

**THE DOHA
DEBATES**

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What the world thinks

Syria's President Assad - should he resign?

Date

25TH DECEMBER 2011

Polling dates

14TH DECEMBER 2011 – 19TH DECEMBER 2011

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METHODOLOGY

Methodology

- The research was conducted using **YouGov's regional online panel of 220,000+ respondents**. Respondents from across the region (Arab world) were invited to participate in the survey.
- A total of **1,012 respondents** completed the **5-7 minute** survey.
- Fieldwork was conducted from the **14th to 19th of December 2011**.

on - Admin x YouGov Survey x

https://gryphonldc.yougov.net/preview/1380737870/YGSj1544_DohaDebates_D2Assad_14112011_AR/2

8%

YouGov What the world thinks

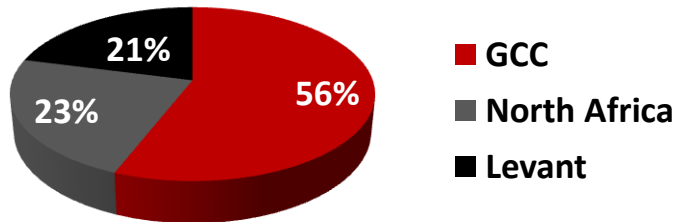
شكراً لموافقتك على المشاركة في هذا الاستطلاع.
نود أن نتعرف على آرائك حول الرئيس بشار الأسد والوضع الحالي في سوريا
مدة الاستطلاع: 10 دقائق تقريباً
عند استكمال الاستطلاع ستتم زيادة 100 نقطة على رصيدك
مشاركة في سحب على جائزة: جهاز نت بوك
يتم السحب في 5 يناير 2012
أراؤك مهمة جداً وأكثر تأثيراً وفعالية مما تعتقد.
يرجى الضغط على زر "التالي" الموجود أسفل كل صفحة للانتقال بين صفحات الاستطلاع. يرجى عدم استخدام زر "التقدم" الموجود في أعلى المتصفح الإلكتروني.
إذا واجهت مشكلة في الاستطلاع الرجاء استخدام زر "إعادة التحميل".



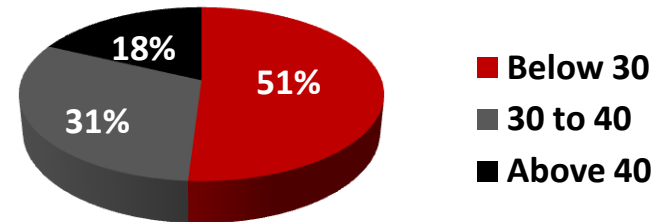
DEMOGRAPHICS

Respondent demographics

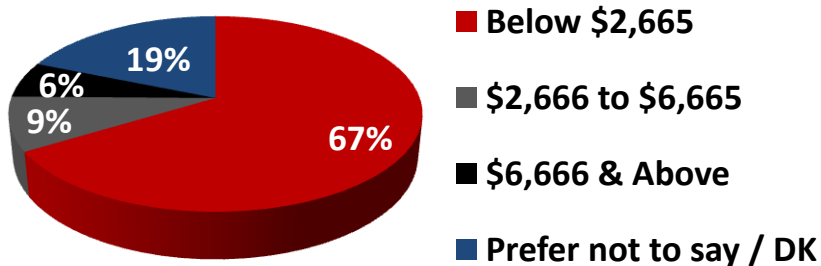
REGION



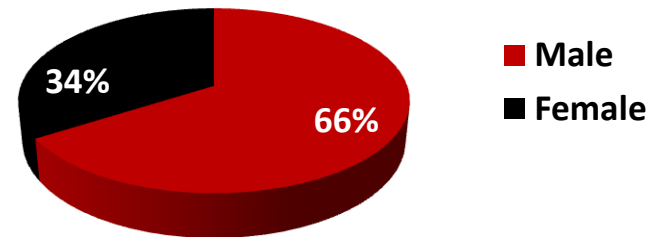
AGE



MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

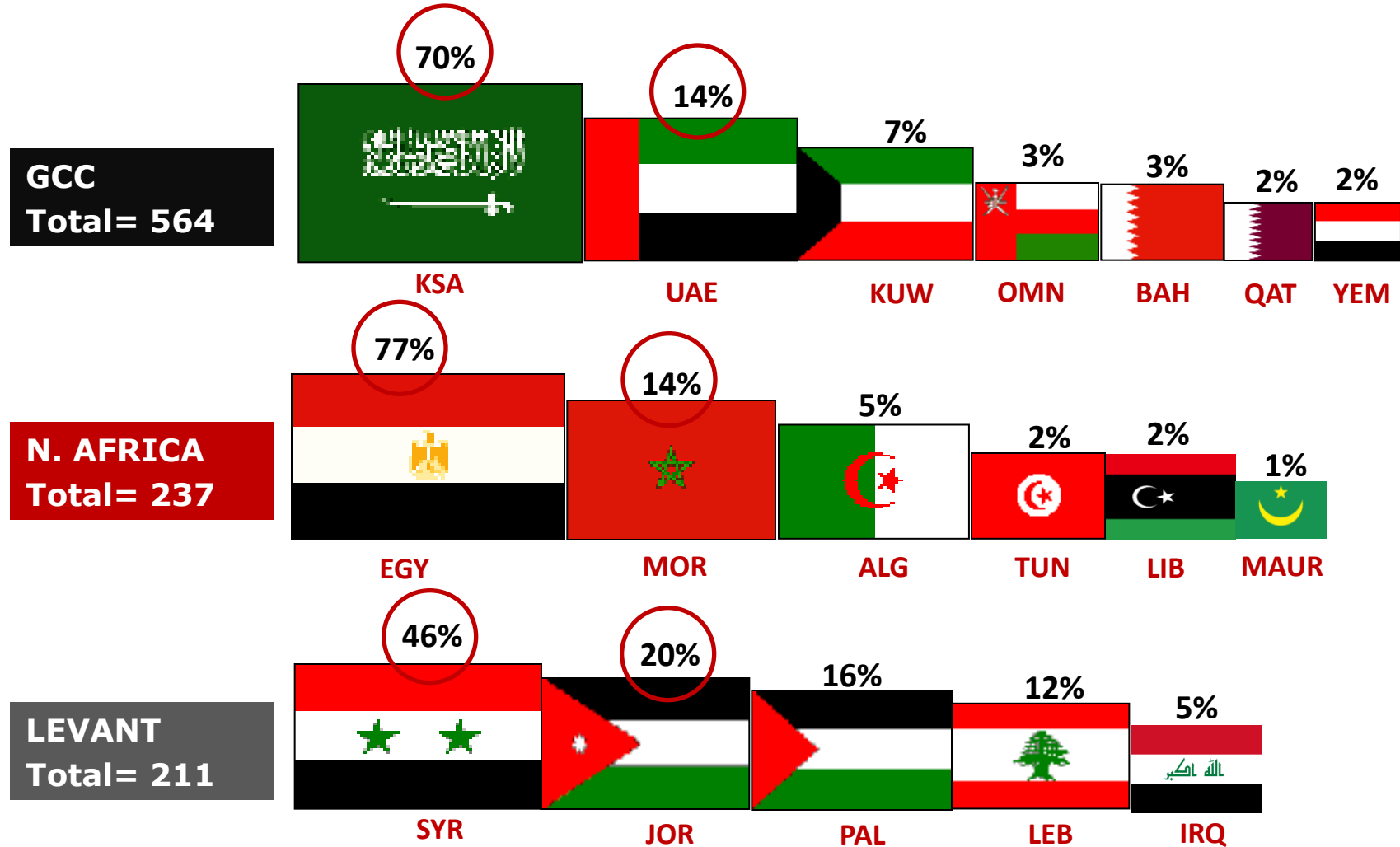


GENDER



Total Base= 1,012

Regional breakdown Countries of residence



Total Base= 1,012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summary (1/2)

