iGeoPoll

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE?

A Six-Country Citizen Perceptions Study on the Iran–Israel–U.S. Conflict

March 2026

Contents

1. Executive Summary

In the first week of March 2026, GeoPoll conducted a multi-country online survey to capture how citizens across the Global South perceive, experience, and respond to the escalating conflict in the Middle East. With 3,754 respondents across six countries – Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa - the survey provides a rare, empirical snapshot of public opinion from regions that bear a disproportionate share of the conflict's economic consequences but are seldom the source of geopolitical analysis.

The survey was fielded during a uniquely volatile period. Following the Twelve-Day War between Israel and Iran in June 2025, the situation escalated dramatically in late February 2026 with U.S.-Israeli Operation Epic Fury, a campaign that assassinated Iran's Supreme Leader and destroyed nuclear and military infrastructure but that triggered an open-ended war of attrition rather than capitulation. By early March 2026, global oil supplies through the Strait of Hormuz had been severely disrupted, driving fuel and food price shocks across the developing world.

The findings paint a picture of a Global South that is deeply aware, profoundly concerned, and increasingly skeptical of Western-led solutions:

- **Attribution:** Israel (38%) and the United States (29%) are held most responsible for the conflict, with only 18% of respondents blaming Iran. Attribution varies dramatically by country - Pakistan blames Israel (63%), while Kenya and South Africa point to the U.S. (42% and 50%).

- **Sympathy:** 43% sympathise with Iran and only 13% with Israel. Pakistan shows the strongest pro-Iran sentiment (82%), while Saudi Arabia overwhelmingly chooses neutrality (65%).

- **Escalation fears:** 72% believe the conflict could lead to a global war, 91% are concerned about regional escalation, and 70% view nuclear weapon use as likely.

- **Economic pain:** 70% say the conflict has significantly affected fuel prices, 70% are very concerned about cost-of-living impacts, and inflation is the most-felt consequence (43%).

- **Declining U.S. credibility and a rising China:** 43% view the U.S. less favourably, and 43% believe the U.S. is primarily serving its own interests. Only 18% see the U.S. as promoting regional stability. Conversely, China is viewed more favourably (29%) than less favourably (19%) as a result of the conflict.

- **Demand for peace:** 57% want their government to call for peace negotiations. The UN is the most-trusted body to look out for country and world interests (22%), but trust is fragmented, with significant minorities viewing none of the listed institutions/countries as looking out for their interests.

- **Information landscape:** Social media (33%) dominates as the primary information source, followed by television (26%). Confidence in information accuracy is moderate or high depending on the source: 25% say Western media coverage is often misleading, but 79% say that they are very or somewhat confident that the information they receive about the conflict is accurate.

These findings carry significant implications for policymakers, international organisations, and media institutions seeking to understand how the conflict is reshaping public opinion across Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. The data suggest a quiet but consequential realignment away from Western-led institutions and toward non-Western and/or multilateral alternatives.

2. Background and Context

2.1 The Middle East Conflict

The Middle East has undergone a series of dramatic escalations since 2024. What began as direct confrontations between Israel and Iran - including Israeli strikes on Iranian military officers in Damascus in April 2024 and the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran - escalated into full-scale aerial warfare during the Twelve-Day War of June 2025. Israel and the United States struck Iranian nuclear facilities and personnel, and Iran retaliated with over 550 ballistic missiles. (CFR, 2026)

Although a ceasefire held through the second half of 2025, Iran's economic collapse and mass protests in January 2026 reignited tensions. On February 28, 2026, U.S. and Israeli forces launched Operation Epic Fury - a joint campaign of nearly 900 strikes in its first 12 hours. The opening salvo assassinated Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and targeted military infrastructure across Iran.

Rather than precipitating surrender, the strikes entrenched Iran in what it perceives as an existential conflict. Mojtaba Khamenei was selected as the new supreme leader, and Iran launched counter-strikes against Israel, U.S. bases, and civilian targets in Arab states hosting American forces. Reports from March 2026 indicate Russia has provided Iran with targeting intelligence for U.S. military assets. (Al Jazeera, 2026) As of mid-March 2026, the region remains locked in an open-ended war of attrition with no diplomatic off-ramp in sight. (Atlantic Council, 2026) dd

The conflict's geographic reach has expanded well beyond the immediate belligerents. Houthi forces in Yemen warned of attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea, effectively closing a corridor that carries approximately 12% of global trade. Hezbollah's involvement along the Israel-Lebanon border has displaced over a million civilians and drawn multiple countries into overlapping humanitarian crises. Meanwhile, the collapse of Iran's conventional deterrent has raised urgent questions about nuclear proliferation - whether Iran will accelerate its enrichment programme toward a weapon, and whether neighbouring states will seek their own nuclear capabilities in response. For the rest of the world, these are not abstract scenarios, but they represent potential triggers for further energy disruption, refugee flows, and great-power confrontations that could reshape the international order for decades.

2.2 Economic Repercussions on the Global South

The economic fallout has been swift and severe. The near-total halt of tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz - through which roughly 20 million barrels per day of crude oil flowed in 2025 - has created what the International Energy Agency calls the largest supply shock in the history of the global oil market. (IEA, 2026) The IMF has warned that every 10% increase in energy prices is expected to increase global inflation by nearly half a percentage point, with the World Economic Forum documenting cascading effects on global food systems, fertiliser supplies, and industrial chains. (WEF, 2026)

For the Global South, the shock arrives asymmetrically. Fuel- and food-importing nations across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia lack the strategic reserves and fiscal buffers of wealthier importers. Rising import costs are translating directly into higher household prices, weakening currencies, and growing risk of social unrest. The countries surveyed in this study represent a cross-section of those most exposed: Kenya and Nigeria as major fuel importers, South Africa as a trade-dependent economy, Egypt as dependent on Suez Canal revenues and wheat imports, Saudi Arabia as a

regional power directly affected by military operations, and Pakistan as a fragile economy already under IMF structural adjustment.

The transmission channels are both direct and indirect. Directly, higher crude prices raise the cost of fuel, electricity, and transport, which in turn inflate the prices of food and basic goods. Indirectly, the closure of shipping routes will lengthen supply chains and add weeks and significant cost to deliveries of everything from grain to manufactured goods. For countries already contending with post-pandemic debt burdens, climate-related agricultural disruptions, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the energy shock functions as a compounding crisis rather than an isolated one. The situation doesn't offer relief to households already stretched thin.

2.3 Why This Study Matters

While much of the geopolitical analysis has focused on the strategic calculations of the belligerents and their immediate allies, remarkably little attention has been paid to how the billions of people across the Global South - who bear a disproportionate share of the economic consequences - actually perceive the conflict. This study fills that gap with empirical data from citizens across six strategically significant countries spanning two continents.

Understanding how citizens in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan view this conflict is therefore not merely an academic exercise but a strategic input for any actor seeking to navigate the evolving global order. At a moment when the post-1945 multilateral system is under extraordinary strain, the perspectives of these populations offer a corrective to analysis that too often treats the Global South as a passive bystander rather than an active participant in shaping what comes next.

The findings are intended to inform governments, international development organisations, humanitarian agencies, and media institutions about the human dimensions of this crisis.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted by GeoPoll using its online survey platform, with mobile web survey links distributed through digital channels across six countries. The approach leverages GeoPoll's established infrastructure for rapid, multi-country data collection in regions where traditional polling methods face significant logistical and cost barriers. Fieldwork took place during the first week of March 2026, capturing public sentiment at a critical juncture in the conflict.

The survey instrument consisted of 31 questions developed by GeoPoll's research team and was produced in English and translated into Arabic (Egypt, Saudi Arabia) and Urdu (Pakistan) to ensure accessibility and linguistic accuracy across all target markets.

The total achieved sample of 3,754 respondents provides a margin of error of approximately ±1.6% at the 95% confidence level for aggregate figures. Country-level margins of error range from approximately ±2.8% (Egypt) to ±4.9% (Pakistan), providing robust statistical precision for both cross-national comparison and within-country analysis.

3.1 Data Quality and Control

GeoPoll applied a rigorous, multi-layered data cleaning and quality assurance process to ensure the integrity of the dataset:

- **Duplicate detection and removal:** All responses were screened for duplicate submissions using device identifiers and response pattern analysis, ensuring each respondent contributed only once to the dataset.

- **Outlier identification:** Responses flagged for abnormal completion times (both excessively fast and excessively slow) were reviewed and, where appropriate, excluded to remove inattentive or automated responses.

- **Open-ended response validation:** The three open-ended questions were reviewed for gibberish, copy-paste responses, and off-topic content. Valid responses were coded thematically using keyword-based classification across English, Arabic, and Urdu.

- **Logical consistency checks:** Responses were cross-checked for internal consistency across related questions to identify contradictory or implausible answer patterns.

- **Missing value treatment:** All analysis was conducted on valid responses only, with missing values excluded from percentage calculations to ensure reported figures reflect genuine respondent input.

These protocols reflect GeoPoll's commitment to delivering research-grade data. The result is a clean, verified dataset that supports confident analysis across all six countries.

3.2 Sample

The total sample of 3,754 respondents across six countries is distributed as follows:

Country	N
Kenya	653
Nigeria	594
South Africa	651
Egypt	638
Saudi Arabia	603
Pakistan	615

The six countries were selected to represent a diversity of economic profiles, geopolitical positions, and relationships to the conflict. Kenya and Nigeria are Sub-Saharan African economies heavily exposed to global energy and food price shocks. South Africa occupies a distinct position as a BRICS member with an active non-aligned foreign policy and a strong tradition of public engagement on international justice issues. Egypt straddles the conflict zone itself, dependent on Suez Canal revenues, a major wheat importer, and a direct neighbour to the theatre of operations. Saudi Arabia is a regional power whose own security calculations are inseparable from the Iran-Israel-U.S.

dynamic. Pakistan brings the perspective of a nuclear-armed, Muslim-majority state with deep historical ties to both Iran and Saudi Arabia, currently navigating severe economic fragility under IMF supervision.

3.3 Analytical Approach

This report presents aggregated findings across all six countries as the primary frame of analysis. Country-level, gender, and age-group breakdowns are called out where significant differences exist between subgroups, which we flag as notable. Percentages are calculated on valid responses (excluding missing values). The multi-select question on information sources (Q12) is reported as percentage of respondents rather than percentage of responses. The aggregate sample provides a margin of error of approximately ±1.6% at the 95% confidence level; country-level margins range from ±2.8% (Egypt) to ±4.9% (Pakistan).

