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## Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation

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December 12, 2021

# Comprehensive Survey of Political Opinion among the Arab Public

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**Dr. Arik Rudnitzky**

Main findings

- The Arab public has given the government an overall score of less-than-average (2.37 on a scale of 1 to 5). The level of confidence among Arab citizens with respect to the government plan to fight crime in Arab towns is very low (2.13 on a scale of 1 to 5) and similarly for the implementation of the new five-year plan (2022–26) for the economic development of Arab society (2.29 on a scale of 1 to 5).
- Although the government coalition includes an Arab party (Ra'am) and Arab members of the Jewish parties, the Arab public does not hang much hope on this situation benefiting its economic situation, its feeling of personal security or the resolution of planning and building problems in the Arab towns, nor will it increase the representation of Arabs in the civil service or improve relations between Arabs and Jews. At the same time, 40.5 percent of the respondents feel that this development will lead to an increase in voter participation among Arabs in the next elections while only 22.7 percent feel that voter participation is liable to decline.
- One-half (51 percent) of the respondents feel that the current coalition will not last for four full years until the next elections. Only 29.1 percent feel that the current government will indeed last to the end of its term.
- Most of the respondents (56.2 percent) are of the opinion that Ra'am should demand a ministerial position in the government (a minister or deputy minister) rather than just being part of the coalition. Only 14.4 percent support Ra'am's decision to join the coalition without demanding a ministerial position and 15.5 percent are convinced that Ra'am should not have joined the coalition at all.
- A large majority of the respondents (71.4 percent) support the idea of the Joint List (Hadash, Ta'al and Balad) reuniting with Ra'am. Only 23.7 percent do not support the idea.
- As a result of the violent events in May, 51.8 percent of the respondents feel that relations between Arabs and Jews in the country worsened significantly.
- A year after the signing of the Abraham Accords, the Arab public is divided on the question of whether it will contribute to political stability in the Middle East. Most of the respondents (63.2 percent) feel that it will not help bring about a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. In contrast, 55.8 percent of the respondents believe that the normalization agreements are a positive development for Arab citizens of Israel.
- Opinion is divided among the Arab public with regard to a realistic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: 23.7 percent believe in a two-state solution based on the 1967 ceasefire lines; 26 percent believe in a one-state solution with a single Palestinian-Jewish state from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River; and 37.9 percent believe that there is no solution on the horizon and that the situation will remain unchanged.

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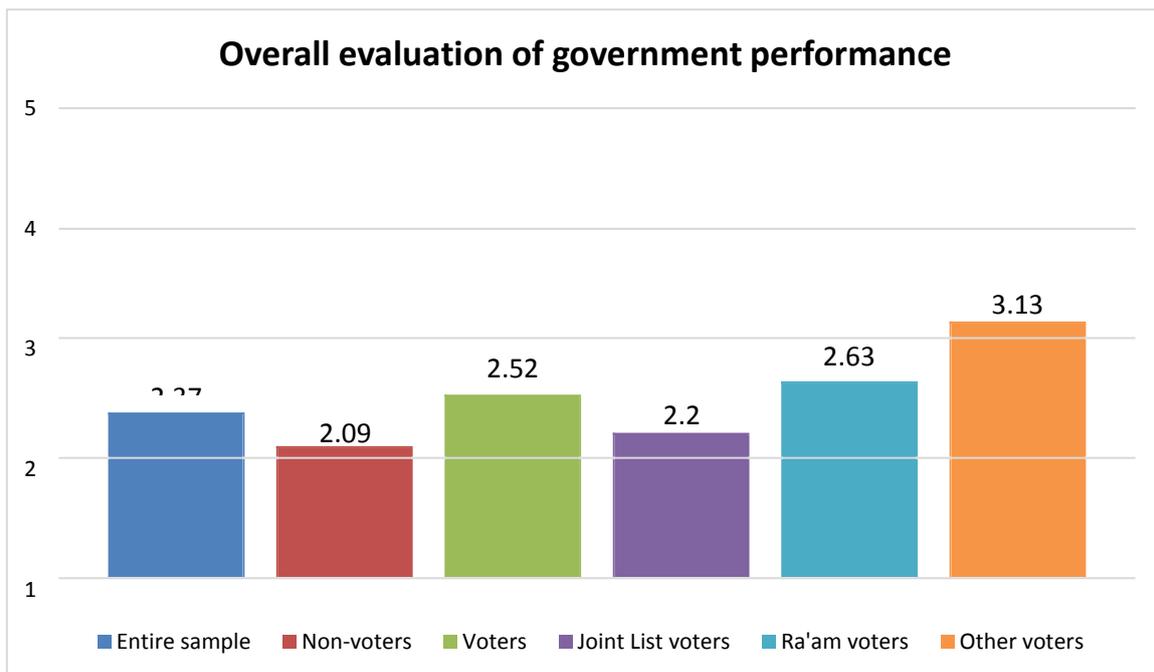
- 61.1 percent of the respondents said that if the Knesset elections were held today they would vote while 32.9 percent said they would not. After weighting the responses, the rate of voter participation would be 49 percent.
- One-half of the respondents (54.2 percent) feel that President Yitzhak Herzog displays little understanding of the problems of Arab society. Only 12.1 percent feel that he shows a great deal of understanding.

### Overall evaluation of the government’s performance

Five months following the creation of the government, the Arab public gives its performance a low overall score (less-than-average); the average score is 2.37 on a scale from 1 (the lowest score) to 5 (the highest score). One-half of the respondents (52.9 percent) gave the government the lowest scores (1 or 2).

There were statistically significant differences in the answers of the respondent between **voters** (respondents who said they voted in the last Knesset elections) and **non-voters** (respondents who said they didn’t). The voters’ evaluation of the government was higher with statistical significance than that of the non-voters.

Statistically significant differences were also found among voters according to voting patterns in the 24<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections, which were held last March. Ra’am voters gave the government the highest score which was higher with statistical significance than the score given by the Joint List voters (Hadash-Ta’al-Balad). Within this group, the highest average score for the government’s performance was given by respondents who voted for Jewish parties (or individuals who participated in the elections but did not specify for whom they voted).



