

# IRAQ POST- DAESH

---

Improved Social Cohesion, but Iraqis  
Remain Dissatisfied with Government

---

## NATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS

---









# IRAQ POST- DAESH

---

Improved Social Cohesion, but Iraqis  
Remain Dissatisfied with Government

---

**NATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS**

---

**JULY 2019**

---



This material has been funded by the UK government. However the views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

This survey was implemented by the National Democratic Institute with the contribution of: JPM Strategic Solutions, GQR, and IIACSS. This research was coordinated by Ancuta Hansen, Senior Country Director of NDI Iraq. For more information about this survey or NDI's public opinion research in Iraq, please contact us at e-mail: [ahansen@ndi.org](mailto:ahansen@ndi.org) or visit [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org).

Cover photo: Karam Hassawy, Mosul, 2018 © NDI







Mohammed Abdullah, Kirkuk, 2018 © NDI

---

# Contents

---

05

**PROJECT OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY**

07

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

09

**SURVEY FINDINGS**

11

**GOVERNMENT**

Iraqis Remain Discontent

17

**CORRUPTION**

Thriving in Governance Gaps

23

**SOCIAL COHESION**

Iraqi Identity Consolidates, but Politics Seen as Divisive

31

**GENDER**

Women's Rights Getting Worse but Demand For Equality Increasing

39

**SECURITY**

High Trust in Security Forces, but Concerns of Daesh Resurgence Persist

45

**JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Communities Unwilling to Deal With Daesh's Legacy







Ancuta Hansen, Erbil, 2018 © NDI

---

# Project Overview and Methodology

---

Although the conflict with Daesh<sup>1</sup> continues to dominate international media headlines, post-conflict socio-political and security challenges in Iraq go beyond the military operations to eradicate the remnants of the terrorist group. Post-Daesh Iraq faces multiple intersecting issues, many of them structural in nature and tied to the role and the performance of the government, including fair distribution of resources across the country's regions, delivering basic services, improving job opportunities and economic conditions, and the ability to decrease social tension and foster a sense of national unity. Other challenges are deeply rooted in culture, such as beliefs about identity and gender roles.

Drawing on quantitative and qualitative public opinion research conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Iraq since 2010,

<sup>1</sup> Arabic acronym of the self-titled *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)* terrorist group

this survey aims to provide Iraqi decision makers and civil society, the international community, and the broader research community with independent, statistically representative data on Iraqi citizens' perceptions and expectations about potential drivers of conflict and resilience post-Daesh. This data would assist those interested to objectively monitor shifts in public perceptions and opinions in order to inform public policies and program approaches. Through the dissemination of analysis reports and delivery of in-person research briefings, NDI aims to develop a knowledge base for Iraqi officials and the international community to serve as a foundation for an evidence-based dialogue on key socio-political dimensions.

For this nationally representative survey,<sup>2</sup> 7,227 computer-assisted face-to-face interviews were

<sup>2</sup> A small number of districts in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin were deemed too risky for enumerators' physical integrity and were replaced with other districts in the same governorate with similar demographics.

conducted in all provinces of Iraq. The weighted sample (1,340 interviews) reflects the demography of the population including on age, gender, education, geography, and urban/rural composition. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used as follows: probability proportional to size sampling at governorate, district, sub-district, and block level in urban areas; simple random sampling in rural areas at village selection, and house/individual level. The survey was conducted in Arabic and Kurdish; women enumerators interviewed women.

The survey was fielded from March 18<sup>th</sup> to April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and has an estimated Margin of Error (MoE) of +/- 2.6% at the national level. Regional average MoEs: 3.5% Baghdad; 4.9% South (Babil, Basra, Karbala, Missan, Najaf, Diwaniya, Wasit); 2.0% West (Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salahaddin); 6.9% Kurdish Region of

Iraq (KRI). Confidence intervals displayed show full design effects beginning in 2018; for older data the margin of error was determined using the simple random sampling formula. Half-split samples were used on select questions for AVB experiments or to reduce the survey length for individual respondents.

