



Arab News YouGov Poll:

The 2020 US elections – What do Arabs want?



THE MIDDLE EAST, BETTER EXPLAINED

ARAB
NEWS

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In 2016 Arab News, the Middle East's leading international English-language daily, partnered with YouGov, the world's leading online polling firm, to produce a regular series of surveys capturing the pulse and changing dynamics of the Middle East and North Africa. The regular surveys gauge public sentiment on regional and international events, offering credible, actionable insight into international public opinion and Arab affairs.

The partnership has completed 5 surveys to date on issues ranging from Arab political sentiment and Gulf relations



with Qatar, to the Arab image in the US and how Arabs view Japan.

The following executive summary outlines the results of the Arab News / YouGov Pan Arab survey on the 2020 US Presidential Election, the fifth survey in the series. The poll conducted in late September 2020 gauges how Arabs across the Middle East view the 2020 US election, the candidates and their policies. Ultimately, our survey sought to understand what the Arab world is anticipating from a future US Presidential administration.

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

Methodology

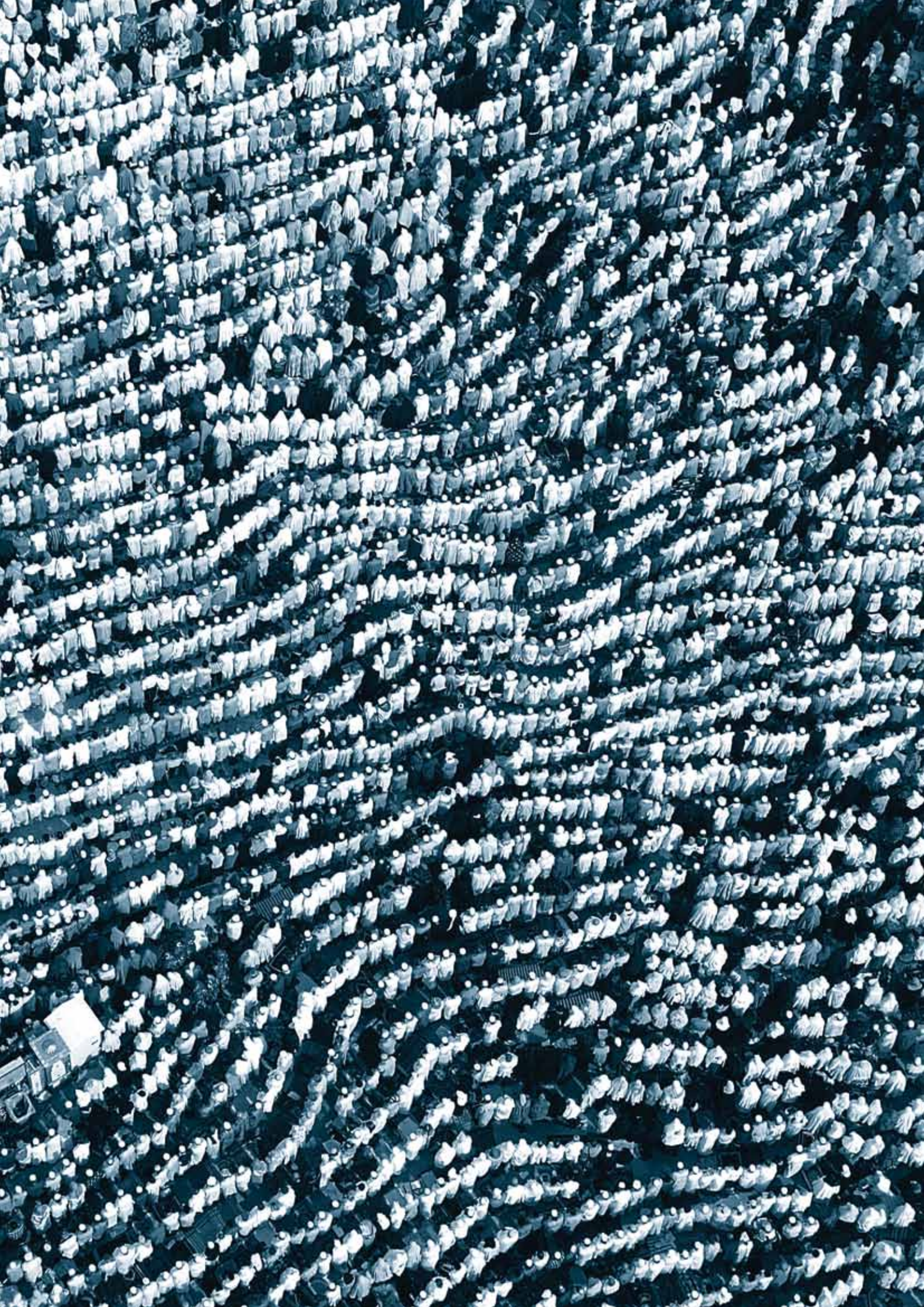
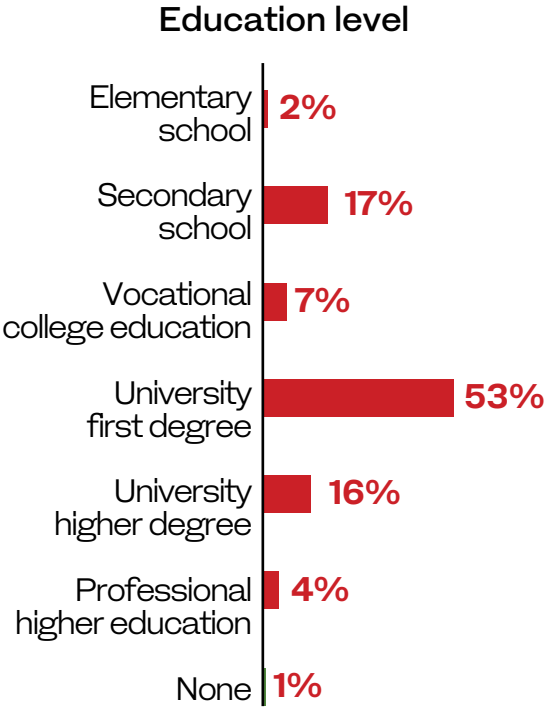
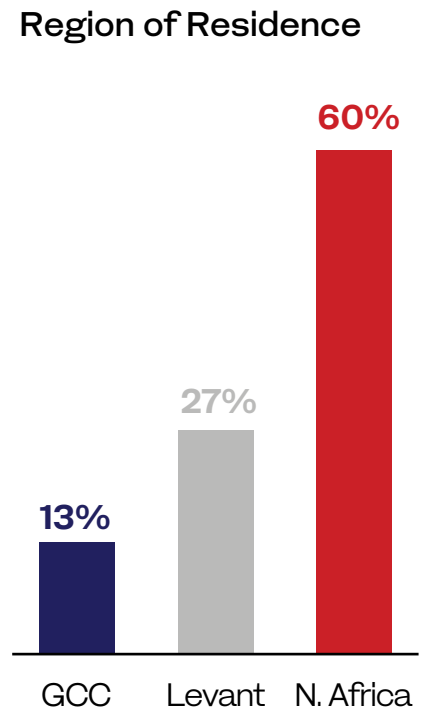
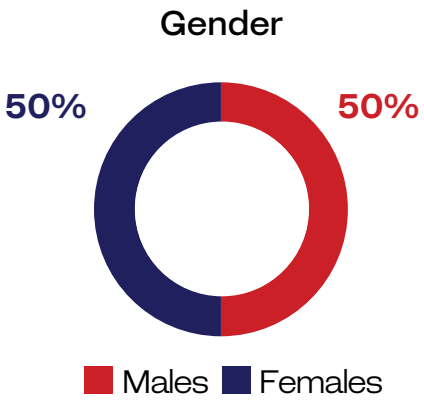
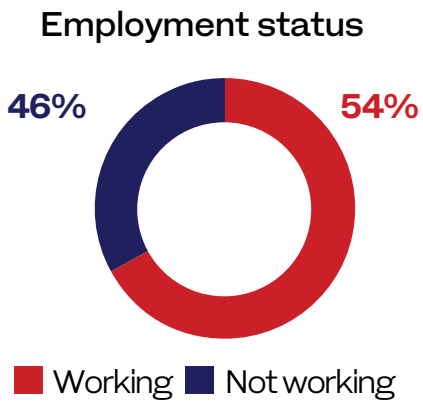
The survey was conducted using an online interview administered among members of the YouGov panel of over 8 million individuals across the world who have agreed to take part in surveys. An email was sent to panelists selected at random from the panel, inviting them to take part in the survey and providing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