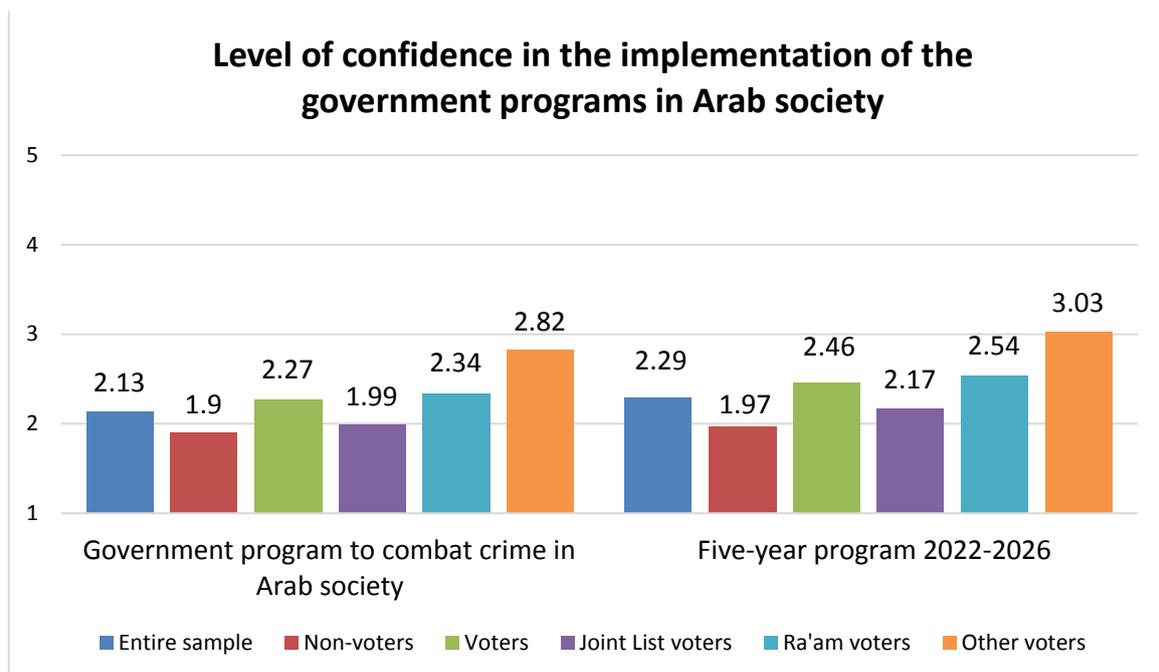
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### Lack of confidence in the government plans for the Arab sector

In recent months, the government has approved two large-scale programs to deal with problems in Arab society. In August, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett announced a new program to fight crime in Arab society and the creation of a special branch in the police designated for that purpose. In October, the government approved a new five-year program (2022–26) for Arab society with a cost of NIS 30 billion.

The findings of the survey indicate that the Arab public finds it difficult to believe that the government will implement these two programs. The average level of confidence with respect to the implementation of the government program to combat crime in Arab society is 2.13 on a scale from 1 (the lowest score) to 5 (the highest score). With respect to the implementation of the new five-year plan, the score was 2.29. Most of the respondents ranked their level of confidence with the two lowest scores (1 and 2): 71.9 percent with respect to the implementation of the war on crime program and 58.2 percent with respect to the implementation of the five-year program.

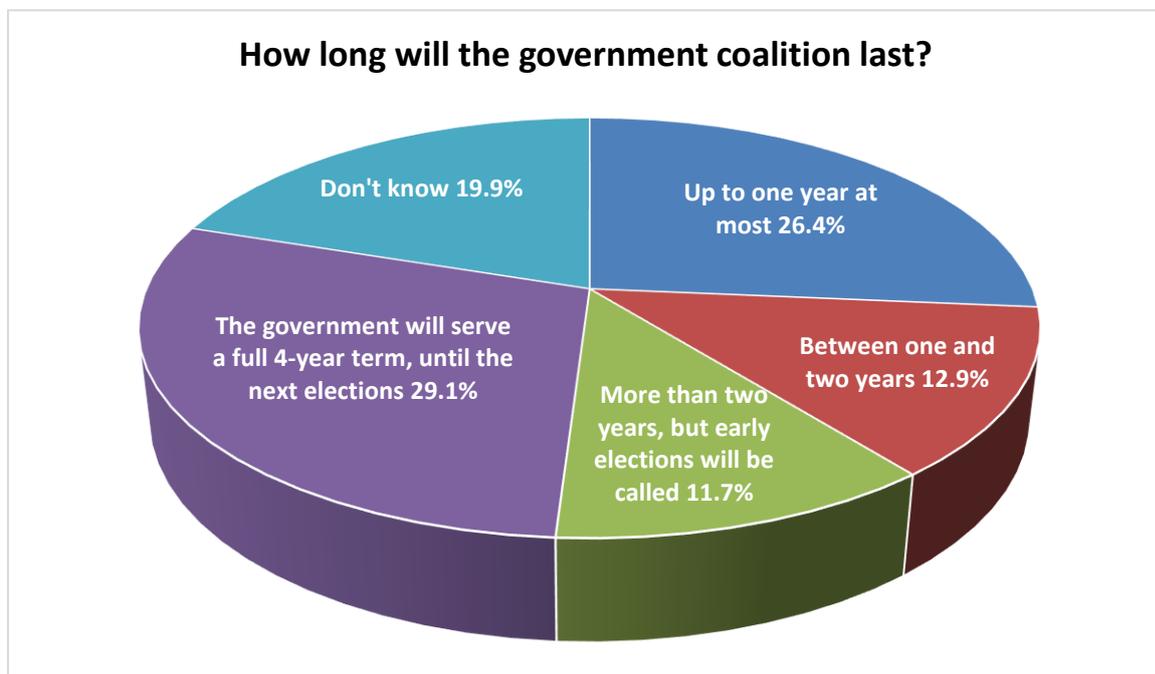
The level of confidence in the implementation of the government programs is higher among voters than among non-voters. The lowest level of confidence among voters with respect to the implementation of the two programs was observed among Joint List voters. Their level of confidence in the government program to fight crime in Arab society was so low that it was only slightly higher than among non-voters. On the other hand, the level of confidence among Ra'am voters in the two programs was higher than among the Joint List voters. The level of confidence in the government programs among voters for the Jewish parties was the highest. However, it should be stressed that the confidence of all the groups ranged from low to no more than average.