Where the report references "statistically notable" differences between countries or demographic groups, this denotes observed differences of 10 percentage points or more - a threshold chosen to reflect practically meaningful variation given the sample sizes involved. Open-ended responses were coded thematically using keyword-based classification across English, Arabic, and Urdu, with translated illustrative quotations included where they illuminate patterns not captured by the closed-ended questions. All open-ended analysis is presented in a separate companion document.
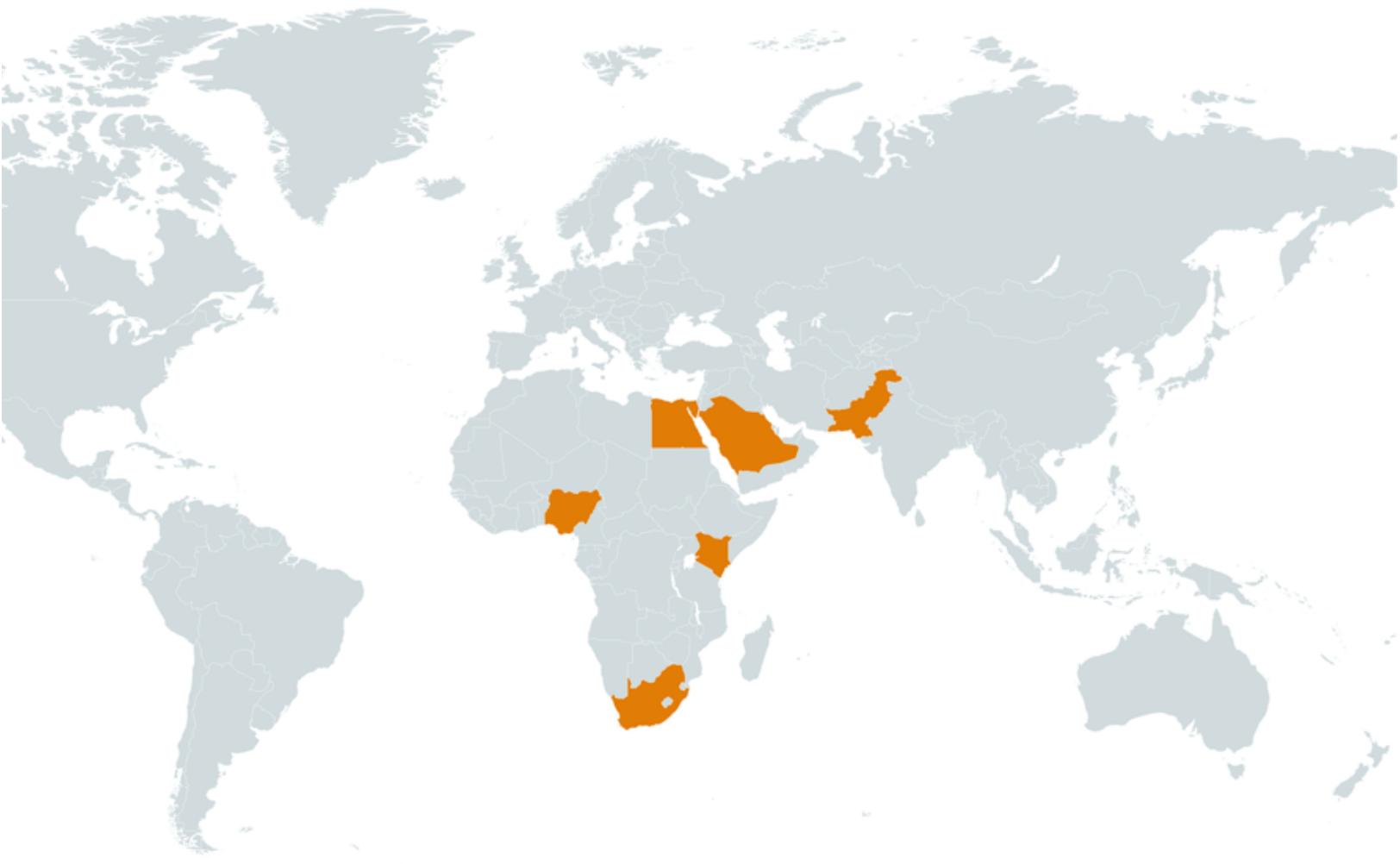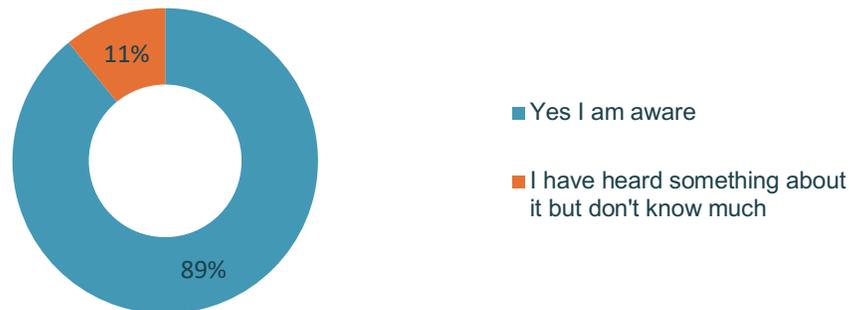
4. Key Findings

4.1 Awareness and Information Landscape

Near-Universal Awareness

Awareness of the Middle East conflict is near-universal across all six countries. Fully 89% of respondents reported being aware of the conflict, with only 11% saying they had heard something but did not know much.

Awareness of the Conflict

Notably, not a single respondent reported being unaware of the conflict altogether - a striking indicator of its global salience.

In their own words...

We asked respondents who said they were aware of the conflict to explain, in their own words, what they had heard about it. This question was asked early in the survey to capture top-of-mind awareness and framing. Among the responses, the most dominant themes were:

> **U.S./Israel Military Action Against Iran (19%) -** The single most prominent narrative frame was one of U.S. and Israeli aggression against Iran. Nearly one in five English-language respondents described the conflict in terms of attacks, bombings, or strikes by the U.S. and/or Israel on Iranian territory.
>
> *"Israel and the United States are fighting Iran."*
>
> *"USA and Israel attacked Iran."*
>
> *"Israel wants to control the Middle East or expand their territory, they started the war"*
>
> **Iran's Nuclear Programme (15%) -** The nuclear dimension featured prominently, with respondents referencing Iran's nuclear enrichment, weapons development, or the international dispute over its nuclear programme. This was especially salient in Kenya (24.0%) and Nigeria (17.5%), where more respondents appeared to frame the conflict primarily through the nuclear lens.
>
> *"The conflict is mainly on security, power and Iran's nuclear program"*

"That Iranian must stop getting nuclear energy that they are preparing to have"

Assassination of Iranian Leadership (9.4%) - A notable cluster of responses referenced the killing of an Iranian leader or president.

"Killing of the Iranian president"

"Iran president killed"

Power, Control, and Hegemony (6.2%) - A significant minority framed the conflict in terms of geopolitical power struggles, territorial control, and dominance.

"They are fighting to be more powerful"

"It is all about power and control over the Middle East"

Oil, Energy, and Fuel (4.3%) - Respondents in South Africa were notably more likely (7.9%) to connect the conflict to oil and energy, reflecting the country's acute sensitivity to fuel price shocks. This framing was less common in Nigeria (1.4%) despite its own oil-dependent economy, suggesting that Nigerian respondents were more focused on the security dimension.

"Fighting over oil"

General War/Fighting References (4.7%) - A residual category of respondents simply described awareness of "war" or "fighting" without elaborating on the parties or causes. This was highest in Egypt (23.1% of the small English-language sample) and Pakistan (5.9%).

Information Access: Social Media Dominates

Respondents were asked to select *all sources* through which they have heard about the Middle East conflict. The results show a heavily digital information landscape, with most respondents citing multiple channels.

78%	**66%**	**54%**	**34%**	**22%**	**19%**
Social Media	Television	Online News	Friends/Family	Radio	Messaging Apps

Social media is the overwhelmingly dominant channel, cited by more than three in four respondents (78%). Television news follows as the second most common source (66%), and online news websites rank third at 54%. Together, these three digital and broadcast channels form the core information backbone for Global South audiences following the conflict.

Interpersonal and traditional channels play supporting roles: friends and family are cited by 34% of respondents, while radio (22%) and messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram (19%) round out the media mix. The average respondent relies on approximately 2.7 sources, underscoring that audiences are not siloed in a single channel.

The finding that nearly four in five respondents encounter conflict information through social media - a medium where misinformation spreads rapidly - has direct implications for credible news organisations and policymakers. Messaging strategies must prioritise social media and television as primary channels. In sub-Saharan Africa, radio remains a relevant supplementary channel that should not be overlooked. The combination of high social media reliance and only moderate confidence in Western information accuracy (see Section 4.7) underscores the urgent need for accessible, trusted information sources.

Confidence in Information Accuracy

In the current landscape of the Middle East conflict, information has become a strategic "weapon of war," which makes the believability of daily news a significant challenge for global audiences. Propagandistic tactics, ranging from the use of AI-generated deepfakes and recycled video game footage to systematic state-funded ad campaigns, are frequently employed to shape Western and regional public opinion. This environment of "contextual media ethics" often sees state-controlled outlets prioritizing patriotic narratives over objective truth, while social media platforms act as rapid accelerators for unverified claims.

When asked to rate their confidence in information accuracy, a combined 79% of respondents report being either very confident (41%) or somewhat confident (39%) in the information they receive about the conflict. However, 15% report low confidence, and 6% are either unsure or not at all confident.

Confidence in Information Accuracy
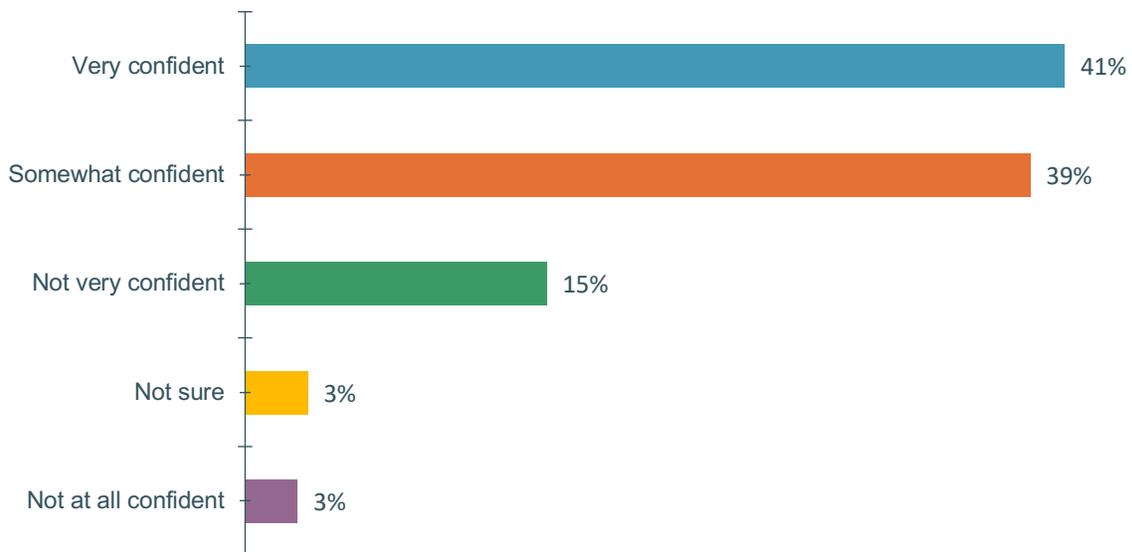
Confidence is highest in Nigeria (56% very confident) and Kenya (49%), but notably lower in Saudi Arabia (30%) and Egypt (32%). This pattern of higher confidence in sub-Saharan Africa and lower confidence in the Middle East may reflect greater media plurality in African markets or, conversely, greater awareness of media manipulation in countries closer to the conflict zone.

4.2 Conflict Attribution and Sympathies

Assigning Blame: Stark Regional Divides

The question of responsibility reveals deep regional divides. At the aggregate level, Israel is held most responsible (38%), followed by the United States (29%) and Iran (18%). Eight percent are not sure, 6% say no single side is responsible, and fewer than 1% cite other regional actors.

38% blame Israel

29% blame the United States · 18% blame Iran

However, this aggregate picture masks dramatically different national narratives:

> *There is a clear Muslim-majority / sub-Saharan African divide. In Pakistan (63%), Egypt (51%), and Saudi Arabia (45%), Israel is overwhelmingly held responsible. In contrast, sub-Saharan African countries are more likely to blame the United States - particularly South Africa (50%) and Kenya (42%). Nigeria is unique in pointing primarily to Iran (39%).*

Who Is Most Responsible (by Country)
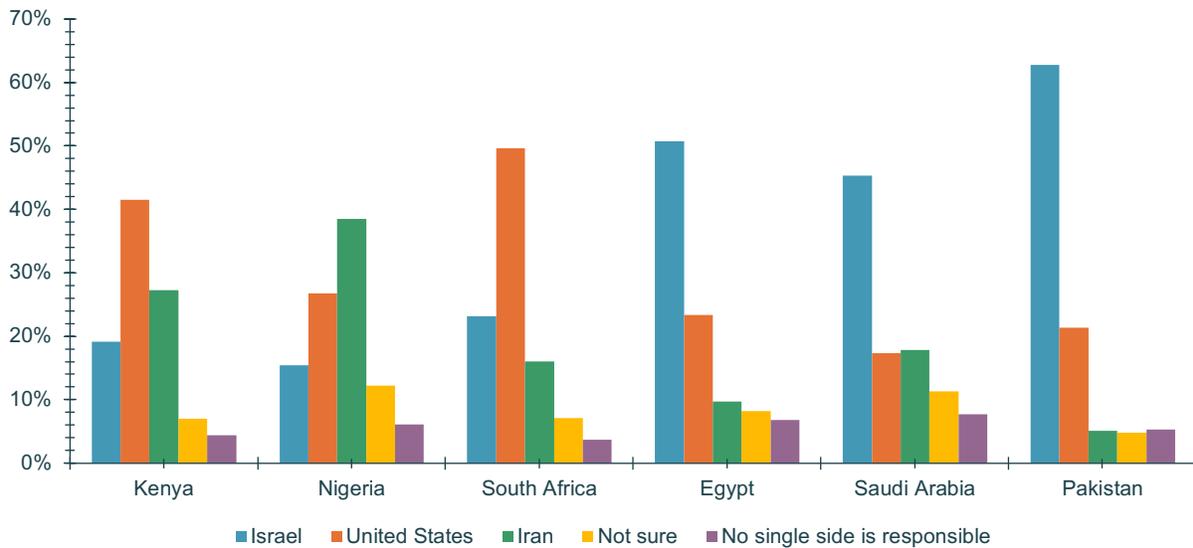
Male respondents are more likely to blame Israel (43% vs. 33% for females), while females are more likely to report uncertainty (10% vs. 7%). This pattern holds across most countries.

