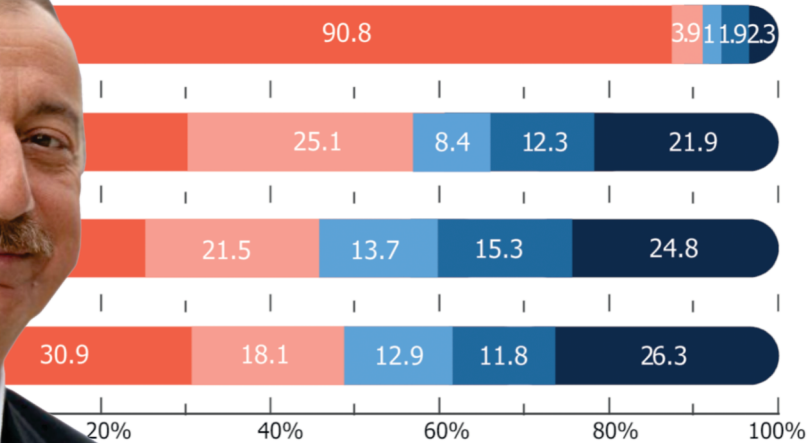
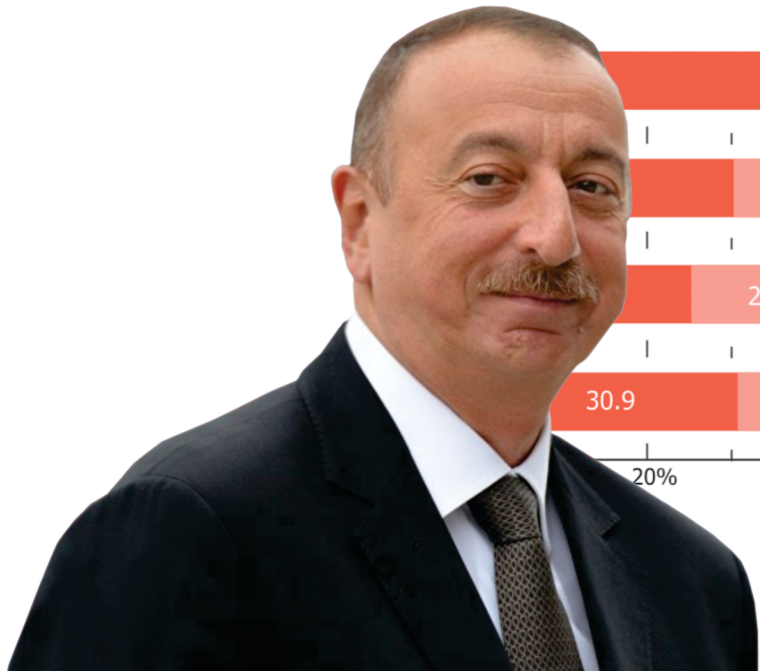




PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE
IN PUBLIC OPINION

ANALYTICAL REPORT



SOCIAL
RESEARCH
CENTER



“The guarantor of stability and security is the Azerbaijani people, the unity of people and authorities.”

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Ilham Aliyev**



SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTER

TRUST INDEX / 02
Special issue

January - March 2020

PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC OPINION

Prepared based on a sociological survey
ANALYTICAL REPORT

Research team:

Public Opinion Analysis Department
Domestic Policy Analysis Department
Socio-Economic Analysis Department

Baku - 2020

About the Social Research Center

The Social Research Center (SRC) was established by Decree No. 525 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 8, 2019. It operates as a public legal entity, systematically analyzing the development dynamics of social relations. The SRC identifies current trends, forecasts changes in this field, and investigates their potential impact on society. Applying modern information technologies and scientific approaches, the SRC conducts social research and surveys public opinion. Its findings are then provided to governmental bodies for consideration and action.

Responsible for this issue: Elshad Mirbashir

Editor: Agshin Mammadov

Designer: Babek Jafar, Gurban Jalilov

Editor (English): Pasha Bayramov, Nailakhanim Rustamova

Address:

18, Ismayil bay Kutkashenli Str., Yasamal district, Baku, AZ1073,
the Republic of Azerbaijan

Telephone: (+994 12) 510-70-78

(+994 12) 510-23-75

(+994 12) 510-70-69

E-mail: info@stm.az

Website: www.stm.az

Signed to print: 15.08.2023

Total printing sheet: 3.5

Order: 10

Issue: 500

Printed in the printing house of "MM-S" enterprise.

Address: Republic of Azerbaijan, AZ 1102, Baku city,
Nasimi district, A. Taghizade street, house 13.

Phone: (+994 12) 431 11 00

(+994 50) 314 09 37

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 4 |
| I. Methodological Principles of the Survey..... | 8 |
| II. Statistical and Analytical Study of Survey Results.... | 10 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 24 |

INTRODUCTION

Given the exceptional importance President Ilham Aliyev attaches to public opinion regarding the revolutionary reforms implemented in the country since 2019, the Social Research Center (SRC) has launched a new format of sociological surveys. These surveys are the first of their kind in the country, conducting quarterly (3-monthly) monitoring of public opinion on reforms and enabling more prompt monitoring of the dynamics of social processes and their evaluation in public opinion.

The next report provided covers the first quarter of 2020 (January-March). This analytical report, based on a sociological survey, creates conditions for promptly studying the opinions of our people regarding the milestones of the President's domestic and foreign policy during the period under consideration, as well as the state of sociopolitical and socioeconomic processes in the country. It provides a comprehensive picture by promptly evaluating public attitudes toward processes occurring in the legal, executive power, and law enforcement systems, using public opinion as a reliable source in making relevant decisions.

The survey reflects events that enable tracking of the President's multifaceted activity in both domestic and foreign policy, events of historical importance and special significance in the political calendar, and those widely covered in the official chronicle, as well as in both local and foreign media.

In January-March 2020, as ever, the events took place in the activity of the President of Azerbaijan, which became the agenda of international public opinion and were remembered. These events brought attention to the actions undertaken by President Ilham Aliyev in the fields of domestic and foreign policy for the sake of strengthening statehood, ensuring a further increase of trust and confidence in him. In this regard, we would like to recall the major events in foreign and domestic policy that are the target of public opinion in the survey:

In the field of foreign policy:

❖ On February 15, President Ilham Aliyev made a speech at the 56th meeting

of the prestigious Munich Security Conference, which has been held in Germany since 1963 and is considered a decisive platform in ensuring international stability. At the Munich Conference, attended by 500 first rank officials, including the heads of state (presidents and prime ministers) of 35 countries and more than 100 ministers of foreign affairs and defense, the President not only held important bilateral meetings but also presented very important strategic initiatives and theses in panel discussions.

❖ At the Munich Conference, where President Ilham Aliyev has been regularly invited in recent years, a significant political debate on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was arranged between him and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan for the first time. This event garnered global attention as it was unprecedented. During the debates, closely observed by the global Armenian diaspora and the occupying country, the President of Azerbaijan delivered a profound political analysis rooted in historical facts, political experience, and intellectual-scientific thinking in response to the moderator's questions, yielding excellent results.

❖ President Aliyev's supremacy was explicitly demonstrated before the global and local conference audience. He effectively dismantled the illogical statements and myths of 'false ancient history' perpetuated by the leader of the occupying country, presenting a compelling narrative grounded in real political thought. Armenian media also acknowledged that President Ilham Aliyev conveyed the truth about the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to an influential audience and effectively utilized the event's format to expose the policy of aggression and Armenian deceit.

❖ The survey indicates that in the political debates attended by global political, military, scientific, and media elites, President Aliyev leveraged the opportunity to showcase his superiority in all aspects, including political ethics, strategic thinking, culture, and human values. This has significantly contributed to increasing confidence and trust among our people in the restoration of our country's territorial integrity.

❖ In the panel discussions attended by the President at the conference, his speeches on Azerbaijan's oil strategy, the questions addressed to him about the assessment of the regional processes from the security aspect, the meetings of the US and Russian military elite and the Chiefs of General Staff in our country, and his answers to these questions were widely covered in the local and international media. The fact that in all his speeches without exception, the President put a focus on the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, which was the most important issue for Azerbaijan, and defended the national interests took an important place in the country's public opinion. According to the general assessment reflected in public opinion, the foreign policy pursued by President Ilham Aliyev, who is the guarantor of Azerbaijan's sovereignty, will allow our state to gain the required geopolitical status and stability in the constantly changing world. The President has mobilized all available resources and potential for this.

Special emphasis should be placed on the President's participation in the Davos World Economic Forum, particularly the significant importance of his speech at the panel session 'Strategic Vision: Eurasia' and the traditional meetings of the head of state with influential figures from the economic and business world. These engagements hold paramount significance in shaping economic reforms as a strategic sustainability goal in Azerbaijan, attracting foreign investors to the country's economy, and deepening cooperation initiatives. Furthermore, the President's involvement in bilateral and multilateral negotiations in Davos carries exceptional strategic importance in explicitly declaring the fundamental contours of Azerbaijan's geo-economic policy and outlining the priorities of foreign economic policy.

❖ In the first quarter of 2020, the visits of the top leadership of Turkey and Turkmenistan to our country, as well as the official visit of our President to Italy and his interviews with foreign media (Russia 24 channel) were the focus of attention in terms of assessing foreign policy priorities.

