

# PUBLIC OPINION OF THE ISRAEL AND HAMAS CONFLICT NEARLY A YEAR AFTER THE OCTOBER 7<sup>TH</sup> ATTACKS

As the one-year anniversary of the deadly Hamas attacks on Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup> nears, the latest Pearson Institute/AP-NORC Poll shows that the public's priorities for U.S. involvement remain focused on a few key foreign policy objectives. A majority say it is very important to recover hostages being held in Gaza by Hamas and about half believe it is important to negotiate a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. These priorities are very similar to a survey in [November 2023](#).



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The public spreads blame for the current situation across several entities. About 3 in 4 say that the Israeli government, the Palestinian group Hamas, and the Iranian government are each at least somewhat responsible for the continuation of the fighting.

Many public attitudes toward the conflict have remained relatively stable, but there have been some shifts in opinion over the past year. Israel is more likely to be seen as an ally than it was in [August 2023](#) before the attacks (40% vs. 32%). The public is also more supportive of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state now (29% vs. 22%).

## Three Things You Should Know

About the Pearson Institute/AP-NORC Poll  
Among all Adults:

- 1) About 3 in 4 say Hamas (76%), Israel (75%), and Iran (73%) are at least somewhat responsible for the war's continuation while only 49% say the same about the U.S.
- 2) 25% sympathize more with Israelis than Palestinians while 15% feel the opposite. 31% sympathize with both equally and 26% do not have sympathy for either side. These numbers were similar in August 2023.
- 3) 52% of evangelical Republicans feel the U.S. is not supportive enough of Israelis and only 33% of all other Republicans feel the same.

There are significant differences in attitudes toward the Israelis, Palestinians, and the conflict based on political partisanship, religion, and age.

For example, more Republicans than Democrats (46% vs. 10%), more evangelical Christians than other adults (42% vs. 20%), and more adults age 45 and older than younger adults (31% vs. 18%) sympathize more with the Israelis than the Palestinians

And there are significant differences within the partisans. Older Democrats tend to be more supportive of Israel than younger Democrats and evangelical Republicans are more sympathetic of Israelis than other Republicans.

There are also partisan differences regarding the war between Ukraine and Russia. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to view Russia as an adversary and Ukraine as an ally. Views on U.S. spending on the war have shifted over the past year, as fewer people think the United States is spending too much in Ukraine compared with last [October](#) (34% vs. 52%).

The nationwide poll was conducted by the Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research from September 12 to 16, 2024, using AmeriSpeak®, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 1,111 adults. The margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points.

## **THE PUBLIC SPREADS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTINUED FIGHTING BETWEEN ISRAEL, HAMAS, AND IRAN, AND MANY BELIEVE ISRAEL'S MILITARY HAS GONE TOO FAR IN THE FIGHTING.**

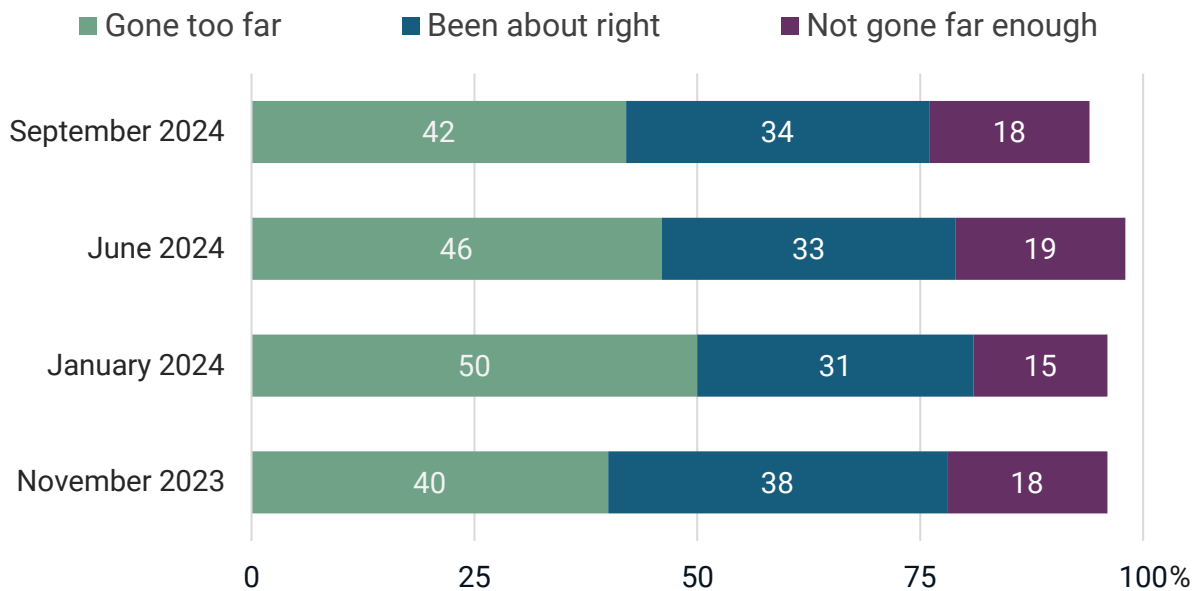
There is a public consensus that both sides are at least somewhat responsible for the war's continuation. About 3 in 4 feel the Israeli government (75%), the Palestinian group Hamas (76%), and the Iranian government (73%) are all at least somewhat responsible. Fewer, 49%, place blame on the U.S. government.

