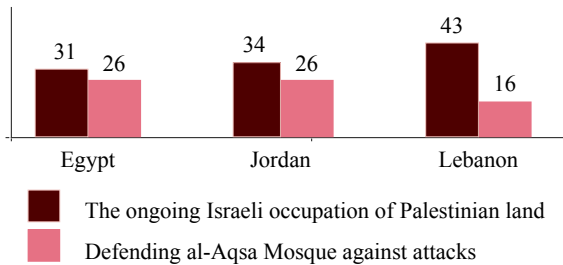
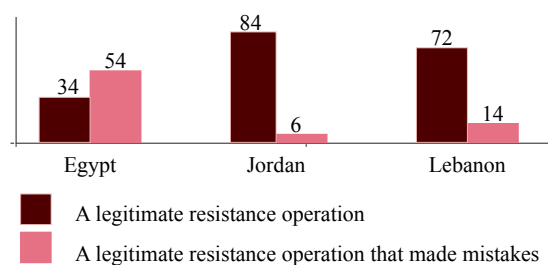
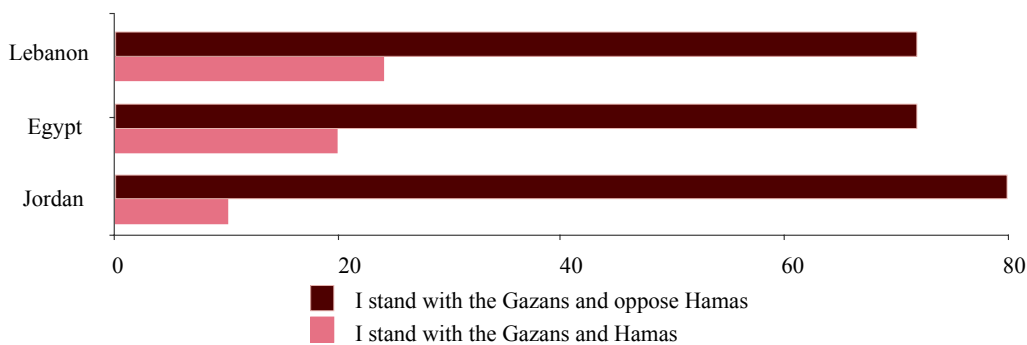


Figure (4): Assessment of 7 October(%)



Furthermore, 80% of Jordanians express solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. In Lebanon²² and Egypt, this sentiment is somewhat lower, at 72% in each country. Notably, a significant portion of respondents in both Lebanon (24%) and Egypt (20%) voiced disagreement with Hamas.²³ In contrast, only 10% of Jordanians shared this negative view of Hamas.²⁴

Figure (5): Solidarity with Palestinian Gazans and Support for Hamas(%)



Data from previous surveys of AOI shows that Arabs have consistently supported the Palestinian cause, viewing it as a concern for all Arabs, not just Palestinians. Egyptians strongly supported the notion that “the Palestinian issue is the issue of all Arabs” in the years 2011-2013, but this support waned in the years 2014-2016 in favour of the notion that “the Palestinian issue is only the concern of the Palestinians, and they work to solve it themselves”. This shift can be attributed to the media campaigns aimed at demonizing Hamas

²⁰ According to the survey conducted by WINEP and even amid the destruction caused by Israel in its genocidal war against the Palestinians, 97% of Lebanese Shia indicated that the war on Gaza is a win for the whole region, 88% of Lebanese Sunnis agreed with this view, whereas only 54% of Lebanese Christians agreed and 27% opposed it. Responding to the same statement, 92% of Jordanians and 89% of Egyptians shared similar views. See: Cleveland.

²¹ It is important to note that this figure and some other figures only include the main responses that hold significant weight in the analysis. Responses with low percentages, such as “Don’t know/ Declined to answer” and “Other”, are not included.

²² Positive opinions toward Hamas are predominantly found within the Shia community in Lebanon, according to WINEP’s survey. Overall, 79% of Lebanese expressed a positive view of Hamas. However, opinions are more divided within the Christian community, with 59% holding a positive view and 38% holding a negative view. See: Cleveland.

