



PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE  
IN PUBLIC OPINION  
ANALYTICAL REPORT





## **About the Social Research Center**

The Social Research Center (SRC) was established by Decree No. 525 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 8, 2019. It operates as a public legal entity, systematically analyzing the development dynamics of social relations. The SRC identifies current trends, forecasts changes in this field, and investigates their potential impact on society.

Applying modern information technologies and scientific approaches, the SRC conducts social research and surveys public opinion. Its findings are then provided to governmental bodies for consideration and action.

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**PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE  
IN PUBLIC OPINION**

Prepared based on a sociological survey  
**ANALYTICAL REPORT**

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*“For me, there has never been a more important task than the liberation of lands. This goal, this objective was behind every decision. We are standing here now, and no one can take us out of here... We will restore all liberated lands. We, the People of Azerbaijan, are the true owners of these lands.”*

**Ilham ALIYEV**  
**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Social Research Center is embarking on systematic and regular studies to monitor and analyze the dynamics of public opinion regarding the activities of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The forthcoming report in this series focuses on the first quarter of 2021, spanning January to March. This analytical report, derived from a comprehensive sociological survey, rigorously observes the dynamics of public sentiment toward the multifaceted activities of the President during the aforementioned period, conducting a comparative analysis with the preceding quarter.

The results of the survey performed by the Social Research Center from April 1-12, 2021 - the quarterly monitoring of public opinion - indicate that the population views President Ilham Aliyev's international and domestic activities in January-March of the current year, especially during the post-war period, as very effective and important. These activities include the protection of national interests, continuous efforts to ensure national welfare, peace, and security, as well as the Great Return to the territories liberated from occupation. Additionally, the survey highlights the development of regional cooperation, the facilitation of dialogue between political forces, and the continuation of large-scale reforms initiated in 2019. The President's multifaceted activity during January-March of this year has strengthened his positive image in public opinion.

**In the survey provided, the respondents were asked questions for the following purposes:**

- Assess the efficiency of the President's activity in various fields;
- Assess reforms as one of the key principles of modern governance in public opinion;
- Define public attitude toward the President's visits to liberated territories and the Great Return plans/initiatives;
- Define the people's major expectations for the period after the Patriotic War;
- Study the efficiency of the President's interviews with media representatives and the reforms performed to improve the media system;
- Define the dynamics of trust and confidence in the President;
- Assess the environment of dialogue between political forces created at the President's

initiative and the changes occurring in the system of political parties;

- Study public attitude toward the activity of international organizations.

Similar to previous periods, throughout January-March 2021, the President's engagements witnessed events of historical significance that held particular weight in the political calendar. These occurrences received widespread coverage in the official chronicle, as well as extensive attention from both local and foreign media. Subsequently, they were not only remembered but also became focal points of international public discussions.

**□ The President's visits to liberated territories in public opinion: the Great Return plans and initiatives.**

The President's activity in the field of restoration and construction, particularly during his visits to the liberated territories, stood out as one of the most notable moments in the first quarter of 2021. The majority of respondents view the President's visits to the liberated territories as emblematic of Karabakh's revival and the return of the population to those areas. They also recognize the Supreme Commander-in-Chief's direct involvement in overseeing all construction work, which signifies his commitment to ensuring Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

Furthermore, respondents appreciate the President's emphasis on historical monuments, the importance he places on the Motherland and its people, and his dedication to preserving national spiritual, historical, and cultural values. They recognize the significance of the Great Return initiative and the President's efforts to ensure stability and security in the territories liberated from occupation. Moreover, they acknowledge his contribution to the information war against Armenian forces and their supporters.

At a meeting with military servants in Shusha and in his speech on the occasion of the Novruz Holiday in the Jidir Plain, the President demonstrated his direct leadership in the preparation for the Great Return. Therefore, 84.6 and 12.2% of the respondents, respectively, completely and partly agreed with the opinion that the return to Karabakh is a priority for the President. The foundation of important transport and infrastructure projects (Fuzuli Airport, Fuzuli-Shusha, Fuzuli-Hadrut, Hadrut-Jabray-

il-Shukurbeyli highways, Horadiz-Aghband railway) laid by President Ilham Aliyev during his visit to the liberated territories, and the opening of transport communication corridors in the region will serve to ensure sustainable peace.

At the direct initiative and under the guidance of the President, comprehensive plans are underway not only to restore and reconstruct the aforementioned areas but also to implement innovative concepts such as 'Smart City' and 'Smart Village' within those regions. President Ilham Aliyev has consistently articulated his vision that the liberated territories will transition into green energy zones. This presidential initiative showcases the strength and resilience of our nation, especially notable amid the significant challenges facing the global economy during the ongoing pandemic.

The inauguration of the 8 MW Gulabird Hydropower Plant on the Hakari River highlights the beginning of efforts to meet the region's energy demands. A key priority has been to create favorable conditions for the planned execution of various activities in the lands liberated from occupation and to attract investment.

The strategic framework 'Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic Development,' established by the President to guide the building of a robust state and prosperous society, outlines the goals for the multifaceted and sustainable development of our country. Among these priorities, the substantial return to the territories liberated from occupation garners widespread approval from the majority of respondents. Importantly, these National Priorities play a crucial role in fulfilling the commitments outlined in the United Nations' Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

President Ilham Aliyev's speech on the occasion of the Novruz Holiday in Shusha's Jidir Plain contains important messages. For 28 years of occupation, Shusha and its historical image were destroyed by a hateful enemy. The enemy wanted to Armenianize Shusha and erase the heritage of the Azerbaijani people, but Shusha preserved the national spirit of Azerbaijan. During his visits to the territories liberated from occupation, President Ilham Aliyev demonstrated to the world that these are historical lands of Azerbaijan, where our citizens will live and create.

□ Promoting global solidarity in combating the coronavirus. Due to the successful foreign policy of President Ilham Aliyev, responding to global challenges and completely meeting our national interests, our country is also considered a very reliable partner in international cooperation. The President's statement, "...our word is as valid, reliable, and strong as our signature..." is one of the basic principles of a wise and forward-looking policy. The adoption of the resolution 'Ensuring Equal, Affordable, Timely, and Universal Access to Vaccines Against COVID-19' as part of the 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council at the initiative of Azerbaijan as the Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement on March 23 is a tribute and another manifestation of great trust and respect to President Ilham Aliyev and Azerbaijan in the world. This resolution adopted by the UN was put forward by President Ilham Aliyev in his interview with Azerbaijan State Television on February 1, according to the position that Azerbaijan the Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement would not be indifferent to the unfair and unequal distribution of vaccines against COVID-19 worldwide. Like the President's previous pandemic-related initiatives, this one has gained global support for a short period. Just according to the President's initiative, before the UN Human Rights Council adopted the resolution, on March 5, 2021, the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, acting in New York, adopted a communiqué on the relevant matter. The resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council draws attention to the unfair and unequal distribution of vaccines against COVID-19 between developed and developing countries and the major obstacles to the goals and objectives set in the fields of ending the current injustice and discrimination and eliminating the pandemic, especially in the UN Sustainable Development Agenda.

□ Foreign policy, international initiatives, and dissemination of information. Considering the new geopolitical reality that emerged after the victory in the Patriotic War, defining new priorities in foreign policy formed the strategic line of the President's activity during the reporting period.

The agreement signed during the meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan



in Moscow on January 11, as a continuation of the Statement dated November 10, 2020, outlined priorities related to the construction of the Zangezur corridor, aimed at connecting the main part of Azerbaijan with the Nakhchivan AR. This agreement once again demonstrated our country's openness to cooperation, peace, and development.

Furthermore, in the first quarter of the current year, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Joint Exploration, Development, and Exploitation of Hydrocarbon Resources of the Dostlug Field in the Caspian Sea, signed between the Government of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan, resolved long-standing disagreements and established a foundation for a new format of cooperation in the Caspian Sea. It is noteworthy that last year, when the final segment of the Southern Gas Corridor was put into full operation by TAP, Azerbaijani gas reached the European market. This historic achievement reshaped the Eurasian energy map.

The 7th Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council Ministerial Meeting, held via videoconference, reported that the pipeline's length was 3,500 km, connecting 7 countries. The successful implementation of the project was made possible through close cooperation among these countries. The pipeline traverses very complex geographical areas, including 2,500 m high mountains, with more than 100 km laid on the bottom of the Adriatic Sea. The Southern Gas Corridor adheres to the highest environmental standards, which were fundamental in planning and executing the project. Azerbaijan actively participated in the construction of all four segments of the Southern Gas Corridor - Shah Deniz, South Caucasus Pipeline, TANAP, and TAP.

During the studied period, cooperation between Azerbaijan and ICESCO has deepened. A few days after the start of the Patriotic War, at the beginning of October 2020, ICESCO issued a statement supporting the fair position of Azerbaijan and made decisions that became the key factor in the further improvement of relations. Azerbaijan has always strongly promoted Islamic solidarity issues, and ICESCO has held numerous events in Azerbaijan. Official Baku has always called for unity among Muslim countries. The regional center of ICESCO to be opened in

Azerbaijan will make an important contribution to further strengthening Islamic solidarity and protecting Islamic cultural heritage. In the poll, establishing closer relations between Azerbaijan and ICESCO was also appreciated by the population.

In this context, it is crucial to highlight Audrey Azoulay's biased stance toward our country during her tenure at the helm of UNESCO since 2017. UNESCO's unwarranted calls regarding Christian monuments following the 44-day war, without taking any measures against Armenians who occupied our lands for almost 30 years, have significantly eroded the population's trust in this institution. This bias is evident in UNESCO's failure to address the destruction of Azerbaijani cultural heritage, the falsification of traces of Azerbaijani culture, illegal settlements in our territories, the conversion of ancient Caucasian Albanian churches into Armenian ones, and numerous criminal acts committed during the occupation, including the alteration of names of cities and villages and the misrepresentation of the origin of Christian religious monuments.

During the 4-hour press conference held on February 26, commemorating the 29th anniversary of the Khojaly Genocide, the President provided answers to questions from local and foreign journalists regarding the information policy pursued and information attacks. Against the backdrop of the changing geopolitical realities in the South Caucasus after the 44-day war, the President's remarks carried important messages on the state's priorities in the current situation, resonating with a wide audience.

Thus, the results of the survey performed by the Social Research Center for the first quarter of 2021 to study the public attitude toward President Ilham Aliyev's activity in the fields of domestic and foreign policy and the index of trust in the President give ground to assert that against the background of the realities and challenges of the post-war period, the people's trust and confidence in the President has increased due to his pragmatic, social-oriented policy covering the national interests, and their support for the reforms aimed at further improving the welfare and prosperity of our people tends to rise.

## METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SURVEY

### 1. The Survey Coverage

The survey encompassed Baku, Absheron, and 7 economic regions (Guba-Khachmaz, Daghlig Shirvan, Shaki-Zagatala, Aran, Ganja-Gazakh, Upper Karabakh, and Lankaran). In total, the opinions of 1191 respondents were analyzed. The survey did not include the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and regions liberated from occupation.

### 2. Selection of Respondents

Random sampling was performed using the multistage stratification for population groups over 18; age and gender balances were maintained. Based on the sample size, the statistical error is 2.8%, and the confidence interval is 95%.

### 3. The Survey Approach and Method

A repeated survey design was selected as the research approach. In methodological science, a repeated survey design is utilized to monitor trends over an extended period. The research employed questionnaire surveys and the SurveyToGo software as part of the quantitative methodology. Fieldwork was conducted from April 1 to April 12, 2021. The survey utilized face-to-face polling techniques.

### 4. Ethical Principles

The confidentiality of interviews was strongly protected. Anonymity was ensured in all the interviews. Respondents were made sure that their answers would only be used in a generalized way. This factor ensured the high reliability of the survey data.

### 5. Instructions

14 interviewers and 2 coordinators participated in the survey. The Social Research Center has developed guidelines for interviewers. Before starting the work, the interviewers have passed appropriate training performed by the Center's employees. During the training, interviewers got acquainted in detail with the survey purpose, the questions to be addressed to the respondents, and the method for selecting the respondents. The interviewers also received extensive explanations for each question in the questionnaire and performed the test survey.

### 6. Data Processing and Analysis

After the completion of the survey, the data collected for each questionnaire was entered into the database and analyzed using a special software SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. X2 test and correlation analysis were used to find a statistically significant relationship between variables and compare them between different socio-demographic groups.

**Note:** Due to the rounding, the total percentage in the diagrams may differ from 100%.

### 7. Process Control

To ensure the quality of surveys, we analyzed the number and quality of polls conducted by each interviewer throughout the day. Additionally, we checked the addresses visited by the interviewers and the duration of each visit daily using the GPS function of the software. Furthermore, we monitored the time spent on each poll and each question separately.



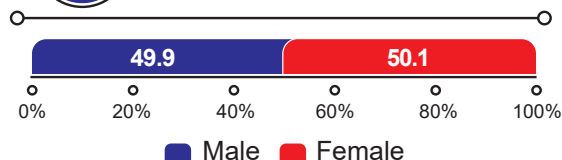
## Methodological Principles of the Research

	<b>The number of respondents</b>	1191 respondents
	<b>Selection of respondents</b>	Random sampling was performed using the multistage stratification for population groups over 18
	<b>The confidence interval and statistical error</b>	95% and 2.8%
	<b>Data collection method</b>	The face-to-face polling technique was used in the survey
	<b>Polling period</b>	The fieldwork was performed on April 1-12, 2021
	<b>The survey coverage</b>	Baku, Absheron, and 7 economic regions (Guba-Khachmaz, Daghigh Shirvan, Shaki-Zagatala, Aran, Ganja-Gazakh, Upper Karabakh, and Lankaran). In total, the opinions of 1191 respondents were studied. The survey did not cover the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and regions liberated from occupation
	<b>Respondent selection criteria</b>	Age and gender balances
	<b>Data processing and analysis</b>	After the completion of the survey, the data collected for each questionnaire was entered into the database and analyzed using a special software SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

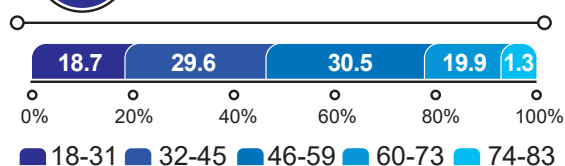
## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS OF THE RESPONDENTS



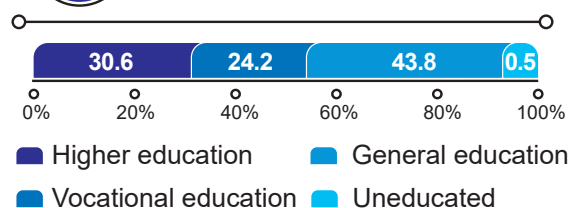
### Gender composition



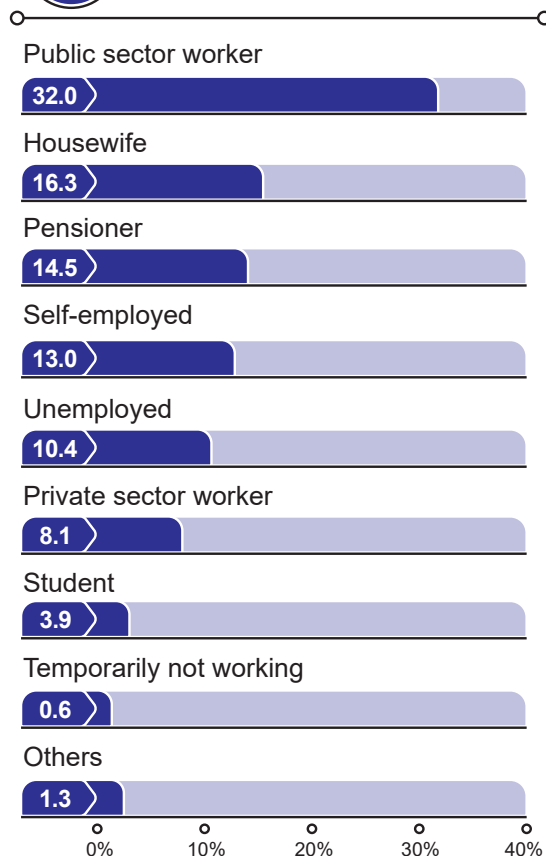
### Age



### Education status



### Employment status





## SECTION I.

# PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC OPINION

### 1.1. Attitude Toward the President's Activity in Various Fields

To analyze the evolving public sentiment toward the Presidential performance, the Social Research Center (SRC) conducts surveys quarterly, polling respondents on the President's activities across various domains. Notably, the overwhelming majority of the population evaluates the President's efforts in army building and enhancement as 'very good' (86.5%) or 'mostly good' (12%, totalling 98.5%). By comparison, figures from the December 2020 survey stood at 94.6% and 5.0%, respectively, totalling 99.6%. These robust indicators can be attributed to the President's focused policies on army building and improvement, particularly in the aftermath of the 44-day Patriotic War.

In both current and past polls conducted by the SRC to assess the Presidential performance in public opinion, one consistently praised area is the President's activity in the field of foreign policy. The realities shaped by the 44-day Patriotic War underscore that according to President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan has achieved substantial progress in foreign policy over its 30-year independence. This progress is attributed to the President's innovative approach to diplomacy, involving bilateral, tripartite, and multilateral cooperation formats, which contributed to our victory and subsequent consolidation. Properly delineating and implementing foreign policy holds exceptional importance for Azerbaijan, given its strategic location at the intersection of the West and the East, its cultural significance as a junction of civilizations, and its strategic position at the convergence of geopolitical and geo-economic interests, both in the pre-war and post-war periods.