The sharp divergence in attribution narratives suggests that messaging from international organisations and governments must be highly localised. A one-size-fits-all diplomatic narrative is unlikely to resonate across these diverse markets. The blaming of the U.S. in sub-Saharan Africa, combined with high levels of blaming Israel in Muslim-majority countries, represents a significant challenge for Western diplomatic engagement.

Sympathies and Solidarity

The question of where sympathies lie in the conflict reveals one of the survey's most telling divisions. Respondents were asked which side, if any, they sympathise with more, and the results expose deep variation across the six countries. Overall, Iran draws the largest share of sympathy overall (43%), but "neither side" follows closely at 35%, while only 13% express sympathy toward Israel.

Conflict Sympathies
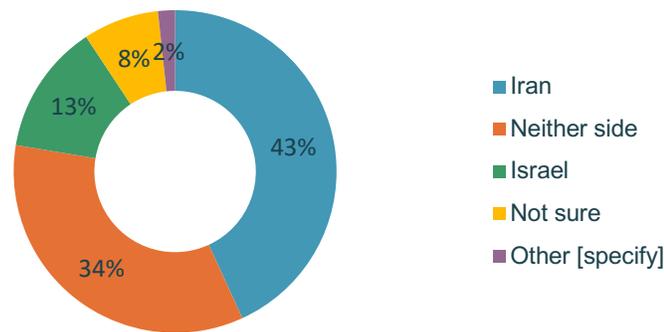
These headline figures, however, mask stark regional contrasts: Iran's neighbor, Pakistan, overwhelmingly sides with Iran (82%), whereas Saudi Arabia, itself a major Middle Eastern power, largely declines to take sides, with nearly two-thirds (65%) choosing "neither." Sub-Saharan African countries fall in between, with more evenly distributed responses showing a combination of genuine solidarity, geopolitical distance, and ambivalence.

Sympathies by Country
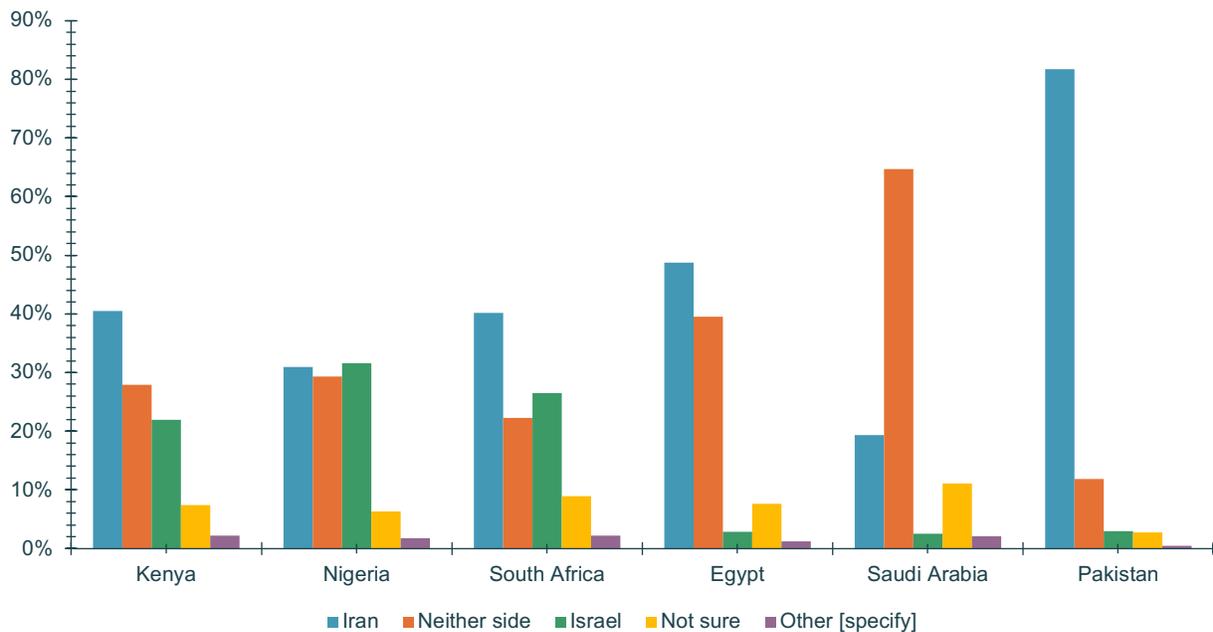
Pakistan registers the strongest pro-Iran sympathy at 82% - nearly double the overall average and the single highest figure for any question-country combination in the dataset. Egypt (49%) and Kenya

(41%) also show substantial pro-Iran sympathy. Saudi Arabia stands apart: 65% say neither side, reflecting a deliberate posture of official neutrality.

Sympathy for Israel reaches its highest levels in Nigeria (32%) and South Africa (27%) - the only two countries where it exceeds 25%. In Egypt (3%), Saudi Arabia (3%), and Pakistan (3%), pro-Israel sentiment is negligible.

Generally, what emerges is a picture of people across the world who are not monolithically aligned but rather navigating competing loyalties, religious affinity, anti-Western sentiment, non-alignment traditions, and genuine uncertainty about a conflict with no clear moral clarity for many respondents. The 35% who choose "neither side" should not be dismissed as disengaged; in many cases, this reflects a deliberate refusal to be drawn into a binary framing that does not reflect their lived reality or national interests.

4.3 Escalation Concerns

Beyond the question of who is to blame or where sympathies fall, the survey reveals a deeper, more visceral concern: that the conflict will not stay contained. For many respondents across the Global South, the Middle East is not a distant theatre of war but an interconnected powder keg whose detonation would ripple outward, through energy markets, migration corridors, and alliance networks, into their own regions. The questions in this section probe the extent of that anxiety, asking respondents how likely they consider a broader regional war, whether they believe the conflict could escalate into a global confrontation, and how real they perceive the threat of nuclear weapons use to be. The responses paint a portrait of populations bracing for the worst.

Fear of Regional Spillover

Two-thirds (67%) of respondents are very concerned about a broader regional war, and a further 24% are somewhat concerned - a combined concern level of 91%. Only 6% are not very concerned and 3% are not at all concerned.

Likelihood of Broader Regional War
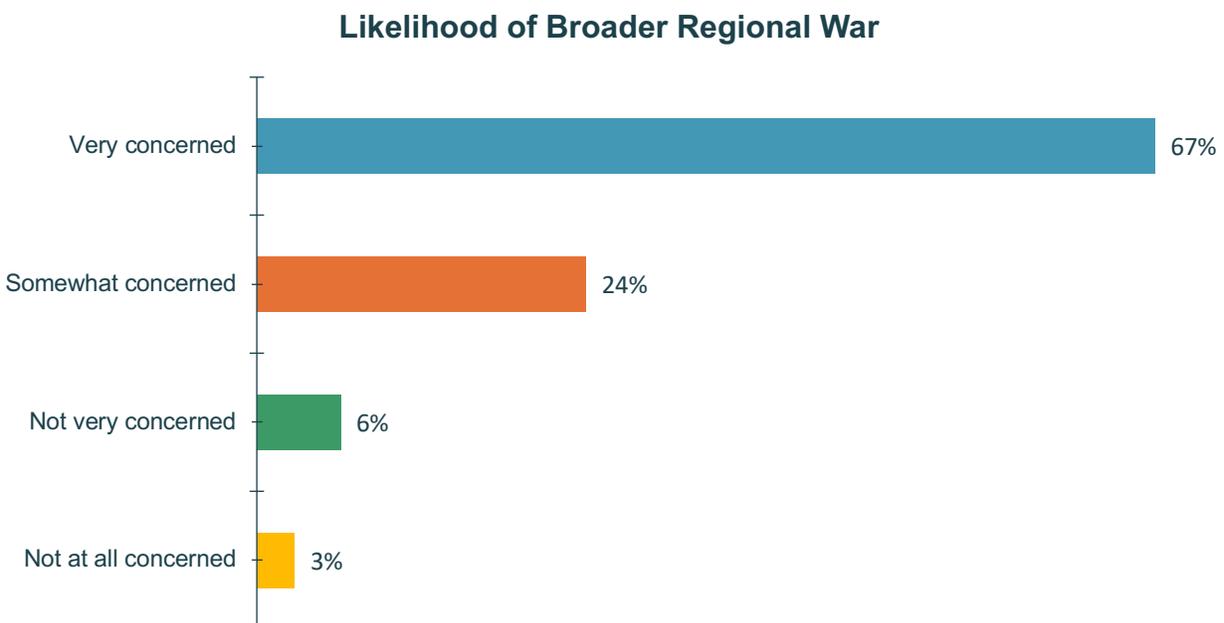
Concern is highest in sub-Saharan Africa and Pakistan (74–77% very concerned), and somewhat lower in Saudi Arabia (52%) and Egypt (59%). Respondents in countries geographically closer to the conflict appear paradoxically less alarmed than those further away, possibly reflecting conflict normalisation or confidence in national defence capabilities.

Global War Fears

Several commentators have described the conflict as a potential flashpoint for "World War 3", especially coupled with the still-active Russia-Ukraine conflict (see the GeoPoll Report). Fully 72% of respondents believe the conflict could lead to a wider global war. This view is shared by a clear majority in every country surveyed.

Likelihood of Global War Escalation

Response	Percentage
Yes	72%
Not sure	16%
No	12%
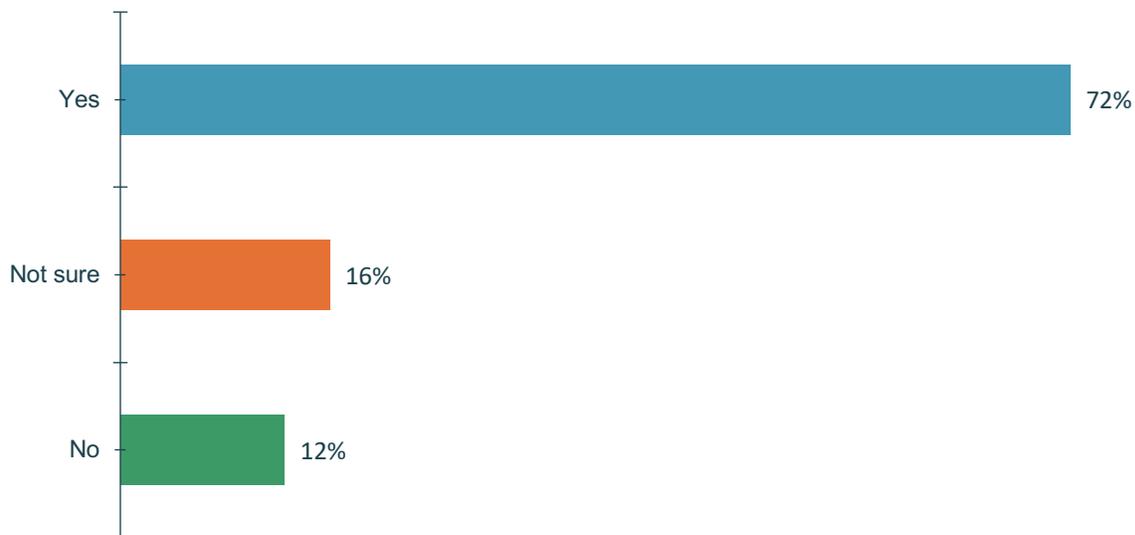
Pakistan (86%), South Africa (84%), and Kenya (81%) show the most acute concern. Saudi Arabia is the outlier at 51%, with 27% unsure. Generally, apart from Pakistan, populations further from the conflict zone perceive it in more catastrophic terms, likely because they feel less informed and reliant on global media.