In [January](#), 50% of the public said Israel's military had gone too far. That has since declined to a level about where it was immediately following the October 7<sup>th</sup> attacks (42%). The current survey was conducted in September prior to the escalation in fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

Fewer Republicans than Democrats (18% vs. 32%) or adults under the age of 45 than older adults (39% vs. 51%) say Israel's military has gone too far now compared with January. There have not been significant changes in attitudes among Democrats, independents, or those age 45 and older.

## Views about Israel's military response have fluctuated in the last year

Percent of adults



**Question:** Would you say the military response from Israel in the Gaza Strip has gone too far, been about right, or not gone far enough?

**Source:** AP-NORC Polls conducted November 2-6, 2023 with 1,239 adults, January 25-29 with 1,152 adults, June 20-24 with 1,088 adults, and September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.



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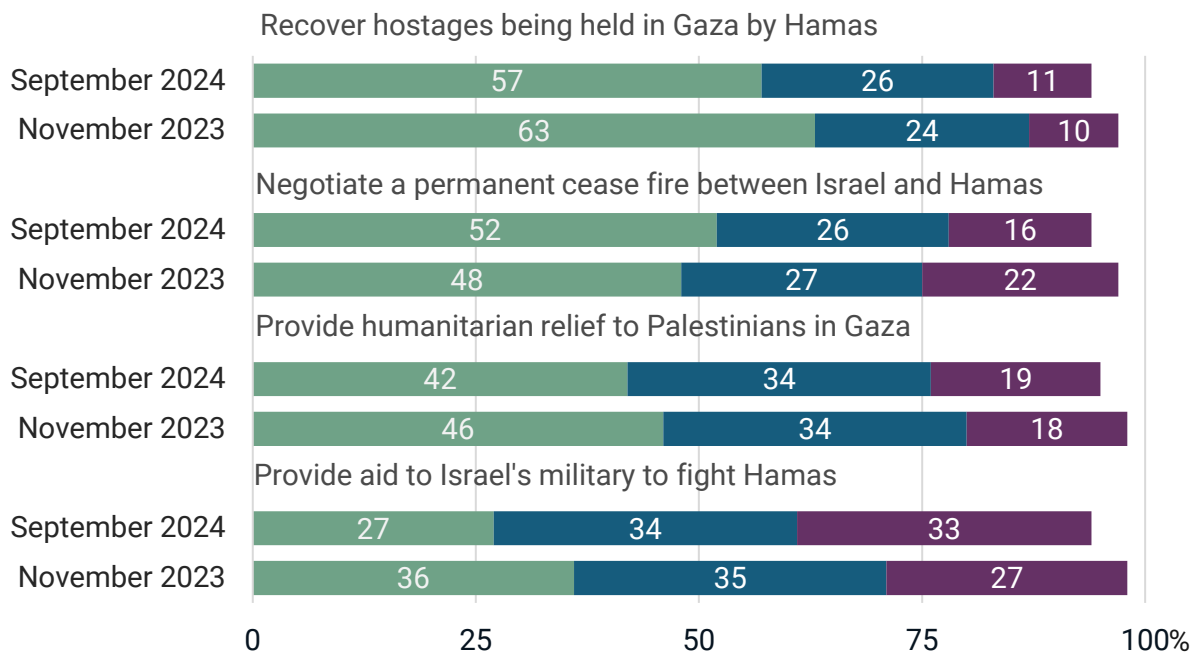
## THE PUBLIC PRIORITIZES RECOVERING THE HOSTAGES BEING HELD IN GAZA AND NEGOTIATING A PERMANENT CEASEFIRE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HAMAS.

Since November 2023, a majority of adults have prioritized the recovery of the hostages being held in Gaza by Hamas and about half say negotiating a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas is extremely or very important. Fewer say it is important that the United States provide humanitarian relief to Palestinians in Gaza or supply Israel's military.

### Public attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy goals are similar to those in November 2023

Percent of adults

■ Extremely/very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not too/not at all important



**Question:** Thinking about the foreign policy goals of the United States, please tell me how important it is for the United States to do each of the following:

**Source:** AP-NORC Polls conducted November 2-6, 2023 with 1,239 adults and September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.