According to the April 2021 survey results, the absolute majority of the population assesses the President's foreign policy as good to one degree or another (69.4% 'very good,' 22.0% 'mostly good,' 91.4% in total). For comparison, in the survey performed in December 2020, the respondents' attitudes

toward the President's foreign policy were as follows: 85.1% 'very effective,' 10.4% 'mostly effective' (95.5% in total).

The survey also shows a positive public attitude toward the President's Personnel reforms. Thus, 43.7 and 35.0% of the survey participants chose, respectively, 'very good' and 'mostly good' answers in this regard. Note that in the surveys performed in June and December 2020, respectively, 53.9 and 65.4% of the respondents chose the 'very good' option.

In both the December 2020 and current surveys, the proportion of respondents who assessed the Personnel reforms as ineffective ('very bad') remains almost the same: 8.2% and 8.3%, respectively.

It is noteworthy that satisfaction with Personnel reforms is higher among the 18-25 age group and lower among the 26-35 and over 46 age groups. Additionally, the satisfaction of the unemployed with Personnel reforms is lower compared to other groups but higher among public sector workers and the self-employed. Regionally, Lankaran and Absheron stand out as economic regions with the highest and lowest satisfaction with Personnel reforms, respectively.

The actions taken by Azerbaijan to fight against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic demonstrated that the government is prioritizing the health and well-being of every Azerbaijani citizen. The President's unwavering attention to the health of the people is greatly valued by the population. Thus, 83.4% of the respondents assessed the work done by the President to protect public health as effective to one degree or another (54.9% 'very effective,' 28.5% 'mostly effective'). 9.8% of the respondents took the opposite position ('very bad'). Note that in December 2020, the respondents' answers to this question were as follows: 70.5% 'very effective,' 19.4% 'mostly effective'

(89.9% in total). In the June 2020 survey, this question was asked in a relatively different form ("toward modernizing the health-care system"), and the results differed to some extent. Thus, 46.7 and 32.6% of the respondents assessed the performed work

as, respectively, 'very effective' and 'mostly effective.' In contrast to both December 2020 and April 2021 polls (9.8%), in the June 2020 survey, 17.1% of the respondents expressed a negative attitude toward the policy in this area.

Those who positively assessed the measures taken to protect public health also appreciated the anti-corruption measures ( $r=0.505$  ( $p<0.01$ )).

We can also add that 55.7 and 30.1% of the respondents assessed the President's activity aimed at eliminating the negative effects of the pandemic, directly related to the above question, as 'very good' and 'mostly good' (85.8% in total).

Those who positively assess the measures taken to eliminate the negative effects of the pandemic, also have a positive attitude toward those taken to protect public health ( $r=0.573$  ( $p<0.01$ )).

Those who expressed a positive attitude toward the measures taken to ensure the physical and civil security of the population also considered those taken to protect public health to be satisfactory ( $r=0.580$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

In total, 81.9% of the respondents consider the President's activity aimed at ensuring the social protection of the population to be effective to varying degrees. Conversely, the weight of those who took the opposite position was equal to 10.9% ('very bad') and 5.2% ('mostly bad'). It's worth noting that in the December 2020 survey, the positive attitude toward activity in this field in public opinion was about 10% higher (91.4%). The share of those who expressed an opposite opinion was 5.7%. These figures once again show that in the post-war period, the social problems of the people have become relevant again, and their expectations from the appropriate institutions have increased.

Note that those who expressed a positive attitude to the measures taken in the field of Personnel reforms also took a similar position regarding the social protection measures ( $r=0.544$  ( $p<0.01$ )).

X Recall that the April and December 2020 survey results almost coincide.

Along with those above, 45.3% of the respondents assessed as 'very good' the president's activity in the development of the non-oil sector, 46.7% - the development of agriculture, 45.8% - in combating corruption,

60% - ensuring the physical and civil security of the population, and 51.5% - reforms in the cultural sphere.

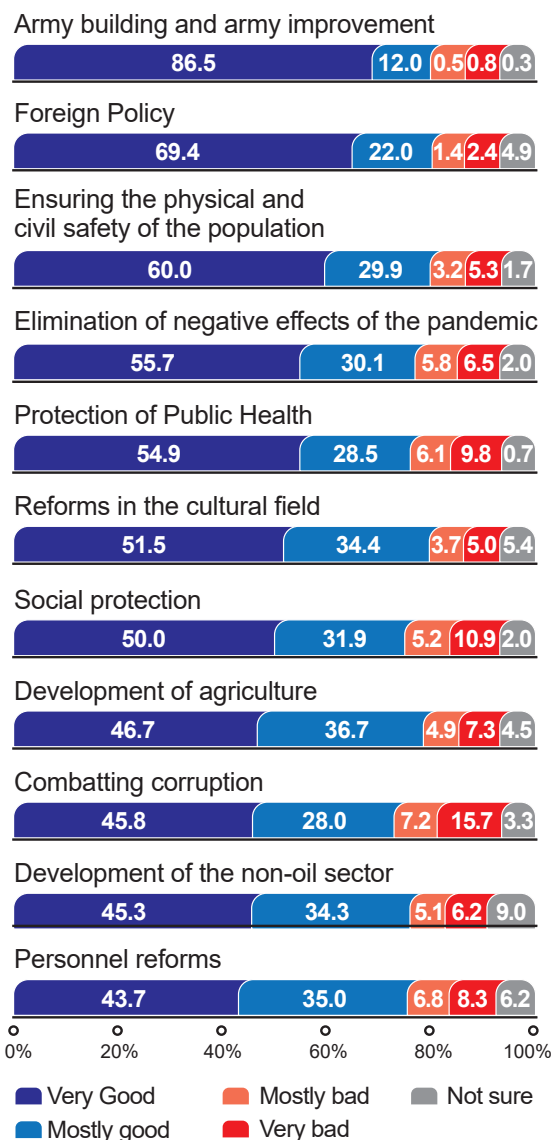
Those who expressed a positive attitude toward the measures in the field of Personnel reforms also took a positive position regarding those aimed at developing agriculture ( $r=0.551$  ( $p<0.01$ )) and the non-oil sector ( $r=0.576$  ( $p<0.01$ )).

Those who positively assessed the measures taken to ensure the physical and civil security of the population also had a positive attitude toward those in the field of Personnel reforms ( $r=0.503$  ( $p<0.01$ )).

Those who expressed a positive attitude



### How do you evaluate the President's activities in different directions?



toward anti-corruption measures took a similar position regarding measures in the field of Personnel reforms ( $r=0.553$  ( $p<0.01$ )).

Those who positively assess the reforms in the cultural sphere take a similar position regarding the measures taken to protect public health ( $r=0.529$  ( $p<0.01$ )).

## **1.2. The Reforms Performed by the President as One of the Key Principles of Modern Governance. Which Reforms Does the Society Expect More?**

The systematic personnel and structural reforms initiated in Azerbaijan since 2019 are characterized by a conceptual foundation and a gradual implementation process. In an extensive interview with local journalists on December 23, 2019, President Ilham Aliyev highlighted the deliberate nature of these reforms, emphasizing that over the past 16 years, every step taken has been backed by careful analysis and strategic goals. The President noted that personnel reforms are timely, asserting that the decision to undertake such reforms might not have been appropriate five years earlier, but waiting for another two years would have been too late.

President Aliyev underscored a transformative shift in the approach to work, stating that Azerbaijan is modernizing and cultivating a new image, a powerful image aligned with the demands of the new era, the expectations of the community, and the nation's development strategy. He emphasized the evolving responsibilities in this context, noting that those who fail to grasp this responsibility may lose their positions at best, with more stringent measures taken against them if necessary.

To define the public attitude and expectations toward Personnel reforms implemented in the country, the respondents were asked, "In which areas would you like these reforms to be deeper?" According to the respondents, there is a greater need for large-scale reforms in science and education (65.4%). Those with secondary education make up the majority of the people who wish to deepen reforms in the science and education sector.

As one of the most important social policy components, the most critical problem in the educational sphere is responding to global challenges, demands, and realities of the labour market. Herewith, we face new challenges, especially during the post-pandemic and post-war periods. There is a great need to modernize the education system in our country, increase its scientific potential, perform result-oriented research, improve the social conditions of young scientists, apply modern information and communication technologies in the field of science, and ensure the performed research to gain international credibility.

A significant 62.2% of respondents believe that the healthcare system requires comprehensive reforms. Notably, residents of Lankaran, Baku, Aran, Daghigh Shirvan, and Shaki-Zagatala economic regions, along with individuals earning below AZN 501, those with higher and secondary education, and individuals within middle-aged groups express a heightened desire for more effective reforms in the healthcare system. Despite the President's prompt actions, Azerbaijan's healthcare system has withstood the challenges posed by the pandemic with fewer losses compared to many other countries. However, the pandemic has underscored the prevailing issues in this sector, emphasizing the imperative for radical reforms.

The initial step in this direction is evident in the dismissal of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Moreover, the populace anticipates the effective implementation of compulsory health insurance, enhancements to the healthcare system's material and technical infrastructure, salary increases for physicians and medical staff, and the delivery of quality medical services to address the existing concerns and meet the expectations of the people.

51.2% of the respondents expressed their desire for large-scale social protection reforms. Note that lately, there are some problems in this field in society. In particular, there are requests associated with determining the disability degree of the Patriotic War veterans and ensuring the employment of those involved in protecting the territorial integrity of the state.

Older age groups are dominated by tho-

<sup>1</sup> President Ilham Aliyev gave an interview with a group of local journalists on the results of the year. /23.12.2019/ - <https://president.az/articles/35325>



se who wish for changes in social protection. The respondents from Baku and Aran wish more deepen the reforms in this field.

Those who expect to deepen the social protection reforms, assess lower the measures in the fields of Personnel reforms ( $t(1115)=3.428$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), combating corruption ( $t(1147)=2.719$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and ensuring the physical and civil security of the population ( $t(1135)=2.847$ ;  $p<0.01$ ).

A notable 47.3% of respondents express support for the implementation of large-scale reforms in the military field. The inclination for deeper reforms in the military field is more prevalent among individuals in the middle age group, as well as in Baku and Aran. A nuanced analysis of the outcomes of the Patriotic War is deemed necessary, with emphasis placed on training to enhance the skills of military personnel across various troop types, along with the implementation of pertinent human resources reforms in this domain.

Furthermore, respondents have expressed their desire for deeper reforms in several key areas since 2019. These include public administration (41.2%), the economy (40.5%), the law enforcement system (40.3%), the judicial system (35.2%), foreign policy (29.8%), the political system (27%), mass media/press (23.5%), and the diaspora (22.7%). The aspiration is to deepen reforms in these sectors, reflecting the sentiments of the surveyed population.

Those with secondary and higher education, respondents from Baku and Aran, as well as those with an income below AZN 501 wish for deeper reforms in law enforcement bodies.

Those who wish for deeper reforms in the field of economy, assess lower the measures aimed at developing the non-oil sector ( $t(1082)=2.273$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and agriculture ( $t(1136)=2.185$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

As the age increases, the number of those who wish to deepen reforms in the judicial system also grows. Among the respondents from Baku and Aran, there are more those who wish for changes in this field.

Those who wish for deeper reforms in the judicial system, assess lower the measures taken in the fields of army building and improvement ( $t(704)=2.298$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), social protection ( $t(1165)=2.568$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), Personnel reforms ( $t(685)=3.975$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and combating corruption ( $t(752)=3.009$ ;  $p<0.01$ ).

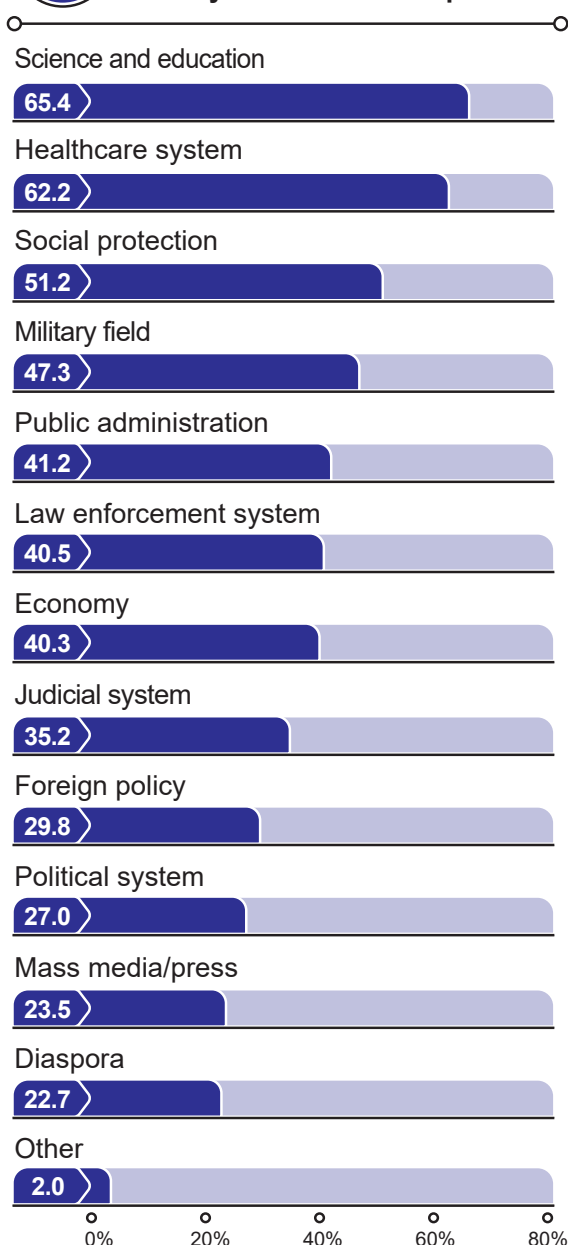
Those who wish for deeper reforms in the field of foreign policy, assess lower the measures aimed at ensuring the physical and civil security of the population ( $t(542)=2.908$ ;  $p<0.01$ ).

Those who wish for deeper reforms in the political system, assess lower the measures taken in the field of Personnel reforms ( $t(480)=2.061$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

As the age increases, the desire to deepen media reforms also grows. More people in Baku and Aran wish for deeper reforms in this field.



### Which of the reforms more extensively implemented in 2019 would you like to be deepened?





69.4 and 62.7% of the survey participants are completely satisfied with, respectively, the introduction of the new official behavior and management culture against the background of declaring Shusha a cultural capital and the formation of a new generation of officials by involving more qualified staff in management. On January 6, in a video conference dedicated to the results of 2020 under the chairmanship of Ilham Aliyev, the President said, **“Relevant institutions failed to combat corruption and bribery strongly enough, and in some cases, they turned a blind eye to crimes. All this is true. Personnel reforms have already put an end to this. Today, no one who has committed a crime can avoid liability, regardless of his or her position. No one is above the law. There is no special status, no privilege for anyone. Everyone should know this. I believe the events of 2020 show that everyone already knows this.”**<sup>2</sup>



#### Concerning HR reforms, to what extent do you agree with the following?

The new official behavior and management culture are introduced against the background of declaring Shusha a cultural capital



A new generation of officials is formed by involving more qualified staff in management



The establishment of a special representative institution in Karabakh gives impetus to the new local administration



Staff with a poor public image still remains in management



A new model of official-citizen relations is being formed



Measures are taken against those who abuse their positions



Public opinion is considered in HR policy



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Completely agree    ■ Do not agree    ■ Not sure  
■ Partly agree    ■ Not aware

62.5% of the respondents completely agree with the opinion that the establishment of a special representative institution in Karabakh gives impetus to the new local administration. In general, the establishment of a special representative institution is a new page in public administration. The establishment of a special representation of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the territories liberated from occupation, aimed at accelerating the construction, restoration, and reconstruction to revitalize these territories, strengthening the coordinated activity of governmental bodies (institutions) and other organizations to achieve this goal, and improving flexibility and efficiency of management will allow for forming official-citizen relations meeting the challenges of the time in the public administration and taking certain steps to implement this institution throughout the entire country.

Despite all this, 53.2% of the survey participants completely agree with the opinion that staff with a poor public image remains in management. 48.4% of the respondents completely agree with the formation of a new model of official-citizen relations, 47.3% with measures taken against those who abuse their positions, and 35.1% with the consideration of public opinion in Personnel policy.

Those who wish for deeper reforms in public administration agree more with the opinion that staff with a poor public image remain in management ( $t(1125) = 2.360$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ).

Those who stated that measures were taken against those who abused their positions, also assessed reforms in the field of combating corruption more positively ( $r = 0.404$  ( $p < 0.01$ )).

### 1.3. Attitude Toward the President's Speech at the Turkic Council Summit

One of the highlights of the President's activity is his participation in international events and his speeches therein. The informal Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States held on March 31 via video conference was notable in this regard. In this survey, the respondents' attitudes toward the views expressed by the President at this informal Turkic Council Summit were studied.

<sup>2</sup> President Ilham Aliyev chaired a meeting in a video format on the results of 2020. /06.01.2021/- <https://president.az/articles/49933>

49.1% of the respondents believe that President Ilham Aliyev's speech at the Turkic Council Summit on March 31, dedicated to the victory in the Patriotic War, will serve to strengthen the unity between Turkic-speaking countries. Alienating Zangezur from Azerbaijan and transferring it to Armenia served the idea of creating a Christian state between Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Iran. Moreover, the separation of Azerbaijan and Turkey divided the Turkic world.

44.3% of the respondents consider that at that event, the President professionally and effectively conveyed Azerbaijan's rightful position and the reasons for Armenia's military and political defeat to the leaders of the partner states.

43.1% of the respondents believe that the future construction and restoration of Karabakh will ensure turning it into a place of cooperation, friendship, and peace for all Turkic peoples.

42.9% of the survey participants stated that Azerbaijan's victory will increase the economic and political involvement of Turkic-speaking countries in regional processes.

39.7% of the respondents consider that Turkey's open, decisive, and unconditional defense of Azerbaijan will become an example for every Turkic Council member.