The Nuclear Dimension

An alarming 70% consider the use of nuclear weapons either very likely (36%) or somewhat likely (35%). Only 18% consider it unlikely, and 7% are unsure.

70%
believe the use of nuclear weapons is likely

Nuclear anxiety is highest in Nigeria (50% very likely), Kenya (48%), and South Africa (47%), and lowest in Saudi Arabia (19%) and Egypt (23%). The gap between African and Middle Eastern respondents is striking - up to 31 percentage points - and may reflect greater exposure to nuclear deterrence discourse in the Middle East.

Perceived Likelihood of Nuclear Weapons Use

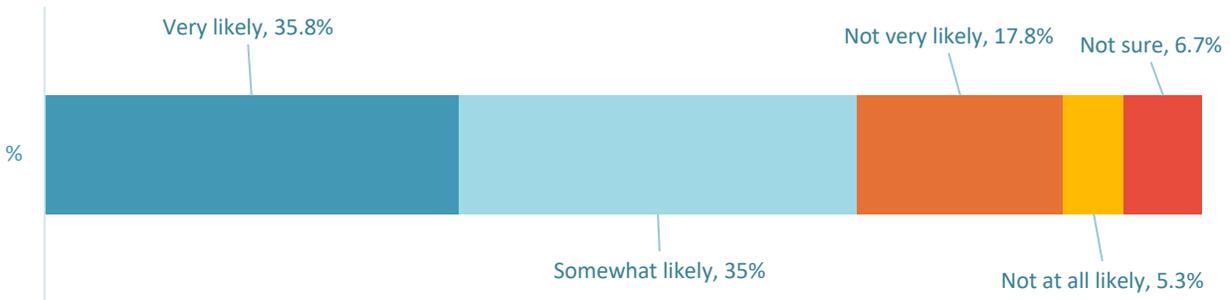The widespread perception that the conflict could go global or nuclear represents a significant psychological burden on populations across the Global South. For governments and international organisations, this level of anxiety can translate into social instability, economic uncertainty, and pressure for drastic policy responses. Communication strategies that provide factual context about escalation risks - without either dismissing concerns or amplifying fears - are urgently needed.

4.4 Economic Impact

The economic dimensions of the conflict dominate public concern, with findings that underscore the tangible, household-level consequences of a geopolitical crisis that many in the West may perceive as remote.

Fuel Price Shock

Fuel prices have surged in several of the queried nations over the last three weeks as the escalating Middle East conflict drives global crude oil costs upward.

Egypt implemented significant hikes on March 10, 2026, raising gasoline and diesel prices by up to 30% due to "exceptional" global market conditions. Similarly, Pakistan announced a historic single-day increase of Rs 55 per litre for both petrol and diesel on March 6, 2026, a move its government directly attributed to regional supply disruptions. South Africa also adjusted prices upward in early March, with petrol rising by 20 cents and diesel by up to 65 cents per litre.

In contrast, amidst political pressure, Kenya's regulator, EPRA, maintained stable pump prices for its March–April cycle despite cited rising import costs, while Saudi Arabia kept its January 2026 rates unchanged through mid-March. Nigeria has not yet implemented a unified national price hike, though official reports warn of "unavoidable" upward pressure as global tensions persist.

Seventy percent of respondents say the conflict has significantly affected fuel prices, with a further 19% saying it has had some effect - a combined 89%. Only 8% say no and 3% are unsure.

Impact on Fuel/Energy Prices (by Country)
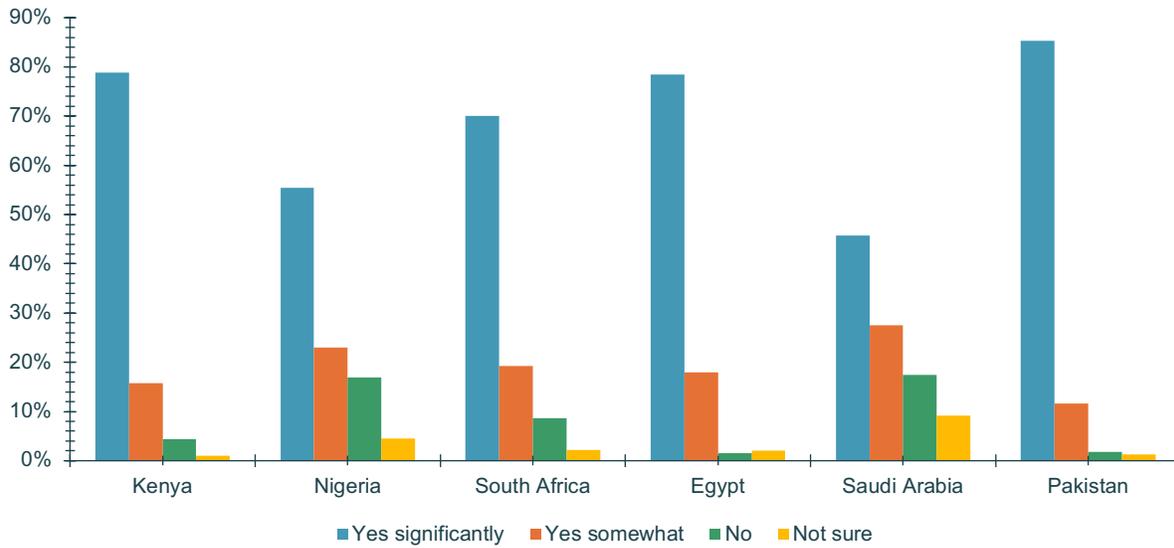
Pakistan (85%), Kenya (79%), and Egypt (78%) report the most acute fuel price impacts. These are major fuel importers with limited fiscal buffers. Even Saudi Arabia, an oil-exporting nation, reports 46% saying the impact is significant, likely reflecting disruptions to refining and distribution rather than supply per se. Nigeria shows a comparatively lower figure (56%), potentially reflecting the country's own oil production partially cushioning the shock. It is worth noting that at the time of the survey, there was talk in Kenya that prices would go up later in the week, which might be the reason for such responses despite the prices ultimately not changing.

Cost-of-Living Anxiety

Cost-of-living concern mirrors the fuel price findings: 70% are very concerned and 22% somewhat concerned (92% combined). This makes economic anxiety the most intensely and uniformly felt dimension of the entire survey.

Concern About Cost of Living Impact
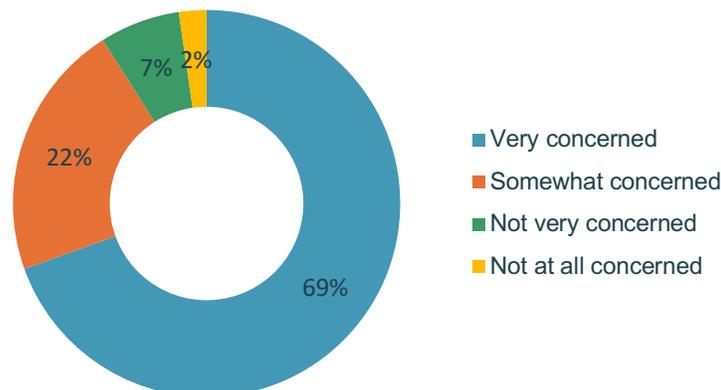
Kenya leads with 84% very concerned, followed by South Africa (81%), Pakistan (78%), Egypt (69%), Nigeria (68%), and Saudi Arabia (41%). Even at the bottom of the range, 41% represents a substantial level of concern for a wealthy oil state.

The Inflation Burden

When asked to identify the single most-felt economic consequence, inflation and cost of living tops the list at 43%, followed by higher fuel prices (27%), higher food prices (15%), job losses and economic slowdown (13%), and none of these (4%).

Most Significant Economic Impact
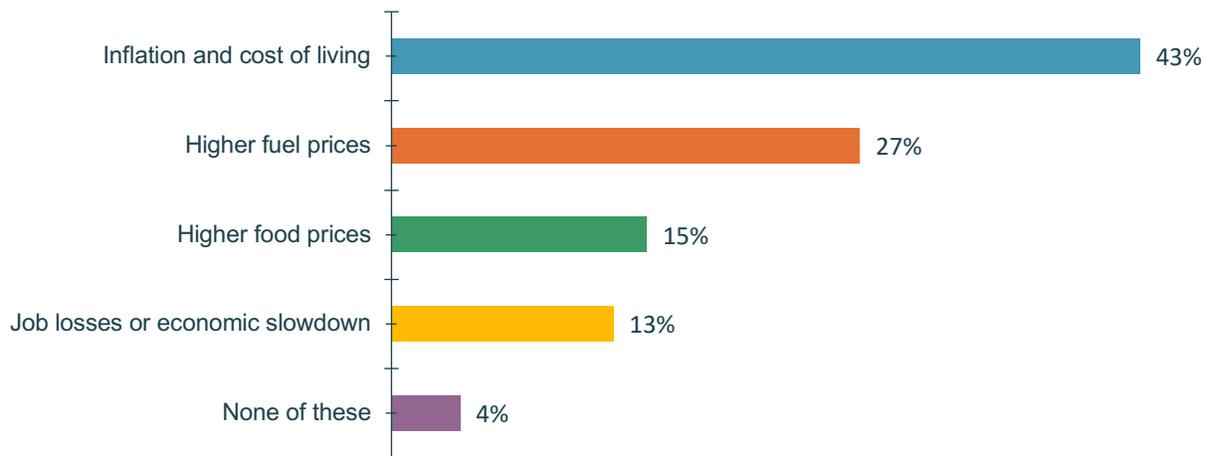
Impact	Overall	Kenya	Nigeria	S. Africa	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Pakistan
Inflation / cost of living	43%	44%	42%	35%	48%	33%	50%
Higher fuel prices	27%	33%	31%	27%	24%	22%	30%
Higher food prices	15%	8%	8%	16%	18%	19%	12%
Job losses / slowdown	13%	15%	16%	22%	8%	12%	8%
None of these	4%	1%	3%	1%	4%	14%	1%

South Africa uniquely shows elevated concern about job losses (22%), reflecting the country's existing unemployment crisis (33% official unemployment). Pakistan and Egypt report the highest inflation anxiety (50% and 48%), consistent with their current macroeconomic fragility. Saudi Arabia is the only country where a meaningful share (14%) reports no economic impact.

The data provide indications as to where economic relief may need to be targeted. If further hard economic evidence supports these findings, fuel subsidy programmes, price stabilisation mechanisms, and food security interventions may need to be prioritised in the countries showing the highest impact (Pakistan, Kenya, and Egypt). South Africa's distinct employment concern suggests a need for complementary job protection or stimulus measures.

4.5 Views on Global Powers

Declining U.S. Favourability

The conflict has significantly eroded perceptions of the United States across the Global South. Forty-three percent of respondents now view the U.S. less favourably, compared to 18% who view it more favourably and 29% whose views are unchanged. Eleven percent are unsure.

