

## **The Military Campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant: Arab Public Opinion**

A coalition of 60 countries led by the United States began air strikes against the group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The contributions made by each country differ: while some countries are providing direct military aid, others are participating in the coalition through the provision of equipment, training, intelligence, while a further group contributes humanitarian aid. The primary force behind the formation of this coalition was US President Barack Obama's Administration which emphasized through the statements of both President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry that its aim was to "degrade and ultimately destroy" ISIL. Thus far, the coalition's strategy has rested on the use of air strikes against ISIL sites in both Iraq and Syria, and enhanced support for the Iraqi ground forces who are fighting the group. The possibility of deploying ground troops remains open.

The public's interest in ISIL—both in the Arab region and globally—has been sharpened in recent months, following the group's capture of towns and cities in Iraq's Al Anbar province, such as Falluja and Ramadi at the beginning of 2014. This was capped by the expansion of Iraqi territory controlled by ISIL during the month of June, when it took command of cities like Mosul and Tikrit.

With these developments in mind, the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS) carried out a public opinion survey on attitudes towards the airstrikes being carried out by the international coalition against the group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Survey respondents took part by telephone and were asked questions designed to determine their attitudes towards both the international coalition's aim in carrying out the airstrikes against the group in both Iraq and Syria, as well as respondents' attitude towards ISIL.

This survey is the largest public opinion poll conducted in the Arab region with a sample made up of 600 respondents in each of seven countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Iraq. In addition, a further sample of 900 Syrian refugees was drawn in equal proportion between groups in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. In the aggregated result, each of the population groups is given equal weight so that the total for "Arab Public Opinion" given in the report below has equal weightings for each country/population group. This method prevents the domination of overall "Arab Public Opinion" by the citizens of more populous countries.

Samples for each country/population group were selected randomly, and drawn from the respondent database kept by the Arab Opinion Index, the ACRPS' public opinion

project. The sampling for the original database was done through a multi-stage, stratified clustered approach, allowing for a geographical distribution of sample respondents within each country that reflects that country's population as a whole. The confidence interval within each sample is 95%, with the final results having a margin of error of  $\pm 4\%$ .

The Arab Opinion Project—the Unit within the ACRPS responsible for public opinion surveys—is responsible for commissioning and overseeing an annual survey of Arab public opinion covering a variety of questions of public concern and a number of social and political matters. Its flagship project, the Arab Opinion Index, is the largest survey of its kind, and focuses on the Arab public's attitudes towards questions of citizenship, democracy and political participation, as well as their views of their home countries' state institutions and respondents' financial and social circumstances.

### Public attitudes towards the international coalition against ISIL

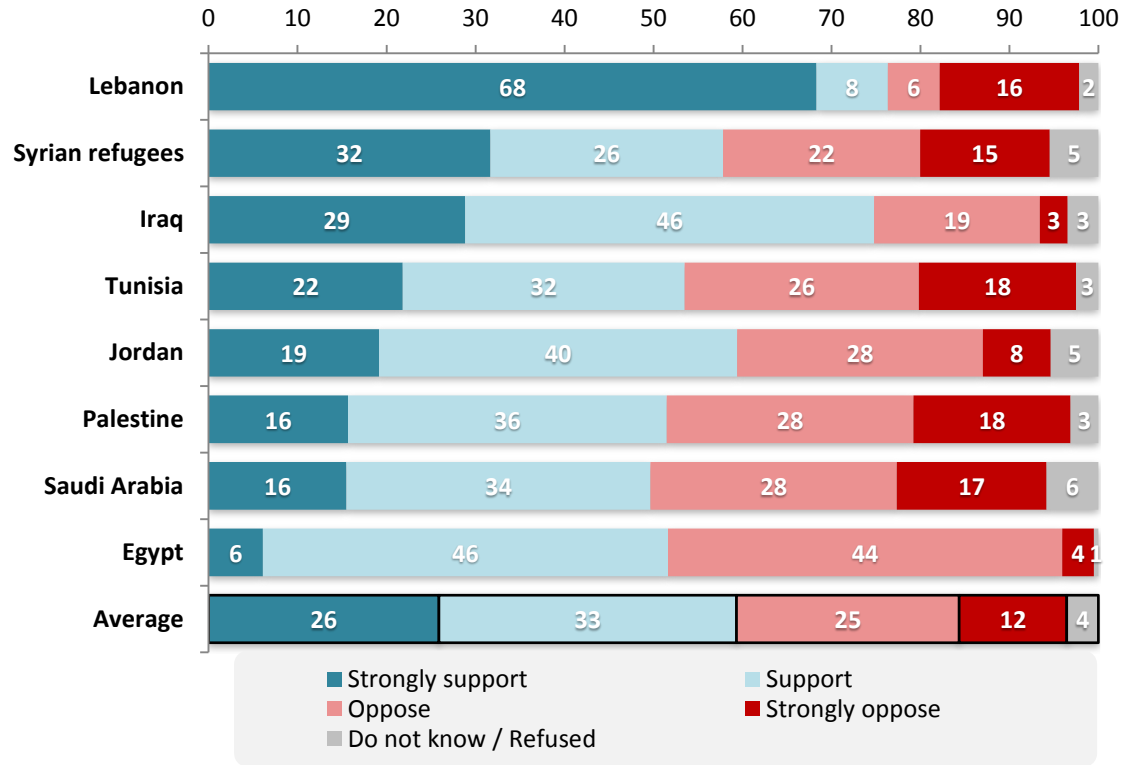
This section of the report covers a number of specific matters of interest:

- Public opinion towards the air strikes against ISIL
- Public perceptions of the stated aims of the international coalition against ISIL
- Arab attitudes towards the participation of Arab countries in the coalition against ISIL
- Public fears of the fallout from the attacks on ISIL
- Public perceptions of the ability of the international coalition to achieve its aims
- Public perceptions of who stands to gain the most from the present military campaign
- Public attitudes of American foreign policy in the Arab region

A clear majority of Arabs (59%) expressed varying degrees of support (either “Strongly support” or “Support”) for the airstrikes by the international coalition against armed extremist groups including ISIL. In contrast, 37% of respondents voiced varying levels of opposition (either “Strongly opposed” or “Opposed”) to the international coalition's bombing campaign. Notably, twice as many respondents were strongly in favor of the military campaign as were strongly opposed to it: 25% compared to 12%.