34.1% of the respondents state that it will prompt Turkic-speaking states to take effective steps against Armenia's war crimes for the sake of common ideals and legal-political principles.

22.7% of the respondents believe that the wait-and-see attitude of some Turkic Council member states will hinder this organization from gaining decisive regional status.

15.6% of the respondents consider that some Turkic Council member states will preserve their previous cautious approach.

### How would you characterize the results of the President's speech dedicated to the victory in the Patriotic War at the Turkish Council Summit on March 31?



Stressing the importance of opening the Zangezur Corridor will serve to strengthen unity among Turkic-speaking countries

49.1

Azerbaijan's rightful position and the reasons for Armenia's military and political defeat were conveyed to the leaders of the partner states professionally and in an effective well-argued manner

44.3

The future construction and restoration of Karabakh will ensure turning it into a place of cooperation, friendship, and peace for all Turkic peoples

43.1

The victory of Azerbaijan will increase the economic and political involvement of Turkic-speaking countries in regional processes

42.9

Turkey's open, decisive, and unconditional defense of Azerbaijan will become an example for every Turkic Council member

39.7

It will cause Turkic-speaking states to take effective steps against Armenia's war crimes for the sake of common ideals and legal-political principles

34.1

The wait-and-see attitude of some Turkic Council member states will not allow this organization to gain decisive regional status

22.7

The previous cautious approach will preserve

15.6

Nothing will change

1.1

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

## SECTION II.

# POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY OF THE SUPREME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN PUBLIC OPINION

### 2.1. Attitude Toward the January 11 Agreement

The tripartite Statement signed by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia on November 10 has marked a significant shift in the geopolitical landscape of the South Caucasus. The subsequent meeting of the heads of these three countries in Moscow, precisely two months after the Statement's signing on January 11, held particular importance in solidifying the terms outlined in the November 10 tripartite agreement. Notably, Azerbaijan's steadfast refusal to accept any of Armenia's conditions during the Moscow meeting can be unequivocally regarded as a diplomatic success for Azerbaijan in the post-war period.

In contrast to Armenia, the Azerbaijani delegation, representing official Baku, effectively achieved the major objectives set forth for itself at the Moscow meeting. This diplomatic outcome underscores Azerbaijan's strategic acumen and assertive positioning in the evolving dynamics of the region.

We can note that in the January 11 Agreement, definite steps for solving the issues reflected in the November 10 Statement were outlined. In particular, forming a working group for the opening of transport communication lines, i.e., the Zangezur corridor connecting the main part of Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan AR, has once again shown that Azerbaijan is determined in this position in this field. In this regard, President Ilham Aliyev noted, **"The statement signed today testifies to our intentions because one of the clauses of the statement on the results of the cessation of hostilities had to do with the restoration of transport communications. This area can bring great dynamics to the development of the region and strengthen security. The opening of**

**transport communications serves the interests of the peoples of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia and our neighbours. I am confident that neighbouring countries would also actively engage in the establishment of a diversified network of transportation corridors and arteries in our region. We must continue to identify areas of activity that are effective and result-oriented in the short term."**<sup>3</sup>

Note that according to the January 11 Agreement reached at the Moscow meeting, a completely new geo-economic landscape will be created, and a new transport communication project will be implemented in the region. The transport lines, including Turkey-Nakhchivan-main part of Azerbaijan through Mehri, Armenia-Iran, and Armenia-Russia through Azerbaijan, will be restored.

In this survey, respondents were also asked to assess the agreements reached at the subsequent meeting of the heads of the three states (Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia) in Moscow on January 11, 2021, as a continuation of the joint Statement dated November 10, 2020. 46.4% of the respondents stated that the opening of transport communications - the Zangezur Corridor - will contribute to the security and stability of the region. 37.6% stated that economic, transport, and trade relations of the region through Russia and Turkey will be established. 42.4% believed that this would further strengthen our Victory, while 37.2% stated that our Victory would extend the sphere of influence and bring economic benefits to the region.

<sup>3</sup> Russian President, President of Azerbaijan, and Armenian Prime Minister made press statements. /11.01.2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/50071/print>



### How do you assess the agreements achieved at the meeting of the heads of the three states on January 11?

The opening of the Zangezur Corridor will contribute to the security and stability of the region

46.4

This will further strengthen our victory

42.4

Economic, transport, and trade relations of the region through Russia and Turkey will be built

37.6

Our victory will extend the sphere of influence and bring economic benefits to the region

37.2

Agreements between the three states are also in Turkey's interests

19.3

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the status issue will remain in the past

15.5

The interstate agreement will have no effect

14.9

I am not aware of this

21.4

Other

1.5

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

The Social Research Center conducted an analysis of respondents' opinions on the joint tripartite Statement of November 10, 2020, as part of a survey conducted from December 1-4, 2020, under the theme 'Public Attitude Toward the Results of the Patriotic War.' The findings revealed that a significant majority of respondents (85.9%) held a positive view of the joint statement signed between Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia, with 54.2% expressing a 'completely positive' sentiment and 31.7% expressing a 'mostly positive' stance.

Moreover, the survey indicated that 66.8% of respondents believed that the November 10 Statement marked the liberation of three regions from occupation without any loss. Additionally, 61.5% of respondents asserted that the tripartite November 10 Statement symbolized both the military and political victory of Azerbaijan. Notably, half of the participants in the survey (49.9%) conducted on December 1-4, 2020, indicated that the tripartite Statement signed by the heads of state of Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia conveyed the complete defeat of Armenia.



## SECTION III.

# PRESIDENT'S INFORMATION POLICY IN PUBLIC OPINION

### 3.1. Attitude Toward the President's Interviews with Local and International Media

During the press conference convened on February 26, commemorating the 29th anniversary of the Khojaly tragedy — a universally acknowledged grave humanitarian catastrophe of the 20th century — President and Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev engaged with local and foreign media representatives. This event emerged as a focal point in both national and global media throughout the first quarter of 2021, alongside comprehensive discussions on Azerbaijan's historical truths, the realities of the Second Karabakh War, and the priorities for the post-war period. Throughout the extensive 4-hour conference, President Aliyev responded with precision and thoughtfulness to over 50 questions from more than 30 world media agencies.

The President's adept handling of inquiries is particularly noteworthy in the current period, marked by an intensified information struggle. Throughout the conference, President Aliyev articulately conveyed the country's position, offering extensive insights into Armenia's sustained degradation resulting from its years-long occupation policy. His remarks were delivered with the confidence and decisiveness befitting a victorious leader, emphasizing the President's unwavering commitment to the principles he upholds.

If we perform a comparative analysis, President Ilham Aliyev's interviews with about 30 foreign mass media during the 44-day Karabakh War II also contributed to conveying the truths of Azerbaijan to the world community. Thus, each interview is a rich source in terms of studying the true nature of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and making it clear that occupying Armenia has been negotiating for the sake of imitation with the support of its patrons for nearly 30 years and international law and the criterion

of justice have melted behind their interests - in short, in terms of conveying the rightful position of Azerbaijan to the international community. As a continuation of these interviews, the purpose of the President's press conference for local and foreign journalists after the war, most importantly, on the anniversary of the Khojaly tragedy, was to once again convey the factors that determined our victory, including our truths, by the Leader of the victorious country to the world. This was the next victory of Azerbaijan in the international information space. Guided by facts, the President stated that the Khojaly genocide was an inhumane crime, and its victims were avenged in the Karabakh War II.

The President once again clearly explained that Azerbaijan's position is based on the norms and principles of international law, UN Security Council resolutions, and a fair approach to the issue. The President also presented the model that will ensure the peaceful living of people. President Ilham Aliyev stated that everything will depend on the policy chosen by the Armenian leadership and power, **"Our policy was unambiguous both during and after the war. I have articulated it quite clearly and am saying today that we are focused on peace. We didn't need war. This was an enforced measure. And this measure turned out to be more effective than all the many years, thirty years of useless negotiations. So everything will depend on the correct assessment of modern realities by the Armenian leadership, correct conclusions, and exclusion of revanchist attempts."**<sup>4</sup>

The President once again brought the difference between the war waged by Azerbaijan and Armenia to the attention of the international audience. It was supported by facts that it was a war of liberation for Azerbaijan and a war of aggression for Armenia. The President showed the example of defending Azerbaijan's national interests, conveying the truth about the conflict and our country to the world community.

Considering these factors, several ques-

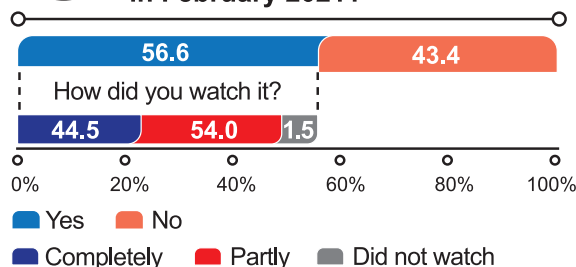
<sup>4</sup> Ilham Aliyev held a press conference for local and foreign media representatives. /26.02.2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/50738>

tions were posed to the respondents regarding the aforementioned issues. Firstly, they were asked whether they were aware of the President's 4-hour press conference for local and foreign media representatives in February 2021. Among the respondents, 56.6% were aware of this event. Of those who were informed, 44.5% watched the press conference in its entirety, 54% watched part of it, and 1.5% did not watch it.

It's worth noting that individuals who expressed a desire for deeper reforms in foreign policy also tended to watch the President's 4-hour press conference for local and foreign media representatives more frequently ( $X^2(2)=15.582, p<0.01$ ). Additionally, there is a positive correlation between age and the number of individuals who wish to see further improvements in the field of foreign policy.

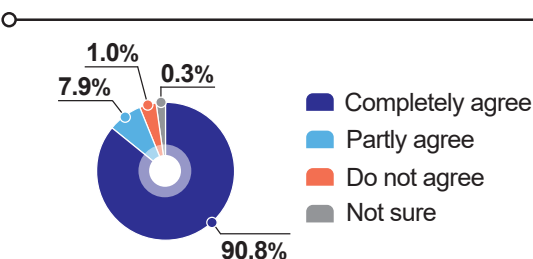


#### Are you aware of the President's 4-hour press conference for local and foreign media representatives in February 2021?



90.8 and 7.9% of the respondents, respectively, completely and partly agree with the idea that the President's answers to more than 50 questions from more than 30 media agencies in 4 languages and his messages at the press conference, which have caused great interest in the world media, signify future victories on the information front.

#### To what extent do you agree with the idea that the President's messages at the press conference for local and foreign media representatives signify future victories on the information front?



83.8% of the respondents stated that at the press conference, the President skillfully answered provocative questions, 75.5% stated that he spoke 4 languages perfectly, 59.5% stated that he provided extensive information to the world community, 51.2% stated that he included Azerbaijan in the world agenda, 39.6% stated that the involved media agencies were selected according to Azerbaijan's cooperation relations, and 35.3% stated that they appreciated the participation of foreign media agencies along with local ones.



#### What did you appreciate most at the President's press conference?



### 3.2. Attitude Toward Media Reforms

The 44-day Patriotic War and the post-war period have shown that information has a great impact on political processes and relations, and international and domestic public opinion. In the modern era, when fundamental reforms covering every field of social life are implemented in Azerbaijan, intensive innovations take place in the unified information space covering the whole world, communication tools are developing rapidly, and progressive technologies and work methods are being applied, media needs qualitative change.

Azerbaijani media stands to gain significantly from embracing the opportunities

presented by innovative advancements, including modernization, rationality, and the widespread application of advanced technologies. These developments should align with the operating principles dictated by the global information landscape. However, to fully leverage these opportunities and serve the community with objective and professional information rooted in transparency and citizen satisfaction, fundamental reforms in this sector are necessary.

In light of these considerations, President Ilham Aliyev has issued a Decree to establish the Media Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan as a Public Legal Entity. This initiative entails the transformation of the State Fund to Support the Development of Mass Media under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The primary objectives of this agency include supporting media development, fostering institutional building efforts within the sector, and facilitating the adoption of new information and communication technologies and innovations.

Survey participants also express the belief that the reforms undertaken in this domain to enhance the media system will have a positive impact on media professionalism (47%), transparency (43.3%), free-thinking (46.2%), and the ability to cover social and political issues (39.3%). Furthermore, respondents anticipate that these reforms will contribute to strengthening Azerbaijan's international media relations (43.8%) and advertising market (25.3%), forming a robust economic basis (26.7%), fostering increased competition among media agencies (30.6%), reducing foreign information attacks on Azerbaijan (35.2%), and freeing the media from the influence of various interest groups (30.6%). Interestingly, 8.7% of the respondents found it challenging to respond to this question.

Those who wish for deeper media/press reforms, also agree more with the idea that it will increase media professionalism ( $X^2(1)=25.559$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and opportunities to cover social and political issues ( $X^2(1)=64.833$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).



### What are your expectations from the reforms performed to improve the media system?



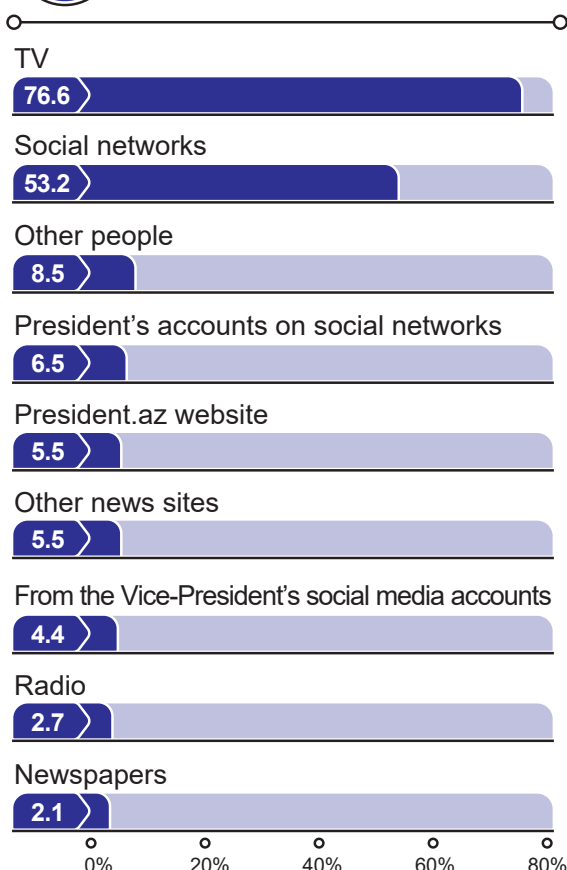
### 3.3. Sources of Information on the President's Sociopolitical Activity

The survey results and observations show that TV channels and social media platforms are the major sources of information on the President's speeches and interviews with local and foreign media representatives. 76.6% of the survey participants receive information on

the President's activity from TV, 53.2% from social networks, 8.5% from other people, 6.5% from the President's social network accounts, 5.5% from the President.az website, 5.5% from various websites, 4.4% from the I Vice President's social network accounts, 2.7% from the radio, and 2.1% from newspapers.



### Where do you get information on the President's activity?



For comparison, note that according to both surveys performed in January-March and April-June 2020, the majority of the population watches the President's activity and speeches on TV. This figure was 81.1% for both periods. However, for September-December, this figure has increased to 91.3%, which can be attributed to the President's regular application to the people on TV during the war. However, a decrease in the number of people addressing Internet resources and social networks to learn about the President's activity and speeches was observed. This can be attributed to the restriction of internet resources at that time. Thus, while in

January-March and April-June, the figure for the said information source was, respectively, 41.7 and 49.8%, in the December survey, it made up 29.9%. As for the President's social network accounts, only about 1-2% change was observed for the entire year. In the April 2021 survey, the number of those who followed information on the President's activity on social networks increased to 53.2%, confirming that the above assumption is correct.



## SECTION IV.

# PLANS OF GREAT RETURN TO LIBERATED TERRITORIES AND EXPECTATIONS

### 4.1. Attitude Toward the President's Visits to Territories Liberated from Occupation

President Ilham Aliyev's consistent visits to the liberated regions, following the cessation of military operations, underscore his sensitive approach to these crucial matters. Notably, on February 14, the President visited the Fuzuli, Zangilan, and Lachin regions, followed by visits to the Fuzuli and Khojavand regions on March 15, and Shusha on March 16. Throughout these visits, the President articulated his perspective on the atrocities committed by Armenians during the occupation, which included the destruction of settlements, severe damage to Azerbaijan's cultural heritage, and deliberate actions aimed at erasing the country's rich historical legacy.

President Aliyev emphasized the imperative of presenting these truths to the international community, stating, "Let all international organizations come and see this. Let the circles defending and supporting the Armenians, those who always support them, come and see what these savages have done." Among the key messages conveyed by the President during these visits was the assertion that Azerbaijan reclaimed these lands as a heroic nation and a victorious state.

The alignment between President Aliyev's political will and his actions signals a commitment to the revitalization of the lands liberated from occupation. It is anticipated that these areas will undergo rejuvenation and emerge as some of the most developed regions, not only within the country but also in the broader region.

Note that the survey participants were also asked what the President's visits to the territories liberated from occupation were indicative of or what these visits meant for them.

According to the respondents, the President's visits to the liberated territories indicate the soon revival of Karabakh and our return there (61.7%), the Supreme Commander-in-Chief's direct leadership of all construction operations (61%), ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (59.8%), the special importance attached by the President to historical monuments (59.6%), ensuring stability and security in our territories liberated from occupation (58.9%), the importance attached by the President to the Great Return (58.4%), the special importance attached to the homeland, people, national-spiritual, historical, and cultural values (54.3%), the involvement of Azerbaijanis from all over the world in the revival of Karabakh (54.6%), the stimulation of the development of territories liberated from occupation and investment in the region (50.3%), the warning to the Armenian forces and their patrons (48.3%), and his contribution to the information war (36.3%).