In the field of domestic policy:

❖ On January 13, 2020, in the meeting dedicated to the results of the last year, in his final speech, the President also defined the goals for the current year. At the

meeting, the Head of State performed a comparative analysis, based on the facts, between the dynamics of the socioeconomic development of our country and the South Caucasus, especially Armenia, and provided indicators confirming its explicit superiority by all parameters - domestic policy, military power, Army building, major macroeconomic indicators, GDP, social security, wages and pensions, global competitiveness, huge energy-transportation projects, sports, etc. The successful start of 2020, especially for the non-oil sector, was marked by foreign investment in two large projects - the construction of the region's largest wind and solar power plants.¹

❖ The first quarter of 2020 can be characterized as a period of very active economic development dynamics nationwide. During the meeting dedicated to the results of 2019, the President's statement that "The World Bank rated Azerbaijan one of the top 20 reformist countries, which is a great achievement" underscores the extent of both quantitative and qualitative expectations in this field for 2020.

❖ The conference dedicated to the results of the first year of implementing the State Program for the Socioeconomic Development of the Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2023 holds particular significance for determining the key priorities of regional development and advancing the non-oil sector based on new clustering requirements.

❖ On March 10, during his speech at the first session of the Azerbaijani Parliament's 6th convocation, President Ilham Aliyev declared the commencement of a new historical stage of political reforms in Azerbaijan. The President's speech, serving as a strategic document with conceptual content reflecting profound aspects of political reforms, outlined the key vectors of measures to be undertaken by the legislative body to shape a new political landscape in Azerbaijan, enhance the political system, and establish a stronger foundation for a multi-party system in our country. The President reiterated that reforms are indispensable and demonstrated unwavering determination to concurrently implement economic and political reforms in the nation.

❖ Starting from March of the first quarter of 2020, the spreading coronavirus pandemic continues to be dominated on the global and Azerbaijani agendas. At

¹ <https://president.az/articles/35601>

the ceremonies of the opening of strategically significant social facilities, which have been ongoing since the first quarter of the year, the President's speeches and messages on the irreversibility of reforms have become a tradition. On March 3, the President attended the opening of the Goranboy Regional Central Hospital. He informed the country's public of the control over the situation in Azerbaijan and all the strategic directions of operational and crisis management, arising in connection with the pandemic. Also, in the 1st quarter, Agstafa Agrarian Industrial Complex, Gazakh Lime Plant, and Shamkirchay Water Treatment Complex were opened as part of this work, which became important from the standpoint of the President's live contacts with the people. The last month of the first quarter of 2020 is characterized by unprecedented global economic risks. The current situation requires flexible and decisive anti-crisis management at the highest level. From this standpoint, we can evaluate the Presidential Decree dated March 19, 2020, as a strategic decision based on an accurate determination of the current situation and its strategic contours, aimed at mitigating possible negative trends in the economy. In terms of ensuring the stability of the country's economy and resistance to external impacts, as well as protecting the prospects of economic development, the working groups created in 4 different fields and the tasks assigned to them fulfill a serious basic function in the anti-crisis strategy.

The President also conducted extensive interviews and delivered speeches at the opening of the second project of the State Housing Development Agency - Hovsan Residential Complex on March 24, and the Yeni Klinika medical institution in Baku on March 28. This proactive engagement of the President marks a significant milestone in crisis management and social communication, combating the pandemic, and educating the population, being the first of its kind in the country. It holds profound significance in public opinion.²

The President underscored the importance of developing social and healthcare infrastructure and implementing preventive measures for unforeseen circumstances during his administration. It is noteworthy that several countries have officially requested to study Azerbaijan's experience in combating the coronavi-

rus, highlighting the global recognition of Azerbaijan's efforts in this regard. The first quarter of 2020, especially January-February, can be characterized by positive macroeconomic indicators against the background of threats caused by global economic shocks. Thus, during this period, the gross domestic product increased by 2.8%, and 6.7 and 21.7 growth was recorded, respectively, in the non-oil sector and the non-oil industry. Inflation made up only 2.8%, and the income of the population grew by 9%, i.e., income exceeded inflation.

❖ The survey indicates that Azerbaijan has the capability to independently overcome the crisis affecting the entire world. While many CIS states seek assistance from international organizations and countries, Azerbaijan has the ability to overcome the crisis using its own resources. Public opinion underscores that the President's sound policy, the implementation of preventive measures, and the establishment of control mechanisms for implementation have contributed to the effectiveness of state administration.

❖ Another crucial issue is that, unlike many heads of state who withdraw to the provinces or isolate themselves socially, our President remains among the people during the most difficult times. He shares their views and conveys accurate information to the community. This not only boosts morale but also helps to enlighten the people by thwarting attempts to exploit the pandemic in the global information war. According to public opinion, under the banner of 'National unity and solidarity' against the threat of the coronavirus, the President successfully mobilized our entire nation to maintain optimism and vigilance.

❖ In the first quarter of 2020, the President received the economic policy managers in a routine procedure, ensured accountability for the work done, and made strategic decisions and assignments on the spot, which should be highly appreciated in terms of establishing communication with the public at the highest level concerning reforms. This management style creates a high certainty and confidence in terms of both consumer behavior and the formation of medium and long-term priorities for the business sector.

❖ The work of the Commander-in-Chief in the field of military building and

² some countries applied for studying Azerbaijan's experience in combating the coronavirus// https://apa.az/az/xarici_siya-set/Azrbaycanin-koronavirusla-mubariz-tc-rubsini-oynmk-ucun-muracit-edn-dov-ltir-var-577968

strengthening the National Army as a result of meetings held by the President in the first quarter of the year in not only the capital but also the frontline areas, the regions close to the contact line, was highly evaluated in the public opinion.

❖ In the President's speeches before the people, it was reflected that the Azerbaijani leadership 'looks 20-30-50 years ahead' in its activity, and the huge reforms in the state administration, performed over recent years, have already borne fruit compared to the advanced world countries where the pandemic is raging. Hence, the pandemic posed a significant test for the new political elite, as they encountered challenges like crisis management and adaptable social communication in the information society. They demonstrated readiness to overcome this test, and public opinion validated the effectiveness of personnel and management reforms implemented in this context. It is believed that the new staff is prepared to address global threats through flexible transformation.

❖ Personnel reforms and the organization of reporting/transparency receptions for newly appointed or acting officials of state administrative bodies represent a new format in the President's domestic policy, highlighting the special emphasis on the implemented reforms. In the first quarter of 2020, within this new format, the President received various officials including the Minister of Labor and Social Security of the Population, the Chairman of the Board of the Baku Transport Agency, the Chairman of the State Urban Planning and Architecture Committee, as well as young executives appointed to Ismayilli and Neftchala, among others. The public opinion survey indicated that the population closely follows these receptions.

❖ During the first quarter of 2020, the political will expressed by the President against corruption and other anti-social acts, and the exposure and arrest of some executive power leaders as part of reform policy were also on the agenda and favorably received in public opinion.

❖ Despite the global drop in oil prices in the first quarter of the year, on March 24, the President declared that the policy of social reforms would be successfully continued: "All social obligations will be fulfilled both this and the following years. Thereat, a record number - 7,000 apartments

will be provided to internally displaced persons this year; 5,000 apartments were built last year. 1,500 apartments will be provided to martyr families. I believe that the martyr families who are now on the accommodation waiting list will get houses in the next few years, and this program will be completed." ³ Also, at the beginning of 2020, all pensions were indexed by 16.6 percent. As a result, the average monthly pension for all types of allowance in Azerbaijan exceeded AZN 300.

Thus, the results of the survey, performed by the Social Research Center to study the public attitude toward the activity of President Ilham Aliyev in the fields of domestic and foreign policy during the first quarter of 2020 and the index of trust in the President, can be summarized as follows:

Against the backdrop of declining oil prices worldwide, the escalation of international geopolitical conflicts, and the rapid spread of the new global pandemic, which has triggered the most profound social, political, and economic crisis since World War II, the people's trust and confidence in President Ilham Aliyev have increased due to his prudent policies. Support for reforms aimed at enhancing the welfare and prosperity of our people is on the rise.

The Trust Index provided, an analytical report based on a public opinion survey, validates this conclusion.

³ <https://president.az/articles/36241>

I. METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF SURVEY

Selection of respondents:

○ A total of 1212 respondents were involved in the public opinion survey.

○ The public opinion survey was based on the cluster sampling method. In total, 101 clusters were randomly sampled according to addresses selected across the country, and the first 12 respondents in each cluster were included in the main sample.

○ A family member whose birthday was close to the survey time was chosen to participate in the survey.

○ The survey results were analyzed with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error 3%.

○ The fieldwork was performed in March 2020.