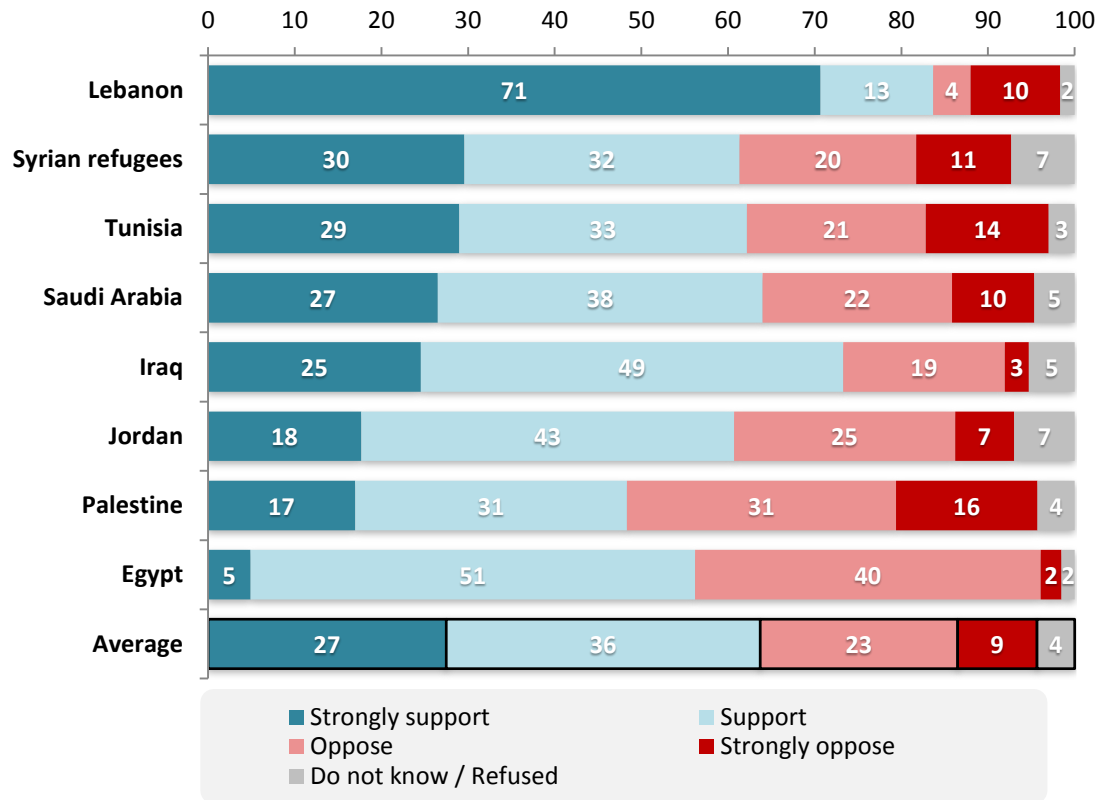
Examining the results for individual countries, Lebanon showed the highest levels of support for the international coalition against ISIL: 76% of respondents within that country support the airstrikes, compared to 24% who were opposed to them. The lowest levels of support for the strikes came from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Palestine: only 50% of Saudis expressed support for military action against armed extremist groups; that figure was 52% for Palestine and Egypt. At 6%, the proportion of Egyptians who were

“strongly” supportive of military action was the lowest of any individual country. Opposition to the strikes was also highest in Egypt, with 48% of Egyptians opposed, to varying extents, to the airstrikes. That figure was 45% for respondents in each of Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia.



**Figure 1 Responses to the question "In general, do you support or oppose the military airstrikes by the US-led international coalition against Islamic militant groups including ISIL and other groups in Iraq and Syria?"**

Respondents were also asked the extent of their support for/opposition to the stated aims of the military campaign against ISIL. In the overall group, 63% of Arab public opinion expressed support for those aims, while 32% were opposed. Support for the coalition’s stated aims of the military campaign against ISIL was higher than support for the airstrikes against armed extremist groups, which is also borne out by the levels of opposition to the stated aims of the coalition against ISIL, which are lower than levels of opposition to the military strikes against armed extremist groups.



**Figure 2 Responses to the question "To what extent do you support or oppose the declared objectives of the anti-ISIL campaign to “degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL”?"**

Respondents were also asked to evaluate the capability of the international coalition against ISIL to achieve its stated aims, regardless of their attitudes towards that coalition. Across all population groups, 22% of respondents expressed confidence in the international coalition achieving its aims, with a further 38% expressing the opinion that the coalition would be able to “partially” achieve its aims. In contrast, one-third expressed the view that the coalition would not be able to achieve its aims.

A detailed examination of these results also reveals important differences between the different population groups surveyed and within them. With nearly one-third of respondents in those countries expressing the view that the coalition is “completely” capable of achieving its aims, Saudi Arabians and Lebanese showed the highest levels of confidence in the coalition’s abilities. Yet Lebanon was also very polarized, having the highest proportion of respondents who lack confidence in the coalition’s capabilities: 41% of respondents in that country expressing the opinion that the coalition would not achieve its aims. This was followed by respondents amongst the Syrian refugee population, 38% of whom believed that the coalition’s aims were unachievable, and 37% of Egyptians.

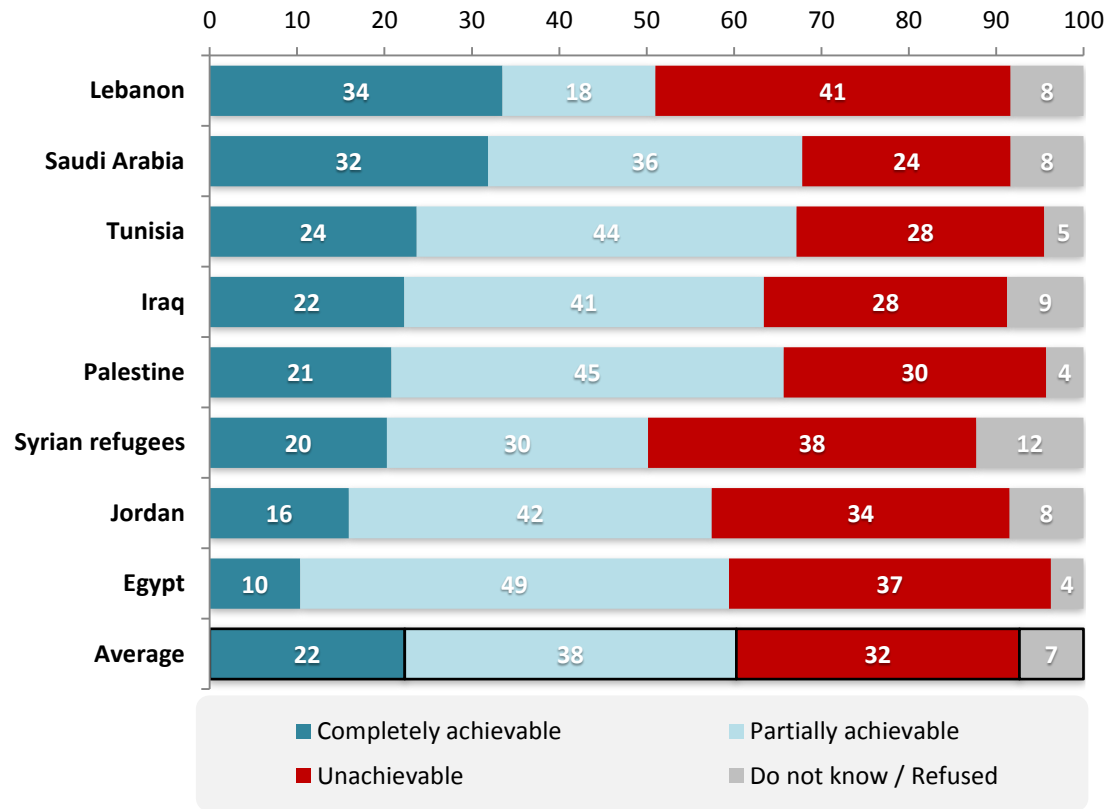
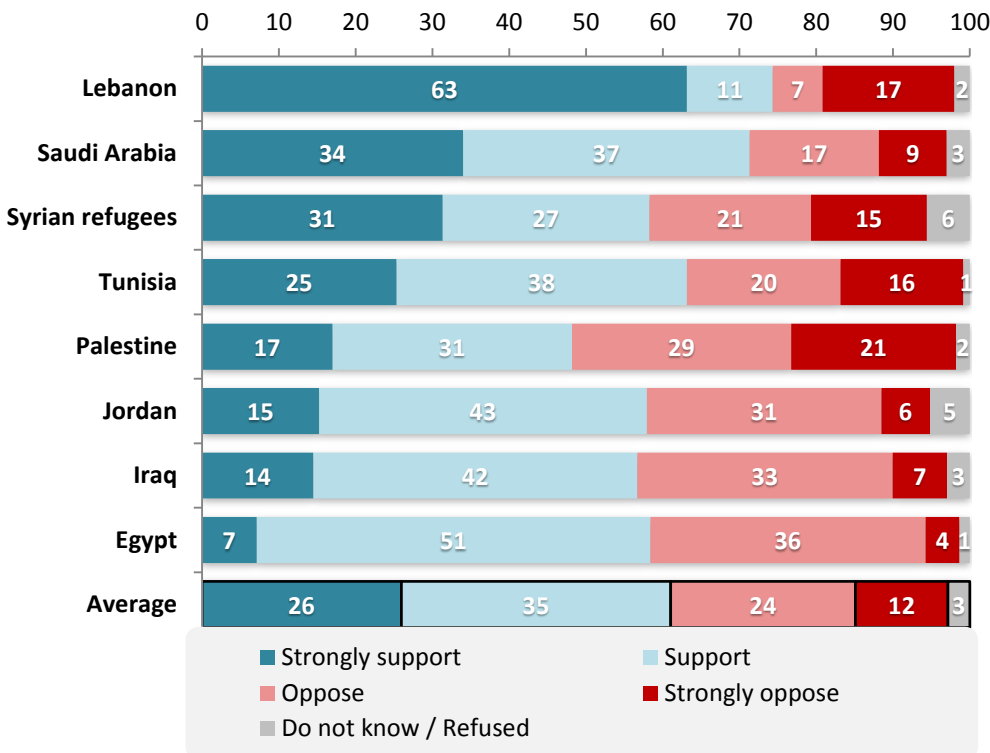