²³ In a survey conducted by WINEP in November-December 2023 in Egypt, the percentage of Egyptians who view Hamas positively increased markedly compared to previous years. Between 2014-2020, positive views of Hamas ranged from only 23-33%, while negative views ranged from 63-73%. However, the war has significantly shifted these numbers, with 75% of Egyptians now viewing Hamas positively and only 21% holding a negative view. Mohamed Abdelaziz, “Egypt Polling Shows Rise in Positive Views of Hamas; Iran-Backed Groups and the Muslim Brotherhood Remain Unpopular,” *Policy Analysis*, Washington Institute, 1 February 2024, accessed on 7/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/4xzehvfk>

²⁴ According to the survey conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies, 66% of Jordanians strongly support Hamas’s surprise attack on Israel, with an equal percentage of experts affirming this view. In contrast, only 8% of Jordanians and 3% of experts oppose the attack. See: “Ḥarb Isrā’īl al-Musta’irra wa-’Udwānīhā ‘alā Ghazza.”

following the 2013 coup led by President Sisi. Nevertheless, Egyptians' view reverted to considering the Palestinian issue as one for all Arabs in 2017-2018, with around 75% or more maintaining this perspective through 2019-2020 and 2022. This shift aligns with a decrease in the anti-Hamas media campaigns in Egypt.

In Lebanon, support for the statement “the Palestinian issue is the issue of all Arabs, not just the Palestinians”, has varied over the years but has generally been lower than in Egypt and Jordan. Support for the opposing view, “the Palestinian issue is solely the concern of the Palestinians”, fluctuated significantly, peaking at 36% in 2014 and falling to 13% in 2017-2018. In contrast, Jordanians have consistently shown strong support for the statement that “the Palestinian issue is the issue of all Arabs”, with agreement rates exceeding 90% in all years except for 2012-2013 (84%), 2014 (82%), and 2015 (89%). With the outbreak of war on Gaza, this support surged across all three countries, reaching 95% in Jordan, 94% in Egypt, and 84% in Lebanon. The majority of respondents in these countries are now more convinced than ever that the Palestinian issue concerns all Arabs.

Figure (6): Support for the statement “The Palestinian cause is a cause for all Arabs and not the Palestinian people alone”(%)