- The vast majority of respondents want Syria's President Bashar Al Assad to resign.
 - The sentiment is highest in North Africa – a region that witnessed the biggest number of revolutions and ousting of rulers in the MENA region over the past year.
 - However, those in the Levant were not as insistent with less than two-thirds of them stating that President Assad should resign.
 - A larger proportion of respondents in Syria are supportive of their president.
- 3 in 4 of those who believe President Assad should resign also believe the entire political regime needs to change to ensure similar practices do not take place again.
- The largest proportion of respondents believe the best scenario for Syria would be to oust President Assad from power immediately and hold free democratic elections under the supervision of a transitional government.
 - Interestingly, those who do not think President Assad should resign do not really want him to stay in power either as over half of them (51%) believe it is best for Syria if he remains in power but with the guarantee of free democratic elections in the near future.
- Reasons for calling for the resignation of President Assad are: to end the regime's brutal treatment of protesters over the past 8 months, the belief that Al Assad has lost the support of his people in addition to the regime's reputation of abuse and torture for many years.
- Interestingly, among those who do not think President Assad should resign, reasons are driven by fear regarding the future of the country rather than support as they do not want to see Syria become another Iraq.

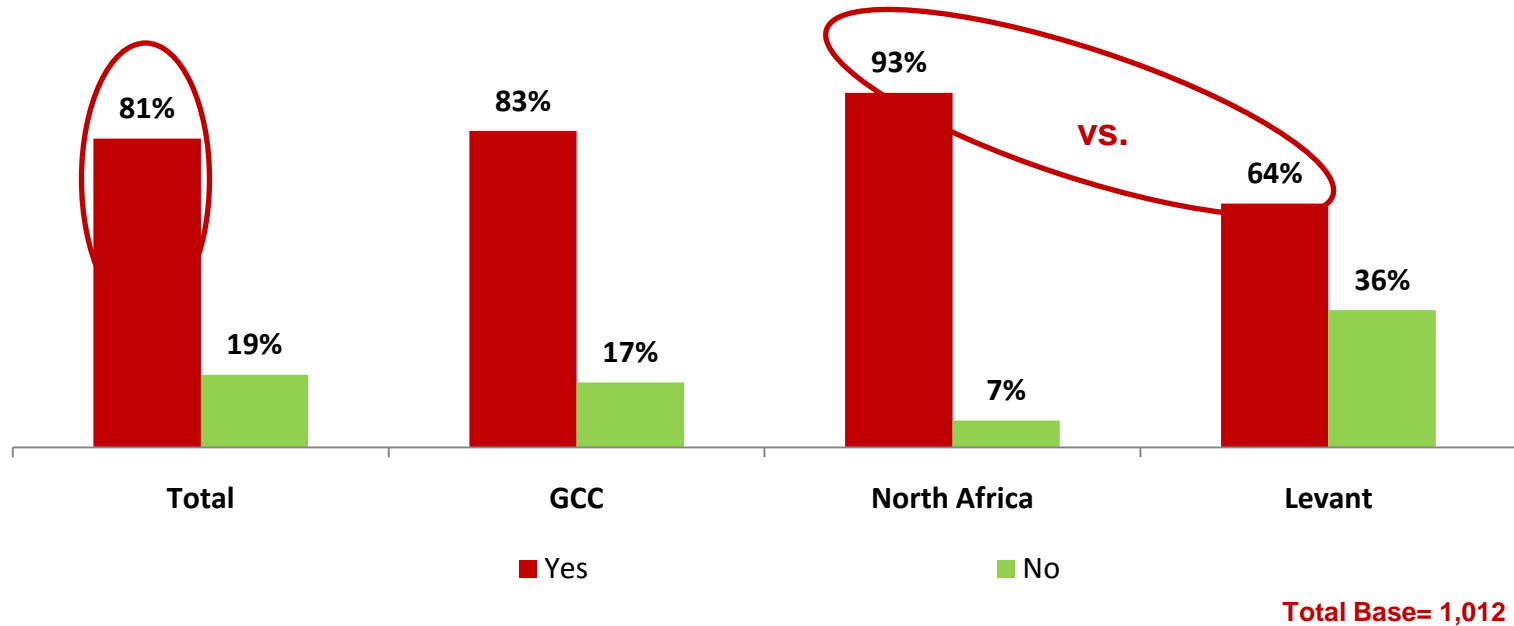
Executive summary (2/2)

- At least half of the respondents do *not* think the protests are part of a conspiracy by the US, the West, and/or Israel. In fact, over half of the respondents believe the protests in Syria are by the Syrian people in line with the 'Arab Spring' movement and represent the view of the majority of Syrians as opposed to being led by 'trouble makers'. Over half also believe the news we hear about the protests are true and not exaggerated.
- 2 in 3 respondents in the GCC and North Africa approve the Arab League's decision to impose sanctions on Syria. Those in the Levant tend to oppose this decision with the larger proportion of them, particularly those in Syria, not approving of this course of action.
- The high support for the Arab League's decision to impose sanctions on Syria appears to be derived from the belief that is the right thing to do to help the Syrian people as it would help bring down President Assad. The majority of respondents do not think Syria needed to be given more time by the Arab League to carry out reform.
 - However, when comparing the situation to their position on Israel, a little over half of the respondents (52%) agree that the Arab League exhibited double-standards by being tolerant with Israel to settle its dispute but not allowing Syria enough time to solve its own issues.
- President Assad's place in history seems to be defined by the last eight months. Views among respondents were unfavorable even prior to the recent events with the majority saying he was an average-to-bad president.
- Finally, in the event of President Assad stepping down/being replaced or ousted, respondents 'predict' the relationship between Syria and Iran will worsen, whereas the country's relationship with Lebanon and Turkey is expected to improve. Looking at the international landscape, the largest proportion of respondents believe Syria's relations with Israel will become worse if President Assad steps down/ gets ousted while an equal proportion expect the Syrian-American relationship to become better.

POLL RESULTS

President Assad must resign

In your opinion, should Syria's President Assad resign?

