

Israeli Voice Index, February 2022

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Main Findings

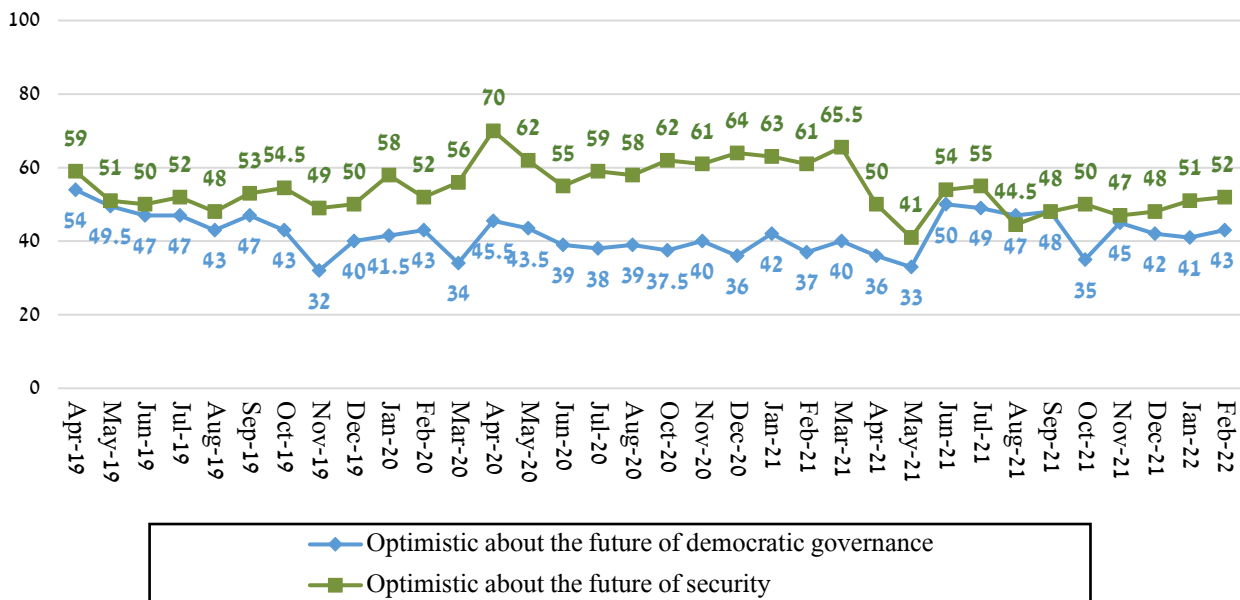
- ❖ The rates of optimists about the future of national security and of optimists about the future of democracy are showing stability. As in the past, the optimism about national security exceeds the optimism about the future of democracy. On both issues immigrants since 1990 from the former Soviet Union, or Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), are more optimistic than the other Jewish interviewees in the sample.
- ❖ A majority of the interviewees report that they are following the events in Ukraine. Among the Jews the rate of those following is higher than among the Arabs. Likewise, as expected, the interviewees who are CIS immigrants are following the events more intensively than the other Jewish interviewees.
- ❖ The interviewees are divided on whether the message of the harsh economic and other sanctions that the West chose in response to Putin's move is appropriate, with somewhat more saying it is an appropriate response. Slightly more CIS immigrants view it as appropriate than Jewish interviewees in general.
- ❖ The majority does not see a military response by the West as preferable to the measures that were taken. Among CIS immigrants the support for a military intervention is lower than among the other Jewish interviewees.
- ❖ A small majority of the sample think the events could affect Israel's strategic situation in the regional and international arena, while believing that this would be only a limited effect. Fewer CIS immigrants than Jewish interviewees in general see the events in Ukraine as likely to affect Israel's situation.
- ❖ A clear majority of the sample supports the government's cautious policy toward the conflict in Ukraine.
- ❖ At present Finance Minister Liberman is perceived by the sample in general as the strongman in the government. An especially interesting finding is that among CIS immigrants, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett is perceived as the strongman.
- ❖ The prevailing assessment among the interviewees is that the government will continue to exist at least until the end of 2022 despite the disagreements among the factions.
- ❖ The interviewees are divided on how well the government has contended with the fifth wave of COVID-19. Equal numbers give it good or excellent grades and give it not-good or poor grades. Whereas a majority of voters for the coalition parties assign the government good or excellent grades, only a tiny minority of voters for the opposition parties do so.
- ❖ About half of the interviewees report that their situation has not changed for better or worse compared to their situation before the outbreak of COVID-19. The rate of those who report that their situation has changed for the worse exceeds the rate of those who say it has changed for the better.
- ❖ A majority of the interviewees expect that in the future a new variant of COVID-19 will emerge.

- ❖ Assessment of whether the country is prepared for such a new wave is closely related to interviewees' political location: a majority of voters for the coalition parties think the country is prepared for a new wave on the basis of past experience, while a majority of voters for the opposition parties think the opposite.

The National Mood

This month saw relative stability in the rate of optimists about the future of national security (a little over half and with a slight increase) and in the rate of optimists about the future of Israeli democracy (slightly less than half). Indeed, with one clear exception in the negative direction in October regarding optimism about the future of democracy, that has been the case since the new government was formed in June 2021.