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### Overall evaluation of the coalition’s stability and the effect of inclusion of Arab members

The Arab public is divided in its evaluation of the government coalition’s stability: one-half of the respondents (51 percent) do not believe that the coalition will last for a full four years; 26.4 percent feel that it will not last even for a full year. In contrast, 29.1 percent feel that the coalition will indeed last for its entire term (four years). In this context, a not insignificant proportion of the respondents (about 20 percent) do not have an opinion on this question.



On this question, there were statistically significant differences among various groups. Voters believed that the coalition would last till the end of its term (34.4 percent) more than non-voters did (20.5 percent); Ra’am voters (46.2 percent) and voters for Jewish parties (44.8 percent) more than voters for the Joint List (22.8 percent); men (32.7 percent) more than women (24.8 percent); the educated (post-secondary and university graduates; 33.3 percent) more than the uneducated (high school education or less); and the Druze (46.7 percent) more than Christians (33.3 percent) and Moslems (26.8 percent).

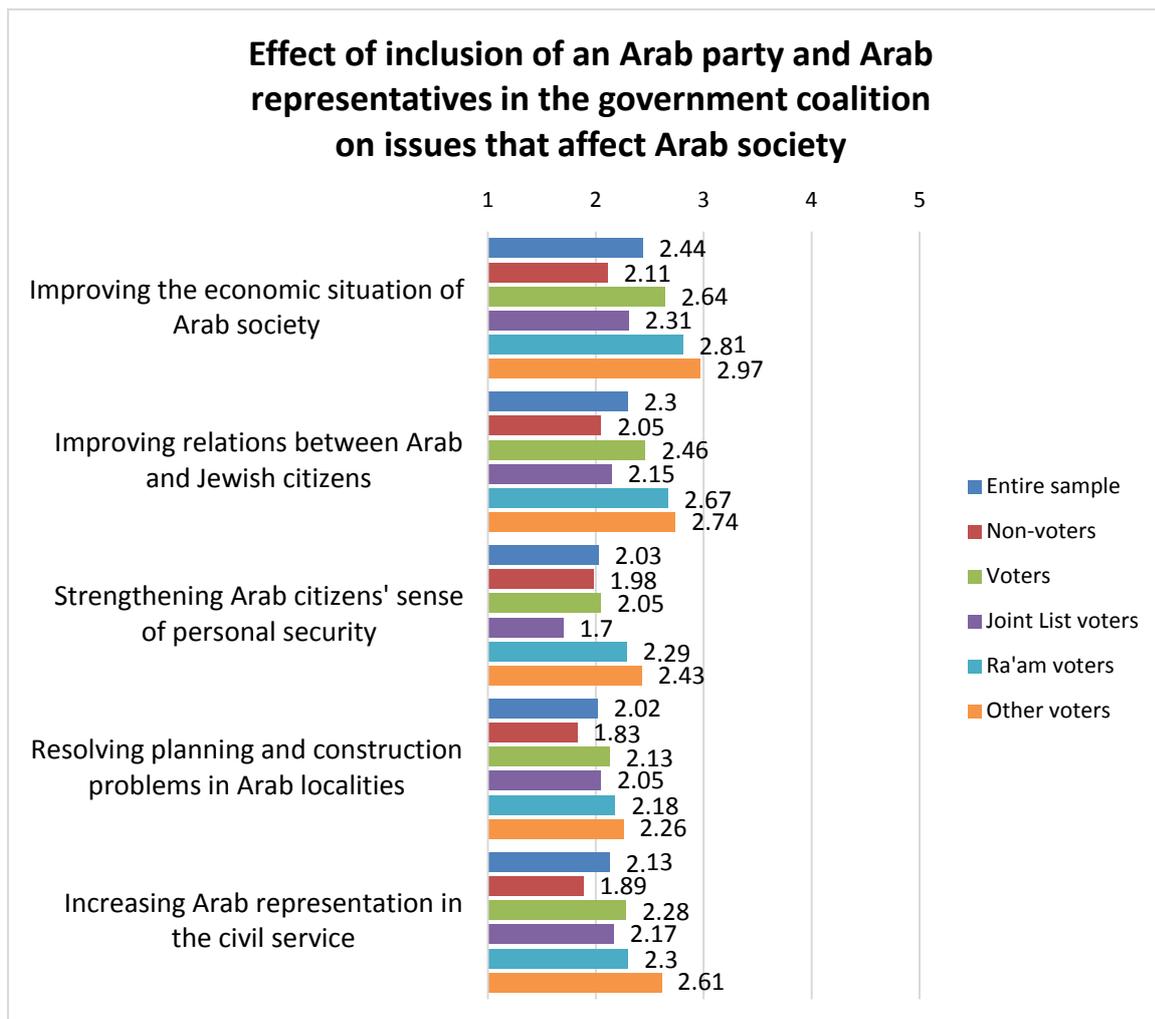
For the first time in the country’s history, the government coalition includes an Arab party (Ra’am) and Arab members of Jewish parties, such as Meretz, the Labor party and Yisrael Beitenu (“Israel Our Home”). The respondents were asked about their opinion on how this would benefit Arab society in a number of areas, including improving their economic situation, improving relations between Jews and Arabs, strengthening the feeling of personal security, resolution of problems in planning and building and increasing the presence of Arab workers in the civil service.

Overall, the Arab public does not pin much hope on this development bringing them any benefit. On a scale of 1 (the lowest score) to 5 (the highest score), the average score given by the respondents

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with respect to improvement in each of the aforementioned areas ranged from 2.02 to 2.44. Nonetheless, where there is some optimism it is higher with respect to improvement in the economic situation of Arab society or improvement in relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel and lower with respect to the resolution of problems in planning and building in Arab towns and the strengthening of the feeling of personal security among Arab citizens.