Figure 3 Responses to the question “Regardless of your attitude towards the international coalition against ISIL, do you think that it’s declared objective to “degrade and ultimately destroy” ISIL is achievable?”

A total of 61% of Arab respondents support the Arab countries taking part in the coalition against ISIL (26% “Strongly” supporting and 35% supporting). This contrasts with a total of 36% of respondents who were opposed to the participation by Arab countries in the military strikes against ISIL, 12% of them “Strongly” opposed to that participation.

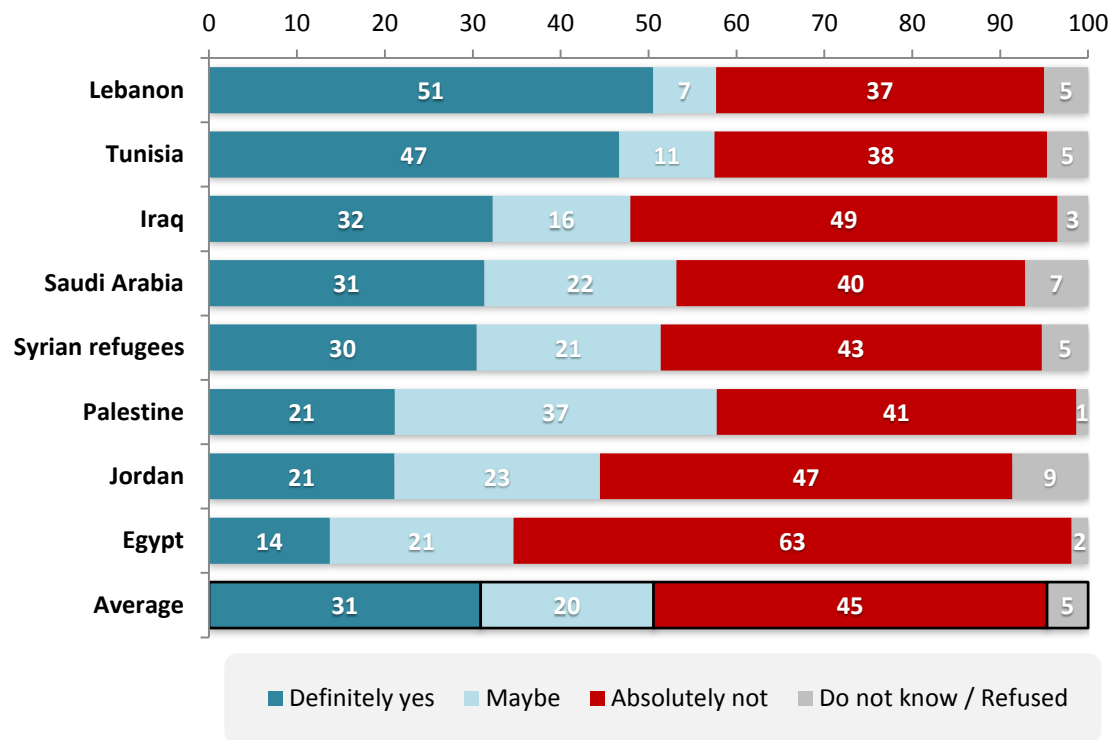
The highest levels of support for Arab participation in the coalition to fight ISIL was found in Lebanon, with roughly 75% of respondents in that country expressing varying levels of support for Arab participation in the coalition. This was followed by Saudi Arabia, where 70% of respondents were in favor of Arab participation in the coalition. One-half of respondents in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Tunisia and within the Syrian refugee population were in favor of Arab states taking part in the coalition to strike ISIL. Respondents from Palestine were the least supportive of Arab participation within the international coalition against ISIL, with 50% of Palestinians surveyed opposed to Arab participation in the coalition to “degrade and ultimately destroy” ISIL. This was followed by Egypt, where 40% were opposed to Arab countries’ participation in the military strikes against targets in Iraq and Syria; Iraq, where opposition was at 39%; Jordan, where 37% of respondents were opposed; and Tunisia and Syrian refugees, with 36% of each of the two groups opposed to Arab participation in the coalition.



**Figure 4 Responses to the question “Do you support or oppose Arab participation in the coalition to confront ISIL in Syria and Iraq?”**

Arab public opinion shows little appetite for the deployment of ground forces to help in the confrontation of ISIL, with 45% being “Absolutely” opposed to such a move by the US and its Western allies. This compares to 31% of respondents who were “Definitely” in favor of the deployment of ground troops by the West to tackle ISIL. A further 20% of respondents were unsure about whether or not the US and its Western allies should use ground troops to confront ISIL.

Across the various Arab countries and population groups sampled, Lebanon was the only country where a majority (51%) was “Definitely” in favor of the deployment of ground troops by the United States and its Western allies. The country with the second-highest level of support for such a move was Tunisia, with 47% of the respondents supporting the deployment of ground troops to tackle ISIL. Similarly, the greatest levels of opposition to the deployment of ground troops were found in Egypt (63%), Iraq (49%), Jordan (47%) and amongst Syrian refugees (43%).