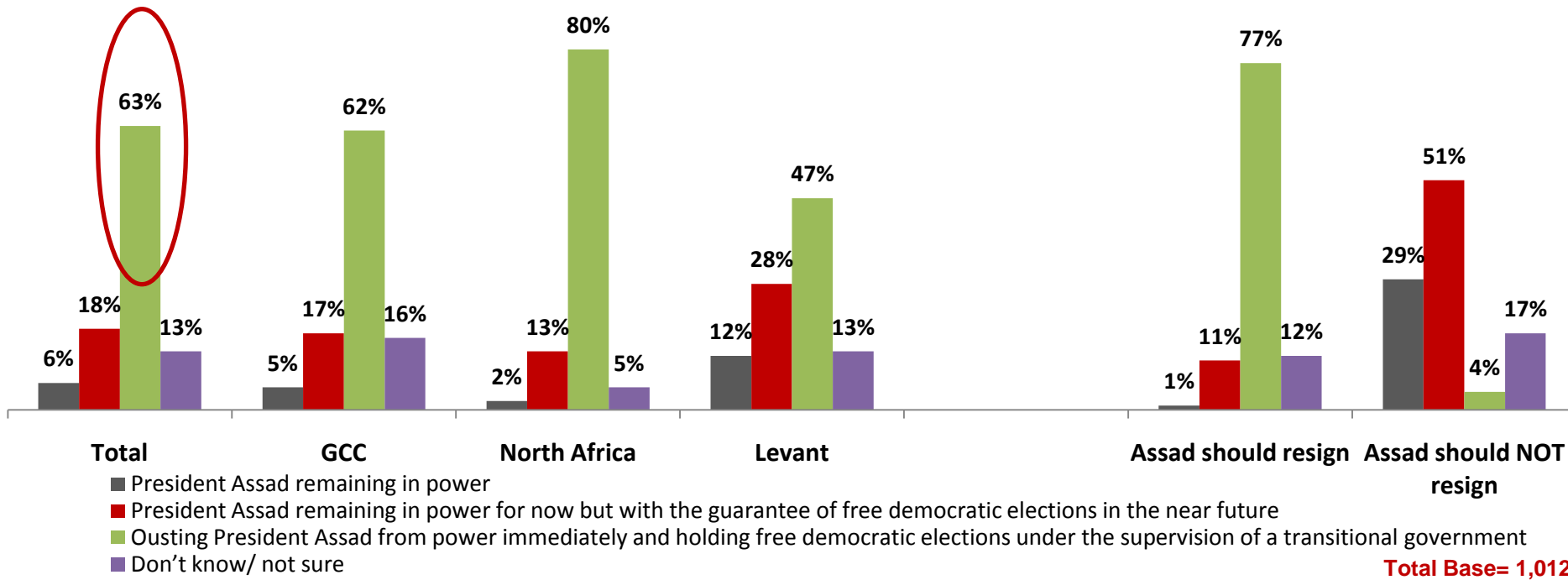


➤ The vast majority of respondents (81%) want Syria's President Bashar Al Assad to resign. This is highest in NA- a region that witnessed the biggest number of revolutions and ousting of rulers in the MENA region over the past year. On the other hand, those in the Levant were not as insistent with almost two-thirds (64%) stating that President Assad should resign.

➤ Respondents in Syria are more supportive of their president. 55% do not believe Assad should resign vs. 45% wanting him to leave power.

Assad should be out of the political scene in the future, either way

From your perspective, which one of the following scenarios would be the best for Syria's future?

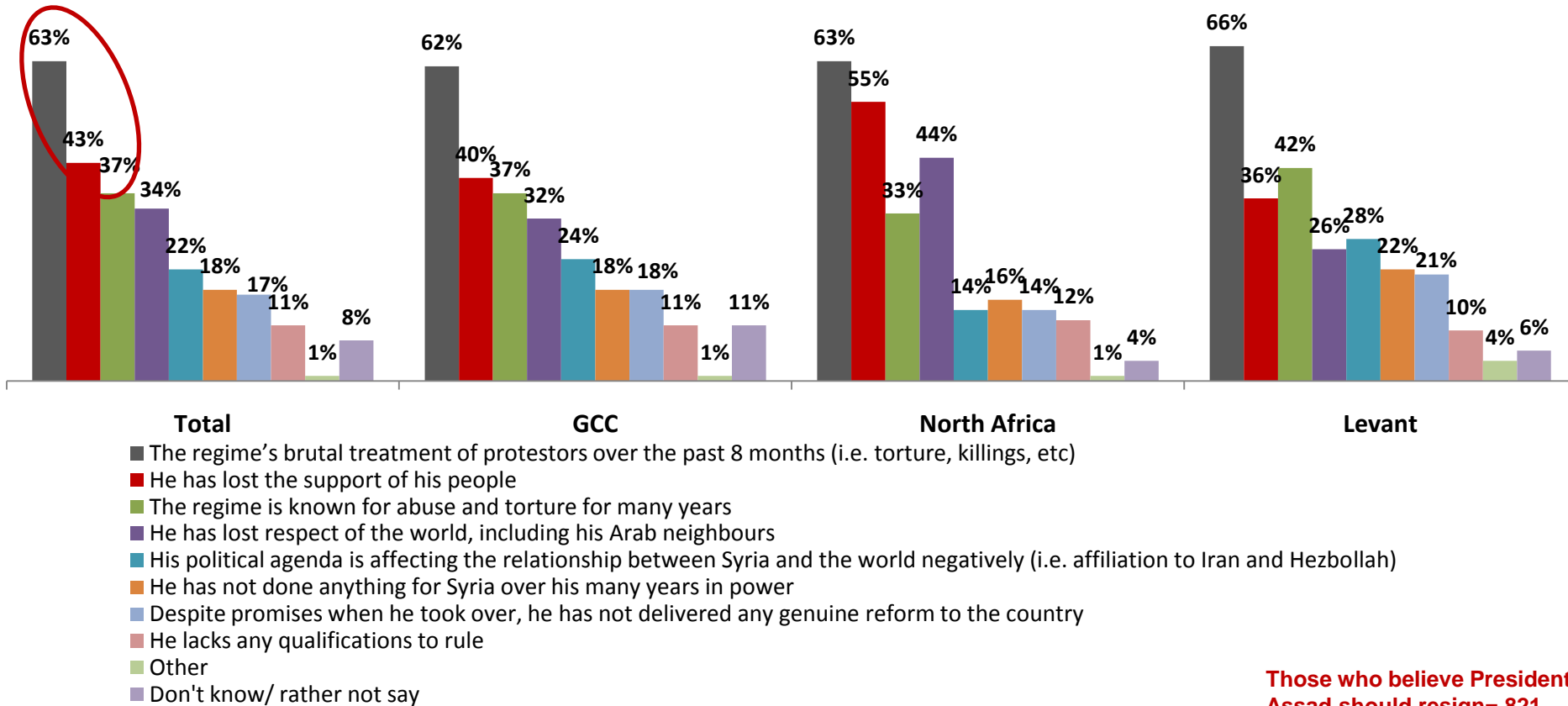


➤ When asked which scenario would be the best for Syria's future, the largest proportion of respondents (63%) called for the ousting of President Assad from power immediately and holding free democratic elections under the supervision of a transitional government. Those in NA are the biggest supporters of this strategy– with 4 in 5 wanting a swift resolution to the trouble.