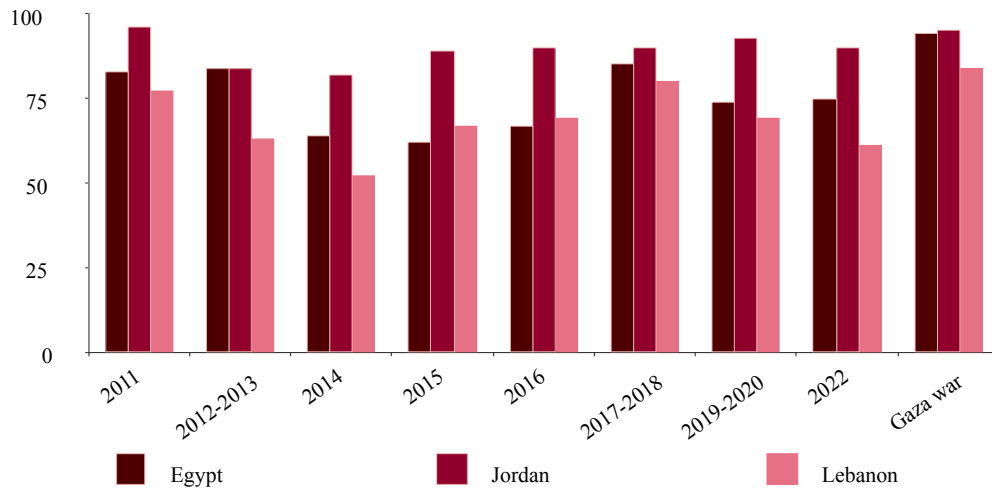
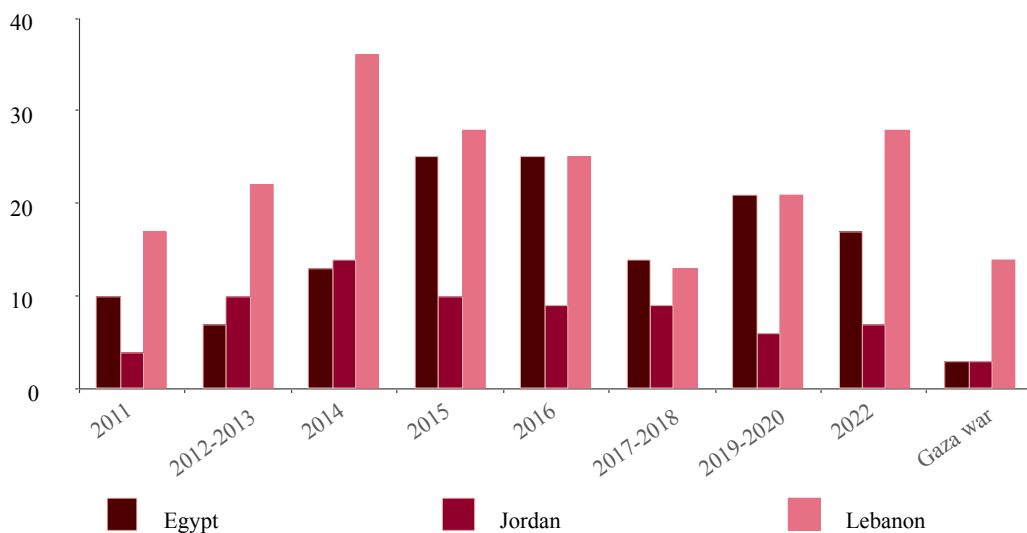
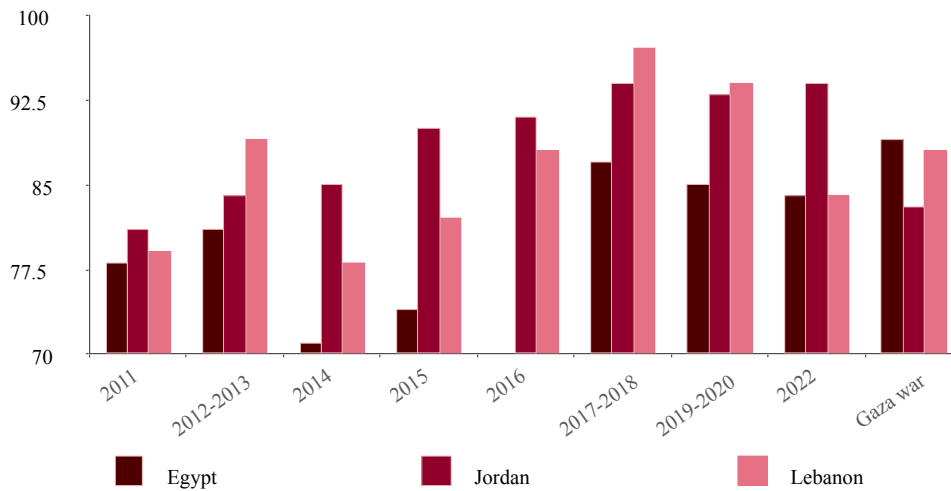


Figure (7): Support for the statement “The Palestinian cause is a cause of the Palestinians solely, and they alone should work to resolve it”(%)



In this context, respondents across these countries expressed strong disapproval of their governments' recognition of Israel, even though two of these countries, Egypt and Jordan have normalized relations with Israel. Following the war on Gaza, opposition to normalization grew in Lebanon and Egypt compared to 2022, while it slightly decreased in Jordan.