**Figure 5 By-country responses to the question “Do you think that the U.S. and its Western allies should send ground troops to help defeat ISIL in Iraq and Syria?”**

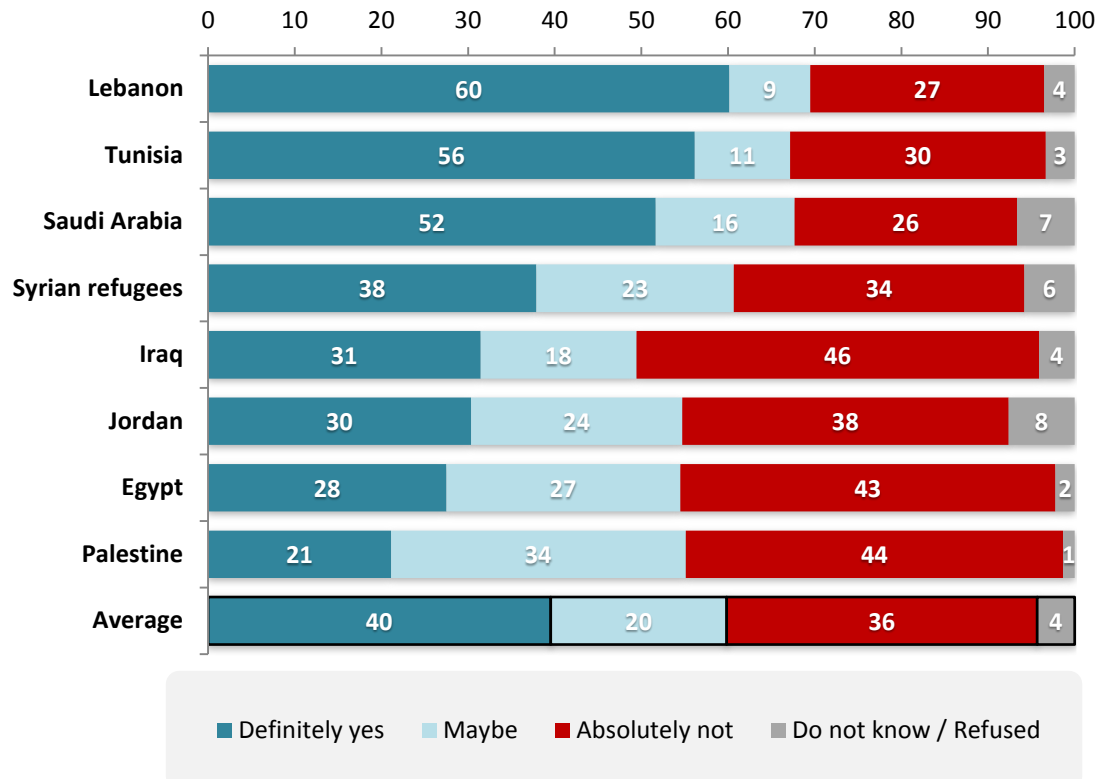
These results change significantly when respondents are asked their opinion of the deployment of ground troops by those Arab countries which are taking part in the coalition against ISIL. Overall, 40% of the Arab public is in favor of the deployment of Arab ground forces to confront ISIL, compared to 36% of respondents who were

opposed to such a move by Arab countries. Fully 20% of respondents were unsure about the deployment of ground forces by Arab countries to confront ISIL.

Majorities in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia were in favor of the deployment of Arab ground forces, while one-third of each of the Syrian refugee population, Iraqis and Jordanian voiced similar opinions. This compares to 28% of Egyptians and 21% of Palestinians. Egypt and Palestine also displayed high levels of opposition to the deployment of Arab ground forces, at 43% and 44% of respondents respectively. The only country with a higher level of opposition to the deployment of Arab ground forces was Iraq, at 46% of respondents. In Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Jordan and amongst Syrian refugees, opposition to the deployment of Arab ground forces against ISIL varied between one-quarter and one-third of the respondents.

Comparing support for the deployment of Arab ground forces to that for the deployment of US and more broadly Western ground forces indicates that most of the Arab public accepts the necessity of confronting ISIL. This is borne out as well by support for the coalition's stated aims. Such attitudes are influenced by the formation of the coalition fighting ISIL and its constituent members. This is a clear demonstration of the fact that the US' leadership of the coalition against ISIL impacts on public perceptions in the Arab region: even as the Arab public stands opposed to ISIL, its attitudes towards the group are fundamentally impacted by the leadership of the coalition that is opposed to that group.





**Figure 6 Responses to the question "Do you think the Arab countries participating in this coalition should send ground troops to help defeat ISIL in Iraq and Syria?"**

Respondents were presented a number of statements reflecting widespread fears surrounding the military campaign presently underway against ISIL, and asked which, if any, they shared. The results show that Arab public opinion to be starkly divided on the nature of the threat consequent from this conflict. A total of 14% of respondents cited “foreign intervention” as the greatest possible threat that could result from “the war against ISIL”, and a similar proportion cited that their greatest concern was the potential for “the war against ISIL” to spread across the region. Similar proportions of respondents reported everything from the possibility of the transformation of the conflict into a war against Islam, prolonged conflict, or the deterioration of economic circumstances (11% each) to political instability and the possibility of retaliatory strikes by ISIL in respondents’ home countries (10% each). Significantly, Palestinian and Egyptian respondents were the most likely to cite foreign intervention as their greatest fear (24% and 23% respectively), at significantly higher levels than Lebanese and Tunisians (9% each). Similar proportions of Palestinians and Saudi Arabians (18% and 17%) expressed the fear that this present conflict would evolve into a “war against Islam”.

**Table 1 Respondents' fears of the potential fallout from the confrontation of ISIL. The results shown below combine two answers from each respondent.**

	Palestine	Egypt	Iraq	Syrian refugees	Jordan	Saudi Arabia	Lebanon	Tunisia	Average
Foreign intervention	24	23	14	13	12	11	9	9	<b>14</b>
Potential to spread regionally	14	9	14	17	13	11	21	11	<b>14</b>
The economic cost	11	10	10	9	12	12	6	17	<b>11</b>
Might evolve into war against Islam	18	10	6	10	10	17	3	13	<b>11</b>
Its open-endedness: Finishing the job	6	13	13	17	12	6	17	4	<b>11</b>
Political fallout	10	11	10	10	14	10	6	8	<b>10</b>
That ISIL would carry out retaliatory attacks in your home country	9	3	8	8	6	11	14	17	<b>10</b>
That political and other freedoms will be curtailed under the pretext of combatting terrorism	3	2	3	2	1	8	1	12	<b>4</b>
To increase the popular support for, and influence of, extremist Islamist movements across the region	3	5	3	3	3	5	6	5	<b>4</b>
I do not have any fears	0	10	12	7	8	4	16	2	<b>7</b>
Do not know / Refused	0	2	6	3	8	6	2	3	<b>4</b>
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>

Respondents were also asked to specify the two parties which, in their opinion, stood to gain the most from the military campaign against ISIL. The overall results show that 31% of the Arab public named the United States to be one of the two biggest beneficiaries of the military campaign, while 27% named Israel as one of the two parties who stood to gain the most. Other countries named by respondents included Iran (14%), and the Syrian (10%) and Iraqi (5%) regimes. Notably, in other countries, the proportions of those who cited their home countries as beneficiaries of the military campaign were statistically insignificant, with 3% of respondents.