This report draws on fifteen cross-sectional national surveys conducted by NDI in Iraq, dating back to 2010. Sample size has varied as follows: prior to 2018, a number of 500 interviews were conducted in each of the four regions (Baghdad, South, West, and KRI). In 2018, expanded sample included 800+ interviews per governorate. In 2019, NDI conducted 500 interviews in each of the four regions, and oversampled the provinces of Basra, Baghdad, Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin for a total of 800+ interviews per each province.



---

# Executive Summary

---

In the most recent survey, Iraqis have a high level of pessimism about the direction of their country, largely driven by perceptions of endemic corruption and low levels of trust in the government's ability to address major concerns such as jobs and unemployment. There are signs that the social fabric within Iraq is strengthening as security conditions improve: sectarianism—especially the divide between Arab Sunni and Shia—is widely viewed as waning, and a strong majority of Iraqis still identify themselves as “Iraqi.” However, political tensions remain a significant source of division within the country, and women's rights are viewed as worsening even as there is a high demand for equality between the genders. Below are the key findings on the main themes of the survey:

**Government: Iraqis remain discontent.** Frustration toward Iraq's governing institutions continues, even as Iraqis perceive security and basic services as improving. The distrust in governing

institutions is largely driven by Iraqis that view them as ineffective and unable to combat corruption and unemployment.

**Corruption: Thriving in governance gaps.** A large majority of Iraqis continue to view corruption as worsening, a frustration especially targeted at senior government officials. Despite Iraqis' frustration with corruption, some capitulate to using bribes as a means to obtain critical services, such as receiving faster attention at a hospital or to obtain a job, or aid for reconstruction.

**Social Cohesion: Iraqi identity consolidates but politics seen as divisive.** More than a year after the liberation of Iraq from Daesh, Iraqis continue to perceive relations between Shia and Sunni as improving. For this to hold particularly in the Sunni-dominated West, the government will need to redouble its efforts to empower its citizens and to pick up the pace of reconstruction. Perceptions about the Kurdistan Region

Government (KRG) and the federal government in Baghdad relations continue to improve from a 2015 low point, amplified by the budget-sharing agreement between the two governments, though perceptions about the relationship are worse in the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI) compared to the rest of Iraq.

**Gender: Women's rights worsening, demand for equality increasing.** A majority of Iraqis see women's rights as worsening. Iraqi women continue to face significant limits on their personal freedoms, including an inability to travel freely, domestic violence, and widespread harassment. Many of the constraints on women's rights are driven by societal, familial, and religious pressure, as well as a culture of shaming that forces women to censor their actions. A strong majority of Iraqis, however, think that women should receive more rights than they have today, though there are some gender divides on this issue with women being significantly more likely to desire more rights for women.

**Security: Increasing trust in security forces, despite concerns of Daesh resurgence.** In the

post-Daesh environment, Iraqis see the security situation as significantly improving and hold security forces in high regard, including the Popular Mobilization Units, popularly known as Hash'd al Shaabi. Even with better security and high levels of trust in security forces, significant concerns remain that Daesh or other terrorist organizations will return to the country. There are also some concerns in the West that Hash'd al Shaabi may overreach their initial security goals.

**Justice and Human Rights: Communities unwilling to integrate Daesh fighter's widows and orphans.** Dealing with the sizable conflict-affected populations in the post-Daesh era remains a challenge for Iraq. A mix of collective blame, mistrust, and a culture of shame are driving the social exclusion of those perceived to be affiliated with Daesh, as most Iraqis struggle with the thought of reintegrating widows and abandoned or orphaned children of Daesh fighters back into their communities. Adding to the challenges, Iraqis have little faith in the institutions that could help bring some relief to these individuals, including the government, the justice system, and the Human Rights Commission.