Optimistic about the future of Israeli democracy and about the future of national security, April 2019 – February 2022 (% , entire sample)

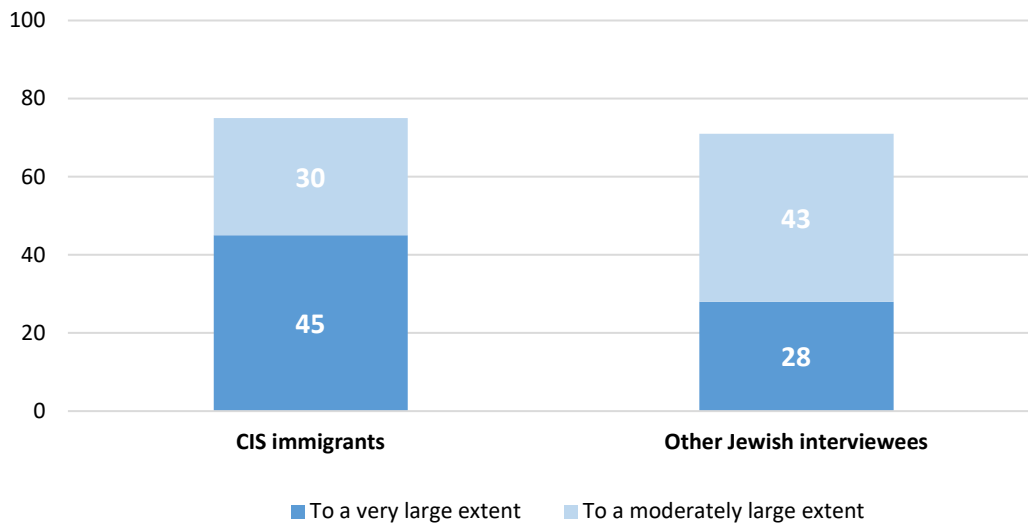


Because this month we dealt with the Ukraine issue, we also looked into differences in positions according to origin. It turns out that the rate of optimists about the future of Israeli democracy is considerably higher (53%) among immigrants since 1990 from the former Soviet Union – or Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) – than among the other Jewish interviewees (45%). The same holds true for optimism about the future of national security: 60% of CIS immigrants are optimistic compared to 54% of the other Jewish interviewees.

The Conflict in Ukraine

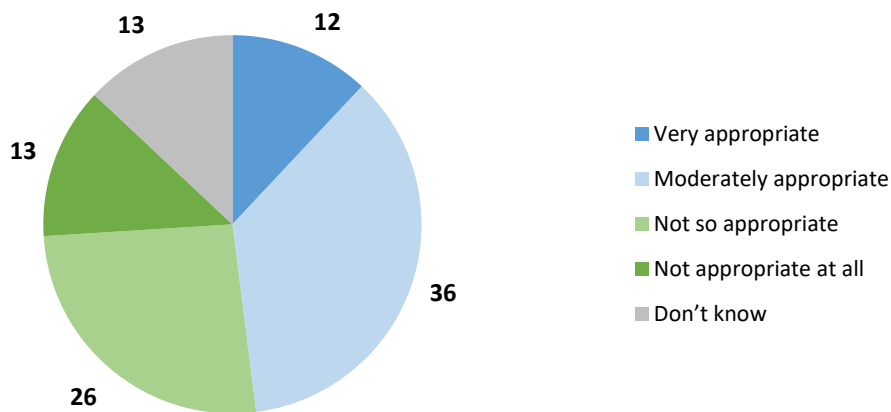
The level of keeping up with events – A majority of the interviewees reported (69%) that they are following what is happening in Ukraine (29% to a very large extent and another 40% to a moderately large extent). The Jewish interviewees say they are following the events at a higher rate than the Arab interviewees (72% vs. 58%). Among CIS immigrants the level of keeping up with the events is slightly higher than among the other Jewish interviewees. CIS immigrants are also keeping up with them more intensively.

To what extent are you following the conflict between Russia and Ukraine? (% , Jewish sample, CIS immigrants compared to the other Jewish interviewees)



Is the West’s response, which focuses on economic sanctions, appropriate? The interviewees are divided on whether the message of the sanctions is appropriate, with somewhat more regarding it as an appropriate response (48%). A lower rate (39%) says it is not an appropriate response.

In your opinion, is the Western states’ message of not intervening militarily in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, so as to avoid the emergence of World War III, while instead imposing harsh economic and other sanctions on Russia the appropriate response to Putin’s moves? (% , entire sample)