➤ Interestingly, those who do not think President Assad should resign do not really want him to stay unchallenged in power either as over half of them (51%) believe it is best for Syria if he remains in power but with the guarantee of free democratic elections in the near future.

Reasons for demanding Assad's resignation

*What are the main reasons why you believe President Assad should resign?
(Please select the top 3 reasons for your opinion)*



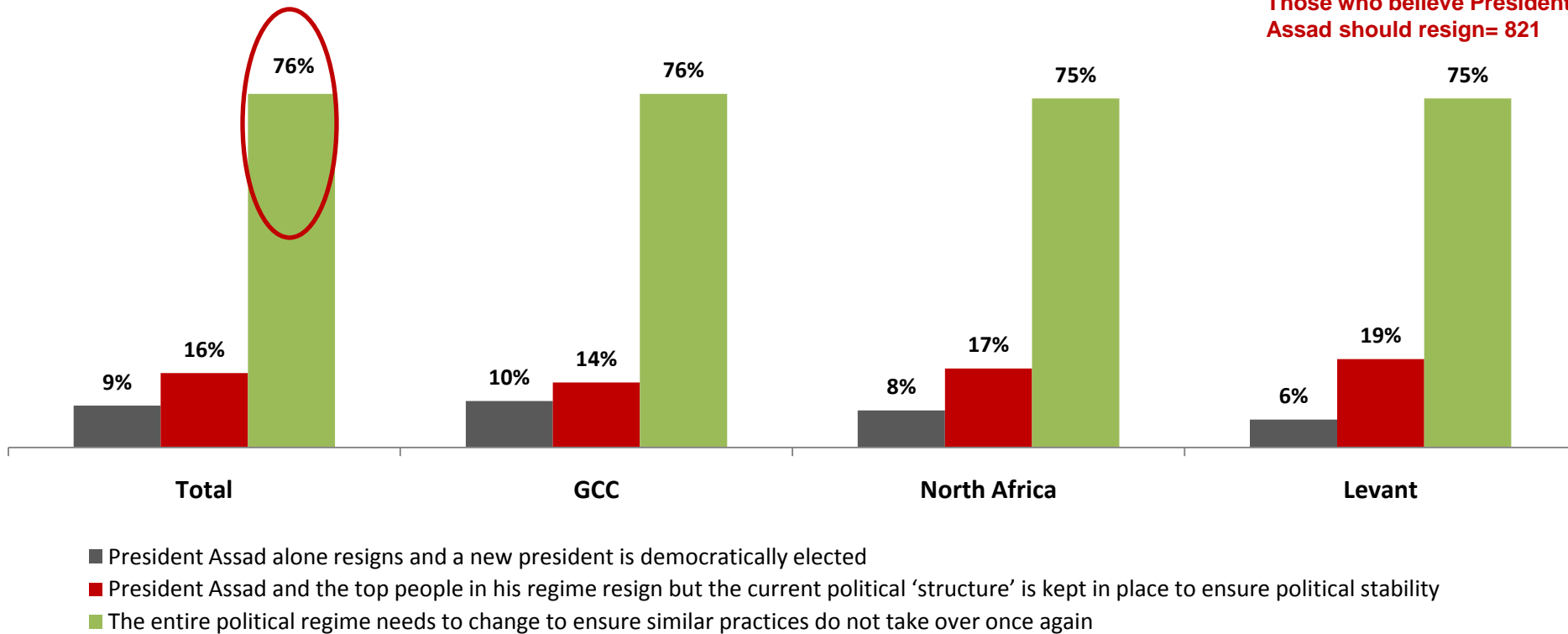
Those who believe President Assad should resign= 821

➤ The main reasons respondents believe President Assad should resign are to end the regime's brutal treatment of protestors over the past 8 months (63%); because he has lost the support of his people (43%) and because of the regime's reputation of abuse and torture for many years (37%).

President Assad should not resign alone

If President Assad was to resign, which one of the following options would you be most in favour of?

Those who believe President Assad should resign= 821

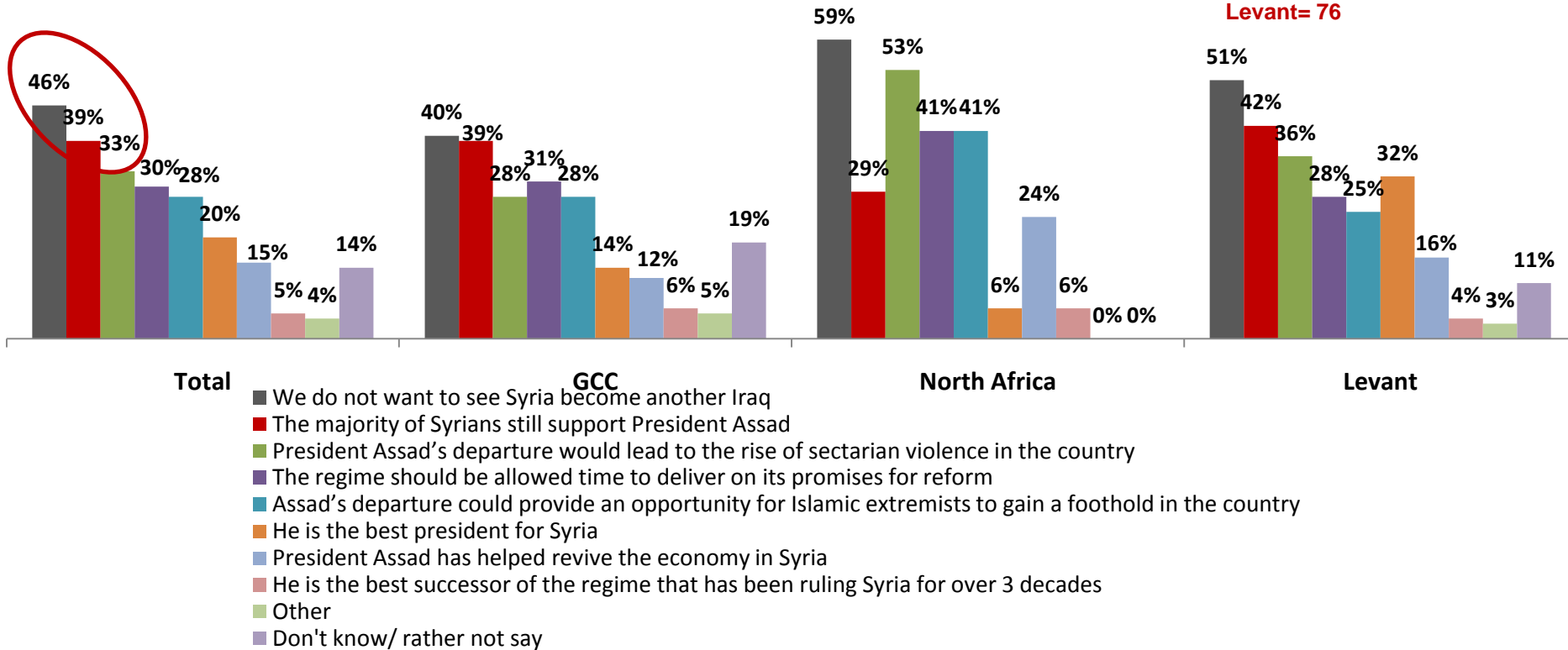


➤ 3 in 4 of those who believe President Assad should resign also believe the entire political regime needs to change to ensure similar practices do not take place again. Respondents from all regions shared very similar views on this point.