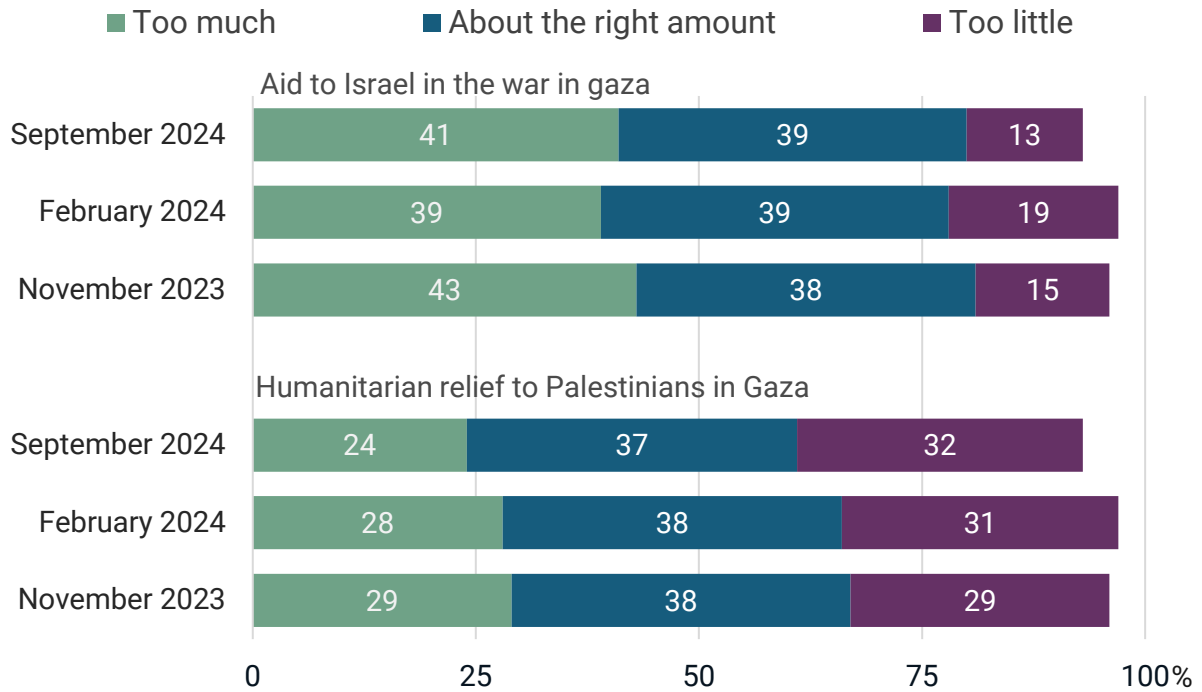
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Opinions have remained steady over how much the United States should spend on aid to Israel or humanitarian relief to Palestinians in Gaza since last November. Currently, 41% believe the United

States is spending too on much on aid to Israel and a quarter think the same regarding humanitarian relief to Palestine.

### Views on U.S. spending in Israel and Gaza have not significantly changed in the last year

Percent of adults



**Question:** Do you think the U.S. government is spending too much, too little or the right amount on each of the following?

**Source:** AP-NORC Polls conducted November 2-6, 2023 with 1,239 adults, February 22-26, 2024 with 1,102 adults, and September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.



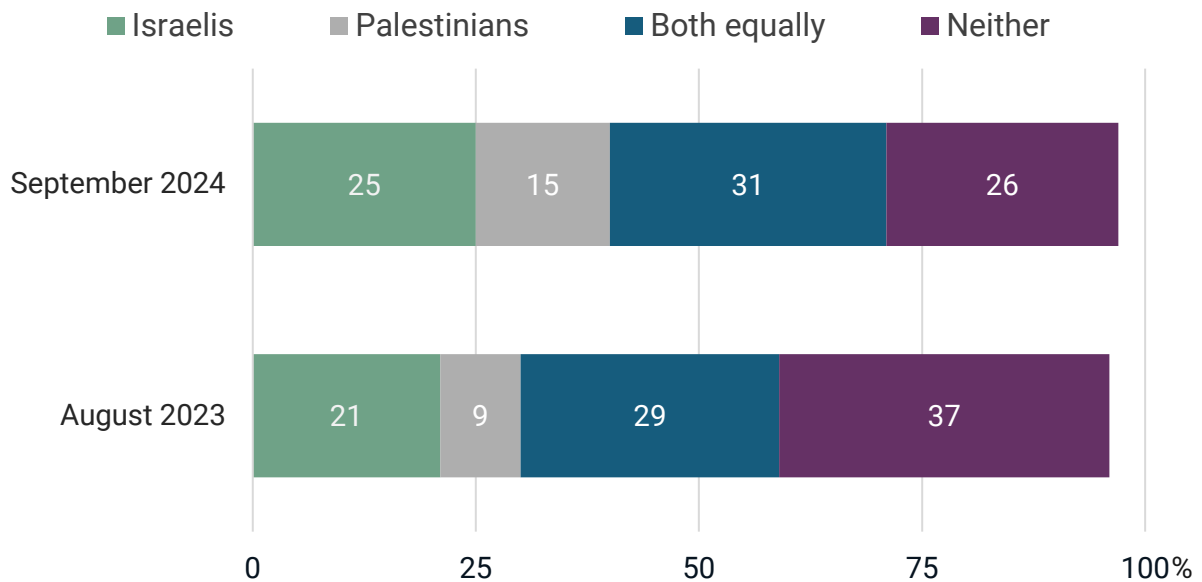
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## THERE IS PUBLIC SYMPATHY FOR BOTH ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS, AND MANY VIEW ISRAEL AS AN ALLY.

