

New Egyptian Opinion Poll: Continued Dissatisfaction with Government Performance, Almost Half Reject Mass Protests, and Mixed Views on Foreign Relations

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Brief Analysis

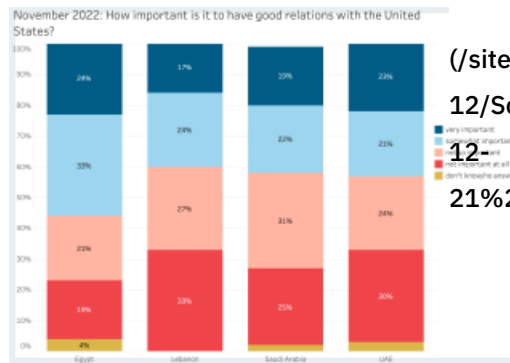
The most recent poll results from Egypt suggest a disconnect between public opinion and public policy, especially on economic concerns and relations with Israel.

A new public opinion poll of Egyptian citizens, commissioned by the Washington Institute and conducted by a regional commercial firm in November 2022, showed that more than half of Egyptians place equal importance on their country's relations with the United States and Russia, while a significant majority of the population voiced negative views of ties with Iran.

On the domestic front, a deepening economic crisis in Egypt has likely influenced the increasing percentage of Egyptians who are not satisfied with their government's performance on key economic issues. However, half of the Egyptians polled do not support street protests. Notably, on this issue and other questions addressed in the survey, there are no statistically significant differences between the responses of Egyptian adults under age thirty and the country's older generation.

Egyptians are Sharply Divided on Importance of Relations with U.S. and Russia, while Iran Seen as Unimportant

Consistent with the results of the last poll conducted in July/August 2022, Egyptians retain mixed views on the importance of their relations with foreign countries. The United States seems to be at the forefront, with 57% of respondents stating these relations are either "very" or "somewhat" important. And despite the fact that almost three-fourths of Egyptians see the Russian military actions in Ukraine as at least "somewhat" negative—in part due to the war's impact on their daily lives through rising food prices—50% of Egyptians continue to value relations with it.



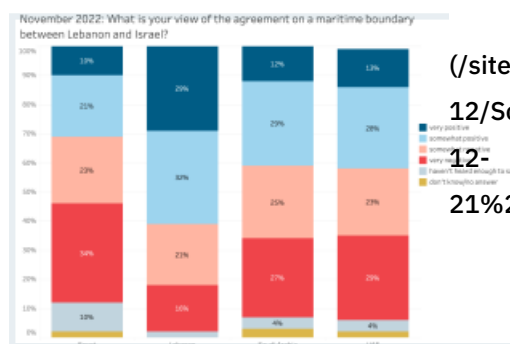
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Such mixed views are also apparent given the 49% of the Egyptians polled who agree at least “somewhat” with this proposition: “We cannot count on the U.S. these days, so we should look more to other countries like China or Russia as partners.” In contrast, and consistent with the previous poll, a significant majority (87%) of respondents say that good relations with Iran are either “not so important” or “not important at all.”

In the same vein, more than one-third (38%) of respondents agreed on the proposition that “since Iran is now getting so close to having a nuclear bomb, it’s time for an Arab country to get one too.” Notably, more than half of Egyptians (60%) disagreed with this proposal. Reactions to this statement could depend on the respondents' political backgrounds—some may believe it risky to own such technology, whereas others may view a nuclear bomb as a national security requirement.

Abraham Accords, Contact with Israelis, and Israeli Elections Remain Unpopular, though Israel-Lebanon Maritime Deal has Some Support

Though Egypt was the first Arab country to establish formal diplomatic ties with Israel, there is still strong popular resistance against ties with Israel or Israelis. When asked about their views of the Abraham Accords between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan, only 12% of Egyptians polled viewed its effects on the region as positive. This percentage is approximately the same as when polled in July/August, while 82% see them as at least “somewhat” negative. Such attitudes reflect the wide gap between the public and the policies of its own government on this matter. In contrast, more Egyptians view the recent border demarcation agreement between Israel and Lebanon in a positive light. When asked about the agreement on the maritime boundary between Israel and Lebanon, 57% labeled the agreement as negative, versus almost one-third of the public seeing it as positive.