How Conflict Affected View of the U.S.
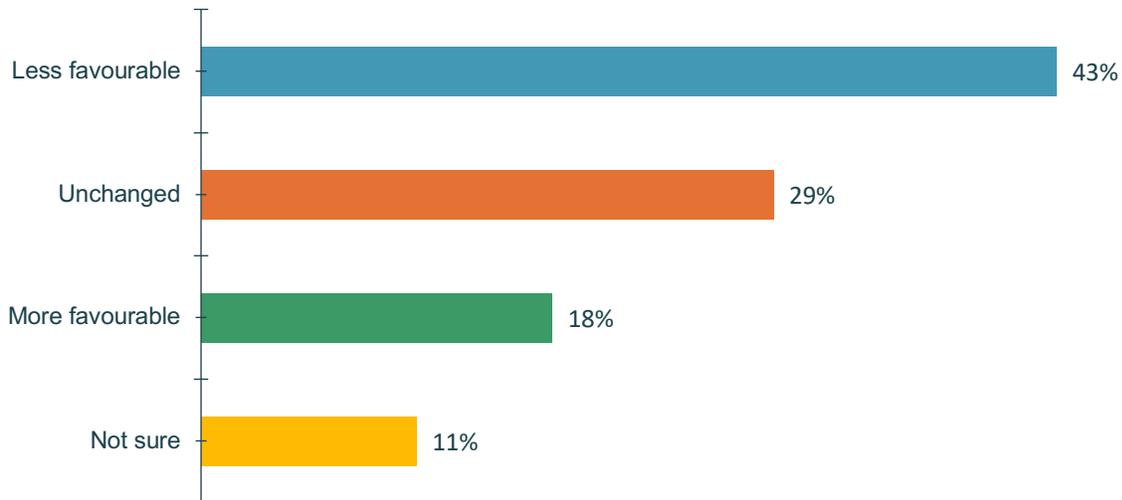
Response	Overall	Kenya	Nigeria	S. Africa	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Pakistan
Less favourable	43%	42%	25%	49%	53%	40%	33%
Unchanged	29%	23%	37%	21%	28%	34%	33%
More favourable	18%	25%	25%	23%	11%	11%	20%
Not sure	11%	10%	14%	7%	9%	15%	14%

With 53% viewing the U.S. less favourably, Egypt - historically a major U.S. aid recipient and strategic partner - shows the sharpest erosion. South Africa follows at 49%, consistent with the country's vocal diplomatic criticism of Western involvement in the conflict. Nigeria stands out as the most balanced, with 37% unchanged and 25% each for more and less favourable. Perhaps surprisingly, Pakistani views did not follow a significantly negative trajectory: though 33% see the U.S. less favourably, that was the second smallest percentage of the countries surveyed, while an equal percentage's views went unchanged and 20% see the U.S. more favourably.

Perceived U.S. Motivations

The data on perceived U.S. motivations is equally revealing. Forty-three percent believe the U.S. is primarily serving its own interests, 27% say it is serving Israel's interests, and only 18% believe it is acting in the interest of regional stability.

Perceived U.S. Motivation

- Its own interests
- Israel's interests
- Interest of regional stability
- Not sure

43% · 27% · 18% · 13%
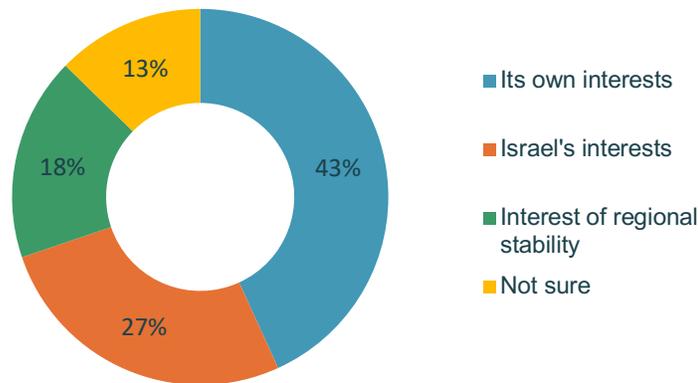
In South Africa (62%) and Kenya (56%), the perception of U.S. self-interest is dominant. In Egypt (41%) and Pakistan (39%), the view that the U.S. primarily serves Israel's interests is most prominent. Only in Nigeria does a significant share (46%) see the U.S. as acting for regional stability - a notable outlier.

Perceptions of China

Views of China have shifted net positive across the six countries: 29% view China more favourably since the conflict began, versus 19% less favourably, with 37% unchanged. The positive shift is strongest in Pakistan (44%), consistent with the deep China–Pakistan strategic partnership, and in South Africa (31%) and Egypt (31%), where China's non-interventionist positioning in the region appears to be resonating.

How has your view of China changed?

- More favourable
- Unchanged
- Less favourable
- Not sure
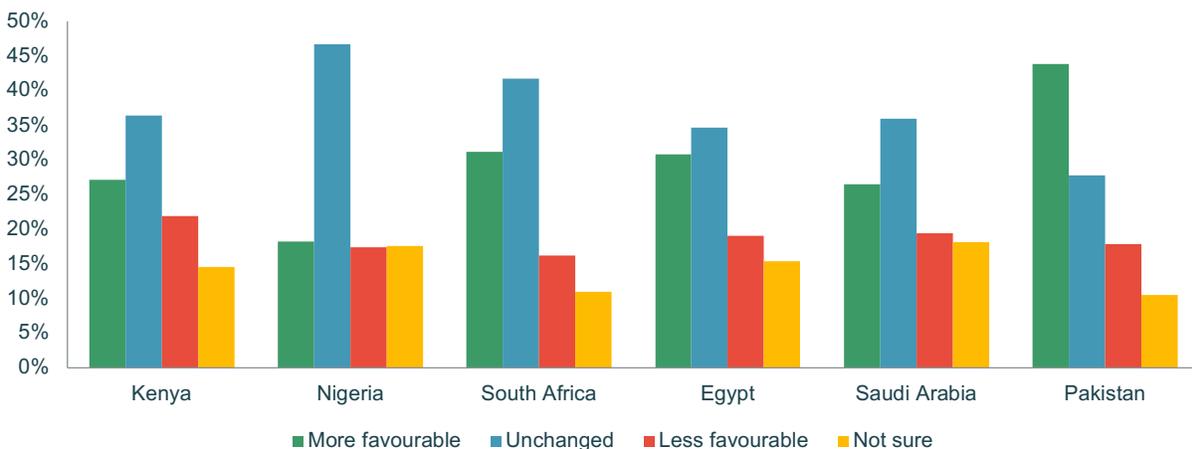
View of Russia

Russia's picture is more mixed. Overall, views split almost evenly: 23% more favourable versus 24% less favourable, with 39% unchanged. However, significant regional variation exists. Pakistan again leads the positive shift (33%), while Kenya stands out as the most critical (32% less favourable) — the only country where the negative shift clearly exceeds the positive one. In general, views went "unchanged" (e.g., Nigeria at 44%, South Africa at 44%), suggesting these populations are less engaged with Russia's role in the conflict.

How has your view of Russia changed?

Legend: ■ More favourable ■ Unchanged ■ Less favourable ■ Not sure
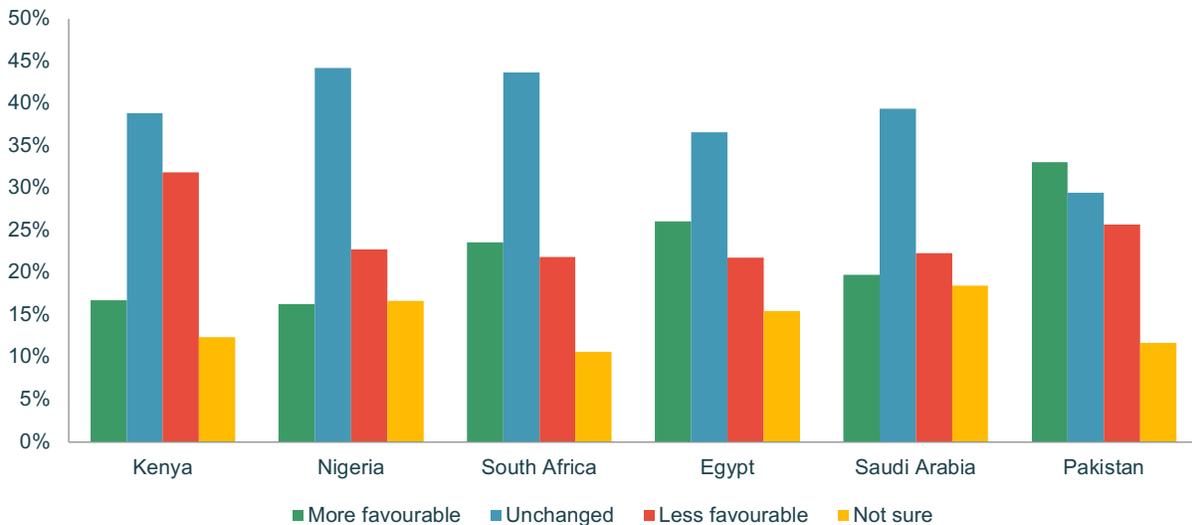
The simultaneous erosion of U.S. credibility (see Section 4.5) alongside the positive or neutral reception of China and Russia signals a meaningful geopolitical shift in Global South opinion. China's non-interventionist positioning is yielding clear reputational dividends, particularly in Pakistan and Egypt. For Western policymakers, the data suggest that the U.S. military posture in the Middle East is actively undermining soft power across these populations. For Chinese and Russian strategists, the data confirms that their restrained public positioning on the conflict is being well received - though Russia's more polarised reception suggests its reputational gains are less secure than China's.

4.6 Governance, Trust, and the Path Forward

The Resolution Question

The United Nations remains the most-cited body for conflict resolution (22%), but the margin is thin: China follows at 20%, the United States at 19%, none of them at 16%, the European Union at 12%, and Russia at 11%.

Most Capable of Helping Resolve the Conflict
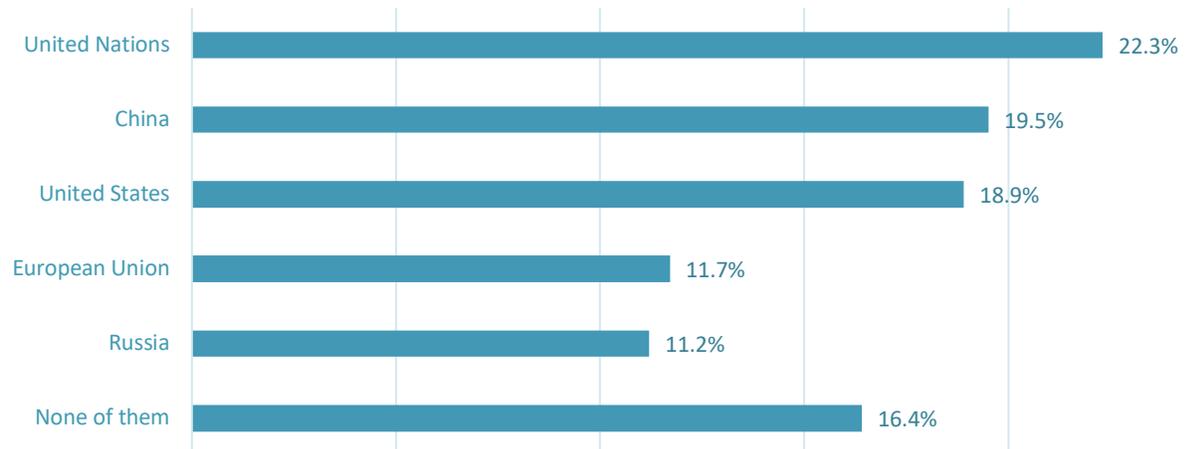
Response	Overall	Kenya	Nigeria	S. Africa	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Pakistan
United Nations	22%	39%	37%	23%	10%	10%	35%
China	20%	11%	9%	26%	21%	20%	31%
United States	19%	20%	31%	19%	16%	21%	9%
None of them	16%	11%	7%	9%	21%	32%	11%
European Union	12%	14%	11%	10%	16%	7%	5%
Russia	11%	5%	6%	14%	15%	11%	9%

Trust in the UN is strongest in sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya 39%, Nigeria 37%), suggesting a persistent attachment to multilateralism. China is favoured in Pakistan (31%) and South Africa (26%). Saudi Arabia shows the highest pessimism (32% say none of them). Nigeria is the only country where the U.S. leads as the preferred resolver (31%).

The implication may be that the UN still matters in world affairs in ways that Western governments are overlooking.

Though Russia has traditionally been an important player in the Global South, trust in it to look out for the interests of other countries and the world's is generally low. This result is likely due to Russia being preoccupied with its war in Ukraine and thus unable to assist other nations.