#### What do the President's visits to the liberated territories mean for you?

The soon revival of Karabakh  
and our return there

61.7

The Supreme Commander-in-Chief direct  
leadership of all construction operations

61.0

Ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan

59.8

The special importance attached  
to historical monuments

59.6

Ensuring stability and security in our  
territories liberated from occupation

58.9

The importance attached by the President to the Great Return

58.4

The involvement of Azerbaijanis from all over the world in the revival of Karabakh

54.6

The special importance attached to the homeland, people, national-spiritual, historical, and cultural values

54.3

The stimulation of the development of territories liberated from occupation and investment in the region

50.3

Warning to the Armenian forces and their patrons

48.3

Contribution to the information war

36.3

Other

1.4

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

73.9% of the respondents assessed the Victory bonfire lighted by the President in Shusha - the Jidir Plain as the symbol of Victory, 72% - the triumph of Shusha won with the blood of our martyrs/the symbol of Victory, 65.2% - demonstration to the world that Shusha is the spiritual and cultural capital of Azerbaijan, 64.7% - patriotism, 62.2% - the love for land and flag, 58.9% - the President's commitment to our values and traditions, 58.9% - national unity, 58.4% - territorial integrity, 57.4% - solidarity, 54.3% - preservation of historical heritage, and 49.6% - the strategies and plans of restoration and reconstruction of Karabakh, and stated that thereby, the President sent messages to the world.



**What were the key impressions conveyed by the President during the Victory bonfire event on the Shusha-Cidir plain?**

Victory

73.9

A symbol of the triumph of Shusha won with the blood of our martyrs

72.0

Demonstration to the world that Shusha is the spiritual and cultural capital of Azerbaijan

65.2

Patriotism

64.7

Love of land and flag

62.2

National unity

58.9

The President's commitment to our values and traditions

58.9

Territorial integrity

58.4

Solidarity

57.4

Saving the historical heritage

54.3

Reconstruction and construction strategies and future plans in Karabakh

49.6

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

#### 4.2. Attitude Toward the Plans of the Great Return to Karabakh

The people of Azerbaijan achieved a historic victory by liberating their territories from Armenian occupation, marking a monumental milestone in their history. Construction efforts have commenced in the newly liberated areas to integrate them into the country's economy. In the 2021 state budget, significant funds have been allocated for the restoration and reconstruction of these territories, totalling

AZN 2 billion. These funds will support various endeavours, including the development of socioeconomic, energy, utility, and transport infrastructure, as well as the facilitation of living and business activities for returning citizens.

President Ilham Aliyev has taken a decisive step by establishing the Karabakh Revival Fund as a Public Legal Entity. This initiative aims to ensure modern and dignified living conditions for sustainable settlement in the liberated territories. The fund's mission includes executing comprehensive construction, restoration, and improvement projects across different sectors, promoting safe living environments, supporting efficient activities, and fostering continuous improvements in well-being.

Additionally, the President has mandated the prompt development of master plans for all cities and regions liberated from occupation. Simultaneously, initiatives are underway to implement 'Smart City' and 'Smart Village' concepts as pilot projects in selected areas to establish green energy zones. The inaugural 'Smart Village' project is slated to begin in the Third Aghali village of the Zangilan region.

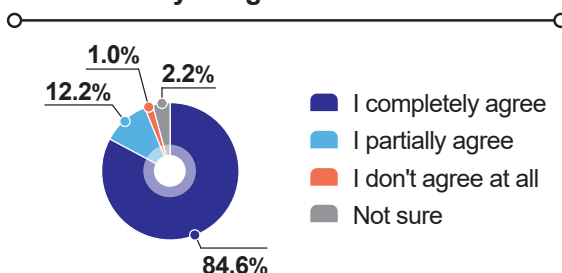
Highlighting the importance of power supply to these regions, President Aliyev emphasized ongoing efforts to provide electricity to Shusha. Azerishig OJSC has already laid electric lines in Shusha, with ongoing initiatives by Azerenergy OJSC to establish high-voltage lines and construct a power substation in the city. These initiatives are crucial for ensuring sustainable electricity provision to Shusha and fostering its continued development.

Laying the foundation of the historically significant Horadiz-Zangilan-Aghband railway, which is of strategic importance for Azerbaijan, was also a particularly critical issue. As the President notes, the commissioning of the Horadiz-Aghband railway will connect the main part of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan.

In general, in his speeches, the President has repeatedly mentioned the priority of the return to Karabakh. The attitude of the survey participants also confirms this idea. Thus, 84.6 and 12.2% of the respondents, respec-

tively, completely and partly agree with the idea that the return to Karabakh is a priority for the President.

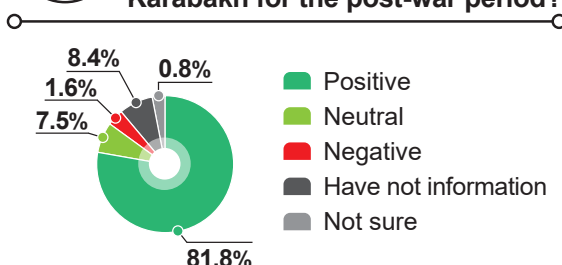
### Taking comprehensive measures for the Great Return in Karabakh in a short time is the most priority issue of the head of the country. How much do you agree with this idea?



81.8 and 1.6% of the respondents, respectively, positively and negatively assess the decisions (messages) concerning the plans (initiatives) of the Great Return to Karabakh for the post-war period. 7.5% of the respondents expressed a neutral position. Interestingly, 8.4% of the respondents stated that they were not aware of the decisions made concerning the Great Return plans (initiatives).

Those who agree with the idea that the return to Karabakh is a priority for the President, also more positively assess the decisions (messages) concerning the plans (initiatives) of the Great Return to Karabakh for the post-war period ( $X^2(2)=12.404$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

### How do you evaluate the decisions made regarding the Great Return plans in Karabakh for the post-war period?



<sup>5</sup> Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Establishment of the Karabakh Revival Fund Public Legal Entity. /04.01.2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/49876>

In the document 'Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development,' approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 2, 2021, the Great Return to the territories liberated from occupation is defined as one of the 5 key priorities.<sup>6</sup> In general, the following five National Priorities for the country's socioeconomic development should be implemented in the next decade:

1. a steadily growing, competitive economy
2. a dynamic, inclusive society based on social justice
3. areas of modern innovations and competitive human capital
4. the great return to the territories liberated from occupation
5. a clean environment and a country of green growth.

These National Priorities are integral for fulfilling the obligations outlined in the United Nations Transforming Our World 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In a survey conducted, participants emphasized two key directions from 'Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic Development,' approved by the President, as particularly significant: the Great Return to the territories liberated from occupation (71.9%) and fostering a clean environment and promoting green growth (37.3%). This choice reflects the populace's strong desire for the swift restoration of the liberated territories and the resettlement of people in their ancestral lands.

Furthermore, it's noteworthy that a steadily growing, competitive economy (28.7%), a dynamic and inclusive society built on principles of social justice (16.7%), and fostering areas of modern innovations and competitive human capital (9%) were also ranked as important priorities by respondents.

It's interesting to observe that those who prioritize the Great Return to Karabakh also prioritize the return to the liberated territories in 'Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic Development,' as approved by the President ( $X^2(1)=2.727$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This correlation underscores the shared emphasis on national restoration and development

among the surveyed population.

Those who positively assess the decisions (messages) concerning the plans (initiatives) of the Great Return to Karabakh for the post-war period, also consider the Great Return to the territories liberated from occupation to be a higher priority in 'Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic Development' approved by the President ( $X^2(2)=14.312$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

#### Which two of the 'Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic Development' approved by the President are more important



The great return to the territories liberated from occupation

71.9

A clean environment and a country of green growth

37.3

A steadily growing, competitive economy

28.7

A dynamic, inclusive society based on social justice

16.9

Areas of modern innovations and competitive human capital

9.0

Not sure

4.4

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

#### 4.2.1. Attitude Toward Transport Communication Projects in the Liberated Territories

The reintegration of territories liberated from occupation into the country's general economy following the historic victory in the Patriotic War, coupled with the opportunities presented by new international and regional transport-logistics corridors, will provide a significant boost to Azerbaijan's develop-

<sup>6</sup> Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic Development /02.02.2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/50474>



ment. Within this framework, fostering security, stability, prosperity, and mutually beneficial cooperation in the region, alongside the advancement of economic and trade relations, will further solidify Azerbaijan's role as the leading state in the South Caucasus, influencing the broader regional economic landscape.

The nation's successful socioeconomic and political achievements, coupled with its commitment to national and multicultural values, instil confidence that Azerbaijan's influence, situated at the crossroads of East and West, will continue to grow in the years leading up to 2030. These opportunities serve as a foundation for enhancing Azerbaijan's economic sovereignty and transitioning into a powerful state with high social welfare, built upon modern living standards.

Azerbaijan has embraced the path of developing a socially oriented market economy to enhance the welfare of its population. Elevating national social welfare hinges on accelerating economic growth supported by sustainable, inclusive, and primarily private initiatives, as well as ensuring the return of the population to the liberated territories. Strengthening the relationship between society, business, and the state is vital for ensuring long-term sustainable and rapid development.

Effective management of the state's role in the economy through market-oriented reforms, bolstering private property institutions, fostering a business-friendly public administration, and further liberalizing trade regimes to facilitate access to foreign markets are fundamental factors driving economic growth. Encouraging private initiatives on a creative and innovative basis will allocate economic resources to areas that generate higher added value.

Achieving these objectives necessitates establishing an effective framework for macroeconomic policy, ensuring sustainable macroeconomic stability, and reinforcing the medium and long-term drivers of economic development, such as modernizing human capital, expanding the digital economy, and asserting full economic sovereignty.

The survey also studied the public attitude toward creating transport and communication infrastructure in the territories liberated from

occupation. According to 68.1% of the survey participants, the President's decisions to build transport and communication infrastructure (roads, airport) in the liberated territories will primarily stimulate tourism. The strategic priorities of the state are supposed to include the territories liberated from occupation in the most advanced global tourist destinations due to the latest construction technologies. The region's tourism potential, beautiful nature, and attractive places create ample opportunities for this. Practical steps are being taken to further turn Shusha, declared by the President the capital of Azerbaijani culture, into the most visited place.

A significant majority of respondents, 57%, express the belief that the development of transport and communication infrastructure in the liberated territories will catalyze increased investment. Notably, companies from friendly nations such as Turkey, Great Britain, Israel, Italy, and others have already signalled their interest in investing across various sectors in these areas, establishing close cooperation ties with Azerbaijan.

Moreover, 54.6% of respondents opined that the construction of transport and communication infrastructure in the liberated territories is pivotal for ensuring Azerbaijan's sovereignty in regions where Armenians reside. Recognizing the importance of integrating Armenians living in Azerbaijan into the nation's multicultural and tolerant environment, the state has identified this as a further strategic priority. Achieving this integration involves enhancing the appeal of Azerbaijan through the implementation of vital infrastructure projects that contribute to the quality of life.

According to 45.3% of the respondents, building transport and communication infrastructure in the liberated lands will introduce additional elements to the security of the region and is of great importance for the improvement of the living conditions of the internally displaced persons who will return to their homes. 45.1% of the respondents consider that building transport and communication infrastructure in the liberated lands will improve the efficiency of economic projects to be implemented.



**According to you, what is the goal of the President's decisions to build transport and communication infrastructure in the liberated lands?**



In this context, let us add that in the December 2020 survey, most of the respondents believed that the liberated territories would be restored soon. Thus, 97.7% of the respondents in that survey came to this conclusion. 69.6% of them believe that this work will be done within a short period while 28.1% state that the process will take time.

#### **4.3. Attitude Toward the President's Activity Associated with the Restoration of Historical, Cultural, and Religious Monuments in the Territories Liberated from Occupation**

Armenia disseminates various false information on the destruction of Christian monuments and changing their original form in the territories liberated from occupation, and even appeals to UNESCO in this regard. On January 5, when receiving Anar Karimov in a video format in connection with appointing

his Minister of Culture, President Ilham Aliyev said, "We have very productive and sincere relations with UNESCO, and I hope that these relations will be maintained. I had meetings with three general secretaries. They have visited Azerbaijan many times. They have played a significant role in the development of UNESCO-Azerbaijan relations. Therefore, UNESCO is well aware of Azerbaijan's contribution to the world's cultural heritage. Why hasn't UNESCO raised this issue for 30 years? We have raised this issue with them many times. Those appeals are documented in the form of letters. Two years ago, the new UNESCO leadership was asked to send a mission here, to send a mission to the occupied lands and see what is left of our historical sites. What was the response of the UNESCO leadership? They said that they did not want to politicize the issue. Fine, if you did not want to politicize the case two years ago, why do you want to politicize it now? Let them give an answer, provide a straightforward answer, and a logical explanation. There is no reply."<sup>7</sup>

Herewith, relations between Azerbaijan and ICESCO have further expanded after the Patriotic War. Receiving the delegation led by the Director General of ICESCO, Salim bin Mohammed al-Malik on January 13, President Ilham Aliyev said that a few days after the start of the war, at the beginning of October, ICESCO made a very supportive statement and decisions for the fair position of Azerbaijan. All this demonstrates our unity, the unity of our people. Azerbaijan has always strongly promoted issues related to Islamic solidarity.<sup>8</sup>

In general, all religious and historical monuments are protected in Azerbaijan, and the state demonstrates care for them. It is enough to mention that the Armenian Gregorian Church has been preserved in the center of Baku and there are many books in the Armenian language. Numerous international events related to the promotion of inter-civilizational dialogue, inter-religious tolerance, multiculturalism, and coexistence have been arranged in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's example of multiculturalism is taught in the world's leading universities. Therefore, the agitation

<sup>7</sup> Ilham Aliyev received Anar Karimov in a video format on his appointment as Minister of Culture /05.01.2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/49907>

<sup>8</sup> Ilham Aliyev received the delegation led by the Director General of ICESCO /13.01.2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/50126>

raised by Armenians regarding Christian monuments has no grounds and pursues political goals. Christian monuments are treated with great respect in Azerbaijan, and as a result, the Gazanchi Church in Shusha is being repaired at the state's expense. Herewith, facilitating the visits of Armenian pilgrims to the Khudavang Church operating in the Vang village of Kalbajar to celebrate religious holidays and perform rites is a demonstration of the importance Azerbaijan gives to national and spiritual values and its humanistic policy.

On the contrary, as a result of Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani lands, including Shusha, our historical, cultural, and religious monuments were destroyed, and home museums were looted. Among them, there are the busts of Khurshid Banu Natavan, Uzeyir Hajibeyli, and Bulbul in Shusha. These shot busts are witnesses of Armenian vandalism. In one of his speeches, President Ilham Aliyev said that after the restoration of our territorial integrity, the busts of Bulbul, Natavan, and Uzeyir Hajibeyli would be reinstalled in Shusha. These words of our President have already come true.

In his interview with Azerbaijan TV on February 1, President Ilham Aliyev stated his views on Shusha, **"As for Shusha, I have declared Shusha the cultural capital of our country. Everyone knows this, and this decision is highly appreciated. Shusha will become one of the cultural capitals of not only Azerbaijan, the region but also the world. Shusha must have a very rich cultural life. Our compatriots who will live in Shusha must return there after all the work is done."**<sup>9</sup>

73.9% of the respondents who commented on the President's activity regarding the restoration of historical and cultural monuments believe that his visit to the Azikh cave testifies that historical and cultural monuments will be restored in all territories liberated from occupation. 68.9% of the survey participants see President Ilham Aliyev as a worthy follower of Heydar Aliyev's policy concerning the culture and history of Azerbaijan. According to 67.8% of the respondents, the President's participation in the ceremony of opening Natavan's

monument in Shusha and his visit to Vagif's bust and mausoleum is a manifestation of his special attention to Karabakh. 67.2% of respondents consider that this is a demonstration of his respect, love, and care for the historical and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan.

According to 62% of the survey participants, the President's activity in the field of restoration of historical and cultural monu-



### How would you characterize the President's activity in the field of restoration of historical and cultural monuments?

The President's visit to the Azikh cave testifies that historical and cultural monuments will be restored in all territories liberated from occupation

73.9

He once again confirms that he is a worthy follower of Heydar Aliyev's policy concerning the culture and history of Azerbaijan

68.9

His participation in the ceremony of opening Natavan's monument in Shusha and his visit to Vagif's bust and mausoleum is a manifestation of his special attention to Karabakh

67.8

It is a demonstration of his respect, love, and care for the historical and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan

67.2

The resumption of the Khari Bulbul international festival and Vagif poetry days in Shusha is aimed at promoting cultural values

62.0

It is an indicator of Azerbaijan's ownership of its historical and ancient territories

61.0

It is a demonstration of a firm position concerning the cultural war of Armenians against our country

48.8

Not sure

2.9

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

<sup>9</sup> Ilham Aliyev participated in the opening of the newly constructed building of Absheron District Central Hospital. /01.02.2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/50466>

ments, the resumption of the Khari Bulbul International Festival and Vagif poetry days in Shusha, is aimed at promoting cultural values. According to 61% of the respondents, the President's activity in the field of restoration of historical and cultural monuments is an indicator of Azerbaijan's ownership of its historical and ancient territories, and according to 48.8% of them, it is a demonstration of a firm position concerning the cultural war of Armenians against our country.

#### 4.4. Major Expectations for the Period after the Patriotic War

The major expectations of the respondents for the period after the Patriotic War, which ended with the victory of Azerbaijan over Armenia, were that the political and economic power of our country would increase (60.6%), and its influence on Armenia would increase even more (46.9%). Also, 49.6% of the respondents state that Azerbaijan and Turkey will play an important role in determining the region's fate, 45.8% state that Armenia will recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, 32.4% state that regional cooperation and integration will accelerate, 41.7% believe that Turkey's military presence in the region will expand, and 38.7% believe that the alliance between Russia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan will strengthen.