Figure (8): Disapproval of Israel's recognition(%)



Respondents also agreed that Arab governments' severing relations or halting normalization processes with Israel are the most crucial measure to end the war in Gaza, with 44% in Lebanon and 33% in both Egypt and Jordan supporting this stance. As for the second important measure, responses varied slightly. In Egypt (13%)²⁵ and Lebanon (18%), sending aid to Gaza without Israeli approval was viewed vital for ending the war. In Jordan, 25% of respondents advocated for using oil as a strategic tool to pressure Israel and its allies to cease the war.

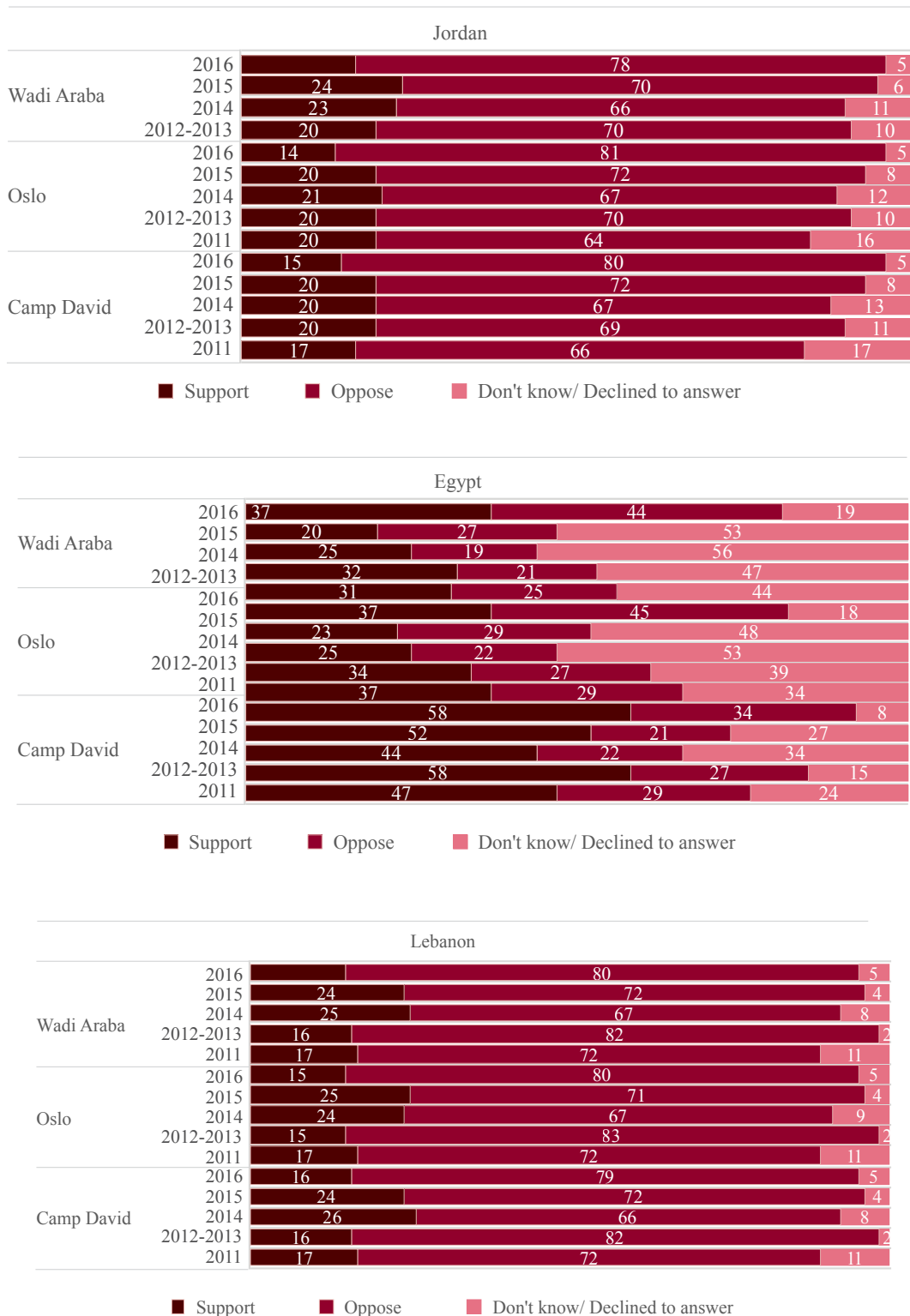
Table (1): Measures that Arab governments should take to stop the Israeli war on Gaza(%)