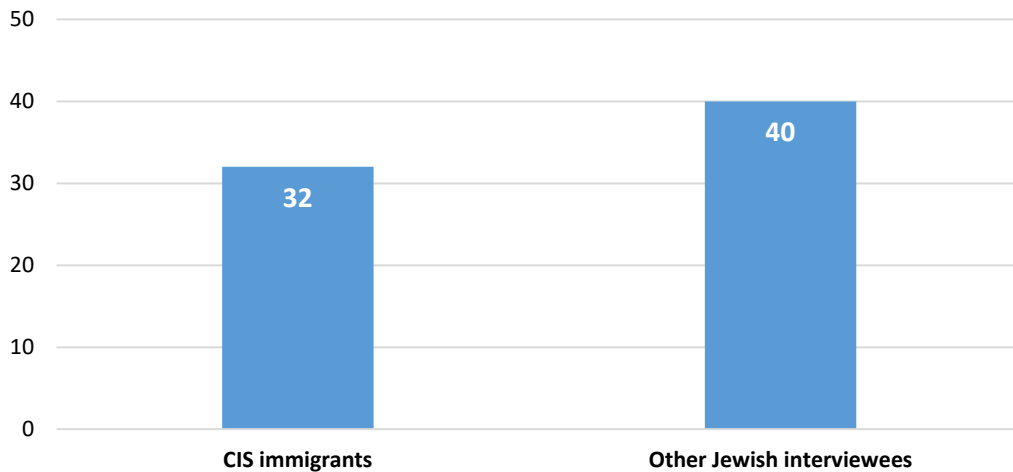


Among the Jewish interviewees about half see this response as appropriate (51%), while among the Arab interviewees only a little more than a third see it that way (35%). We also found a certain disparity between CIS immigrants and the other Jewish interviewees: 51.5% of those immigrants consider it an appropriate response compared to 46% of the other Jewish interviewees.

Would it have been preferable for the Western countries to intervene militarily? More interviewees (50%) responded to this negatively; only 37% said a military response would have been preferable. Among the Arab interviewees the majority responded that a military response would not have been preferable (63%)

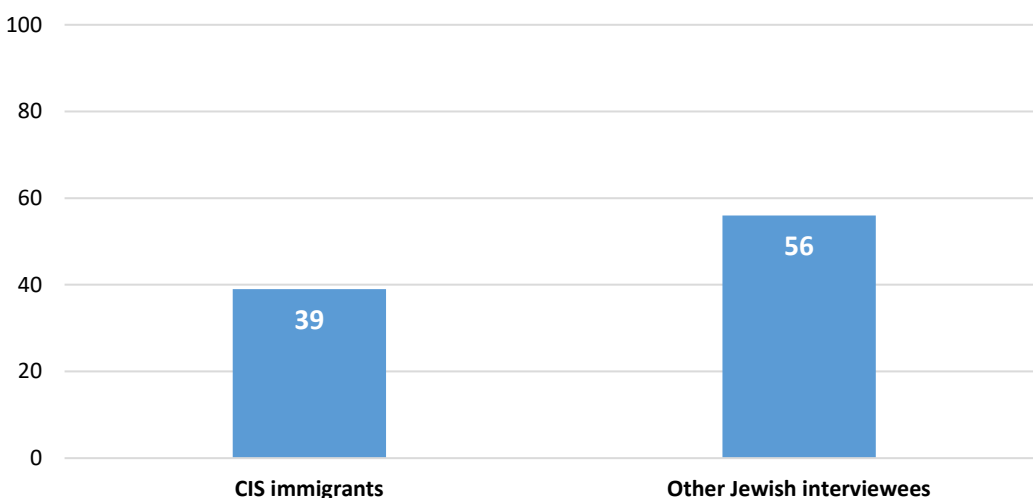
compared to less than half of the Jewish interviewees (47%). Among CIS immigrants the support for a military intervention is smaller than among the other Jewish interviewees (32% vs. 40%).

In your opinion, would it have been preferable for the Western countries to intervene militarily against Russia’s invasion of Ukraine? (% , think a military response would have been preferable, Jewish sample, CIS immigrants compared to other Jewish interviewees)



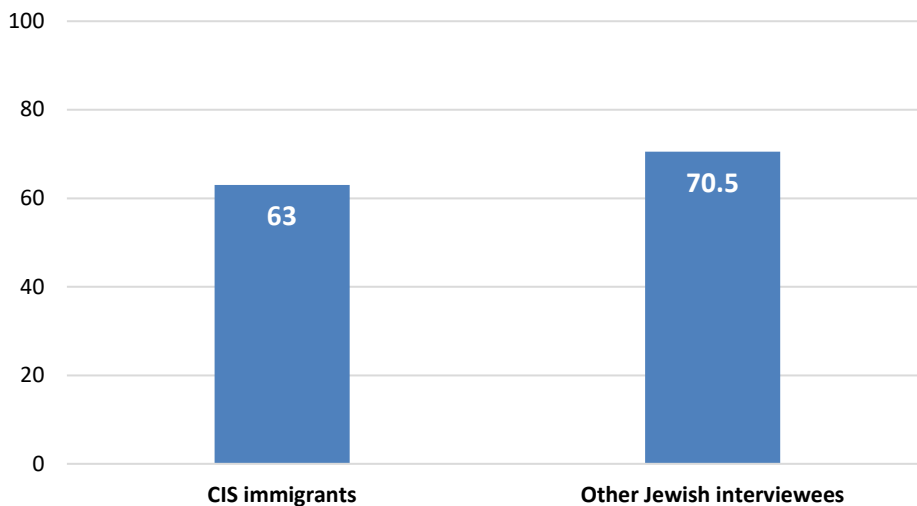
The likely effect of the events in Ukraine on Israel’s strategic situation – About half of the interviewees (52%) think the events could affect Israel’s strategic situation in the regional and the international arena, but the rate of those who see only a moderately large effect (40%) exceeds the rate of those who anticipate a very large effect (12%). A very interesting finding is that the rate of CIS immigrants who think the events in Ukraine could have repercussions on Israel’s strategic situation is considerably smaller than the rate who think so among the other Jewish interviewees.