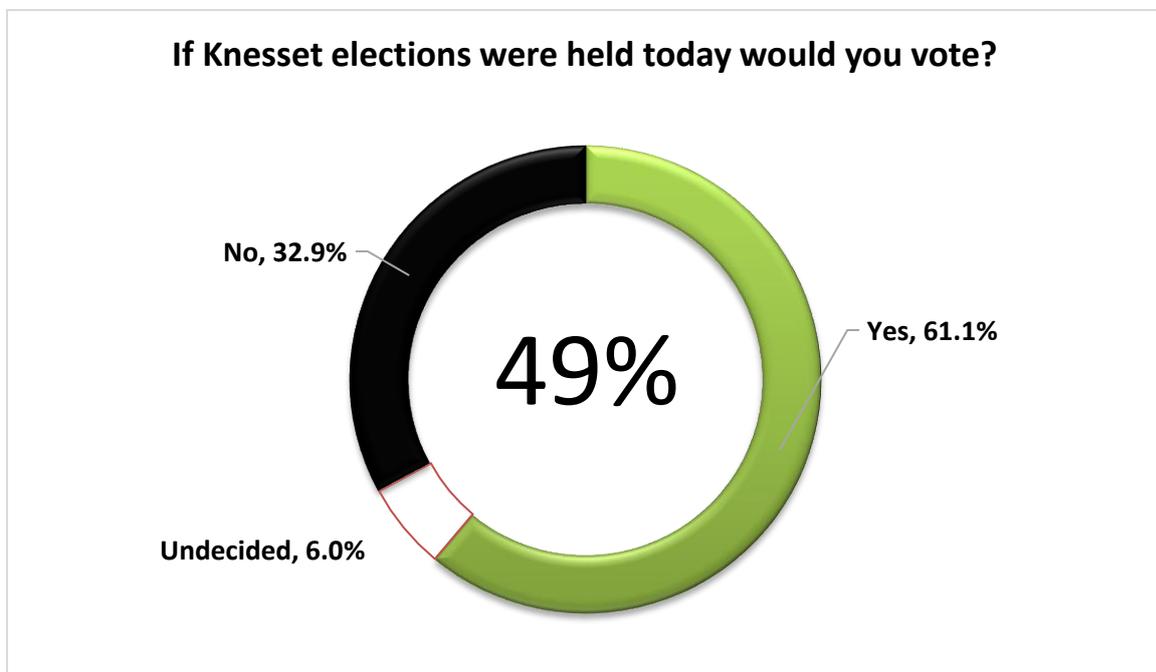
Voters had higher hopes than non-voters, with a statistically significant difference, in all areas, apart from strengthening the feeling of personal security where the differences were not statistically significant. Within the group of voters, the scores given by Joint List voters were lower in all areas than those given by Ra'am voters. In the areas of improvement of the economic situation, the strengthening of the feeling of personal security among Arab citizens and the improvement of relations between Arabs and Jews, the scores given by Joint List voters were lower, with statistically significant differences, than those of Ra'am voters. It is worth mentioning that with respect to the strengthening of the feeling of personal security, Joint List voters gave lower scores than non-voters.



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### Voter participation rate among Arab citizens in the next elections

The following question was presented to the respondents: If Knesset elections were held today, would you vote? 61 percent answered positively, 33 percent answered negatively and 6 percent had not yet decided. Weighting by means of the survey methodology, the composition of the sample and past experience, it can be predicted that voter participation among the Arab public would be 49 percent. This is somewhat higher than the rate observed in the last elections in March 2021 (44.6 percent) and similar to the rate observed in the elections held in April 2019 (49.2 percent).

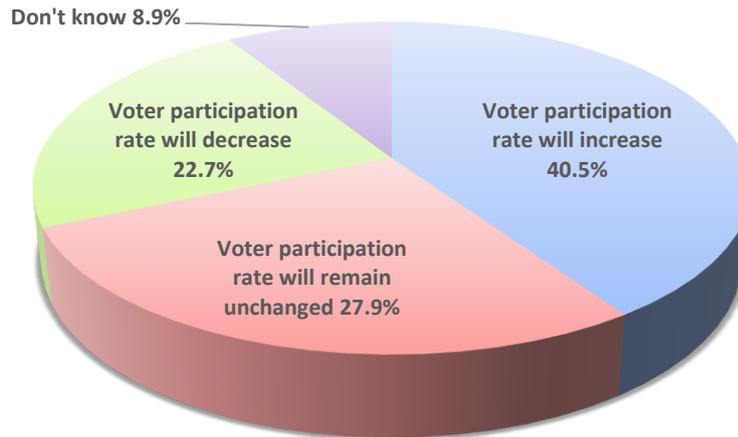


Is the inclusion of Arab MKs in the government coalition likely to raise the voter participation rate of Arab citizens in the next elections? 40.5 percent of the respondents are convinced that it will; 27.9 percent felt that it will remain unchanged; and 22.7 percent claim that in fact it will decline.

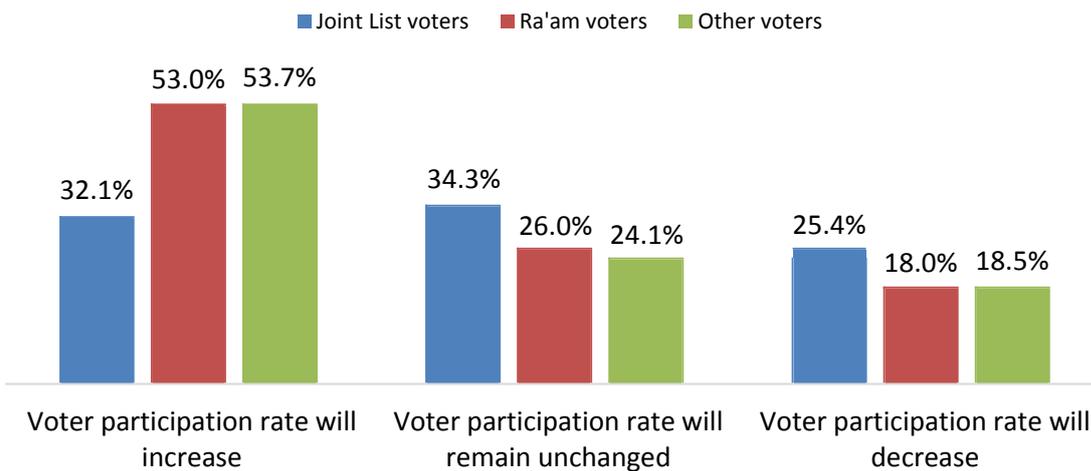
On this question, statistically significant differences were found according to voting patterns in the last Knesset elections. One-third (32.1 percent) of the Joint List voters think that the voter participation rate will rise in the next elections; more than one-half (53 percent) of Ra'am supporters and a similar rate (53.7 percent) of voters for Jewish parties are also convinced that it will rise. On the other hand, one-quarter of Joint List voters (25.4 percent) and a relatively low proportion of Ra'am voters (18 percent) and of voters for Jewish parties (18.5 percent) feel that the voter participation rate among Arab citizens will in fact decline.