The real reason behind not favouring Al Assad's resignation

What are the main reasons why you believe President Assad should NOT resign and should remain in power? (Please select the top 3 reasons for your opinion)

Those who believe President Assad should NOT resign= 191
GCC= 98
NA= 17
Levant= 76



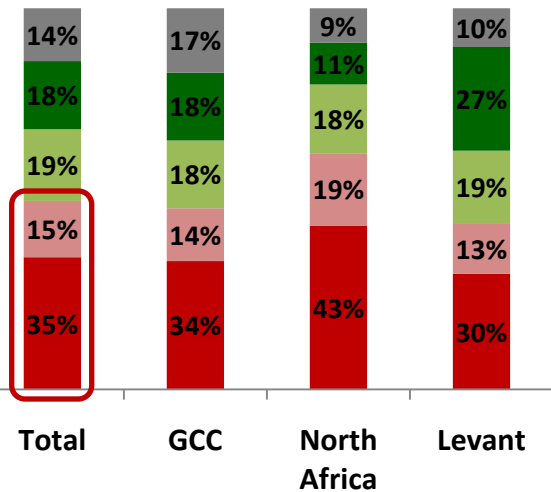
- Support for President Assad to stay in power is not necessarily a reflection of support for his regime. 46% of respondents say they want President Assad to remain in power to save Syria from becoming another Iraq.
- About a third (32%) of those in the Levant believe President Assad is the best president for Syria.

Current protests in Syria represent reality and reflect the voice of the people

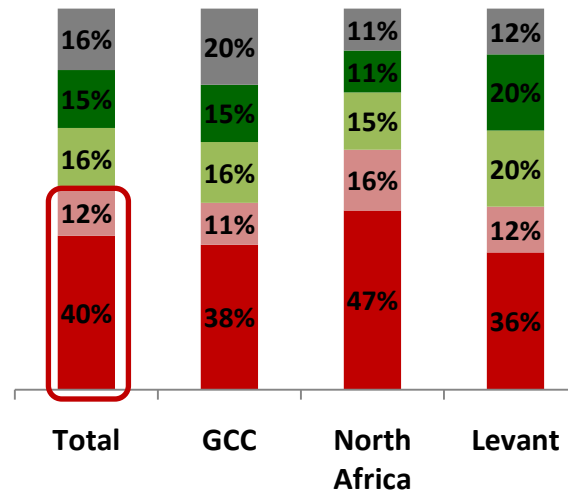
How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding the current protests in Syria?

Total Base= 1,012

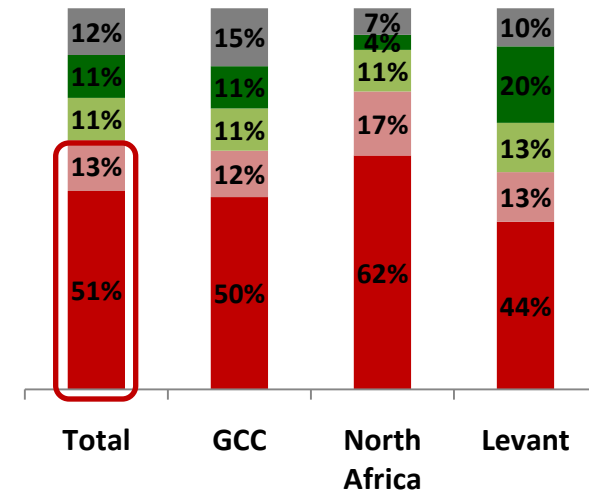
These protests are part of a conspiracy by the US and the West



These protests are part of a conspiracy by Israel



These protests are led by 'trouble makers', not by loyal Syrians



■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree
■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree
■ Don't know/ Can't say

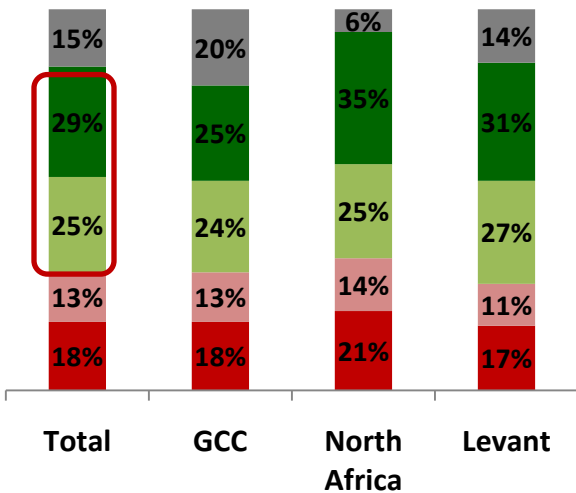
- Half of the respondents (50%) do not think the protests are part of a conspiracy by the US and the West. An almost similar percentage (52%) do not believe they are part of a conspiracy by Israel either.
- Only 1 in 5 respondents (22%) tend to think these protests are led by 'trouble makers' and not by loyal Syrians.

Current protests in Syria represent reality and reflect the voice of the people (cont.)

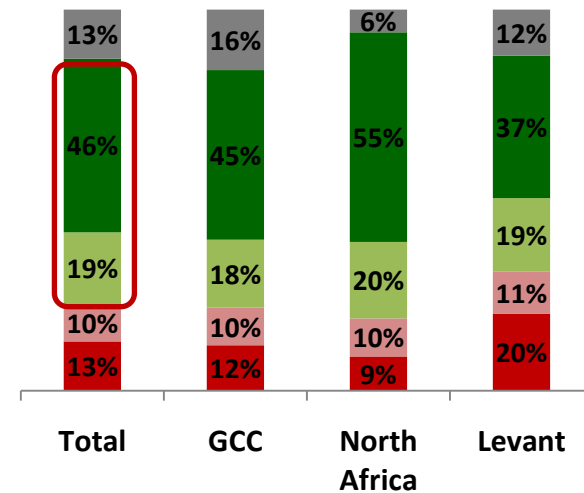
How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding the current protests in Syria?