Public sympathy toward both Israelis and Palestinians is similar to sentiment in August 2023. About 3 in 10 sympathize with both Israelis and Palestinians equally, while 25% sympathize more with the Israelis and 15% have more sympathy for the Palestinians. In August 2023, before the Hamas attacks on Israel, adults were more inclined to have sympathy for neither side.

### Sympathy for Israelis or Palestinians has not significantly shifted since before the October 7th attacks

Percent of adults



**Question:** In the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, which side do you sympathize with more, Israel, the Palestinians, both equally, or neither?

**Source:** AP-NORC Polls conducted August 10-14, 2023 with 1,165 adults and September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.

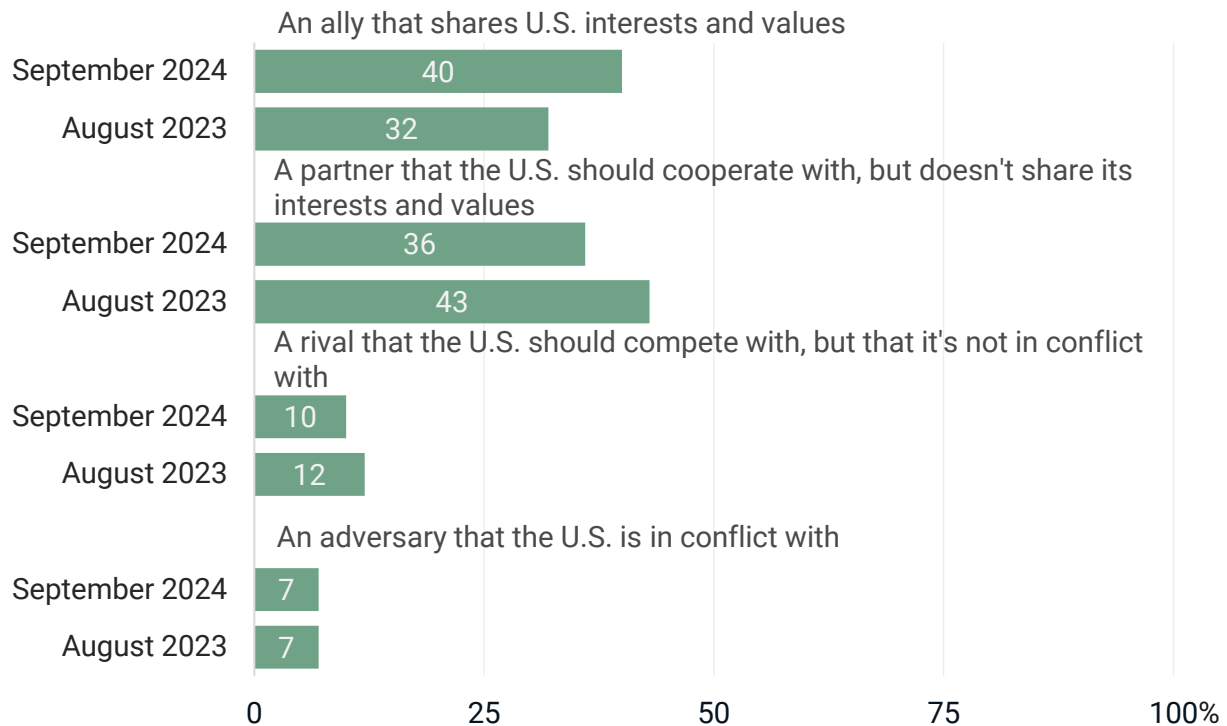


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Forty percent of adults now view Israel as an ally compared with 32% who said the same in August 2023. Over a third currently describe Israel as a partner to cooperate with but does not share U.S. interests and values. Less than a quarter say it's either an adversary or a rival.

## More see Israel as an ally now than before the October 7th attacks

Percent of adults



**Question:** [Israel] Generally speaking, which of the following descriptions do you feel best describes the U.S. relationship with each of the following countries? Would you say that each is....

**Source:** AP-NORC Polls conducted August 10-14, 2023 with 1,165 adults and September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.

