

# THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIVITY IN PUBLIC OPINION

## ANALYTICAL REPORT



## **About the Social Research Center**

The Social Research Center (SRC) was established by Presidential Decree No. 525 on February 8, 2019, in the Republic of Azerbaijan. As a public legal entity, the SRC systematically analyzes the evolving dynamics of social relations. It identifies current trends, predicts changes, and investigates their potential impact on society. Utilizing state-of-the-art information technologies and scientific methodologies, the SRC conducts social research and studies public opinion. Its findings are presented to government authorities to inform policy-making and decision-making processes.

**SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTER**

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# **THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIVITY IN PUBLIC OPINION**

Prepared on the basis of a sociological survey

## **ANALYTICAL REPORT**

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"The post-war period presents significant challenges, and we are managing them skillfully. I can say that we largely shape the post-war agenda, of course, while maintaining constant contact with neighboring countries and considering their concerns."

Ilham Aliyev,  
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan



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# INTRODUCTION

In line with past traditions, the high socio-political activity of the President during the second half of the current year was evaluated by the Social Research Center through public opinion. The timing of the survey coincided with a significant historical moment—the post-war period, marked by the reconstruction and revitalization of Karabakh. While the large-scale structural and personnel reforms led by the President's political will in recent years are seen as a new phase of state-building, the post-war transition is regarded as the dawn of a new era for the victorious nation and society. During this period, the people of Azerbaijan have witnessed the consistent and ongoing strengthening of the glorious victory in Karabakh across political, diplomatic, legal, military-strategic, and informational domains. This has been achieved through the political leader's decisive actions, rooted in national interests, and has led to the affirmation of our victory on both the international and global stage. The new era has seen historically significant developments, including restoration and reconstruction efforts in the liberated territories, major international and domestic events, and shifts in public sentiment. The public's trust in the President, its evolution, and the President's activities in various domains were all covered in the opinion poll. An analysis of previous and current survey results shows that the President remains the unifying and reconciling force within Azerbaijani society, especially concerning national interests. The latest results indicate the highest level of public approval for the President's activities compared to previous periods. This confidence is bolstered by the President's direct oversight of restoration and construction in the liberated areas, successful investment projects, regular engagements with former refugees and internally displaced persons, numerous domestic and international visits, and his steadfast commitment to prioritizing national interests. His speeches on various platforms, addressing the occupation's legacy and regional dynamics, along with his broader activities, also play a key role in shaping public trust. The year 2021, characterized as the first post-war year, has been marked by dynamism and

intense activity on the part of the President. From the beginning of the year to December alone, publicly available information indicates that the President conducted over 60 international and domestic meetings and visits, participated in over 40 consultations, interviews, and press conferences, hosted more than 100 receptions, held over 40 phone conversations with foreign heads of state and officials, and oversaw more than 120 groundbreaking and opening ceremonies, the majority of which took place in the liberated territories. The scope of his overall activity can be observed across foreign policy, domestic policy, and social and economic spheres.

## Foreign policy

2021 can be considered the beginning of further progress and positive changes in terms of the successful continuation of the foreign policy strategy in the country, as well as the new geopolitical configuration created by the post-war conditions. In this regard, the activities of the President in the direction of foreign policy are of great importance, and it is considered appropriate to include certain events of special relevance here.

Here is an improved version of the text with some grammatical adjustments and slight enhancements for clarity and flow:

This year, the head of state has taken a multifaceted approach to foreign policy, particularly in consolidating the military-political victory achieved last year, both in the international arena and at the diplomatic table. Most of the over 100 receptions held by the head of state since the beginning of the year have focused on foreign policy. Notable attendees include Russia's Foreign Minister, the UK's Minister of Exports, the CEO of BP Group, UN officials, a representative of the US Secretary of State, Belarus's Minister of Defense, and the Foreign Ministers of Croatia, the Czech Republic, Serbia, and Slovakia. High-ranking officials from Turkey, as well as separate meetings with the deputy prime ministers of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Qatar, also stand out. The overall picture of these receptions and meetings reflects Azer-

baijan's commitment to multilateral cooperation in foreign policy, fostering close relations with both regional and global partners. In addition to these, the head of state held meetings with the prime minister of Georgia in order to strengthen bilateral relations between the countries, as well as with the presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in order to expand economic and commercial relations and relations within the framework of international organizations. It should be noted that Kyrgyzstan was among the countries to which Azerbaijan provided vaccine assistance. In addition, meetings were held with the presidents of the Islamic republics of Pakistan and Iran in order to increase cooperation in various fields. Pakistan is remembered as one of the countries that took a firm and principled position regarding Armenia's military aggression against Azerbaijan in the past.

In the direction of foreign policy, the President's visits to various countries, especially the business trip to Sochi and the bilateral meeting with the President of the Russian Federation, the visit of the head of the country to Turkmenistan, participation in the 15th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization, the 8th Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States and the "Supreme Order of the Turkic World" within the framework of his visit to the Republic of Turkey Order" can be highlighted in terms of its special importance. The high attitude and sympathy shown to the president by the leaders of the region and the world countries in his example, by raising the strategic position and international image of Azerbaijan, in addition to his outstanding leadership qualities, but also the opportunities that the conflict, which was resolved under the leadership of the head of state, opened up for the development of the region, its importance for the entire Turkic world and the international comes from the new opportunities it creates at scale. The President acted as the initiator of the "3+3" format, which combines different cooperation platforms between neighboring countries into a single platform for the multilateral development of the region. Despite the resolutions of the UN Security Council, Commander-in-Chief Muzaffar wrote his name in history as a leader who engraved the message of justice in the memory of the international community by end-

ing the thirty-year-long occupation in a short period of 44 days.

### Domestic policy

On January 6, 2021, at the meeting dedicated to the results of 2020, as well as on March 5 at the New Azerbaijan Party's 7th congress, the President gave a special place in the history of our nation and a broad analysis of the path that led to the Victory, in the post-war period. He also defined priorities and goals in the field of internal policy, socio-economic situation, personnel reforms and administrative management. First of all, in response to the President's initiative, very important steps have been taken in the current year in the direction of continuing the dialogue and solidarity environment created between the country's political forces during the Patriotic War in the post-war period, and strengthening the political system. As a result of President Ilham Aliyev's systematic and multi-faceted administrative-political reforms, the government-opposition dialogue, a new political configuration was established, numerous meetings were held with political party leaders, and the results of each meeting were analyzed and proposed proposals were studied, as well as the new draft law "On Political Parties" proposals presented by political parties were discussed.

The vast majority of political parties signed eight joint statements and two joint appeals, demonstrating unity against foreign threats during the days of the Patriotic War and in the subsequent periods. On March 17, 2021, leaders of political parties in Azerbaijan, along with prominent political scientists and commentators, visited Aghdam, followed by a visit to Shusha on October 7, 2021.

These visits, organized as part of the political dialogue initiated by the President, aim to foster healthy cooperation among politicians and deepen traditions of sustainable dialogue. This cultivated environment encourages constructive collaboration, the prioritization of national interests over personal ambitions, national solidarity, and trust-building. Moreover, supporting a dialogue-oriented approach in political relations directly contributes to the development of democratic traditions. Political dialogue in Azer-

baijan, as an embodiment of political unity, is one of the key factors ensuring political stability.

In 2021, the concurrent implementation of economic and political reforms remained a focal point. Given the changing regional and sectoral structure of Azerbaijan's economy, the reintegration of Karabakh into the economic cycle, and the prospects of reopening regional communications, including the Zangezur corridor, the President signed a decree on July 7, 2021, titled "On the New Division of Economic Regions in the Republic of Azerbaijan." This new division aims to increase the efficiency of efforts to restore and develop Karabakh, enhance flexibility in economic management, and drive institutional reforms. Specifically, it will improve the efficiency of economic planning within the regions. The socio-economic development program for the regions, along with Karabakh's development strategy, will be adapted to this new economic division. Given that agriculture forms the foundation of most regional economies, the new division opens fresh opportunities for the growth of this sector. As part of these ongoing reforms, 12 regional departments of the institution were established to create a transparent and efficient education management system. The aim is to plan financial and administrative resources in line with a unified education policy, establish an education management system capable of addressing future tasks, and improve the overall structure of the Ministry of Education. One of the primary focuses of the President's activities this year has been personnel reforms. The appointment of a special representative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the liberated territories within the Karabakh economic region (excluding the Shusha region) is viewed by experts as a novel approach to transferring local administration to economic regions. In this context, the improvements in education management mentioned earlier can be seen as a component of these broader institutional reforms. In the post-war period, several documents have been signed to implement structural and personnel reforms in the army, along with measures to increase its numbers. Strengthening the social protection of the Armed Forces' mil-

itary personnel remains one of the key priorities of President Ilham Aliyev's agenda in 2021. Throughout the year, targeted measures to combat the coronavirus pandemic have continued. Surveys conducted by STM show that the majority of citizens highly appreciate the state's efforts in organizing and vaccinating the population. Azerbaijan has not only made significant contributions to the fight against the pandemic but has also assumed a leadership role in global vaccination policy. As the chair of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States and the Non-Aligned Movement, President Ilham Aliyev initiated special summit meetings dedicated to COVID-19 in April and May of last year. At the Non-Aligned Movement Summit, the President proposed a special session of the UN General Assembly focused on COVID-19, which received overwhelming support from the international community. Additionally, the President advocated for equal and universal access to vaccines and the fair distribution of vaccines at the UN Human Rights Council. President Aliyev also raised this issue during his speech at the opening ceremony of the Global Baku Forum, organized by the Nizami Ganjavi International Center on November 4, 2021, under the theme "The World After COVID-19": "Some countries are discussing administering a third dose of the vaccine, while in other countries, the level of vaccination remains low. We need to address this issue to ensure a level playing field... We have created a database on COVID-19 treatments, and the World Health Organization is utilizing it in Non-Aligned Movement countries. This helps WHO plan and forecast its support effectively. As the chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, we have provided financial and humanitarian aid to over 30 countries and supplied vaccine doses to several nations free of charge. We also made a voluntary financial contribution of \$10 million to the World Health Organization to support underprivileged countries. These are the steps we are taking at the global level. Of course, uniting the international community's efforts and demonstrating responsibility from the world's leading countries will help overcome this pandemic."

<sup>1</sup> Speech by President Ilham Aliyev at the opening ceremony of the 8th Global Baku Forum. /November 4, 2021 - <https://president.az/articles/54230>



As it can be seen, despite the effects of the pandemic and the war, our country is not satisfied only with the improvement of the social condition of the population, protection of regional security, and major reconstruction works. With the pragmatic steps and leadership of President İlham Aliyev, Azerbaijan is taking global initiatives and supporting poor countries. It provides financial and humanitarian aid for other.

In every speech of the President, great appeals are made to young people. Noting the important role of young people in winning our victory in the Patriotic War. Formation of the young generation in the spirit of patriotism is one of the priority directions of state policy. On September 7 of this year, when he received Farid Gayibov in a video format regarding his appointment as the Minister of Youth and Sports, he once again paid special attention to such points, especially noted that the young generation should be away from negative external influences, that they should be educated and knowledgeable. The creation of the Education Student Loan Fund and the Education Development Fund under the Ministry of Education by the relevant decrees of the President, as well as the allocation of 3 billion 884 million manats from the budget for next year's education expenses can be considered as another indicator of state care for young people.

### **Social and economic areas**

Azerbaijan is at a critical turning point in its socio-economic development. Along with a new geopolitical reality, the recent victory has bolstered Azerbaijan's economic role in the region. The goals set forth under "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development," approved by a presidential decree, focus on building an inclusive society, turning the non-oil sector into the central driver of economic growth, and increasing its share in the overall economy. Additionally, the reintegration of territories liberated from occupation, which are rich in resources, is one of the key drivers of economic growth. Overall, the reforms implemented in Azerbaijan in 2021—including new economic regionalization, structural reforms, the application of corporate standards in state enterprises, and im-

provements to the business environment—aim to boost economic efficiency. In the past year, Azerbaijan's rankings have improved in various global reports: it rose from 34th to 28th place in the "Doing Business" report, from 44th to 38th in the "Economic Freedom Index," and from 55th to 40th in the "Global Cybersecurity" report. These improvements indicate that in 2021, social and economic initiatives played a significant role in the President's overall agenda. A large portion of his activities focused on improving the welfare of society, particularly for those affected by the war, and implementing economic projects that would stimulate the development of Karabakh, the country, and the wider region. These efforts have largely been characterized by reconstruction and development processes. Key milestones include laying the foundations for infrastructure in liberated territories, restoring cultural and historical heritage sites, launching new transport and communication projects, and starting the construction of major highways such as the Horadiz-Jabrayil-Zangilan-Aghband and Barda-Aghdam roads. The opening of the Victory Road and the commencement of operations at Fuzuli International Airport, along with plans for new airports in other regions, further underscore this progress. Additionally, events like the Wagif Poetry Days and the Kharibbulbul Festival in Shusha, as well as social support packages for the families of martyrs, war veterans, and Patriotic War heroes, have been central to the President's activities. Regular meetings with public representatives also reflect his commitment to societal engagement.

During this year, President focused on the development of other regions of the country. His visits to Dashkasan, Naftalan, Goranboy, Shamakhi, Gabala, Ismayilli, Barda, Tartar regions, Ganja and Sumgait cities, Nakhchivan MR are characterized by groundbreaking and opening events of various infrastructure facilities of local and national importance. Furthermore, these mentioned things can be considered the beginning of the next national success and progress in the socio-economic field.

In the post-war period, the expansion of activities in the field of social protection was among the priorities of state policy. President set important tasks for the relevant institutions, especially regarding the improvement of the

welfare of war participants, veterans and families of martyrs. Based on the initiative of the head of the country, a special approach was applied to persons who lost their ability to work in the war, families of martyrs, vulnerable groups, social support measures covered more than 31 thousand people from this category. Single coordination centers have been established for the applications of the mentioned vulnerable groups. Appropriate orders have been signed to improve their housing, health and well-being.

According to the relevant order of the President, in order to improve the welfare of citizens, it is planned to increase the minimum wage, pension and allowances for 2022. During the current year, on the basis of the relevant decrees and orders, the amount of Presidential scholarships is 66.7% for the families of martyrs, 20% for the National Hero of Azerbaijan, 100% for the participants of the Second World War, more than 50% for the war and disabled people due to "20 January tragedy", those who are equal to the war disabled people increased. Also President's monthly scholarship for the Heroes of the Patriotic War was established. Awarding the participants of the war, as well as the doctors fighting on the front lines of the health service, with various medals and honorary titles is the essence of the continuation of the events in these fields.

The direction of the pro-social policy carried out by President Ilham Aliyev in the last 18 years aimed not only to eliminate social inequality, but also to balance it, eliminate sharp differences in the material condition of citizens, and ensure a decent standard of living for all members of society. The increase of social expenses to 46.4%

in the state budget of 2022 and the increase of 13.5% compared to 2021, i.e. 1 billion 650 million manats, is a clear expression of this.

With the initiative and approval of the head of state, appropriate steps were taken in the field of improving the country's legislation in accordance with the requirements of the new era. Within this framework, during the current year, the perpetuation of the martyr's name and benefits to the martyr's families, employment, labor pensions, health insurance, unemployment insurance, Tax Code, Labor Code and other legislative acts were improved.

This year, several economic zones, industrial, and agricultural parks have been established to foster the development and reintegration of territories liberated from occupation, positioning the region as a driver of economic growth. Notable initiatives in this regard include the foundation of the Aghdam Industrial Park, the "Araz Valley Economic Zone" in the Eastern Zangezur economic district, "Dost Agropark," the Alat Economic Zone, and the opening of the Hajigabul Industrial Quarter. These efforts aim to transform Azerbaijan into not only a transit hub but also a leading economic center in the region.

As a result, the new opportunities emerging in foreign and domestic policy, along with advancements in economic and social sectors, increased economic attractiveness, and the construction of a welfare society, lay a solid foundation for optimism about the country's future development prospects.

# METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE RESEARCH

## Methodological approach

A quantitative methodology was employed in the research. The survey was conducted across several economic regions, including Baku, Absheron-Khizi, Nagorno-Shirvan, Ganja-Dashkasan, Gazakh-Tovuz, Lankaran-Astara, Guba-Khachmaz, Sheki-Zagatala, Karabakh, Central Aran, Mil-Mugan, and Shirvan-Salyan. The opinions of 1,162 respondents were gathered. The survey did not include the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic or the newly liberated territories.

## Selection of respondents

A multi-level stratified random sampling approach was used to select respondents for the study, ensuring equal opportunities for every citizen to participate. In the first stage, the settlements to be included in the survey were identified. In the next stage, the surveyors were dispatched to the field and followed pre-determined routes in the areas assigned to them, inviting every third household to participate.

Special attention was given to socio-demographic indicators to ensure proportional representation of respondents. The distribution of each socio-demographic group (by gender and age) was aligned with their proportion in the country. As a result, 51.2% of the respondents were men and 48.8% were women. Among the age groups, those aged 56-65 had a relative majority, accounting for 23.1% of respondents.

With a sample size of 1,162 respondents, the margin of error for the results is 2.9%, at a 95% confidence interval. A pilot study involving 10 respondents was conducted prior to the full-scale study, and necessary adjustments were made to the questionnaire based on the test results.

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 37 (33 specific and 4 socio-demographic) questions. The questions were mainly prepared with the aim of measuring trust and confidence in the President, attitude to the President's visits, meetings, interviews, public position on the construction and recovery processes in Karabakh, evalua-

tion of activities in various directions. And also social, socio-economic situation and main expectations in the post-war period, and information sources on the President's activities.

## Instruction

Guidelines for interviewers have been prepared. Before starting work, the interviewers participated in the relevant training organized by the employees of the Center. During the training, the interviewers familiarized themselves with the questionnaire and instructions, and fully prepared for conducting the survey. Extensive explanations were given for each question in the questionnaire and a test question was administered by the interviewers.

## Method of inquiry

Modern technologies have been applied in conducting surveys. So, the surveys were carried out through tablets. In recent years, SurveyToGo has been used, which has become more widely used in the United States and Great Britain and is considered a modern survey program. This program has a number of advantages in terms of monitoring the work of the survey team, maintaining online monitoring of the survey process and receiving reliable information.

## Field work

Fieldwork was conducted from November 22 to December 2, 2021. The average duration of each survey was 21 minutes and 3 seconds. Anonymity was maintained throughout all interviews, and respondents were assured that their answers would only be reported in aggregate form. This assurance contributed to the high reliability of the data collected during the survey.

## 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 program SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.





## METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES



**Number of respondents**

1162 respondents



**Selection of respondents**

Random sampling was carried out by multi-level stratification sampling method for population groups over 18 years of age



**Confidence interval and margin**

95% and 2.9%



**Data collection method**

A face-to-face questionnaire survey method was used in conducting the survey



**The date of the survey**

The field work was carried out between November 22 and December 2, 2021



**Scope of the study**

Baku, Absheron-Khizi, Nagorno-Shirvan, Ganja-Dashkasan, Gazakh-Tovuz, Lankaran-Astara, Guba-Khachmaz, Karabakh, Sheki-Zagatala, Mil-Mugan and Central Aran, Shirvan-Salyan



**Criteria applied to the selection of respondents**

Age and gender balance



**Data processing and analysis**

After the survey was completed, the data collected directly in the database for each questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS



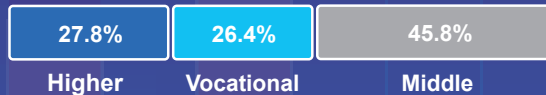
## Demographics



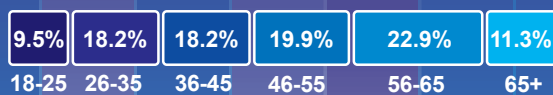
### Gender composition



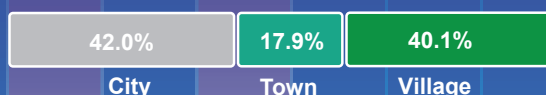
### Education level



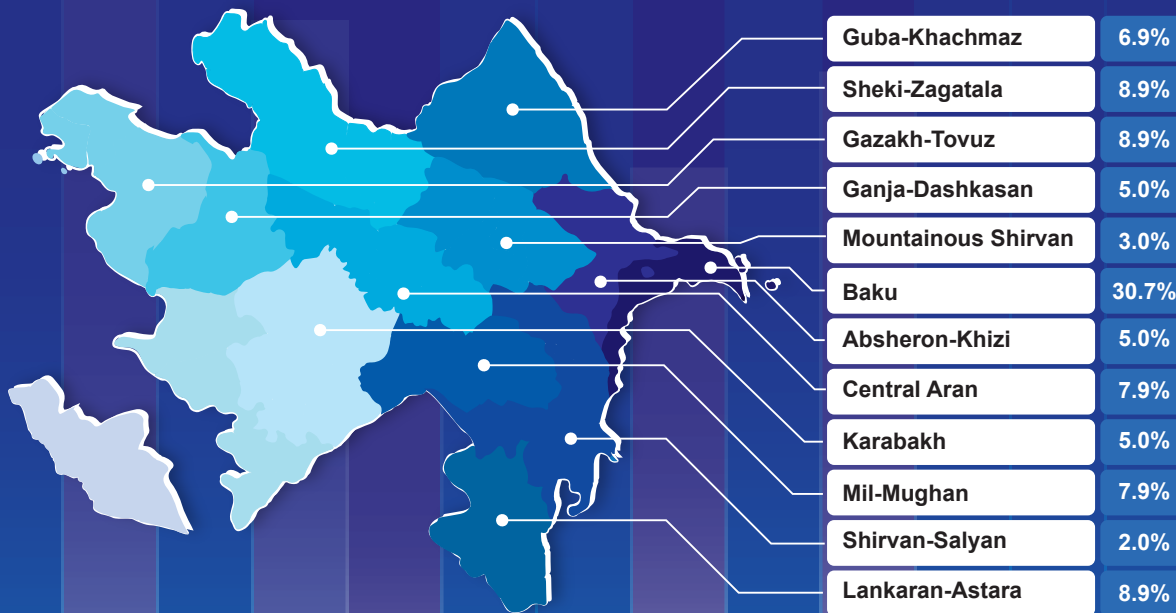
### Age group



### Your place of residence



## Economic regions where the survey was conducted



## I SECTION

# PUBLIC, SOCIAL-ECONOMIC SITUATION AND EXPECTATIONS IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

### 1.1. Evaluation of the moral and psychological state of the society

Based on a public opinion survey, the moral and psychological state of Azerbaijani society in the post-war period was examined. It is worth noting that the noticeable uplift in public morale, which began even before the war, played a key role in the positive outcome. The success of the April battles, along with the significant diplomatic achievements during the historic dialogue between President Ilham Aliyev and the Prime Minister of Armenia at the Munich Security Conference in February 2020, marked a turning point. This event helped overcome the psychological barriers in Azerbaijani society and served as a moral victory over the enemy, exemplified by the President's leadership. In July of that year, during provocations along the state border, tens of thousands of young people demonstrated their patriotism and readiness for war by voluntarily seeking to join the army—clear evidence of the nation's spirit and solidarity.

In this context, the 44-day Patriotic War was not only a military triumph but also a peak in the moral and psychological strength of Azerbaijani society.

However, regardless of the war's outcome, its bitter consequences for all parties are inevitable. Additionally, the restrictions brought about by the global pandemic and its ongoing socio-economic impacts have also affected the moral and psychological state of society. In this rapidly changing environment, where events unfold quickly, public sentiment remains dynamic, and the survey results reflect the mood of the period in which it was conducted.

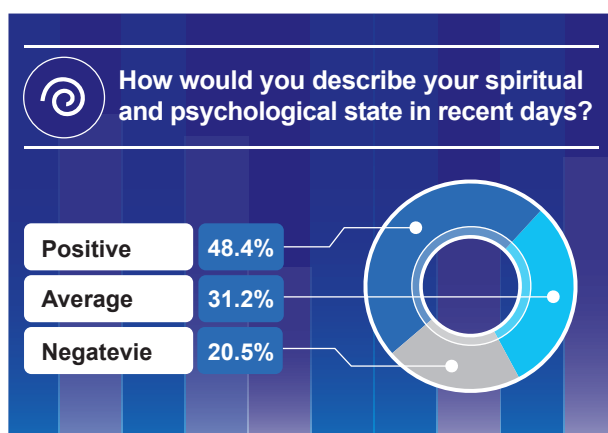
According to the analysis, approximately 48.4% of respondents rated their recent spiritual and psychological condition as high,

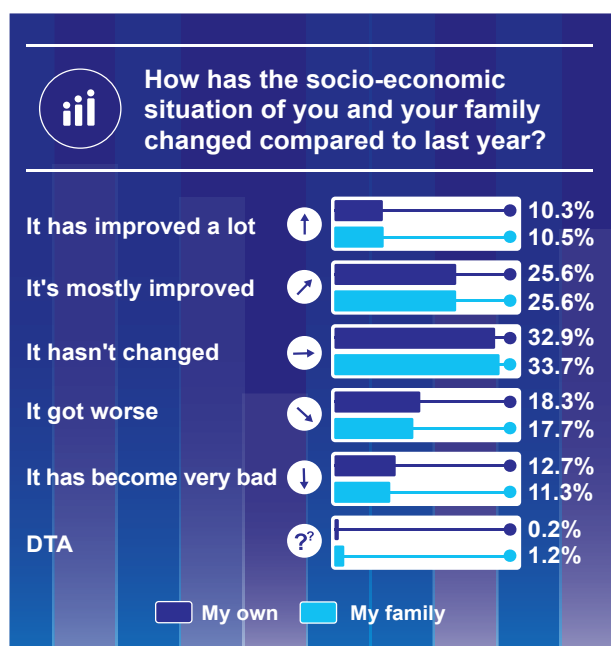
while 31.2% assessed it as moderate. Meanwhile, 20.5% described their mental and psychological state as anxious and tense.