The total sample size was 3,097 Arabic speakers, aged 18 years or above, residing

across 18 countries in the Arab world. Fieldwork was undertaken between 21st and 27th of September 2020. The overall margin of error is $\pm 1.761\%$. The sample was weighted as per the population distribution of all the countries covered. Weights were also added in line with regional distribution of age groups, and for equal representation of men and women..

Below is a detailed breakdown of the sample by demographics.

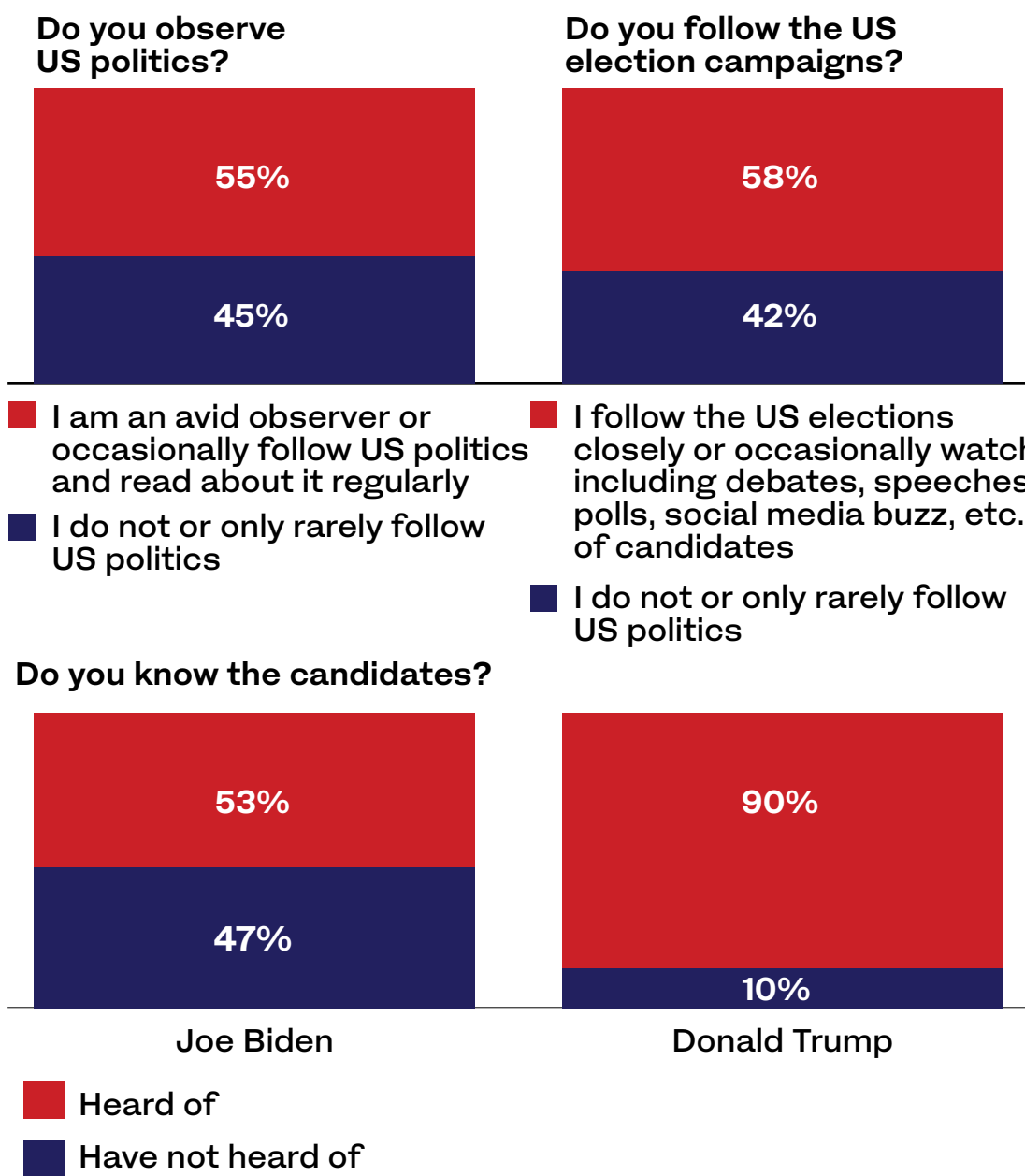
DEMOGRAPHIC SAMPLE OF THE ARAB NEWS/YOUGOV PAN ARAB SURVEY





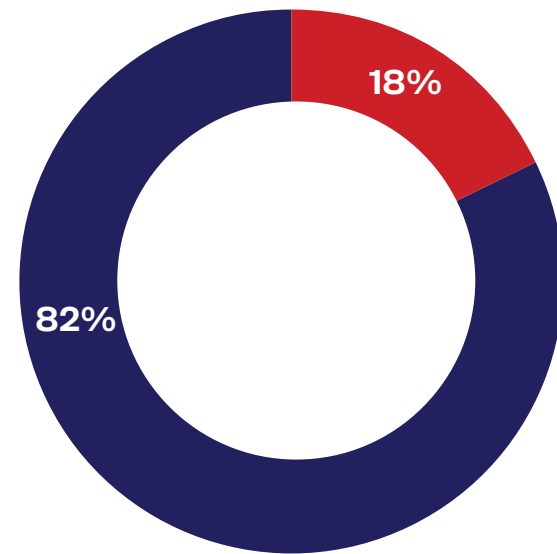
2. Arabs and US politics

What do Arabs understand about US politics? We found that most Arabs are regular observers of US politics and are very interested in the outcome of the 2020 election.



Only half (53%) of respondents are aware of Democratic nominee Joe Biden compared to a whopping 90% for the incumbent US president and Republican nominee Donald Trump.