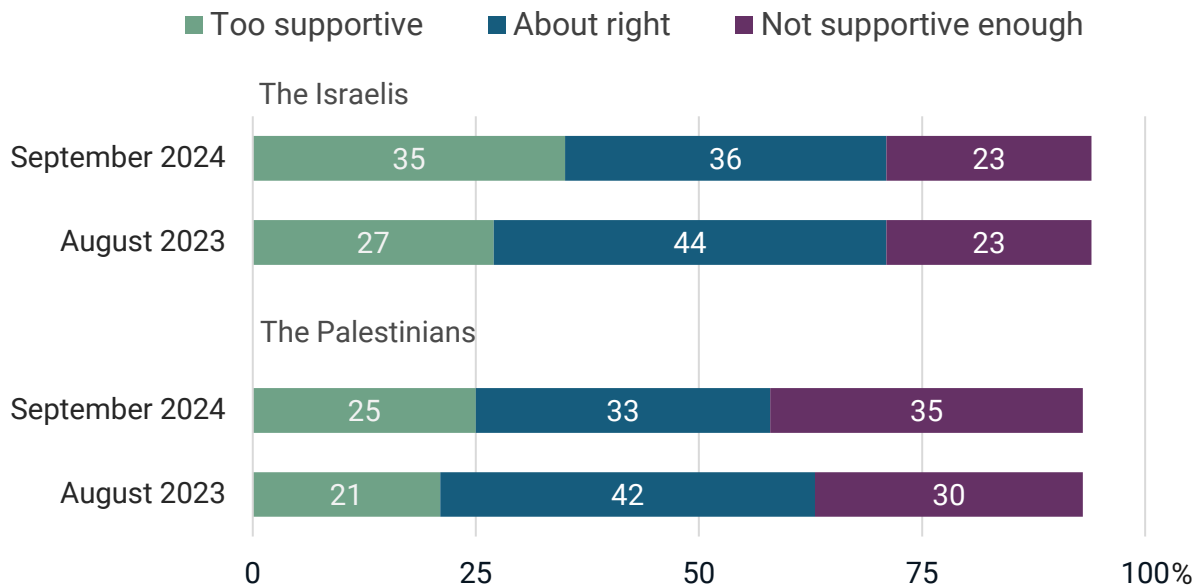


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The public is divided on how much support the United States should provide Israelis or Palestinians. About a quarter of adults believe the United States is too supportive of Palestinians and a third feel the same way about Israelis.

## Views of U.S. support for Israelis and Palestinians have changed little in the last year

Percent of adults



**Question:** Thinking about the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, do you think the United States is too supportive, not supportive enough, or about right in its support of each of the following?

**Source:** AP-NORC Polls conducted August 10-14, 2023 with 1,165 adults and September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.



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## THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONFLICT ESCALATING, AND THERE IS NO CLEAR CONSENSUS ABOUT A TWO-STATE SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT.

When thinking about where the conflict might be headed, 78% of the public are at least somewhat concerned that the war will escalate to a broader conflict in the Middle East and nearly the same amount (77%) is concerned the United States will be drawn into that conflict.

Adults are less concerned that the war between Israel and Hamas will lead to a broader conflict compared with [February 2024](#) (35% vs. 44%). But the survey was conducted in September prior to the escalation in fighting between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

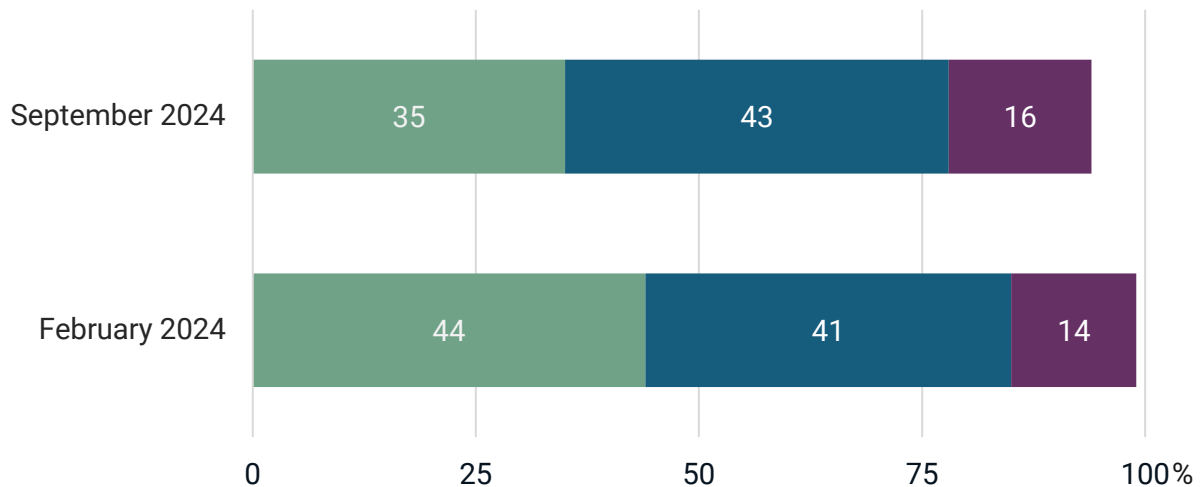
While 50% of Democrats were extremely or very concerned that the war in Israel would lead to a broader conflict in February 2024, only 38% feel the same way now. There was no significant change in the attitudes among Republicans or independents.



## Fewer adults are concerned that the war between Israel and Hamas will lead to a broader conflict in the Middle East compared to February

Percent of adults

■ Extremely/very concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Not very/not at all concerned



**Question:** [That the war between Israel and Hamas will lead to a broader conflict in the Middle East] How concerned are you about each of the following?