To what extent, in your opinion, could the events in Ukraine affect Israel’s strategic situation in the regional and the international arena? (% , think they could have an effect, Jewish sample, CIS immigrants compared to other Jewish interviewees)



The government's cautious policy – We asked: “In your opinion, is the Israeli government’s cautious approach to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which involves not taking a firm stance against Russia, right or not right?” A clear majority (67%) supports the government’s policy. Among CIS immigrants the rate of those who favor this cautious policy toward the conflict is lower than among the other Jewish interviewees.

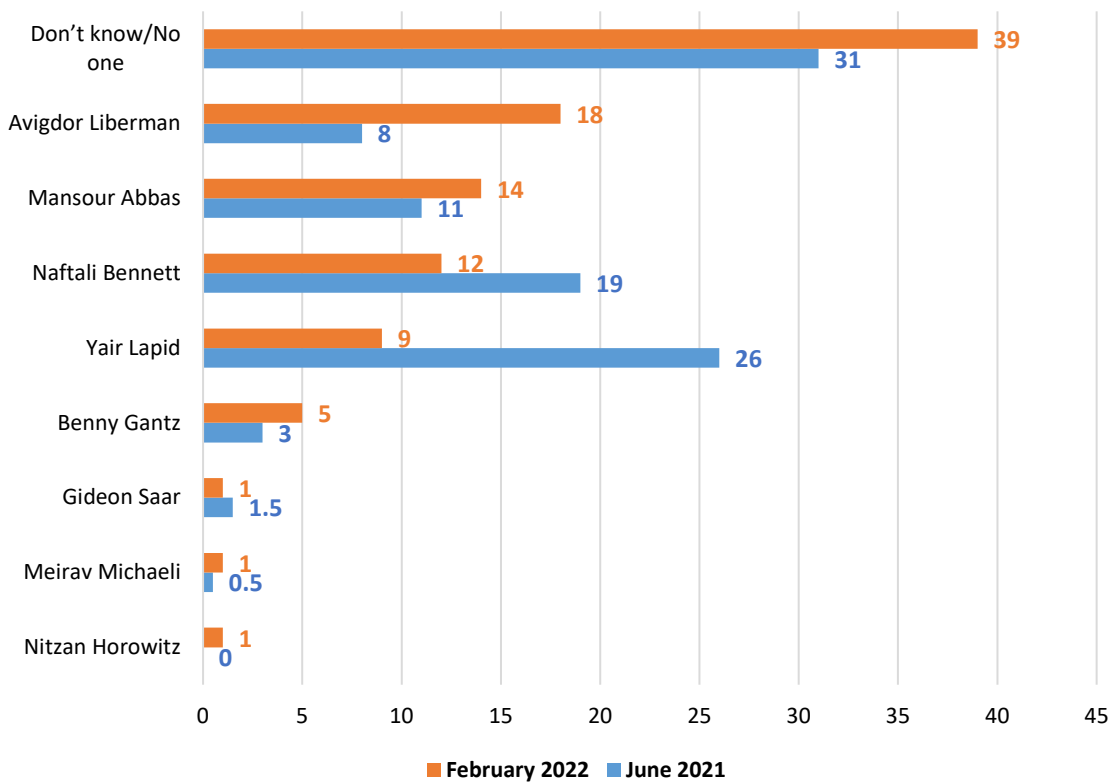
The Israeli government’s cautious response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which involves not taking a firm stance against Russia – right? (% , Jewish sample, CIS immigrants compared to the other Jewish interviewees)



Who Is Currently the Strongman in the Government?

This month we repeated a question on an issue we asked about in June, slightly after the government was formed: “In your opinion, who is currently the ‘strongman’ in the government?” Now as well, the highest rate answered that they do not know (39%, compared to 31% in June). In first place at present is Finance Minister Liberman; 8% indicated that he is the strongman in the government, whereas in June he was in fourth place at 8%. Alternative Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Lapid, who was perceived as the strongman in the government in June (26%), is now in fourth place with only 9% saying he is the strongman. There was also a decline in the rate of those who see Prime Minister Bennett as the government’s strongman, from 19% in June to only 12% at present.

In your opinion, who is currently the “strongman” in the government? (% , entire sample, June 2021 and February 2022)



Whereas in the Jewish sample Liberman was perceived as the strongman in the government (19.5%), among the Arabs only 9% saw him as such, lower than for Prime Minister Bennett (13%) and Foreign Minister Lapid (10%). Fifteen percent of the Jews indicated that Ra’am leader Mansour Abbas is the strongman in the government, compared to only 7% of the Arabs.

All three political camps in the Jewish public perceive Liberman as the strongman in the government (left – 24%; center – 20%; right – 19%), but sharing first place with Liberman on the right is Mansour Abbas, who comes in third for the center. On the left only 4% perceive Abbas as the government’s strongman. The differences in this assessment among the voters for the different parties are summed up in the following table:

The strongman in the government: Segmentation by voting in the most recent elections (% , entire sample)

	First place	Second place
Likud	Liberman (18%)	Abbas (17%)
Yesh Atid	Lapid (23%)	Liberman (18.5%)
Shas	Liberman (28%)	Abbas (23.5%)
Blue and White	Liberman (25%)	Bennett (22%)
Yamina	Bennett (26%)	Abbas (24.5%)
Labor	Liberman (17%)	Lapid (17%)