❖ Respondents in the older age group assessed their spiritual and psychological condition more positively compared to younger and middle-aged groups. Similarly, those with higher education had a more favorable assessment compared to respondents with secondary or vocational education. Upper-income respondents also reported a more positive outlook compared to those with low- and middle-incomes. Additionally, respondents living in rural areas expressed a more optimistic view of their mental and emotional state compared to those living in cities and towns.

In the post-war period, understanding changes in the socio-economic condition of society is crucial, as it significantly influences the moral and psychological well-being of individuals. To assess this, citizens were asked how their socio-economic situation, as well as that of their families, had changed compared to the previous year.

It is important to consider that the evaluation of socio-economic conditions and public welfare must account for the ongoing pandemic's negative consequences, in addition to the war. Currently, the global socio-economic crisis, ex-





acerbated by the pandemic, has caused supply shortages and led to record-high inflation levels, even in developed countries. According to various official data, inflation in the United States has reached its highest level in 31 years, while Europe has seen its highest inflation in 13 years. As a result, combating inflation has become a key focus of the global economy, with national economies in the global value chain also feeling these effects.

❖ Of the citizens who responded to questions about changes in their socio-economic situation over the past year, 10.3% reported that their personal socio-economic situation had improved significantly (10.5% said the same about their family), while 25.6% noted that it had improved moderately (the same percentage for their family). Around 32.9% of respondents stated that their socio-economic status had not changed, with 33.7% saying the same about their family. Meanwhile, 18.3% of participants reported that their situation had worsened somewhat (17.7% for their family), and 12.7% (11.3% for their family) stated that it had worsened significantly. Only 0.2% of respondents, and 1.2% regarding their families, had difficulty expressing an opinion on the matter.

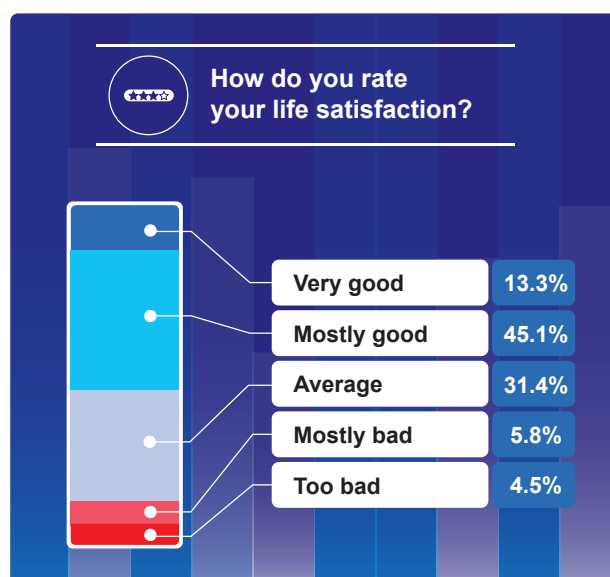
❖ There were no statistically significant differences in the dynamics of socio-economic changes across gender and age groups. However, respondents with higher education viewed their socio-economic changes more positively

than those with secondary or vocational education. Similarly, respondents with higher incomes rated their socio-economic changes more positively than those with low or middle incomes. While the majority of rural respondents evaluated the change in their socio-economic status positively, urban respondents reported more negative changes.

❖ The analysis indicates that financial well-being is a significant factor influencing the respondents' current spiritual and psychological state. Respondents who reported improvements in their socio-economic status also expressed a more positive outlook on their mental and emotional well-being, while those who experienced a decline reflected more negative feelings ( $R=0.492$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

❖ Socio-economic status also emerged as a key factor in respondents' overall life satisfaction. The relationship between life satisfaction and socio-economic factors, as the primary determinants, has been confirmed by international studies. In this survey, over half of the participants (58.4%) rated their life satisfaction positively (13.3% as very good, 45.1% as mostly good). Another 31.4% rated their satisfaction as average (neither bad nor good), while approximately 10.3% expressed negative life satisfaction (4.5% as very bad, 5.8% as mostly bad).

\* There were no statistically significant differences in life satisfaction across age and gender groups. However, respondents with higher education, those in the upper-income group, and rural residents reported higher life satisfaction



than those with lower education levels, lower incomes, and those living in cities and towns.

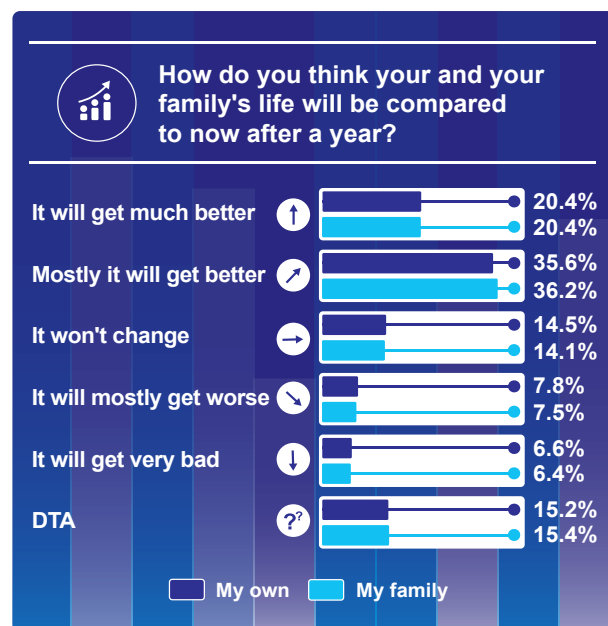
❖ According to the relationship between the results, 50.1% of those who rated their life satisfaction as generally good are respondents whose socio-economic status improved compared to last year, while 34% did not change. Also, 76.6% of those who rated their life satisfaction poorly were respondents whose socio-economic status worsened, and 20.2% whose status did not change ( $X^2(16)=407,001$   $P<0.01$ ).

❖ Against the background of various factors such as the ongoing positive results of the military and political success achieved last year, the new geopolitical reality that is changing in favor of our country, large-scale construction and restoration works in the liberated lands, and the potential benefits of the planned transport and communication projects, the society's expectations for the future regarding its well-being are optimistic. characterized.

❖ 20.4% of the citizens who participated in the survey said that next year their socio-economic situation (the same number of their families) will improve a lot compared to this year, 35.6% (36.2% of their families) believe that it will mostly improve. 14.5% and 14.1% of those who stated that they do not expect any change in their and their family's well-being, respectively. 7.8% (7.5% of their families) believe that their well-being will worsen compared to the current year, and only 6.6% (6.4% of their families) believe that it will worsen significantly. 15.2% of the respondents found it difficult to assess their (15.4% of their family's) future expectations.

❖ According to the analysis of the results, regardless of age and education level, the citizens who participated in the survey have optimistic expectations for the next year. Respondents with a high income level have more positive expectations for the next year compared to those with a low and medium income level, as well as those who live in rural territorial units compared to those who live in cities and towns.

❖ According to the analysis of the results, the trend of changes in the socio-economic status of the respondents during the last year mainly determined their expectations for the next year. So, the absolute majority of the respondents who stated that their socio-economic situation



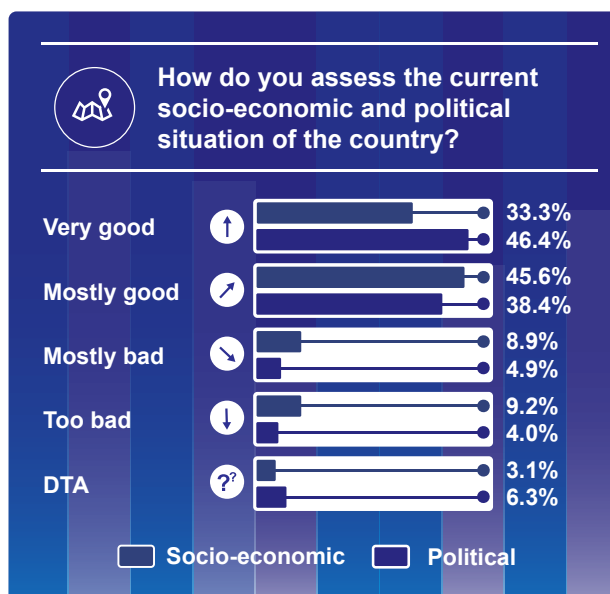
has improved a lot compared to last year, i.e. 94%, said that their situation will improve a year later, 4.3% will not change, and 1.8% will worsen. Also, 46.7% of the respondents who stated that their well-being has worsened a lot compared to last year, 22.1% assumed that it would not change, and 31.2% that it would improve a year later ( $X^2(16)=478,381$   $P<0.01$ ).

## 1.2. Evaluation of the socio-economic and political situation of the country

In addition to analyzing the moral and psychological state of society, the survey also explored public opinion and forecasts regarding the socio-economic and political situation in the country. The results indicate a positive correlation between respondents' views on both these aspects.

Despite the ongoing impact of the global economic crisis caused by the pandemic, Azerbaijani society views the liberated territories as a key resource for the country's future development and a major driver of economic growth. Several factors contribute to this positive outlook, including the goals set by the head of state for the post-war period, the successful continuation of reconstruction efforts in Karabakh, the shifting geopolitical landscape in the region favoring Azerbaijan, and the expected economic benefits from international transport and communication projects. The ongoing peace and reconstruction processes, combined





with the country's current social conditions, further reinforce this optimism regarding the nation's economic future.

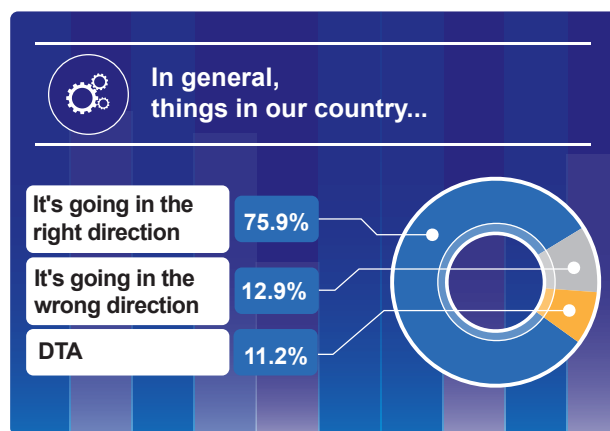
Overall, the survey results show that respondents hold a favorable view of the current socio-economic and political situation in the country. This positive perception plays a key role in shaping their optimistic outlook for their own and their families' futures.

According to the findings, 33.3% of respondents rated the current socio-economic situation of the country as very good, while 45.6% rated it as mostly good. On the other hand, 8.9% and 9.2% rated the socio-economic situation as bad and very bad, respectively, and 3.1% found it difficult to express an opinion on the matter.

Regarding the political situation, 46.4% of respondents rated it as very good, and 38.4% as mostly good. Meanwhile, 4.9% believed the political situation was mostly bad, 4.0% rated it as very bad, and 6.3% were uncertain or unable to express their opinion.

❖ The socio-economic and political situation in the country was generally evaluated positively by respondents, regardless of age, gender, or educational level. A direct correlation was observed between income level and a positive attitude toward both the socio-economic and political conditions. Additionally, the analysis revealed that respondents living in cities assessed the country's socio-economic situation more negatively compared to those in towns and villages.

❖ The results also indicated a relationship



between respondents' evaluations of their personal socio-economic status and their attitudes toward the country's overall socio-economic conditions. Those who rated their own socio-economic situation positively or negatively similarly assessed the country's situation in line with their personal experience ( $R=0.44$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

The past few years have been marked by dynamic global and national events. Last year, Azerbaijan successfully navigated challenges posed by the sharp decline in global oil prices, the deepening socio-economic impact of the pandemic, and Armenia's military provocations and large-scale conflicts. This year has been notable for maintaining these successes both diplomatically and militarily, reintegrating liberated territories, organizing international meetings and agreements, implementing new transport and infrastructure projects, and providing social support to war participants and victims.

In light of these developments, the survey also examined public opinion on the overall direction of the country. The results reflect that 75.9% of respondents believe the country is headed in the right direction, while 12.9% feel it is going in the wrong direction. Another 11.2% were uncertain or unable to express an opinion on the matter.

❖ The vast majority of survey participants, regardless of age, gender, income, or education level, expressed a positive view on the overall progress of developments in the country.

As part of the survey, citizens were asked to identify the five main issues they consider to be the most pressing in Azerbaijan. The top concerns were employment security (56.9%), rising prices (53.1%), and material security (30.6%). These issues are particularly relevant given the new demands of the post-war envi-

ronment and the negative effects of the global socio-economic crisis, aligning with the results of a similar survey conducted between January and March of the current year. In that survey, employment security (53.2%), the state of education (43.3%), and financial security (25.6%) were also top concerns in public opinion.

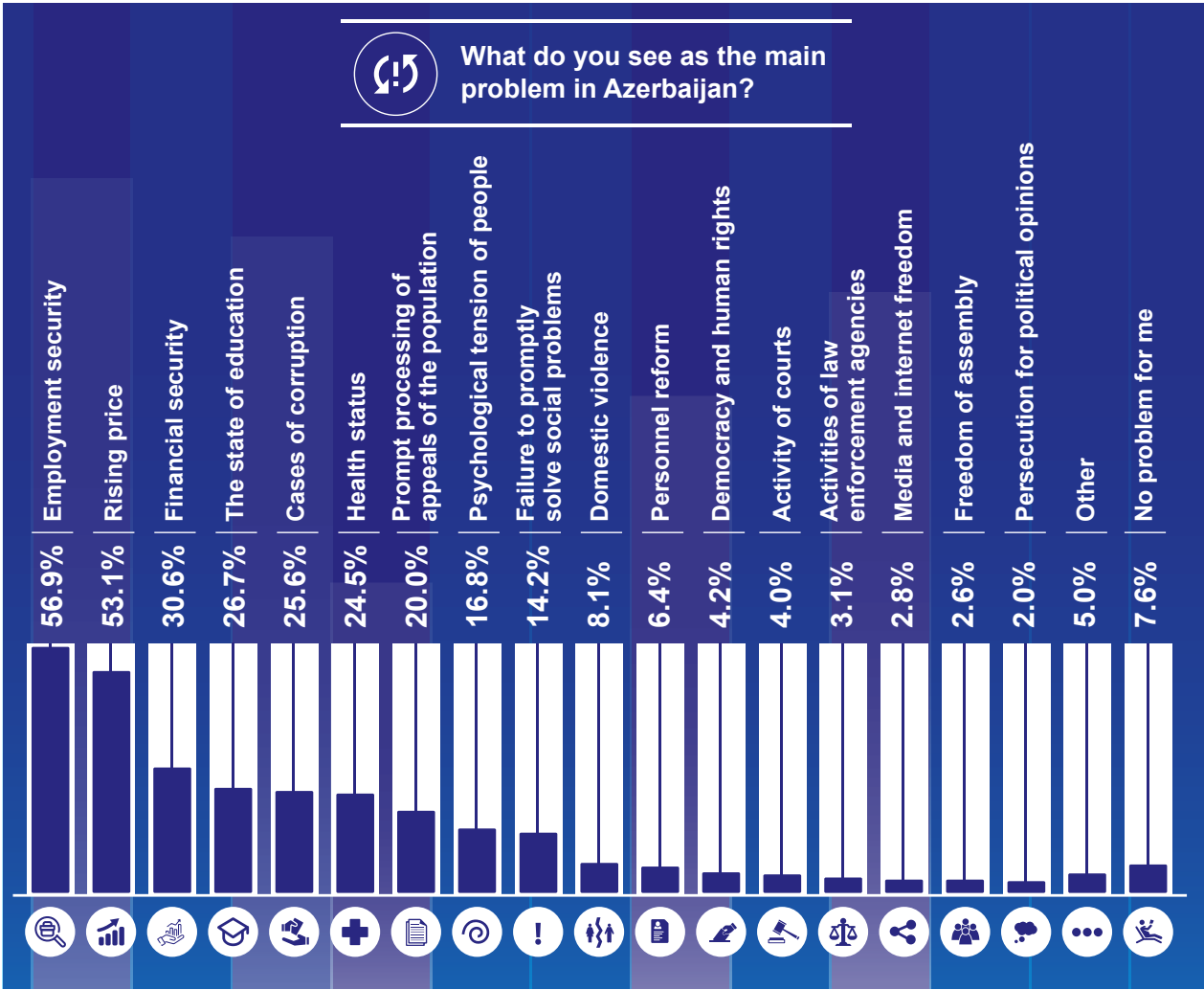
The current survey results reflect public expectations for the next steps in addressing employment for war participants and veterans, mitigating the impact of global inflation on the national economy, and alleviating the socio-economic difficulties brought about by the pandemic.

❖ According to the analysis, employment is a more urgent concern for respondents aged 18-25 compared to other age groups, with educational level not making a statistically significant difference in this regard. The issue of rising prices is more pressing for middle-aged respondents compared to younger and older groups, and it is particularly concerning for

low-income respondents compared to those with middle or high incomes. Financial security, on the other hand, is a greater concern for younger respondents across all age groups, regardless of their education level or whether they live in rural or urban areas.

❖ Respondents who view the current socio-economic situation in Azerbaijan positively identify price increases (46.2%), employment security (42.7%), and corruption (19.1%) as the country's main challenges. Conversely, those with a negative outlook highlight employment security (77.7%), price increases (54.5%), and the material well-being of the population (38.4%) as the most pressing issues ( $X^2(63)=329,305$   $P<0.01$ ).

The 44-day Patriotic War not only restored Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and justice but also marked the rise of a new geopolitical configuration in the region. The rapid resolution of the 30-year conflict, through decisive military operations, significantly enhanced Azerbaijan's



international standing, establishing it as a strong and independent player in regional politics and an economic hub. Azerbaijan has spearheaded initiatives such as the "3+3" format, aimed at uniting various cooperation platforms among neighboring countries to foster regional development across all sectors.

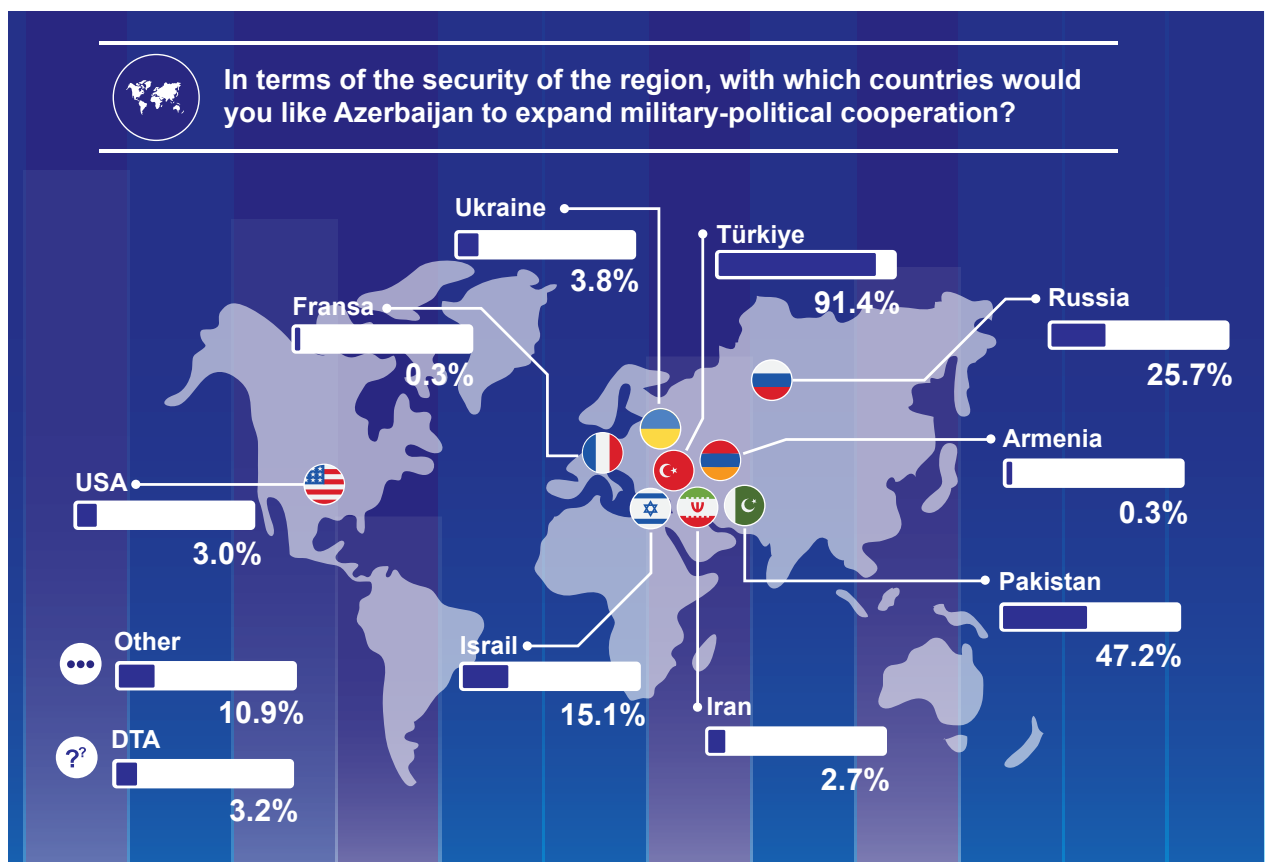
The Turkish-Azerbaijani military-political alliance has emerged as a cornerstone of regional stability and security. The signing of the Shusha Declaration, which elevated strategic cooperation between the two nations, underscored Turkey's enduring importance to Azerbaijan's security, mirroring the historical significance of their partnership 100 years ago. The close and multifaceted ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey are unmatched globally in terms of their intensity and cooperation. At the same time, Azerbaijan has maintained a long-standing, cooperative relationship with Russia, shaping its foreign policy and regional-international relations around both national and regional development interests.

❖ Considering all these factors, in addition to the socio-economic and political situation in the country, public attitudes toward foreign policy issues were also examined in the opinion

survey. Respondents were asked which countries they preferred Azerbaijan to strengthen military-political cooperation with, in order to ensure regional security. Based on the survey results, Turkey emerged as the top choice, with 91.4% of the public viewing it as Azerbaijan's main ally and foreign policy partner. In response to the question, "In terms of regional security, with which countries should Azerbaijan expand military-political cooperation?", Pakistan (47.2%) and Russia (25.7%) followed.

Analysis of the results showed no statistical significant difference between respondents who favored Turkey or Pakistan in terms of education, income level, or age group. However, older respondents were more likely to choose Russia compared to younger and middle-aged participants.

❖ The survey also explored citizens' forecasts and expectations for the coming months, considering the government's internal and external policies. In the post-war period, the level of optimism, national unity, and societal solidarity had positively influenced both the current situation and future outlooks. A large majority of participants had a positive view of the future political landscape: 41.3% expected domestic pol-





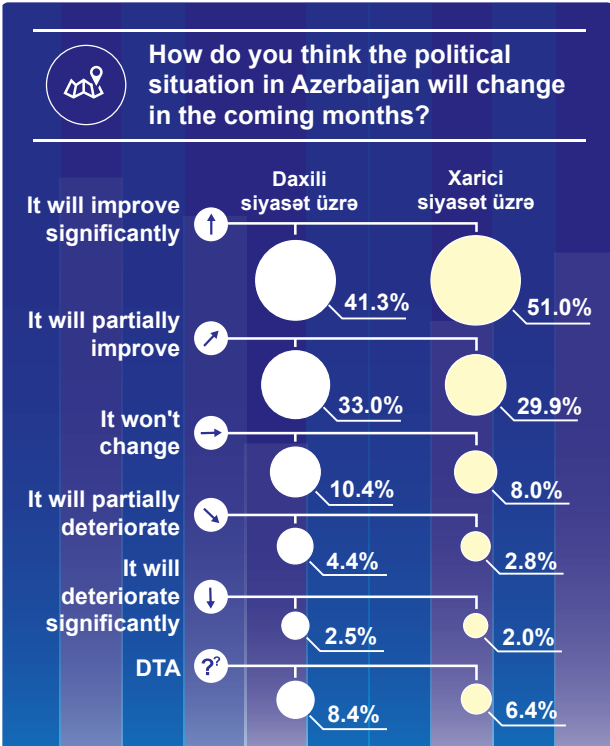
icy to improve significantly, and 33% anticipated moderate improvement in the coming months. Meanwhile, 10.4% foresaw no changes, 4.4% believed the situation would slightly worsen, and 2.5% expected it to significantly worsen. Additionally, 8.4% found it difficult to express an opinion.

In terms of foreign policy, Azerbaijani society is similarly optimistic. Of the respondents, 51% believed the foreign policy situation would improve significantly, and 30% expected moderate improvements. A smaller proportion—8.0%—did not expect any changes, while 2.8% predicted slight worsening, and 2.0% anticipated significant deterioration. 6.4% of respondents were undecided.

❖ The analysis further indicated that older respondents were more optimistic about both the internal and foreign policy future of the country compared to younger respondents and those from rural areas. However, variations in education and income levels did not result in statistically significant differences in their outlook.

Survey results also revealed that, regardless of which countries respondents preferred for military-political cooperation, an overwhelming majority positively assessed Azerbaijan's foreign policy. This could be seen as a reflection of the public's approval of Azerbaijan's balanced diplomatic relationships with all regional countries.