Total Base= 1,012

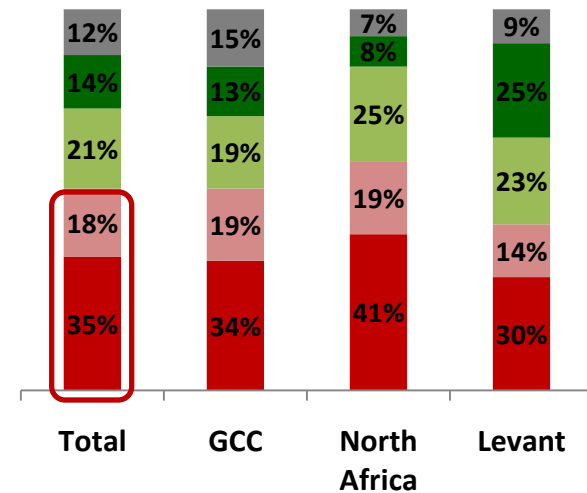
These protests are by the Syrian people in line with the 'Arab Spring' movement



The protests represent the view of the majority of the Syrian people



The news we see and hear about the protests are exaggerated

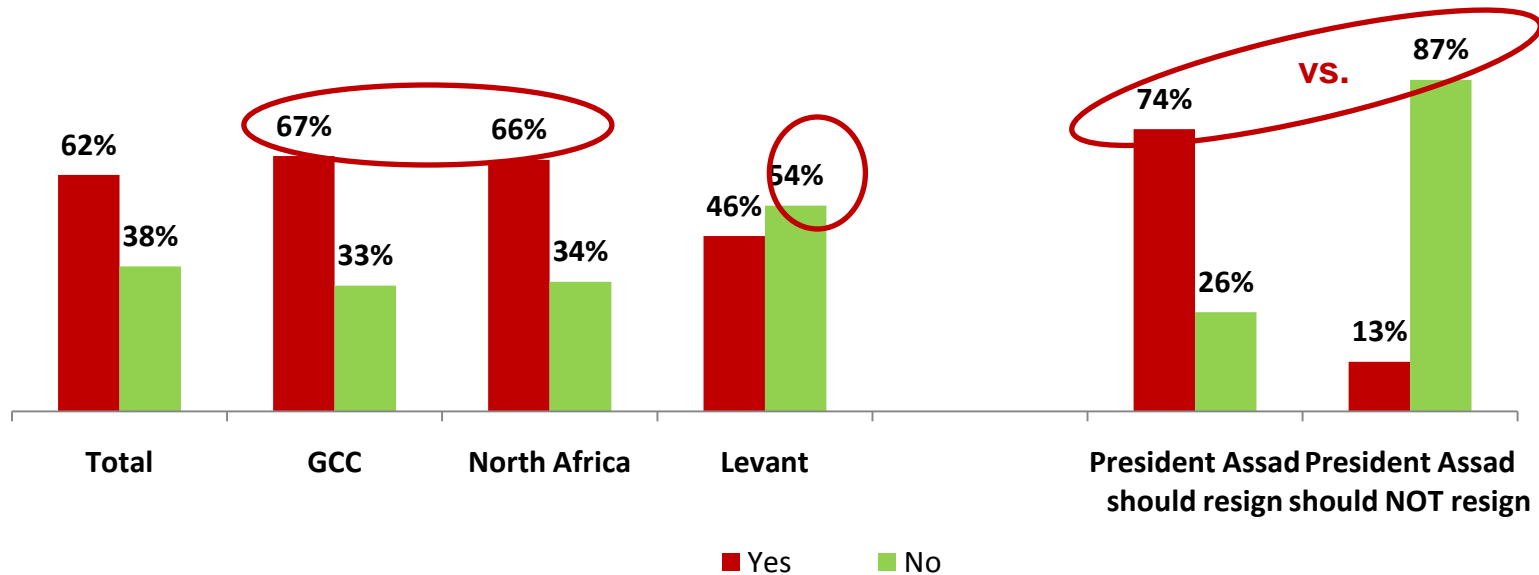


■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree
■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree
■ Don't know/ Can't say

- In fact, over half of the respondents (54%) believe the protests in Syria are by the Syrian people in line with the 'Arab Spring' movement.
- 64% also agree that these protests represent the view of the majority of Syrians.
- Only 36% think the news they see and hear about the protests are exaggerated, while 52% believe they are true. Those in Syria are more skeptical with 52% believing the news about the protests are exaggerated.

Arab countries need to impose sanctions on Syria

Given the current circumstances in Syria, do you support the Arab League's decision to impose sanctions on Syria?

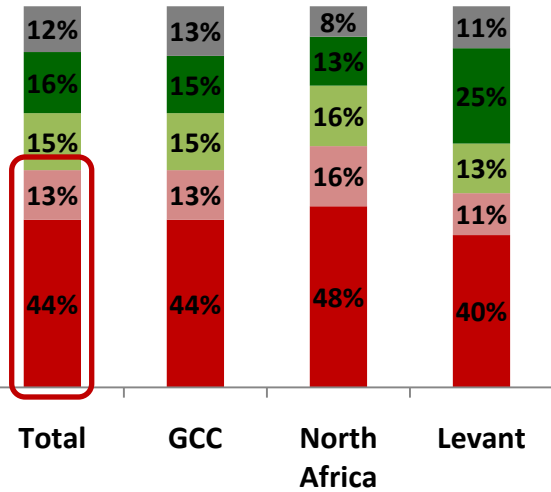


Total Base= 1,012

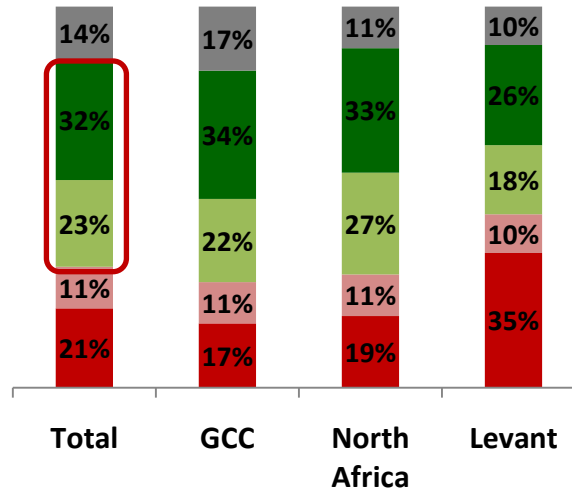
- 2 in 3 respondents in the GCC and NA (67% and 66%, respectively) approve the Arab League's decision to impose sanctions on Syria.
- Those in the Levant, which would be affected the most, tend to oppose this decision with the larger proportion of them (54%) not approving of this course of action, particularly those in Syria (68% said 'No').
- Those who believe President Assad should resign support the decision strongly (74% said 'Yes') while those who think it is better if he stays in power frown upon it (87% said 'No')

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements as they relate to the Arab League's decision to impose sanctions on Syria?