For comparison, it's noteworthy that in the December 2020 survey, respondents were asked about their primary expectations for the new stage Azerbaijan entered. Among them, 75% believed that after reconstruction, employment and welfare would increase in the country, 55.3% anticipated the creation of new economic prospects, and 43.6% viewed the Karabakh War II as a precedent for resolving frozen conflicts.

Furthermore, those who anticipate Armenia recognizing Azerbaijan's territorial integrity after the Karabakh War II tend to have a more positive assessment of Azerbaijan's foreign policy ( $t(1131) = 5.383, p < 0.01$ ).

In this context, it's essential to highlight one of the major expectations of the people following the Patriotic War: the proper implementation of the state's social policy concerning the families of martyrs, veterans, and partici-



#### What are your expectations for the period after the Karabakh War II?

Azerbaijan's political and economic power will increase

60.6

Azerbaijan and Turkey will play an important role in determining the region's fate

49.6

Azerbaijan's influence on Armenia will increase

46.9

Armenia will recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan

45.8

The alliance of Russia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan will strengthen

38.7

Regional cooperation and integration will accelerate

32.4

There will be problems in living together with Armenians

29.4

Russia will defend Armenia

29.2

Russia will violate its neutrality after a certain period

20.7

Azerbaijan-Armenia relations will be reformed

19.9

The war will flare up again in the near future

10.5

I have no expectations

3.2

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

pants of the Karabakh War II. Survey results and observations indicate lingering concerns among the population regarding certain social issues after the war. Consequently, respondents' attitudes toward the state policy regard-



ing these individuals and the areas requiring more attention were also examined.

As for the state policy concerning the Karabakh War II martyr families, veterans, and participants, the respondents note that the issues of improving the housing and living conditions of those families (74%), increasing the monthly pension for them (70.8%), solving their social problems (69.4%), sending those wounded during the war to foreign countries for treatment (67.7%), establishing orders and medals and highly appreciating the heroism of military servants (61%), properly (73.3%) and timely (67.6%) defining the disability degree, granting different-level privileges (55.8%), arranging their direct meetings with the heads of relevant bodies (51%), and pardoning their relatives in prison (37.7%) have been considered more objectively.

It is crucial to note that the Azerbaijani state demonstrates an unwavering commitment to the well-being of the families of martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the homeland, as well as to the veterans and warriors who displayed exceptional heroism in liberating our lands from enemy occupation. Strengthening the social security of martyr families and war participants stands out as a pivotal focus within the social policy framework, championed under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev.

This commitment is emphasized through institutional initiatives aimed at preserving the social orientation of state policy. Particularly noteworthy are the decrees issued by President Ilham Aliyev, which increased allowances for martyr families to AZN 500, war-disabled individuals of Group I to AZN 400, war-disabled individuals of Group II to AZN 350, war-disabled individuals of Group III to AZN 300, and National Heroes to AZN 1,800. Additionally, a new allowance, known as the "Allowance of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Hero of the Patriotic War," was established at AZN 2,000.

In a commendable effort, the government has provided more than 9 thousand martyr families with private houses and apartments. In 2020 alone, 1,450 apartments and private houses were allocated to martyr families and war-disabled individuals, with plans to provide an additional 50 houses in the coming days. Furthermore, 400 war veterans and disabled

persons were provided with cars in 2020, exemplifying the high level of attention given to this deserving category of individuals.

By the way, in the video meeting dedicated to the results of 2020, President Ilham Aliyev drew attention to his decision to give the houses intended for internally displaced persons to the martyr families: **"I have already instructed to transfer the apartments on the balance sheet of the State Committee for**



### What would you like the President to implement in his policy concerning the Karabakh War II martyr families, veterans, and participants?



**Affairs of Refugees and IDPs to that of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population. It is quite a large program. Therefore, the martyr families who were on the waiting list before the war should be accommodated in these houses. Herewith, the relatives of our heroic soldiers who died in the Karabakh War II should be accommodated in these houses. This is a fair decision."**

According to the President's instructions, appropriate measures are being taken in this field. The most obvious example of state care for the Patriotic War martyr families and participants was the establishment of the YASHAT Foundation by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated December 8, 2020. Thus, as the state's institutional initiative in this field, the YASHAT Foundation's activity includes a humanitarian mission.

According to the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Central Bank and the Association of Banks of Azerbaijan discharged principal debts and interest on 1,503 loans granted to 830 martyrs who were on the official list of the Ministry of Defense. Herewith, to keep the concerns of the Patriotic War participants in the focus, according to the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers dated January 30, 2021, a special commission for the arrangement of work on granting the title of War Veteran to the Patriotic War participants was formed and started operating.

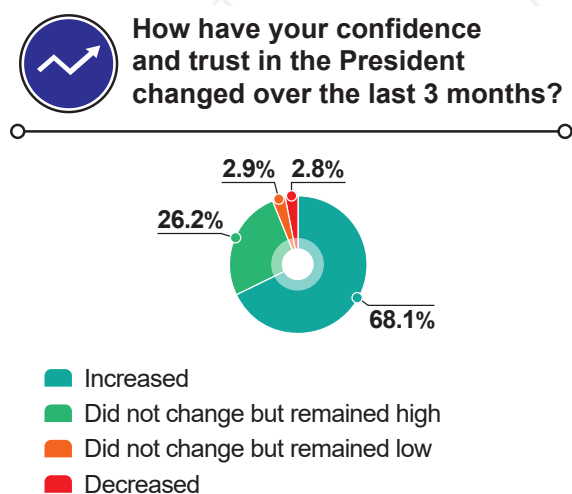
One of the government's important steps is the involvement of local executive bodies in initiatives aimed at caring for the Patriotic War martyr families and participants. Institutionalizing social policy demonstrates the government's commitment to principles in this field. In this regard, the creation of a department for managing affairs related to Patriotic War martyr families and participants within the structure of local executive bodies, as per the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated January 7, 2021, marks a significant move toward diversifying and institutionalizing social policy in our country. This enhances the accessibility of public services aimed at addressing the social challenges faced by the Patriotic War martyr families and participants.

## SECTION V.

# CONFIDENCE AND TRUST DYNAMICS

### 5.1. Confidence and Trust in the President

68.1% of the respondents state that their trust and confidence in the President have increased over the last 3 months. The increase in trust and confidence in the President during the period under study is related to the processes occurring in the socioeconomic life and socioeconomic projects and reforms implemented by the President. 26.2% of the respondents state that their trust and confidence in the President have not changed but remained high. On the contrary, 2.9% of the respondents state that their trust and confidence in the President have not changed but remained low, and 2.8% state that their trust and confidence have decreased.



For comparative analysis, it is important to highlight that in the periods of January-March and April-June 2020, the percentage of respondents expressing an increase in trust and confidence in the President was 58.1% and 24.6%, respectively. In contrast, the survey conducted in the last quarter of the year, in December, revealed a substantial surge, with this figure reaching 85%.

The absolute majority (97.0% on average) of the respondents who, according to the results of surveys performed in March (38.2%), June (71.7%), and December (14.0%) 2020, reported that their trust and confidence had not changed, state that their trust and confidence in

the President have not changed but remained high. Accordingly, 1.4% of the respondents reported a decrease in their trust and confidence at the end of 2019, 0.9% in March 2020, 2.6% in June, and only 0.1% in December.

Also, the absolute majority (88.3%) of the current survey participants completely trust, and 9.1% mostly trust the President. The respondents' trust in the I Vice President is also high. Thus, 82.5 and 12.2% of the respondents answered, respectively, 'completely trust' and 'mostly trust.'

**Let us also add that among those who state that their trust and confidence in the President have increased over the last 3 months, there are also more of those who:**

- agree with the idea that public opinion is considered in Personnel reforms ( $X^2(6)=106.361, p<0.01$ );

- have positive attitudes toward the measures implemented in the field of army building and improvement ( $X^2(9)=184.954, p<0.01$ );

- assess measures implemented in the field of foreign policy positively ( $X^2(9)=251.587, p<0.01$ );

- have positive attitudes toward measures implemented in the field of Personnel reforms ( $X^2(9)=199.660, p<0.01$ );

- highly assess the decisions (messages) concerning the plans (initiatives) of the Great Return to Karabakh for the post-war period ( $X^2(6)=91.451, p<0.01$ );

- agree more with the idea that the return to Karabakh is a priority for the President ( $X^2(3)=25.198, p<0.01$ ).

- hope that building transport and communication infrastructure in the lands liberated from occupation will ensure the sovereignty of Azerbaijan in our territories where Armenians live ( $X^2(3)=14.210, p<0.01$ ).

**Among those who state that their trust and confidence in the President have increased over the last 3 months, there are also more of those who:**

- expect that Azerbaijan's political and economic power will further increase in the period after the Karabakh War II ( $X^2(3)=29.594, p<0.01$ ).

- expect the improvement of housing and living conditions of the Karabakh War II martyr families, veterans, and participants in the state policy concerning those families  $X^2(3)=8.482, p<0.05$ ).

Those who state that their trust and confidence in the President have increased over the last 3 months, also trust more the country's government ( $X^2(9)=445.471, p<0.01$ ) and the Vice President ( $X^2(9)=374.180, p<0.01$ ).

Those who trust the President also more positively assess measures taken in the field of army building and improvement ( $r=0.412, p<0.01$ )).

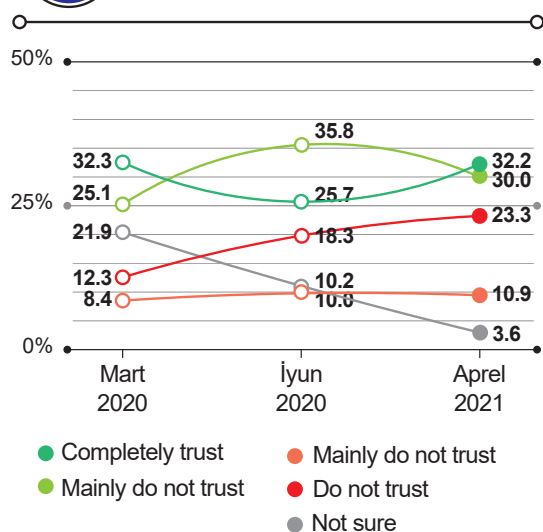
## 5.2. Confidence and Trust in the Milli Majlis and Judicial Institutions

In the April 2021 survey, 32.2% of respondents expressed complete trust in the Milli Majlis. To provide context, in March, a similar level of confidence was reported, with 32.3% expressing complete trust in the newly formed parliament after the February 2020 elections. However, by June, this figure had decreased to 25.7%

Conversely, regarding respondents expressing distrust in the activities of the Milli Majlis, the breakdown is as follows: 10.9% mostly do not trust, and 23.3% do not trust at all. It is noteworthy that in March 2020, the percentages for respondents who stated they did not trust at all and mostly did not trust the



To what extent do you trust the Milli Majlis?



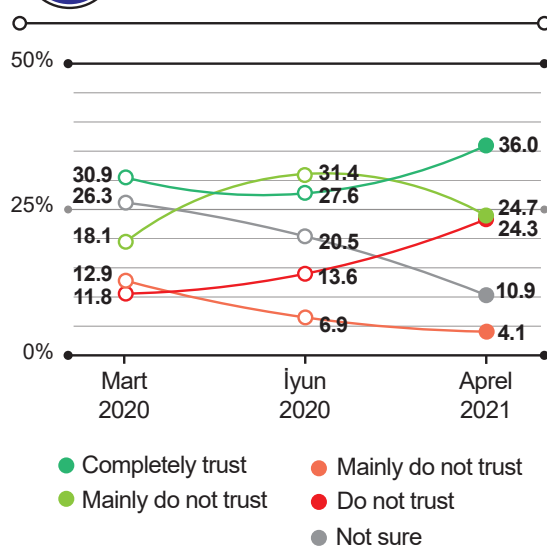
Parliament's activity were 12.3% and 8.4%, respectively. By June, these figures had shifted to 10% and 18.3%.

An increase was observed in the dynamics of the respondents' trust and confidence in judicial bodies. Thus, 36% of the respondents state that they completely trust the court. In March 2020, 30.9% of the respondents reported complete trust in judicial bodies while in June, this figure made up 27.6%.

In the current survey, 24.3% of the respondents state that they do not trust the activity of judicial bodies at all.



To what extent do you trust the judiciary bodies?



## 5.3. Confidence and Trust in Executive Bodies

There has been an increase in the dynamics of respondents' trust and confidence in the Cabinet of Ministers, the supreme executive body. Thus, 32.8% of the survey participants state that they completely trust the Cabinet of Ministers. A comparison of the performed surveys showed that in June 2020, the respondents who expressed complete trust in the Cabinet of Ministers made up 27.9%.

In April and June 2020, 27.2% and 36.7% of the respondents reported their trust in the said body, respectively. While in June 2020, the number of those who had difficulty assessing the trust in the Cabinet of Ministers increased to 11.6%, in April 2021, it decreased to 6.4%.



In addition to the Cabinet of Ministers, the survey delved into the respondents' trust in various institutions, including local executive bodies, the State Statistics Committee, the Central Bank, ombudsmen, and municipalities. Results indicated that 46.4% of respondents trust the State Statistics Committee, 44% trust the Central Bank, 40% trust the ombudsmen, 27.4% trust local executive power, and 23.6% trust municipalities.

The survey findings underscore a persistent challenge in the level of trust for local executive bodies, with 5.0% mostly not trusting and 39.1% not trusting at all. Similarly, trust in ombudsmen is low, with 4.0% mostly not trusting and 15.3% not trusting at all. Trust in municipalities also faces challenges, with 14.9% mostly not trusting and 32.2% not trusting at all.

Interestingly, a portion of respondents found it challenging to express their opinion on their trust in the court (10.9%), the Ombudsman Apparatus (18.1%), and the activity of the State Statistics Committee (10.8%).

Notably, the level of trust in almost all the listed institutions is generally lower among men than women. Unemployed individuals tend to assess the activities of the President, the I Vice-President, the Cabinet of Ministers, the Milli Majlis, and the Ombudsman Apparatus lower than other groups, while public sector workers rate them higher. Additionally, the unemployed and private sector workers tend to assess the Central Bank and the judicial system more negatively. Interestingly, respondents with a monthly income between AZN 251-500 express less satisfaction with the activities of the Central Bank, municipalities, the Ombudsman Apparatus, and local executive bodies compared to those with an income between AZN 501-1000.

While the 18-25 age group assesses the President's activity more negatively than others, the highest appreciation level is among those over 65. The highest and lowest appreciation of the Milli Majlis was observed in the 18-25 and over 65 age groups, respectively. A similar picture is observed for the Ombudsman Apparatus, judicial bodies, and the Central Bank. Those who are dissatisfied with the Cabinet of Ministers are between 56-65, and those who are dissatisfied with local executive bodies are more widespread among the

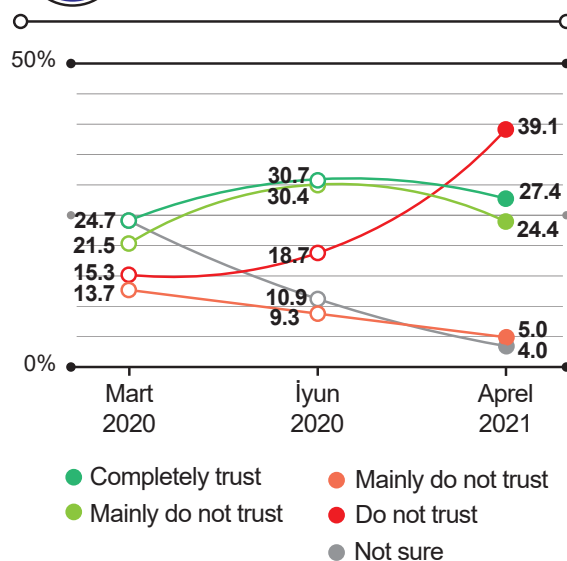
36-45 and over 65 age groups.

As for the economic regions, the President's activity was assessed lower in Baku and Absheron and higher in Ganja-Gazakh compared to other areas. A noteworthy point is that trust in most institutions is higher in the Lankaran economic region and lower in Baku and Absheron. One of the greatest differences was observed for municipalities. Thus, in Baku and Absheron, dissatisfaction with this institution is significantly higher than in most regions. Daghigh Shirvan and Lankaran are satisfied with the municipalities more.

Note that in the surveys 2020, in June, a decrease of around 15% was observed in the number of respondents who reported their trust in local executive bodies compared to the beginning of the year (January-March).