	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon
Suspend relations or normalization with Israel	33	33	44
Deliver aid to Gaza without Israeli approval	13	13	18
Use the oil weapon to pressure Israel and its supporters	10	15	9
Establish a global alliance to boycott Israel	11	10	6
Provide military aid to Gaza	11	6	3
Announce military mobilization	3	4	5
Reconsider relations with the US	2	2	5
Reconsider relations with states that support Israel's war on Gaza	2	1	1
Build alliances with states that have taken practical steps against Israel	4	2	2
Other	7	8	5
Don't know/ Declined to answer	4	6	2

²⁵ An overwhelming majority of Egyptians (97%) believe that Arab countries should take a decisive stance by “immediately sever[ing] all diplomatic, political, economic, and any other contacts with Israel, in protest against its military action in Gaza”, according to WINEP’s survey. Despite the lack of consensus, more than two-thirds of Egyptians (69%) agree that “Arab governments should take a more active role in Palestinian-Israeli peacemaking, offering both sides incentives to take more moderate positions”. Additionally, a vast majority (96%) of Egyptians thought that their country should provide more humanitarian aid to the Palestinians, even if it requires some practical coordination with Israel. See: Abdelaziz.

The first five surveys conducted by the ACRPS between 2011 and 2016 included questions about attitudes toward the peace agreements signed by Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestine Liberation Organization with Israel. Responses from Jordan and Lebanon largely rejected these agreements. In Egypt, support for the Camp David Accords was relatively high, with about half of respondents supporting it in all years surveyed. However, support for the other peace agreements with Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization was lower, though still higher than in Jordan and Lebanon. At the same time, a high percentage did not provide a clear stance in Egypt.

Figure (9): Stances toward Arab peace agreements with Israel (2011-2015)(%)

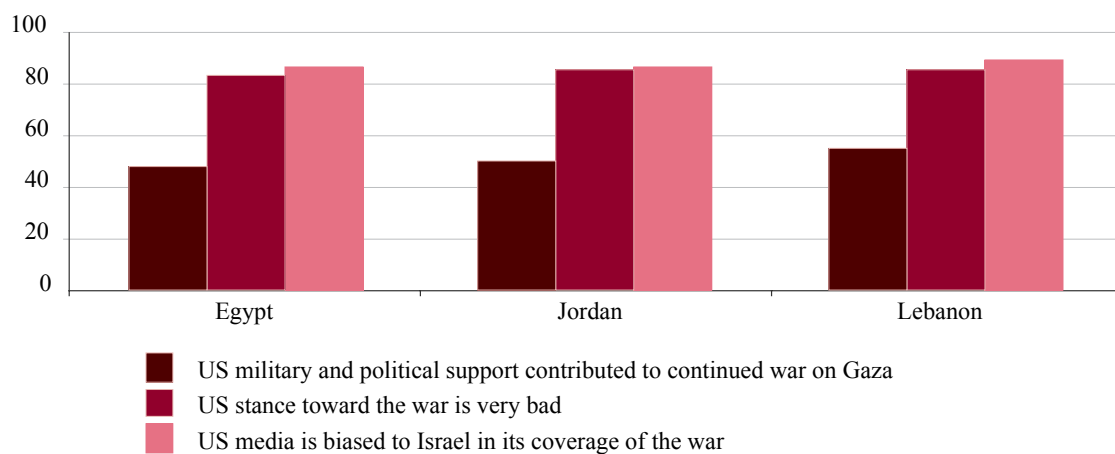


A broad segment of Egyptians supports boycotting foreign products, according to an unofficial survey that indicates Egypt ranks second in commitment to the boycott after Jordan.²⁶ In Jordan, there is widespread participation in boycotting products from countries that support Israel. Currently, 93% of Jordanians engage in some form of boycott, with 60% of them boycotting American products and 26% boycotting Israeli products. Additionally, 93% of Jordanians support boycotting products from countries that support Israel, and 72% believe that this boycott will not negatively impact the Jordanian economy.²⁷ In Lebanon, the boycott reached 90% in some areas,²⁸ leading to discussions about its impact on Lebanese companies and their employees.