**Source:** AP-NORC Polls conducted February 22-26, 2024 with 1,102 adults and September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.



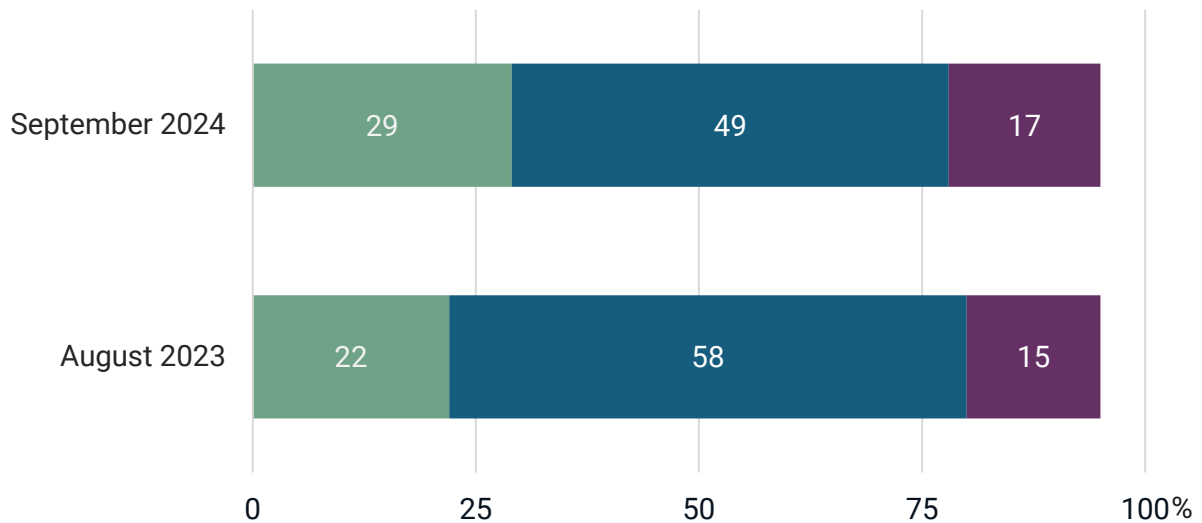
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Although there have been some fluctuations in the level of concern throughout the year, currently, 77% are at least somewhat concerned that the United States will be drawn into the war, not much different from last February when 81% were concerned. The public is more supportive of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state now than it was prior to the start of the conflict (29% vs. 22%). The shift in opinion has been driven by an increase in support for an independent Palestinian state among Democrats (47% vs. 31%).

**More favor the creation of a Palestinian state now than in August 2023**

Percent of adults

■ Strongly/somewhat favor ■ Neither favor nor oppose ■ Strongly/somewhat oppose



**Question:** Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose the establishment of an independent Palestinian state that includes the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem?

**Source:** AP-NORC Polls conducted August 10-14, 2023 with 1,165 adults and September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.



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## THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS IN VIEWS TOWARD ISRAEL AND THE U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONFLICT.

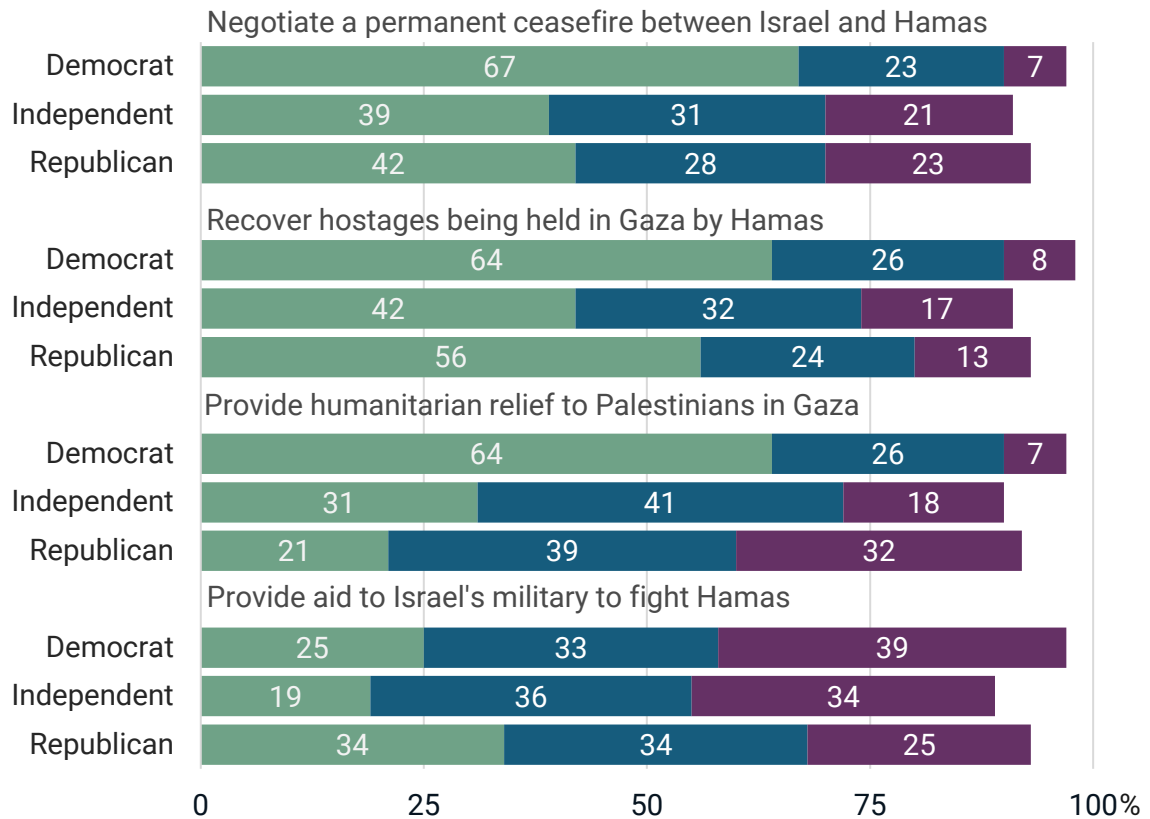
Democrats and Republicans tend to have different views on most issues related to the current conflict between Israel and Hamas. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to sympathize with Israelis (46% vs. 10%), while Democrats are more likely to sympathize with both groups equally (41% vs. 22%).