Institutional Trust

Beyond the conflict and looking overall, we also asked the respondents which country or international body they trusted most to act in the best interests of their country and the world.

Countries & Institutions Most Trusted To Act in the Best Interests of the World

Legend: United Nations, China, None of them, Not sure, United States, African Union
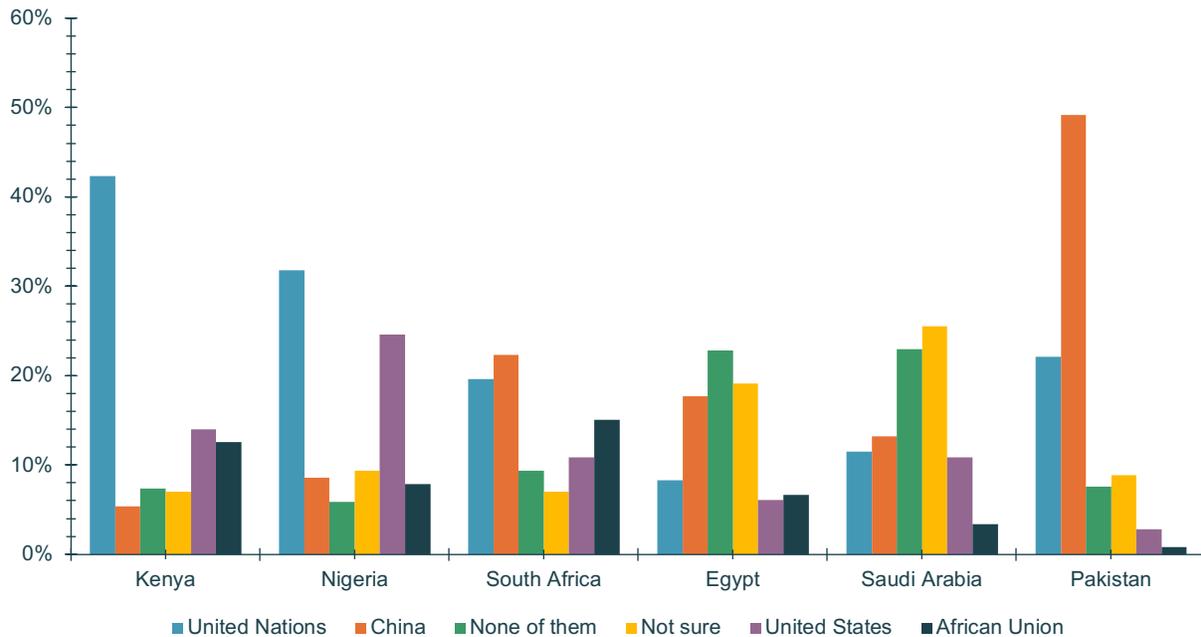
The trust graph reveals dramatic variation. Pakistan places extraordinary trust in China (49%) to act on behalf of Pakistani and world interests, more than double any other country-body combination except Kenya's and Nigeria's trust in the UN (42% and 33% respectively). Egypt and Saudi Arabia show the greatest lack of belief in other institutions to look out for theirs and the world's interests (43% in Egypt and 48% in Saudi Arabia in total choosing either "none of them" or "not sure"). As might be expected, the African Union is viewed as acting in country and world interests mainly in the African countries surveyed, with only sub-Saharan countries put significant trust in the AU (e.g., 16% of South African respondents).

What Citizens Want From Their Governments

Preferred Government Role
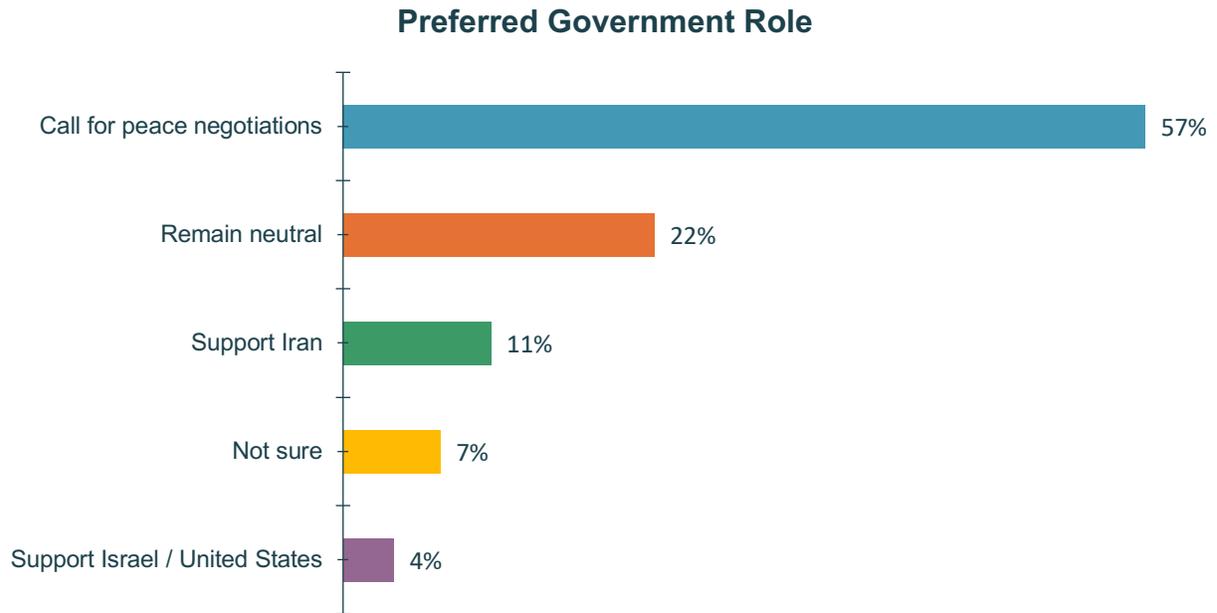
Response	Overall	Kenya	Nigeria	S. Africa	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Pakistan
Call for peace	57%	64%	58%	52%	61%	55%	44%
Remain neutral	22%	28%	29%	29%	18%	23%	8%
Support Iran	11%	1%	2%	9%	11%	4%	42%
Not sure	7%	3%	5%	4%	8%	15%	4%
Support Israel/U.S.	4%	4%	7%	6%	2%	3%	3%

Pakistan is the only country where a large share (42%) explicitly wants its government to support Iran, nearly equaling the share calling for peace negotiations (44%). This reflects Pakistan's historical ties to Iran, shared religious identity, and strong public opposition to U.S. military action. In all other countries, peace negotiations command majority or plurality support, with remaining neutral the second-most preferred government response. Small but significant groups prefer supporting Iran in South Africa (9%) and Egypt (11%), which likely reflects historical and multilateral ties in the case of the former; no country contained a significant group that prefers supporting Israel and the U.S., topping out at 7% in Nigeria. Thus, even the most pro-U.S. country's population does not see this war in a positive light.

4.7 Personal Security and Media Perceptions

A Pervasive Sense of Insecurity

With all the perceived threats we asked respondents how safe they felt, and found a nearly evenly split: 35% feel somewhat safe, 34% do not feel safe, 26% feel safe, and 5% are unsure. This means a combined 69% feel either unsafe or only somewhat safe - a remarkable level of personal insecurity driven by a conflict thousands of kilometres away for most respondents.

Do you currently feel safe?
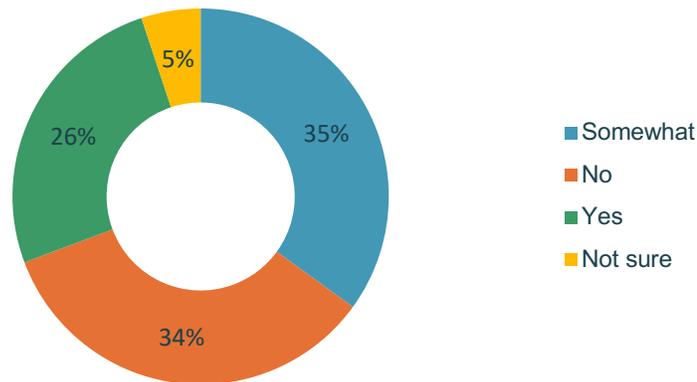
Kenya registers the highest level of insecurity (53% say no), likely compounded by the country's direct experience with regional terrorism and proximity to conflict zones in the Horn of Africa. Saudi Arabia shows the highest sense of safety (39% yes), despite geographic proximity to the conflict, possibly reflecting confidence in national defence or a "nothing to do with us" attitude.

Women are significantly more likely to report feeling unsafe (39% vs. 31% for men), a pattern consistent across all six countries. This finding has implications for gender-sensitive programming in humanitarian and development contexts.

Personal Experience

GeoPoll also asked the respondents if they had been personally impacted by the wall, and if so, to describe any personal impacts. The most striking finding is that while a majority report no personal impact, those who do overwhelmingly describe economic consequences.

As expected, given its proximity, Pakistan stands out dramatically: nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents report some form of personal impact, far exceeding that of any other country. Nigeria (48%) and Kenya (45%) also report substantial impact. By contrast, Saudi Arabia (81%), despite its geographic proximity, reports the lowest personal impact – likely reflecting the Kingdom's relative economic insulation.

In their own words…

Among the respondents reporting some impact, the dominant themes were economic:

General Inflation and Rising Prices (38%) - The most commonly cited impact was a generalised cost-of-living squeeze, coming surprisingly early on in the conflict. Nigerian respondents with impact were especially likely to mention prices (65%), followed by Egypt (46%) and South Africa (36%).

"Only high prices" — Kenya

"Stock, commodity and crypto market liquidation" — South Africa

"ارتفاع الاسعار بشكل عام"

[Prices have risen generally] — Egypt

Fuel and Transport Costs (33%) - Fuel price spikes and their knock-on effect on transport were the most concrete, frequently cited mechanism. Nigeria again led (65% of impacted respondents), as reports from the country indicate that fuel prices have begun to rise, citing the conflict. Egyptian respondents also cited fuel in significant numbers (قوود, بنزين).

"Expected hike in cost of fuel" — Kenya

"Increase in transportation fee and some food stuff in region" — Nigeria

"نعم تم زيادة اسعار البنزين والغاز بشكل كبير"

[Yes, petrol and gas prices have increased significantly] — Egypt

"بالفعل قبل يومين تم زيادة الوقود بنسبة ٣٠%"

[Just two days ago fuel was increased by 30%] — Egypt

"The fuel in my country is going to increase drastically next month" — South Africa

Economic Hardship and Employment (9%) - Broader economic impacts including job disruption, income decline, and business harm were described.

"Affected my job" — Saudi Arabia

"Yes, because sometimes my work is affected due to bombing" — Saudi Arabia

Fear, Anxiety, and Safety Concerns (3%) - A smaller group described psychological impacts and security fears, spread across all countries. Saudi Arabia's impacted respondents were notably likely to mention safety concerns, despite the overall low impact rate.

"The conflict gives me anxiety and uncertainty about what to expect" — South Africa

"It's worrisome as we are in alliance with the States so we could be hit next" — Pakistan

The conflict's personal impact is felt primarily through economics like fuel prices and inflation, not physical security. Pakistan is an outlier, with nearly three-quarters reporting some impact. Egyptian Arabic-language respondents frequently cite fuel price hikes with striking specificity (30% increase). Saudi Arabia's low impact rate suggests effective economic insulation despite regional proximity.

The Representation Gap

The Iran–Israel–U.S. conflict has unfolded against a backdrop of deep structural imbalance in who gets to shape the global response. Africa, home to 1.4 billion people, holds no permanent seat on the UN Security Council; neither does Latin America, South Asia, or the Arab world. Decisions about sanctions, ceasefires, and military intervention are debated and vetoed in chambers where the populations most affected by the ripple effects, such as rising fuel prices, food insecurity, and forced displacement, have the least institutional voice. At the same time, research has shown that even where public opinion runs strong, as it does across much of the Arab world and the African continent, citizens often find themselves underrepresented by their own governments, whose foreign policy positions are shaped more by geopolitical alignment than by domestic sentiment. The result is a representation gap that operates at two levels: ordinary people in the Global South are marginalized in the international institutions that govern the conflict and are frequently marginalized within their own political systems as well.