US “Ironclad” Support for Israel

The majority of respondents in Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon agree that US political and military support is the primary factor enabling Israel's continued war on Gaza, particularly for 55% of respondents in Lebanon, 50% in Jordan, and 48% in Egypt.²⁹ These negative perceptions of the US stance are made clear by the 85% of respondents in Jordan and Lebanon, and 83% in Egypt, who evaluate the US stance in the war on Gaza as very bad. Additionally, respondents believe that US media is biased in favour of Israel, with 89% in Lebanon, and 86% in both Jordan and Egypt.

Figure (10): Assessment of US stance toward the war on Gaza(%)



Due to US support for Israel, trust in the US and its influence as well as trust in other Western powers like Britain, France, and Germany, has plummeted among Arabs. Conversely, support for US strategic rivals – namely China, Russia, Iran, and Turkey³⁰ – has increased, particularly in Egypt.³¹ The way the US

²⁶ Khulud Sulayman, “Ḥaṣīlat ‘al-Muqāṭa’ a’ wa-Khaṭar al-Irtidād ‘Anhā,” *Alminassa*, 22/5/2024, accessed on 9/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/5extkezu>

²⁷ “Ḥarb Isrā’īl al-Musta’irra wa-’Udwānihā ‘alā Ghazza.”

²⁸ Hidayat Taha, “al-Ḍarar ‘alā al-Iḥtilāl wa-l-Sharikāt al-Dā’ima lahū bil-Arḳām.. al-Muqāṭa’ a al-Tijāriyya Tuthmir fī Lubnān,” *Almayadeen*, 24/1/2024, accessed on 7/7/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/y4nhwmft>

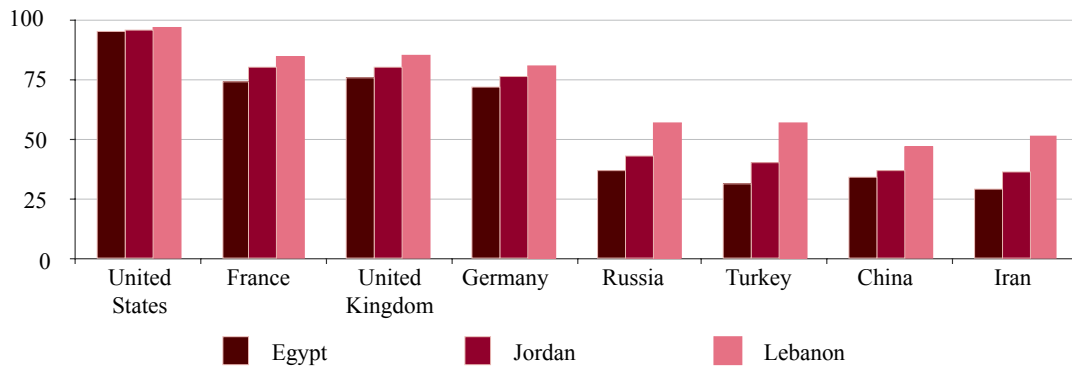
²⁹ A significant proportion of Egyptians (78%), Jordanians (76%), and Lebanese (92%) believe that the war has shown that Israel is weak, internally divided, and potentially defeatable someday, according to WINEP’s survey. Abdelaziz.