Respondents in Tunisia, Iraq, Egypt, Palestine and Jordan were the most likely to designate the United States and Israel as one of two beneficiaries of the military campaign against ISIL. Between one-half and one-third of respondents in that group of

countries named either the US or Israel as a main beneficiary of the military campaign against ISIL.

Statistically significant groups in all of the populations surveyed named Iran as one of two beneficiaries of the campaign. The countries where respondents were least likely to designate Iran as a beneficiary were Lebanon (6%), Tunisia and Iraq (9% each). In Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, 24% of respondents named Iran as one of two beneficiaries. Other groups which were likely to name Iran as one of two beneficiaries of the strikes were the Syrian refugee group at 22% of respondents; and Jordanians, Egyptians and Palestinians at 16%, 15% and 12%, respectively. Similarly, statistically significant proportions of respondents across all countries named the Syrian regime as a major beneficiary of the campaign. The largest proportions of these were found amongst Syrian refugees, at 21%; Palestinians, at 15%; Saudi Arabian respondents, at 11%, and Lebanese, at 10%.

The largest proportion of respondents who believed their own country to be a major beneficiary of the military campaign was found in Lebanon, where that proportion was 10% of the respondents. This was followed by Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, at 6% and 5% of respondents, respectively. In all other countries, the proportion of respondents who regarded their home country as a main beneficiary of the military campaign was statistically insignificant—the highest of these was Jordan, with 3% of the population.

**Table 2 Respondents' answers: which two parties stood to gain the most from the military strikes against ISIL. The results reported here combine two answers from each respondent.**

	Tunisia	Egypt	Iraq	Palestine	Jordan	Lebanon	Saudi Arabia	Syrian refugees	Average
U.S.	38	37	37	31	30	29	23	22	<b>31</b>
Israel	31	33	31	31	27	27	17	15	<b>27</b>
Iran	9	15	9	12	16	6	24	22	<b>14</b>
Syrian Regime	8	6	4	15	9	10	11	21	<b>10</b>
Iraqi Regime	6	1	5	10	6	2	6	4	<b>5</b>
Your country <sup>1</sup>	5	0.3	0.2	1	3	10	6	0.1	<b>3</b>
Arab peoples	--	2	1	--	1	1	1	1	<b>1</b>
Arab countries other than your	0.3	1	2	0.1	1	2	0.4	1	<b>1</b>

\* Option not offered to Syrian refugees.

own									
Others	1	2	2	--	1	3	1	4	<b>1</b>
Do not know / Refused	3	4	9	0.2	8	10	11	12	<b>7</b>
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>

In addition to ascertaining their views on the international coalition against ISIL, respondents were also asked to identify the two largest threats to the security and stability of the Arab region. Respondents were also asked to share their perceptions of US policy in the Arab region, and to identify the action which the US would need to take in order to improve its image amongst the Arab public.

Respondents were asked to define the two largest sources of threat to the security and stability of the Arab region. Results indicate that 28% of public opinion surveyed listed Israel as the largest threat to regional security, followed by the United States (21%), Iran (17%), and armed Islamic groups (13%). A further 7% responded that the largest threat to the security of the Arab region was the weak governance ("lack of respect" or "lack of sanctity" of the state), while 5% of the Arab public listing either the "absence of democracy" and "economic difficulties" as being one of two major sources of threat to the security and stability of the Arab region.

Approximately one half of the total number of respondents in each surveyed group mentioned either Israel or the United States as comprising the largest threat to the Arab world's stability and security. Majorities in Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq emphasized this point. Iran was also widely cited as a country that posed a great threat to the region's stability and security by large numbers of Syrian refugees, Saudi Arabians, Egyptians and Jordanians. Between one quarter and one third of respondents in those countries designated Iran as one of two of the greatest threats to the Arab world's stability and security.

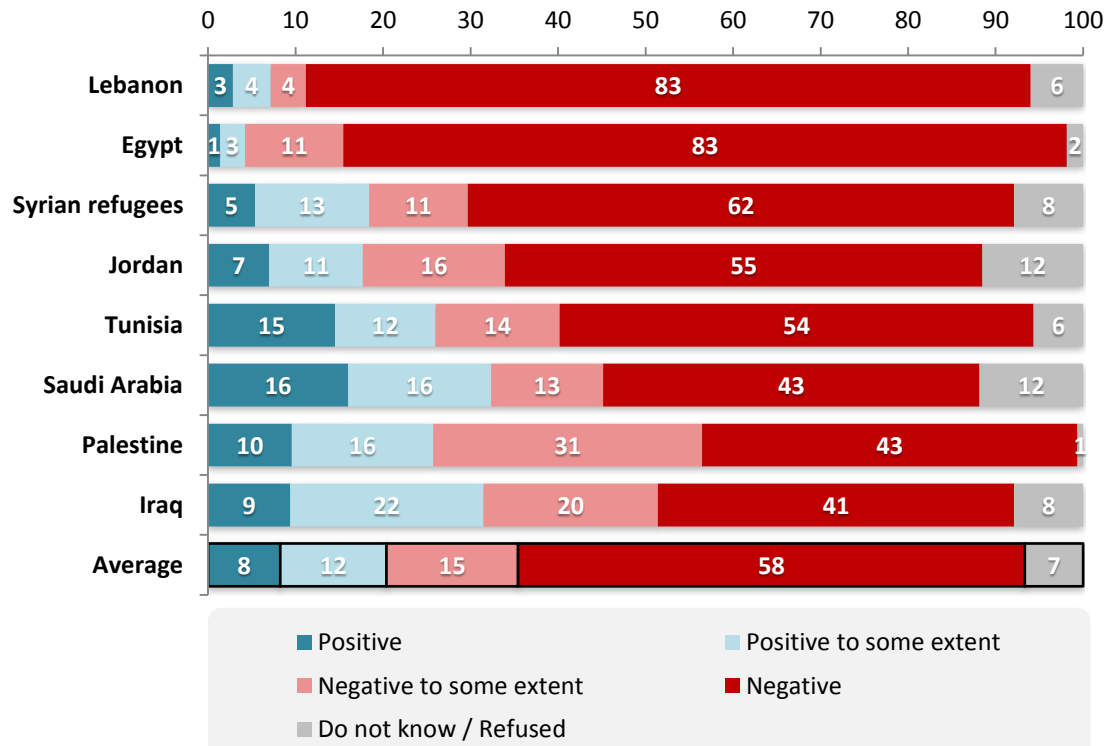
Armed Islamist groups were most likely to be named as a major threat to the security of the Arab region in Iraq, Lebanon and Tunisia. Respondents in Lebanon and Tunisia were also most likely to regard the weakness of governance as a further source of threat. Tunisians, alongside Syrian refugees, were most likely to cite the lack of democracy as a source of threat to the security and stability of the Arab world.