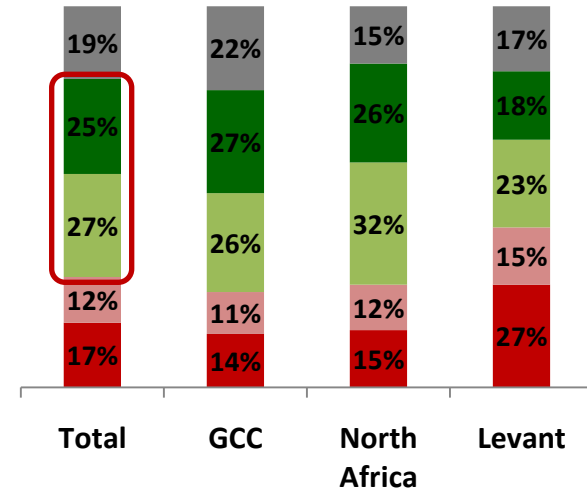
The Arab league should have given the Syrian regime more time to carry out reform



Imposing these sanctions is the right thing to do to help the Syrian people



The sanctions will help bring down President Assad



■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree
■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree
■ Don't know/ Can't say

Total Base= 1,012

- The majority of respondents (57%) do not think the Arab League should have given the Syrian regime more time to carry out reform.
- In fact, 55% of respondents believe that imposing the sanctions is the right thing to do to help the Syrian people.
- The high level of support for the Arab League's decision to impose sanctions on Syria appears to be derived from being 'hopeful' they would help bring down President Assad (52%).

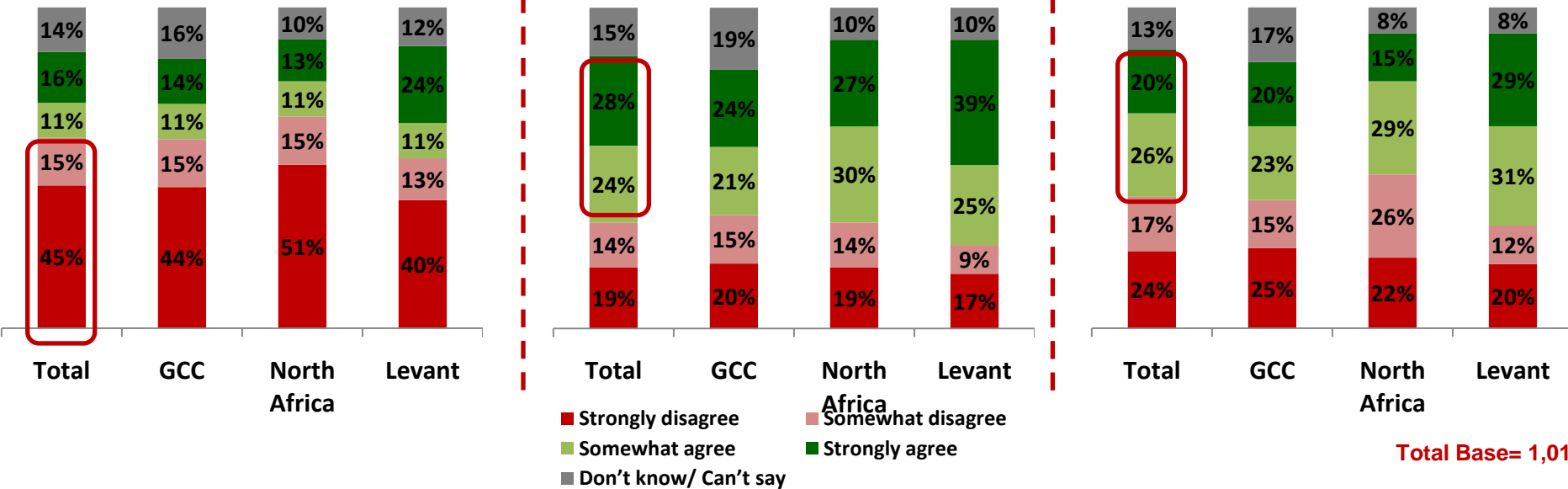
Consequences of imposing the sanctions (cont.)

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements as they relate to the Arab League's decision to impose sanctions on Syria?

The imposing of sanction is wrong, Arab presidents should stand by each other (i.e. support Bashar Al Assad) against the West

The Arab league exhibited double-standards by being tolerant with Israel to settle its dispute but not allowing Syria enough time to solve its own issues

The sanctions will bring more chaos to Syria

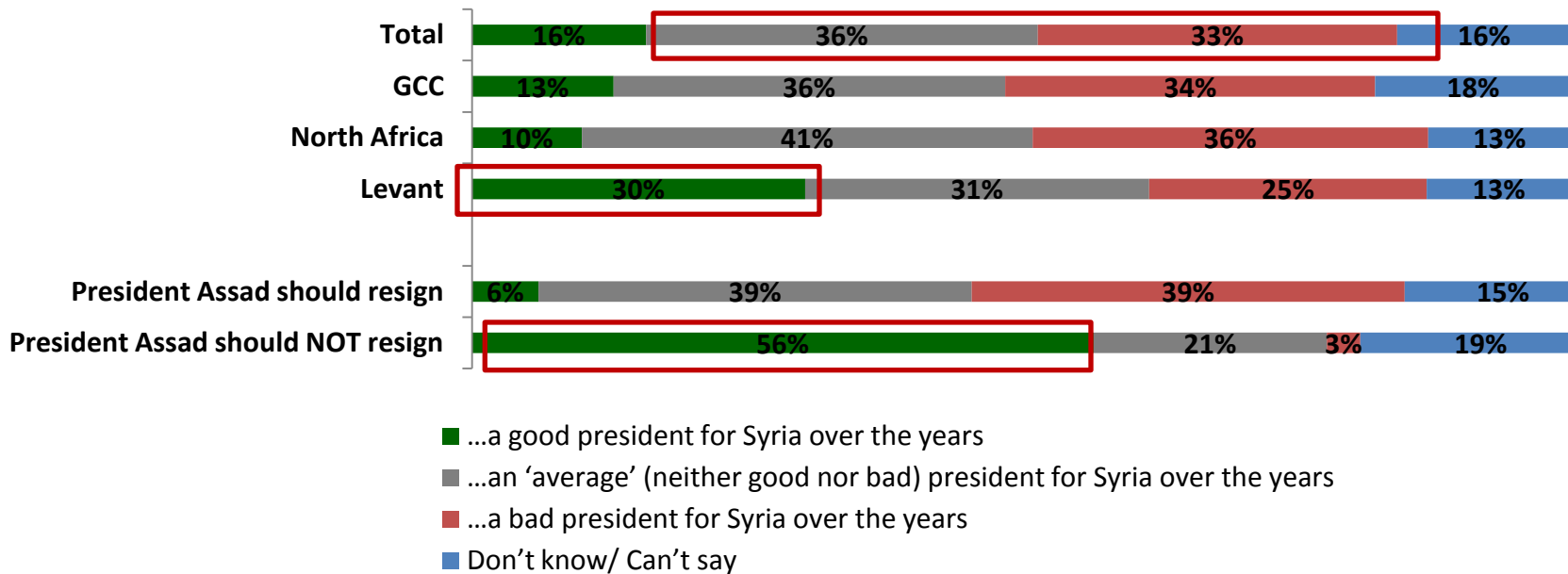


- Arabs continue to support the Arab League's decision of imposing sanctions on Syria with 60% of them disagreeing with the statement "the imposing of sanctions is wrong, Arab presidents should stand by each other (i.e. support Bashar Al Assad) against the West".
- However, when comparing the situation to their position on Israel, a little over half of the respondents (52%) agree that the Arab League exhibited double-standards by being tolerant with Israel to settle its dispute but not allowing Syria enough time to solve its own issues.
- When asked if the sanctions will bring more chaos to Syria, respondents tended to agree (46% vs. 41% disagree).