As it had been one year since the victory in the Patriotic War, the survey also explored which events from that period remained in pub-



lic memory. The results showed that, one year after the victory, public opinion was marked by a strong sense of pride in the historic triumph (54.4%), the demonstration of national unity and solidarity (34.8%), and the fact that Azerbaijan's victory was widely recognized globally (34.3%). Other key memories included the importance of being seen as a victorious nation (33%), the strengthening of military patriotism (23.4%), the Victory Fair and the Victory March (21.8%), the elimination of societal pessimism (15.6%), and international congratulations on Azerbaijan's victory (5.3%).

## II SECTION

# THE GREAT RETURN AND CONSTRUCTION EVENTS/PROJECTS IN LIBERATED AREAS

### 2.1. Public attitudes towards plans for the Great Return

One of the key goals that President Ilham Aliyev set for himself many years ago was the reconstruction of Azerbaijan's regions and cities after liberation from occupation and the implementation of the "Great Return" program. The first step toward this goal was the reconstruction of Cojug Marjanli village in Jabrayil district, following the April 2016 victory. This marked the beginning of the "Great Return." By invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter, which grants the right to self-defense, Azerbaijan restored its territorial integrity with its victory in the 44-day Patriotic War, which began on September 27, 2020. Following the war, comprehensive measures for the Great Return were initiated, aimed at providing modern and dignified living conditions in the liberated territories. These measures include construction, restoration, and improvement efforts across all sectors, ensuring safe living, efficient activity, and the continuous enhancement of well-being in these regions.

The prioritization of the return to Karabakh has been repeatedly emphasized by President Aliyev in his speeches. In a public opinion poll conducted by the Social Research Center during the first quarter of 2021 (January-March), 84.6% of respondents fully agreed that the return to Karabakh is a priority for the head of state, while 12.2% partially agreed. Additionally, 81.8% of respondents positively evaluated the decisions and initiatives regarding the Great Return to Karabakh for the post-war period.

The public's support for this initiative is further evidenced by donations made to the "Karabakh Revival Fund," established by President Aliyev on January 4, 2021. Just as during the war, the Azerbaijani people stand united with the President and the state during this post-war

reconstruction period. In the "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development" program, approved by the Presidential Decree on February 2, 2021, the Great Return to the liberated territories was identified as one of the five key priorities for the country.

Currently, a range of important projects is underway, including "smart city," "smart village," and "green energy" initiatives, as well as the construction of airports, roads, and facilities for agriculture, tourism, and production enterprises. In addition to the economic and financial dimensions, this process holds significant geopolitical and transit-logistics importance. With various countries actively participating in the restoration efforts, the demand for secure, stable movement corridors has increased. In this context, the Zangezur Corridor is of strategic importance for the world.

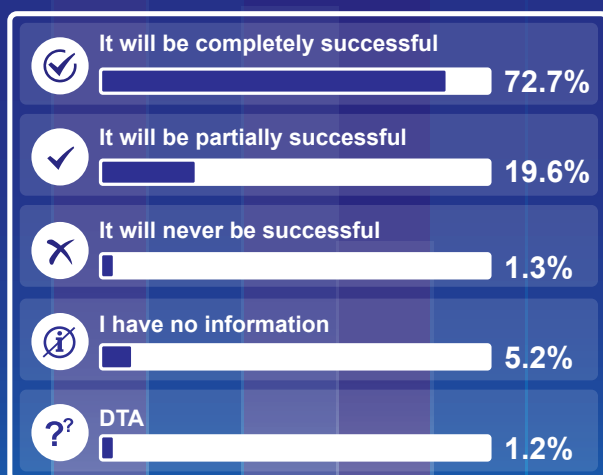
Considering these factors, respondents in a survey were asked about their views on the construction and development projects in the liberated territories. Specifically, the survey examined their attitudes toward "smart city," "smart village," and "green energy" projects aimed at improving agriculture, enhancing social life, and contributing to security in these regions. According to 72.7% of respondents, the implementation of these projects will be completely successful, while 19.6% believe they will be partially successful.

❖ The survey also revealed broad support for these initiatives across all demographics, regardless of age group, gender, income, or education level. From the gender distribution of the sample, 52.9% of men and 47.1% of women expressed confidence that the reconstruction and development projects in the liberated territories would be fully successful ( $\chi^2(4)=18.280$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

❖ According to the age level of the respond-



## Implementation of the "smart city", "smart village" and "green energy" projects in the liberated territories...



ents, representatives of the relatively older generation (65 and older) are more optimistic about the future of these projects (76.4%).

❖ Regarding education levels, there is no significant difference: respondents with secondary education (75.8%) have slightly higher confidence in these projects compared to those with professional qualifications (71%) and higher education ( $X^2(8)=20.173$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Only a small percentage of respondents (1.3%) believe these projects will not be successful.

According to the analysis, 5.2% of respondents are unaware of the projects being implemented in Karabakh. Among these, 5.3% of the urban population, 3.7% of the settlement population, and 6.0% of the rural population lack information about the initiatives. Furthermore, 18% of those who believe these projects will be completely successful, and 6.3% of those who think they will not be successful, also feel that the construction work in areas of Azerbaijan where Armenians live compactly can contribute to peace and coexistence ( $X^2(3)=8.875$ ,  $P<0.05$ ).

❖ It's important to mention that, under President Ilham Aliyev's leadership, ongoing reforms aim to transform Azerbaijan into a regional digital hub for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In line with the Presidential decree of January 6, 2021, the "Analysis and Coordina-

tion Center of the Fourth Industrial Revolution" was established under the Ministry of Economy. On April 19, 2021, President Aliyev also signed a decree for the development of the "Smart City" and "Smart Village" concepts.

❖ The first "Smart Village" pilot project includes the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Agali villages in Zangilan, focusing on five components: housing, production, social services, "smart agriculture," and alternative energy. Agali village will be the first in the Caucasus to meet modern standards, incorporating "smart management systems" from a data and analysis center. Several agricultural development initiatives are underway, with land allocated for production and a list of necessary innovative equipment prepared.<sup>2</sup>

Renewable energy will play a key role in Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur, with the aim of creating energy-efficient, environmentally friendly systems throughout the energy value chain. The Presidential Decree dated May 3, 2021, concerning the creation of a "green energy" zone in the liberated territories, paves the way for extensive work in this area. The 2021 state budget allocated 1.39 million USD to the Ministry of Energy for this purpose, and the Japanese company TEPCO has been contracted to develop the concept and master plan for the "green energy" zone.

<sup>2</sup> The presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey got acquainted with the work done within the framework of the "Smart Village" project in Zangilan. /October 26, 2021/- <https://president.az/articles/53744>

Agriculture is another key focus in the liberated territories, with efforts to establish a "green" economy. The foundation of "Dost Agropark" was laid by President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during their visit to Zangilan on October 26, signaling this commitment. Plans for an integrated meat processing and packaging facility, as well as a 100,000-ton capacity agricultural warehouse system, are also in place. These initiatives will enhance the food security of both Azerbaijan and Turkey and enable the export of agricultural and livestock products to international markets.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.2. The new configuration of the economic zones of Azerbaijan: attitude to the historical, political, economic perspectives of the creation of the Karabakh and East Zangezur economic regions

In the post-war period, developments in the South Caucasus region, particularly in Armenia, including the resurgence of revanchist forces, efforts by Armenians to "revive" the OSCE Minsk Group, and attempts to shift negotiations to the European Union platform, prompted Azerbaijan to take strategic action. In response to these complex dynamics, President Ilham Aliyev issued a crucial decree, approving a new division of economic regions and initiating a renewal of the strategic mechanisms for managing the country's economy. This new economic regionalization, approved by the presidential decree on July 7, 2021, was a significant and well-calculated decision from strategic, economic, and historical perspectives. The decree emphasizes the large-scale efforts aimed at restoring the territories liberated from occupation, ensuring their future development, establishing essential infrastructure, and facilitating the return of displaced populations. The new economic regional structure aims to better organize these efforts efficiently.<sup>4</sup>

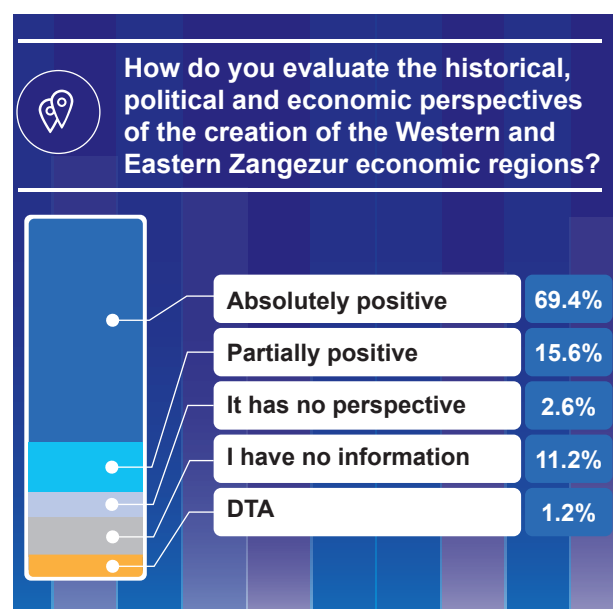
As outlined in the decree, two new economic regions were created: the Karabakh economic region (encompassing Khankendi city, Agjaba-

di, Aghdam, Barda, Fuzuli, Khojaly, Khojavand, Shusha, and Tartar regions) and the Eastern Zangezur economic region (comprising Jabrayil, Kalbajar, Gubadli, Lachin, and Zangilan regions), increasing the total number of economic regions in Azerbaijan from 10 to 14. This reorganization creates new opportunities for integrating Karabakh back into the economic cycle and re-opening regional communications, including the Zangezur corridor.

A recent survey conducted by the Social Research Center reveals that President Aliyev's decree on improving the administrative structure of the region is highly appreciated by the public. A significant majority of respondents (69.4%) view the establishment of the Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur economic regions as entirely positive, with 15.6% expressing partial approval.

❖ Gender distribution results show that 75.6% of male respondents and 62.9% of female respondents rated the historical, political, and economic perspectives of these economic regions as "completely positive" ( $X^2(4)=25.533$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

❖ Survey results further indicate that appreciation for the decree increases with age. Among respondents aged 18-25, 64.9% viewed it positively, compared to 72.1% among those aged 56-65 and 79.3% among those 65 and



<sup>3</sup> President Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan laid the foundation stone of the "Dost Agropark" in Zangilan district /26 oktyabr 2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/53740>

<sup>4</sup> Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the new division of economic regions in the Republic of Azerbaijan. /July 07 2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/52389>

older ( $X^2(20)=42.396$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

❖ In terms of education levels, those with higher education (79.6%) grasp the significance of the decree better than those with secondary (64.4%) or professional (68.2%) education ( $X^2(8)=50.124$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

The answers to the final two questions indicate that the people of Karabakh are closely monitoring developments in their region and respond positively, demonstrating a strong desire to return to these areas soon.

❖ Interestingly, the survey results reveal that older individuals are more aware of the presidential decree than younger people, suggesting that the older population tends to follow current events more closely. Specifically, 15.3%, 14.4%, and 15% of respondents aged 18-25, 26-35, and 38-45, respectively, reported having no information about the decree. In contrast, among those aged 56-65 and over 65, only 6.4% and 8.6% lacked awareness.

❖ In terms of education levels, the highest percentage of those uninformed about the decree came from those with secondary education (17.2%). Among respondents with higher education and vocational training, the figures were 3.5% and 8.3%, respectively.

It is important to note that the creation of the Karabakh economic region carries significant political weight. The establishment of this region as an economic zone serves as a political and administrative affirmation of Karabakh's connection to Azerbaijan, effectively eliminating the term "Nagorno-Karabakh" from official usage. Now, the region is more often remembered for its distinct characteristics—its past under occupation, its natural resources, and its rich historical and cultural heritage.

The formation of the Zangezur economic region reflects Azerbaijan's strategic political will regarding the Zangezur corridor, as referenced in the trilateral agreements dated November 10, 2020, and January 11, 2021. Moreover, establishing this economic district restores historical justice, as the districts of Zangilan, Gubadli, Jabrayil, Lachin, and Kalbajar are geographically linked. They are surrounded by the Zangezur mountain range and occupy the eastern part of the Zangezur plateau, a region historically part of the Zangezur district created in 1861. This historical connection justifies the integration of

these districts into the same economic zone.

Post-war processes and the emergence of new realities necessitated the adaptation and adjustment of economic zoning principles in the region. Therefore, the presidential decree on the new division of economic regions seeks to enhance the competitiveness of Azerbaijan's economy, accelerate the reintegration of liberated territories into the national economy, and improve planning and forecasting processes. Additionally, the new economic regions will play a pivotal role in attracting foreign investments, directing domestic investments efficiently, creating new financial resources, and diversifying value-added production.

Following the Cabinet of Ministers' decision on July 10, 2021, necessary steps are being taken to ensure the implementation of the President's decree dated July 7, 2021, regarding the new division of economic regions. Practical measures include preparing, reviewing, and presenting relevant projects and proposals for the new economic zoning, along with ensuring that decisions made are aligned with existing legislation.

### **2.3. Attitude towards the implementation of transport and communication projects in the territories freed from occupation**

The large-scale projects implemented in recent years, along with Azerbaijan's established relationships, have demonstrated that the country plays a pivotal role as a transport hub for international initiatives. Thanks to the pragmatic policy of President Ilham Aliyev, the territories freed from occupation are now integrated into this vast transport network. In the year following the Patriotic War, significant progress has been made in constructing 10 road infrastructure projects spanning approximately 700 kilometers across Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur. These include major routes such as the "Zafar" road, Ahmedbeyli-Fuzuli-Shusha, Toganali-Kalbajar-Istisu, Kalbajar-Lachin, Horadiz-Jabrayil-Zengilan-Aghband, Talish-Tapgaragoyunlu-Gaşalti, Khudafarin-Gubadli-Lachin, Shukurbeyli-Jabrayil-Hadrut, Fuzuli-Hadrut, and Barda-Aghdam highways.

The construction of the Victory Road in such a short period is a symbol of the resounding



victory achieved by the people of Azerbaijan. This project, implemented at an unprecedented speed, reflects the strength of the Azerbaijani state, its potential, and, most importantly, President Ilham Aliyev's unwavering determination. The highway was built to commemorate the path used by the Glorious Army in liberating Shusha—the cultural capital of Azerbaijan—and was named "Victory Road" by the Victorious Commander-in-Chief, Ilham Aliyev. The project was overseen directly by the president throughout its construction.

Beginning at the Hajigabul-Minjivan-Zangezur corridor highway, the 101-kilometer-long Zafar Road extends to the city of Shusha, the crown of Karabakh. Passing through the territories of Fuzuli, Khojavand, Khojaly, and Shusha regions, this road connects dozens of settlements, including the cities of Fuzuli and Shusha. This project is especially significant as it primarily aims to ensure the comfort of returning residents by providing them with a high standard of living.<sup>5</sup>

As part of these ongoing efforts, on October 26, the foundation of the Zangezur corridor—Horadiz-Jabrayil-Zangilan-Aghband highway—was laid by President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.<sup>6</sup>

The Zangezur corridor has the potential to become a strategic route connecting Azerbaijan with the region, as well as with Asia and Europe in multiple directions. Experience suggests that major global powers have already acknowledged and expressed their support for this function of the Zangezur corridor, recognizing how it will reshape regional transport architecture.

The Zangezur Corridor holds great importance from historical, geopolitical, and modern perspectives, especially in terms of restoring peace, harmony, and cooperation in the South Caucasus. The multifaceted nature of this issue encompasses various factors, including geopolitical, political, ideological, geographical, economic, socio-cultural, legal, and security concerns. This complexity makes the launch of the Zangezur corridor a significant event, backed by several important factors.

Considering this, citizens were asked in a public opinion survey to characterize the importance of the Zangezur corridor, with multiple response options available. According to the respondents, the corridor's operation would further strengthen Azerbaijan's ties with Turkey (74%), bolster unity within the Turkic world (54.7%), and expand Azerbaijan's (Nakhchivan's) role in the East-West and North-South transport corridors (53.6%). Additionally, it would provide direct access for Turkey and Azerbaijan to the Turkic world (34.8%), elevate relations between Russia and Turkey (33%), solidify Azerbaijan's position as a transport and logistics center of Eurasia (31.9%), contribute to regional security and peace (23.5%), offer an alternative route for Azerbaijan's access to the West via Georgia (8.5%), and enhance Azerbaijan-China cooperation within the framework of the "One Belt, One Road" project (8.4%).

Conversely, 6.9% of respondents believed that the Zangezur transport corridor would not impact relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, while 2.2% thought the project would not bring any political or economic changes.

<sup>5</sup> President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva participated in the opening of Victory Road. /November 07, 2021/- <https://president.az/articles/54040>

<sup>6</sup> The presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey laid the foundation of the Horadiz-Jabrayil-Zengilan-Aghband highway (Zangezur corridor). /October 26, 2021/- <https://president.az/articles/53736>



## What do you see as the importance of Zangezur transportation corridor?

It will further strengthen Azerbaijan's relations with Turkey

74.0%

It will serve to strengthen unity in the Turkish world

54.7%

It will expand the participation of Azerbaijan (Nakhchivan) in the East-West, North-South transport seas

53.6%

It will ensure direct access of Turkey and Azerbaijan to the Turkic world

34.8%

It will raise the relations between Russia and Turkey to a higher level

33.0%

It will strengthen the position of Azerbaijan as the transport and logistics center of Eurasia

31.9%

It will contribute to the security of the region and peace in the region

23.5%

It will become an alternative in Azerbaijan's exit from Georgia to the West

8.5%

Within the framework of the "One Belt One Road" project, Azerbaijan-China cooperation will be deepened

8.4%

It will not affect the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan

6.9%

It will not cause any political or economic changes

2.2%

Other

1.7%

DTA

7.1%

❖ The analysis of responses with the highest percentages across several categories indicates that an overwhelming majority of respondents, regardless of age group, gender, income, or education level, recognize the significance of the Zangezur transport corridor.

❖ According to the overall results, 75.6% of men and 72.3% of women expressed a positive attitude towards the statement, "The Zangezur transport corridor will further strengthen relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey." Agreement was particularly strong among older age groups (78.1%), professionals and specialists (77.8%), those with higher education (75.5%), high-income individuals (77%), and urban dwellers (75.1%).

❖ The view that "The Zangezur transport corridor will expand Azerbaijan's (Nakhchivan) participation in the East-West and North-South transport corridors" was more frequently supported by respondents with higher education (67%) and those aged 26-35 (59.5%).

❖ Regarding the statement that "The Zange-

zur transport corridor will serve to strengthen unity in the Turkish world," the highest levels of support were observed among older respondents (62.9%), those with higher education (59.7%), high-income individuals (59.5%), and urban residents (56.6%).

❖ It should be noted that Zangezur, an ancient Azerbaijani land, has historically been one of the main routes for commercial, economic, and cultural exchanges. From the 1920s until 2020, the separation of Zangezur isolated Azerbaijan's Turkic brothers from one another, cutting ties between the peoples of the region and posing a significant obstacle to trade. Through the lens of this reality, the Second Karabakh War opened up not only new opportunities for the region but also for the broader world, particularly for the Turkic world, through the Zangezur corridor.

❖ On November 12, during the 8th Summit Meeting of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States in Istanbul, President Ilham Aliyev remarked: "We are now engaged in major restoration works. At the same time, the results of

the Second Karabakh war open up new opportunities for the region. In particular, I believe that the opening of the Zangezur corridor will open up new opportunities for the entire region in terms of transport. The Zangezur Corridor is a project that can connect the Turkish world, Europe, and our neighbors, and today active work is being done towards the realization of this project. As for Zangezur, I want to remind you of my speech at the Nakhchivan summit. At that time, I said that in 1920, the Soviet authorities severed the geographical connection of the Turkic world by taking Zangezur from Azerbaijan and giving it to Armenia, and anyone can see this by looking at the map. Today we are restoring this geography. Through the implementation of transport and communication projects, we are reconnecting and reuniting this region, and I hope we will succeed in this until the end."<sup>7</sup>

As indicated by the respondents' answers, the Zangezur corridor offers significant potential not only for connecting Azerbaijan's exclave, the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, with Turkey, but also for benefiting Armenia, Russia, Iran, and countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including China. Chinese media, politicians, analysts, and business leaders have consistently highlighted the importance of the transport corridor they refer to as the "Middle Road" within the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, with increasing emphasis on the Zangezur corridor in recent discussions. President Ilham Aliyev has also encouraged the countries of the Asia-Pacific region to closely examine the opportunities presented by the creation of this corridor.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to note that the opening of the Zangezur corridor does not serve as an alternative to the Georgian route but rather complements it. The corridor is not solely about transporting goods from Azerbaijan to Georgia. Through the Zangezur corridor, Georgia can facilitate the transportation of goods from its own country, the Black Sea Basin, and Europe to Iran, the Gulf countries, and other regions at competitive prices, creating significant revenue opportunities. This means that the Zangezur corridor will not be a transport platform serving the interests of only a few selected countries in one direction; instead, it will benefit all countries in the region through the diverse con-

nections it will establish in multiple directions.

All of this demonstrates that the activation of the Zangezur corridor on both a regional and global scale will drive significant geopolitical and geoeconomic innovations. Moreover, the corridor will play a crucial role in enhancing Azerbaijan's international standing as an independent state.

Among the reconstruction projects in the region, the opening of Fuzuli International Airport, which serves as the air gateway to Karabakh, as well as the planned construction of airports in the Lachin and Zangilan regions, are of immense socio-economic and strategic importance. These projects will further expand the region's transport capabilities, and Azerbaijan is working diligently to complete these initiatives in a short period of time, making effective use of available resources.

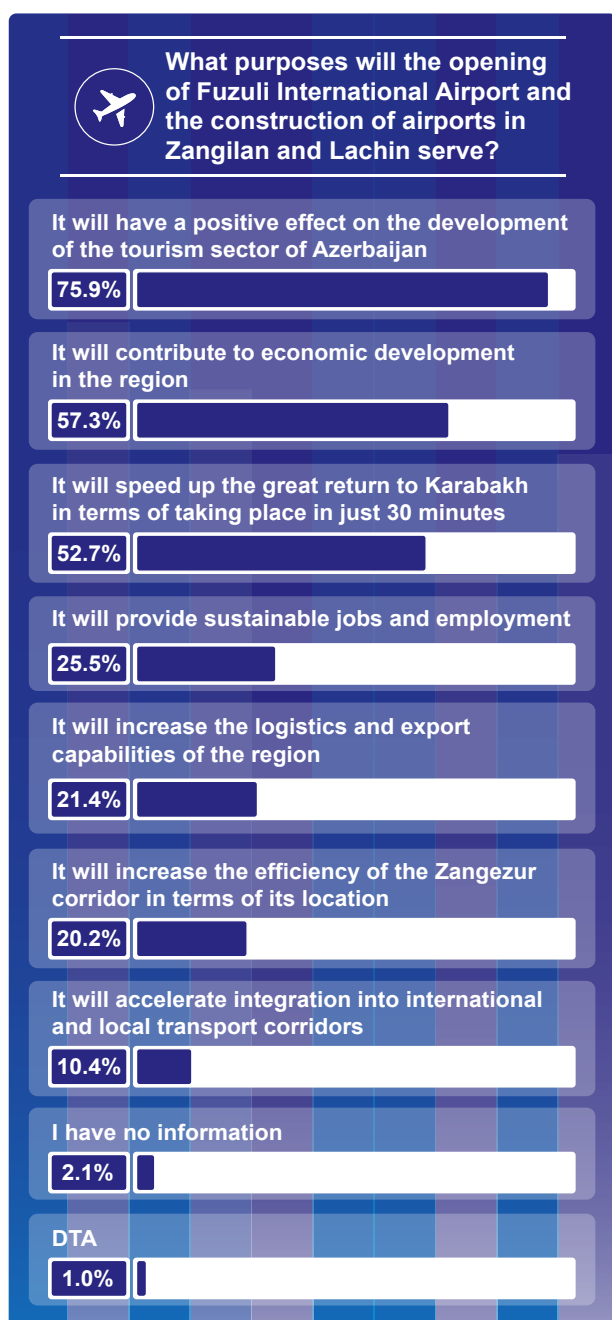
According to respondents in the current survey, the opening of Fuzuli International Airport and the construction of airports in Zangilan and Lachin will have a positive impact on the development of Azerbaijan's tourism sector (75.9%), contribute to the region's economic growth (57.3%), accelerate the "Great Return" to Karabakh in just 30 minutes (52.7%), provide stable employment opportunities (25.5%), increase the region's logistics and export potential (21.4%), enhance the efficiency of the Zangezur corridor due to its strategic location (20.2%), and accelerate integration into international and local transport corridors (10.4%). Only 2.1% of respondents stated that they had no information about these projects. It should be noted that respondents were allowed to select multiple answer options.

According to respondents in the current survey, the opening of Fuzuli International Airport and the construction of airports in Zangilan and Lachin are expected to positively impact various sectors in Azerbaijan. Specifically, 75.9% believe these projects will boost the country's tourism sector, while 57.3% anticipate contributions to the region's economic development. Additionally, 52.7% think the "Great Return" to Karabakh will be accelerated, reducing travel time to just 30 minutes. Other benefits highlighted include the creation of stable jobs and employment (25.5%), increased logistics and export opportunities in the region (21.4%), enhanced efficiency of the Zangezur corridor due to its strategic location (20.2%), and faster integra-

<sup>7</sup> VIII Summit Meeting of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States was held in Istanbul. /November 12, 2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/54183>

<sup>8</sup> President Ilham Aliyev's speech at the 77th session of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific was presented in video format. /April 26, 2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/51287>





tion into international and local transport networks (10.4%). Only 2.1% of respondents indicated they had no knowledge of these projects. It should be noted that respondents were allowed to select multiple answers.