Regions. The survey covered the following economic-geographic regions,



DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS OF THE RESPONDENTS



GENDER COMPOSITION

| | |
|--------|-------|
| Male | 49.8% |
| Female | 50.2% |



AGE

| | |
|-------|-------|
| 18-25 | 8.5% |
| 26-35 | 22.2% |
| 36-50 | 26.7% |
| 51-65 | 34.2% |
| 65+ | 8.3% |



LEVEL OF EDUCATION

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Higher | 26.0% |
| Vocational education | 20.4% |
| Complete secondary | 48.0% |
| Incomplete secondary | 45.1% |
| No education | 1.0% |

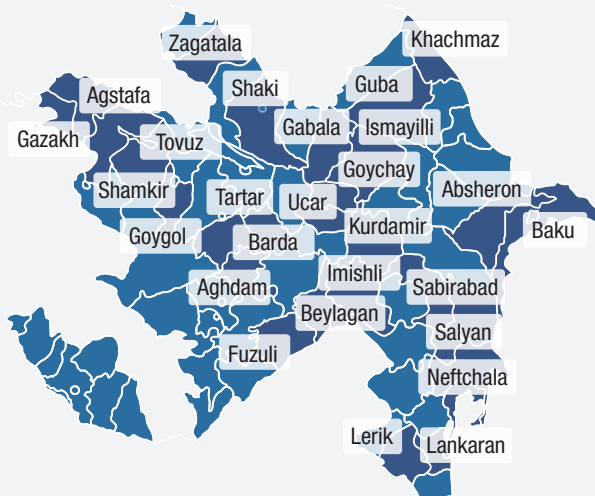


EMPLOYMENT

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Employed-public sector | 31.1% |
| Employed-private sector | 6.1% |
| Retired | 15.3% |
| Unemployed | 11.3% |
| Housewife | 15.0% |
| Individual entrepreneur | 10.9% |
| Other | 10.3% |



POLLING POINTS



excluding the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and the occupied regions: Baku, Absheron, Guba-Khachmaz, Daghlig Shirvan, Shaki-Zagatala, Aran, Ganja-Gazakh, Upper Karabakh, and Lankaran. Herewith, the ethnic Azerbaijani population group from the occupied regions was also involved in the survey.

The Survey Method

The face-to-face interview method was used in the survey. Modern technology and the SurveyToGo application were used in the survey. This software has many advantages in terms of monitoring fieldwork within wide geography, maintaining online monitoring of the survey, and getting reliable data.

Data Processing and Analysis

After the completion of the survey, the data collected for each questionnaire were entered into the database and analyzed using specialized software SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Correlation analysis was utilized to identify statistically significant relationships between variables, while X^2 , T, and ANOVA tests were employed to compare variables across different socio-demographic groups. Exploratory factor analysis was

applied to define latent factors, and the reliability of these factors was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha.

Due to the rounding, the total percentage in the diagrams may deviate from 100%.

The Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire consisted of 18 main and 4 demographic questions. The questions mainly covered the following:

- Assessing the President's performance in various fields;
- The President's speeches on the occupying position of Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh problem in the international arena;
- People's attitude to staff changes in local executive bodies;
- The dynamics of the population's confidence and trust in the President

DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS OF THE RESPONDENTS

1212 respondents were involved in the survey. Since the survey was based on the random sampling principle, all the population categories were represented in terms of socio-demographic indicators.



II. STATISTICAL AND ANALYTICAL STUDY OF SURVEY RESULTS

The radical reforms initiated in the country in 2019 encompassed the enhancement of social welfare for the population, personnel reforms, and reforms within the legal and executive power branches. The President's strong determination stands as one of the most crucial factors contributing to the successful and sustainable implementation of all these reforms.

To find out the respondents' attitude to the President and all three power branches (law-making, executive, and judicial), the degree of their trust in these institutions was studied.

The absolute majority of the respondents stated that they trust the President. The absolute majority of the respondents (90.8%) stated, "I completely trust the President."

Trust in other branches of government is lower compared to the President. Specifically, 57.4%, 46.2%, and 49% of the respondents trust, respectively, the parliament, the local executive power, and the court. Among these branches, the executive bodies have the lowest credibility. Another notable finding is that one in four respondents (24.8%) had difficulty expressing their opinion on whether to trust the executive bodies, and slightly more respondents (26.3%) had difficulty expressing their opinion on the court.

may be attributed to the reformation of its composition and the public's expectations regarding it, known as the 'cred-it of trust.' Results from the SRC survey on local self-governance bodies revealed that their accessibility and effectiveness in problem-solving, as well as the efficiency of the local executive power's activity, were not highly appreciated by the respondents. According to these findings, less than half of the respondents trust the local executive authority to a certain degree (24.7% 'fully trust', 21.5% 'mainly trust').

In the first quarter of 2020, as part of the President's anti-corruption policy, implementing new criteria for serving the people and ensuring the rule of law in this area continued. Preventing illegal actions of the heads of the local executive power and arresting them by the State Security Service (SSS), supporting these measures by the citizens, and people's expectations for this process to be continued testify to the need for more intensive reforms in the local executive power structures.

The fact that approximately one in four respondents do not trust the courts and slightly more (26.3%) find it difficult to express an opinion indicates the need for radical judicial reforms.



DIAGRAM 1.
**WHAT IS THE DEGREE OF YOUR TRUST
IN THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATION?**

■ Completely trust ■ Mainly trust ■ Mainly do not trust ■ Do not trust ■ Not sure

President



Parliament



Local executive power



Court



The higher reliability of the parliament compared to other branches of power

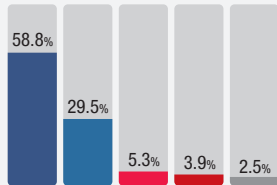
This result shows that citizens trust the President of the country more than other



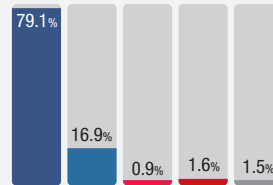
DIAGRAM 2.
**HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIVITY
IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS OVER THE LAST 3 MONTHS?**

Very good Mostly good Mostly bad Very bad Difficult to answer

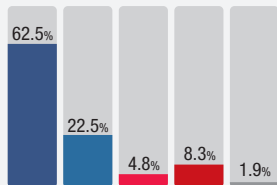
Economy,
agriculture, and
regulating labor
relations



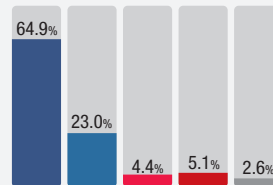
Army building
and modernization
of the armed
forces



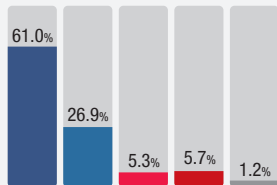
Combating
corruption



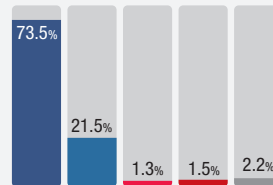
Personel reforms



Social protection



Foreign policy



institutions. The absolute majority of the respondents highly appreciated the President's activity in the fields of army building and modernization of the armed forces (96%) and foreign policy (95%). The President's activity in the fields of economic development, agriculture, and regulation of labour relations (88.3%), Personnel reforms (87.9%), and social protection (87.9%) was positively assessed by the vast majority of respondents.

The respondents' positive assessments of the President's activity in the fields of Personnel reforms and social protection are generally the same. However, when considering this in detail, it becomes clear Personnel hat Personnel reforms were assessed as 'very good' by more respondents (64.9%). The President's activity in combating corruption was positively assessed by the majority of respondents (85%).

As can be seen, the public's assessment of the President's performance in military and political fields is higher than socioeconomic and anti-corruption ones.

In the survey 'President's Performance in Public Opinion,' performed by SRC in October 2019, the respondents assessed

the President's activity in various fields. Comparing those results with the new ones shows that during the past few months, the people's attitude toward the President's activity in various fields has improved. Another important point is that those who assess the President's activity in various fields as 'very good' have increased significantly. The comparative diagram below (Diagram 3) shows the difference in fields The ANOVA analysis shows that the absolute majority of the respondents with complete secondary and lower education and the majority of those with higher education highly appreciate the President's activity in all fields.

From an occupational standpoint, the President's activity is highly appreciated in all fields by the employed, especially public sector workers, pensioners, and housewives. However, this indicator is relatively low among the unemployed.

Regarding regional differences, a higher assessment ratio in terms of foreign policy was noted in the economic regions of Aran, Absheron, and Upper Karabagh. Similar patterns were observed in the sphere of social protection. More positive conclusions regarding Personnel reforms

were obtained in Aran, Upper Karabagh, and Daghlig Shirvan. In the fields of economic development, agriculture, and labor relations regulation, the President's work is highly appreciated in the Aran region.

The highest positive assessment of the President's anti-corruption policy was recorded in Daghlig Shirvan, followed by Aran and Upper Karabakh. A higher assessment ratio was also recorded in the Aran region regarding army building and its improvement. While lower compared to the aforementioned regions, mainly positive conclusions were obtained in the Ganja-Gazakh economic region.

However, it is worth noting that in the Shaki-Zagatala region, the factor of satisfaction with the President's activity in various fields is lower compared to other regions. Almost the same situation was observed in Baku and the Guba-Khachmaz economic region.

The President's speeches in the international arena also play a significant role in the positive assessment of his for-

eign policy by the absolute majority. His speech at the Munich Security Conference on February 15, 2020, following his resonant statement 'Karabakh is Azerbaijan and an Exclamation Point' at the Valdai International Discussion Club meeting in 2019, fostered a positive sentiment among the country's population. It notably increased citizens' trust and confidence in the President and enhanced confidence in the restoration of our territorial integrity.

In general, the President's speeches at the Munich Security Conference, across various panels, and his demonstration of superiority in all parameters during the political debate with N. Pashinyan were highly regarded by the respondents.

The opinion of putting the prime minister of Armenia in an awkward position again (56.7%) was most widespread among the respondents. Almost half of the respondents assessed this speech as the President's next diplomatic victory (48.5%) and a new phase in solving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem (44.3%).