### To what extent do you trust local executive bodies?



Low trust and confidence in local executive bodies (39.1% do not trust at all, and 5% mostly do not trust) shows the need for reforms in this field. Note that the issues outlined in the President's order On Supplementary Measures to Improve the Public Administration Efficiency dated March 17, 2020, and the Decree On the Special Representatives of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Territories Liberated from Occupation dated January 19, 2021, can be evaluated as an alternative solution in eliminating existing problems associated with local executive bodies

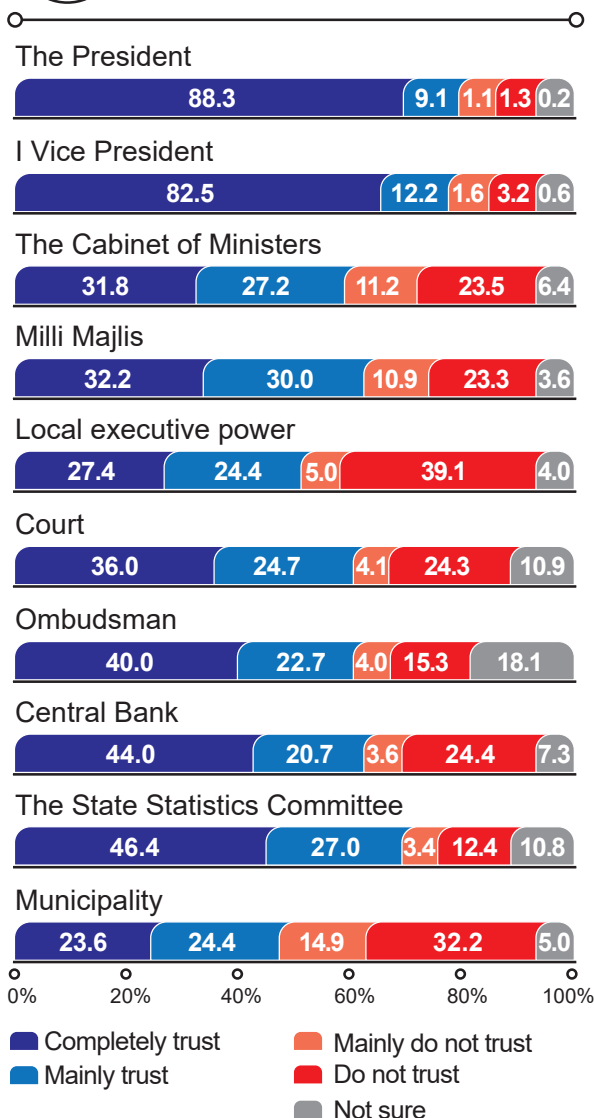
and changing the public attitude toward local governance structures in a positive direction.

In this survey, respondents were also asked whether they had applied to any institution regarding the problems they faced during the last year. The results indicate that 37.4% of the respondents stated that they did not apply to any institution, while 62.6% reported that they did apply.

Among those who applied, 41.6% of the respondents addressed their problems to the relevant ministry and agency, 27.5% to the local executive power, 9.7% to the Presidential Administration, 8.9% to the I Vice-President, 8.6% to the court, 3.7% to the regional MP, and 3.4% to the Milli Majlis.



### To what extent do you trust the following persons and institutions?



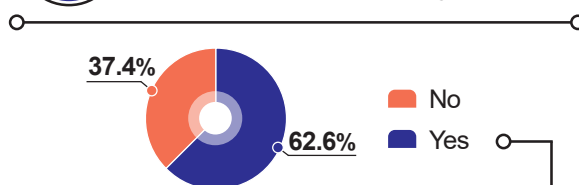
It is worth noting that 10.4% of the respondents indicated that they had submitted applications to the municipality on specific issues. A crucial observation is that 55.8% of survey participants expressed dissatisfaction with the outcomes of their applications, with 20.1% reporting a lack of any definitive results. In contrast, 14.5% and 9.7% of respondents expressed complete and partial satisfaction, respectively, with the outcomes of their applications.

The survey results underscore a significant level of dissatisfaction among the population regarding the consideration of their cases by relevant government bodies and institutions. This dissatisfaction contributes to a lack of trust in these government bodies and institutions.

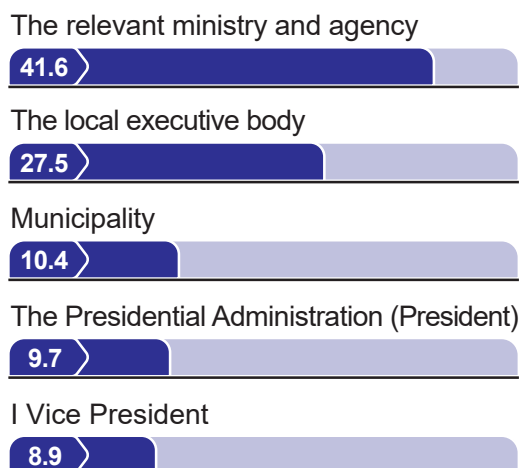
Furthermore, it is noteworthy that individuals who have applied to relevant ministries, agencies, and other institutions over the past year tend to express lower trust in the Cabinet of Ministers ( $t(1113)=5.075$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Those who have applied to the local executive body regarding their problems over the last year, trust the activity of their regional executive body less ( $X^2(3)=20.196$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

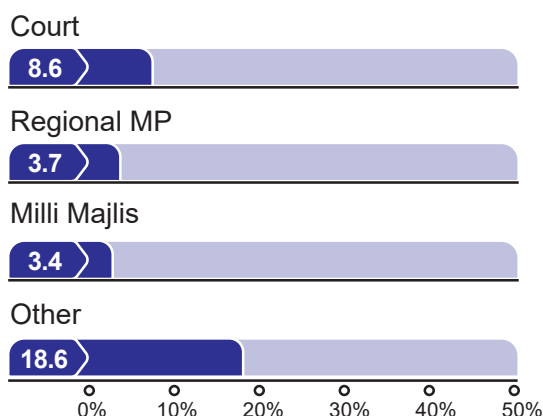


### Have you applied to any institution regarding your problem over the last year?

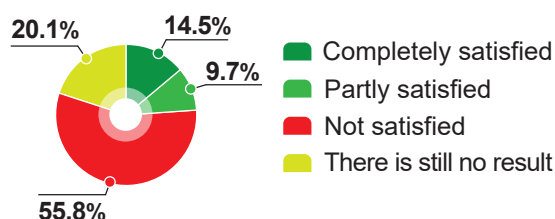


### Which institution did you apply to?





**How satisfied were you with the outcome of your application?**



#### 5.4. Attitude Toward the President's Awareness of the Citizens' Situation

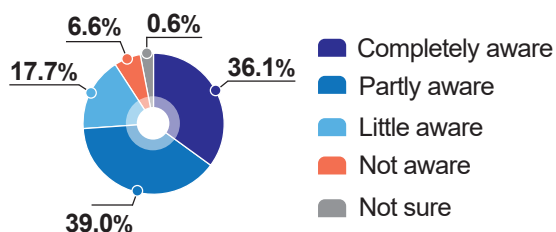
An intriguing aspect pertains to the respondents' perceptions of the President's awareness of citizens' situations. According to 36.1% and 39% of respondents, respectively, the President is completely and partly aware of citizens' situations. In contrast, 17.7% of respondents believe that the President is poorly aware, with an additional 6.6% expressing that the President is not aware at all.

A noteworthy finding is that a quarter of respondents (24.9%) believe that all events occurring in various locations are reported to the President as they unfold.

Importantly, the majority of respondents who participated in the survey state that their confidence and trust in the President have increased. According to 63.6% of the respondents, only positive information is conveyed to the President. On the contrary, 5.5% of the respondents believe that only negative information is conveyed to the President. 6.1% of the respondents had difficulty answering this question.



**According to you, to what extent is the President aware of the citizens' situation?**

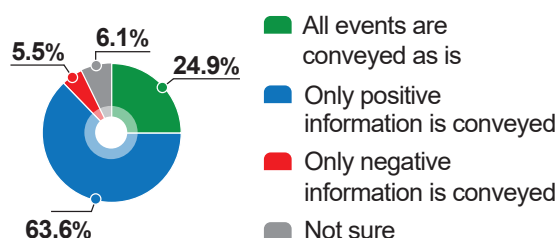


Those who state that officials had violated the law over the last year, also more often noted that only positive information was conveyed to the President compared to those taking the opposite position ( $X^2(2)=61.593$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

Also, 34.4% of the survey participants stated that over the last year, they did not face a law violation by officials, and 65.6% reported that they did. 45.1% of the respondents stated that they did not apply to any institution/body regarding the law violation by officials, and only 54.9% reported that they did.

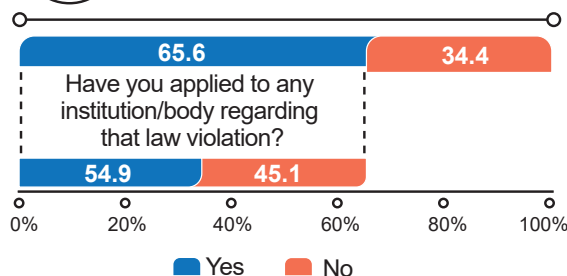


**According to you, to what extent is the information on the events occurring in places conveyed to the President as is?**





### Have you faced a law violation by officials over the last year?



## 5.5. The Citizens' Major Concerns

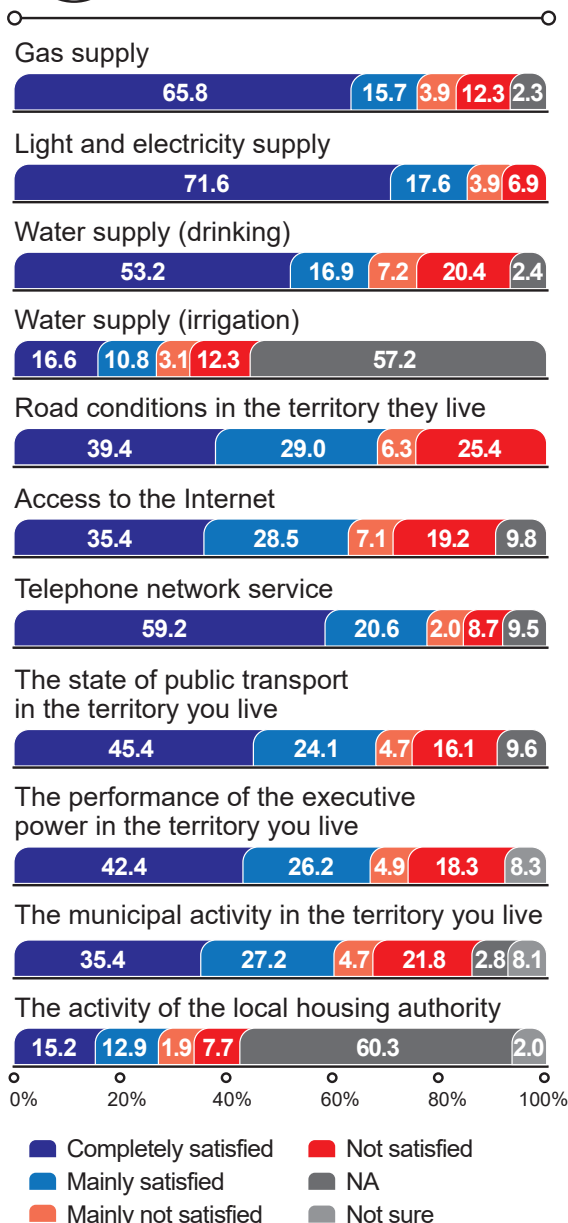
This survey comprehensively evaluated the respondents' satisfaction with various service areas. Results indicate that 71.6% of survey participants expressed satisfaction with the light and electricity supply, followed by 65.8% for gas supply, 59.2% for telephone network service, and 53.2% for drinking water supply. Conversely, 25.4% of respondents reported dissatisfaction with road conditions in their area, 21.8% with municipal activity, 20.4% with drinking water supply, 19.2% with internet access, 18.3% with the performance of the executive power in their area, 16.1% with the state of public transport, 12.3% with irrigation water supply, and 7.7% with the activity of the local housing authority.

In terms of emerging concerns, 70.1% of respondents reported an increase in complaints about rising consumer product prices over the last 3 months, 55.2% noted an increase in unemployment, 51.5% expressed a desire to return to the liberated lands, 45.4% anticipated impoverishment, 43.5% expected the strengthening of national unity, and 43.1% reported an increase in trust in the government. Additionally, 37% of respondents reported an increase in hope for improved well-being, 29.6% lacked confidence in vaccination, and 24.9% reported an increase in COVID-19 cases in their immediate environment.

Those who stated an increase in their negative attitude toward the government, also noted less that only positive information was conveyed to the President compared to those who took the opposite position ( $X^2(2)=13.481$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).



### How satisfied are you with the following services?



Those who did not apply to any institution/body over the last year regarding the law violation by officials, also state that their trust in the government has increased for the last 3 months compared to those who shared the opposite position ( $X^2(1)=6.381$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

The survey participants listed their major concerns in the country as follows: unemployment (53.2%), the state of education (43.3%), the financial situation of people (25.6%), the uncertainty of the fate of Khankendi, Khojaly, and Khojavand (20.2%), temporary closure of workplaces due to the pandemic (16.8%), the arbitrariness of officials (16.2%), the pres-





### Which of the following have you observed in your immediate environment during the last 3 months?

An increase in complaints about the growing prices of consumer products

70.1

An increase in the number of unemployed/lost their jobs

55.2

The wish to return to the lands liberated from occupation

51.5

The expectation of returning to pre-pandemic lifestyle on a global scale soon

45.4

Impoverishment

44.7

The strengthening of national unity

43.5

An increase in trust in the government.

43.1

An increase in the hope that people's well-being would improve

37.0

A lack of confidence in vaccination

29.6

An increase in the number of cases of infection with COVID-19 in the immediate environment

24.9

The lack of faith in the future

17.3

An increase in the negative attitude toward the government

12.9

Taking an opposite position

4.0

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

ence of Russian 'peacemakers' in Karabakh (13.4%), healthcare system problems (10.8%), failure to solve social problems (10.4%), corruption (10.2%), implementing the quaran-

tine regime in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic (9.2%), and the state of considering people's complaints and appeals (6.5%). It is noteworthy that 7.4% of the respondents stated the lack of any concerns. Note that the respondents could choose only three problems from the answer options.

Those who were concerned about the failure to consider people's appeals also applied more often to any institution regarding the law violation by officials ( $X^2(1)=11.108$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

Those who are concerned about the arbitrariness of officials are less likely to share the opinion that all information is conveyed to the President as is ( $X^2(2)=16.392$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

Individuals expressing concerns about the arbitrariness of officials also note that among their close ones, the negative attitude toward the government has increased compared to those who are not concerned ( $X^2(1)=40.170$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).



### Which of the following have you observed in your immediate environment during the last 3 months?

Unemployment

53.2

The state of education

43.3

The financial situation of people

25.6

The uncertainty of the fate of Khankendi, Khojaly, and Khojavand

20.2

Temporary closure of workplaces due to the pandemic

16.8

The arbitrariness of officials

16.2

The presence of Russian 'peacemakers' in Karabakh

13.4

Healthcare system problems

10.8

Failure to solve social problems

10.4

## Corruption

10.2

Implementing the quarantine regime in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic

9.2

The state of considering people's complaints and appeals

6.5

I have no concerns

7.4

Other

24.5

0% 20% 40% 60%

Survey respondents reported various challenges in the territories they live in, with unemployment being the predominant concern (55.4%). Other notable issues include growing psychological tension (39%), temporary unemployment/closure of workplaces (34%), increasing aggression among people (33%), poor street conditions (28%), widespread drug use (26.6%), inadequate road infrastructure (25.9%), lack of sewage lines (24.9%), poor or no lighting (24.9%), public transport problems (24.2%), widespread theft (19.3%), poor communication/relations between residents (18.2%), and disorders (noise, people violating public order on the street) (9.1%).

Similar to the respondents' major concerns for the country, unemployment emerges as the top issue in their local territories. This signals a serious concern for the government and serves as a significant criterion for increasing social dissatisfaction. The consequences of unemployment, such as rising crime rates, susceptibility to radical religious movements, and potential influence from foreign special services, underscore the urgency of addressing this issue. To combat unemployment, widespread promotion of vocational training and self-employment programs aligned with labor market demands is essential.



## Which of the following problems do you currently observe in the territory you live?

Unemployment

55.4

Growing psychological tension

39.0

Temporary closure of workplaces

34.0

Growing aggression among people

33.0

Poor condition of the streets

28.0

The widespread use of drugs

26.6

Poor road infrastructure

25.9

The lack of sewage lines

24.9

Poor or no lighting

24.9

Public transport problems

24.2

Widespread theft

19.3

Poor communication/relations between residents

18.2

Disorders

9.1

None

9.0

Other

3.2

0% 20% 40% 60%

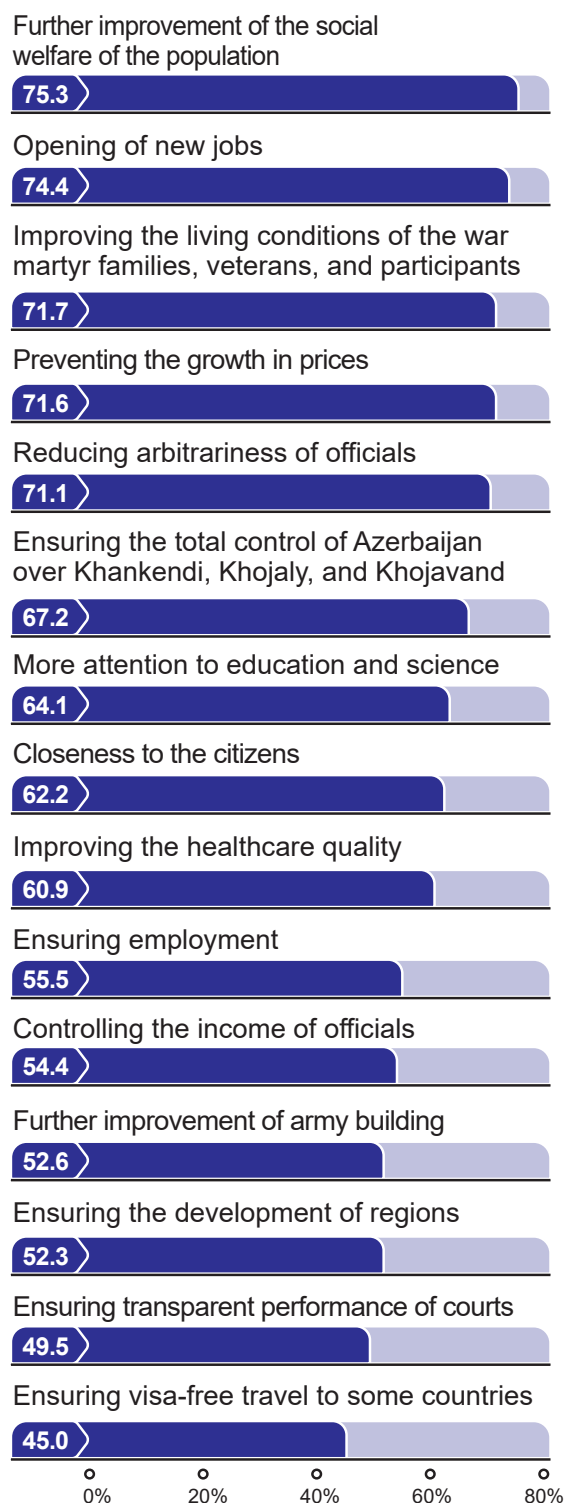
## 5.6. The Key Expectations of the Citizens from the President

Following the Patriotic War, one of the paramount tasks is to uphold the spirit of Victory and fully address citizens' expectations. The research results underscore that citizens primarily expect the President to enhance their social welfare further (75.3%). The creation of new job opportunities is the second most significant expectation (74.4%). It is anticipated that the government's major priority in the future will be to strengthen social policy, given that citizens in the victorious country desire not only improved social welfare but also the creation of new jobs, enhanced living conditions for war martyr families, veterans, and participants (71.7%), and measures to prevent rising prices (71.6%) and the arbitrary behavior of officials (71.1%). Additional expectations include ensuring Azerbaijan's complete control over Khankendi, Khojaly, and Khojavand (67.2%), increased attention to education and science (64.1%), proximity to citizens (62.2%), and the enhancement of healthcare quality (60.9%). The respondents' expectations in other areas encompass employment opportunities (55.5%), oversight of officials' incomes (54.4%), further improvements in army building (52.6%), continued regional development (52.3%), transparent court proceedings (49.5%), visa-free travel to some countries (45%), continued foreign relations development (44%), anti-terrorist operations against separatists in Karabakh (40.7%), non-oil sector development (38.9%), improved local administration in the regions (38.4%), and accelerated vaccination efforts (38.6%). These expectations highlight that citizens anticipate complex issues to be gradually addressed in the post-war period.