Views are divided as to whether the respondent's country's voice is being heard in international discourse about the war: 32% say yes, 31% somewhat, 29% no, and 8% are unsure. The sense of voicelessness is most acute in Kenya (55% no), Nigeria (45% no), and South Africa (44% no), while Saudi Arabia (55% yes) and Egypt (42% yes) feel most empowered. This pattern closely tracks with each country's actual influence in international forums and regional diplomacy.

### Representation in International Discourse
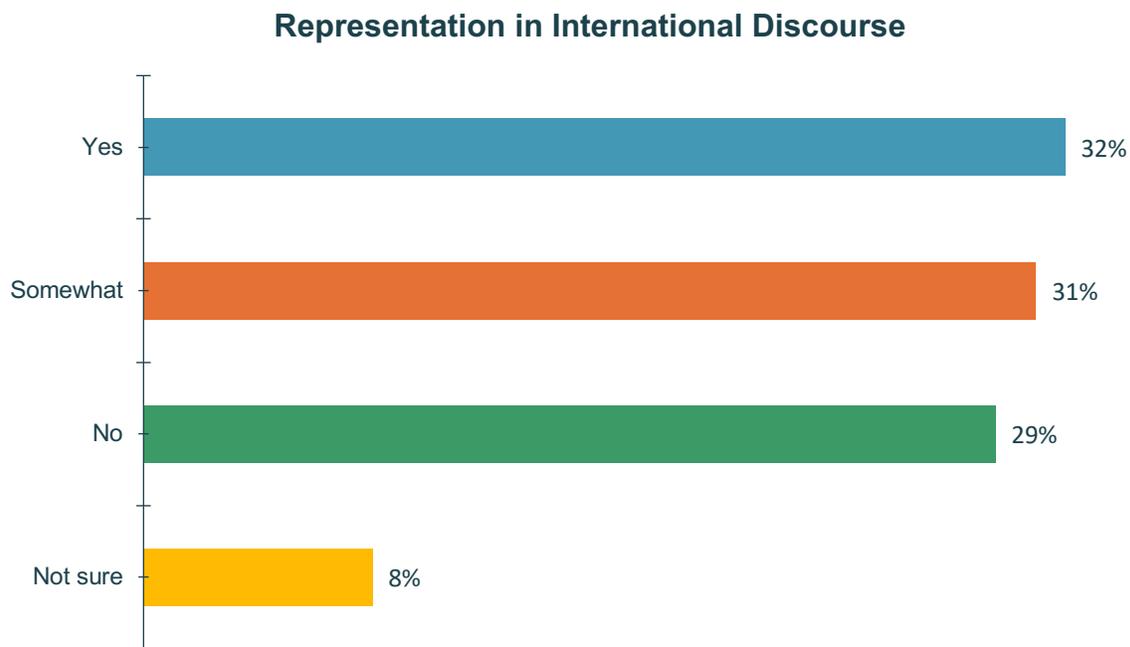
The perception that African voices are excluded from international discussions about the conflict provides strong support for initiatives to include Global South perspectives in multilateral negotiations, UN General Assembly deliberations, and international media coverage.

Western Media Credibility Under Strain

The way a conflict is narrated shapes how it is understood and by whom. Western media outlets remain among the most widely distributed sources of international reporting, yet their framing of the Iran–Israel–U.S. conflict has drawn persistent scrutiny. Critics have long questioned whether coverage from major Western newsrooms adequately represents the perspectives, concerns, and lived realities of populations outside Europe and North America. Accusations of selective emphasis, double standards in the language of condemnation versus restraint, and the privileging of certain geopolitical narratives over others have intensified as the conflict has escalated. For citizens in the six countries surveyed, many of whom rely on a mix of local, regional, and international media, the question of whether Western outlets can be trusted to report fairly on a crisis with such profound implications speaks directly to broader anxieties about whose voices count in the global information ecosystem and whether the stories being told about this conflict reflect the full complexity of its impact.

Accuracy of Western Media Coverage

Very accurate	23%
Somewhat accurate	40%
Often misleading	25%
Not sure	13%
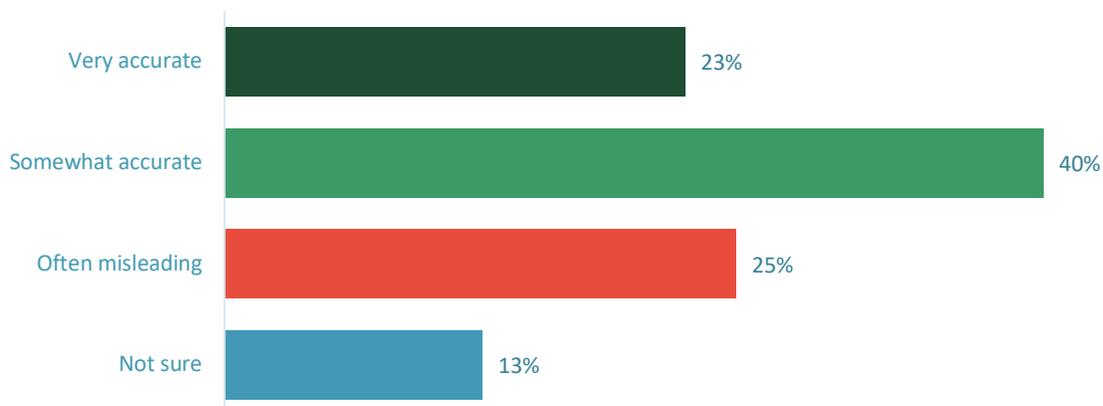
Forty percent describe Western media coverage as somewhat accurate, 25% say it is often misleading, 23% say it is very accurate, and 13% are unsure. The perception that Western coverage is misleading is highest in Egypt (31%), Pakistan (30%), and Saudi Arabia (29%), countries with more controlled media environments, compared to Kenya (14%) and Nigeria (13%).

Given that respondents were quite confident that the information they receive about the conflict is accurate (e.g., 40.5% were "very confident"), but significantly less confident that Western media coverage is accurate, it follows that citizens of the Global South generally see Western media as more biased than their own preferred news sources.
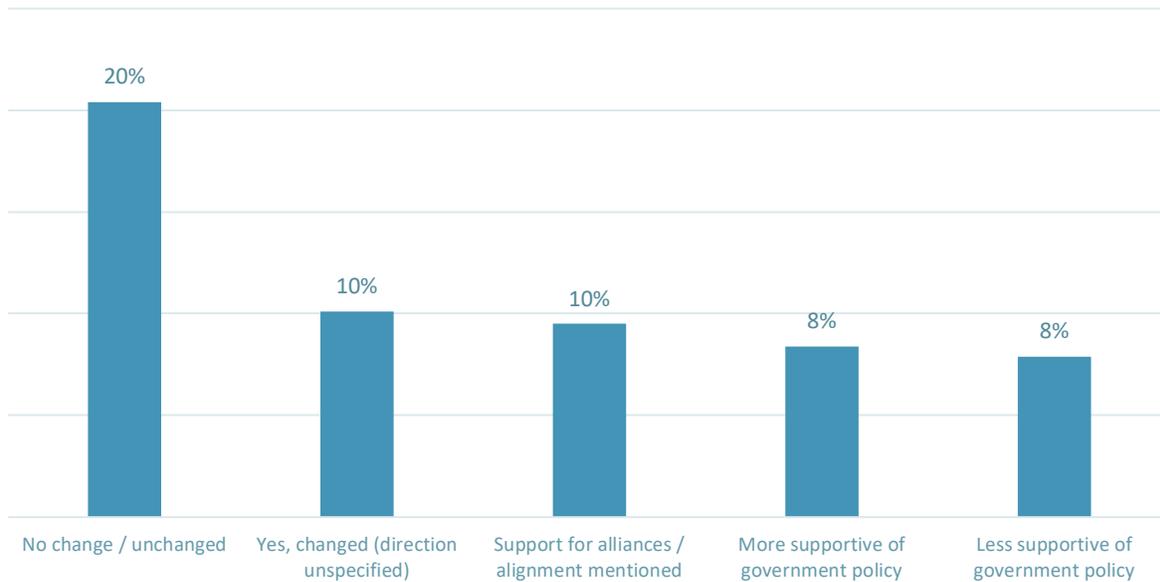
> *The finding that one in four respondents considers Western media coverage of the conflict to be "often misleading" represents both a challenge and an opportunity for credible news organisations and international broadcasters seeking to serve audiences in the Global South.*

Foreign Policy and Next Steps

The Impact of the Conflict on Citizens' Foreign Policy Perceptions

We also asked whether the conflict had made respondents more or less supportive of their countries' current foreign policy alliances. The picture that emerges is nuanced and varies sharply by country.

Foreign Policy Perceptions

No change / unchanged	Yes, changed (direction unspecified)	Support for alliances / alignment mentioned	More supportive of government policy	Less supportive of government policy
20%	10%	10%	8%	8%

Kenya: Leaning Critical - Kenyan respondents were notably more likely to have become less supportive (21%) than more supportive (16%) of their government's foreign policy. This is the widest gap in the sample and suggests that Kenyans regret their country's deep trade ties with Iran.

> "I am less supportive since my country questioned the murder of Palestinians and no one cared" — Kenya
> "It seems that my country is for Iran and I think that is not good" — Kenya

Nigeria: Polarised But Alliance-Conscious - Nigerian responses were balanced between more (15%) and less (15%) supportive, but Nigeria had the highest rate of alliance-related responses (17.6%), suggesting respondents are actively evaluating their country's diplomatic partnerships.

South Africa: Slightly More Critical - South Africa mirrors Kenya with a slight lean toward less supportive (15%) over more supportive (14%). The large no-change group (27%) is interesting given the complex multilateral dynamics between South Africa and Israel, the United States, and Iran: for example, one might have expected South Africans to be less supportive of partnerships with either Iran (given its increasingly dire situation) or the United States (given that the U.S. started the war). On the other hand, it is possible that respondents' biases toward one partner or another washed out any differentiation in how they view their country's partnerships as a whole.

Egypt: Alliance-Oriented - Egyptian respondents had a large "yes, changed" group (13%) and frequent alliance mentions (11%), but the direction of change was more often supportive. Arabic-language verbatims reveal respondents evaluating alliances in terms of national protection:

> "نعم لأن هذه التحالفات تدعم بلدي وتقف معه ضد أي عدوان"
>
> [Yes, because these alliances support my country and stand with it against any aggression] — Egypt
>
> "أقل تأيدا لأنها يجب أن تقطع علاقتها مع إسرائيل"
>
> [Less supportive because it should cut ties with Israel] — Egypt
>
> "أكثر تأييدا فلا بد من العمل على أكثر من جهة"
>
> [More supportive – we must work on multiple fronts] — Egypt

Saudi Arabia: Alignment With Government - Among Saudi respondents, no-change (17%) and yes-changed (8%) responses were common, but explicit "more supportive" (5%) outnumbered "less supportive" (1%), suggesting the Kingdom's diplomatic stance resonates with citizens.

> "Less supportive because our leader has no power to affect or influence the world" — Saudi Arabia
>
> "I don't know what to say, this war is scary, is big, doesn't need any answer" — South Africa

Pakistan: Engagement Without Clear Direction - Pakistani respondents were the most likely to say their views changed (10%) but the least likely to specify a direction. Many wrote in Urdu, expressing complex views about their country's double-edged positioning:

> "Our country Pakistan is still sitting silent and foreign policy support is neutral" — Pakistan (translated from Urdu)

Overall, the conflict has not produced a uniform shift in foreign policy views. About one in five respondents report no change. Among those who have shifted, sub-Saharan African respondents lean slightly more critical, while MENA respondents are more alliance-conscious and tend toward government alignment. The alliance dimension - barely visible in English-only analysis – emerges strongly when Arabic responses are included.

What Should the Next Steps Be?

The final open-ended question asked respondents for their views on the path to resolution. The overwhelming sentiment, consistent across all countries, is a call for diplomatic engagement.