The US candidate who gets the most votes across the country is guaranteed to be the next president



False

True

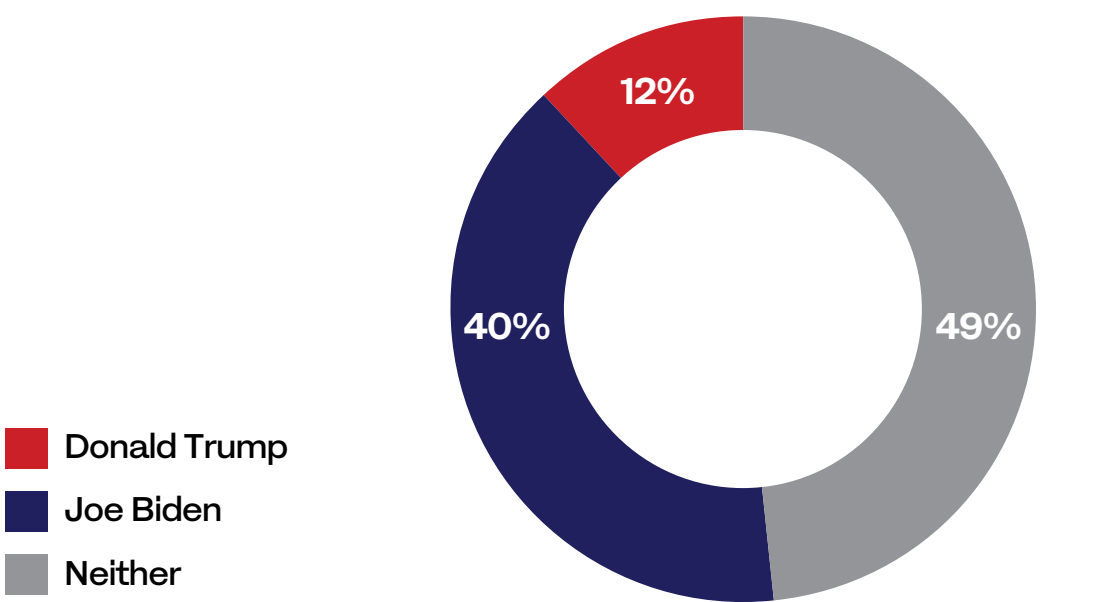
Yet, a staggering majority are not familiar with how the US president is elected as 82% agreed that the candidate with the most votes across the board will win the presidential elections, omitting the Electoral College which is the ultimate decider of the presidential vote.



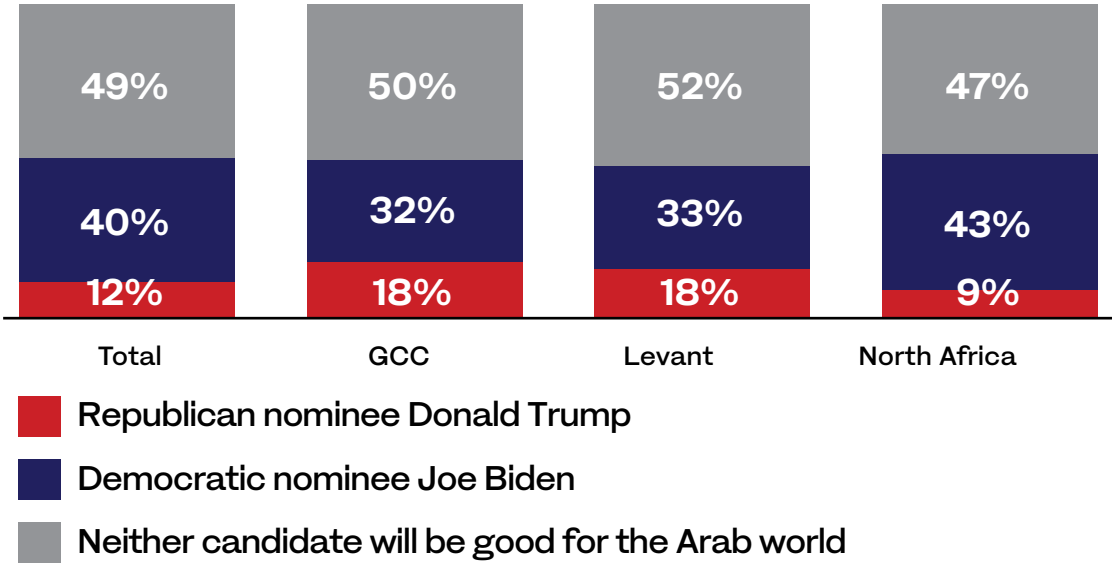


3. Which candidate is better for the Middle East?

Interestingly, when asked which candidate would be better for the Arab world if elected president, most believe that neither candidate (49%) would fulfill such a description, yet Biden (40%) is still considered a better option to Trump (12%). Nationals of Levant (52%) and GCC (50%) seem to agree with the notion that none of the candidates to the US presidency would seek Arabs' interests, while North Africans (43%), in particular, believe that Biden might be a better advocate to Arabs interests than Trump.