❖ The idea that planning the construction of international airports in the territories freed from occupation "will have a positive effect on the development of the tourism sector of Azerbaijan" is shared by relatively older people (those aged 46-55 (80.7%), 65+ (84.3%)), higher it is widespread among the educated (80.2%), and those with a high income (82.4%).

❖ Among other answer options of this ques-

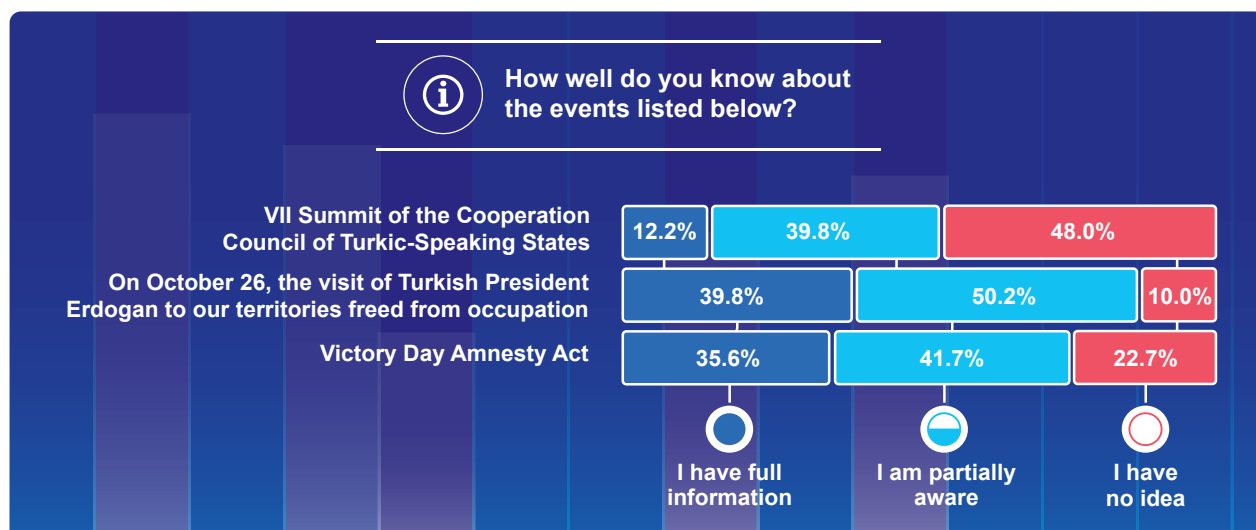
tion, the opinion "will contribute to economic development in the region" prevailed. So, compared to women (51.9%), men (62.5%), those aged 56-65 (62.9%) and over 65 (61.4%), with higher education (64, 8%), those with a high income (66.2%) chose more.

❖ "The return to Karabakh will be accelerated to just 30 minutes" (52.7%), with a notable preference for this view among respondents aged 56-65 (58%) and those over 65 (60%), as well as individuals with secondary education (54.7%) and high-income earners (63.5%).

It should be noted that Fuzuli International Airport, inaugurated by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan on October 26 this year, was constructed to the highest modern standards. The airport is capable of handling all types of aircraft, featuring a 3,000-meter-long and 60-meter-wide runway. The terminal, equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure, can accommodate at least 200 passengers per hour. All work was completed in accordance with international norms and standards. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) assigned the airport the code FZL, reflecting the name of the city where it is located—Fuzuli. Additionally, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) granted the airport the UBBF code.

Fuzuli International Airport holds significant importance for the restoration and development of Karabakh and East Zangazur. It will play a key role in bringing industrial products from these economic regions to global markets and expanding the region's export capabilities. As President Aliyev noted, the airport will also serve as a vital asset in attracting foreign tourists to the liberated territories, creating new opportunities for the area. With the growing number of foreign visitors eager to explore Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan and the jewel of Karabakh, Fuzuli Airport offers a more efficient, cost-effective route for tourists to visit these newly liberated areas. In short, Fuzuli International Airport will contribute to the revival of tourism in the region.

We should also add that in the SRC's survey covering the months of January-March 2021, the public attitude towards the creation of transport and communication infrastructure in the territories freed from occupation was studied. Those who took part in that survey stated that the President's decisions on the creation of transport and communication infrastructure (construction of roads, construction of the airport) in the territories freed



from occupation will primarily stimulate tourism (68.1%), facilitate the flow of investments to these territories (57%), economic projects will increase its efficiency (45.3%).

Economist experts also believe that the presence of airports in Fuzuli, Lachin and Zangilan will enable Karabakh and East Zangezur economic regions to become the leading centers of the region, and foreign businessmen to invest in this region. This is especially important in terms of the reintegration of our Karabakh into the economy of Azerbaijan. After the restoration and reconstruction phase, our territories freed from occupation are expected to form 8 percent of Azerbaijan's economy. This means the creation of an additional 5 billion manats of new value. From this point of view, Fuzuli International Airport will make a special contribution to the diversification of the economy of Karabakh on regional markets.

In this context, let's add that in the current survey, the respondents were also asked about the level of awareness of the official visit of the President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the Republic of Azerbaijan on October 26. 39.8% of the respondents said that they were fully informed about this visit, and 50.2% said that they were partially informed. 10% of those polled have no information about Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to our country, his participation in a number of events and openings in Fuzuli and Zangilan.

❖ In the overall sample, men (44.8%) ( $X^2(2)=15.560$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) and those with higher education (53.9%) ( $X^2(4)=55.310$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) were more likely to indicate that they were fully informed about the visit compared to women (35.4%). Representatives of the older generation (45.7%) ( $X^2(10)=28.137$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) were also significantly more informed.

During the post-war period, the visits of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Azerbaijan's historical lands—specifically Shusha, Fuzuli, and Zangilan—have been closely followed, given their significance in terms of the region's political, economic, and security developments. What made Erdoğan's October 26 visit even more noteworthy was that it commenced directly from Karabakh, landing at Fuzuli International Airport. By choosing to visit the Karabakh economic region, including Khankendi, Erdoğan signaled that Turkey recognizes Azerbaijan's sovereignty over these territories, reaffirming that Ankara stands firmly by Baku.

It is also worth noting that this was President Erdoğan's third visit to Azerbaijan following Azerbaijan's historic victory. After the Victory Parade on December 10, 2020, and the signing of the Shusha Declaration on June 15, 2021, this latest visit represents the second grand occasion Erdoğan has attended in Karabakh. His direct arrival at Fuzuli by plane underscores the post-war reality and aims to attract foreign investment to the region, where security is now a priority. The inaugural foreign landing at Fuzuli International Airport also serves to increase Karabakh's attractiveness, with its great tourism potential, to international audiences, thereby expanding the number of visitors.

Taking these factors into account, respondents were asked to characterize President Erdoğan's visit to Fuzuli and Zangilan on October 26. According to 66.2% of the respondents, Erdoğan's visit underscored Turkey's friendly stance and reinforced confidence in the enduring brotherhood between the two nations. Additionally, 38.2% believe the visit accelerates the opening of the Zangezur Corridor and boosts regional communication and economic cooperation, vital for the surrounding countries. Furthermore, 29.4% saw this trip as a



reflection of Turkey's growing geopolitical power and influence in both the region and globally. Another 20.4% emphasized that Azerbaijan and Turkey are advancing confidently towards common geopolitical goals. Other opinions included: viewing the visit as a message against Armenia's aggressive behavior towards Azerbaijan (19.1%), a demonstration of Turkey's open support for economic projects and construction in the region (16.1%), and seeing it as contributing to the region's economic prosperity, peace, and security (14%).

❖ The absolute majority of those who participated in the survey, regardless of their age group, gender, income and education level, highly valued Erdogan's visit to Fuzuli and Zangilan and said that this visit had a positive impact on the development dynamics of relations between the two countries.

## 2.4. Attitude towards coexistence with Armenians in Karabakh

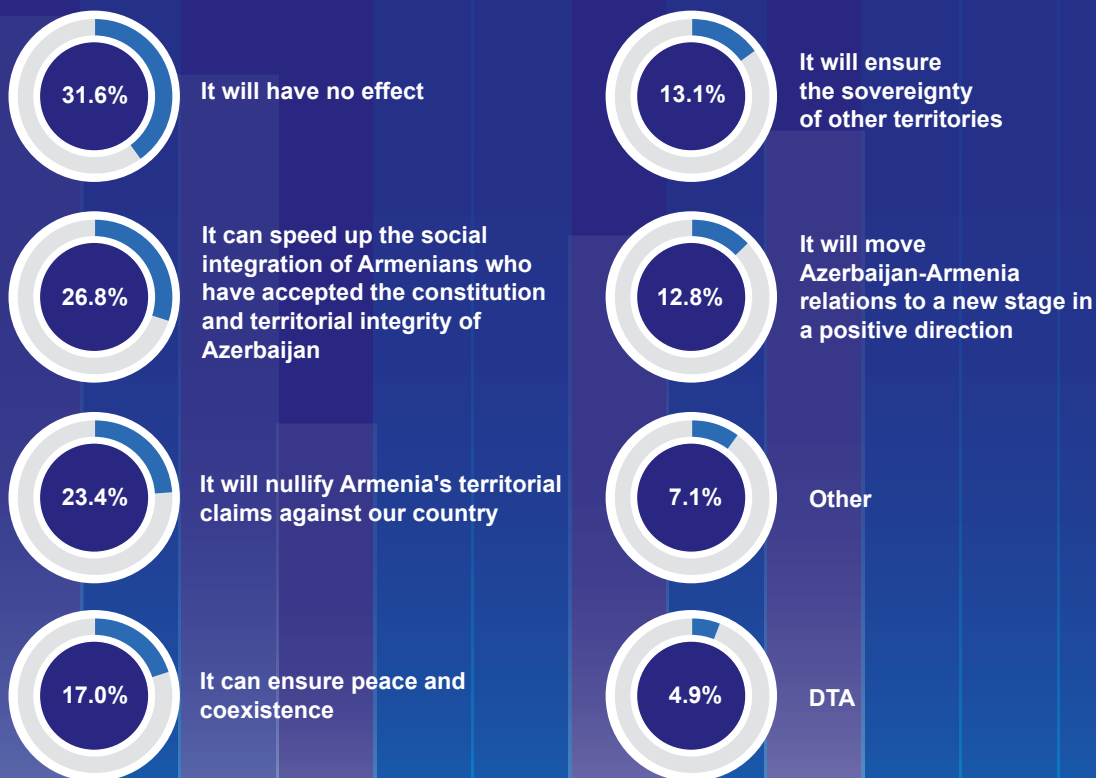
A year after the end of the Patriotic War, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized in various interviews with local and international media, as well as in his speech at the opening ceremony of the Global Baku Forum on November 4, organized by the Nizami Ganjavi International Center under the theme "The World After COVID-19," that Azerbaijan is now in a post-conflict phase. He noted that Azerbaijan had made several proposals to Armenia to initiate peace talks, expressing a desire to focus on peace and the future rather than war. Since the conflict has concluded, the discussion is no longer about granting any special status to the Armenians living in Karabakh, but rather about their reintegration into Azerbaijan as citizens. Official Baku has consistently stated that the rights and security of the Armenians living in Karabakh, like those of other ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan, are guaranteed at a high level. In an interview with the Spanish EFE news agency, President Aliyev noted that about 25,000 ethnic Armenians currently reside in Karabakh, within the area under Russian peacekeepers' control, and emphasized that they are Azerbaijani citizens. He reiterated that they will enjoy the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as any other Azerbaijani citizen, regardless of religious or ethnic origin, and firmly stated, "There is no status, and everyone should forget about this issue."

One-third of respondents in the recent survey conducted by STM supported the ongoing reconstruction efforts in the areas of Azerbaijan where Armenians live in compact communities. According to 17% of respondents, these construction projects could help ensure peace and promote coexistence. Meanwhile, 26.8% believe that such efforts would accelerate the social integration of Armenians who acknowledge Azerbaijan's constitution and territorial integrity. Furthermore, 23.4% of respondents think these steps will nullify Armenia's territorial claims against Azerbaijan, while

<sup>9</sup> President Ilham Aliyev's interview with Spain's EFE news agency. /October 2, 2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/53296>



**In your opinion, if construction works are carried out in the territory of Azerbaijan, where Armenians live compactly, what can this cause?**



13.1% believe they will strengthen Azerbaijan's sovereignty over other territories, and 12.8% see this as a move that will improve Azerbaijan-Armenia relations and usher in a new, positive phase.

However, 31.6% of the respondents said that these efforts would have no effect, while 4.9% of respondents were unsure how to respond to the question.

❖ In the general sample, men (30.2%) agree more than women (23.3%) with the opinion that the implementation of construction works in the territory of Azerbaijan, where Armenians live compactly, "can speed up the social integration of Armenians who recognize the constitution and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan." According to the age distribution, this opinion was given more priority in the age range of 18-25 years (31.5%). Those with higher education (35.5%) and those with high income (36.5%) expressed a more positive attitude to this idea.

❖ In the general sample, 26.5% of male respondents, those in the older age group (25.7%), and those with higher education (25.2%) believe that the implementation of construction works in the territory of Azerbaijan, where Armenians live

compactly, "will nullify Armenia's territorial claims against our country." ), those with a high income (28.4%), those living in the village (24.3%) expressed more agreement.

❖ The opinion that the implementation of construction projects in areas of Azerbaijan where Armenians live compactly "will have no impact" is more prevalent among women (35.9%), individuals aged 36-45 (39.1%), those with secondary education (35.1%), individuals with low income (37.7%), and residents of settlements (42.9%).

In a survey conducted by the Social Research Center (STM) in April 2021, respondents were asked whether the establishment of transport and communication infrastructure in the liberated territories would ensure Azerbaijan's sovereignty over the areas inhabited by Armenians. A total of 54.6% of respondents answered this question positively. In the same survey, 45.3% of participants expressed the opinion that the creation of transport and communication infrastructure in the liberated territories would contribute to the security of the area and play a crucial role in improving the living conditions of internally displaced persons returning to their homeland.



## 2.5. Attitude towards the President's activities related to the restoration of historical, cultural and religious monuments in the territories freed from occupation

After 30 years of longing, Commander-in-Chief and our brave army liberated its cities, towns, and regions from Armenian occupation. However, this triumph also revealed a bitter truth: the Armenians, in blatant disregard for humanitarian and international laws, had destroyed significant parts of Azerbaijan's historical and cultural heritage, inflicting severe damage on valuable monuments. Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to fully measure the moral damage caused to the people of Azerbaijan due to the destruction of these irreplaceable sites. These looted and ruined monuments were not only valuable to Azerbaijan but also represented important contributions to world civilization. Each monument that was under occupation stands as a living witness of history.

It is well known that the preservation, study, and protection of historical and cultural monuments—regarded as a nation's treasure—are key concerns for every state and for international organizations. The safeguarding of cultural heritage, which also ensures the cultural rights of people, is enshrined not only in domestic legislation but also in international legal frameworks. Various international agreements, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), The Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954), the European Cultural Convention (1954), and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972), outline provisions for the protection, study, and use of historical and cultural monuments and the defense of cultural rights in general.

Azerbaijan joined the First Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention in 1993 and the Second Protocol in 2000. This convention obligates participating states to protect cultural heritage, whether on their own territory or that of opposing parties during military conflicts, including

both movable and immovable cultural properties such as architectural, artistic, and historical monuments, as well as archaeological sites. Furthermore, the convention mandates that states incorporate laws in their legislation to penalize those who violate its terms.

Reflecting this principle, the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan includes provisions related to the protection of historical and cultural monuments, affirming that "protecting historical and cultural monuments is the duty of every person." Additionally, Article 18 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments" emphasizes the need for efforts to recover and return cultural monuments seized by occupying forces during war, stating that such monuments "cannot be used for military purposes." Article 32 of the same law mandates that relevant international organizations be informed of the destruction of monuments of world, national, and local significance by invaders. Presently, the Azerbaijani government is calculating the damage inflicted upon its cultural heritage and civilian population in the territories liberated from occupation.

Azerbaijan is committed to restoring its material and cultural monuments, regardless of their religious significance, and to building new ones in its liberated territories, thereby reaffirming the nation's spirit of tolerance. On November 7, on the eve of Victory Day, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, while laying the foundation of the Dashalti Mosque in Shusha, sent a powerful message to the world: "We are not only beautifying our lands and creating modern infrastructure for the return of our former IDPs, but also restoring cultural monuments desecrated by the occupiers. We reclaim our sacred values and erase the traces of vandalism against our religious and cultural heritage."

It should be noted that the Heydar Aliyev Foundation has launched a project to restore religious monuments and mosques, which are a part of Azerbaijan's national heritage, in the Karabakh region. This project will involve the

<sup>10</sup> Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments". - <http://www.e-ganun.az/framework/3526>

<sup>11</sup> President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva laid the foundation of Dashalti Mosque in Shusha. /November 07, 2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/54041>

restoration, conservation, and reconstruction of our sanctuaries with the participation of both local and foreign experts. Restoration efforts for religious sites destroyed during the occupation, particularly in Shusha and the Aghdam region, have already begun.

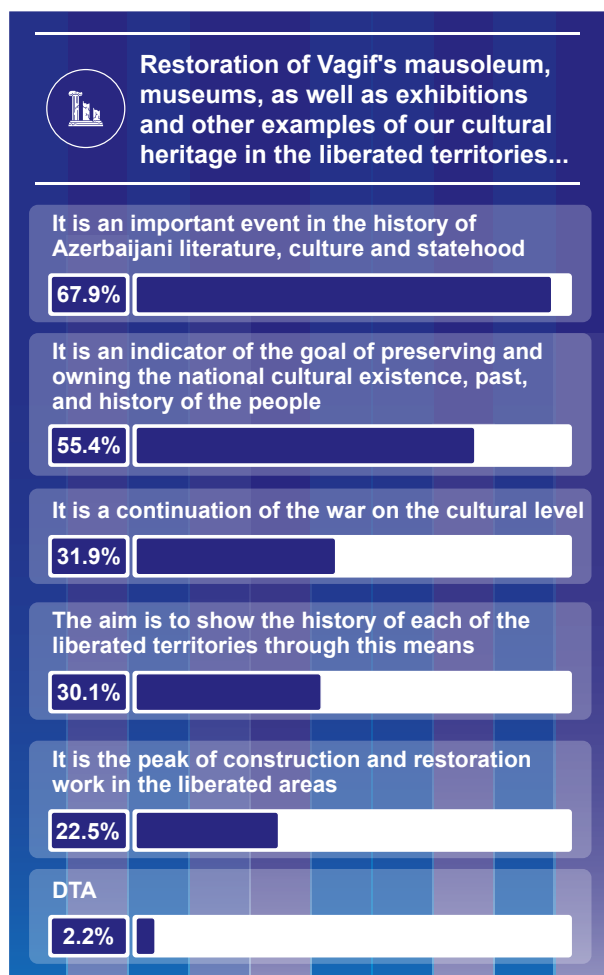
A recent survey explored public attitudes toward the restoration of Azerbaijan's material, cultural, spiritual, and religious monuments (such as Vagif's mausoleum, museums, exhibitions, and other examples of cultural heritage) in the liberated territories. Respondents expressed strong support, with 67.9% viewing this restoration as an important event in the history of Azerbaijani culture and statehood, and 55.4% seeing it as a reflection of the people's commitment to preserving and reclaiming their national cultural heritage, past, and history. Additionally, 31.9% saw it as a continuation of the war at the cultural level, 30.1% believed it served to showcase the history of each liberated territory, and 22.5% viewed it as a celebration of the reconstruction and restoration efforts. Only 2.2% of respondents were uncertain about their stance.

❖ Among the respondents, younger individuals (73.9%), those with higher education (74.5%), high-income earners (77%), and those living in rural areas (70.9%) were most likely to regard the restoration as a significant event for Azerbaijani literature, culture, and statehood. Similarly, the belief that the restoration reflects a goal of preserving national cultural existence and history was most strongly shared by younger people (67.6%), individuals with higher education (59.1%), high-income earners (66.2%), and urban residents (59.4%).

The overall results indicate a positive public sentiment toward the restoration of cultural heritage in the liberated territories.

❖ For comparison, it is worth noting that in a previous survey conducted by STM from January to March 2021, 73.9% of respondents felt that President Ilham Aliyev's visit to the Azikh cave signaled the commitment to restore historical and cultural monuments in all liberated areas. Additionally, 68.9% saw President Aliyev as a worthy successor to Heydar Aliyev's policies on Azerbaijani culture and history. A further 67.8% felt the President's involvement in the inauguration of Nateva's monument in Shusha and his visit to Vagif's bust and mausoleum

demonstrated his special attention to Karabakh. Similarly, 67.2% believed these acts were a sign of respect, love, and care for Azerbaijan's historical and cultural heritage. According to 62% of respondents, the President's efforts to restore historical and cultural sites, including the revival of the "Khari Bulbul" International Festival and the "Vagif Poetry Days" in Shusha, were aimed at promoting Azerbaijan's cultural values. Furthermore, 61% saw these activities as a testament to Azerbaijan's ownership of its historical and ancestral lands, while 48.8% viewed them as a strong stance in the cultural war with Armenia.



### III SECTION.

## ATTITUDE TO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT

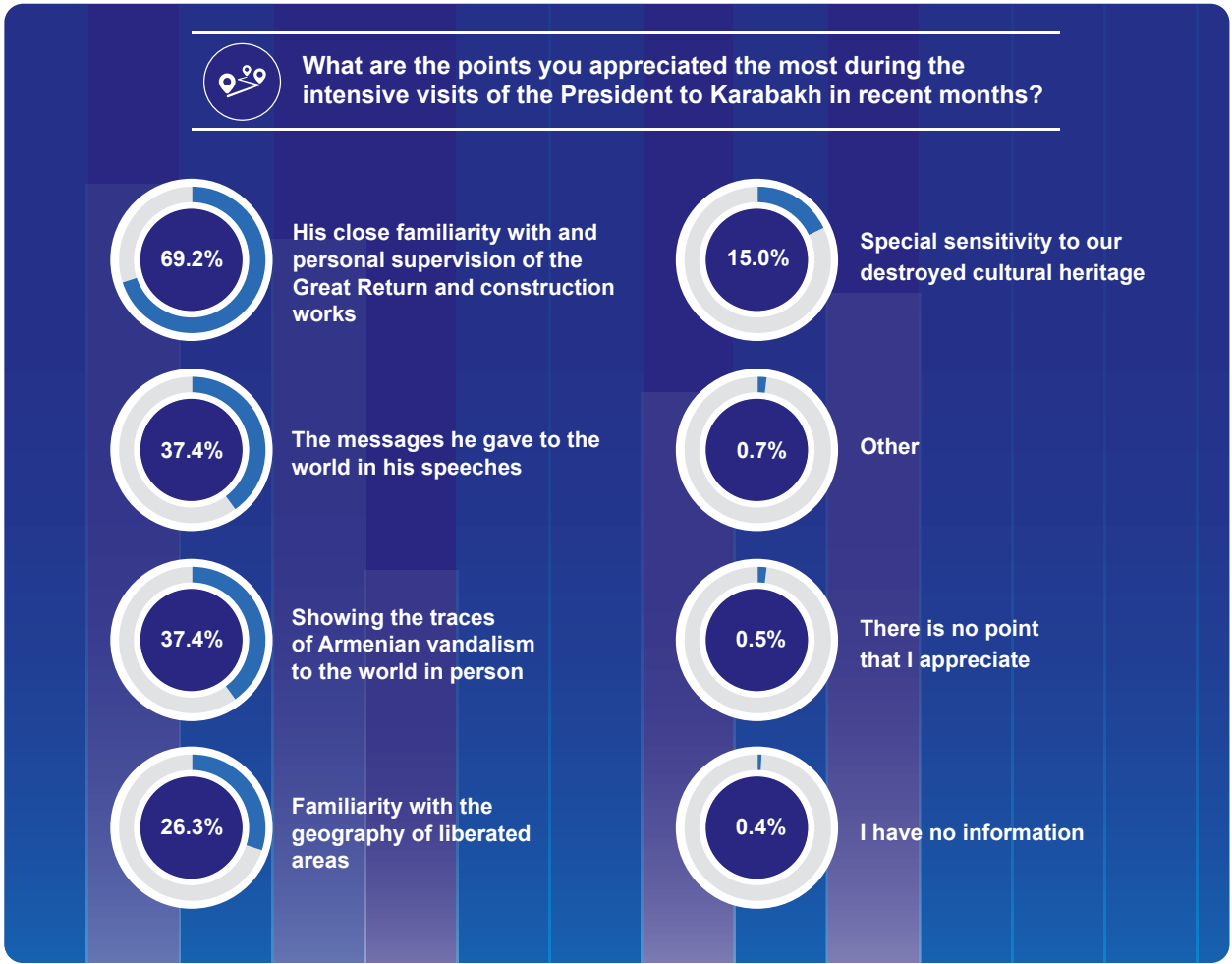
### 3.1. Attitude to the President's visits to territories freed from occupation

Currently, the primary goal is to undertake construction and restoration efforts in our territories liberated from occupation and to effectively implement the Great Return program. In this context, the continuous visits of President and Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev to these regions have been warmly received by our citizens. This is reflected in the survey results, where participants expressed strong appreciation for the President's recent intensive visits to Karabakh, particularly his direct involvement in overseeing the Great Return

and construction initiatives (69.2%).

Respondents also noted other significant aspects of the President's visits, including his efforts to showcase the traces of Armenian vandalism to the world (37.4%), the important messages he conveyed in his speeches (37.4%), his thorough understanding of the geography of the liberated territories (26.3%), and his deep sensitivity toward our damaged cultural heritage (15%).