The Diplomacy Consensus

> # 45%
> Called for peace, negotiations, or dialogue

Nearly half of all respondents across all six countries and all languages used terms equivalent to "peace negotiations," "dialogue," or "diplomacy" (سلام، مفاوضات، حوار، تفاوض, muzakrat, bat cheet). This was the dominant theme by a wide margin.

Theme	Overall	Kenya	Nigeria	S. Africa	Egypt	Saudi	Pakistan
Peace/dialogue	45.4%	66.0%	63.5%	47.0%	42.1%	31.7%	21.8%
Ceasefire	5.9%	8.7%	6.0%	3.6%	6.1%	6.1%	5.1%
UN/intl. intervention	4.0%	7.5%	4.8%	2.2%	3.9%	4.0%	1.5%
US should stop	1.8%	4.0%	1.6%	4.1%	0.4%	0.2%	2.0%
Don't know	1.5%	0.4%	3.0%	2.7%	0.9%	1.0%	1.3%
Iran comply/surrender	1.3%	1.4%	6.0%	1.4%	0.1%	–	0.5%
Regional diplomacy	1.3%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	2.1%	1.7%	2.3%
De-escalation	1.0%	1.4%	1.4%	0.8%	1.0%	0.6%	0.5%

- **Ceasefire as Immediate Priority (5.9%) -** A distinct cluster called for an immediate ceasefire (وقف إطلاق النار ,وقف الحرب, jang band) as a precondition for talks. This was evenly distributed between sub-Saharan Africa and MENA.

  > "Stop the war first, then talk" — Kenya
  > "حلا النزاع بوقف اطلاق النار واحلال السلام"
  > [Resolve the conflict by ceasefire and establishing peace] — Egypt
  > "يجب على الاطراف الكف فورا عن الحرب"
  > [The parties must immediately stop the war] — Egypt

- **UN and International Intervention (4.0%) -** Calls for multilateral action came from all regions. Egyptian and Saudi respondents specifically referenced the UN (الأمم المتحدة) and the UN Security Council (مجلس الأمن).

  > "UNO should intervene and pass the resolution to stop the war immediately" — Saudi Arabia
  > "على الدول العظمى أن تتدخل لحل الصراع باسرع وقت ممكن"
  > [The great powers must intervene to resolve the conflict as quickly as possible] — Egypt

- **U.S. Withdrawal (1.8%) -** Calls for U.S. withdrawal were concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya 4.0%, South Africa 4.1%), consistent with the framing of U.S. aggression observed in Question 1. This theme was notably absent from Saudi and Egyptian responses.

  > "The U.S. should stop intervening in the Middle East, it doesn't concern them" — Egypt
  > "America should leave the region alone" — South Africa

- **Iran Compliance (1.3%) -** A small group, concentrated in Nigeria (6.0%), called for Iran to surrender or denuclearise. This was virtually absent in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, where respondents were more likely to frame Iran sympathetically or call for balanced negotiation.

- **Regional and Islamic Diplomacy (1.3%) -** A theme that emerged primarily from Arabic-language responses: calls for Arab, Muslim, or regional solidarity and diplomatic coordination. This was strongest in Egypt (2.1%), Saudi Arabia (1.7%), and Pakistan (2.3%).

  > "أن يكون هناك دعوه تحالف أو دعوه سلميه"
  > [There should be a call for alliance or a call for peace] — Egypt
  > "لازم كل الاطراف تتجه للسلام ويلتزموا القانون الدولي وحماية المدنيين"
  > [All parties must move toward peace, abide by international law, and protect civilians] — Egypt

Overall, there is a powerful cross-cultural, cross-linguistic consensus in favour of diplomatic resolution. Peace negotiations and dialogue are the overwhelmingly preferred path. The inclusion of Arabic responses reveals additional themes – particularly regional/Islamic diplomacy and de-escalation – that were invisible in English-only analysis. Virtually no respondents in any country advocate for military escalation.

5. Cross-Cutting Themes

5.1 The Sub-Saharan vs. Muslim-Majority Divide

A consistent finding across nearly all questions is the divergence between sub-Saharan African countries (Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa) and Muslim-majority countries (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan). Sub-Saharan respondents are more likely to blame the U.S. for the conflict (39% vs. 21%), trust the UN (31% vs. 14%), feel personally unsafe (42% vs. 27%), and perceive their countries as voiceless (47% vs. 16%). Muslim-majority respondents are more likely to blame Israel (53% vs. 19%), sympathise with Iran (50% vs. 37%), and call for direct government involvement rather than neutrality.

The implication here is that international organisations and development agencies working across these regions should anticipate fundamentally different narrative frameworks. A conflict communication strategy effective in Nairobi will likely be counterproductive in Cairo.

5.2 The Saudi Exception

Saudi Arabia consistently occupies a distinctive position. On sympathy, 65% choose neither side. On escalation, concern is the lowest of any country. On economic impact, it shows the most insulation. On other countries or bodies looking out for its and world interests, it shows the highest pessimism (23% say none). This pattern reflects a combination of economic resilience as a net oil exporter, deliberate government positioning between regional powers, a tightly managed media environment, and the kingdom's complex strategic relationships with both the U.S. and regional Muslim actors.

5.3 Pakistan's Polarised Profile

Pakistan displays the most extreme and consistent positions in the dataset: 63% blame Israel, 82% sympathise with Iran, 42% want their government to support Iran, 49% trust China most, 86% fear global war, and 85% report significant fuel price impacts. This combination of religious solidarity, anti-Western sentiment, strategic alignment with China, and acute economic vulnerability makes Pakistan the most intense case study in the survey.

5.4 Nigeria's Contrarian Pattern

Nigeria departs from other sub-Saharan African countries on several indicators. It is the only African country where Iran is held most responsible (39%), where the U.S. is seen as acting for regional stability (46%), and where pro-Israel sympathy is relatively greatest (32%). These patterns may reflect the influence of Nigeria's religiously diverse population (roughly evenly split between Muslim and Christian communities), as well as Nigeria's non-aligned status combined with its relationship with the United States, resulting in competing media narratives and a less unified public posture.

5.5 Multilateralism Versus the West

A recurring theme across the data is a dispersion of soft power influence. Declining U.S. favourability, moderate but still significant UN trust (particularly when compared to Western trust in the UN), and growing orientation toward China point to a quiet but consequential realignment of global influence from the West and toward both non-Western and multilateral alternatives. This has implications for the legitimacy and effectiveness of any internationally mediated peace process.

5.7 The Trust Vacuum in the Middle East

Perhaps the most striking structural finding is the depth of institutional distrust in the two Middle Eastern countries surveyed. When asked which international body they trust most to mediate the conflict, nearly half of Saudi respondents (49%) and 42% of Egyptians answered either "none of them" or "not sure" - compared to roughly 15% in each of the sub-Saharan African countries and Pakistan. Egypt's distrust extends even to the United Nations, which only 8% of Egyptian respondents trust, by far the lowest figure in the survey. This trust vacuum is consequential: it suggests that populations closest to the conflict have the least faith in any external actor's capacity or willingness to resolve it. For multilateral institutions, this represents a credibility crisis that cannot be addressed through rhetoric alone, it shows accumulated disillusionment with decades of perceived inaction or bias.

5.8 The Information Paradox - Confident but Sceptical

A counterintuitive pattern emerges when information confidence is cross-referenced with perceptions of media accuracy. Among respondents who report being "very confident" in the information they receive, 43% rate media coverage as "very accurate," but among social media users specifically, 27% say coverage is "often misleading," compared to 24% among those relying on other sources. The paradox is that the dominant information channel - social media - is also the one its own users are most likely to view as unreliable. This creates a population that is simultaneously highly informed and quietly uncertain about the quality of what it knows, a combination that makes public opinion particularly volatile and susceptible to narrative shifts driven by a single viral event or claim.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research provides compelling evidence that the Global South is not merely a passive bystander in the Middle East conflict. Citizens across Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia are highly engaged, deeply affected economically, and increasingly disillusioned with the existing international order's ability to manage the crisis. Based on the findings, we offer the following recommendations:

For Governments

- **Prioritise economic mitigation:** With 70% reporting significant fuel price impacts and 70% very concerned about cost of living, governments should prioritise mitigation strategies for food and fuel shortages, as well as social safety nets targeted at the most vulnerable populations. The data demonstrate which countries are hardest hit and what specific economic consequences (inflation, fuel, food, jobs) may require attention.
- **Respond to the call for peace:** The overwhelming preference for peace negotiations (57%) provides legitimacy for governments to take an active diplomatic stance. This is particularly relevant for African governments, whose populations feel most excluded from discussions.
- **Address the security perception gap:** With 34% reporting they do not feel safe, particularly women (39%), governments should consider public communication campaigns that provide factual context about national security preparedness without dismissing legitimate concerns.

For International Development Organisations

- **Fund conflict-impact research:** This study demonstrates the value of rapid mobile-based surveying to capture real-time public opinion. Funding similar research on an ongoing basis would provide critical evidence for programming decisions.
- **Localise communication strategies:** The sharp divergence in attribution and sympathy narratives across countries means that a one-size-fits-all communication strategy will fail. Messaging should be tested and localised.
- **Include Global South voices:** The finding that 29% feel their country has no voice - rising to 55% in Kenya - should galvanise efforts to include developing country perspectives in multilateral processes.

For Media Organisations

- **Address the trust deficit:** With 25% of respondents saying Western media coverage is often misleading, there is a clear market for credible, transparent reporting on the conflict from Global South perspectives.
- **Invest in local-language digital content:** Given that social media is the primary information source (33%) and confidence varies by country, media organisations should invest in vernacular digital content that provides accessible, fact-based coverage.

For Researchers

- **Track evolving opinion:** This survey provides a March 2026 baseline. As the conflict evolves, repeat surveys will be essential to track shifts in perception, attribution, and economic impact.
- **More Analysis:** GeoPoll will offer this raw data to any researchers who wish to perform further analysis for more themes and findings. Please contact us.

About GeoPoll

GeoPoll is a full-service research agency that collects data primarily through mobile-based methods across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Since its founding in 2012, GeoPoll has operated in over 130 countries, building one of the broadest research footprints in the emerging nations.

GeoPoll conducts over 5 million surveys annually using a multi-mode approach that includes SMS, live voice calls (CATI), mobile web, the proprietary GeoPoll App, and in-person interviews (CAPI). Its infrastructure spans partnerships with mobile network operators that provide direct access to over 300 million people, supported by a profiled respondent panel of 5 million and a network of more than 10,000 trained interviewers across 65 call centres. This reach allows GeoPoll to collect data rapidly and at scale in markets where traditional survey infrastructure is limited or absent.

GeoPoll has built a particular capability in collecting data under the conditions where it is needed most and hardest to obtain. The company has deployed mobile surveys during active conflict zones, natural disasters, and disease outbreaks, environments where conventional research find difficult to operate in. This includes rapid-response data collection during the Ebola and COVID-19 outbreaks in West and East Africa, food security assessments in conflict-affected regions of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, and public opinion research in fragile states where physical access is constrained by insecurity or infrastructure collapse. The ability to reach respondents via basic SMS or recorded phone calls, which requires neither internet access nor a smartphone, means GeoPoll can gather data from populations that are effectively invisible to online-only research methodologies.

GeoPoll works with international development organisations, UN agencies, governments, NGOs, and private-sector brands seeking reliable data in hard-to-reach markets. The company's quality assurance protocols include AI-assisted review of call transcripts to verify enumerator compliance with training protocols, standard deduplication and outlier detection, and multi-language instrument design with in-country translation review.

GeoPoll is headquartered in the United States with operations across its focus regions. For more information, visit www.geopoll.com.

Acknowledgements

Frankline Kibuacha	**Data Analysis and Report Author** Marketing Director, GeoPoll LinkedIn
Newton Adika	**Fieldwork Lead** Marketing Executive, GeoPoll LinkedIn
Evan Yoak	**Expert Review** Consultant, Governance Research LinkedIn
Donna-lee Ginsberg	**Review & Instrument Design** Chief of Staff & Research Manager, GeoPoll LinkedIn

Contacts

info@GeoPoll.com
www.GeoPoll.com

Media inquiries: frankline@GeoPoll.com