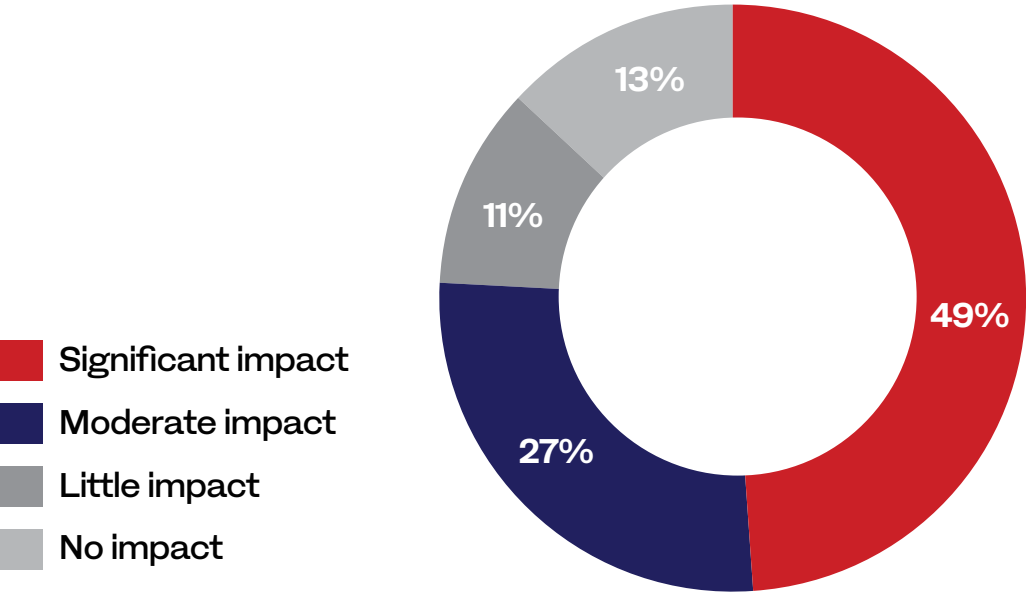


WHO'S BETTER FOR THE ARAB WORLD'S INTERESTS?



4. Impact of the next US president on the region

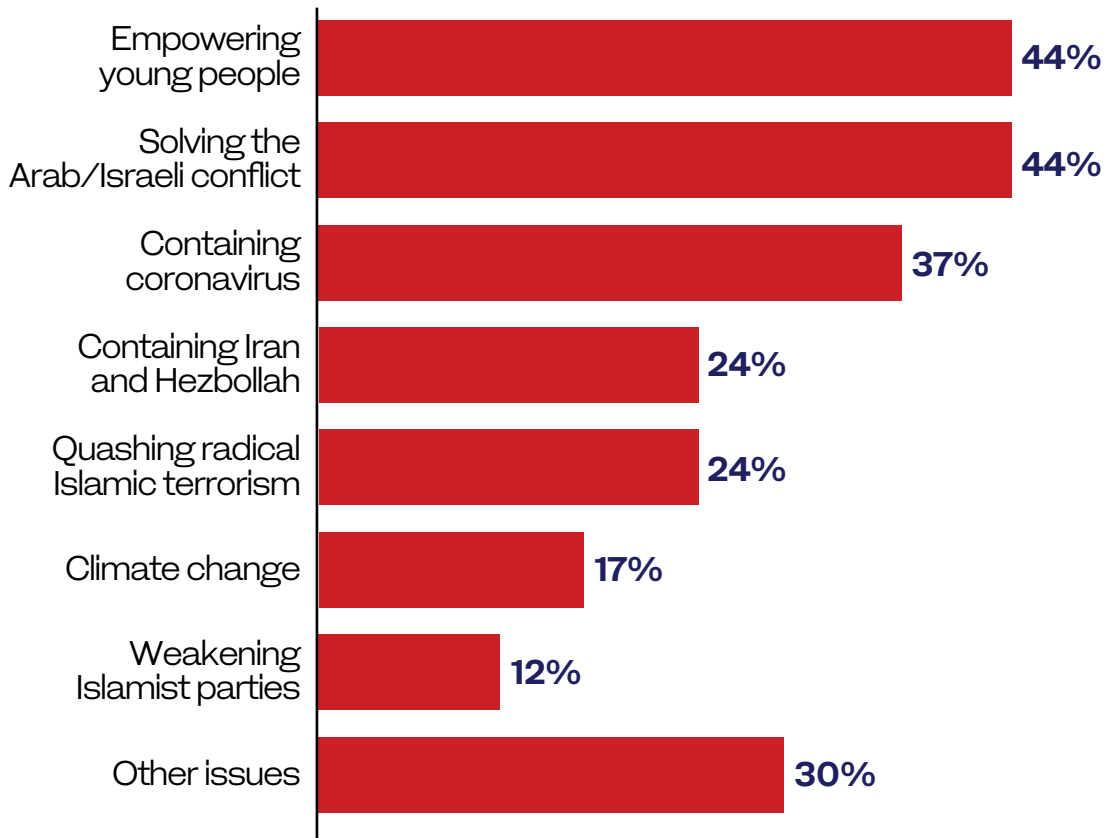
A majority of respondents (76%) believe in the significance of the next US president and his impact on the Arab world in 2021. Regardless who will fill the post on Inauguration Day, Arabs believe in the importance and impact the US president will have in 2021.





5. The top three issues Arabs want the next president to focus on

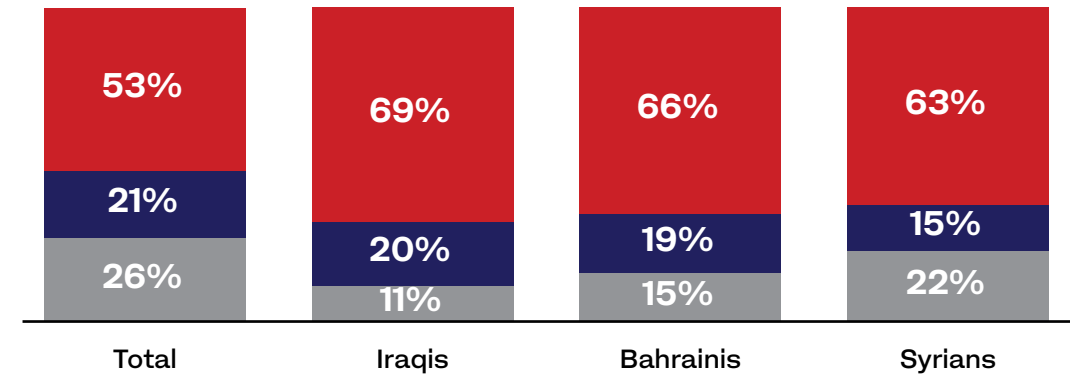
Respondents highlighted empowering youth (44%), solving the Arab-Israeli conflict (44%) and containing the coronavirus (37%) as the top three concerns they would want the next president to focus on.