At best President Assad was deemed average prior to the recent events

Aside from his response to the protests over the last 8 months, you would say that over the past decade President Bashar Al Assad has been...

Total Base= 1,012

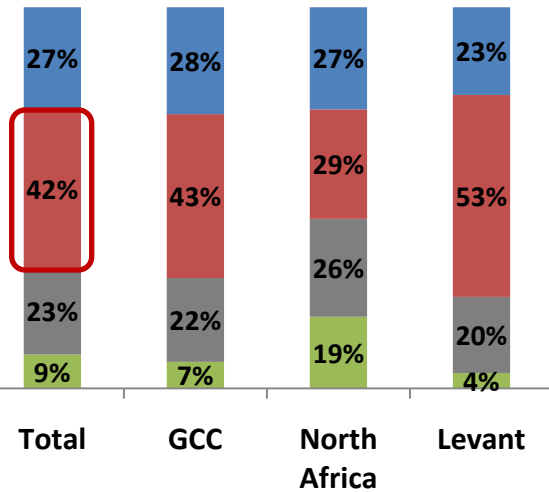


- While one-third of the respondents (33%) accuse President Assad of being a bad president for Syria over the years, a slightly larger proportion of respondents believe he was 'average- neither good nor bad'.
- Those in the Levant are more likely to see him as a 'good' president with 30% saying he is/was – with the highest in Syria (46%).
- Those who do not want President Assad to resign believe he has been a good president for Syria over the years, not taking into account his response to the recent protests (56%).

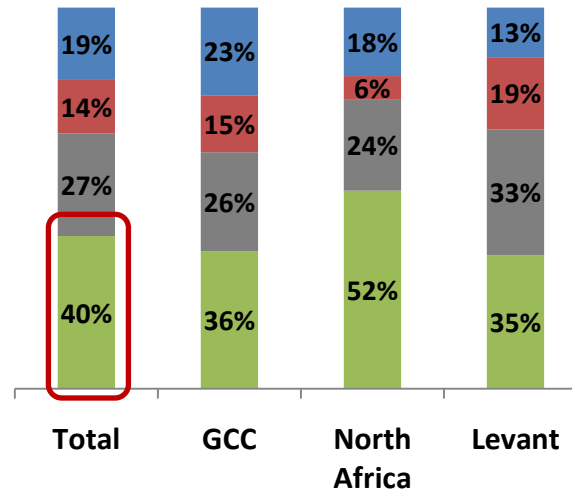
How will the external relationships be affected?

Finally, if President Assad was to step down/ be replaced or ousted, what do you think will happen to the relationships between Syria and the each of the following countries/ regions?

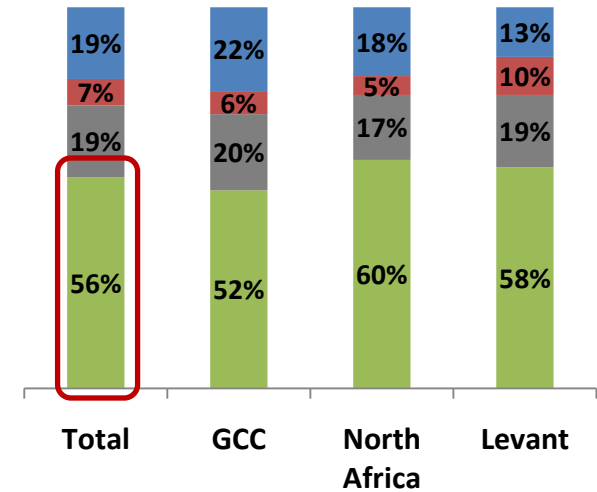
Iran



Lebanon



Turkey



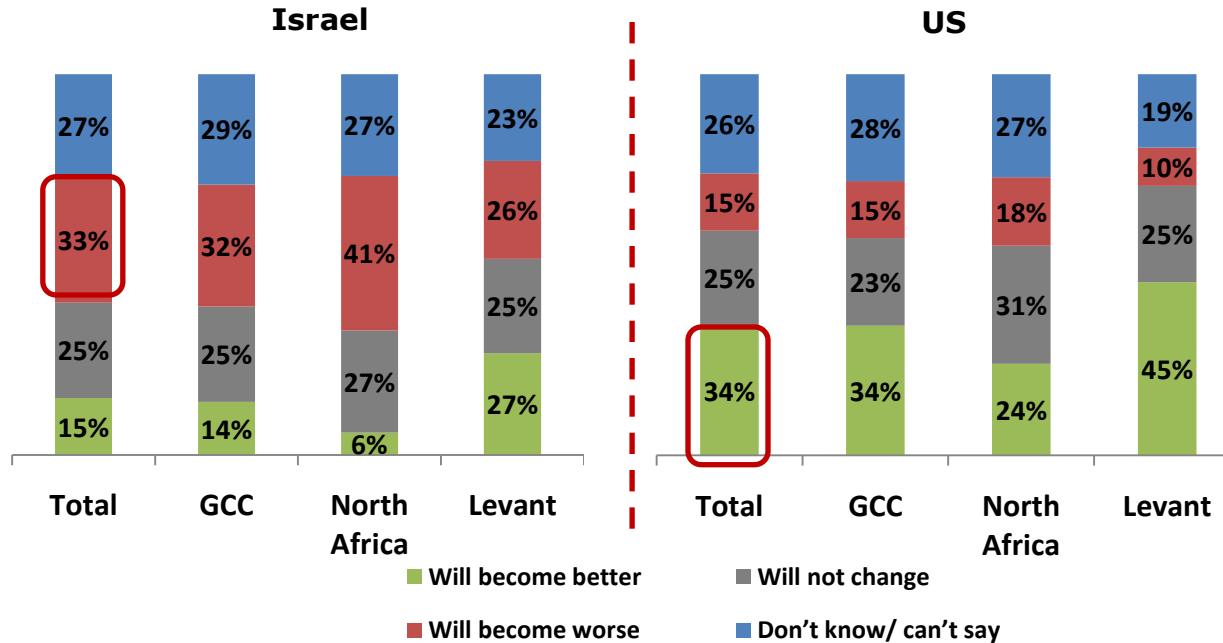
■ Will become better ■ Will not change
■ Will become worse ■ Don't know/ can't say

Total Base= 1,012

- In the event of President Assad stepping down/ being replaced or ousted, respondents 'predict' the relationship between Syria and Iran to worsen (42%).
- On the other hand, the relationship with Lebanon (40%) and Turkey (56%) is expected to improve.

How will the external relationships be affected? (cont.)

Finally, if President Assad was to step down/ be replaced or ousted, what do you think will happen to the relationships between Syria and the each of the following countries/ regions?



Total Base= 1,012

➤ Interestingly, while a third of the respondents (33%) think the relations with Israel will become worse if President Assad steps down/ gets ousted, an equal proportion (34%) expect Syria's relation with the US to become better.

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