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**How will the inclusion of Arab members in the government coalition affect the voter participation rate among Arab citizens in the next elections?**

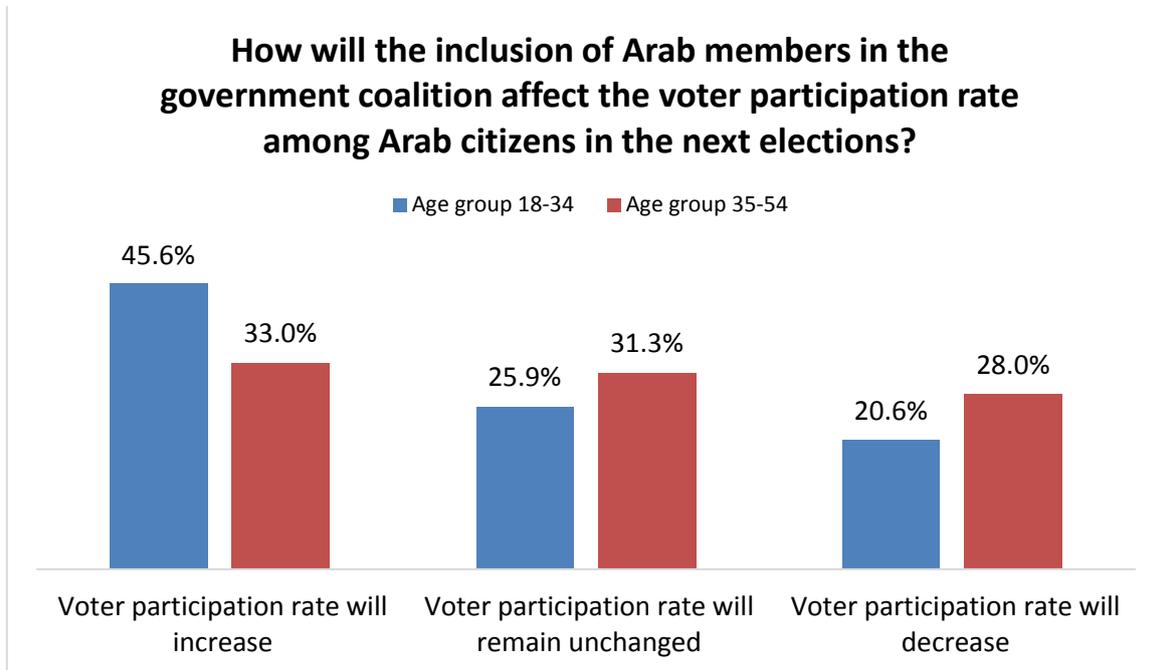


**How will the inclusion of Arab members in the government coalition affect the voter participation rate among Arab citizens in the next elections?**



Another statistically significant difference was found in a cross-section by age. The belief that the voter participation rate among Arab citizens will rise in the next elections as a result of the inclusion of Arab representatives in the coalition is more common among the young than among the old: 45.6 percent of the 18–34 age group vs 33.0 percent of the 35–54 age group feel that the voter participation rate among Arab citizens will rise in the next elections. In contrast, only 20.6 percent of the 18–34 age group feel that the voter participation rate among Arab citizens will in fact decline as opposed to 28 percent of the 35–54 age group.

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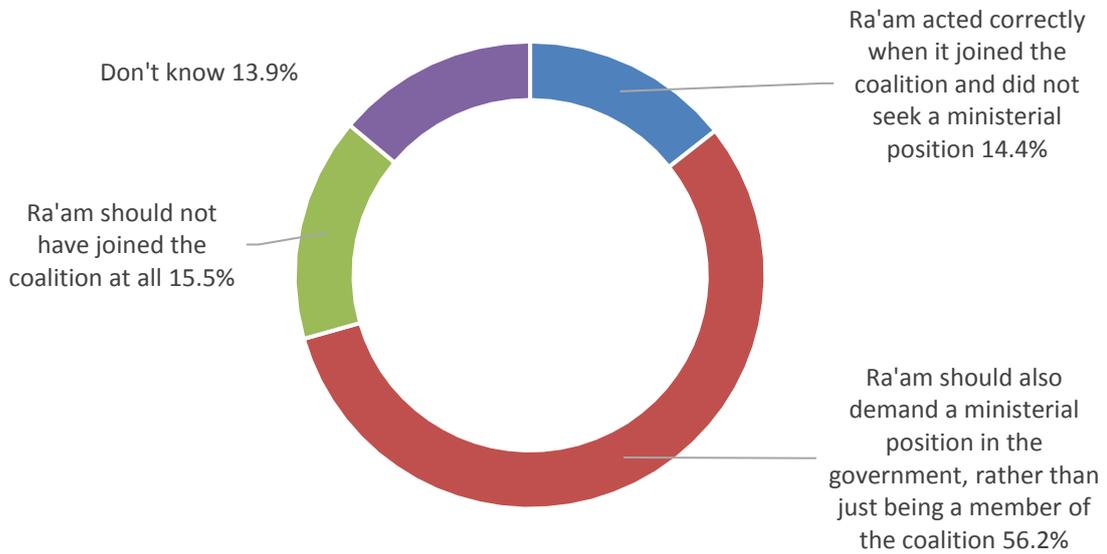


And what does the Arab public think about the historic decision by Ra’am to join the government coalition? Most of the respondents (56.2 percent) are convinced that Ra’am should also demand a ministerial position in the government, such as a minister or deputy minister, rather than just being a member of the coalition. The rest were divided equally between supporters of Ra’am’s decision to join the coalition without a ministerial position (14.4 percent) and those opposed to Ra’am joining at all (15.5 percent); meanwhile, about 14 percent had no opinion on the matter.