**Table 3 Respondents' opinions of which were the greatest threats to the security and stability of the Arab region. Answers below are a combination of two answers provided by each respondent.**

	Palestine	Lebanon	Egypt	Jordan	Iraq	Tunisia	Syrian refugees	Saudi Arabia	Average
Israel	34	33	33	31	27	23	22	21	<b>28</b>
U.S.	31	20	26	22	26	15	19	13	<b>21</b>
Iran	6	6	22	22	13	7	29	32	<b>17</b>
Islamist militancy	12	18	7	10	20	16	10	11	<b>13</b>
The weakness of the state	6	9	4	3	4	15	6	7	<b>7</b>
Absence of democracy	3	5	3	3	3	14	6	5	<b>5</b>
Economic difficulties	8	4	2	3	3	9	3	4	<b>5</b>
Do not know / Refused	0	4	2	6	6	2	5	5	<b>4</b>
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>

These results demonstrate that the Arab public generally views US foreign policy negatively, with 73% viewing American policy in the region as negative (58% “negative” and 15% “negative to some extent”). This majority holds across all of the countries and population groups surveyed, with the largest proportions being found in Egypt, Lebanon and amongst Syrian refugees, where negative attitudes towards American foreign policy accounted for three-quarters or more of respondents’ answers.

This contrasts with only 20% who view American foreign policy in the region as positive, 12% “positive” and 8% “positive to some extent”. This accounted for only 4% and 7%, respectively, of responses from Egypt and Lebanon. The Arab societies with the most positive attitudes towards the United States were Saudi Arabia (16% “positive” and a further 16% “positive to some extent”) and Tunisia (15% “positive” and 12% “positive to some extent”).



**Figure 7 “All in all, how would you evaluate the foreign policy of the United States towards the Arab region? Is it Positive, Positive to some extent, Negative to some extent, or Negative?”**

Respondents were also asked to specify which potential actions, if any, to be taken by the United States would improve their view of that country. The most commonly cited answer revolved around ending US military and financial support for Israel, provided by 36% of respondents. This was followed by 18% of respondents whose answer revolved around finding a “solution to the Syrian crisis that met the aspirations of the Syrian people”. A third group of 14% of respondents defined the most significant potential step taken by the US, that would improve their attitude to that country, would be for the Americans to end intervention in their home countries’ domestic affairs.

**Table 4 Respondents' views of which actions could be taken by the United States to improve their opinions of that country.**

	Ceasing financial and military support to Israel	Working towards a solution to the Syrian crisis which meets the aspirations of the Syrian people	Increasing economic aid to the Arab region	Ceasing support for tyrannical Arab regimes	Working to end the Iranian nuclear program	Ending interference in our country's domestic affairs	Fighting extremist groups	Do not know / Refused	Total
Palestine	55	19	9	7	2	6	1	0	100
Tunisia	41	12	5	4	3	24	11	2	100
Jordan	39	13	6	3	4	12	1	21	100
Egypt	39	13	6	7	3	10	3	21	100
Lebanon	37	9	3	5	2	25	14	6	100
Iraq	33	9	6	7	1	13	3	28	100
Syrian refugees	25	45	3	4	1	10	5	8	100
Saudi Arabia	18	25	4	5	16	17	9	5	100
<b>Average</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

## Respondents' views on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

The report aims to ascertain public attitudes towards ISIL through focusing on a number of specific points, including:

- The extent to which ISIL represents a threat to their home country's national security
- Public attitudes towards the rise of ISIL
- Public attitudes towards ISIL in general terms
- Public perceptions of the factors that were most important in securing popularity and support for ISIL

Before investigating respondents' attitudes towards ISIL in detail, it would be instructive to examine how closely follows on-the-ground-developments related to ISIL. Only 11% reported never following ISIL-related developments in the media, compared to 13% who followed these developments "Rarely". Meanwhile, 40% reported following such developments "Sometimes" and 35% reported following ISIL-related news "Very closely".

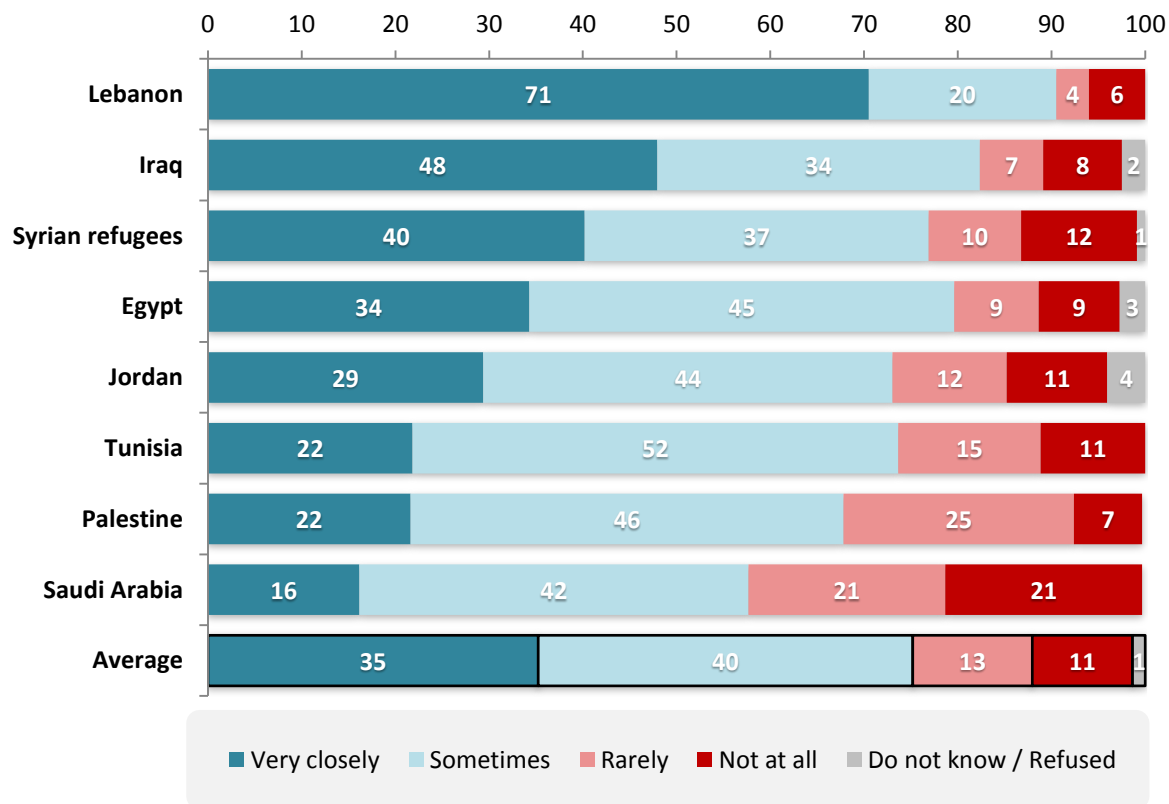
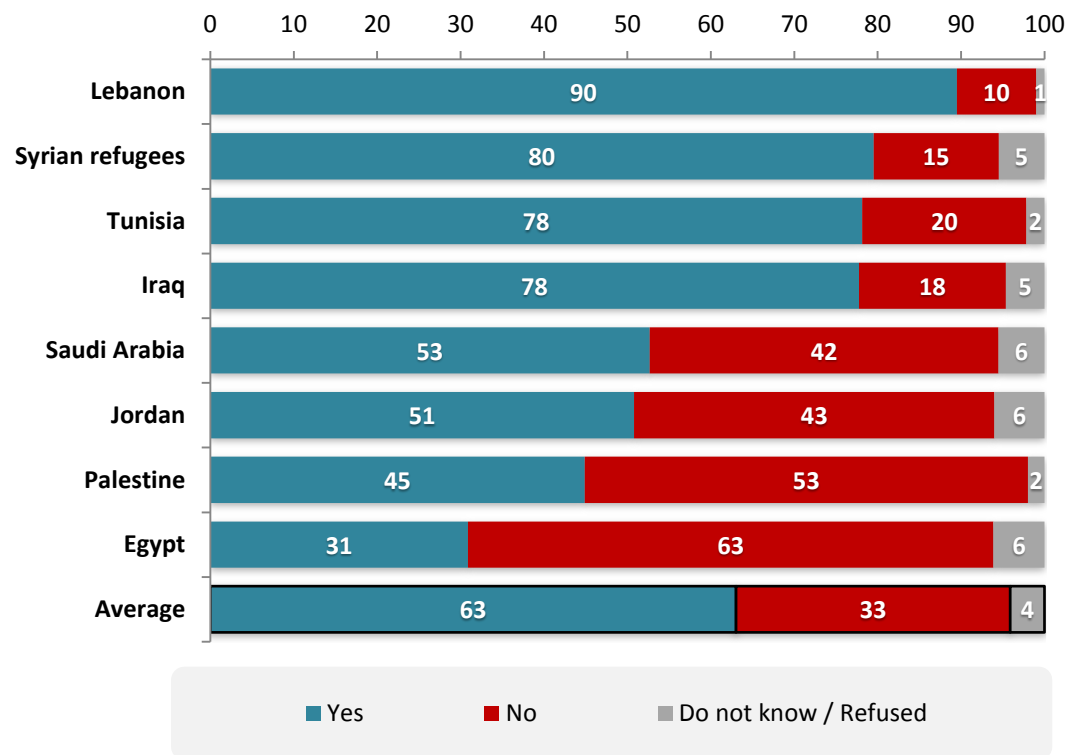