6. Joe Biden and the Obama legacy

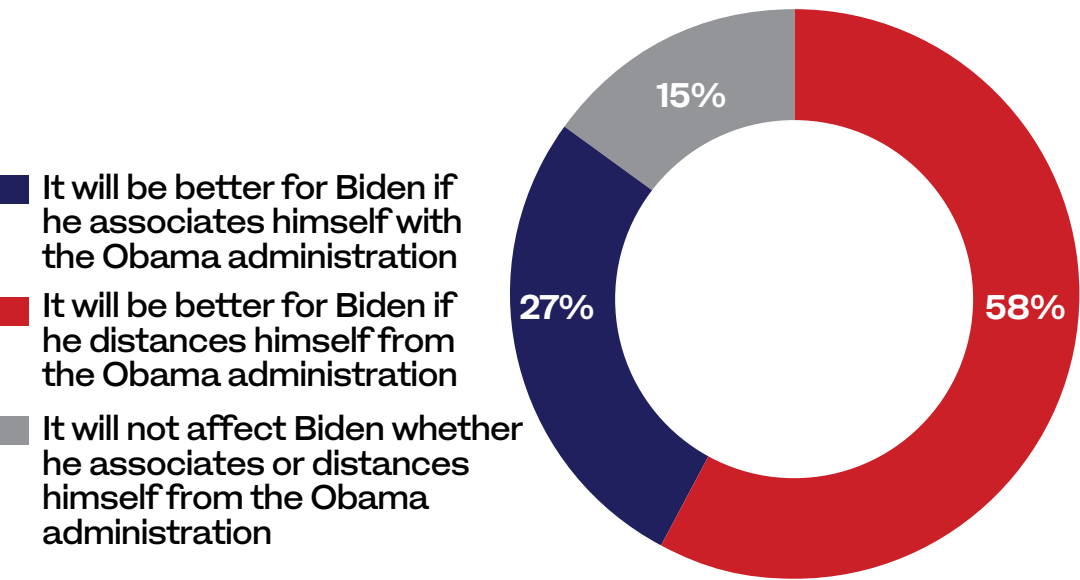
Slightly more than half the sample (53%) believes that the Obama administration and its policies have left the region worse off. This is strongly felt by Iraqis (69%), Bahrainis (66%) and Syrians (63%) in particular.

How would you describe the policies implemented in the Middle East Region under the administration of Barack Obama (the previous US president)?



- They left the region worse off
- They did not leave any significant impact on the region
- They left the region better off

In turn, over half (58%) believe Joe Biden should distance himself from the Obama administration's policies and build his own legacy in order to succeed if he is elected.



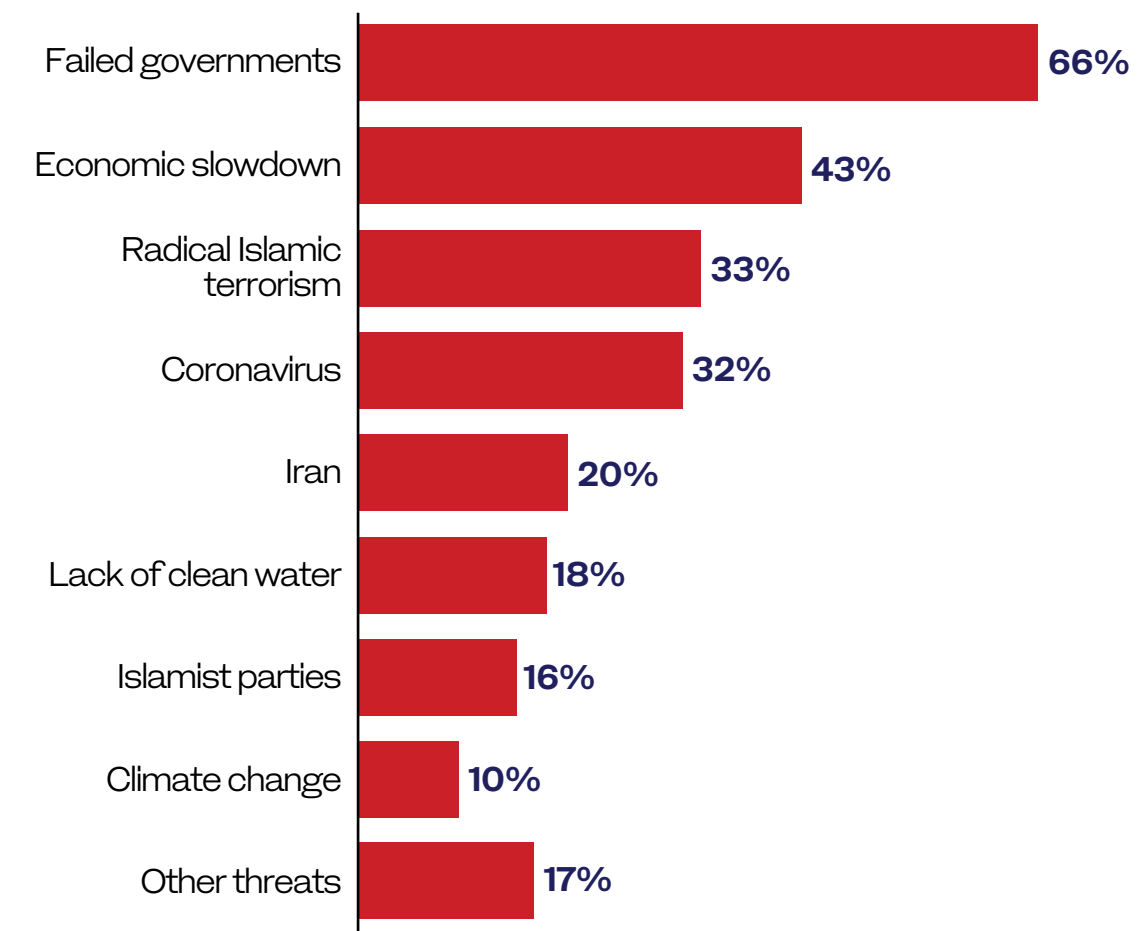
- It will be better for Biden if he associates himself with the Obama administration
- It will be better for Biden if he distances himself from the Obama administration
- It will not affect Biden whether he associates or distances himself from the Obama administration