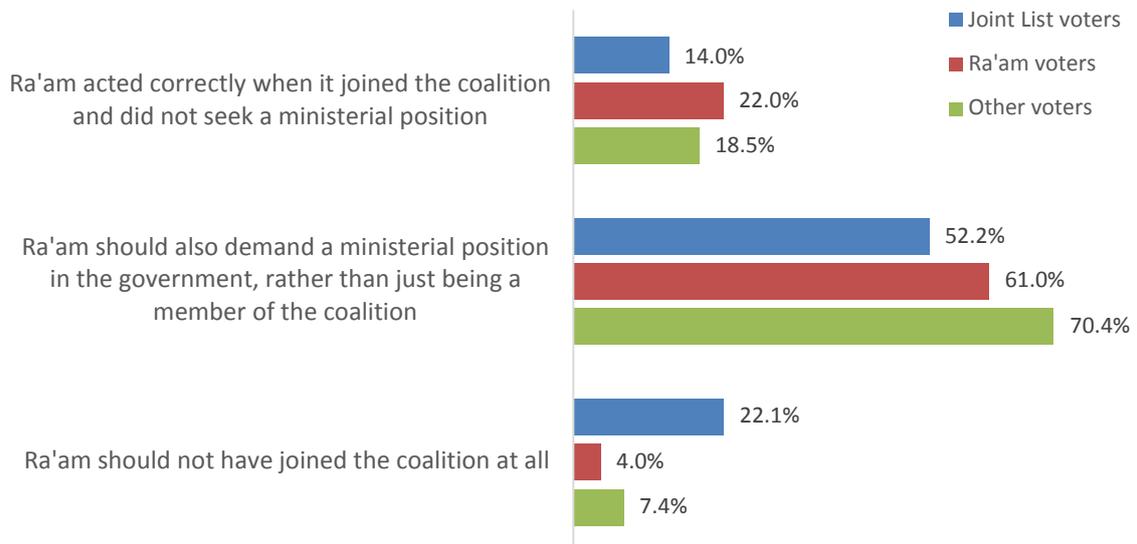
It is of interest that one-half of the Joint List voters (52.2 percent) feel that Ra’am should demand a position in the government rather than just being a member of the coalition. A larger majority of Ra’am voters (61 percent) and of voters for Jewish parties (70.4 percent) also feel that way. In contrast, 22.1 percent of Joint List voters and a small proportion of Ra’am voters (4 percent) and of voters for Jewish parties (7.4 percent) feel that Ra’am should not have joined the coalition at all. Ra’am voters therefore do not question their party’s decision to join the coalition.

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### Positions on Ra'am's decision to join the coalition

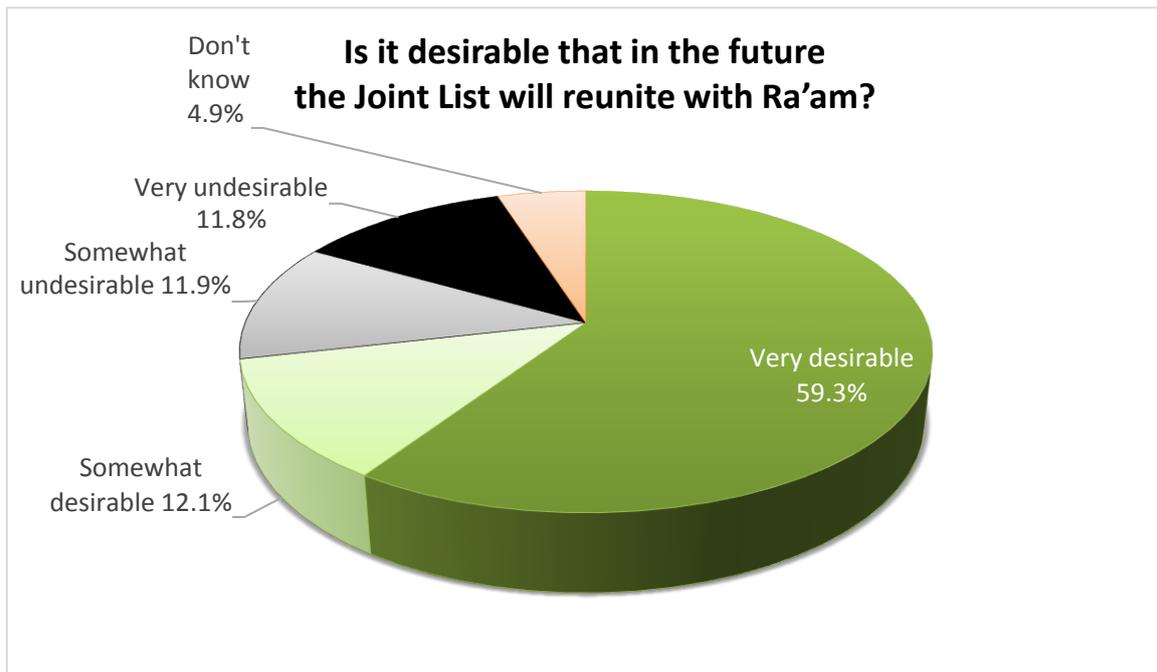


### Positions on Ra'am's decision to join the coalition



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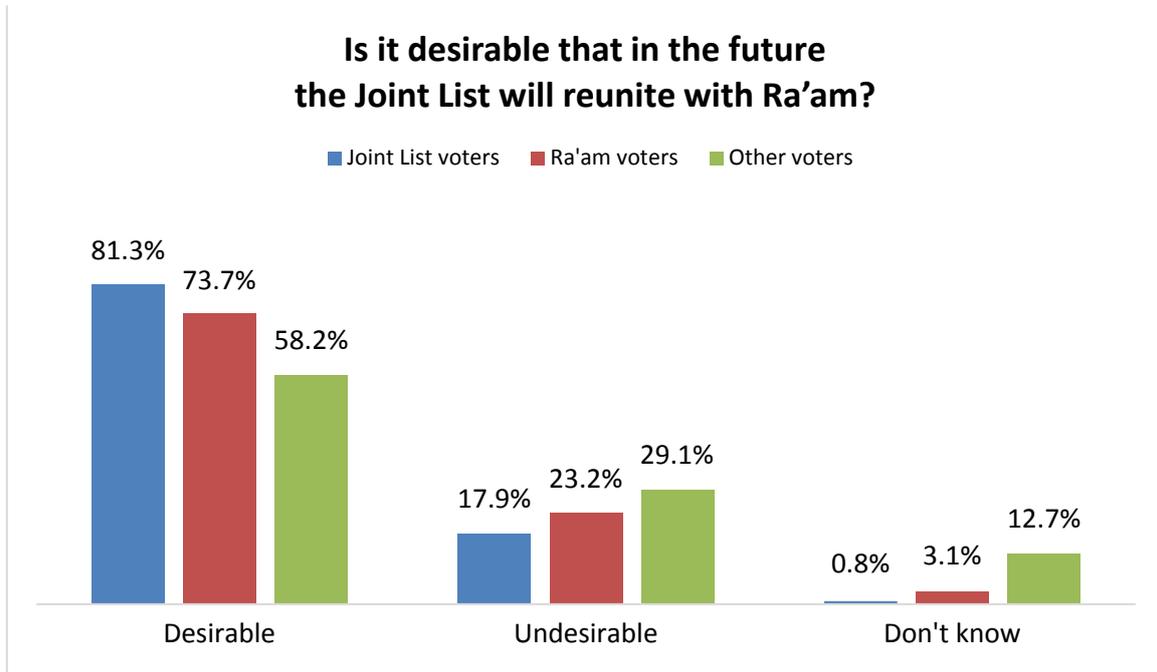
The respondents were then presented with the following hypothetical question: Is it desirable in the future that the Joint List (Hadash–Balad–Ta’al) reunite with Ra’am? It appears that this idea has broad support among the Arab public. 71.4 percent of the respondents feel that such a scenario is desirable (of which 59.3 percent feel it is very desirable) while only 23.7 percent feel that it is not.