❖ It is noteworthy that 56.5% of respondents who selected the option "Intimate familiarity with the Great Return and personally supervising construction works" expressed confidence that the Zangezur corridor will enhance access to Azerbai-



jan's East-West and North-South transport routes, including Nakhchivan ( $X^2(1)=9.525$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

In the SRC survey conducted between January and March of this year, respondents identified several key outcomes of the President's visits to the liberated territories. They believed these visits contributed to the revival and swift return of Karabakh (61.7%), demonstrated the Supreme Commander-in-Chief's direct leadership in all construction initiatives (61%), and reinforced Azerbaijan's territorial integrity (59.8%). Additionally, the President's focus on historical monuments (59.6%), efforts to ensure stability and security in the liberated areas (58.9%), and emphasis on the Great Return (58.4%) were all highlighted. Respondents also noted the President's commitment to national, spiritual, historical, and cultural values (54.3%), efforts to involve Azerbaijanis from around the world in the revival of Karabakh (54.6%), and the stimulation of development and investment in the liberated territories (50.3%). Furthermore, they regarded these actions as warnings to external forces in Armenia (48.3%) and contributions to information warfare (36.3%).

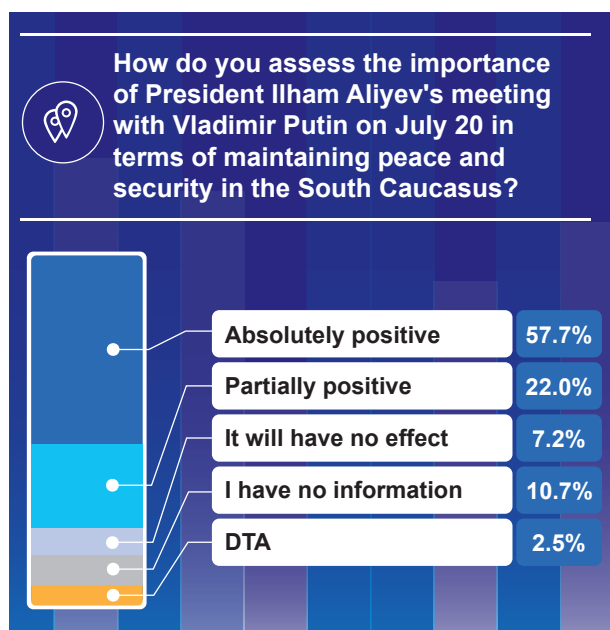
❖ A comparison of the answers in both surveys shows that the respondents highly value the fact that the President is closely familiar with the great return and construction works and personally supervises these works (61% and 69.2%, respectively). According to the analysis of the results, regardless of the age group, gender, education and income level of the citizens who participated in the survey, the fact that the President is closely familiar with the great return and construction works and personally supervises these works was welcomed by the respondents.

### 3.2. Reaction to the President's working visit to Russia

On July 20 of this year, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev paid a business visit to Russia at the invitation of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. Although the issues discussed during the meeting may seem like economic issues at first glance, in fact, the main focus was on the realities of the post-war period. As a result of the exchange of views on both bilateral relations and regional issues, the parties came up with a common position. Thus, it is clear from the press statements of both heads

of state that the presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia take a common position regarding the post-war period. President Ilham Aliyev's statement during the meeting, "We are determined to make the post-conflict period as painless as possible" was the main line of the meeting.

Restoration of communications reflected in the documents dated November 10, 2020, including January 11, 2021, signed with the participation of the President of Russia. During the meeting, the two heads of state showed a common position regarding the importance of fulfilling the terms of the tripartite declaration, which envisages the opening of all communications, including the transport corridor between the main part of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan MR - Zangezur corridor, is a very successful step. The issue related to the desire of certain geopolitical forces and global powers to intervene in the processes in the South Caucasus and to create provocation regarding the mountainous part of Karabakh was also discussed at the Moscow meeting. It is no exception that the joint steps that Russia and Azerbaijan will take in the future were also the subject of discussion at that meeting. Taking all of this into account, the respondents were asked, "How do you assess the importance of President Ilham Aliyev's meeting with Vladimir Putin, held on July 20 as part of his business trip to Moscow, in terms of maintaining peace and security in the South Caucasus?" the question was asked. 57.7% of the respondents fully appreciated the importance of this meeting, 21.9% partially positively.





❖ According to the analysis of the survey results, the importance of the meeting with Vladimir Putin, held within the framework of the President's business trip to Moscow, in terms of maintaining peace and security in the South Caucasus, according to the gender distribution, men (62.5%) ( $X^2(3)=19.404$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), the older age group those who belong (65+) (73.6%) ( $X^2(15)=75.328$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), those with vocational education (64.8%), those with high income (62.7%), those living in the village evaluated positively.

Among the respondents, 7.2% of those with the opposite position are of the opinion that this meeting will not have any effect in terms of maintaining peace and security in the South Caucasus.

❖ This opinion is more common among those in the lower age group (18-25) (12.6%), those with secondary education (8.4%) and the urban population (9.7%).

10.7% of respondents had no information about this meeting. 2.5% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

It should be noted that during the one-year period after the end of the 44-day war, a number of terms of the November 10 tripartite declaration have not yet been fulfilled due to Armenia's revanchist and destructive policy. It is obvious that the process is deadlocked on some issues. Pashinyan wanted the West to become the main center of gravity in this process, even ahead of Russia. It is not the first time that hypocrisy, one of the main features of his political-psychological portrait, is manifested. We observed this both in the days of the Patriotic War and in the post-war period, for example, in May 2021, some time after the military border demarcation with Armenia began in the directions of Kalbajar and Lachin. At that time, Pashinyan suggested that either CSTO or NATO forces be deployed on the border. Although he tries to hide the reality under various epithets, the reality is very different from this dream. Let's not forget that Pashinyan declared at the tripartite meeting held in July that he actually accepted the proposals on the demarcation and delimitation of borders, as well as the Zangezur corridor and the creation of a working group for this purpose. This means that after that, moving the discussions to some other platforms loses its meaning. The position of Azerbaijan is concrete and clear: the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan should be recognized

by Armenia, delimitation and demarcation of the borders should be carried out, all points of the statements dated November 10, 2020, January 11, 2021, and November 26, 2021, including the opening of the Zangezur corridor should be ensured and eventually a peace treaty should be signed.

### 3.3. Attitude to the military-political and economic aspects of the Shusha Declaration

Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, formed on the basis of mutual trust and solidarity, are being successfully developed in the post-war period on political, military, economic and cultural levels, as well as on international platforms. On June 15, 2021, Baku and Ankara officially announced their alliance in the military, political and economic spheres with the Declaration signed in Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan, which will change the geopolitical landscape of the region. The fact that the Shusha Declaration coincides with the Liberation Day of the Azerbaijani people - June 15, and the 100th anniversary of the Kars Treaty, which is considered very important for Karabakh and Zangezur, has a special symbolic meaning. It is no coincidence that while signing the Declaration with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Shusha, the head of state of Azerbaijan reminded everyone of the Kars Agreement. He noted that: "The historic Kars agreement was signed exactly one hundred years ago. This also has a great symbolic meaning. A joint declaration of alliance signed in the liberated city of Shusha after one hundred years shows the direction of our future cooperation. Many important issues are reflected in the declaration. Joint cooperation at the international level, our activities, political relations, economic-trade relations, culture, education, sports, youth policy, almost all areas are covered. The importance of the Southern Gas Corridor for Turkey, Azerbaijan and the world is shown. Every issue is very important."

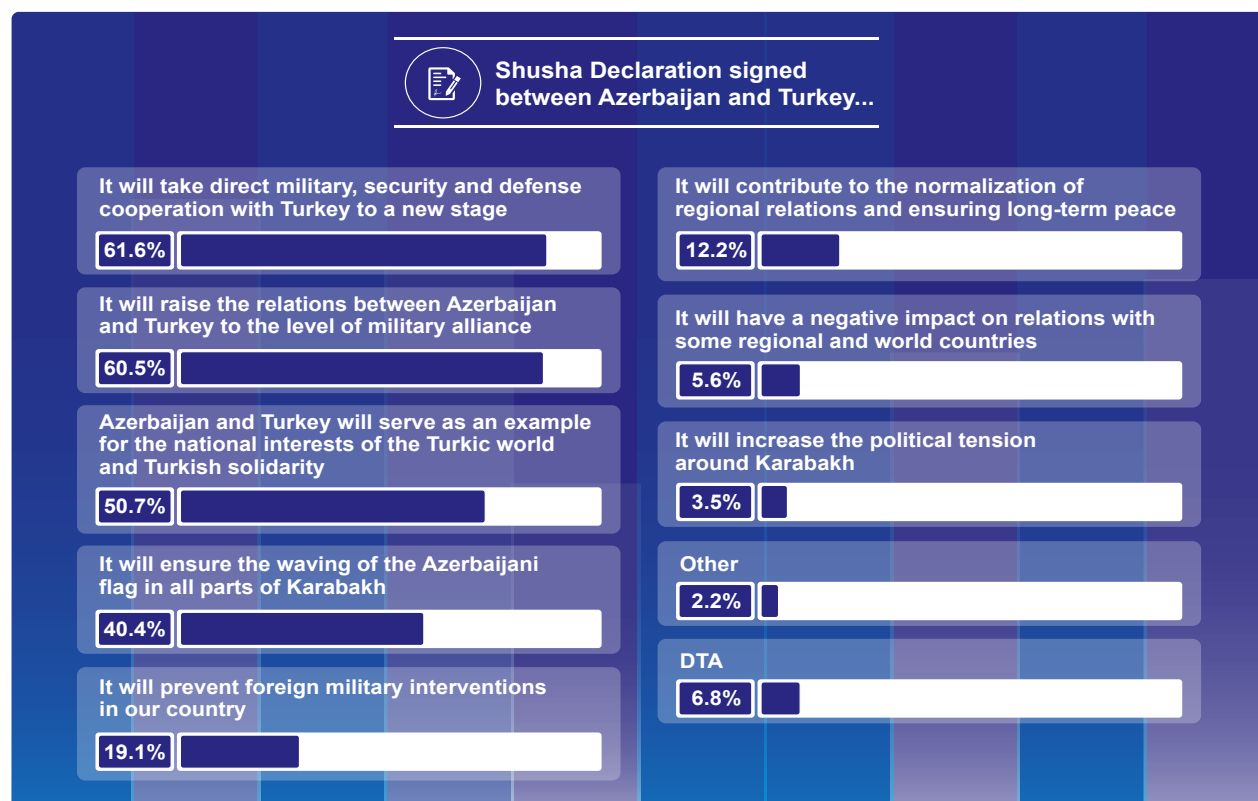
Of course, it is no coincidence that President Ilham Aliyev refers to the Kars Agreement and what happened 100 years ago. Because similar cases to the processes that took place 100 years ago are being repeated now. Global powers are still fighting for the region. There is only one difference that if the outcome of the events then ended in favor of Armenia and its patrons, today

the new reality created in the South Caucasus means the direct victory of the state and people of Azerbaijan. As a result of the visionary policy of the head of state, our people restored historical justice exactly 100 years later.

The Declaration, aimed at combining opportunities for protecting the common interests of both countries, as well as mutually coordinating their activities in regional and international strategic issues of common interest, is the beginning of the establishment of a new regional geopolitical configuration under the leadership of Baku and Ankara. This means the destruction of nearly 200 years of geopolitical configurations in the region and the beginning of a new regional order that will continue under the leadership of the Azerbaijan-Turkey tandem. Many important issues are reflected in the declaration. Taking these points into consideration, the respondents were asked about the importance of the Shusha Declaration in the relations developing at the strategic level between the two friendly and brotherly countries. The analysis of the results of the survey shows that a significant part of the respondents (60.5%) think that the Shusha Declaration will raise the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey to the level of military alliance.

❖ The gender distribution clearly shows that men (65.3%) favor this answer option more than women (55.5%). Similarly, a relatively high preference was observed among the older generation (ages 56-65 and 65+), with rates of 64% and 65.7%, respectively. Individuals with higher education (65.1%) and those living in rural areas (63.3%) also selected this option more frequently.

One of the key points in the Declaration focuses on cooperation and alliance in the military field. It specifies that if the territorial integrity or sovereignty of either state is threatened or attacked by a third party, the two states will protect each other. The Declaration asserts: "If, in the opinion of either Party, its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability, or the security of its internationally recognized borders is threatened or subjected to aggression by a third state or states, the Parties shall hold joint consultations to address the threat or aggression. In order to eliminate the threat, they will take initiatives in line with the goals and principles of the UN Charter, and will provide necessary assistance to one another in accordance with the UN Charter. The volume and form of this aid will be determined through immediate dis-



<sup>12</sup> Shusha Declaration on alliance relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey. /June 16, 2021/- <https://president.az/articles/52122>

cussions, aimed at meeting the defense needs for joint measures, and the coordinated activity of the power and management structures of the Armed Forces will be organized."

Through the Shusha Declaration, Turkey has clearly signaled to the international community that it will stand by Azerbaijan, including with military support, in the event of any violation of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity or threat to its state borders.

The respondents' answers indicate that a significant number (61.6%) believe the Shusha Declaration will elevate direct military, security, and defense cooperation with Turkey to a new level.

❖ According to the gender distribution, among those who chose this answer, there are more men (68.5%), representatives of the older generation (65+) (73.6%), people with higher education (71.4%), who live in rural areas than women (54.5%). (63.1) are selected with higher percentage indicators.

The two fraternal countries also agreed to make joint efforts to reform and modernize the armed forces of the two states in accordance with modern requirements, to implement measures aimed at strengthening defense capabilities and military security, to increase the ability of the armed forces of the two countries to work together, to manage weapons and ammunition based on modern technologies. they also agreed on the promotion of close cooperation and related activities of authorized structures and institutions for this purpose. Holding regular joint meetings of the Security Councils of both countries on national security issues and reaching an agreement to discuss regional and international security issues affecting the national interests and interests of the countries at these meetings is an indication of how close and principled the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey are. This means that from now on, the Security Councils of Azerbaijan and Turkey will regularly hold joint meetings and work together against threats.

50.7% of the respondents think that Azerbaijan and Turkey will serve as an example for the national interests of the Turkic world and Turkish solidarity. As mentioned in the Declaration, the Parties will pay attention to increasing national and international efforts that will serve the unity and well-being of the Turkic world, strengthen joint cooperation in the field

of promotion and promotion of Turkish cultural heritage at the international level, and in order to further strengthen Turkish solidarity, the Organization of Turkic States, Turkish Academy, Turkish Culture and will promote activities carried out within the framework of the Heritage Foundation, TURKSOY and the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries.

❖ Among those who believe that Azerbaijan and Turkey will serve as a model for advancing the national interests of the Turkic world and Turkish solidarity, 81.9% selected the option related to the Zangezur corridor, which would strengthen ties with Azerbaijan's exclave, Nakhchivan, and with Turkey ( $\chi^2(1)=40.498$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

Survey participants also highlighted several key expectations regarding the Shusha Declaration: 40.4% believe it will lead to the Azerbaijani flag being raised in all parts of Karabakh in the near future; 19.1% think it will prevent foreign military interventions in Azerbaijan; and 12.2% anticipate it will contribute to the normalization of regional relations and promote long-term peace.

On the other hand, 5.6% of respondents expressed concerns that the signing of the Shusha Declaration could negatively affect relations with some regional and global powers. Additionally, 3.5% believe that the declaration may increase political tensions around Karabakh. A small portion of respondents, 6.8%, found it difficult to answer this question.

It is worth noting that the Shusha Declaration also emphasizes information policy and lobbying efforts. To enhance their effectiveness on the international stage, the declaration highlights the need for joint initiatives in media and diaspora activities. The Azerbaijan-Turkey Media Platform is a key element, aiming to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in information, communication, and public diplomacy, as well as foster closer ties between the Azerbaijani and Turkish diasporas. The declaration also calls for joint action on shared challenges and consistent solidarity, serving as a clear example of these efforts.

Additionally, the Shusha Declaration outlines provisions on the foreign policy alignment of Azerbaijan and Turkey. It states that both countries will pursue an independent foreign policy aimed at safeguarding their national interests. The document underscores the importance of

collaboration to advance international relations, address local, regional, and global security and stability issues, and emphasizes the need for coordination and bilateral political consultations. The declaration further highlights the significance of activities carried out under the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

### 3.4. Attitude towards the role of the president in strengthening the unity of the Turkish states

President Ilham Aliyev has identified the strengthening of pan-Turkic unity as one of the key priorities in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Notably, during his speech at the Turkic Council Summit held in Baku in 2019, President Aliyev emphasized the significance of this geographic region to Azerbaijan, stating: "The common ancestry, history, culture, and national values that unite us form an important foundation for our cooperation. The development of relations between Turkic-speaking countries is one of the priority areas of Azerbaijan's foreign policy."

The President views the shared national heritage and cultural traits of Turkic-speaking peoples as a powerful political and ideological force, fostering collective resilience and mobilization. Azerbaijan's active participation in the integration of Turkic states is a testament to this commitment, with the country not only participating but often leading these efforts. Over time, President Aliyev has worked diligently to unify Turkic states, peoples, and diaspora organizations around common goals, particularly in taking a united stance against the Armenian lobby. Azerbaijan's bilateral and multilateral initiatives with Turkic-speaking republics—countries that share historical, political, and religious ties—are aimed

at deepening these connections.

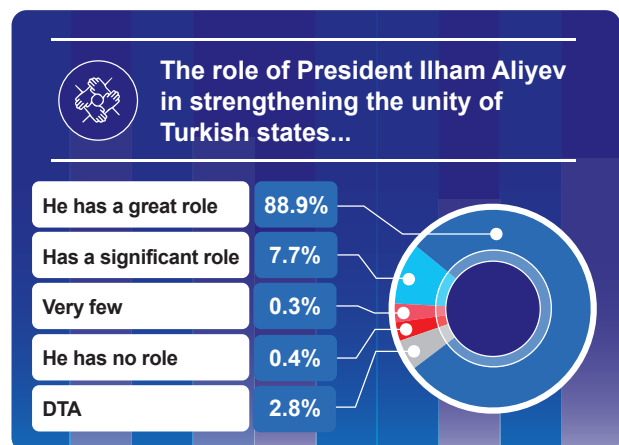
The high approval of President Ilham Aliyev's role in strengthening unity among Turkic states, as reflected by 96.6% of respondents in the recent survey, demonstrates the public's recognition and support for this aspect of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

However, the survey also revealed that public awareness of the VIII Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States, held on November 12 on Democracy and Freedom Island in Istanbul, is relatively low. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) were unaware of the meeting. Among those who were informed, 12.2% reported being fully informed, while 39.8% were partially informed.

❖ The analysis of the results shows that men were more likely to be informed than women ( $X^2(2)=35.034$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Additionally, urban and suburban residents had higher levels of awareness compared to rural populations. Older respondents were more informed than younger ones ( $X^2(10)=51.634$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), and individuals with higher education were more knowledgeable about the summit compared to those with vocational education ( $X^2(4)=111.833$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

During the meeting of the leaders of the independent Turkic republics in Istanbul, several important decisions were made, and significant milestones were reached. The most notable decision was a name change: the union of Turkic leaders would no longer be called the Council, but the Organization, and the term "Turkic" would be replaced by "Turkic States." Thus, the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States became the "Organization of Turkic States." This transition to an organizational structure offers new opportunities to elevate the institution's status and broaden its activities.

At the summit, Turkmenistan was granted observer status in the Organization of Turkic States. Key documents signed included the Declaration of the 8th Summit of the Turkic Council, the "Vision of the Turkic World – 2040" strategic document, the establishment of observer and partnership statuses within the organization, and the rules regarding the honorary chairman's rights. Additionally, the term of office of the Secretary General was extended, deputies were appointed, and the establishment of the Turkic States Investment Fund was finalized. The International Award of the Organization of Turkic States, named after Alisher Navoi, was also presented





for contributions to the unity of the Turkic world.

One of the key moments at the Summit of Turkic leaders on November 12 was the awarding of President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan with the institution's "Highest Order of the Turkic World." This honor recognized President Aliyev's significant efforts in promoting closer integration and unity among the Turkic nations. As a bridge between Turkey and the Central Asian states, Baku has played a pivotal role in encouraging greater cooperation among Turkic states. In particular, over the past three years, President Aliyev's leadership of the Turkic Council has contributed significantly to strengthening the organization's activities and fostering deeper ties of friendship, brotherhood, and cooperation between Turkic-speaking countries and peoples.

During Azerbaijan's presidency, the Turkic Council expanded its cooperation with other major international organizations, including the UN, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the OSCE, and the Economic Cooperation Organization, while also establishing a productive relationship with the World Health Organization. Additionally, the union of Turkic states grew in membership, with Turkmenistan joining as an observer and Uzbekistan becoming a full member at the Baku Summit. What began as a council of four states under the Nakhchivan Agreement in 2009 had, by the 2021 Istanbul meeting, evolved into the Organization of Turkic States, encompassing seven countries.

Azerbaijan's presidency also saw the establishment of new cooperation mechanisms in fields such as healthcare, migration, agriculture, energy, media, judicial matters, and humanitarian efforts. On April 10, 2020, under the initiative of President Ilham Aliyev, an extraordinary summit was convened to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The liberation of Azerbaijan's territories from occupation in 2020, the strategic importance of the Zangezur region as a link between the Turkic world, and the growing military, political, and economic cooperation between Turkey and the Turkic states of Central Asia have all signaled a new phase in the development of the Turkic world. In accepting the award from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President Aliyev highlighted a key point in his speech, stating: "This order was awarded to me following the Karabakh Liberation War. I take immense

pride, both personally and on behalf of the Azerbaijani people, that the Turkic states recognized and honored me in this way. This order belongs to the people of Azerbaijan, for we made tremendous efforts in the Second Karabakh War. It is especially meaningful to receive this honor from my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan. From the first day of the war to the last, we felt his unwavering support. This support gave us strength, because my brother showed that Azerbaijan is not alone in the world and that Turkey will always stand by Azerbaijan. We were able to achieve our great victory with this solidarity." In a survey, respondents were asked what the awarding of the "Highest Order of the Turkic World" to President Ilham Aliyev signified. According to the respondents, the recognition was based on several factors: 51.5% believed it reflected his role as a strong military leader of the Turkic world; 44.9% saw it as recognition of Azerbaijan, a Turkic state, as the victor of the 21st-century war; 32.3% emphasized his contributions to strengthening friendship, brotherhood, and cooperation among Turkic-speaking nations; 28.4% highlighted his historical and political contributions to the unity of the Turkic world; 25% acknowledged his high reputation on the international stage and among Turkic-speaking countries; 17.6% noted his efforts in developing cooperation along the Zangezur Corridor; 8.6% pointed to the significance of Azerbaijan's victory in securing lasting peace and stability in the region; and 7.2% recognized his work in strengthening the activities of the Organization of Turkic States.

❖ The analysis of the survey results shows that the absolute majority of the respondents, regardless of their age group, gender, income and education level, highly appreciate the awarding of President Ilham Aliyev with the "Highest Order of the Turkish World" and that this award was given to him for his contributions to the closer integration and unity of the Turkish world.