³⁰ This finding is supported by a survey conducted by the independent research group IIACSS from 17 to 29 October 2023, which sampled 500 people each in Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon. Only 7% of Arabs believe that the US has a positive role in the war, with this percentage dropping to just 2% in countries like Jordan. In contrast, 46% of Arabs in Egypt and 27% in Jordan believe that China has a positive role in the war. The positive views toward Russia are even more pronounced, averaging 47% across surveyed countries (excluding Palestine). Additionally, 40% of respondents say that Iran has a positive role in the war, compared to 21% who say it has a negative role. In Egypt, the percentage of those who view Iran’s role positively stood at 50%. Regarding trust levels, only 3% of Jordanian respondents report trusting the US, while 24-25% express trust in Russia and China. In Egypt, trust in the US stands at a mere 9%, compared to 51% for Russia and Iran, and 47% for China. See: Munqith Dagher & Karl Kaltenthaler, “The United States Is Rapidly Losing Arab Hearts and Minds Through Gaza War, While Competitors Benefit,” *Policy Analysis*, Washington Institute, 21 November 2023, accessed on 24/1/2024, at: <http://tinyurl.com/bdfwbr3z>

³¹ In WINEP’s survey conducted in Egypt, public opinion was divided, with 57% agreeing with the statement: “We cannot count on the US these days, so we should look more to other countries like Russia or China as partners”, while 42% disagreed. See: Abdelaziz.

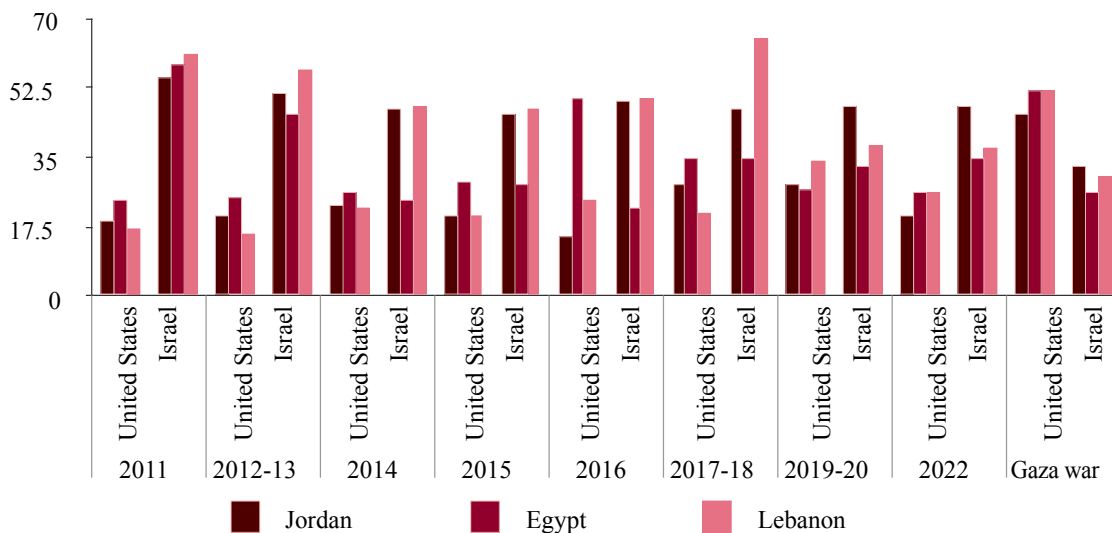
has handled the war in Gaza has led to a significant loss of credibility among Arabs, a sentiment clearly reflected in their social media discussions and public demonstrations.³²

Figure (11): Negative views of regional and international powers' stance during the war on Gaza(%)



Since 2011, the US has not been viewed as the greatest threat by most Lebanese, Jordanians, and Egyptians. Instead, Israel has been perceived as the most significant threat to regional security, except in Egypt during 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017-2018. However, following the Israeli war on Gaza, the US is now seen as the greatest threat.