On this question, statistically significant differences were found according to voting patterns in the last Knesset elections. It appears that the proportion of Joint List voters who feel that the scenario is “very desirable” (the highest level of support) is higher with statistical significance than the proportion of Ra’am voters who feel that way (71.6 percent vs 61.6 percent). In any case, there is a high level of support for this scenario among the two groups of voters (81.3 percent among Joint List voters and 73.7 percent among Ra’am voters); however, the rate was much lower among voters for the other parties (only 58.2 percent). On the other hand, only 17.9 percent of Joint List voters and 23.2 percent of Ra’am voters feel that this scenario is undesirable.

Further statistically significant differences were found according to age group, gender and place of residence. The proportion of those who feel that the three Joint List parties reuniting with Ra’am is a very desirable scenario is higher among the 45+ age group (69.4 percent) than among the 18–44 age group (53 percent); among women (71.4 percent) than among men (50 percent); among Moslems (63.3 percent) than among Christians (47.1 percent) and the Druze (35.6 percent); and among residents of the Triangle (81.1 percent) than among residents of the Negev (62.1 percent) and residents of the North (55 percent).

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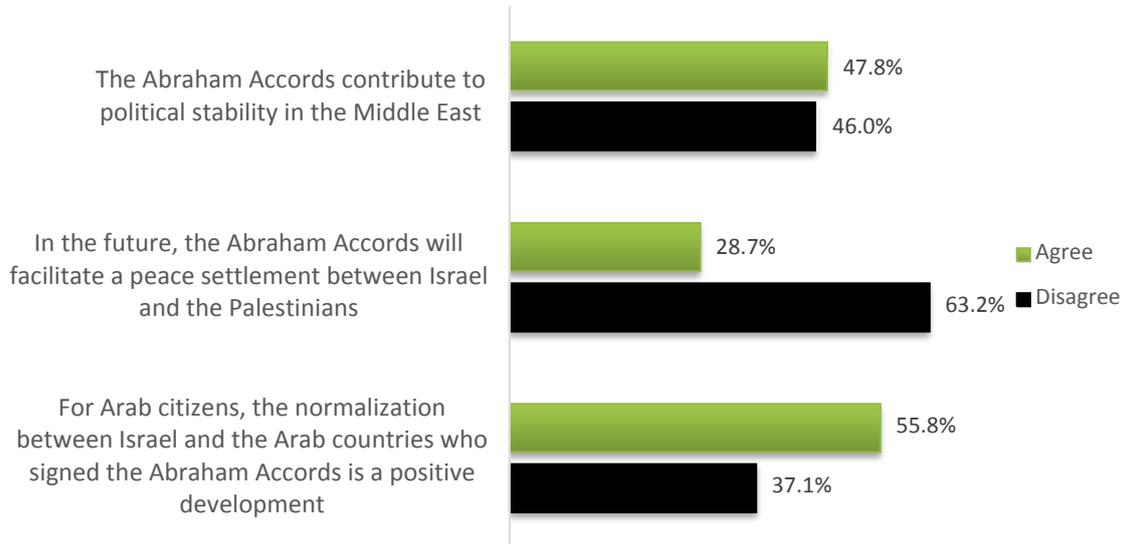
### The Middle East Peace Process

The respondents were asked to express their opinion on the effect of the normalization agreements between Israel and the Arab countries (the Abraham Accords) a year after they were signed. The opinions among the Arab public are divided on the question of whether the Abraham Accords contribute to political stability in the Middle East: 47.8 percent of the respondents feel that they make a contribution to regional stability while in contrast 45.1 percent feel they don't. Only 28.7 percent of the respondents feel that the Abraham Accords make a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians more likely in the future while a large majority (63.2 percent) don't think they do. In contrast, most of the respondents (55.8 percent) agree that the normalization agreements are a positive development for Arab citizens while only 37.1 percent do not agree with that claim.

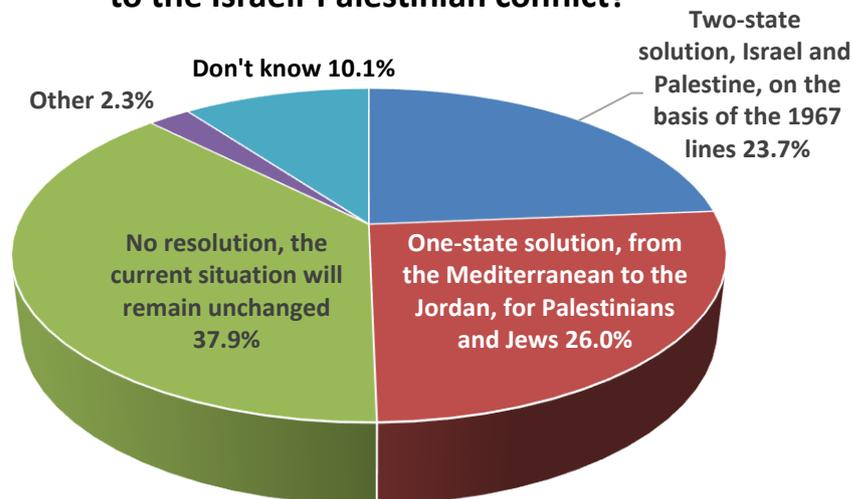
What is a realistic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? One-half of the respondents are divided between a two-state solution, i.e. Israel and Palestine, on the basis of the 1967 ceasefire lines (23.7 percent) and a one-state solution, with a single state from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River for both Jews and Palestinians (26 percent). In this context, a larger proportion of the respondents (37.9 percent) feel that there is no solution on the horizon and that the situation will remain unchanged.