### 3.5. Attitudes to the President's speeches on global platforms as the architect of Victory

When examining the political trajectory and actions of President Ilham Aliyev in the post-war period, his leadership potential becomes evident, especially through his speeches on global





### What does the awarding of President Ilham Aliyev with the "Highest Order of the Turkish World" indicate?

That the Commander-in-Chief is a strong military commander of the Turkic world

51.5%

The fact that the country that won the 21st century war is one of the Turkic states

44.9%

Service in further strengthening friendship, brotherhood and cooperation between Turkic-speaking countries and peoples

32.3%

Historical and political contribution to the further strengthening of the unity of the Turkic world

28.4%

Its high reputation internationally and among Turkic-speaking countries

25.0%

Contribution to the development of cooperation between Zangezur Corridor and Turkish states

17.6%

The importance given to the historic Victory that paved the way for the achievement of lasting peace and stability in the region

8.6%

Efforts to strengthen the organization's activities

7.2%

Other

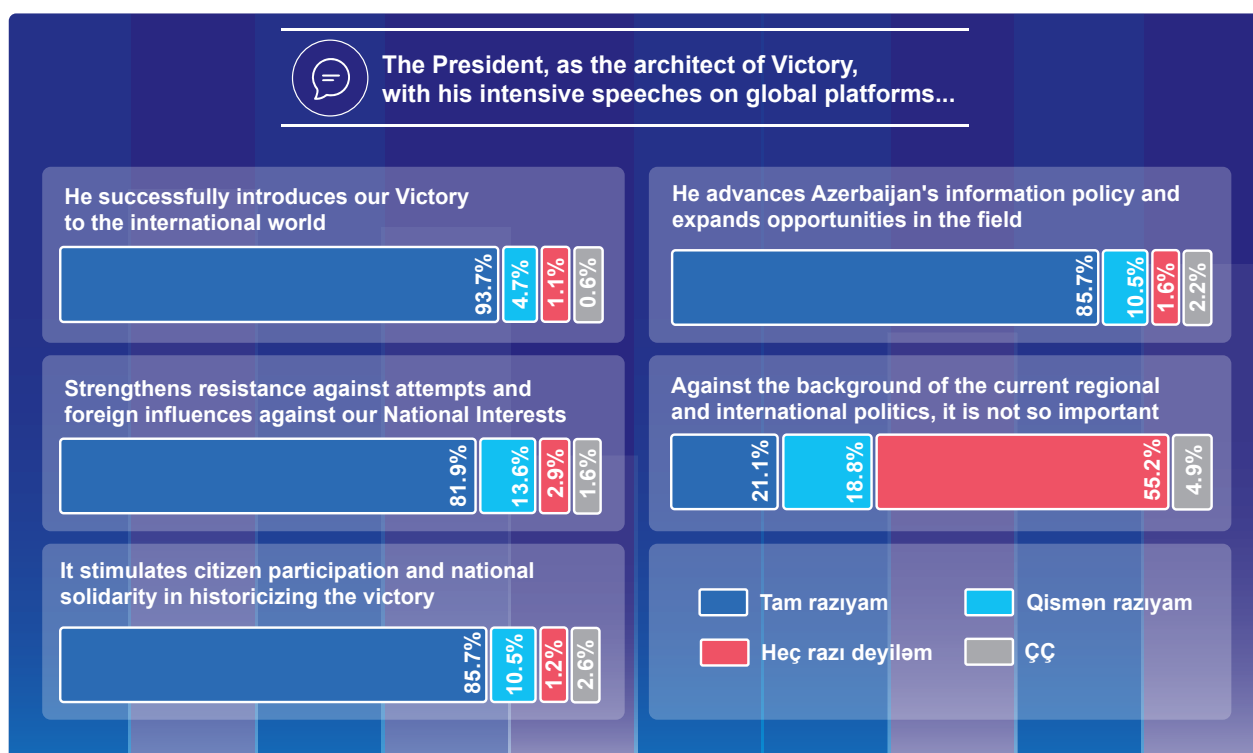
2.4%

I have no information

2.7%

an initiatives. For instance, on November 18, the 3rd Committee of the UN General Assembly discussed and adopted a draft resolution based on his initiative to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and address "vaccine nationalism." A remarkable 171 countries voted in favor of the resolution. This ability to combine decisive action with global leadership is one of the traits that sets President Aliyev apart from other political figures. His strategic decisions during the Patriotic War, which ended in victory for Azerbaijan, reaffirmed his ability to make the right decisions at the right time. In all his post-war speeches and interviews, President Aliyev emphasized that Azerbaijan, as the architect of Victory, is a proponent of peace, cooperation, and development in the region. Survey respondents fully supported this view. A large majority (93.7%) agreed that the President has successfully presented Azerbaijan's victory to the international community through his speeches on global platforms. Additionally, 85.7% believed that he has ensured Azerbaijan's superiority in information policy, opening new avenues for influence in this area, while also fostering national solidarity and citizen engagement in commemorating the Victory. Furthermore, 81.9% of respondents felt that he has strengthened Azerbaijan's resilience to threats against its national interests and foreign influences. It is worth noting that in a survey conducted by SRC between April 1-12, 2021, which covered the period from January to March, 90.8% of respondents expressed full agreement with the President's statements on February 26, the 29th anniversary of the Khojaly tragedy, one of the worst genocides of the 20th century. His messages, conveyed through more than 30 local and international media outlets in four languages during a press conference, received significant global attention and were seen as heralding future successes in the information front. Additionally, 59.5% of respondents appreciated the President's efforts to fully inform the global community, while 51.2% noted that Azerbaijan's presence on the world stage had been significantly elevated.

platforms. These speeches showcase his dual image: both as a victorious military leader and a skilled political figure. As president, Aliyev has consistently demonstrated his unwavering commitment to national interests while shouldering the responsibilities of the state. His influence extends to international and global affairs, and he has been actively involved in various humanitari-



### 3.6. Public attitude to the president's youth policy

One of the greatest achievements of the youth policy implemented in Azerbaijan during the years of independence is the fostering of a young generation imbued with a sense of patriotism. In every interview, address, and speech by President Ilham Aliyev, whether during or after the Patriotic War, he consistently conveys messages to the youth, linking today's realities to the country's future. His speeches frequently include strong appeals to the younger generation.

A key priority is bridging the wisdom of the older generation with the dynamism of youth. This was evident in President Ilham Aliyev's call during the grand event following his victory in the 2018 presidential elections, where he said, "I address the youth of Azerbaijan—I see that the majority of those gathered here are young people—the future of our country will be in your hands." The Patriotic War solidified this, as young people became modern-day heroes, inscribing their bravery into the pages of Azerbaijani history. The war demonstrated the high level of patriotism among Azerbaijani youth.

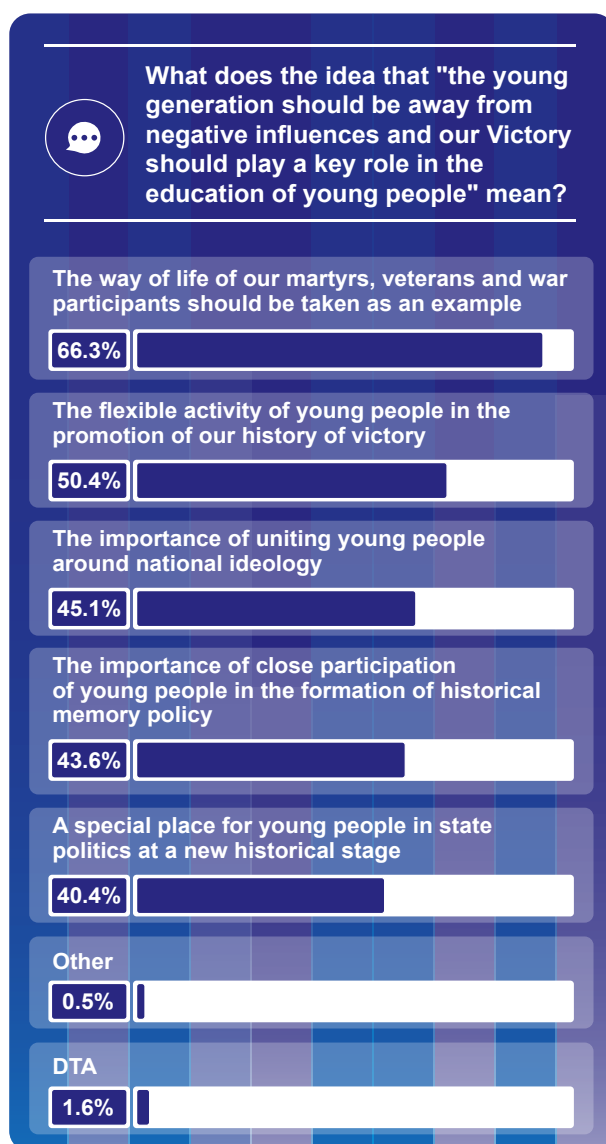
On September 7, President Ilham Aliyev received Farid Gayibov via video to discuss his appointment as Minister of Youth and Sports.

During this meeting, the president reiterated the importance of youth education in patriotism, emphasizing: "The young generation should be educated in the spirit of national pride and patriotism. They must be protected from negative external influences, and to achieve this, comprehensive educational efforts must be made. Young people should be both well-educated and knowledgeable, while remaining close to our national culture. They must understand and preserve our national values, and serious work is needed in this regard. The processes of globalization are ongoing, and in some cases, foreign circles target the youth as their main audience. Efforts are being made to mislead and manipulate young people, and we must prevent this. Patriotic values must be front and center. Our historic victory in the Second Karabakh War should play a key role in the education of young people."

In line with this context, survey respondents were asked their views on the president's statement: "The younger generation should be shielded from negative influences, and our Victory should play a key role in shaping their education." A majority (66.3%) believed that the president's words should serve as a model for instilling the life stories of our martyrs, veterans, and war participants in the national education of youth. Other opinions included the need for

youth to play a more active and flexible role in promoting the story of our victory (50.4%), the importance of uniting youth around a national ideology (45.1%), the necessity for young people to contribute to the preservation of historical memory (43.6%), and the need for youth to hold a special place in state policies during this new historical phase (40.4%). Only 1.6% of respondents found it difficult to answer the question.

An analysis of the survey results revealed that the respondents' positive view of the president's opinion was consistent, regardless of their level of education, income, age group, or place of residence.



<sup>13</sup> President Ilham Aliyev received Farid Gayibov in video format regarding his appointment as Minister of Youth and Sports. /07 September 2021/ - <https://president.az/articles/52993>

## IV SECTION.

# ATTITUDE TO THE ACTIVITY OF THE PRESIDENT IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS

### 4.1. Attitude to the President's activities in the fields of army building, foreign policy, civil security of the population, social protection and personnel reforms

The public attitude towards the President's activity in various directions during the current year was studied. Here, not the relevant institutions, but the direct control of the head of state in those areas, tasks, decrees and orders, is intended to be a public position. The activities of the head of state in all directions are positively evaluated in the opinion of citizens, and the first ranks are (1) reforms in the army, expansion of military cooperation and training, (2) large-scale construction, restoration measures and preparations for the return in the liberated areas, (3) high strategic activity in foreign policy. It should be noted that in the post-war reality, some of these areas of activity are particularly relevant, so it is considered appropriate to provide a brief overview of the activities carried out in those directions along with the results of the survey.

#### Army building

Under the direction and supervision of President Ilham Aliyev, the post-war reforms and advancements in the Azerbaijani army are seen as a logical continuation of the military experience gained on the battlefield. President Ilham Aliyev stated: "We achieved success on the battlefield, but this war also revealed flaws and shortcomings. After the Second Karabakh War, all these issues must be carefully analyzed. Although the Azerbaijani Army is already among the strongest in the world, we must now adopt more modern methods in building our military."

In line with this, in July of this year, the President enacted personnel reforms within the military leadership and issued orders appointing several officers to senior positions. Based on the president's directives to implement structural re-

forms and expand the army, new initiatives were launched to enable more efficient organization of deployments, rotations, and personnel reforms.

Throughout the year, President Ilham Aliyev held regular meetings with military representatives, army units, and war participants, issuing continuous instructions to enhance the combat readiness of troops stationed in liberated territories. The unity of the military-political leadership, the army, and the people, which dismantled the Armenian myth and restored territorial integrity during the 44-day war, also manifested in the post-war period with strong national solidarity and enthusiasm.

In 2021, significant measures were taken to bolster the country's defense capabilities, enhance army professionalism, and meet the new requirements of post-war conditions. To foster military cooperation, frequent meetings were held with the military commands of Turkey and Pakistan, as well as delegations from countries like Japan, Iran, Belarus, and Uzbekistan.

The year 2021 also witnessed large-scale military exercises aimed at increasing army professionalism, deepening international experience exchange, and ensuring regional security and stability. Approximately 30 military trainings and exercises were conducted, many in collaboration with allied nations such as Turkey and Pakistan. Notable international exercises included "Winter Training-2021" in February, "Anatolian Phoenix-2021" in May, "Anatolian Eagle-2021" in June, "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk-2021," "TurAz Şahini-2021" in August and September, as well as the "Three Brothers-2021" and "Unbreakable Brotherhood-2021" exercises. These exercises sent clear messages about the region's future development, peace, and stability.

Additionally, significant military dialogues and collaborations took place, such as the 13th Azerbaijan-Turkey High-Level Military Dialogue meeting in Baku, a joint press conference between the defense ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia,

and Turkey, and regular meetings with NATO officials and delegations during the second half of the year.

Public opinion on the President's military initiatives and reforms was also assessed. The majority of respondents rated the overall activities of the army—including personnel reforms, interstate military cooperation, and joint international exercises—very positively, with 84.2% considering them "very good" and 14.4% rating them "mostly good." Only 0.9% of respondents held a negative view of the military activities (0.4% "mostly bad" and 0.5% "very bad"), while 0.5% of respondents found it difficult to provide an opinion.

### **Great return, construction and restoration work**

The above-mentioned high activity of the head of the country in the direction of construction and return in Karabakh was ranked next in terms of positive attitude in citizen opinions. The absolute majority of survey participants, i.e. 81%, evaluated the activity of the head of state in this field as very good, and 15.5% as mostly good. The evaluation of the activity in this area from a negative position was only 1.3% in total (0.8% mostly bad, 0.6% very bad). About 2.0% of the respondents did not give an opinion on this.

### **Foreign policy**

The high activity of the head of state in the field of foreign policy was ranked next in the respondents' opinions. Despite the revanchism of the enemy who was defeated on the battlefield in the global information space, and the non-constructive intentions of the countries that support him, the head of state's principled position in terms of protecting national interests on bilateral and multilateral platforms, his high activity in the direction of lasting peace in the region, and the well-thought-out foreign policy that makes Azerbaijan an independent subject of the region are definitely in the citizen's opinion. preferably supported. 74.2% of the citizens participating in the survey evaluated the activity in the direction of foreign policy as very good, 20.1% as mostly good. Only 0.9% of the respondents had a bad attitude towards foreign policy activities, and 1.4% had a very bad attitude. 3.4% of the survey participants found it difficult to express their opinion.

### **Civil safety of the population**

As during the war, in the post-war period, the attitude towards the requirements and tasks set by the head of the country to the relevant institutions in the direction of protecting the civil safety of the population was ranked next in the respondents' opinions. It should be noted that, especially during the current year, until full security is ensured, the restrictions related to the citizens' desire to enter the territories freed from occupation can be taken into account here. 60.2% of the survey participants evaluated the activity in the direction of civil security protection as very good, and 30% as mostly good. About 3.5% of the respondents indicated mostly bad, and 4.0% respondents indicated very bad options. 2.3% of respondents found it difficult to express their opinion on this.

### **Social protection**

In the post-war period, alongside ensuring military and civil security, the expansion of social protection measures has remained a top priority of state policy. The head of state has assigned critical tasks to relevant institutions, particularly focusing on improving the welfare of war participants, veterans, and the families of martyrs.

As a result of ongoing efforts to enhance social welfare, official data indicates notable improvements over the past three years: labor contracts increased by 30%, the minimum wage rose by 116%, the monthly wage fund grew by 81%, the minimum pension amount increased by 82%, and the average monthly pension grew by 43%. Additionally, the average monthly allowance increased by 95%. According to a decree signed by the head of state, further increases in the minimum wage, pensions, and allowances are planned for 2022. This year, presidential scholarships saw significant increases: 66.7% for families of martyrs, 20% for National Heroes of Azerbaijan, 100% for Second World War participants, and more than 50% for those disabled during the war and the January 20 events. A monthly presidential scholarship was also introduced for the Heroes of the Patriotic War.

A special focus was placed on supporting those who lost their ability to work during the war, the families of martyrs, and vulnerable groups. According to official data, more than 31,000 people benefited from social



support measures during the post-war period, including family members of martyrs, veterans of the Patriotic War, and their relatives. As per a presidential decree, single coordination centers were established to manage the appeals of families of martyrs, injured military personnel, and war-disabled individuals. From the beginning of the year until November, more than 3,000 family members of martyrs and veterans sought assistance from these centers. The President also decreed the construction and distribution of 3,000 apartments and private houses for families of martyrs and war-disabled individuals in 2021, with plans to increase this number to 11,000 by 2025. By November, 370 apartments had already been provided to 1,900 individuals by the relevant ministry, bringing the total number of apartments and private houses distributed to these groups to 9,570 since the start of the program. Public attitudes toward the President's large-scale initiatives in the area of social protection were surveyed. According to the analysis of the results, 53.9% of respondents rated the President's activity in this field as very good, while 32.3% considered it mostly good. Only 5.5% of respondents rated it as mostly bad, and 5.4% rated it as very bad. Meanwhile, 2.9% of respondents found it difficult to provide an opinion.

### Development of agriculture

A similarly positive trend was observed in the development of agriculture. The head of state's management of agricultural lands, regulation of agroparks, application of customs and tax concessions on export-oriented agricultural products, promotion of import substitution policies, and state support for agricultural workers and investment were all positively received. Additionally, the implementation of innovative systems to ensure transparency and efficiency in the agricultural sector was welcomed by the majority of respondents.

According to the survey, 52.5% of participants rated the head of state's efforts in the agricultural sector as very good, while 34.2% rated them as mostly good. On the other hand, 5.2% held a mostly negative view, and 6.3% expressed a very negative view. Meanwhile, 1.9% of respondents found it difficult to form an opinion.

### Public Health

Given the ongoing pandemic, it is crucial to assess public opinion on the head of state's performance in the healthcare sector. Last year, Azerbaijan was recognized by the World Health Organization as an exemplary country in its pandemic response, a view corroborated by the survey results from that period. This year, in continuation of healthcare policy, the country took significant steps to strengthen mandatory health insurance, expand digitalization in the healthcare system, and modernize its material and technical infrastructure—all in line with the president's directives.

Throughout the year, modern hospitals, laboratories, and diagnostic centers meeting high standards were opened across various regions, which is particularly important in the current pandemic context. Azerbaijan was one of the first countries to take effective action against the pandemic, playing a key role in global efforts to combat "vaccine nationalism." In addition to being the first country in the South Caucasus to begin vaccination, Azerbaijan is now among the leading nations globally in the fight against the pandemic.

The head of state addressed these efforts in a wide-ranging video address during World Health Day and at the 74th session of the World Health Assembly. Based on the president's decrees, medical workers, particularly those on the front lines of the pandemic, were honored with titles such as "Honored Doctor" and "Honored Medical Worker," along with medals. Notably, these recognitions were implemented before the World Health Organization, following Turkey's proposal, declared this year as the "Year of Health Workers."

According to the survey results, 55.3% of participants rated the head of state's healthcare efforts as very good, and 29% as mostly good. However, 5.4% held a mostly negative view, and 8.5% expressed a very negative opinion. Similarly, 1.9% of respondents were unsure.

### Development of the non-oil sector

Within the framework of the survey, the public attitude towards the development of the non-oil sector was determined next. Development of the non-oil sector, diversification of the economy, increasing the export potential and attraction of

foreign investment were among the priorities of the head of the country during the past period and the current year. Within the "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development" approved by the relevant order of the head of state, turning the non-oil sector into the center of economic development, increasing the share of this sector in the economy and increasing the share of the private sector in the financing of the said sector are mentioned as important goals for the next period. The creation of industrial zones, agroparks in the country, the opening of the Alat Free Economic Zone, the opening of the Hajigabul Industrial District, the increase in tax revenues, and the new transit-transportation corridors implemented in the region can be considered as the result and continuation of such measures.

In terms of the development and integration of the territories freed from occupation and the transformation of the region into a driver of economic development, the measures of laying the foundation of the Aghdam Industrial Park and the "Araz Valley Economic Zone" in the East Zangezur economic region should be especially noted. According to official data, an increase of 11% in the non-oil sector and a 42% increase in non-oil exports this year compared to last year can be evaluated as a positive result of purposeful activity in this area.

The positive result of the activity in the non-oil sector is also confirmed by the opinion of citizens. 49.7% of the survey participants evaluated the activity of the head of the country in the field of development of the non-oil sector as very good, and 32.2% as mostly good. About one in ten respondents considered the activity in this area unsatisfactory (4.7% mostly bad, 5.3% very bad). 8.2% of those who studied the general opinion said that it was difficult to express their opinion in this direction.

### Personnel Reforms

The attitude towards personnel reforms is next in the citizen opinions. The personnel reforms carried out by the head of state during the current year include the appointment of special representatives of the President to the regions freed from occupation and the positions of the heads of local executive power of a number of regions, in addition to the army structures and prosecutor's offices. Thus, the personnel reforms that started in the past years have been

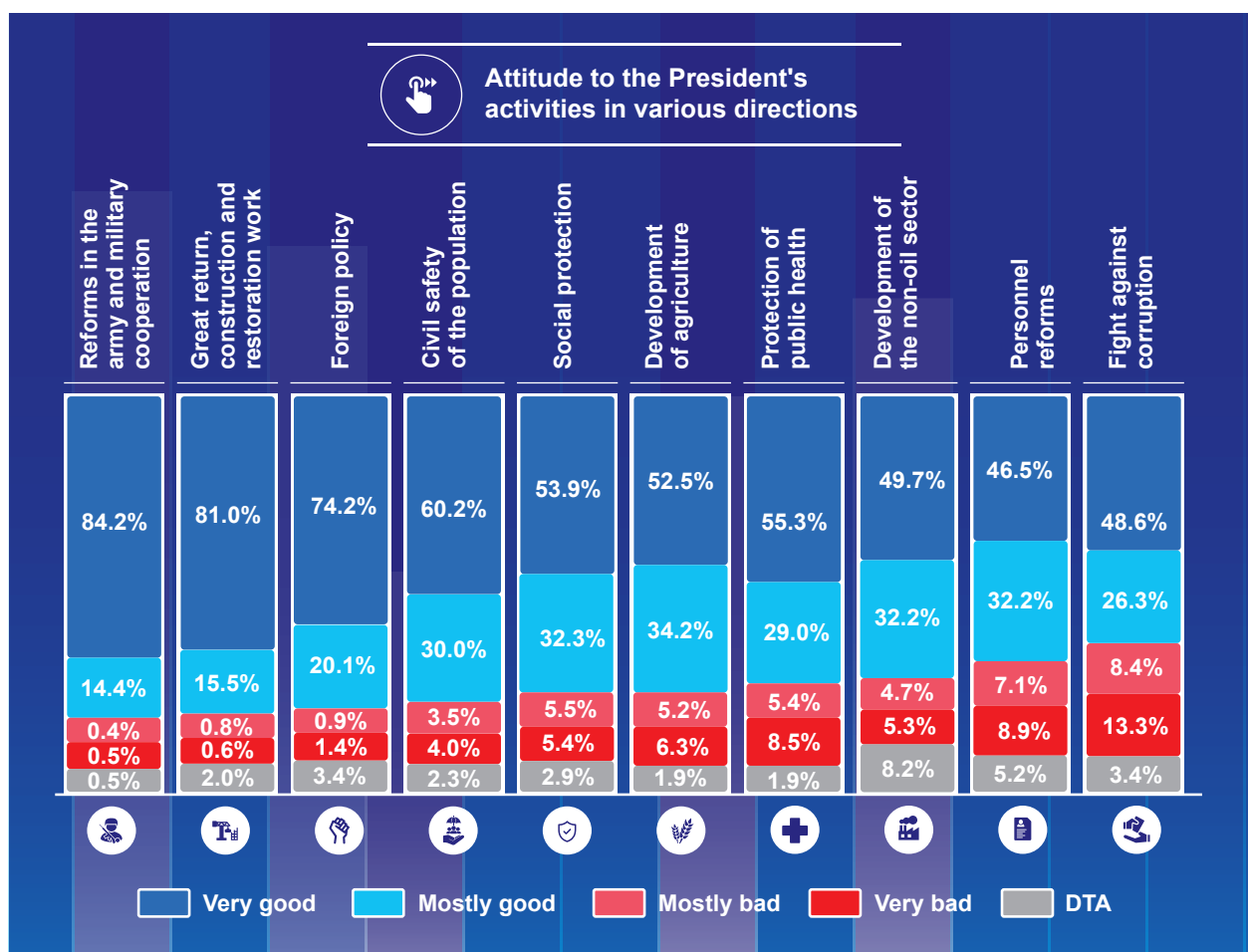
continued during the current year despite the current conditions, and the personnel corps for important administrative and political positions in the country has been significantly updated. Personnel reforms carried out by the head of state were assessed as very good by 46.5% of respondents, and mostly good by 32.2%. That is, in total, 78.7% of the respondents showed a positive position regarding personnel reforms. Accordingly, 7.1% of the respondents rated the current year's activity in this direction as mostly bad, and 8.9% as very bad. 5.2% of the respondents were undecided.

### Fight against corruption

The fight against corruption remained a top priority for the head of state this year. He emphasized: "If there were no cases of corruption and bribery, imagine how much our state budget would grow and how many new opportunities we could unlock. The additional revenues generated from the reforms we are implementing today are primarily being directed toward improving people's living standards. It's only the ninth month of the year, yet due to increased transparency and reforms, we have a budget surplus, most of which we are allocating to social protection." The president also urged officials to cease unethical practices, uphold the high level of trust placed in them, and earn the approval of the public.

The head of state's anti-corruption efforts were seen as successful by 74.9% of respondents, with 48.6% rating them as very good and 26.3% as mostly good. However, 8.4% of participants viewed the efforts as mostly bad, and 13.3% rated them as very bad. Meanwhile, 3.4% of respondents found it difficult to form an opinion.

An analysis of the overall results reveals a positive public attitude toward the president's actions across various areas, regardless of respondents' education levels, income brackets, age groups, or other demographic factors. The majority of survey participants considered the head of state's performance this year to be successful.



#### 4.2. Attitude towards the activities of state bodies, ministries, committees and services

The public evaluation of the activities of relevant executive power bodies, relevant ministries, committees and services in the areas under their authority was included in the poll. The fields of activity in the survey were selected considering their relevance especially for the current period. The change of the public attitude to activities in various fields on one or another scale can be considered as an indicator of the state of implementation of the issues put before those institutions by the head of state, and the quality of service to citizens.

Based on the analysis of the obtained results, more than half of the citizens evaluated the activities of the relevant structures in the three areas reflected in the survey - ensuring civil security, fighting the pandemic and strengthening the economy as fully effective. The activities in the field of social protection, use of budget funds according to their purpose, and prevention of price increase have been decided in the last ranks, as the similar indicators in other areas are relatively low.

#### Public safety

In the opinion of the citizens, with a high index, activities in the direction of ensuring civil safety and social stability were decided in the first place. 57.5% of the survey participants considered the activity of ensuring the safety of the population to be fully effective, 34.2% to be partially effective, and only 5.4% to be ineffective. 2.9% of the respondents had difficulty expressing their opinion about it. This high result, which is reflected in the survey results, can be considered as an indicator of public trust and sympathy for the activities of the relevant bodies.