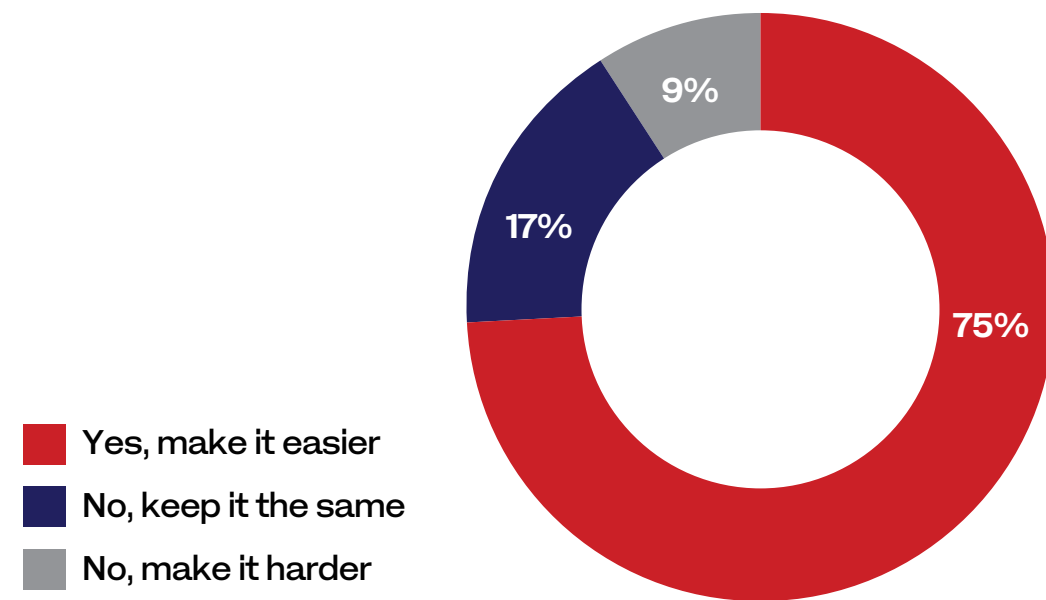
7. The threats facing the Arab world

Failed governments (66%), economic slowdown (43%), radical Islamic terrorism (33%) and coronavirus (32%) top the list of threats to the Arab world. Iran (20%), fifth on the list of important threats facing the Arab world, poses a more serious threat to Iraq (48%), Yemen (42%) and Lebanon (42%).



8. Access to travel to the US

Three quarters of Arabs (75%) strongly agree that the US should make it easier for Arabs to travel to the US.





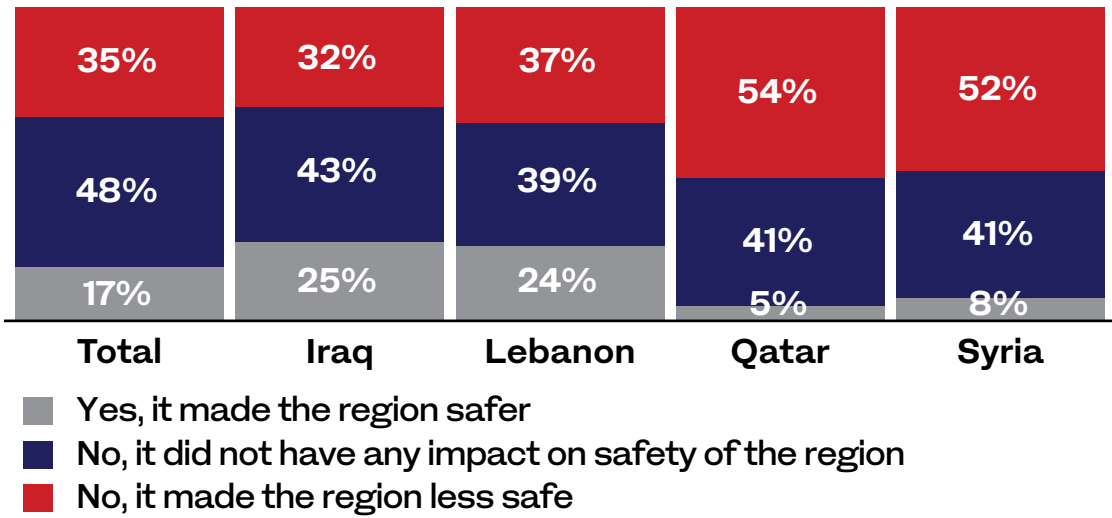
9. How Arabs See US Iran Policy

Withdrawing from the JCPOA nuclear agreement with Iran was a major policy turn by the Trump administration but few Arabs (17%) viewed the move as a precursor to a safer region. Most of those who know the issue seem to be divided between those who think that the US withdrawal had no impact on the region's safety (48%) and those who think it actually made the whole region less safe (35%).

Of those who were aware of the topic, around two-fifths of Bahrain and Lebanon residents believe the US withdrawal from the nuclear agreement with Iran jeopardized safety in the region while one third in Saudi Arabia believe this move has boosted safety in the region.

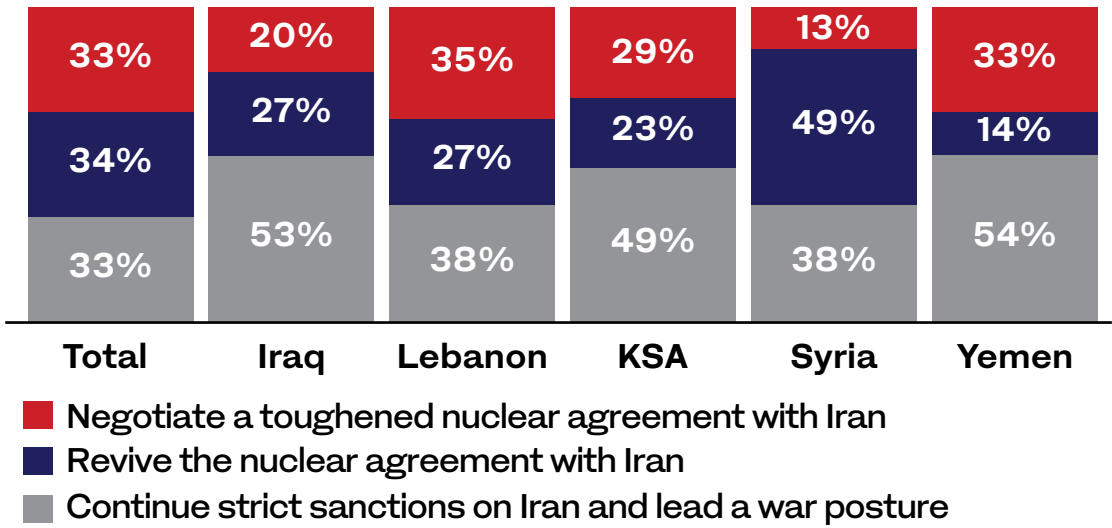
Notably, about one-third of GCC nationals believe the US withdrawal from the nuclear agreement with Iran has boosted safety in the region (led particularly by 49% of Saudi nationals); compared to nationals of the Levant and North Africa amongst whom more than a third believe this move has jeopardized safety in the region.