Residents of Baku and the Aran region, individuals aged 46-65, as well as public sector workers, students, and pensioners, express a stronger desire for improved social welfare. The expectation of creating new jobs is more prevalent among those living in Lankaran and Guba-Khachmaz regions and individuals aged 46-65. In Lankaran, Baku, and Absheron, there is a higher number of individuals who wish to prevent the arbitrary behavior of officials.



**AS a citizen,  
what are your expectations  
from the President?**



The Ganja-Kazakh, Lankaran, Aran, and Baku residents have a greater desire to ensure the further development of the regions.

## SECTION VI.

## PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PROCESSES

**6.1. Changes in the System of Political Parties**

Under the conditions of a multiplicity of parties, the lack of coordination between them is among the factors negatively affecting the effective functioning of the political system. Therefore, President Ilham Aliyev has always taken the initiative of arranging dialogue between political forces in the country while stressing that this is important to improve the future political system of the country and form a strong party system. On March 5, in his speech at the New Azerbaijan Party's 7th Congress in video format, the President said that at the new stage, we need to further deepen the political dialogue, "...This process began before the war, and I believe it yielded good results in a short time. We can say that all parties, except the anti-national council calling itself a political entity, all political forces spoke in favor of dialogue, welcomed our initiative, and this dialogue has already taken place. ... I very much approve of it. I believe that it is of great importance for improving the future political system of our country. I also call upon representatives and members of the New Azerbaijan Party to be mindful of the fact that we have no problems with any political entity in the country." <sup>10</sup>

It would be inaccurate to assert that political parties in Azerbaijan today espouse fundamentally different ideas and orientations. The ideological and political stances of these parties can be discerned by categorizing them based on their attitude toward the legitimate political authority—the state. The prospectless nature of political parties' endeavours to maintain the status quo for decades, not through genuine activity, initiative, and intellectual potential but through a power struggle, is evident. In Azerbaijan, antagonistic political forces, reluctant to engage in political dialogue even on national-scale issues, have, during this period, demonstrated signs con-

trary to a tendency for "disintegration, closure to dialogue, and quantitative multiplication," labeling themselves as "innovators." However, they have been unable to free themselves from radical stereotypes. Attempts to attract individuals without social support have resulted in well-known incidents during elections, surpassing the bounds of civil discourse, political ethics, and moral values.

In essence, this poses a challenge to the mind, as the primary objective of negotiations between political forces in the country over the last two years has been to create not an image of a multi-party political system but a dynamic environment of political competition and diverse parties. This has resulted in ideological eclecticism, with the party landscape consisting of a collection of similar ideological slogans.

Changes in the system of political parties, initiated by the President in the last two years, mainly serve the improvement of the future political system of our country. Considering this factor, the respondents were asked what these changes meant for them. According to 28.4% of the respondents, the changes in the system of political parties in the last 2 years do not mean anything. On the other hand, 27.3% of the respondents share the opinion that the changes in the system of political parties in the last 2 years reflect political solidarity, integration, and national unity. 22.2% of respondents evaluated these changes as the formation of a new political system, and 20.6% as a new view of the party system in Azerbaijan. 20.5% of the respondents believe that these changes testify to the parties' ability to demonstrate solidarity on national-scale issues. 16% of the respondents associate these changes with the formation of the political dialogue environment in the country, 10.5% note the scattering and diversity of ideas on other political fronts, 9.9% - the formation of a strong party system affecting political processes, 6.5% - weak opportunities

<sup>10</sup> 7th Congress of New Azerbaijan Party gets underway. /05.03.2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/50798>



for other parties' transfer to the real political level, and 6.4% - weak material and technical and resource opportunities of the said parties.

Note that those who state that the changes in the system of political parties in the last 2 years reflect the formation of a new political system, also wish more for deeper reforms in the political system ( $X^2(1)=14.034$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).



### What do the changes in the system of political parties in the last 2 years mean?

They do not mean anything

28.4

Political solidarity, integration, and national unity

27.3

The formation of a new political system

22.2

A new view of the party system in Azerbaijan

20.6

The parties' ability to demonstrate solidarity in national-scale issues

20.5

The environment of political dialogue in the country

16.0

Scattering and diversity of ideas on other political fronts

10.5

The formation of a strong party system affecting political processes

9.9

Weak opportunities for other parties' transfer to the real political level

6.5

Weak material and technical and resource opportunities of the said parties

6.4

Not sure

14.7

0%

10%

20%

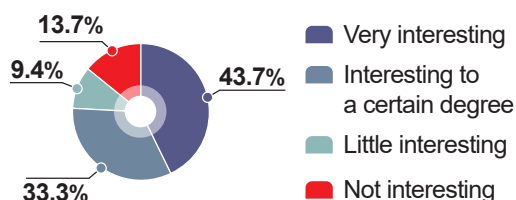
30%

Respondents were also asked how interesting political news is for them in general. 43.7 and 33.3% of the respondents state that political news

is, respectively, very interesting for them and interesting to a certain degree. 9.4% of the survey participants state that political news is of little interest to them, and 13.5% report no interest.



### How interesting is political news for you?



## 6.2. The Election Turnout

75.2% of the respondents stated that they participated in the 2018 presidential elections, 36.2% - in the 2019 municipal elections, and 42.7% - in the 2020 Milli Majlis elections. Note that 18.7% of the respondents stressed that they did not participate in any election.

The comparison of respondents' participation in all three elections shows that the population is more interested in the presidential elections. This is due to the people's great trust and confidence in the President compared to the law-making and executive bodies.

Those who participated in the 2019 municipal elections, also expressed more satisfaction with the municipal activity in the territory they live ( $t(1059)=9.047$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

Those who participated in the 2018 presidential elections, also expressed more interest in political news ( $t(1187)=6.702$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

The election turnout differs by demographic factors. Thus, let us first look at the 2020 Milli Majlis elections. As age increases, this election turnout also increases. For, while the election turnout for those aged 46-65 varies between 26-28%, for the 26-35 age group, this figure is 2 times lower. Those with higher and secondary education are more active in elections than those with secondary education, and public sector workers are more active in elections than those from other occupational groups.

41% of those with a monthly income of AZN 0-250, and 60-62% of those with an income of AZN 251-1000 participated in the Milli Majlis elections. Among the participants, the respondents in Aran, Baku, and Lankaran were more active.

The voter turnout in the 2019 municipal elections demonstrates an increase with age, with respondents in the 18-25 age group showing the

lowest participation at only 19%. Those in Lankaran, Shaki-Zagatala, and Guba-Khachmaz, as well as individuals with secondary vocational and higher education, displayed higher activity in the elections. Public sector workers, along with households earning a monthly income of AZN 251-1,000, exhibited greater involvement in the electoral process.

Similarly, the turnout in the 2018 presidential election rises with age, and the likelihood of participation is higher for those with secondary vocational and higher education. While the turnout in most economic regions did not significantly differ, it was higher in Lankaran and lower in Baku and Absheron. The public sector workers and the self-employed appear to be the most active demographic group, and respondents with a monthly income between AZN 251-1,000 demonstrated increased activity in the elections.

Analysis of non-participation reasons reveals that 27.4% of survey participants did not engage in the election due to being outside their region on the election day, 26.9% believed the elections lacked transparency, and 25.6% refrained from participation as they doubted the significance of their votes. Additionally, 11.7% cited having important work on the election day, 9% did not trust any of the candidates, 8.5% lacked interest in politics, and 2.7% were not sufficiently informed about the candidates' election platforms.



### In which of the following elections did you vote?

The 2018 Presidential elections

75.2

The 2020 Milli Majlis elections

42.7

The 2019 municipal elections

36.2

None

18.7



### Why didn't you participate?

I was beyond their region on the elections day

27.4

I think the elections are not transparent

26.9

I don't believe my voice matters

25.6

I had important work to do on elections day

11.7

I don't trust any of the candidates

9.0

I'm not interested in politics

8.5

I didn't know enough about the election platform of the candidates

2.7

Other

18.8

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

## SECTION VII.

# ACTIVITY OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PUBLIC OPINION

### 7.1. Attitude Toward the Activity of International Organizations

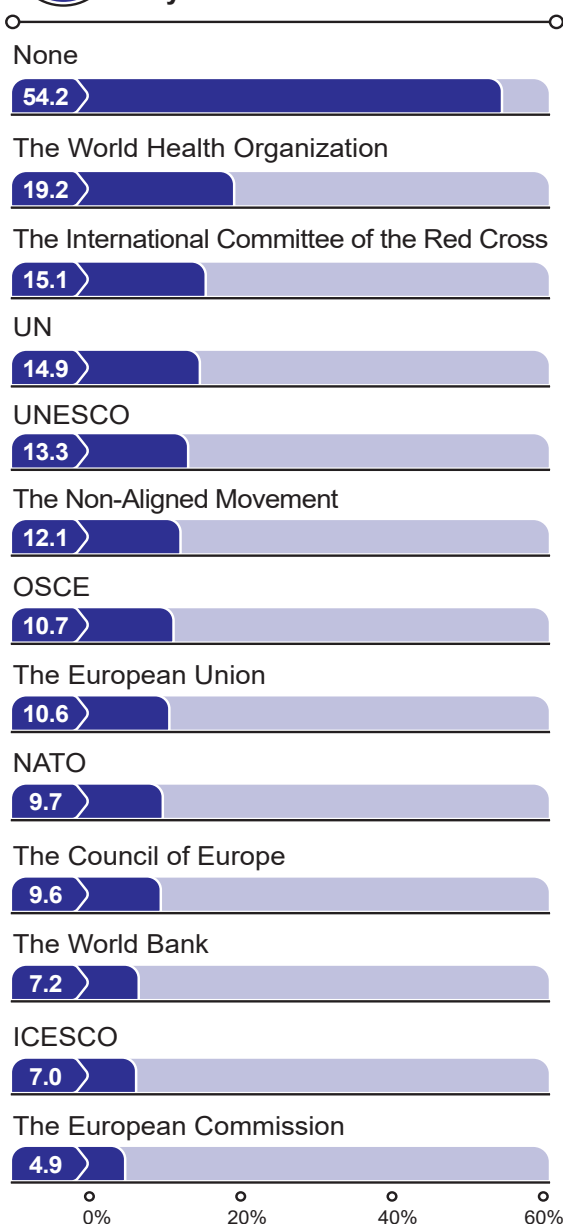
Azerbaijan, strategically positioned in a highly sensitive geopolitical region, has actively engaged in global and regional political processes rather than remaining a mere spectator. The country has pursued a balanced regional policy aligning with its national interests, and the decisions made over time have proven to be correct. In the context of the South Caucasus, where Armenia is a member of the CSTO and Georgia leans towards NATO, Azerbaijan strategically joined the Non-Aligned Movement and even assumed its chairmanship, demonstrating the pragmatism of official Baku's strategic actions during the Patriotic War.

As per the President's statements, before the Karabakh War II, Azerbaijan fortified the legal framework for the Patriotic War by establishing robust relations with international organizations. The nation's successful energy and transport policies not only resulted in the creation of energy and transport corridors but also fostered new cooperation formats in the region and across the broader Eurasian space.

During both the war and post-war periods, the Azerbaijani community closely observed the positions taken by international organizations. In light of these considerations, respondents were queried about their views on the activity of international organizations. Survey results indicate that more than half of the respondents (54.2%) do not actively follow the activities of any international organization. This figure underscores that the perceived double standards and silence exhibited by some international organizations on matters related to Azerbaijan's national interests have impacted public trust and confidence in these entities. However, 19.2% of the respondents state that they follow the activity of the World Health Organization, 15.1% - the International Committee of the Red Cross, 14.9% - the UN, 13.3% - UNESCO, 12.1% - Non-Aligned Movement, 10.7% - the OSCE, 10.6% - the European Union, 9.7% - NATO, 9.6% - the Council of Euro-



The activity of which international organizations do you follow?



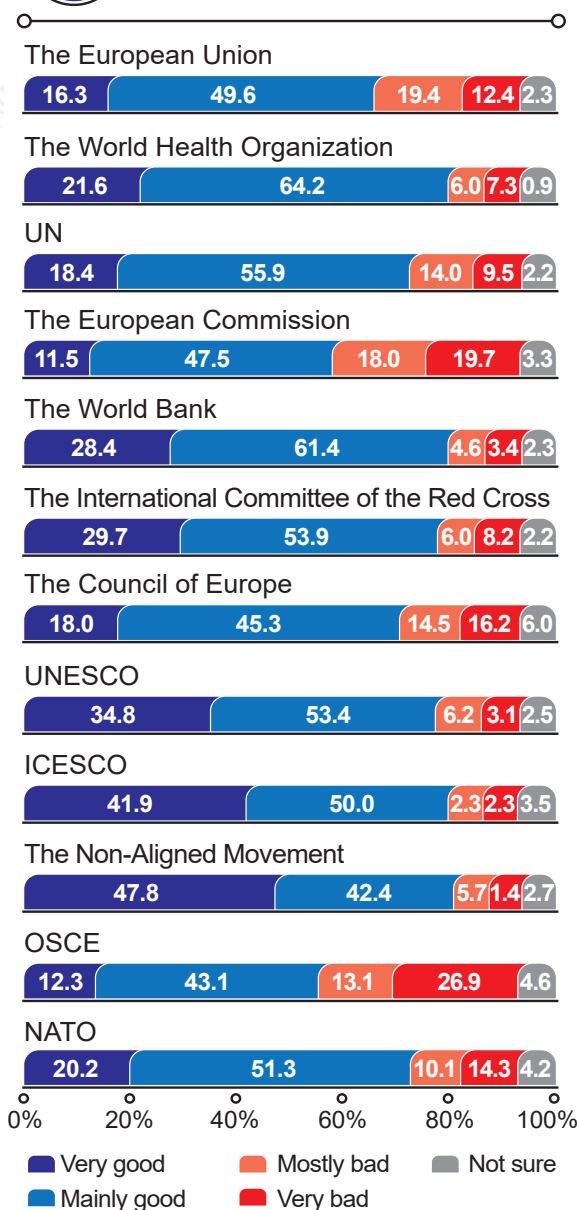
pe, 7.2% - the World Bank, 7% - ICESCO, and 4.9% - the European Commission.

From the international organizations, 47.8% of the respondents assess as very good the activity of the Non-Aligned Movement, 41.9% - of ICESCO, 34.8% - of UNESCO, 29.7% - of

the International Committee of the Red Cross, 28.4% - of the World Bank, 21.6% - the World Health Organization, 20.2% - NATO, 18.4% - the UN, 18% - the Council of Europe, and 16.3% - the European Union. 64.2% of the respondents assess as mostly good the activity of the World Health Organization, 61.4% - the World Bank, 55.9% - the UN, 53.9% - the International Committee of the Red Cross, 53.4% - UNESCO, 51.3% - NATO, 50% - ICESCO, 49.6% - the European Union, 47.5% - the European Commission, 45.3% - the Council of Europe, and



### How do you assess the activity of the following organization?



42.4 % - the Non-Aligned Movement.

Those who trust the European Union, also assess the activity of this organization more positively ( $t(123)=4.298$ ;  $p<0.01$ ).

In his application to the nation on January 1, 2021, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev touched on the place and role of Azerbaijan in the Non-Aligned Movement, "We have joined the Non-Aligned Movement. I remember that at the time, some deemed this move as erroneous. I knew that it was the right step. Immediately after we became a member, we secured the adoption of the resolution of the conflict with the support of 120 countries - a resolution that served our interest. Today, in the capacity of a Chair to the Non-Aligned Movement, we make our voice heard worldwide. I want to repeat that during the conflict the Non-Aligned Movement member states stood up for us and prevented the biased and anti-Azerbaijani initiatives concerning the conflict, launched within the UN Security Council. Thus, that initiative had failed." <sup>11</sup> As a result, the respondents assessed the Non-Aligned Movement's activity as very good.