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In the same context, the Egyptian public still shows very little support for any form of “normalization” with Israelis. A mere 11% agree that “people who want to have business or sports contacts with Israelis should be allowed to do so.” This Egyptian popular attitude stands in contrast with the roughly 40% in the Gulf Arab states of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain who now support such ties. In the same vein, only 5% of the Egyptians polled express a positive view regarding the results of the most recent Israeli elections. Seventy-three percent said they felt “very negative” about the outcome, and another 16% saw it as “somewhat negative.”

Egyptians' Dissatisfaction with Government Performance Continues to Rise, but Almost Half Reject Mass Protest

As the economic situation in Egypt continues to steadily worsen, the Egyptian citizens demonstrated a high level of dissatisfaction with their government's performance. More than two-third of the respondents (69%) say that the government is doing "too little to meet people's need for an acceptable standard of living." The current percentage depicts a sharp jump from the last poll, when Egyptians were more divided—with 47% saying the government was doing too little, while the rest thought the country was doing "too much" or "the right amount."

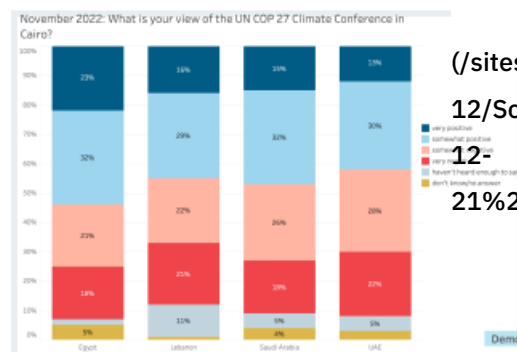
Likewise, when asked if the government is sharing the burden of taxes and other obligations in a fair manner, 58% say it is doing too little. Moreover, an overwhelming majority (76%) of the Egyptians polled expressed a participation crisis and maintained that the government does "too little" to pay attention to the opinions of ordinary citizens.

Despite the deteriorating economic situation and its repercussions on the citizens' daily lives, almost half of the Egyptians polled reject mass protest. When asked if "it's a good thing we are not having mass street protests against the government, as in some other countries lately," almost half of the population (49%) agreed on the statement. Such a view is also consistent with their response to the current anti-government protests in Iran, where 54% saw those protests as negative.

More Egyptians See the World Cup in Positive Light than COP 27, while OPEC Decision is Widely Rejected

Like the three other Arab countries surveyed this month (Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE), the large majority of Egyptians respondents voiced a favorable opinion towards the World Cup tournament held in Qatar. Eighty-six percent of Egyptians polled stated that the recent World Cup tournament has had a "somewhat" or "very" positive effect on the region. The pervasiveness of such attitudes in Egypt and in the three Arab countries mentioned above echoes the importance and the popularity of the event among the Arab population.

Surprisingly, the UN's COP 27 Climate Conference that Egypt recently hosted did not garner as much support among the Egyptians as the World Cup did. While more than half of Egyptian respondents (55%) viewed the conference as positive, 38% labeled it as negative.



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Like their Lebanese counterparts, a large majority of Egyptians polled assessed the regional effect of the latest decision from OPEC+ to cut oil production as negative. Less than a quarter of the respondents (19%) view the decision as positive, while 72% saw the decision as having a "somewhat" or "very" negative impact on the region. Such public attitudes in Egypt and Lebanon—both facing serious economic hardship—suggests citizens' awareness of the potential repercussions of the OPEC+ decision on the prices of oil at home.

Methodological Note

This analysis is based on findings from a personal-interview survey of a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Egyptian citizens, conducted in November 2022 by a highly experienced, independent regional commercial company. The sampling was done according to standard geographical probability procedures, yielding a statistical

margin of error of approximately 3 percent. Strict quality controls and assurances of confidentiality were provided throughout. Full results can be viewed on The Washington Institute's [interactive polling data \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/twi-interactive-polling-platform\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/twi-interactive-polling-platform) platform. Additional methodological details, including demographic breaks and other relevant information, are readily available on request. ❖

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