Has the withdrawal from the JCPOA made the region safe?



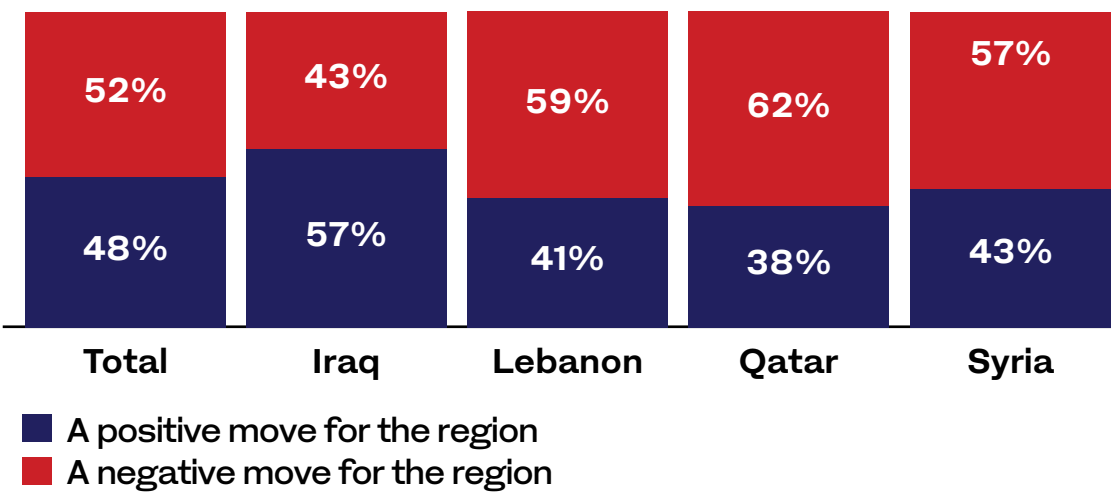
Countries closely tied to Iran seek a tougher stance from the next president. Residents of countries intimately tied to Iran said they want a tougher stance from the next US president including toughened sanctions and a war posture. These include residents of Iraq (53%), Yemen (54%) and Saudi Arabia (49%)

In your opinion, what should the next US president do about US relations with Iran?



Reaction to the December 2019 killing of Qassem Soleimani, a prominent Iranian commander leading operations abroad mainly in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria was split between those who couldn't draw a conclusion (47%) on the impact of his killing could and those who saw it as a positive move towards a safer region and those who regarded it as detrimental to the region's safety. Looking closely at the last two groups, differences arise by nationality. Residents of Iraq (57%) see the assassination as a positive move for the region. On the other hand residents of Qatar (62%) and Lebanon (59%), regard Soleimani's killing as a negative move for the region.

Has the killing of Qassem Soleimani made the region safer?

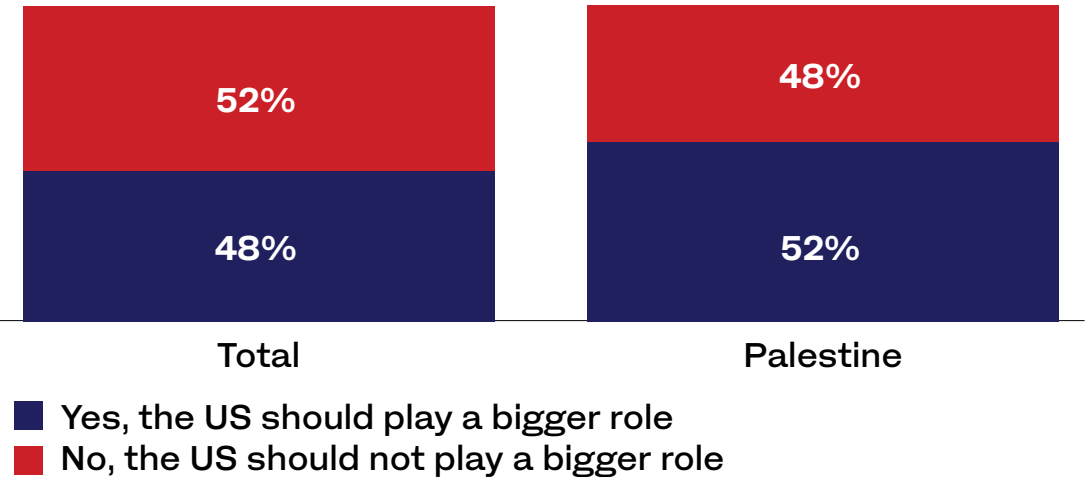




10. Israel, US and the Arab world

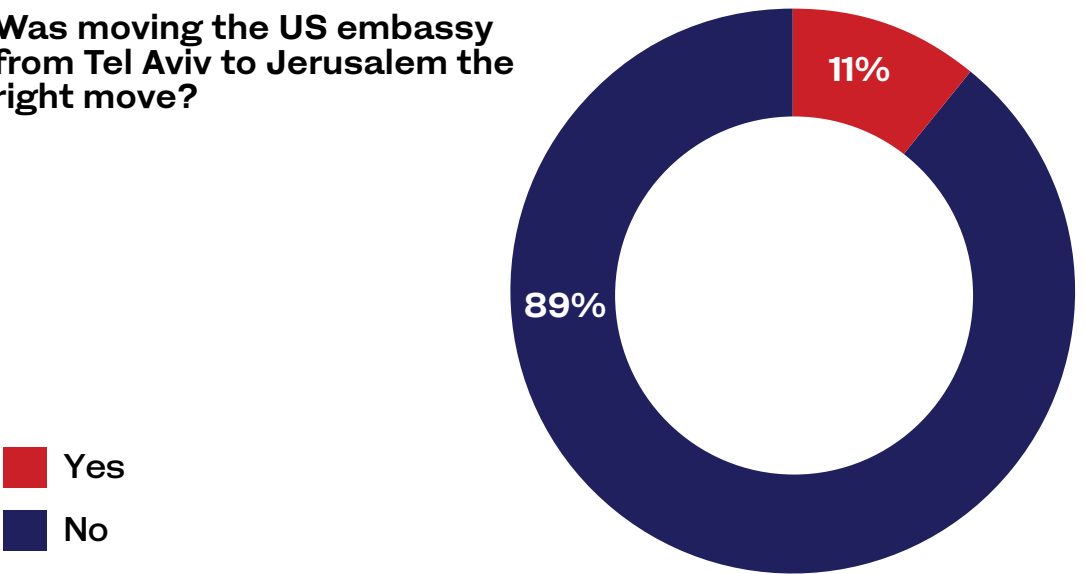
Slightly more than half of Arabs do not support a bigger role for the US in the mediation process between Palestinians and Israelis. Notably a higher proportion of Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories indicated that the US should play a bigger role in the process.