Figure 8 Respondents' answers to the questions "Do you follow ISIL related developments through the media?"



Respondents were also asked if they regarded ISIL as a direct threat to the national security of their home countries. Overall, 63% of the Arab public agreed that ISIL was a direct threat to the security of their own countries, compared to 33% who did not share this view. The greatest proportions of those who regarded ISIL to be a direct threat to their home countries were found in Lebanon, amongst Syrian refugees, and in Tunisia and Iraq. Saudi Arabian and Jordanian public opinion was more divided: 53% of Saudis and 51% of Jordanians viewed ISIL as a direct threat to the security of their home countries, with 42% and 43%, respectively, disagreeing in each of those two countries.

In contrast, 63% of Egyptians and 53% of Palestinians did not view ISIL as a direct threat against their home counties. Perhaps more notably, 18% of Iraqis and 15% of Syrian refugees did not regard ISIL as a direct threat to the security of their home countries. Such high figures for these last two groups are undoubtedly a reflection of either sympathy with ISIL's aims or is rooted in opposition to their home countries' ruling regimes.



**Figure 9 Respondents' answers to the question "Do you consider ISIL to be a direct threat to the security and stability of your home country?"**

Within the same context, respondents were presented with two separate statements and asked to select the one which most closely matched their point of view:

- one: “ISIL is a product of its own environment: this region, the societies within it and its conflicts”; and
- two: “ISIL was created by foreign actors”.

Only 20% of the Arab public agreed with Statement One, with 69% opining that ISIL was a product of foreign intervention. Another 7% of respondents did not express a preference for either of these two statements. The majority for those who believe ISIL to be a product of foreign meddling was found in all of the countries and population groups surveyed, with the largest proportions found in Lebanon (80%), Egypt (77%), Iraq (74%) and Tunisia (72%).

The Palestinians were least likely to blame the creation of ISIL on foreign intervention, with 55% of them sharing this view, compared 34% of Palestinians sharing the belief that ISIL was a reflection of the environment in which it was formed.

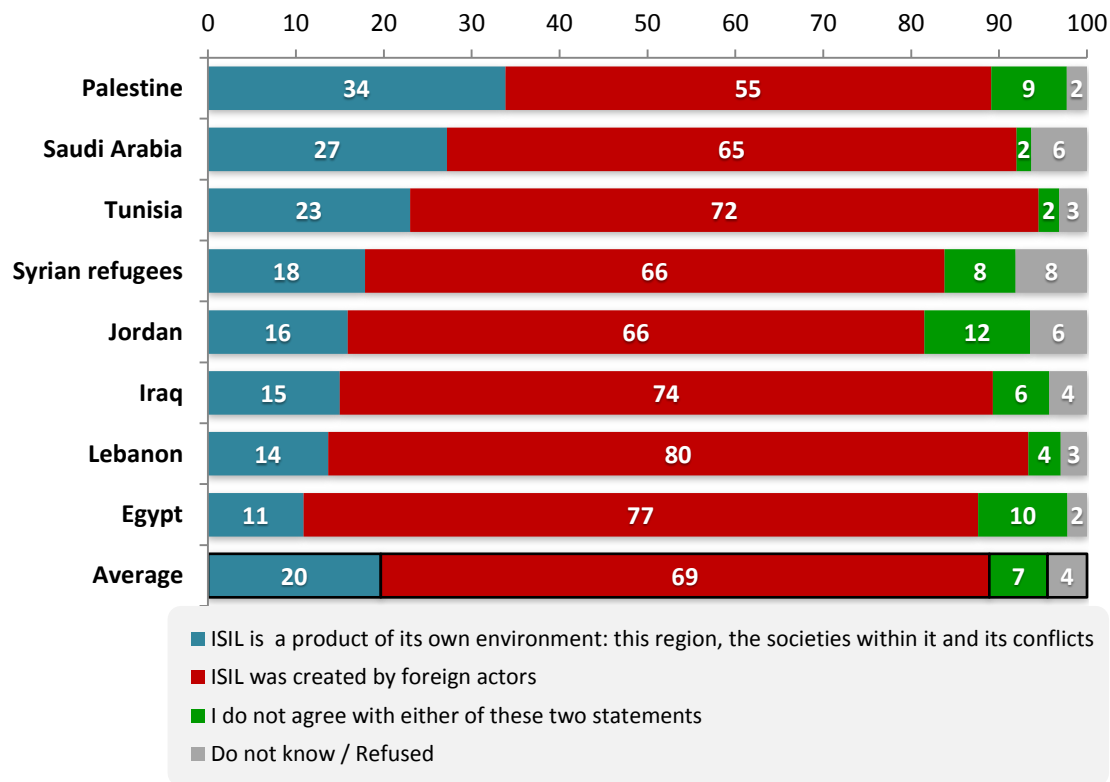


Figure 10 Respondents' views on the origins of the group known as ISIL.

When asked to give a general appraisal of ISIL, a clear majority of 85% of the Arab public expressed an overall negative attitude towards the group (either “negative” or “negative to some extent”). This majority was visible in the results from all of the surveyed countries and population groups, and followed this order of precedence: Lebanon, Iraq, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, amongst Syrian refugees, Jordan and Palestine (in that order).