Only a third of Republicans consider providing aid to Israel's military as extremely or very important, but Republicans are still more likely than Democrats or independents to prioritize it. Democrats are more likely than independents or Republicans to say it is very important for the United States to help negotiate a permanent ceasefire and supply Palestinians with humanitarian relief. Most Democrats and Republicans feel the United States should help recover Israeli hostages being held in Gaza.

## Democrats prioritize reaching a ceasefire agreement and aid to Palestinians more than Republicans

Percent of adults

■ Extremely/very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not too/not at all important



**Question:** Thinking about the foreign policy goals of the United States, please tell me how important it is for the United States to do each of the following:

**Source:** AP-NORC Poll conducted September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.



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## EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS AND OLDER ADULTS TEND TO BE MORE SUPPORTIVE OF ISRAEL THAN OTHER ADULTS.

Identifying as an evangelical Christian is strongly tied to attitudes toward the conflict, even when controlling for partisan and demographic differences.

Evangelical Christians are more likely to sympathize with Israelis than those who do not identify as such (42% vs. 20%). Non-evangelical adults are more likely than evangelical Christians to sympathize

with Palestinians (18% vs. 4%) and four times more likely to favor the establishment of an independent Palestinian state (35% vs. 8%).

Older adults are more likely to consider supporting Israel as a foreign policy priority than younger adults. Those 45 and older are more likely than those under the age of 45 to say recovering the hostages held in Gaza by Hamas (65% vs. 47%), providing aid to the Israeli military (37% vs. 16%), and negotiating a permanent ceasefire (59% vs. 44%) is extremely or very important.

Conversely, adults under the age of 45 are less sympathetic to Israelis than older adults (18% vs. 31%) and less likely to say Hamas is responsible for the continued fighting (68% vs. 82%).

## **THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CONFLICT AMONG OLDER AND YOUNGER DEMOCRATS.**

When it comes to broader feelings about the conflict, Democrats younger than 45 years old are more likely than older Democrats to sympathize more with the Palestinians than the Israelis (37% vs. 20%). However, Democrats 45 and older are more likely than younger adults to think the military response from Israel in the Gaza strip has gone too far (68% vs. 55%).

Democrats age 18-44 are more likely to say the United States is responsible for the continued fighting (65% vs. 51%) than older Democrats. Democrats 45 and older tend to place a higher importance than younger ones on recovering Israeli hostages (70% vs. 56%) and providing aid to Israel's military (32% vs. 16%).

## **EVANGELICAL REPUBLICANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF ISRAEL THAN OTHER REPUBLICANS.**

Republican evangelical Christians have more support for Israel than other Republicans. About half of Republican evangelical Christians think the United States is not supportive enough of the Israelis compared with a third of other Republicans (52% vs. 33%). Only 5% of Republican evangelical Christians favor the establishment of an independent Palestinian state compared with 17% of all other Republicans.