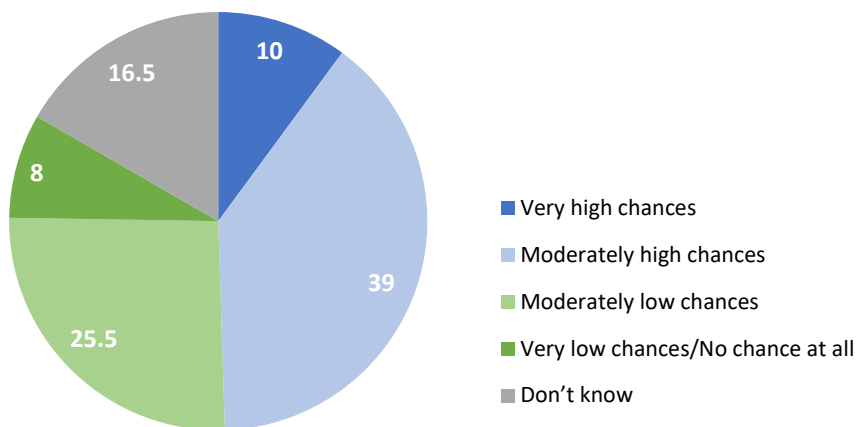
Torah Judaism	Abbas (31%)	Liberman (29%)
Yisrael Beiteinu	Liberman (39%)	Bennett (17%)
Religious Zionism	Abbas (45%)	Liberman (19%)
Joint List	Bennett (15%)	Lapid (13%)
New Hope	Liberman (26.5%)	Gantz (15%)
Meretz	Bennett (26%)	Liberman (17%)
Ra'am	Lapid (33%)	Bennett (11%)

A comparison between CIS immigrants and the other Jewish interviewees reveals that among the former, Prime Minister Bennett came in first (13%). As for Minister Liberman, whereas only 11% of CIS immigrants indicated that he is the strongman in the government, among the rest 21% see him as such. Moreover, among the CIS immigrants the rate of those who regard Abbas as the strongman is higher than for the rest of the Jewish interviewees (17% vs. 7%).

The Government's Survivability

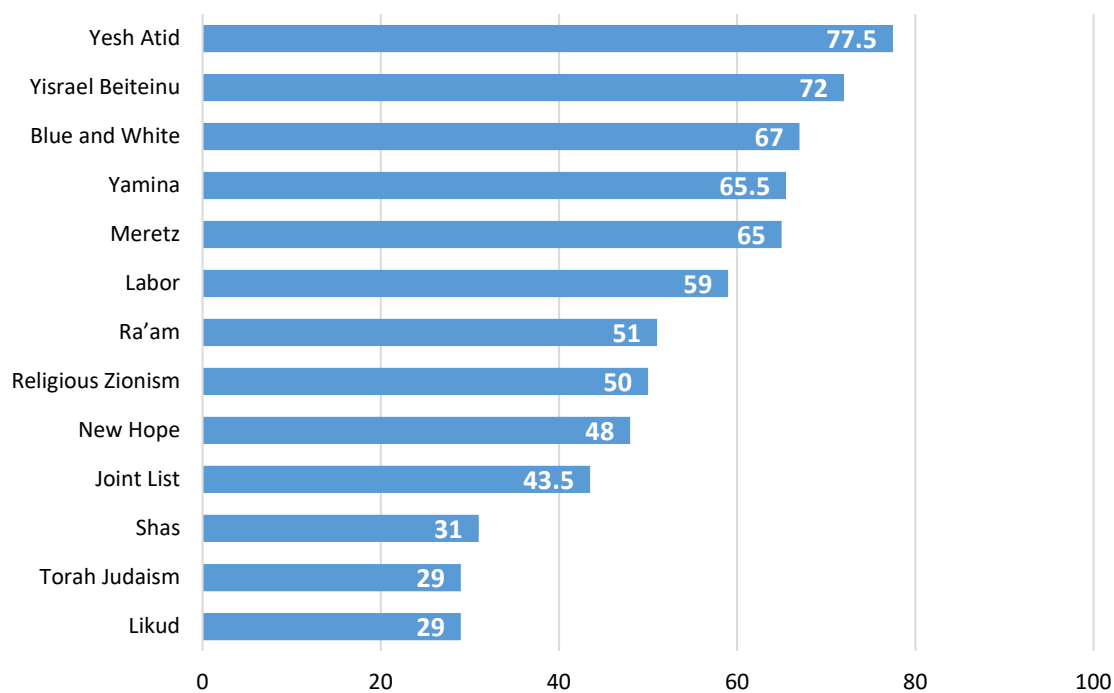
This question, too, was examined in June 2021, when the answers were divided: 46% thought the government would continue to exist for at least a year, while an identical rate (45%) did not expect it to survive its first year. In the present measurement, the rate of those who see high chances that the government will remain in place at least until the end of 2022 rose to 49%, while the rate of those saying it would not survive until then dropped sharply to 33%. Especially notable is the low rate of those who see high chances that the government will dissolve in the next eight months (only 8%; in June 2021 the rate was double). In other words, it appears that a sense of political stability is emerging in Israel.

In light of the tensions among the different factions of the government, alongside the fact that new elections may well bring most of the coalition parties into the opposition, what, in your opinion, are the chances that the government will continue to exist at least until the end of the year? (% , entire sample)



The highest rates of increase for those who think the government will continue to exist for at least a year were found in the right-wing parties (Shas, from 6% in June to 31% at present; Religious Zionism, from 29% to 50%; Yamina, from 50% to 65.5%). At the same time, unlike the two-thirds of coalition-party voters who say the government will remain in place at least until the end of the year, only a third of the opposition-party voters see high chances of that happening.