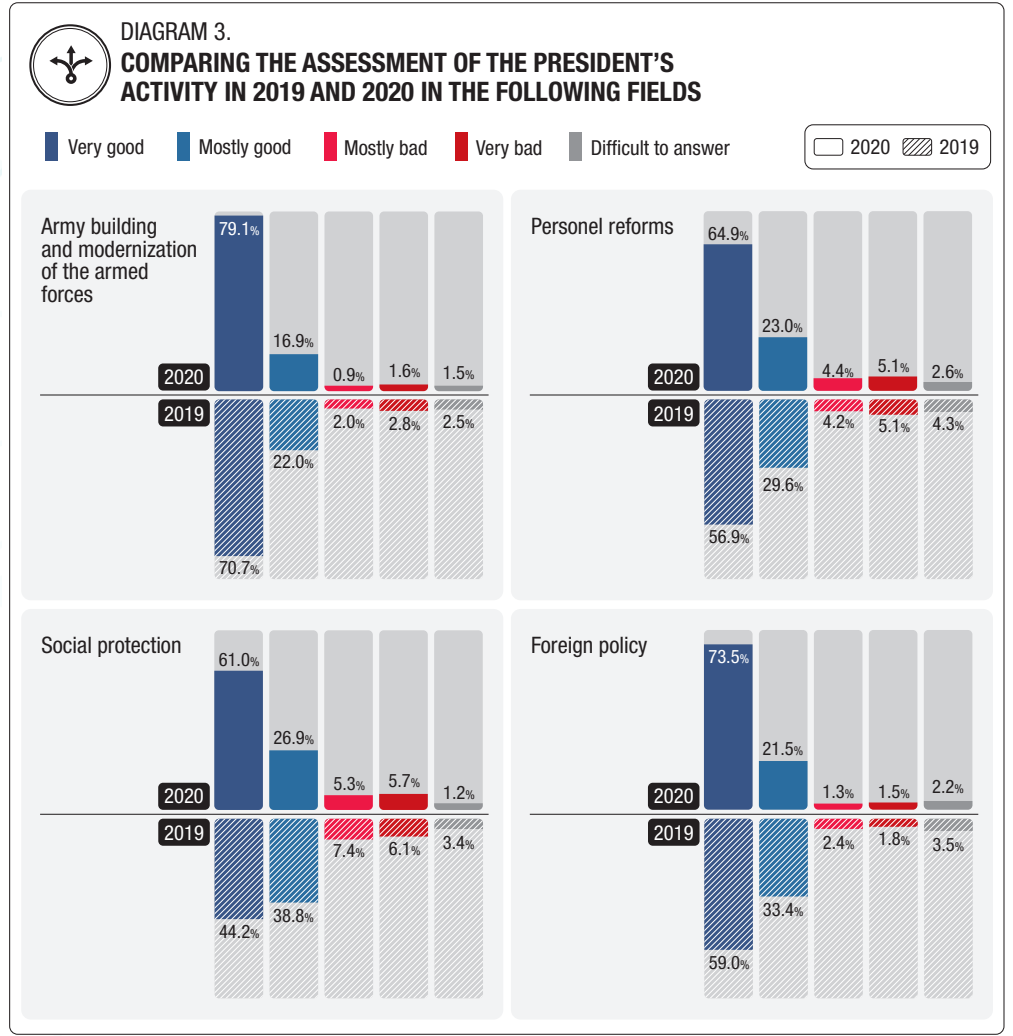
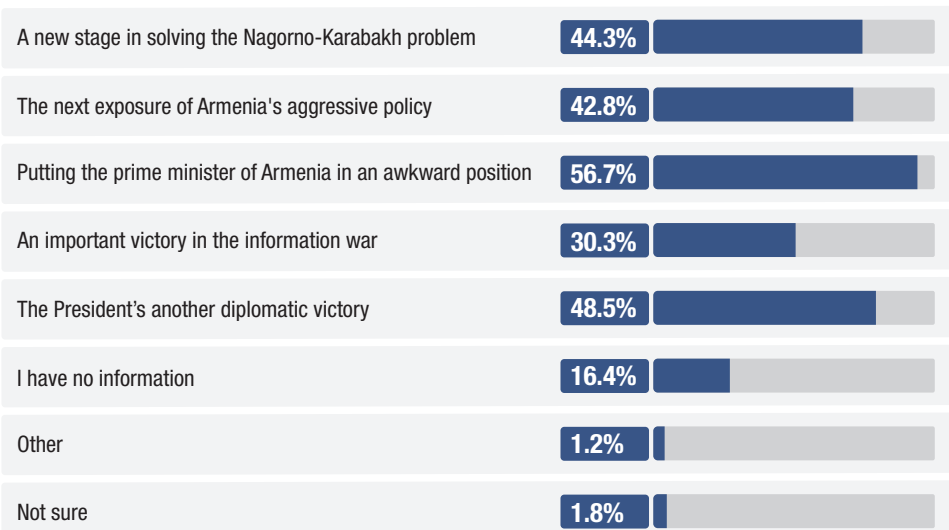




DIAGRAM 4.

HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT THE MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE?



Note: Respondents could choose several answer options. Therefore, the total percentage of responses makes up more than 100%

It is worth noting that 16.4% of the respondents were not informed of this. The demographic indicators of those who have no information on this speech show that women predominate. People with incomplete and complete secondary education are more ignorant of this than those with higher and vocational education. Compared to Baku and Absheron, those who are not informed of this speech prevail in the regions. Compared to middle-aged and elderly people, youth is less informed.

This result raises questions about the efficiency of mass media, which serves as the primary continuous communication tool for the population. It is crucial to convey such vital information to citizens in a correct, comprehensive, and understandable manner and to keep the public informed not only during the occurrence of events but also afterward.

The President's prompt response to events transpiring in the country and globally is generally positively assessed and supported by the population. Citizens highly value the President's appropriate responses to numerous events that unfolded during the first three months of 2020, particularly two issues of global significance.

In general, the first quarter of 2020 is characterized as a period rich in the President's flexible and purposeful strategic decisions in the socio-economic field. The President has determined and strictly controls the basic contours of the large-

scale action plan based on strong political will to ensure the stability of the country's economy and its resistance to

External impacts and maintaining the prospects of economic development. The respondents' attitudes toward preventive measures (preventive policy strategies) in these fields were studied according to specific priorities.

The citizen's opinion on exchange rate policy is of utmost importance, particularly as one of the key aspects of economic policy that the general public closely monitors during times of crisis. Consequently, a significant portion of surveyed respondents (75.9%) perceive the purposeful measures taken to maintain exchange rate stability amidst volatility in global oil markets as highly effective.

Analysis indicates that the assessment of effectiveness in this area varies based on the respondent's occupation. While public sector workers view state policy in this regard as very efficient, representatives from the private sector primarily consider it efficient ($F(6)=3.593$, $p<0.01$). Furthermore, when considering the age distribution of respondents, it becomes evident that older individuals, especially those over 50, hold a higher regard for currency stability compared to respondents under 25 ($F(4)=5.469$, $p<0.01$). Additionally, the findings suggest that family households exhibit a positive attitude toward this issue.



DIAGRAM 5.

**AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF FALLING OIL PRICES,
HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE PREVENTIVE MEASURES
OF THE COUNTRY'S LEADERSHIP IN THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS?**

Very efficient Mainly efficient Mainly inefficient Not efficient Not sure

Keeping the exchange rate stable



Ensuring stability in financial-banking sector



Ensuring food security



Regularly informing the public by relevant governmental institutions



A noteworthy point is that only one of five respondents had difficulty expressing an opinion in this field. The result of the comparative analysis of the respondents who had difficulty answering this question in terms of gender allows for concluding that women make up the majority ($X^2(1)=9.996$, $p<0.01$). Herewith, it was found that respondents with higher education had less difficulty in answering this question than those with medium education levels ($X^2(4)=25.135$, $p<0.01$). On the other hand, at the national level (except for the geography where the survey was not performed), the urban respondents expressed their position more openly compared to the rural ones ($X^2(1)=4.424$, $p<0.05$). Only 3.1% of the respondents expressed a pessimistic position concerning the strategic decisions made.

The attitude toward sound measures aimed at ensuring stability in the financial banking sector emerges as another crucial aspect in this context. Public opinion can be characterized by the following indicators: 63.1% of respondents consider these measures quite efficient, while 3.5% deem them mostly ineffective. Additionally, a significant portion, 33.4% of respondents, find it difficult to express their opinion on this matter.

Respondents who positively evaluated the reforms in the financial banking sector also perceive the pursued currency policy as effective. Specifically, correlation analysis yields a positive result ($r=0.542$,

$p<0.01$). Those who highly appreciate stability measures in the financial banking sector also express significant satisfaction with the concept of ensuring food security ($r=0.480$, $p<0.01$). However, this correlation is relatively lower compared to that with stability in currency policy.

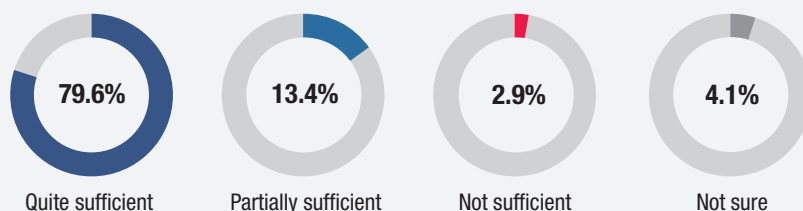
An interesting observation is that respondents with higher and vocational education encountered less difficulty in answering compared to those with secondary education ($X^2(4)=13.620$, $p<0.01$). Furthermore, the analysis indicates that most respondents who found it challenging to answer this question held a similar position when answering the question about maintaining exchange rate stability ($X^2(4)=0.346$, $p<0.01$).