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### Positions on the effects of the Abraham Accords



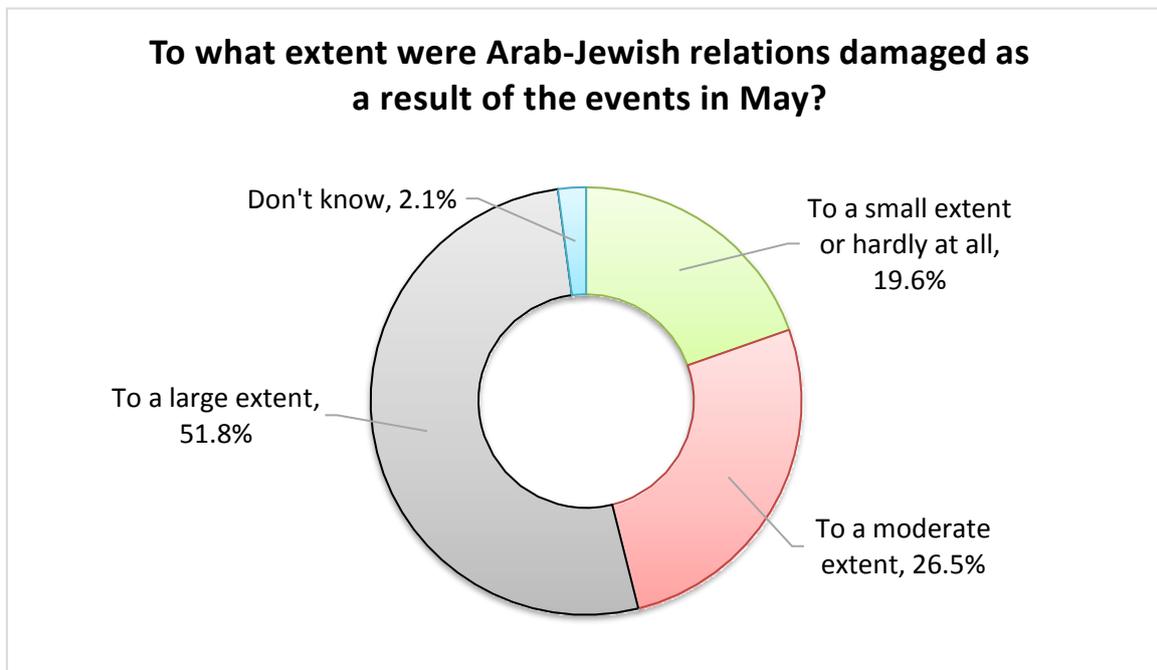
### What is a realistic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?



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### Arab-Jewish relations in Israel

During the round of fighting between Israel and the Hamas regime in the Gaza Strip in May, there were outbreaks of violence between Jews and Arabs throughout Israel and in particular in the mixed Jewish-Arab cities. It appears that even six months later 51.8 percent of the respondents feel that relations were harmed to a great extent and of those about one-third (35 percent) are convinced that relations were harmed to a very great extent. One-quarter (26.5 percent) feel that the relations between the two groups were harmed to a moderate extent and the rest (19.7 percent) feel that they were harmed only somewhat or hardly at all.

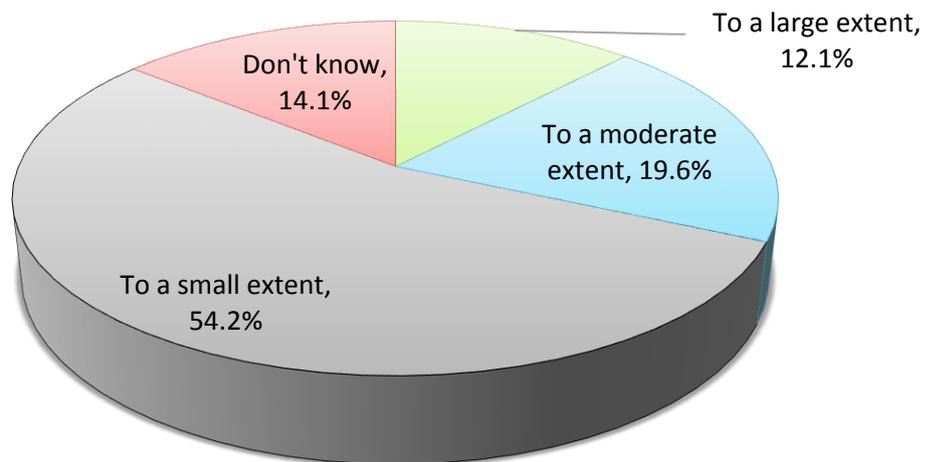


The respondents were asked whether the new President, Yitzhak Herzog, is demonstrating an understanding of the problems and concerns of Arab society. The question was presented about one week after his public appearance at the annual remembrance ceremony for the victims of the Kfar Qassem 1956 massacre, at which he spoke in both Hebrew and Arabic and apologized on behalf of the State of Israel to the families of the victims and to the residents of Kfar Qassem.

It appears that only 12.1 percent of the respondents feel that President Herzog is demonstrating a high or very high level of understanding of problems in Arab society and 54.2 percent feel that he is showing little or very little understanding.

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**Is the new President, Yitzhak Herzog, demonstrating an understanding of the problems of Arab society?**



The survey was initiated by the Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, in cooperation with the Israel Office of the German Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

The survey was carried out by the Yafa Institute – Market Research, Surveys and Consulting, under the direction of Dr. Aas Atrash.

The data were collected during the period November 7–14, 2021 in a telephone survey carried out in Arabic among a representative sample of the adult Arab population (aged 18+).

Size of the sample: 511. Sample error:  $\pm 5$  percent.

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