Assessing high chances that the government will survive at least until the end of 2022, by Knesset voting (% ,entire sample)

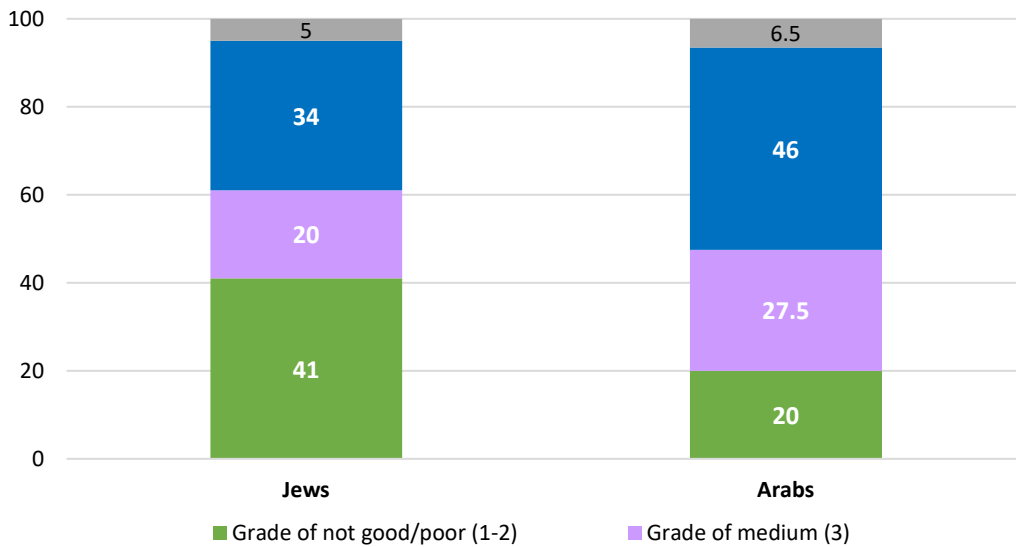


COVID-19: Two Years Later

The government’s performance – We asked: “Which grade from 1=poor to 5=excellent would you give the Bennett-led government’s policy on contending with the fifth wave of COVID-19, which now seems to be ending?” The interviewees were divided on this question. Over a third (37%) give the government grades of not good or poor (1 or 2), and an almost identical rate (36%) gives it good to excellent grades (4 or 5), while 21% assign it a medium grade (3).

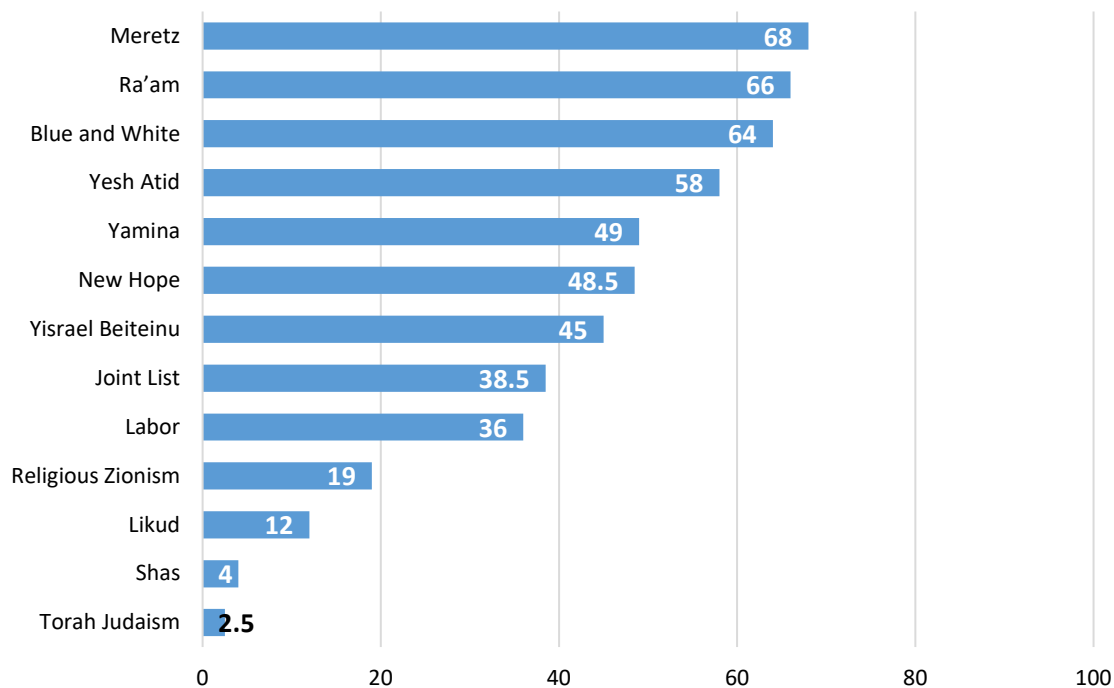
The Arab sample’s assessment of the government’s performance in contending with COVID-19 is more positive than that of the Jewish sample. Here 46% give the government a grade of good or excellent compared to 34% of the Jewish public.

What grade from 1=poor to 5=excellent would you give the Bennett-led government's policy on contending with the fifth wave of COVID-19, which now seems to be ending? (% , entire sample)



The next diagram sums up the differences between the voters for the different parties regarding the government's performance on the fifth wave of COVID-19.