Under the conditions of the deepening COVID-19 pandemic and the global oil crisis (a sharp drop in oil prices), studying the public attitude toward the large-scale work performed in the field of food security is of strategic importance. Public opinion on this issue is important in not only the socio-economic but also the security context. Thus, 89.2% of the respondents appreciate the President's especially sensitive approach to the issue while always keeping it in the spotlight and the state policy in this field. This indicator once again explicitly manifests the public opinion that the President determines the socio-economic according to the public interests. 2.4% of the respondents assessed the work in this field as ineffective



DIAGRAM 6.

HOW SUFFICIENT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE STATE TO COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



while 8.4% of them found it difficult to answer. Public opinion allows for asserting that even against the background of global economic stagnation, the respondents highly appreciate Mr. President's speech based on national economic interests in this field.

One of the key aspects of the new stage of nationwide socio-economic reforms, with the Azerbaijani people at the forefront, is the regular dissemination of information to the general public about all stages of reform progress by governmental institutions operating in this field. This marks a transition to a higher level of crisis communication efficiency. Looking back over the last three months, it is noteworthy that the President has consistently convened meetings with representatives from the socio-economic sector (political administrators) and has openly reported the assigned tasks to a wide audience.

While 87.8% of the respondents regarded the activity in this field as significantly effective, a very small portion - 2.6% of them assessed the work performed as ineffective. In total, 9.4% of the respondents encountered difficulty in answering. Respondents living in settlements assessed the activity in this field as more effective than their urban and rural counterparts ($t(644)=2.504$, $p<0.05$). Additionally, from another perspective, it

is observed that respondents who had difficulty answering this question were predominantly city and village residents ($X^2(2)=21.413$, $p<0.01$).

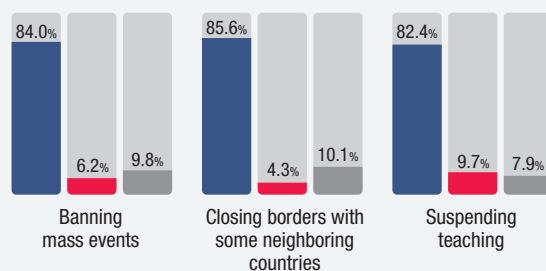
In general, we can note that the respondents have more difficulty in answering the sub-components of this question compared to other ones but under the current conditions of global economic stagnation, there are positive expectations from the strategic steps of the country's leadership and the economic conjuncture formed after the April 2019 reforms (in the socio-economic field), and the indexation according to the results. The global practice also shows that socio-economic reforms manifest their results after a certain period. On the other hand, when considering those having difficulty in answering from a socio-demographic perspective, we also see that mainly women and those less educated come to the fore. The four sub-questions addressed to the respondents in this question block can be evaluated as a single factor when approached as part of factor analysis. The factor loading of these questions falls within the range of 0.750 to 0.818. The determined single factor explained 61% of the total variance. It's noteworthy that the factor reliability was also high (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.773). Based on the respondents' answers to the sub-questions in the socio-economic con-



DIAGRAM 7.

HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE COUNTRY'S LEADERSHIP TO COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS?

■ Positively ■ Negatively ■ Not sure



text, we can observe their high confidence in the President's socio-economic policy as a 'latent factor.' This factor once again underscores the strategic importance of the socio-economic policy as a sub-index of the Confidence Index 2020/1.

The coronavirus pandemic is among the issues worrying the country and the world over the last few months. The operative steps taken by the President of Azerbaijan at the initial stage of the pandemic-related measures to avoid complications caused by this problem have been highly appreciated by the World Health Organization in terms of preventing the spread of the coronavirus compared to other countries.

Establishing the Operational Headquarters under the Cabinet of Ministers by the President's order, suspending teaching in higher and secondary educational institutions, introducing quarantine restrictions, developing the legal framework for the special regime by the Milli Majlis, and continuously monitoring the situation with the coronavirus under the direct supervision of the President was assessed very positively by the country's citizens.

Establishing the Fund to Support the Fight Against Coronavirus by the President under the slogan 'National Unity and Solidarity!' and transferring the annual salaries of the President and the 1st Vice President to this Fund as assistance have further increased social responsibility among the entire country's population. Following the President's example, citizens have also started joining this nationwide process.

Based on the SRC survey results concerning the population's attitude toward the coronavirus, we can state that the absolute majority of the respondents (93%) positively assess the measures

implemented by the state to combat the coronavirus in March and consider them sufficient. Public opinion highly appreciates the state policy in this field, particularly the President's sensitive approach to protecting the national gene pool and further strengthening social healthcare, which he constantly keeps in the center of attention.

Answering the question, "How do you assess the measures taken by the country's leadership to combat the coronavirus?", the majority of the population assesses them positively. The vast majority of the respondents expressed a more positive attitude toward closing borders with some neighbouring countries (85.6%), banning mass events (84%), and suspending teaching (82.4%).

When considering the answers, we can see that about 10% of the respondents had difficulty expressing their opinions on these issues. This was because at the beginning of March, the pandemic was not yet registered in our country, the virus was detected only in those coming from abroad, and the number of new infection cases was very small. People found it difficult to completely understand and evaluate the essence of these measures.

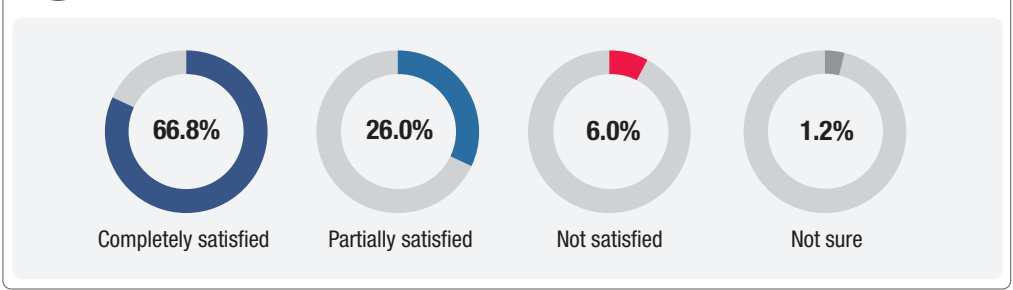
Note that a certain portion of people do not consider the current quarantine regime to have excessively negative effects if it continues. The main reason for such opinions is their trust in the state. They believe that the state will support its citizens in any circumstance.

In this survey, the vast majority of respondents (87.8%) believe that the state will support them in any problems they encounter in the current situation.

Since the emergence of the threat of coronavirus, people's demand for various



DIAGRAM 8.
WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO CASES CAUSING PUBLIC CONDEMNATION?



medical tools (alcohol, masks) to combat this virus has increased. Against the background of this increase in demand, some forces tried to take advantage of this opportunity and created an artificial price increase, a 'scarcity' of those tools. The fact that such cases caused public condemnation and were widely discussed on social networks indicated the dissatisfaction of citizens.

As soon as the President became aware of the problem, he instructed the law enforcement agencies and took the issue under strict control.

From this perspective, respondents were asked, "To what extent are you satisfied with the President's response to cases that have caused public condemnation?"

Overall, the vast majority of respondents (92.8%) agree with the President's response to such cases. Specifically, slightly more than two-thirds of the respondents (66.8%) are 'completely satisfied' with the President's response, while 26% are 'partially satisfied.' These findings reaffirm the significance of public condemnation and the importance of citizens informing about such cases.

The citizens who are satisfied with the President's response to cases causing public condemnation are mostly those positively assessing his activity in certain fields. The higher the level of education, the higher the probability of citizens' dissatisfaction with the President's response to cases causing public condemnation.

The President's response to cases causing public condemnation is directly related to his awareness of what is happening in places.

The majority of respondents (88.9%) consider that the President is, in general, aware of what is happening in places. However, the respondents' opinions on the degree of this awareness are ambivalent. Thus, the weight of the answers

'completely informed' (44.3%) and 'partially informed' (44.6%) are almost the same. Interestingly, about 10% of people consider that the President is not aware of what is happening in places, which is a disturbing indicator.

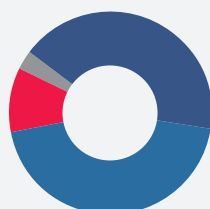
One of the primary reasons for this sentiment is the perception that letters and complaints sent by citizens to the President do not reach their intended recipient and consequently go unanswered. During the inaugural session of the Milli Majlis of the VI Convocation, President Ilham Aliyev addressed this matter seriously. He emphasized the necessity for an effective complaint mechanism and the importance of strengthening public oversight. The President stated that appropriate measures had been implemented, leading to significant changes within the Presidential Administration. Those responsible for hindering the process were dismissed, and further steps were taken to enhance operations in this regard.

Stressing these points by the President in his speeches creates conditions for the more optimistic approach of citizens to this issue, the due response to their complaints and applications, and increases the probability that officials hindering this process will be dismissed, and the rest of them will work better.

In his speeches, the President emphasizes that public opinion is always considered in the decisions made and citizen-oriented measures taken. Public polls, socialization of their results, and reference to these surveys by the President also make citizens consider that public opinion, their views and attitude are important to the state. The vast majority of respondents believe that the President's awareness of what is happening in places is manifested in his decisions in various forms.



DIAGRAM 9.
IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT
IS THE EXTENT OF THE
PRESIDENT'S AWARENESS
OF WHAT IS HAPPENING
IN PLACES?