#### Fight against the Pandemic and vaccination

In the results of the survey, the attitude towards the fight against the pandemic and vaccination measures was decided next. It should be noted that the "Azerbaijani model" in the fight against the pandemic was highly appreciated not only by leading international organizations in this field, but also by public opinion. Apart from being the first country in the South Caucasus to start the vaccination

process, Azerbaijan also ranks first in terms of the level of vaccination. According to the information as of the end of November, more than 5 million of the population were vaccinated for the first dose, and more than 4.5 million for the second dose. The opinion poll conducted among citizens shows that 65.8% of them consider the state's activities in this field to be fully effective, and 22.9% to be partially effective. 9.7% considered the activity in this area to be ineffective. 1.6% of the respondents found it difficult to express a position on this.

### **Strengthening the economy**

In the opinion of the citizens, the activity in the field of strengthening the economy is next in line. 51.4% of those who took part in the opinion survey considered the general activity in the field of investment promotion, support for entrepreneurs, economic development in the country by the relevant structures effective, and 32.7% considered it partially effective. 12.8% of the respondents evaluated the activity in this field as ineffective, 3.1% of the respondents found it difficult to express their opinion.

### **Road infrastructure, utilities improving services**

49.8% of the respondents considered the activity towards the improvement of the road infrastructure and utility supply by the relevant institutions effective. In these directions, 31.1% of respondents evaluated the activity as partially effective, and 17.3% as ineffective. 1.7% of the respondents found it difficult to express a position on this.

### **Provision of quality health care services**

Despite the high evaluation of the activity in the field of fighting the pandemic, the quality of health services provided by the relevant institutions was underestimated in the public opinion. Provision of quality healthcare services was considered fully effective by 37.5% of survey participants, partially effective by 40.8%, and ineffective by 19%. 2.7% of respondents found it difficult to express their opinion about this.

### **Fight against corruption**

34.1% of the citizens who participated in the survey considered the anti-corruption activities of

the relevant bodies to be effective, and 38% considered them to be partially effective. 23.7% of the respondents evaluated the activity in this area as ineffective, 4.3% had difficulty in expressing their position.

### **Social protection**

The work done in the field of social protection, whose activity has gained special relevance in the post-war and pandemic period, is next in line in citizen opinions. 32.3% of the respondents assessed the activity of the relevant structures as effective, and 38.9% as partially effective. 24.9% of the survey participants considered the activity in this direction to be ineffective, and 4% found it difficult to express a position on it.

### **Use of budget funds as intended**

A total of 25% of the respondents evaluated the activity of relevant bodies in the field of using budget funds as effective, and 35.5% as partially effective. Approximately one out of every four respondents, that is, 27.9% of the survey participants, considered the activity in this direction to be ineffective. 11.6% of respondents found it difficult to give an opinion about this.

### **Prevention of price increase**

The public opinion survey revealed that the effectiveness of measures taken by the relevant structures to prevent price increases ranked the lowest. Only 15.5% of respondents found these measures to be effective, while 24.8% considered them partially effective. A significant 57.4% of participants deemed the efforts to curb price increases as ineffective.

❖ The analysis indicates a stark difference between public perceptions of individual state structures' activities and those of the President in various areas. Notably, the issue of public safety stands out positively, with over 50% of respondents holding a favorable view of both the President's and relevant bodies' efforts in this area.

Of the 90.2% of respondents who rated the President's activity in ensuring civil safety as generally good, 50.8% believed the relevant bodies were effective in safeguarding the population, 35.5% found them partially effective, and 13.8% rated them as ineffective ( $\chi^2(6)=255.682$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

❖ Among the 86.2% who rated the President's activity in social protection as generally good, only 38% found the work of the relevant structures in this area effective, while 42.4% saw it as partially effective, and 19.6% viewed it as ineffective ( $X^2(6)=309.258$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

❖ Regarding employment, 85.5% of respondents (with 59.8% identifying employment as the country's main issue) rated the President's efforts in social protection positively. However, the performance of the relevant state structure in this area was evaluated relatively lower: 27.6% considered it effective, 42.3% partially effective, and 30.1% ineffective ( $X^2(63)=308.951$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

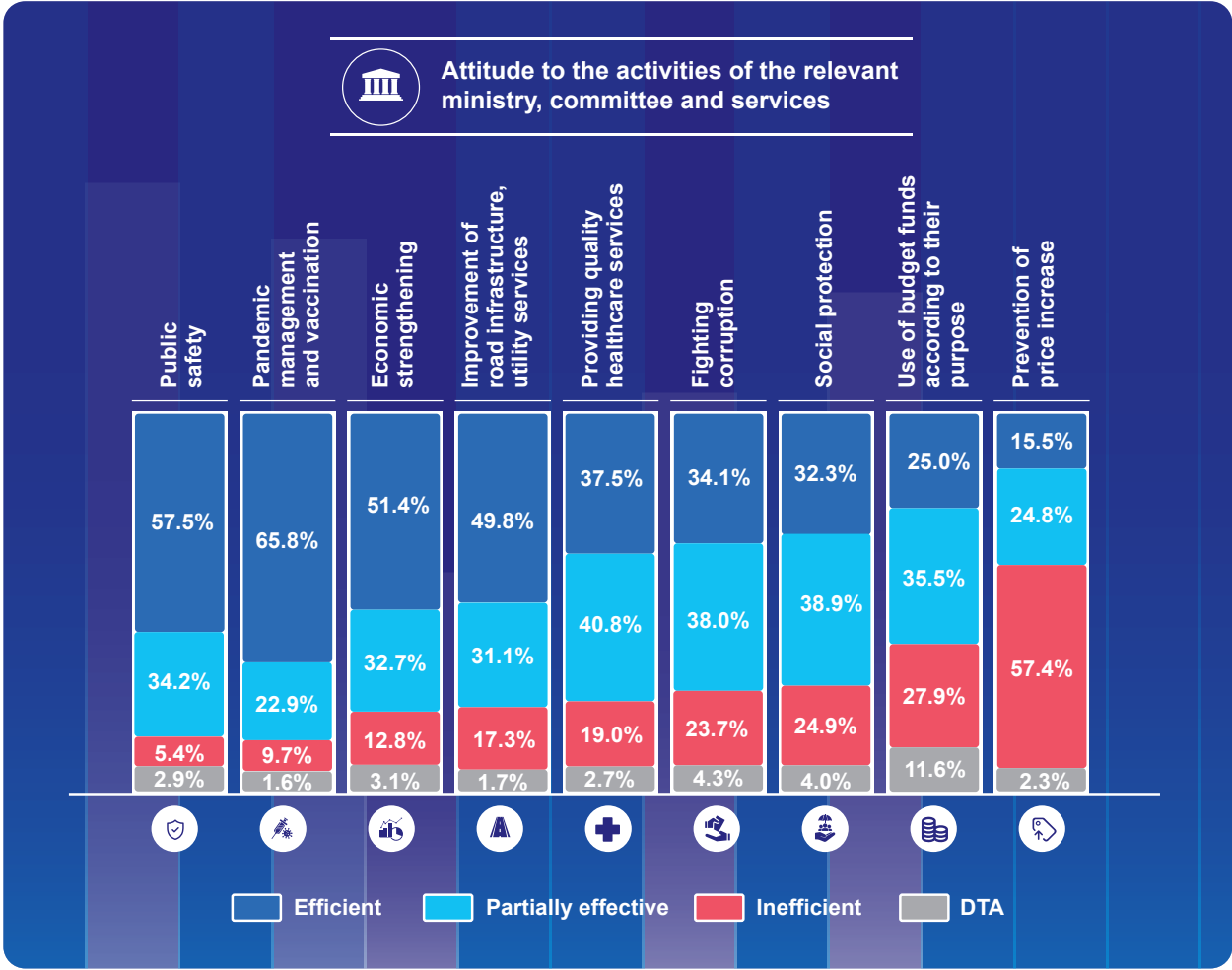
❖ Among the 30.6% of respondents who cited financial security as a major problem, 48.2% rated the President's social protection efforts as very good, and 38.8% as mostly good. However, 6.6% felt the President's actions were mostly bad, and 6.3% rated them as very bad. As for the performance of the relevant structures, 25% of this group deemed it effective, 44.6% considered it partially effective, and 29.6% rated it ineffective ( $X^2(42)=341.060$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

❖ The analysis also revealed a relationship

between respondents' socio-economic status and their evaluation of social protection efforts. Of those whose socio-economic situation improved compared to last year, 54.6% rated the relevant structures as effective, whereas 53.3% of those whose situation worsened found them ineffective ( $X^2(8)=220.088$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Additionally, 17.8% of public sector employees, 33.3% of private sector employees, and 26.2% of pensioners rated the social protection efforts as ineffective ( $X^2(4)=11.921$ ,  $P<0.05$ ).

❖ Among the 74.9% who generally considered the President's anti-corruption efforts to be good, 44.6% rated the anti-corruption measures of the relevant structures as effective, 41.9% as partially effective, and 13.4% as ineffective ( $X^2(6)=444.763$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

Similarly, of the 84.3% who rated the President's efforts in public health positively, 45% found the healthcare services provided by the relevant bodies to be effective, 42.8% partially effective, and 12.2% ineffective ( $X^2(6)=412.420$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).





### 4.3. Main public expectations from the President

The analysis of the survey results suggests a strong alignment between public expectations and state policies. The issues raised by the head of state and the tasks assigned to relevant institutions reflect the public's desires. In this context, the expectations and demands recorded in the survey are seen as stemming from the activities of local authorities and relevant institutions. The pressing reality of the post-war period, along with the ongoing negative effects of the pandemic, has made these demands and expectations even more urgent.

Citizens were asked about their expectations from the head of state, and the analysis of the results showed that employment-related issues ranked highest among public expectations. A significant 80.5% of respondents identified job creation and increasing employment opportunities as their primary expectation from the President.

Regardless of respondents' age group, education level, or place of residence, the majority emphasized the need for employment-related measures. Interestingly, the demand for job creation was more strongly supported by low-income respondents compared to high-income respondents.

It's important to note that the President has consistently focused on employment policies. Key tasks have been assigned to relevant institutions in light of population growth, demographic trends, economic development, and investment opportunities. The ongoing crisis caused by the pandemic has further emphasized the importance of job creation, making it a continuous process. According to official data, during the first six months of the current year, 30,900 new jobs were created by the state, with 89.1% in the public sector. From the beginning of the year until November, 68,500 people found employment. Additionally, the liberation of previously occupied territories has opened up further opportunities to boost employment levels.

Public opinion places a high importance on employment, particularly in relation to supporting war participants and veterans and integrating them into the economy. According to official data, thousands of war participants have been employed through projects like the "Employment

Marathon." However, the survey results highlight public expectations for expanding such measures. A total of 69.8% of respondents cited improving the living standards of war participants, families of martyrs, and veterans as a key expectation. For comparison, during a similar survey conducted in early April, 74% of respondents identified improving the living conditions of these groups as their main concern. Given the inevitable consequences of the war, addressing these issues remains a top priority for both the state and society.

❖ Regardless of the respondents' level of education and income, age group and other criteria, the position of increasing employment is put forward by the absolute majority of them.

65.8% of survey participants indicated their expectations for further improvement of social welfare in the country, as well as 42% for further strengthening of social policy. This result is expected for the current stage of the impact of global inflationary waves on the country's economy and the gradual recovery of the country's economy after severe shutdowns. It should be noted that further expansion of support measures in the direction of improving social welfare in the next year's state budget, increase of minimum wages, pensions and allowances can also be considered as steps taken as a result of these public expectations.

❖ The position of further improvement of social welfare and strengthening of social policy is mentioned more by the respondents belonging to the older age group. In the position of the respondents in this direction, the diversity of their education and income level does not create a statistically significant difference.

Among public expectations from the president, the issue of prevention of official arbitrariness stands next as one of the sensitive points in state-society relations. Taking preventive measures in this direction ranked next with 65% of respondents' opinions. Taking preventive measures against official arbitrariness has been kept under control by the President, especially during the last few years. The head of state supported the strengthening of public control during the tasks and challenges given to officials in front of the public, and stressed that every signal related to official arbitrariness will be investigated.

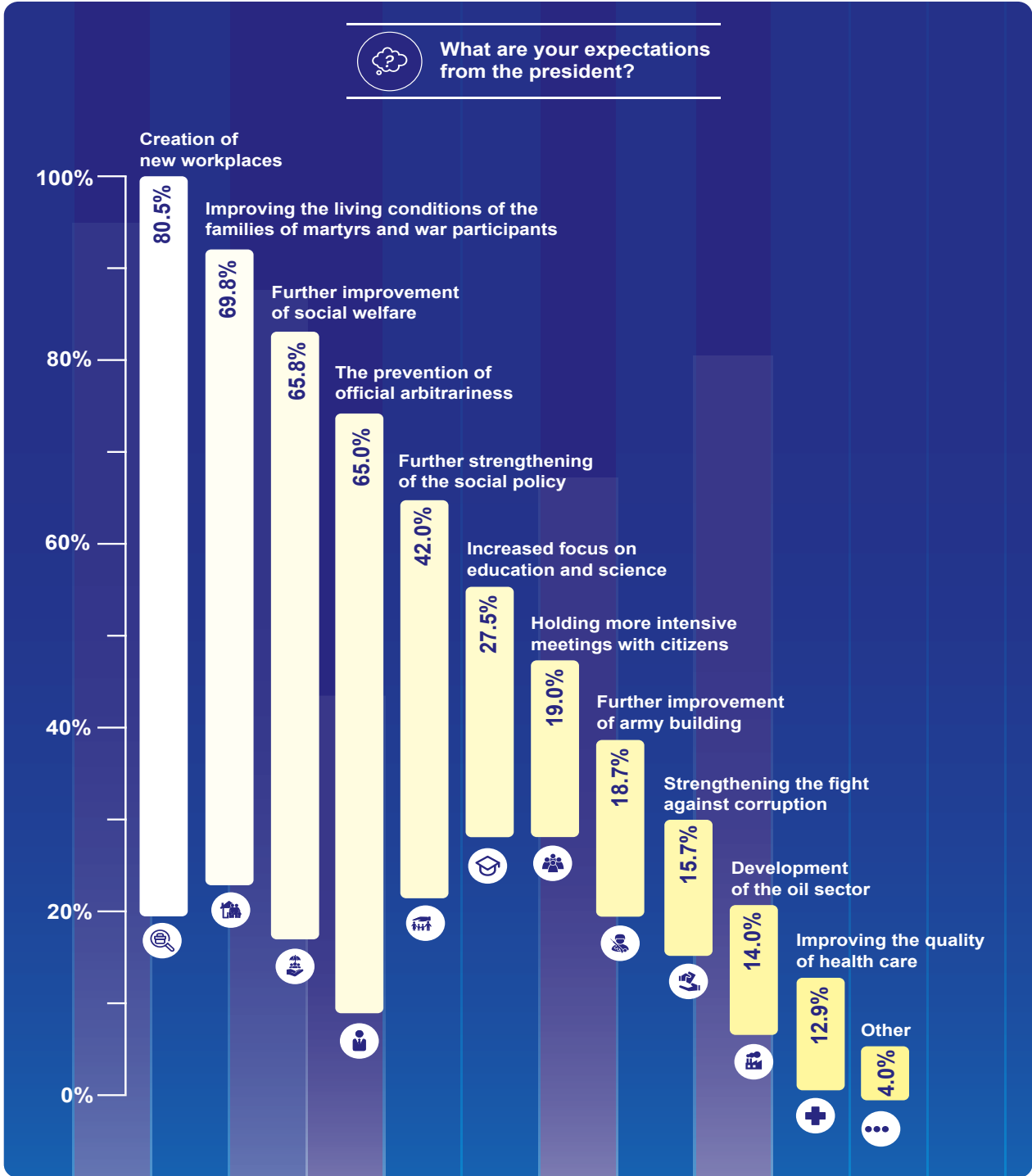
❖ According to the analysis, respondents living in urban areas highlighted the issue of pre-

venting official arbitrariness more frequently than those in rural areas. However, no statistically significant differences were observed in terms of respondents' education level, income, or other demographic factors.

In citizens' opinions, other priorities included attention to education and science (mentioned by 27.5% of respondents), closer engagement with citizens (19%), further improvement of military development (18.7%), among other issues. These results suggest a public demand for re-

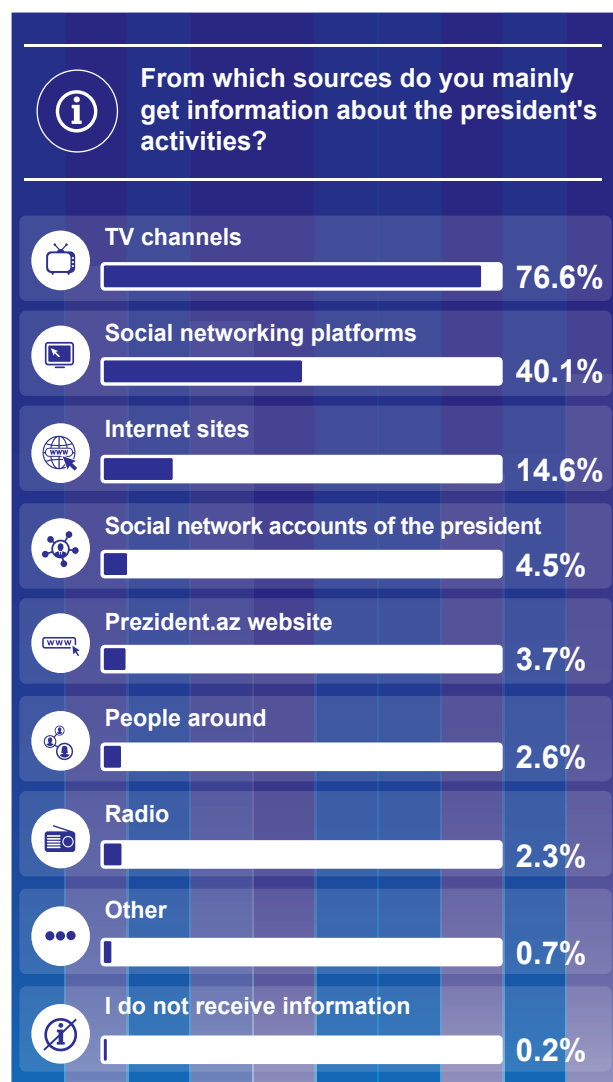
forms, additional measures, and strengthened efforts in these areas.

For comparison, during a survey conducted in early April, covering the months of January to March, the public's main expectations from the head of state were improving social welfare (75.3%), creating new jobs (74.4%), raising the standard of living for the families of martyrs, veterans, and war participants (71.7%), preventing price increases (71.6%), and increasing efforts to combat official arbitrariness (71.1%).



#### 4.4. Sources of information on the activities of the President

The main information sources of the society regarding the large-scale social and political activity of the President during the current year were determined based on the survey. Television channels and social media platforms are the main sources of information regarding the head of state's meetings with former refugees and internally displaced persons in the liberated regions, interviews with media members and speeches on various platforms. The main part of the survey participants, i.e. 76.6%, said that they received information about the social and political activities of the President from television channels. Social networks ranked second with 40.1%, and websites ranked third with 14.6%. Those who noted that they did not receive information about the president's activities made up only 0.2% of the general opinion studied.



❖ The analysis of the results shows that as respondents' age increases, so does the number of individuals who rely on television channels for information. Conversely, younger respondents tend to favor social media platforms. In other words, social networks serve as the main source of information for younger participants, while television remains dominant among older respondents. A similar trend is observed in relation to income levels: respondents from lower-income groups are more likely to choose television, while those from higher-income groups tend to favor social media platforms.

Among those who get their information about the President's activities from social media, 50% mentioned "Instagram" as their primary source, followed by 20% each for "Twitter" and "Facebook," and 10% for "YouTube." The popularity of "Instagram" as a source may be linked to the frequent sharing of video materials from the President's official visits to the liberated territories on the platform.

Television channels, social media accounts, and websites were the main sources of information about the President's social and political activities in polls conducted throughout the past year and the first quarter of this year. In March and June 2020, 81.1% and 91.3% of respondents, respectively, mentioned television as their primary source of information. By March 2021, this number had decreased to 76.6%, and the current survey shows a consistent figure of 76.6%.

The use of social media as a source showed a fluctuating trend: 41.7% in March 2020, increasing to 49.8% in June, and dropping to 29.9% in December due to internet restrictions. By March 2021, it rose again to 53.2%, before settling at 40.1% in the current survey.

For those choosing websites as their information source, the trend was 16.4% in March 2020, 26.2% in June, falling to 3.9% in December, 5.5% in March 2021, and 14.6% in the current survey.

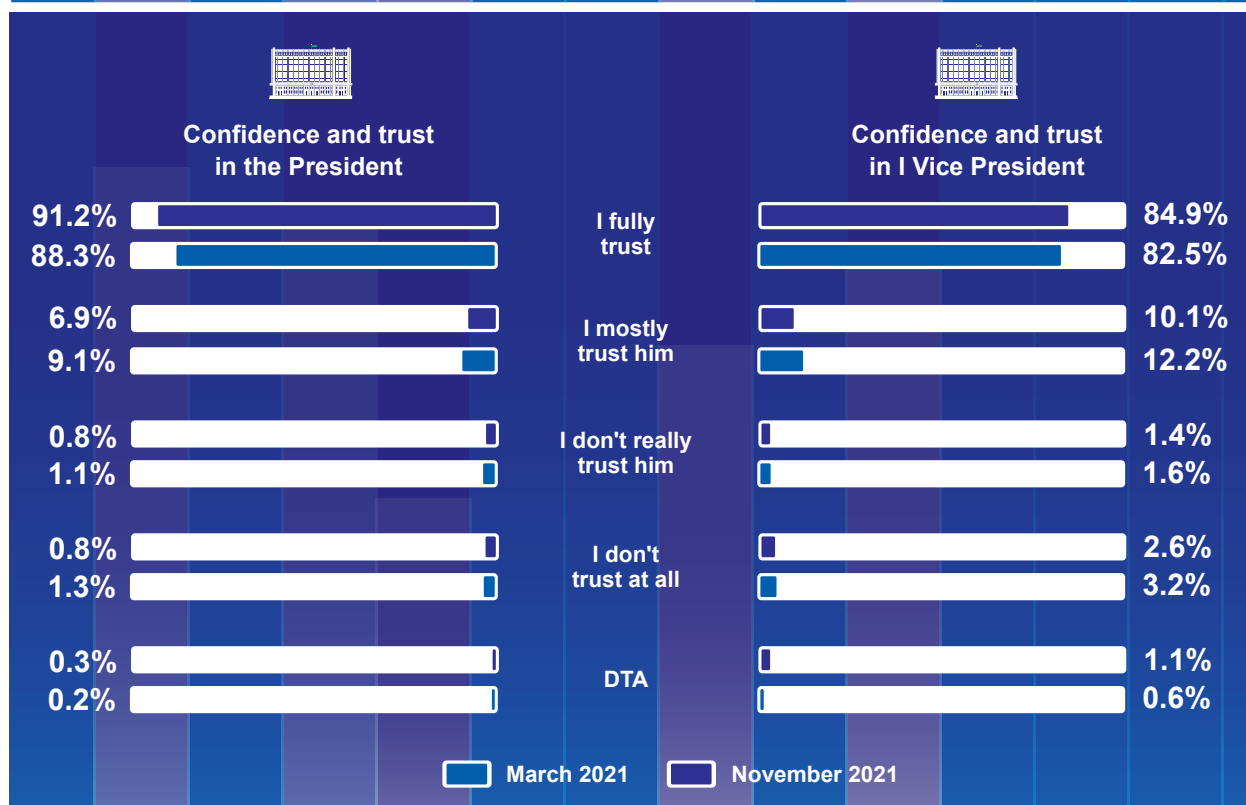
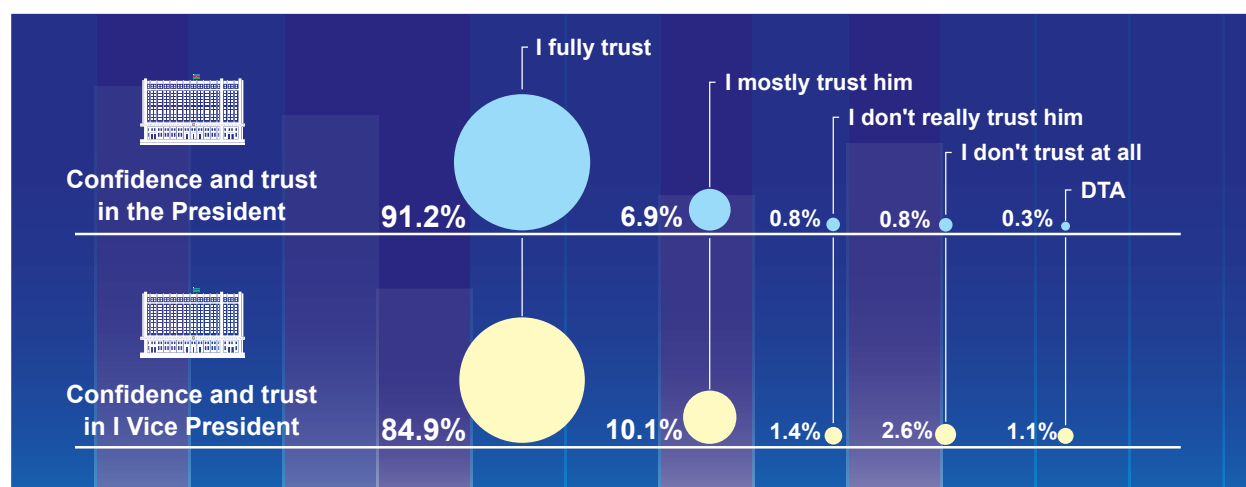
## V SECTION.