Figure (12): Views on Israel and the US as largest threats to the region's security(%)

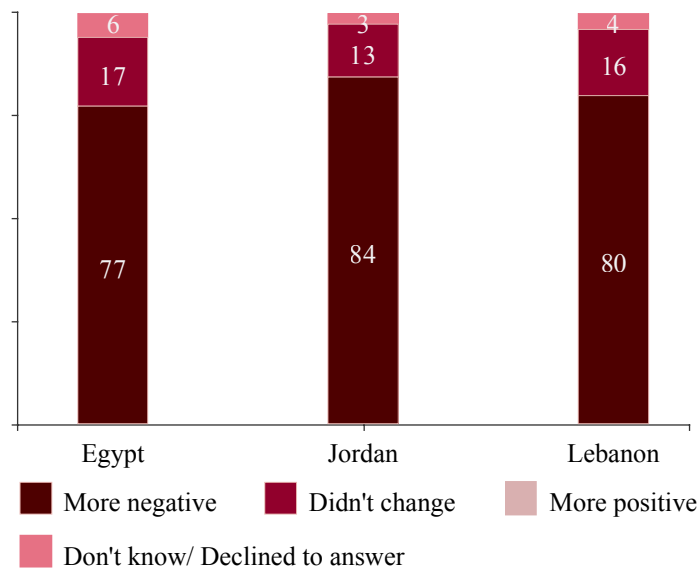


This shift aligns with respondents' assessment of US policies toward the Arab region after the war. The vast majority expressed a negative view of these policies since the war began: Egypt (77%), Jordan (84%), Lebanon (80%).³³

³² For instance, demonstrations involved clashes at the US embassy in Lebanon and Jordan. See: "Infographic: Global Demonstrations in Response to the Israel-Palestine Conflict," *ACLEDE*, 7/11/2023, accessed on 25/8/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/yd2pbvfk>; "Thousands participate in protest at the US Embassy in Amman," *MEMO*, 22/12/2023, accessed on 25/8/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/4rh3nep>; "Security Alert – U.S. Embassy – Amman," *U.S. Embassy in Jordan*, 18/10/2023, accessed on 25/8/2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/3j7mbjk7>

³³ According to the IIACSS survey, Jordanians (53%), Egyptians (50%), and Lebanese (40%) attribute Western support for Israel in its war on Hamas primarily to their hatred of Islam and Muslims. The influence of the Israeli lobby is the next most cited reason, mentioned by 28% in Jordan, 22% in Egypt, and 32% in Lebanon. The least significant reason for Western support mentioned by respondents in these countries was Western sympathy for Israeli citizens: Jordan (7%), Egypt (11%), and Lebanon (10%), see: Dagher & Kaltenthaler.

Figure (13): Respondents' stance toward US policies in the Arab region after the war on Gaza(%)



Conclusion

The findings presented in the paper reveal that Egyptians, Jordanians, and Lebanese are experiencing high levels of pressure and stress due to the ongoing war, which they follow closely. Although regional demonstrations supporting Gaza and expressing solidarity with its people have gradually diminished as the war has continued, there have been calls to avoid becoming desensitized to the war and its devastating consequences. This is accompanied by a profound sense of helplessness and despair among large segments of the Arab public, who increasingly feel powerless to affect either Israel's actions in the war on Gaza or their own governments' positions. Many now believe that suspending relations or halting normalization with Israel could be effective in ending the war, as AOI survey findings suggest.

The level of approval that Hamas continues to receive since 7 October from the general public in these three countries remains a key issue. The data indicates that the war has notably increased the movement's popularity, with a significant proportion of respondents viewing 7 October as a legitimate military operation (with Egypt leaning toward it being legitimate but marred by some mistakes). Respondents also expressed support for Hamas and solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza at rates exceeding 70% across all three countries. Additionally, there is a strong consensus that the Palestinian cause is a concern for all Arabs, not just the Palestinians.

Furthermore, anti-Western sentiments are likely to rise, particularly due to growing anger over the perceived "double standards" exposed by Israel's war on Gaza. Survey data indicates that the US is now considered the greatest threat to the region's security. The prolonged duration of the war has fuelled deep frustration among Arabs, leading to heightened hostility toward the US and other Western countries backing Israel. Israel's and US's conduct of the war and negotiations has exacerbated Arab anger and resentment toward the US. As a result, a significant proportion of Arabs evaluate the role of other powers such as Turkey, Iran, China, and Russia positively at the expense of the US and other Western countries.

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