Do you support US efforts to play a bigger role in mediating between Israelis and Palestinians?



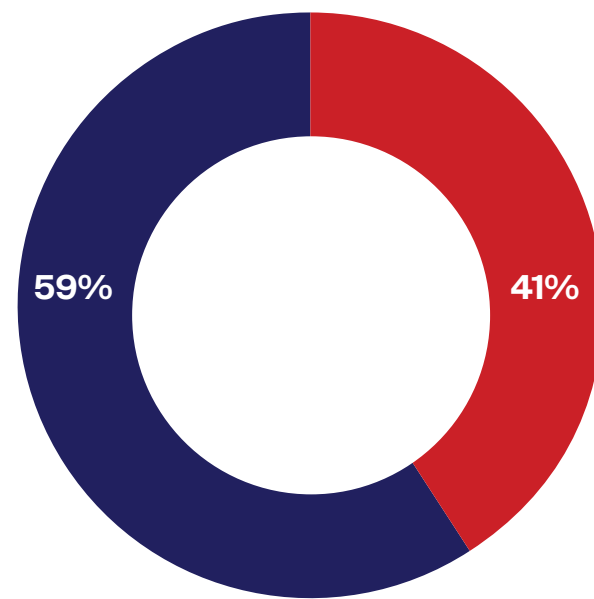
Arab respondents were resoundingly against (89%) the Trump administration’s move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a move he had promised during his 2016 election campaign and implemented during his presidency.

Was moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem the right move?

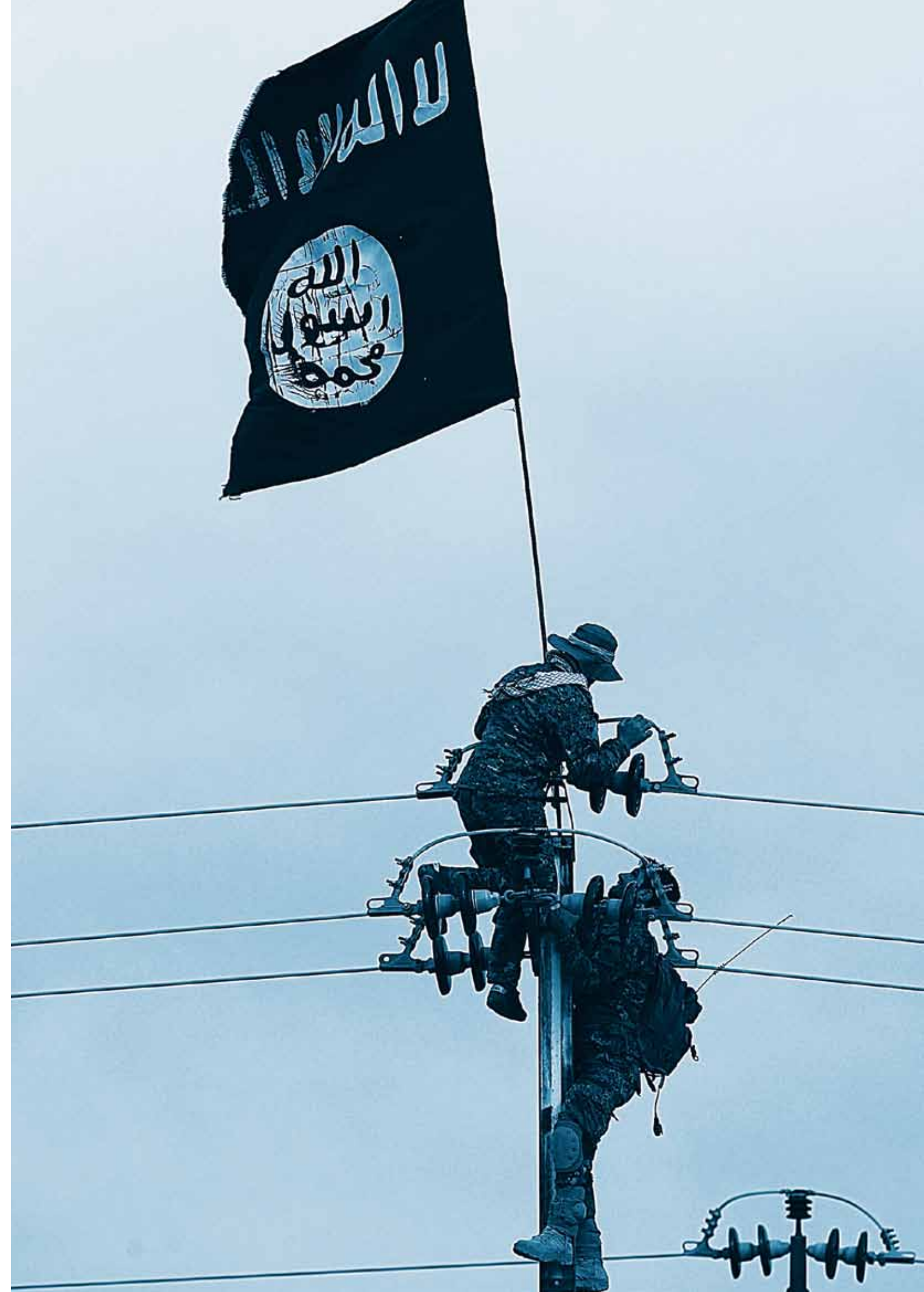


II. How the US has impacted the fight against extremism

The role the US has played in supporting Arab countries in the fight against extremism was generally well regarded with three fifths saying it has helped fight extremism; Saudis (67%) and Syrians (70%) are strong proponents of this statement.



■ Helped
■ Hindered



12. What do Arabs believe are the critical issues facing the US?

When asked what are the top three critical issues facing America, respondents highlighted white nationalism (32%), China (22%) and Iran (9%) as the top threats.