# THE DYNAMICS OF CONFIDENCE AND TRUST

### 5.1. Confidence and trust in the President

The analysis of previous polls conducted by SRC, along with the results of the current survey, indicates that the President serves as a unifying and reconciling central figure in Azerbaijani so-

ciety, particularly in matters of national interest. This is evident in the differing levels of trust expressed towards the President compared to other branches of government and state institutions. While respondents' opinions on various national issues and the performance of state bodies may vary, they consistently express trust and confi-



dence in the President, symbolizing unity and solidarity.

In the survey, 91.2% of participants stated that they fully trust the President, while 6.9% reported that they mostly trust him. Only 0.8% expressed no trust at all, and 0.3% found it difficult to take a position on the matter.

Regarding the 1st Vice President, 84.9% of respondents said they fully trust them, while 10.1% mostly trust them. A small percentage—1.4%—stated they do not trust the 1st Vice President at all, and 2.6% had difficulty trusting. Additionally, 1.1% of respondents were unsure or found it hard to express their opinion.

❖ The analysis of the results shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents express high levels of trust and confidence in both the President and the 1st Vice President, regardless of their age, education, income level, or place of residence. Compared to last year's results and those from the beginning of this year, the current levels of trust and confidence in the President are the highest recorded. These results can be attributed to several key factors, including the successful investment efforts aimed at the construction, restoration, and reintegration of the liberated territories following the 44-day war. The President's regular meetings with former refugees and internally displaced persons, his numerous domestic and international trips, his firm stance as Supreme Commander-in-Chief in confronting the enemy, his diplomatic achievements across various platforms, and his decisive speeches on regional issues have all contributed to his high approval. Additionally, his leadership in advancing international projects in the region further strengthens this trust. From the beginning of the year to November, as outlined by the President himself, over 60 meetings and visits of both international and local significance took place. These included more than 40 meetings, interviews, and speeches at press conferences, over 100 receptions, more than 40 phone calls with foreign heads of state and officials, and over 120 groundbreaking and opening events—many of which were focused on territories liberated from occupation. SRC's periodic polls show varying levels of trust and confidence in the President and the 1st Vice President. In the first quarter of 2021, 88.3% of respondents said they fully trusted the President, while in the current survey, this figure has risen to 91.2%. Similarly, trust in the 1st Vice President increased from 82.5% in the first quarter of the year

to 84.9% in the current survey, as shown in the accompanying diagram.

## 5.2. Trust and confidence in the National Assembly and judicial bodies

Based on the opinion survey, the level of public trust and confidence in other branches of government, parliament and judicial institutions was also studied. It should be noted that trust and confidence in the mentioned institutions change periodically, and the results reflect the situation at the time of the survey.

33.9% of those who took part in the survey declared that they fully trust the Milli Majlis, and 29.3% said that they mostly trust it. 8.3% of the respondents said that they mostly do not trust, and 25.2% said that they do not trust at all. 3.4% of respondents found it difficult to express their opinion in this direction. As a result, it can be noted that approximately two out of three citizens trust the parliamentary institution to one degree or another. For comparison, let's say that during the polls conducted in the second half of the current year, Russian society's trust and confidence in the State Duma was 35.5%, and Turkish society's trust and confidence in the Grand National Assembly was 40%-44%.

❖ Based on the analysis of the results, there is no statistically significant difference in citizen's opinions on their income level and age groups. People with secondary education show more trust and confidence in parliament compared to those with higher education, and those who live in rural territorial units show more trust and confidence in parliament than respondents who live in cities.

Based on the analysis of the survey results, 33.3% of the respondents said that they trust the courts completely, and 30.5% mostly. 5.0% of the respondents stated that they do not trust it at all, and 22.4% said that they do not trust it at all. 8.8% of the respondents found it difficult to express a position in this direction. As can be seen, there is a correlation between public trust and confidence in judicial institutions and the attitude towards parliament. In general, almost two out of three respondents said that they trust the courts to one degree or another.

❖ According to the income and education levels, age group and gender of the survey participants there was no statistically significant difference in the level of trust and confidence in the



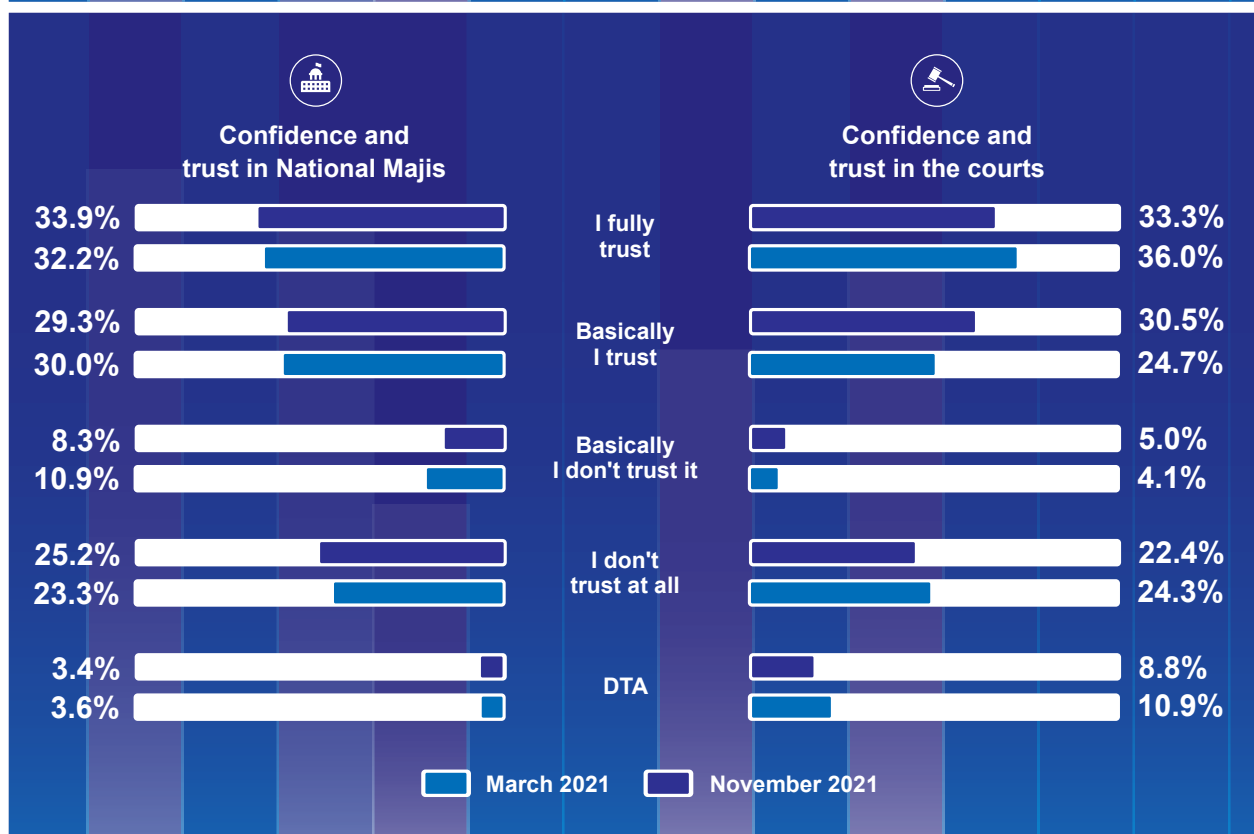
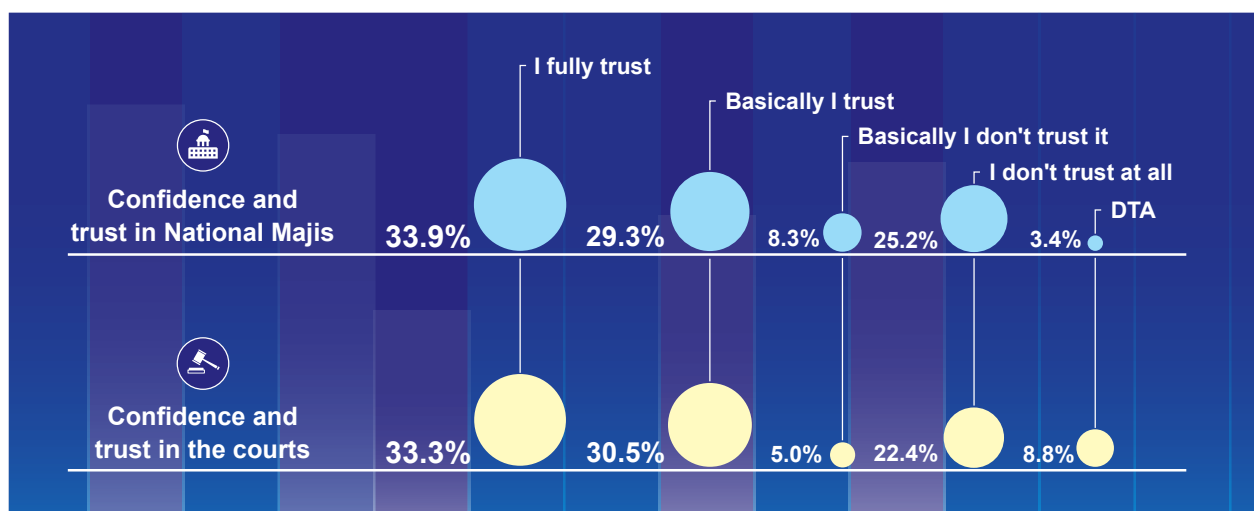
judicial authorities. Respondents living in urban areas had relatively less trust in the judiciary compared to those living in rural territorial units.

The level of trust and confidence of the Azerbaijani society in the parliament and judicial bodies has changed in different scales during the past and current year. In general, those who expressed their trust in the parliament were 57.4% in March 2020, 61.5% in June 2020, 62.2% in March 2021 and 63.2% in the current survey. Also, those who trust judicial authorities in general amounted to 49% in March 2020, 59% in June 2020, 60.7% in March 2021 and 63.8% in the current survey.

### 5.3. Confidence and trust in higher and local executive authorities

Within the framework of the survey, citizens' trust and confidence in the Cabinet of Ministers and local executive authorities as the supreme executive body was also studied. 36.3% of the survey participants said that they fully trust the Cabinet of Ministers, and 32% mostly. Those who took the opposite position made up 26.5% in total (7.3% mostly do not trust, 19.2% do not trust at all). In other words, approximately one in four respondents expressed that they do not trust the Cabinet of Ministers.

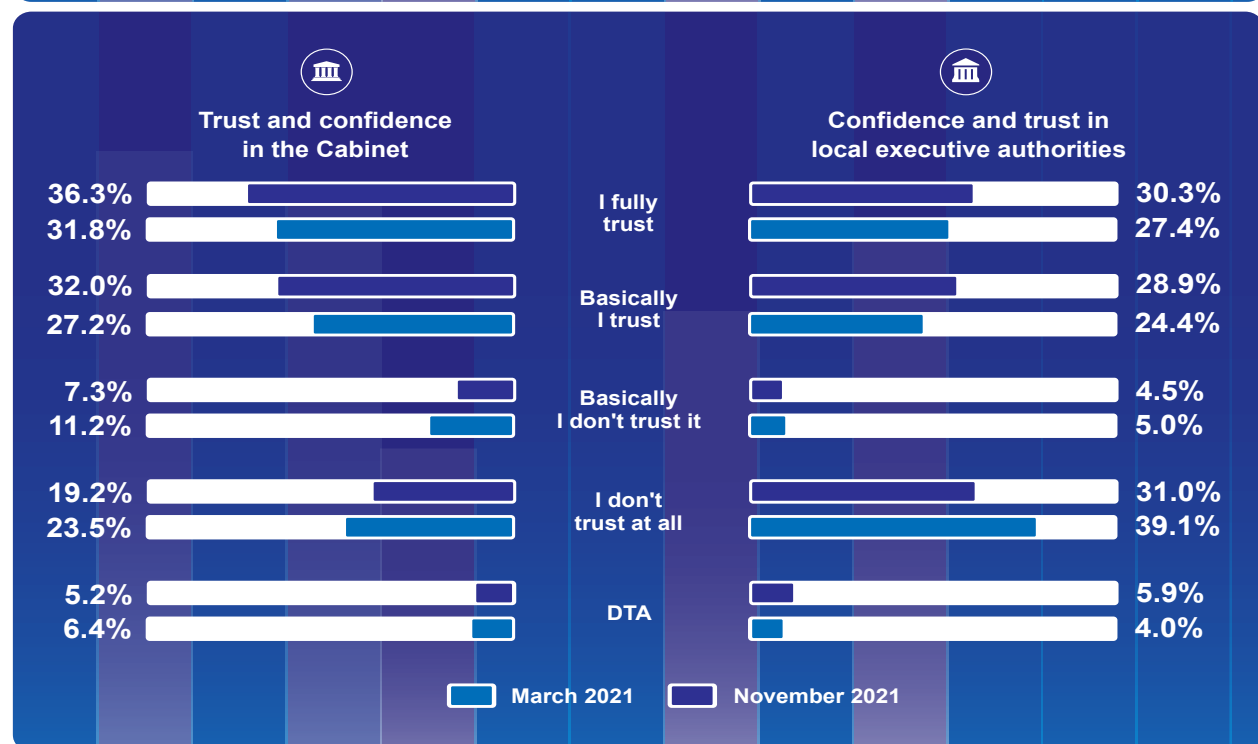
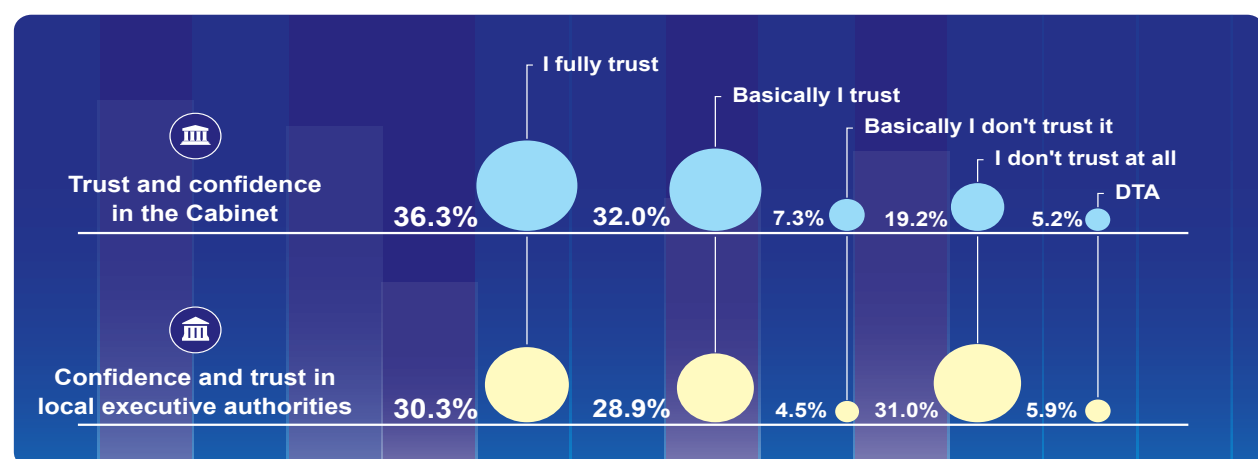
❖ According to the analysis, respondents living



in rural and town areas expressed relatively higher levels of confidence and trust compared to those in urban areas. There was no statistically significant difference in the level of trust in the Cabinet of Ministers across income, education levels, or age groups. The study also examined public trust in local executive authorities, which play a crucial role in shaping state-society relations in the regions and significantly influence public perception of the government. Based on the analysis, 30.3% of respondents stated that they fully trust local executive authorities, while 28.9% said they mostly trust them. In contrast, 4.5% reported having little trust, and 31% said they do not trust local executive authorities at all. Additionally, 5.9% of respondents were undecided or found it difficult to express a clear opinion on the matter.

❖ There was no statistically significant difference in the position of the respondents by educa-

tion, income level and age group. People living in urban territorial units showed less trust and confidence in local executive authorities compared to people living in villages and towns. A comparison of the current survey results with the results of the previous period shows that the dynamics of public trust and confidence in higher and local executive authorities have changed at different levels. Thus, those who declared full trust in the Cabinet of Ministers amounted to 27.9% in June 2020, 31.8% in March 2021 and 36.3% in the current survey. Also, those who declared that they do not trust at all amounted to 15% in June 2020, 23.5% in March 2021 and 19.2% in the current survey. Those who declared full trust in local executive authorities were 30.7% in June 2020, 27.4% in March 2021 and 30.3% in the current survey. 18.7%, 39.1% and 31% of those who stated that they do not trust at all, respectively.



## CONCLUSION

□ In general, 2021, which is characterized as the first year of the post-war period, is distinguished by its dynamism and activity in the activities of the head of state, as always. While the respondents' positions on various current issues in the life of the country or the activities of state institutions differ to one degree or another, they are united in trust and confidence in the President, embodying unity and monolithicity. Thus, the results of the survey conducted by SRC give reason to say that public trust and confidence in the President is high.

□ The reliability level of the respondents is also high in relation to the 1st Vice President. The analysis of the results shows that the absolute majority of the respondents have high trust and confidence in the President and the 1st Vice President regardless of the age group, education and income level, and the area where they live.

□ The level of public trust and confidence in other branches of government, parliament and judicial institutions was also studied in the poll. The results show a correlation between trust and confidence in judicial institutions and attitudes towards parliament. Thus, approximately two out of three respondents stated that they trust the parliament and judicial bodies to one degree or another.

□ The degree of public trust in the Cabinet of Ministers and local executive authorities was determined within the framework of the study. Three out of every four respondents expressed their trust in the Cabinet of Ministers, and almost two out of every three respondents expressed their trust in the local executive authorities to one degree or another.

□ The President's reforms in the army, expansion of military cooperation and training, large-scale construction in the liberated areas, restoration measures and preparations for the Great return, high strategic activities of the foreign policy are characterized by the highest indicators in the citizens' opinion.

□ Based on the analysis of the obtained results, more than half of the citizens evaluated the activity of the relevant state structures on the three areas reflected in the survey - ensuring civil security, fighting the pandemic and strengthening the economy - as fully effective.

The activities of the relevant structures in other areas were evaluated relatively low, and the activities on social protection, the use of budget funds as intended, and the prevention of price increases were decided in the last ranks.

□ The analysis of the results shows that the public position on the activities of individual state structures in the respective directions differs significantly from each other in relation to the activities of the President in various directions.

□ Among the points that the respondents appreciated the most during the intensive visits to Karabakh in recent months, it was decided that the close acquaintance with the great return and construction works and his personal supervision of these works took the first place.

□ The absolute majority of those who took part in the survey said that the return to Karabakh is a priority for the head of the country, the decisions (messages) made regarding the plans for the Great Return, including the development of agriculture in the territories freed from occupation, raising the level of social life and contributing to security, "intelligent city", "He highly appreciated the implementation of "smart village" and "green energy" projects. The participants in the survey have high expectations regarding the implementation of the mentioned projects.

□ According to the results of the survey, the decree signed by the President on the improvement of the administrative structure of the region is appreciated by the respondents. Thus, the majority of the respondents positively evaluated the historical, political and economic perspectives of the creation of Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur economic regions by the decree of the President.

□ The majority of the respondents believe that with the start of the Zangezur transport corridor, Azerbaijan's relations with its exclave, Nakhchivan, and its sister country Turkey will be strengthened, it will serve to strengthen unity in the Turkic world, Azerbaijan's (Nakhchivan's) access to the East-West and North-South transport corridors will expand, as well as Turkey and Azerbaijan Confidence was expressed that direct access to the Turkic world will be ensured.

□ According to the survey participants,

the opening of the Fuzuli International Airport, which is the air gateway of Karabakh, and the construction of the airports in Zangilan and Lachin are of great socio-economic and strategic importance, thereby expanding the transport opportunities of the region. According to respondents, the opening of Fuzuli International Airport, the construction of airports in Zangilan and Lachin will have a positive effect on the development of the tourism sector of Azerbaijan, contribute to economic development in the region, provide employment, and increase the logistics and export opportunities of the region.

□ Survey participants highly valued the restoration of Azerbaijan's material, cultural, spiritual, and religious monuments in the territories liberated from occupation. They view this as a significant milestone in the history of Azerbaijani culture and statehood, highlighting the nation's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage, history, and identity.

□ The vast majority of respondents also positively assessed President Ilham Aliyev's meeting with Vladimir Putin during his business trip to Moscow after the Patriotic War. They saw it as a crucial step toward maintaining peace and security in the South Caucasus.

□ A significant portion of the respondents believe that the Shusha Declaration will elevate Azerbaijan-Turkey relations to the level of a military alliance, enhancing direct cooperation in the fields of security and defense. They view this as an important step toward advancing the shared interests and solidarity of the Turkic world.

□ President Ilham Aliyev's efforts to strengthen unity among Turkic states were also highly regarded by respondents. They believe that Azerbaijan is not only an active participant in this integration process but also one of its leading initiators. The public's high opinion of the President's role in fostering Turkish unity reflects the importance placed on this aspect of foreign policy.

□ According to respondents, President Ilham Aliyev's receipt of the "Highest Order of the Turkic World" symbolizes his status as a strong military leader within the Turkic world. It also underscores Azerbaijan's historic victory in the 21st-century war, highlighting the deepening friendship, cooperation, and brotherhood among Turkic-speaking countries. The award is seen as a recognition of the President's his-

torical and political contributions to strengthening the unity of the Turkic world, promoting the Zangezur Corridor, and achieving lasting peace and stability in the region.

□ Respondents widely share the view that President Aliyev, as the architect of Victory, successfully communicates Azerbaijan's historic achievements to the international community through his speeches on global platforms. They believe he promotes citizen engagement and national solidarity around the narrative of the Victory, while also reinforcing Azerbaijan's advantage in information policy and creating new opportunities to defend national interests.

□ Furthermore, respondents agree with the President's belief that the younger generation should be protected from negative influences, and that the nation's victory should play a key role in their education. They see the lives of martyrs, veterans, and war participants as an example for youth, emphasizing the need for young people to take an active role in promoting national history, uniting around a national ideology, and playing a significant part in shaping historical memory. Respondents also acknowledge the importance of giving youth a prominent place in state policy during this new historical phase.

□ The survey also explored which countries Azerbaijani society prefers to expand military-political cooperation with to ensure regional security. The results showed that Turkey is seen as Azerbaijan's primary ally and partner, followed by countries like Pakistan, Russia, and others.

□ The survey results reveal that, one year after the Patriotic War, the Azerbaijani public continues to recognize the significance of the victory, national unity, and solidarity. There is widespread discussion both within the country and internationally about Azerbaijan's triumph, with respondents expressing pride in their nation's recognition as a victorious people. The spirit of military patriotism has been further strengthened, and public interest in events like the Victory Fair and Victory March remains high. The psychological burden of defeat has disappeared, replaced by widespread national pride, reinforced by congratulations from foreign nations on Azerbaijan's victory.

□ The study of the moral and psychological state of Azerbaijani society in the post-war period, based on an opinion poll, reveals that

a significant uplift in public morale coincided with the pre-war period and was one of the key factors contributing to the positive outcome of the war. According to the data, about half of the respondents rated their current moral and psychological state as high, while one in three rated it as moderate.

□ In the post-war period, it is crucial to assess changes in socio-economic status, as this is a determining factor in the society's moral and psychological well-being. Approximately one-third of respondents stated that their socio-economic situation has improved compared to last year, while another third reported no change.

□ Overall, more than half of the survey participants rated their life satisfaction positively, while one in three rated it as average. The analysis also indicated a connection between life satisfaction and socio-economic status.

□ In light of factors such as the ongoing positive outcomes from last year's military and political successes, the new geopolitical reality that favors Azerbaijan, large-scale construction and restoration efforts in the liberated areas, and the potential benefits of recently implemented transport and communication projects, societal expectations for financial well-being in the future are optimistic. More than half of respondents expressed belief that their socio-economic situation will improve in the coming year.

□ In addition to examining the society's moral and psychological state and expectations, the survey also explored public opinion and forecasts regarding the socio-economic and political situation in the country. The analysis shows a positive correlation between respondents' opinions on both aspects. Most respondents evaluated the current socio-economic and political situation favorably, with only about one in ten expressing negative views about the political situation.

□ The survey also assessed public opinion on the general direction of the country, given the dynamic nature of events this year. The results indicate that an overwhelming majority of respondents believe the country is moving in the right direction.

□ The post-war period has seen a surge in optimism, enthusiasm, and solidarity, which has positively impacted both the present situation and future expectations. The vast majority of participants gave a positive evaluation of the future prospects of both domestic and foreign

political developments.

□ As part of the survey, citizens were asked to identify the most pressing issues facing Azerbaijan at the moment. The top concerns included employment security, rising prices, and financial security. Notably, employment is especially important in terms of ensuring the labor participation of war veterans and participants, and integrating them into the economic system. Addressing these issues is currently a priority for both the state and society.

□ The analysis of the survey results suggests alignment between public expectations and state policy. The issues raised by the President with relevant institutions, as well as the tasks assigned to them, reflect public concerns. In this context, the expectations and demands highlighted in the survey reflect the actions of local authorities and relevant institutions. The post-war period's sensitivities and the ongoing pandemic's negative effects make these demands and expectations even more urgent. According to the analysis, public expectations from the President are primarily focused on securing employment, creating new jobs, improving the living conditions of martyrs' families and war veterans, and further enhancing social welfare.

□ TV channels, social networks, and online platforms are the primary sources of information about the President's meetings with former refugees and internally displaced persons in the liberated regions, as well as his interviews and speeches on various platforms.



## NOTES

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