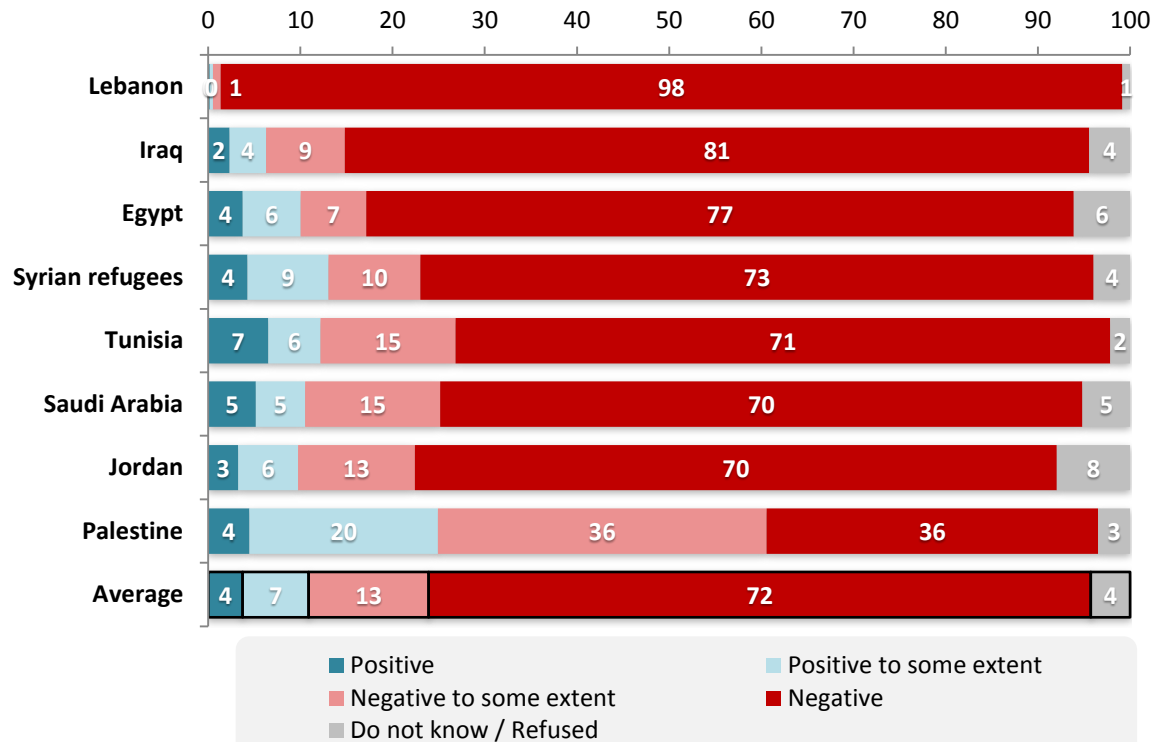


Figure 11 Respondents' answers to the question "In general, do you have a positive or negative view of ISIL?"

Further seeking to understand respondents' views of ISIL, the survey included questions which asked participants to identify the factors that contributed the most to the group's popularity amongst, and influence on, its supporters. Respondents were asked to consider such arguments regardless of whether or not they themselves accepted their validity. When asked to identify such reasons and factors, 15% of respondents cited ISIL's "military achievements", with the highest proportions of those citing this factor coming from Palestine, Egypt, Jordan and amongst the Syrian refugee population. The second most commonly cited factor, accounting for 14% of respondents, was the declaration of an Islamic Caliphate, with the largest proportions of such answers coming from Tunisia, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan.

**Table 3 Factors cited by respondents as the main causes for ISIL's strength and support, regardless of their own acceptance of such arguments. Responses reported below represent a combination of the two factors cited by each respondent.**

	Palestine	Egypt	Jordan	Syrian refugees	Iraq	Tunisia	Saudi Arabia	Lebanon	Average
Military achievements	27	17	16	16	13	10	9	8	<b>15</b>
Declaring Islamic caliphate	17	15	15	10	7	19	12	12	<b>14</b>
Commitment to Islamic principles	14	13	14	16	10	14	13	9	<b>13</b>
Purported defense of the Sunnis	8	7	6	9	10	12	15	13	<b>10</b>
Willingness to stand up to West	17	13	11	6	7	13	7	1	<b>10</b>
Standing up against the Syrian and/or Iraqi regime	10	5	5	8	9	16	15	5	<b>9</b>
Willingness to stand up to Iran	6	8	7	5	6	7	8	3	<b>6</b>
The support and funding it receives from specific Arab and non-Arab countries	--	2	3	3	6	0.4	1	15	<b>4</b>
The group's own economic strength	0.1	0.5	--	2	0.3	--	0.1	1	<b>1</b>
Lack of security and political stability in the region	--	--	--	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1	<b>0.2</b>
The Media	--	--	0.2	--	0.1	--	0.2	1	<b>0.2</b>
Supporters' economic circumstances	--	--	0.3	0.1	--	--	--	0.4	<b>0.1</b>
Others	0.2	1	0.4	5	3	0.3	1	6	<b>2</b>
Do not know / Refused	0.5	18	22	19	27	8	18	22	<b>16</b>
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>

## Conclusions

The results of the survey indicate that the vast majority of the Arab public has a negative view of ISIL, while 11% of Arabs have a positive view (either “Positive” or “Positive to some extent”). This latter figure is nonetheless statistically significant; understanding and investigating the rationale behind such attitudes is undoubtedly a pressing concern. Arab public opinion also provides a number of arguments to explain ISIL’s popularity amongst its supporters, the most important of these being the group’s military achievements; its adherence to religious principles; its preparedness to confront the West; and its self-proclaimed status as a defender of the Sunni Muslim community in Iraq and Syria.

In addition, the air strikes against ISIL sites and presently being undertaken by the international coalition enjoy the support of a majority of the Arab public (roughly one-third of the Arab public is opposed to them). This is echoed in support for the international coalition’s stated aims. Despite such opposition to ISIL and support for the international coalition assembled to combat the group, confidence in the ability of the US-led coalition to achieve its aims remains low: only one-quarter of the Arab public believes that the coalition can accomplish what it has set out to do. Such skepticism towards the coalition is further highlighted by the fact that most respondents named a select group of parties as beneficiaries from the latest air strikes: the United States, Israel, Iran and the Syrian regime. Only 3% of Arabs believe that their own home countries would benefit from the coalition’s military campaign. Clearly, this skepticism further feeds in to the Arab public’s generally negative view of US foreign policy towards the Arab region. Such attitudes on the part of the Arab public could be remedied, provided that the United States ended its support for Israel and also took the measures needed to end the Syrian crisis in a manner that met the aspirations of the Syrian people.

In conclusion, the Arab public opposes ISIL and supports the coalition’s stated objective of “degrade and ultimately destroy” the group. Nonetheless, the Arab public remains skeptical of the coalition’s ability to achieve that aim, and further believes that the US-led campaign against ISIL would serve the interest of a small group of global and regional powers at the expense of respondents’ home countries. The Arab public’s negative perception of the credibility of the United States, the country leading the anti-ISIL coalition, based on American policy towards the Palestinian cause and the Syrian crisis, is reflected in widespread skepticism of the coalition’s ability to accomplish its aims.”