Interestingly, 26.9% of the survey participants expressed a highly negative assessment of the OSCE's activity. Notably, during the visit of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, Stéphane Visconti of France and Andrew Schofer of the US, accompanied by the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Russia to Azerbaijan, Mikhail Bocharnikov, and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Andrzej Kasprzyk, on December 12 of the previous year, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, strongly criticized the 28-year performance of this organization in the context of conflict resolution.

In his remarks, President Aliyev pointed out, "Unfortunately, the Minsk Group did not play any role in the resolution of the conflict, even though it had a mandate to do so for 28 years. I participated in negotiations for the last 17 years. As I said, during the war, despite the Minsk Group's activity in elaborating ideas and attempting to be creative, there was no result. And this is a reality. Therefore, Azerbaijan resolved it. By defeating Armenia on the battlefield, we forced the aggressor to admit its defeat and sign a declaration, which we consider an act of capitulation by Armenia." <sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Address of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. /01.01.2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/49798>

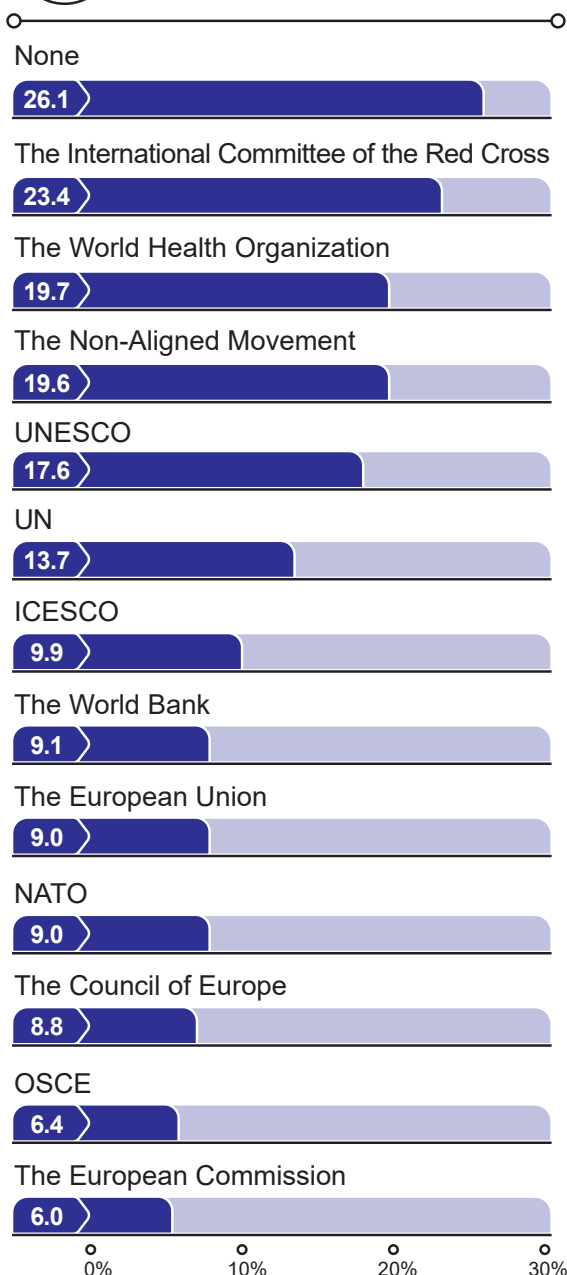
<sup>12</sup> Ilham Aliyev receives OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs from France and the U.S. /December 12, 2020/ - <https://president.az/articles/48908>



Note that 26.1% of the survey participants state that they do not trust any international organization. 23.4% of the respondents state that they trust the International Red Cross Committee, 19.7% - the World Health Organization, 19.6% - the Non-Aligned Movement, 17.6% - UNESCO, 9.9% - ICESCO, 9.1% - the World Bank, 9% - the European Union, 9% - NATO, 8.8% - the Council of Europe, and 6%



### Which international organization in Azerbaijan do you trust?



- the European Commission.

At the 14th virtual Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization, President Ilham Aliyev stated that the United Nations Security Council resolutions of 1993 demanding immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from occupied territories of Azerbaijan remained on paper for 27 years. Azerbaijan itself ensured the implementation of these resolutions and restored its territorial integrity. The invaders were thrown away from the ancient Azerbaijani lands of Karabakh. The armed forces of Armenia were destroyed within 44 days. Azerbaijan forced Armenia to sign the act of capitulation on 10 November 2020.<sup>13</sup>

Among international organizations, the survey respondents expressed the lowest trust in OSCE. Only 6.4% of the respondents trust OSCE. When receiving a delegation led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde on March 14, President Ilham Aliyev, informed of plans for the lands liberated from occupation, "We already started the rehabilitation of the liberated territories. The program of reconstruction is already being implemented. A lot is to be done because everything is destroyed in the liberated territories - the cities, villages, cultural monuments, and entire infrastructure. So, there will be a very big scope of work. It is more than 10 thousand square kilometres of totally destroyed area. We already started the process of negotiations on the opening of communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan. That was part of the statement which was signed on November 10. Negotiations already had several rounds, at different levels and I think that this particular issue can be a starting point for completely turning the page of war and leaving it to history. Because the opening of communications will be for the benefit of all the regional countries. We will create new opportunities and bring new dynamics to regional cooperation. And it can bring many other areas of potential cooperation. I already publicly spoke that Azerbaijan is ready for that. We have completed our task, we liberated the territories, and implemented the resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations and decisions of OSCE. So now, we need to concentrate on the future."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ilham Aliyev made a speech at the virtual Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization. /04.03.2021/- <https://president.az/articles/50795>

<sup>14</sup> Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. /14.03.2021/- <https://president.az/articles/50883>

## CONCLUSION

□ The realities caused by the 44-day Patriotic War once again showed that under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan has achieved several advances with the wide use of new methods in diplomacy practice, which determined our victory and strengthened it in the subsequent period. The foundation of this policy comprises basic principles such as peace, respect for international legal norms, the integrity and inviolability of borders, the territorial integrity of states, and mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as the consistent and open policy meeting the national interests of the Azerbaijani people. It is positive that the population highly assesses and appreciates this position of the President in the post-war period as well.

□ The President's activity in the field of foreign policy and army building and improvement is highly appreciated by the absolute majority of the population. This is understandable against the background of Ilham Aliyev's pragmatic strategy during the period of his presidency in the field of foreign policy and army building and improvement, and the results of the 44-day Patriotic War.

□ Half of the respondents also supported large-scale reforms in the military field. It is recommended to properly analyze the results of the Patriotic War, perform training to increase the professionalism of military staff in various types of troops and implement appropriate Personnel reforms in this field. Provocations committed by Armenians on the Azerbaijan-Armenia state border in recent months prove this once again.

□ The measures implemented in Azerbaijan to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic proved once again that the health and well-being of every Azerbaijani are the priority directions of the government's concern. The preventive measures implemented promptly according to President Ilham Aliyev's guidelines and the multifaceted work performed to protect the health of the country's population once again confirmed that the Azerbaijani citizen is the focus of our state's policy. The President stated that Azerbaijan, like other responsible countries, gave priority to the health of its citizens during the pandemic. The President's permanent attention to

the health of citizens is highly appreciated by the population. Thus, 83.4% of the respondents assessed the work done by the President to protect public health as effective to one degree or another.

□ One of the most important aspects of the policy implemented by the Azerbaijani state in the economic sphere, which constantly manifests itself, is its social orientation. As a result, 81.9% of the respondents consider the President's activity aimed at ensuring the social protection of the population to be effective to one degree or another.

□ It is important that the Personnel and structural reforms, implemented since 2019, become even more large-scale in 2020 and the first quarter of 2021. According to the respondents, there is a greater need for large-scale reforms in the fields of science, education, social protection, and health.

□ The survey results show that the respondents have higher expectations regarding the correct determination of the disability degree, especially for the Patriotic War veterans, and ensuring the employment of those involved in protecting the territorial integrity of the state.

□ Respondents highly appreciate the Personnel reforms. The survey participants are completely satisfied with the introduction of the new official behaviour and management culture against the background of declaring Shusha a cultural capital and the formation of a new generation of officials by involving more qualified staff in management.

□ The respondents believe that the establishment of a special representative institution in Karabakh gives impetus to the new local administration. The survey participants completely agree with the opinion that staff with a poor public image remains in management, as well as the formation of a new model of official-citizen relations, measures taken against those who abuse their positions, and the consideration of public opinion in Personnel policy.

□ Half of the respondents believe that President Ilham Aliyev's speech at the Turkic Council Summit on March 31, dedicated to the victory in the Patriotic War, will serve to strengthen the unity between Turkic-speaking countries.

□ The respondents noted that the meeting of the heads of the three countries in Moscow on January 11 and the agreements reached were of particular importance in terms of strengthening the November 10 tripartite Statement. The survey participants consider that the non-acceptance of any of Armenia's conditions at the Moscow meeting can be considered Azerbaijan's diplomatic success in the post-war period and noted that in contrast to Armenia, official Baku managed to achieve the major goals it set for itself at the Moscow meeting.

□ The respondents state that the opening of transport communications - the Zangezur Corridor will contribute to the security and stability of the region, thereby establishing economic, transport, and trade relations of the region through Russia and Turkey and further strengthening our Victory, which will bring inventions and economic benefits to the region.

□ The respondents believe that at the more than 4-hour press conference held by Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev for local and foreign media representatives on February 26 - the 29th anniversary of the Khojaly tragedy, the worst genocide of the 20th century, along with Azerbaijan's truths, the realities of the Karabakh War II, and the priorities of the post-war period, there were messages addressed to the occupying Armenia. According to the opinion of the respondents, the President clearly expressed the position of our country and talked extensively about Armenia's abasement due to the occupation policy it had pursued for years, speaking as a victorious self-confident leader who is sure of the faithfulness of his ideas and takes a decisive position. The President once again clearly explained that Azerbaijan's position is based on the norms and principles of international law, UN Security Council resolutions, and a fair approach to the issue. The President once again brought the difference between the war waged by Azerbaijan and Armenia to the attention of the international audience. It was supported by facts that it was a war of liberation for Azerbaijan and a war of aggression for Armenia.

□ The majority of the respondents (90.8% completely, 7.9% partly) agree with the idea that the President's answers to more than 50

questions from more than 30 media agencies in 4 languages and his messages at the press conference, which have caused great interest in the world media, signify future victories on the information front.

□ The respondents appreciated the President's media reforms aimed at improving the media system in the post-war period. According to them, these reforms will increase the media's professionalism, transparency, free-thinking, and coverage of social and political problems, strengthen Azerbaijan's international media relations and advertising market, form an economic basis, deepen competition between media agencies, reduce foreign information attacks on Azerbaijan, and release the media from the impact of various groups.

□ The survey results and observations show that TV channels (76.6%) and social media platforms (53.2%) are the major sources of information on the President's speeches and interviews with local and foreign media representatives.

□ According to the respondents, the President's visits to the liberated territories indicate the soon revival of Karabakh and our return there, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief's direct leadership of all construction operations, ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the special importance attached by the President to historical monuments, ensuring stability and security in our territories liberated from occupation, the importance attached by the President to the Great Return, the special importance attached to the homeland, people, national-spiritual, historical, and cultural values, the involvement of Azerbaijanis from all over the world in the revival of Karabakh, the stimulation of the development of territories liberated from occupation and investment in the region, the warning to the Armenian forces and their patrons, and his contribution to the information war.

□ The survey participants assessed the Victory bonfire lighted by the President in Shusha - the Jıdır Plain as the symbol of Victory, the triumph of Shusha won with the blood of our martyrs/the symbol of Victory, demonstration to the world that Shusha is the spiritual and cultural capital of Azerbaijan, patriotism, the love for land and flag, the President's commitment to our values and traditions, national



unity, territorial integrity, solidarity, preservation of historical heritage, and the strategies and plans of restoration and reconstruction of Karabakh, and stated that thereby, the President sent messages to the world.

□ The respondents highly appreciated all the measures taken by President Ilham Aliyev to ensure a modern and decent life for sustainable settlement in the territories liberated from occupation, perform construction, restoration, and improvement in all areas, and support safe living, efficient activity, and continuous growth of well-being. In general, the majority of respondents (84.6%) completely agree with the idea that the return to Karabakh is a priority for the President.

□ From the list of 'Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic Development,' a large number of respondents (71.9%) placed a premium on the great return to the territories liberated from occupation.

□ The majority of the respondents appreciated the President's activity on the restoration of our historical, cultural, and religious monuments in the territories liberated from occupation. Thus, the respondents believe that the President's visit to the Azikh cave testifies that historical and cultural monuments will be restored in all territories liberated from occupation. Some respondents see President Ilham Aliyev as a worthy follower of Heydar Aliyev's policy concerning the culture and history of Azerbaijan. According to the respondents, the President's participation in the ceremony of opening Natavan's monument in Shusha and his visit to Vagif's bust and mausoleum is a manifestation of his special attention to Karabakh. Some respondents consider that this is a demonstration of his respect, love, and care for the historical and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan.

□ The expectations of the respondents for the period after the Patriotic War, which ended with the victory of Azerbaijan over Armenia, cover several fields. Thus, the major expectations were that the political and economic power of our country would increase, and its influence on Armenia would increase even more. Also, some respondents believe that Azerbaijan and Turkey will play an important role in determining the region's fate, Armenia will recognize Azerbaijan's territorial

integrity, regional cooperation and integration will accelerate, Turkey's military presence in the region will expand, and the alliance between Russia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan will strengthen.

□ One of the people's major expectations for the period after the Patriotic War is the correct implementation of the state's social policy concerning the Karabakh War II martyr families, veterans, and participants. The survey results and observations show that after the Karabakh War II, there were cases of remaining anxiety about some social issues among the population.

□ Most of the respondents state that their trust and confidence in the President have increased over the last 3 months. The increase in trust and confidence in the President during the period under study is related to the processes occurring in the socioeconomic life and socioeconomic projects and reforms implemented by the President.

□ 62.6% of the respondents reported that they applied to relevant ministries and agencies and local executive bodies during the last year. 55.8% of them are not satisfied with the outcomes of their application, and 20.1% report the lack of any definite results of their application. This once again shows the great dissatisfaction of the people with the consideration of their cases by relevant government bodies (institutions). This leads to the lack of trust of the population in those government bodies (institutions).

□ According to 36.1% of the respondents, According to 36.1 and 39% of the respondents, the President is, respectively, completely and partly aware of the citizens' situation. On the contrary, 17.7% of the respondents consider that the President is poorly or (6.6%) not aware of the citizens' situation.

□ A quarter of the respondents (24.9%) believe that all events occurring in places are reported to the President as they are. According to 63.6% of the respondents, only positive information is conveyed to the President. On the contrary, 5.5% of the respondents believe that only negative information is conveyed to the President.

□ Also, one-third of the survey participants stated that over the last year, they did not face a law violation by officials, and 65.6%



reported that they did. A little less than half of the respondents stated that they did not apply to any institution/body regarding the law violation by officials, and more than half reported that they did.

□ While the respondents are satisfied with the supply of light and electricity, gas, drinking water, and the telephone network service, on the contrary, they are not satisfied with the road conditions in the territory they live, the municipal activity, access to the Internet, the performance of the executive power and the state of public transport in the territory they live, irrigation water supply, and the activity of the local housing authority.

□ The respondents reported an increase in complaints about the growing prices of consumer products over the last 3 months, an increase in the number of unemployed (i.e. those whose jobs are at potential risk during the pandemic or who have a job and are looking for additional one), the wish to return to the lands liberated from occupation, the expectation of returning to pre-pandemic lifestyle on a global scale soon, impoverishment, the strengthening of national unity, and an increase in trust in the government. Herewith, some respondents reported an increase in the hope that people's well-being would improve, a lack of confidence in vaccination, and an increase in the number of cases of infection with COVID-19 among their close ones.

□ The survey participants listed their major concerns in the country as follows: unemployment, the state of education, the financial situation of people, the uncertainty of the fate of Khankendi, Khojaly, and Khojavand, temporary closure of workplaces due to the pandemic, the arbitrariness of officials, the presence of Russian 'peacemakers' in Karabakh, healthcare system problems, failure to solve social problems, corruption, implementing the quarantine regime in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the state of considering people's complaints and appeals.

□ The research results show that the citizens' key expectation from the President is the further improvement of their social welfare, the opening of new jobs, the improvement of the living conditions of the war martyr families, veterans, and participants, and the prevention of the growth of prices and arbitrariness of officials.

riness of officials.

□ According to 28.4% of the respondents, the changes in the system of political parties in the last 2 years do not mean anything. On the other hand, 27.3% of the respondents share the opinion that the changes in the system of political parties in the last 2 years reflect political solidarity, integration, and national unity. 22.2% of respondents evaluated these changes as the formation of a new political system.

□ The comparison of respondents' participation in all three elections shows that the population is more interested in the presidential elections. This is due to the people's great trust and confidence in the President compared to the law-making and executive bodies.

□ The survey results show that respondents' trust and confidence in some international organizations have decreased while some have increased. Among the international organizations, the survey participants assess as very bad and trust less in the activity of OSCE. On the contrary, respondents appreciate and trust more the Non-Aligned Movement and ICESCO. During and after the Patriotic War, these organizations defended the rightful position of Azerbaijan and took concrete steps, which increased the population's sympathy for them.

NOTES





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