Gave a grade of good/excellent to the government's policy on contending with the fifth wave of COVID-19, by voting for the Knesset (% , entire sample)



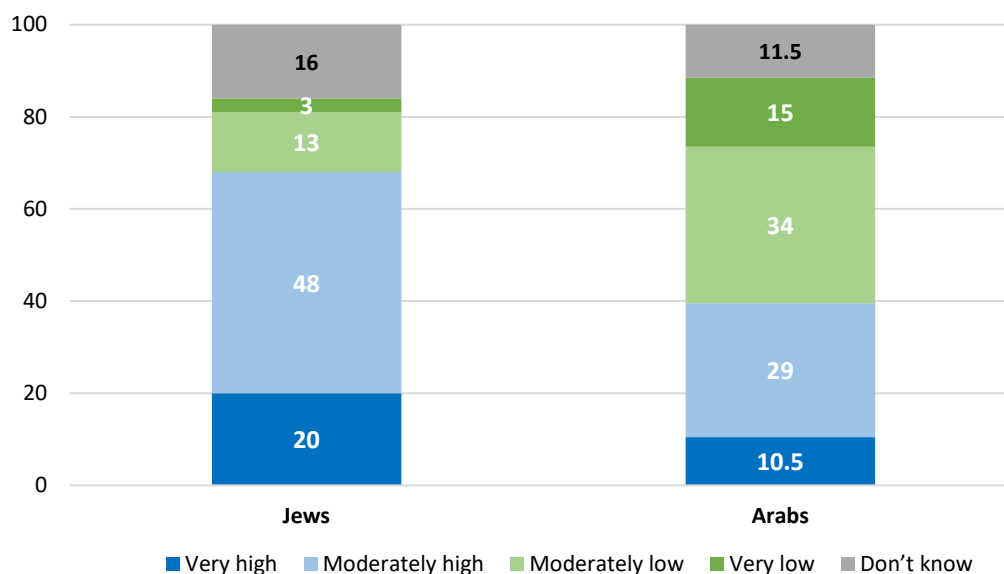
A segmentation by political camp (Jewish sample) reveals that half of the left and almost half of the center (44.5%) gives the government a good or excellent grade for its performance on the fifth COVID-19 wave compared to about a quarter of the right. It was also found that among older adults, the rate of those indicating that the government's performance was good or excellent was higher than among younger people (15% of the younger compared to 52% of those aged 65+).

Gave a grade of good/excellent to the government’s policy in contending with the fifth wave of COVID-19 (% , Jews)

		Grade of good/excellent for the government (%)
Political camp	Left	50
	Center	44.5
	Right	25
Age	18-24	15
	25-34	24
	35-44	30
	45-54	34
	55-64	45
	65+	52

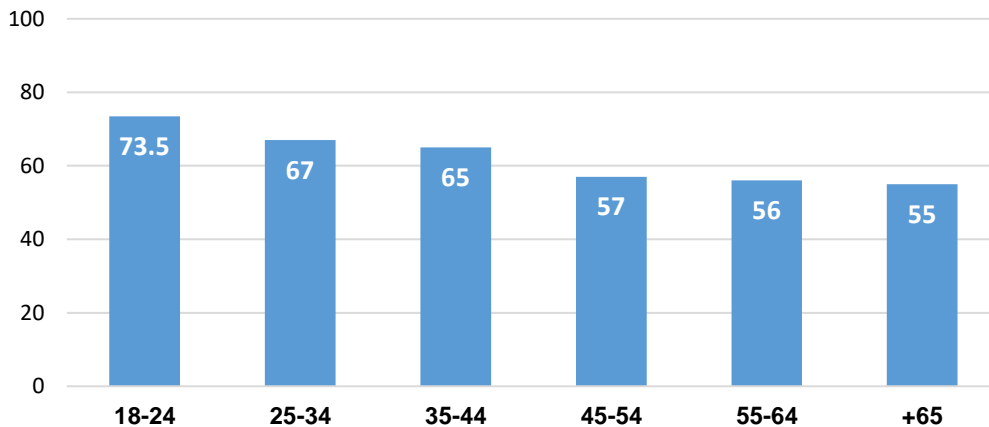
Is a further wave of COVID-19 likely? The interviewees are not optimistic: the majority (63%) thinks another wave is likely. We found, however, a large gap between the Jewish and the Arab interviewees: whereas a majority of the Jews expect that another wave will break out, only a minority of the Arabs think so.

What, in your opinion, are the chances that in the foreseeable future there will be another wave of some variant of COVID-19? (% , entire sample)



As the next diagram shows, while in all the age groups a majority sees another wave of COVID-19 as likely, this majority is larger among the younger than among the older people.