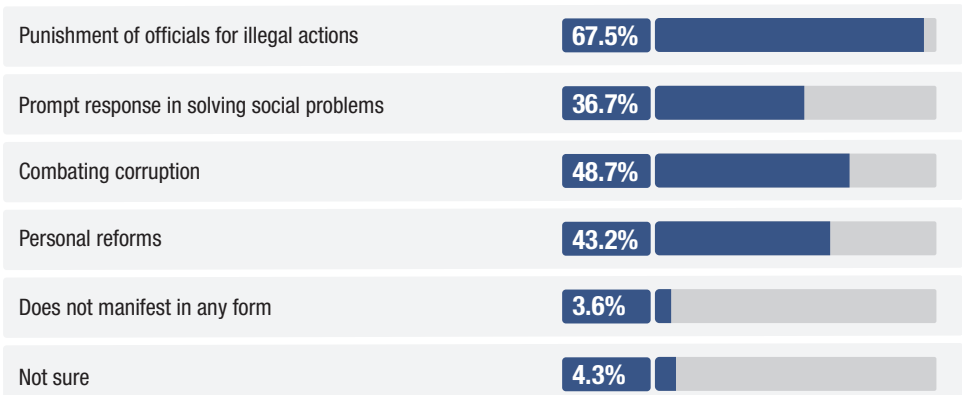


| | |
|-------|---------------------|
| 44.3% | Completely informed |
| 44.6% | Partially informed |
| 9.4% | Not informed at all |
| 1.7% | Not sure |

Note: Respondents could choose several answer options. Therefore, the total percentage of responses makes up more than 100%



DIAGRAM 10.
IN WHAT FORMS DOES THE PRESIDENT'S AWARENESS OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN PLACES MANIFEST ITSELF?



67.5% of the respondents believe that the President's awareness of local occurrences leads to actions taken by him to penalize officials for their illicit activities. In other words, the President ensures that upon being informed of unlawful conduct, the responsible individuals will face consequences. Concrete proof of this assertion includes the arrests and disciplinary actions taken against executive officials in certain regions (such as Agstafa and Neftchala) by the State Security Service in recent months.

According to almost half of the respondents (48.7%), the President's awareness of what is happening in places manifests itself in his decisions to combat corruption and Personnel reforms (43.2%).

It appears that the majority of citizens believe that once informed about ongoing events, the President initiates necessary personnel changes, sometimes involving punitive actions. This outcome underscores the significance of public oversight, a point repeatedly emphasized by the President in his speeches. However, the fact that only one in three respondents (36.7%) considers the President's awareness level important for addressing social issues and providing timely responses serves as a wake-up call.

In general, the absolute majority of respondents (95.2%) consider that public

opinion has played its role in the dismissal of executive leaders. The vast majority of the population (81.8%) is confident that public opinion directly affected the dismissal of local executive bodies by the President. The spread of such opinion among the population can positively characterize President-citizen relations.

The State Security Service's actions against local executive leaders, performed as part of reforms and anti-corruption policy, caused positive expectations, especially in citizens living in the regions. In some cases, those who believed that the situation would not change, and the arbitrariness of officials would continue, changed their minds. More than half of the respondents (54.4%) believe that after these actions, the heads of regional executive bodies will refrain from corruption. A similar number of respondents (50.3%) expect for an increase in the citizens' confidence in the rule of law. These measures and compliance with the 'rule of law' principle once again confirmed the President's political will concerning the equality of any high-ranking officer before the law and the lack of benefits for anyone in connection with the corruption. This increases people's trust in the law and the legal system. The lack of any expectations of 9.4% of respondents is the point requiring attention. This can also



DIAGRAM 11.
DO YOU AGREE THAT "THE DISMISSAL OF THE EXECUTIVE LEADERS FOR ILLEGAL ACTIONS SHOWS THAT THE PRESIDENT RESPECTS AND CONSIDERS THE PUBLIC OPINION"?

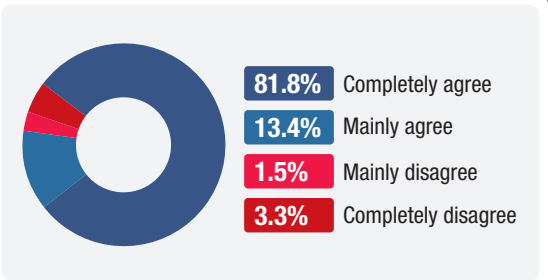




DIAGRAM 12.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM ACTIONS RECENTLY PERFORMED BY THE STATE SECURITY SERVICE?



Note: Respondents could choose several answer options. Therefore, the total percentage of responses makes up more than 100%

indicate unsatisfactory activity of the heads of local executive bodies in some regions. Similarly, 9.4% of respondents believe that the existing punishment principles will not lead to any fundamental change.

Unfortunately, the actions of some executive leaders fail to uphold the trust placed in them by the President. Despite the President's repeated calls for transparency, public service, and the enhancement of citizens' welfare, some officials disregard these directives and continue to act against the interests of the people. Consequently, the dismissal and punishment of such officials underscore the effectiveness of state policy in this regard. The recent actions taken by the State Security Service against executive leaders in certain regions have elicited a positive

response from citizens, as evidenced by survey results. A majority of respondents (85%) believe that these actions positively contribute to the President's image. The punishment and removal of officials who abuse their positions instill confidence that the ongoing reforms cannot be derailed.

One of the key specifics of Personnel reforms launched in 2019, was the 'rejuvenation policy.' Replacing the older generation represented in the government by youth has not only been supported by the citizens but also increased their positive expectations.

The absolute majority of the respondents (91%) assess the appointment of youth to local executive bodies positively in one way or another (75.2% 'very good', 15.8% 'mostly good'). The neutral attitude of 6.1% of the respondents may be caused by the



DIAGRAM 13.

HOW DO ACTIONS, PERFORMED AGAINST THE EXECUTIVE LEADERS IN SOME REGIONS BY THE STATE SECURITY SERVICE, AFFECT THE PRESIDENTIAL IMAGE?

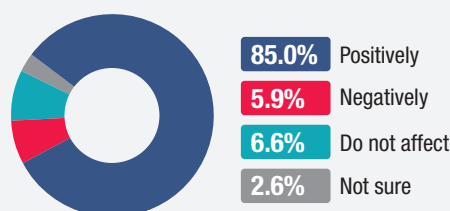


DIAGRAM 14.

WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF YOUTH TO LOCAL EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

Very good Mainly good Neutral Mainly negative Very negative

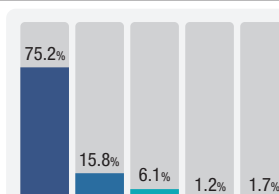
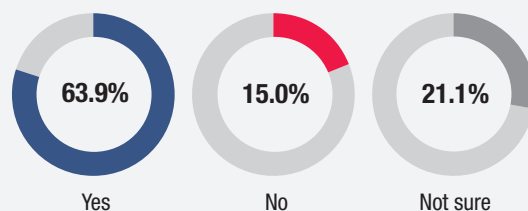




DIAGRAM 15.
**CAN THE NEW COMPOSITION
OF THE MILLI MAJLIS
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT'S
REFORMS?**



lack of ideas on the activity of young executives. This indicator shows that more than 90 and 6.1% of the country's population have, respectively, a positive and neutral attitude toward the appointment of youth to local executive bodies. Here can be said that the population has a positive attitude toward staff changes in local executive bodies. The appointment of representatives of the younger generation is also highly regarded. Particularly, the population hopes that the renewal, especially through the appointment of relatively young personnel, will be in the people's interests, and the new employees will be better than the previous ones. Herewith, it should be stressed that this is also the expectation of public opinion. Thus, the essence of the Personnel policy is not just 'rejuvenation' but meeting the criteria of serving the people by the President.

Dissolution of the Milli Majlis of the 5th convocation and new extraordinary elections became the key part of radical reforms. Note that during the elections to the Milli Majlis, the President called on young people to be active and put forward their candidacies. A sufficient number of young people in the newly formed Milli Majlis testify to the support of the representation of youth in both the law-making and executive power by the state.

Since the Milli Majlis of the 5th con-

vocation failed to adequately respond to the new course of reforms and in some cases, slowed this process down, a new parliament with a new composition had to be convened. A significant part of the respondents (63.9%) consider that the new composition of the Milli Majlis can support the President's reform course. Another important point is that 21.1% of the respondents have difficulty expressing their opinion on this issue.

This shows that many people do not have enough information on the new Milli Majlis composition, or that some time is needed for any opinion to form.

Reforms in law enforcement/security structures started in June 2019 and continued in subsequent months. The respondents believe that staff changes performed by the President in security bodies will positively affect the efficiency of the reforms in general (79.5%), strengthening national security, (85.5%), and people's trust in security agencies (81.9%). It should also be noted that 10.5% of respondents trust that the changes will not affect the effectiveness of general reforms, and 8.7% believe that this will not affect the public's trust in law enforcement agencies. This shows that despite the ongoing radical reforms and staff changes in some institutions, negative situations remain in some places.



DIAGRAM 16.
**HOW DO THE STAFF CHANGES, PERFORMED BY THE PRESIDENT
IN THE SECURITY AGENCIES, AFFECT THE FOLLOWING FIELDS?**

■ Positively ■ Do not affect ■ Negatively ■ Not sure

Efficiency of the reforms in general



Strengthening national security

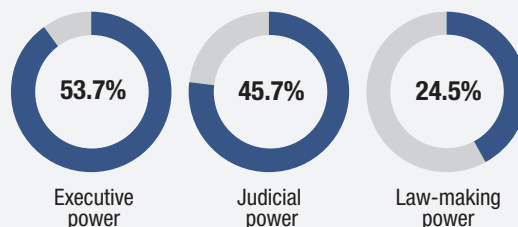


People's trust in security agencies





DIAGRAM 17.
**WHICH ONE OF THE BELOW
AREAS REQUIRES MORE
REFORMS?**



Despite the successfully continued reforms, some areas still need radical reforms and staff changes.