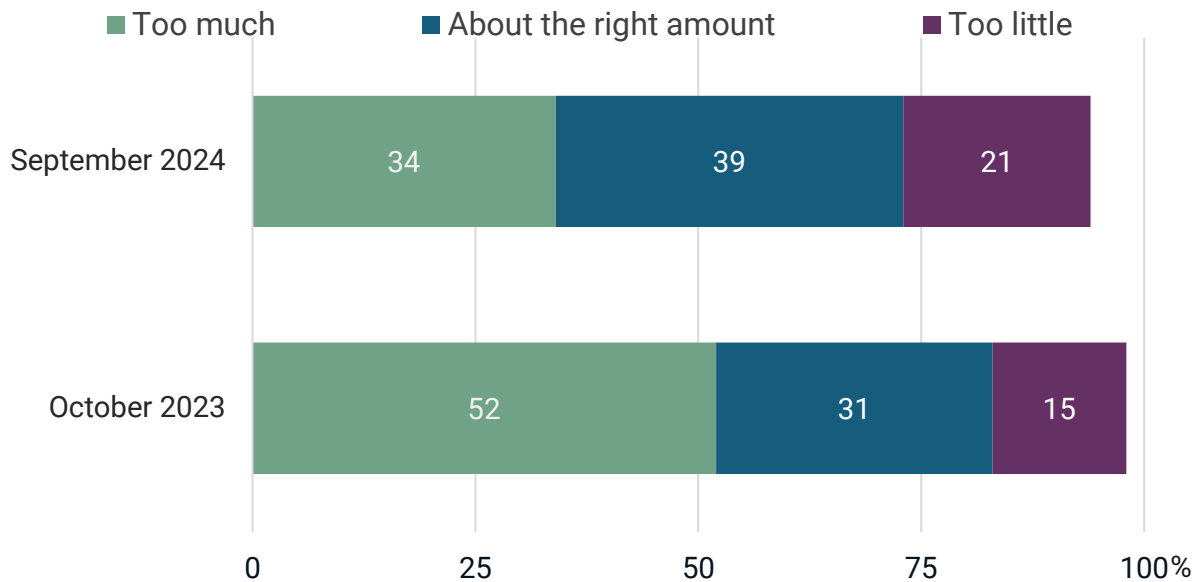
Republican evangelical Christians also are more likely to prioritize U.S. goals in the region than other Republicans. Republicans evangelical Christians are more likely than other Republicans to say it is very or extremely important for the United States to provide aid to Israel's military (48% vs. 28%), help negotiate a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas (56% vs. 36%), and recover the Israeli hostages (67% vs. 51%).

## **THERE IS NO PUBLIC CONSENSUS ON AID TO UKRAINE, AND THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT PARTISAN DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD UKRAINE AND RUSSIA.**

The public is divided on U.S. government spending for aid to Ukraine in its war against Russia. Fewer adults now think the United States is spending too much on aid to Ukraine compared with October 2023. There has been a decrease among both Republicans (50% vs. 69%) and Democrats (20% vs. 37%).

## Fewer adults say the U.S. is spending too much on aid to Ukraine compared with October 2023

Percent of adults



**Question:** [Aid to Ukraine in the war against Russia] Do you think the U.S. government is spending too much, too little, or the right amount on each of the following?

**Source:** AP-NORC Polls conducted October 5-9, 2023 with 1,163 adults and September 12-16, 2024 with 1,111 adults nationwide.



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Half of the public considers Russia an adversary in conflict with the United States and 43% view Ukraine as an ally that shares U.S. interests and values. Sixty-seven percent of Democrats view Russia as an adversary compared with 43% of independents and 40% of Republicans. Democrats (59%) are also more likely than independents (30%) or Republicans (31%) to regard Ukraine as an ally that shares U.S. interests and values.

## STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study was funded by the Pearson Institute and conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Staff from the Pearson Institute and The AP-NORC Center collaborated on all aspects of the study.

Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Omnibus®, a monthly multi-client survey using NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97 percent of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between September 12 and 16, 2024 with adults aged 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,111 completed the survey—1,051 via the web and 60 by telephone. Panel members were invited by email or by phone from an NORC telephone interviewer. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive for completing the survey. The final stage completion rate is 15.9 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 26.4 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 77.2 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 3.2 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 54 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them. These interviews were excluded from the data file prior to weighting.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design.

Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2023 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over.

Complete questions and results are available at: [apnorc.org](https://apnorc.org).

Additional information on the AmeriSpeak Panel methodology is available at: <https://amerispeak.norc.org/about-amerispeak/Pages/Panel-Design.aspx>.

For more information, email [info@apnorc.org](mailto:info@apnorc.org).

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## ABOUT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS-NORC CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

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- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest objective and nonpartisan research institutions in the world. [www.norc.org](http://www.norc.org)

The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals. In its 10 years, The AP-NORC Center has conducted more than 250 studies exploring the critical issues facing the public, covering topics like health care, the economy, COVID-19, trust in media, and more. Learn more at [www.apnorc.org](http://www.apnorc.org).

## ABOUT THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts at the University of Chicago promotes the ongoing discussion, understanding and resolution of global conflicts, and contributes to the advancement of a global society more at peace. Established through a grant from The Thomas L. Pearson and The Pearson Family Members Foundation, and led by Institute Director James Robinson, co-author of *Why Nations Fail* and *The Narrow Corridor*, the Institute achieves this by employing an analytically rigorous, data-driven approach and global perspective to understanding violent conflict. It is global in its scope, activities, and footprint. Attracting students and scholars from around the world, its faculty is in the field studying conflicts – and approaches to conflict resolution – in Nigeria, Colombia, and Afghanistan, to name just a few.