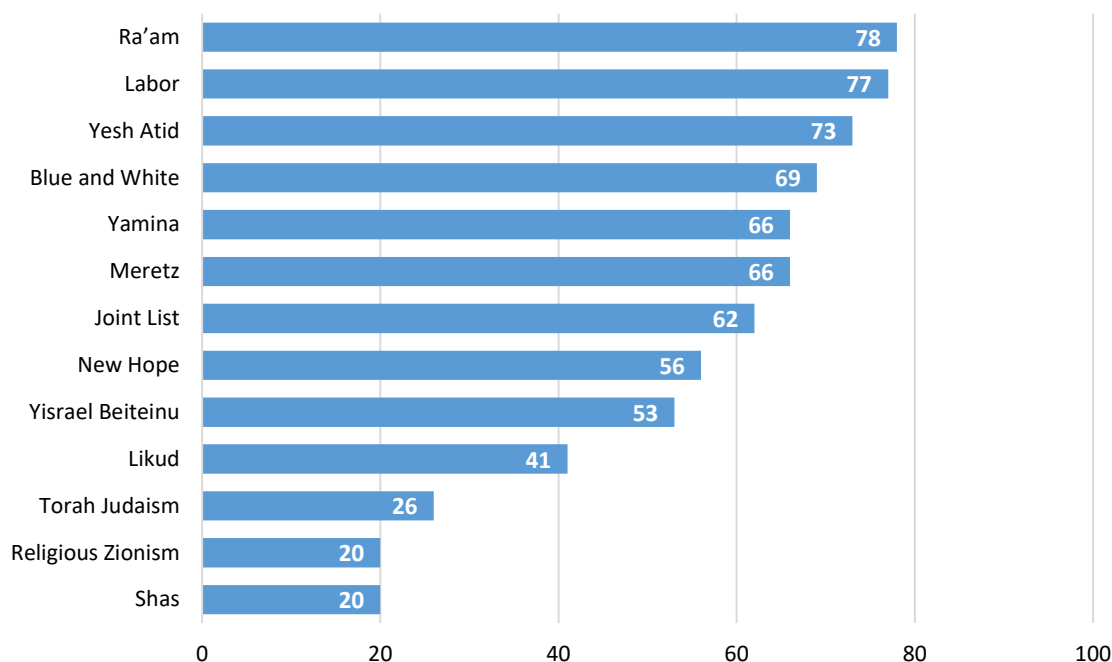
Very high/moderately high chances that in the foreseeable future there will be another wave of some variant of COVID-19? (% , entire sample, segmentation by age)



The country’s preparedness for another wave of COVID-19 – We asked: “And if another wave hits, to what extent, in your opinion, is Israel with its accumulated experience now prepared to deal with it successfully?” The interviewees are divided on this issue: half (51%) assess that Israel is prepared to a very large or a large extent to deal successfully with another wave, compared to 42% who say the country is not prepared for it. On this issue as well, there is a gap between the Jews and the Arabs: only half of the Jewish interviewees (49%) view the country as prepared for a further wave, compared to a majority of the Arabs (62%) who indicated that it is prepared.

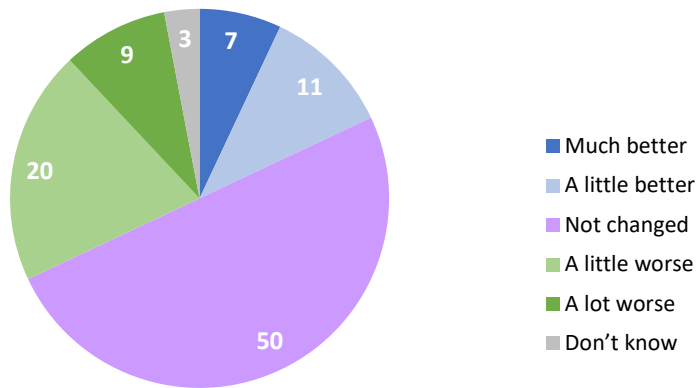
The perception of whether the country is prepared or not prepared to cope with another COVID-19 wave is strongly influenced by political location: whereas a large majority of those who voted for the coalition parties see the country as prepared for another COVID-19 wave, among opposition-party voters only a minority takes that view.

And if another wave hits, to what extent, in your opinion, is Israel with its accumulated experience now prepared to deal with it successfully? (% , entire sample, by voting in the elections)



Has COVID-19 changed our personal situation? Two years since the outbreak of the pandemic, we wanted to know to what extent COVID-19 has affected Israelis' personal situation. The data show that the highest rate—half—said their situation had not changed, 28% said it had worsened, and 18% indicated that their situation had improved.

Is your personal situation today, compared to your situation two years ago, before the outbreak of COVID-19... (% , entire sample)



A segmentation by nationality and gender reveals that while half of the Arab men indicated that their situation at present is worse than what it was two years ago, only 22% of the Jewish men chose that possibility. There is also a gap between the Jewish and the Arab women, but it is smaller, especially because the rate of women who reported a worsening of their situation, both among the Jewish and the Arab women, is much lower than among the men of the same population.

Reported that their personal situation at present is worse than it was two years ago, before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (% , entire sample, in a segmentation by nationality and gender)



Disparities in the rate of those who say their situation at present is worse than what it was two years ago emerge as well in a segmentation by income: whereas 40% of those with below-average income indicated that their situation at present is worse, only 20% of those with average or above-average income chose that possibility.

The Israeli Voice Index for February 2022 was prepared by the Viterbi Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research of the Israel Democracy Institute. In the survey, which was conducted on the internet and by telephone (supplements of groups that are not sufficiently represented on the network) from February 28 to March 2, 2022, 601 men and women were interviewed in Hebrew and 151 in Arabic, constituting a representative national sample of the entire adult population of Israel aged 18 and older. The maximum sampling error for the entire sample was $.359\pm\%$ at a confidence level of 95%. The fieldwork was done by the Midgam Institute. For the full data file see: <https://dataisrael.idi.org.il>