Answers to the question, "Which area requires more reforms?" allow for asserting that the population considers the executive (53.7%) and judicial (45.7%) powers to most need reforms. Those who do not trust the executive power are dominated among those stating the importance of reforms in executive power ($\chi^2(9)=22.122$, $p<0.01$).

This result indicates that the executive power activity is still unsatisfactory in places and is assessed by citizens as inefficient.

The fact that approximately half of the respondents advocate for reforms in the judiciary underscores the public's desire for improvements in this sector. As previously mentioned, trust in the courts is not particularly high among the population (49%). A correlation emerges between these two sentiments, indicating that among those calling for judicial reforms, there is a prevalent lack of trust in the judiciary ($\chi^2(9)=24.325$, $p<0.01$).

Compared to the judiciary, fewer respondents perceive the need for reform in the legislative branch (24.5%). This could be attributed to the significant reforms enacted in the legislature in 2020. Many respondents expressed optimism that the new parliament will support the President's reforms, reflecting the expectations associated with the composition of the new parliament, as highlighted earlier. While significant progress has been made in re-

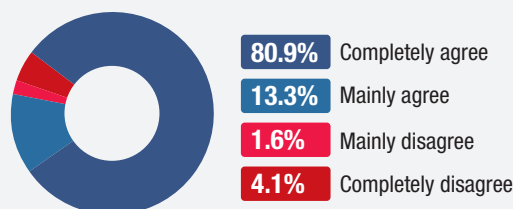
forming various executive bodies, some regions still require attention in this regard. Despite this, citizens maintain high expectations for reforms within the executive branch and remain hopeful that progress will continue.

The majority of those who consider that the new Milli Majlis composition can support the President's reforms are those who state that the executive power needs reforms. The answers to both this and other questions in the survey allow stating that although the parliamentary elections on February 9 formed mainly positive impressions in people on the new Milli Majlis composition, the public opinion on the executive power is ambiguous and expects new changes.

The President's consistent presence among the people and his preference for simplicity in both life and demeanour convey a powerful message to officials through actions rather than words. A vast majority of respondents (94.2%) view the President's simplicity and modesty as exemplary for officials. The President's conduct at various events and meetings, genuine conversations, and attentive listening to people's concerns contribute to this perception among citizens. Examples such as his sincerity at the event commemorating the 90th anniversary of Khoshbakht Yusifzade, where he emphasized Yusifzade's labor contributions, or his choice to sit among young people on equal terms during the opening of an ASAN Service Center, along with his advocacy for respect toward elders in speeches and actions, in-



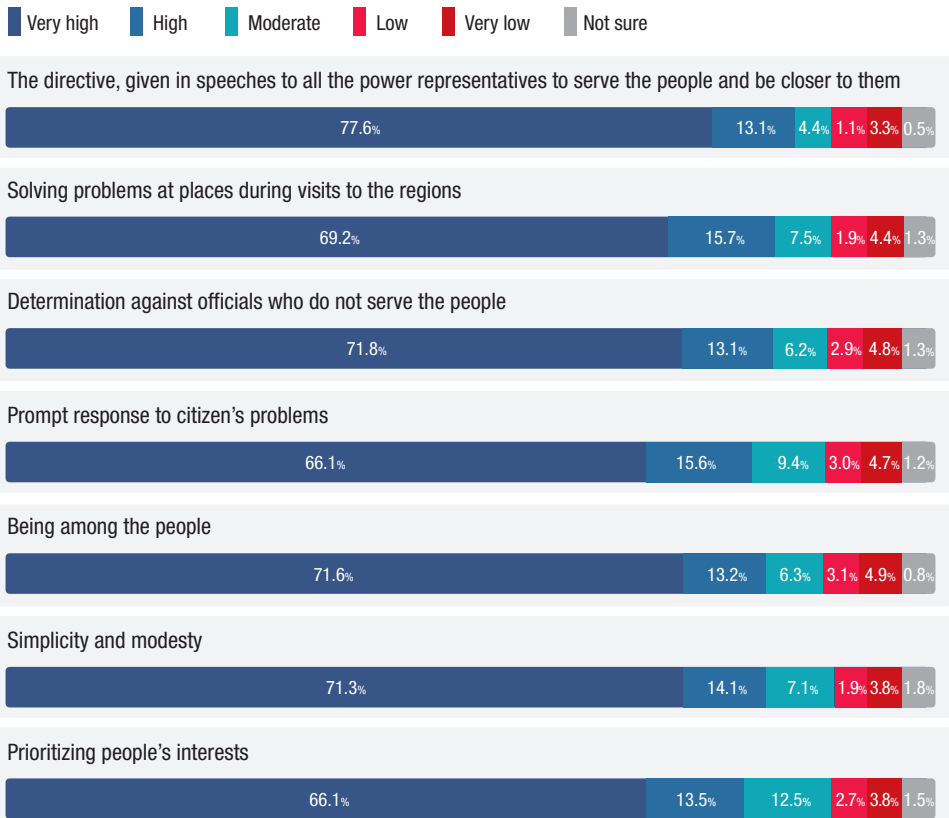
DIAGRAM 18.
**"TO WHAT EXTENT
DO YOU AGREE THAT
"THE PRESIDENT IS
AN EXAMPLE TO OFFICIALS
WITH HIS SIMPLICITY AND
MODESTY?"**



Note: Respondents could choose several answer options. Therefore, the total percentage of responses makes up more than 100%



DIAGRAM 19.
**TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE FOLLOWING
FACTORS AFFECT THE PRESIDENT'S IMAGE?**



cluding recommendations to youth, have all contributed to shaping the image of a 'simple and sincere President' in the public's perception.

Moreover, photos from select holiday events and birthday celebrations shared by the President and his family members on social media platforms further underscore their adherence to national traditions and a preference for simplicity in their lifestyle.

The survey performed as part of the research and employees' observations in places shows that while people are satisfied with their contacts with the President, they are largely dissatisfied with the officials, their negative conduct toward the citizens, and avoidance of contact with them.

In the respondents' opinion, the directive from the President's speeches, urging all government representatives to prioritize serving the people and being closer to them, stands out as the most influential factor in the President's image, with 77.6% agreement. This highlights the significance citizens place on holding officials account-

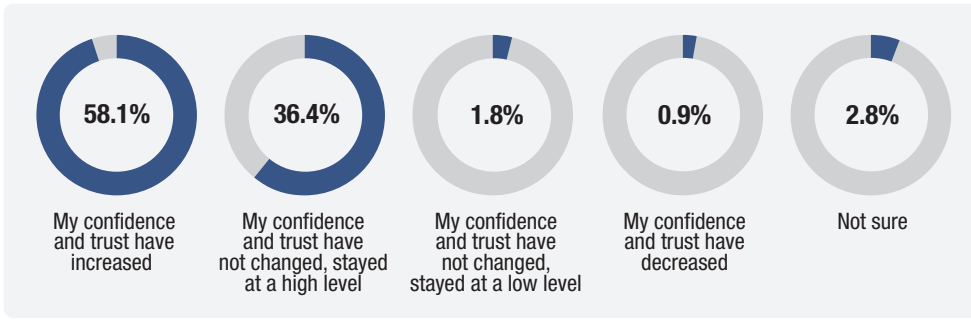
able and implementing staff changes. Additionally, the top three factors impacting the President's image, ranked by degree of influence, include his resolute stance against officials who fail to serve the people (71.8%), his presence among citizens (71.6%), and his display of simplicity and modesty (71.3%). These findings underscore that staff changes and the President's accessibility to ordinary citizens are pivotal factors contributing positively to his image.

Confidence and trust in the President have increased in 58.1% of respondents and stayed at a high level in 36.4% of them.

The observations in both the regions and Baku reveal a widespread sense of confidence and satisfaction with the President's performance. This sentiment is particularly strong given the recent social reforms led by the President, especially those implemented in the past three months. Despite the prevailing support for the Head of State across various regions, citizens also express concerns and indirect



DIAGRAM 20.
**HOW HAS YOUR CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN THE PRESIDENT
CHANGED OVER THE LAST 5 MONTHS?**



fears regarding the adequacy of the President's team in responding to his initiatives.

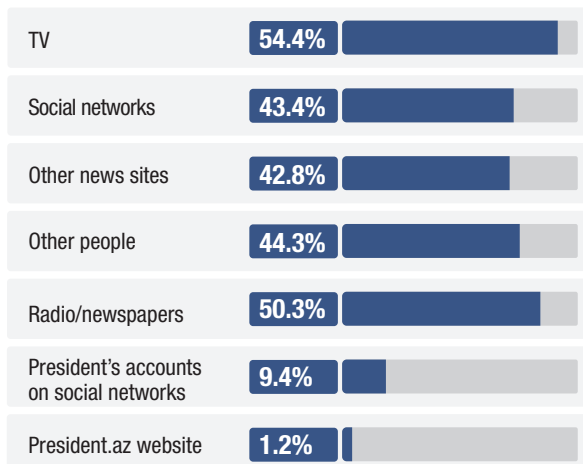
The results of some studies performed by SRC showed that the population receives information mostly from television and then, social networks and sites. The survey results also show that citizens receive information on the President's activity from television (81.1%) and social networks (41.7%). This indicator once again confirms that television is the main source of informing people of the President's activity. This also shows the need for more operative and full information in this field, provided by television. Prime-time TV broadcasting not only news but also certain most popular programs and videos on the President's activity can be effective in terms of informing citizens of the President's actions.

Another issue is the low indicator of using the President's website prezident.az (7.3%) and social network accounts (8.4%). Demographic analysis of the respondents shows that both sources are more addressed by those with higher ed-

ucation and the Baku residents. Receiving information by the citizens from a direct source - the President's social network accounts instead of other social networks will be effective in terms of their access to information.



DIAGRAM 21.
**WHERE DO YOU GET
INFORMATION ON THE
PRESIDENT'S ACTIVITY?**



CONCLUSION

❖ The analysis of the results of the survey performed to study public opinion on the activity of President Ilham Aliyev in the fields of internal and foreign policy during the first quarter of 2020 and the 'Index of Trust' to the President shows that public confidence and trust in President Ilham Aliyev has increased due to his proper policy, and the support for the reforms oriented to further improving the well-being and prosperity of our people will continue to be on the rise.

❖ The majority of respondents trust the President rather than other power branches (law-making and judiciary).

❖ The absolute majority of the respondents (90.8%) state, "I completely trust the President."

❖ Among the respondents, 57% expressed trust in Parliament, 46% in the local executive power, and 49% in the court. The local executive power received the lowest trust among the three power branches. This allows asserting that the country's population trusts the President more compared to other governmental structures.

❖ The President's activity in the military, political, and socioeconomic fields has been positively assessed by the vast majority. The absolute majority of the respondents highly appreciated the President's activity in the fields of army building and modernization of the armed forces (96%) and foreign policy (95%).

❖ Comparing those results of 2019 with the new ones shows that during the past few months, the people's attitude toward the President's activity in various fields has improved. Another important point is that those who assess the President's activity in various fields as 'very good' have increased significantly.

❖ The relatively low estimate of the matter, directly or perceptibly affecting the daily life of people, - the level of combating corruption in public opinion indicates that this field, as well as unemployment and improving social situation, should remain the key goals of state policy for the foreseeable future.

❖ The President's speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2020 (as a continuation of his speech at the meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club), exposing the Armenian

Prime Minister's statements and occupying policy with historical truth, positively affected citizens' attitude toward the President in public opinion and increased their confidence in the restoration of our territorial integrity.

❖ The President's speech at the Munich Security Conference was rated as putting the prime minister of Armenia in an awkward position again (56.7%), the President's next diplomatic victory (48.5%), and a new phase in solving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem (44.3%).

❖ A significant part of the surveyed respondents (75.9%) consider the purposeful measures implemented in keeping the exchange rate stable against the background of volatility in the world oil markets to be significantly effective.

❖ 63.1% of the respondents consider the result-oriented measures to ensure the stability of the country's financial-banking sector sufficiently effective.

❖ Citizens highly appreciated the large-scale work performed in the field of ensuring food security under the conditions of the deepening COVID-19 pandemic and the global oil crisis (a sharp drop in oil prices) (87.8%).

❖ 87.8% of the respondents assess the regular provision of the public with information on socio-economic reforms by relevant government agencies as effective.

❖ 89.2% of the respondents highly appreciate the state policy in this field, the President's especially sensitive approach to the issues of protecting the national gene pool and further strengthening social healthcare, constantly keeping it in the center of attention.

❖ The absolute majority of the respondents (93%) positively assess the measures implemented by the state at the initial stage to combat the coronavirus and consider them sufficient.

❖ The vast majority of respondents (87.8%) believe that the state will support them in any problems they encounter in the current situation with the pandemic.

❖ The vast majority of the respondents expressed a more positive attitude toward the measures taken to combat the pandemic - closing borders with some neighbouring countries (85.6%), banning mass events (84%), and suspending teaching (82.4%).

❖ In general, the absolute majority of the respondents (92.8%) agree with the President's response to cases causing public condemnation.

❖ The majority of respondents (88.9%) consider that the President is, in general, aware of what is happening in places. However, the respondents' opinions on the awareness degree are ambiguous - the weight of the answers 'completely informed' (44.3%) and 'partially informed' (44.6%) is almost the same.

❖ Note that 10% of the respondents consider that the President is not aware of what is happening in places at all, which is a disturbing indicator. This result once again shows the importance of public control, repeatedly stressed by the President in his speeches. The survey results also allow for stating that the mechanisms of reporting the problems and processes occurring in places to superior authorities require reviewing and improvement. For instance, one of the key problems in this regard is that citizens' appeals do not reach the appropriate addressee.

❖ According to the respondents, the President's awareness of what is happening in places is manifested in steps taken by him to punish officials for illegal actions (67.5%), measures to combat corruption (48.7%), and Personnel reforms (43.2%).

❖ The fact that only one of three respondents considers the degree of the President's awareness important in solving social problems and prompt response to them is a wake-up call.

❖ The vast majority of the population (81.8%) is confident that public opinion directly affected the dismissal of local executive bodies by the President. The total indicator of this opinion is 95.2%. The spread of such opinion among the population can positively characterize President-citizen relations.

❖ In general, a few more than two-thirds of the respondents are completely satisfied with the President's response to cases causing public condemnation, and one-fourth are partially satisfied. According to the results, people consider the President sensitive to public opinion in his activity.

❖ The State Security Service's actions against local executive leaders, performed as part of reforms and anti-corruption policy, caused positive expectations, especially in citizens living in the regions.

In some cases, those who believed that the situation would not change, and the arbitrariness of officials would continue, changed their minds. People evaluate such steps as the key branch of reforms and wish them to continue.

❖ Also, the punishment of the officials who do not justify the President's credence testifies to the irreversibility and consistency of the reforms. It is the only criterion for serving the people. Everyone is equal in front of the law. Confidence in the rule of law is also growing in people.

❖ More than half of the respondents (54.4%) believe that after these actions, the heads of regional executive bodies will refrain from corruption. A similar number of respondents (50.3%) expect for an increase in the citizens' confidence in the rule of law.

❖ The majority of respondents (85%) consider the actions performed by the State Security Service to positively affect the President's image. Punishment and dismissal of officials abusing their positions show that no one can stop the launched reforms.

❖ According to the majority of citizens, the ongoing staff changes are among the key factors that positively affect the President's image.

❖ The absolute majority of the respondents (91%) assess the appointment of youth to local executive bodies positively in one way or another (75.2% 'very good', 15.8% 'mostly good').

❖ A significant part of the respondents (63.9%) consider that the new composition of the Milli Majlis can support the President's reform course, while 21.1% of the respondents have difficulty expressing their opinion on this issue.

❖ The respondents believe that staff changes performed by the President in security bodies will positively affect the efficiency of reforms in general (79.5%), strengthening national security, (85.5%), and people's trust in security agencies (81.9%).

❖ Answers to the question, "Which area requires more reforms?" allow for asserting that the population considers the executive (53.7%) and judicial (45.7%) powers to most need reforms. Those who do not trust the executive power are dominated among those stating the importance of reforms in executive power. This result indicates that the executive power

activity is still unsatisfactory in places and is assessed by citizens as inefficient.

❖ The fact that about half of the respondents also state the need for reforms in the court indicates the citizens' expectations of reforms in this field. As noted above, trust in the courts is not so high among the population (49%). When looking at the relationship between these two ideas, it is clear that among the respondents who wish for reforms in the courts, those who do not trust the judiciary are dominated.

❖ Compared to the other two areas, the respondents consider the law-making power to need reformation less (24.5%). This may be due to radical reforms performed in the law-making power in 2020. A significant part of the respondents consider that the new parliament can support the President's reforms. This can be explained by expectations associated with the new parliament composition in public opinion, as stressed above.

❖ In the opinion of 77.6% respondents, "the directive, given by the President in speeches to all the power representatives to serve the people and be closer to them," comes to the forefront as a factor 'most affecting the President's image,' which shows that the punishment of officials and staff changes are of high importance for citizens.

❖ By the impact degree, the top three factors are 'determination against officials who do not serve the people' (71.8%), 'being among the people' (71.6%), and 'simplicity and modesty' (71.3%).

❖ The absolute majority of the respondents (94.2%) consider the President with his simplicity and modesty to be an example for officials. The President's conduct in many events and meetings, sincere conversations, and hearing people out form this opinion in the citizens.

❖ The dynamics of citizens' trust and confidence in the President in the first quarter of 2020 show a growth in this direction. Thus, while in the 'President's Performance in Public Opinion' survey performed by SRC in October 2019, the 'Trust Index' was 54.6%, in March this year, this indicator made up 58.1%. In general, based on the indicators for March 2020, we can state that the absolute majority of the respondents believe in the President and trust him.

❖ Citizens receive information on

the President's activity from television (81.1%) and social networks (41.7%). The indicator of using the President's website prezident.az (7.3%) and social network accounts (8.4%) is low. Demographic analysis of the respondents shows that both sources are more addressed by those with higher education and the Baku residents.

❖ Receiving information by the citizens from a direct source - the President's social network accounts instead of other social networks will be effective in terms of their access to information.

NOTES

[illegible]



**SOCIAL
RESEARCH
CENTER**

18, Ismayil bay Kutkashenli Str., Yasamal district, Baku, AZ1073, the Republic of Azerbaijan

Telephone: (+994 12) 510-70-78; (+994 12) 510-23-75; (+994 12) 510-70-69

info@stm.az www.stm.az