# SURVEY FINDINGS



للمجلس الأعلى للانتخابات  
كوسيط بيني بينه وبينه كإدارة له كان



للمجلس الأعلى للانتخابات  
كوسيط بيني بينه وبينه كإدارة له كان



للمجلس الأعلى للانتخابات  
كوسيط بيني بينه وبينه كإدارة له كان

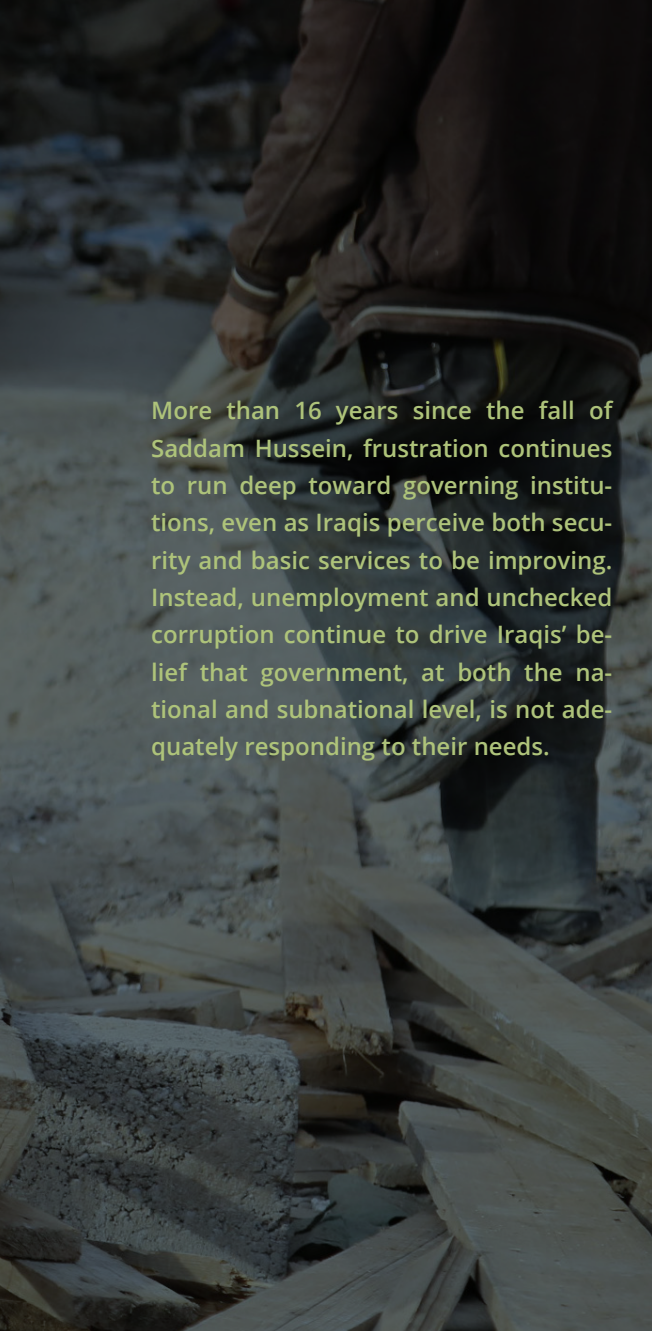
PS 817

الجمهورية العراقية  
الانتخابات مجلس النواب العراقي 2018  
مركز الانتخابات  
صندوق الاقتراع  
صندوق دهنگدان  
مركز الاقتراع









More than 16 years since the fall of Saddam Hussein, frustration continues to run deep toward governing institutions, even as Iraqis perceive both security and basic services to be improving. Instead, unemployment and unchecked corruption continue to drive Iraqis' belief that government, at both the national and subnational level, is not adequately responding to their needs.

---

## GOVERNMENT

---

# Iraqis Remain Discontent

---

**Most of Iraq remains pessimistic, despite a slight improvement in country mood.** Exactly 3 out of 4 Iraqis think the country is going in the wrong direction, while 24 percent say it is going in the right direction, up 3 points since the previous survey last October. Improvements in mood are driven primarily by the KRI, where the dispute between federal and regional authorities over the Region's public budget has recently been resolved, and in Basra, where the public demonstrations against poor service delivery and corruption have ebbed since last fall.

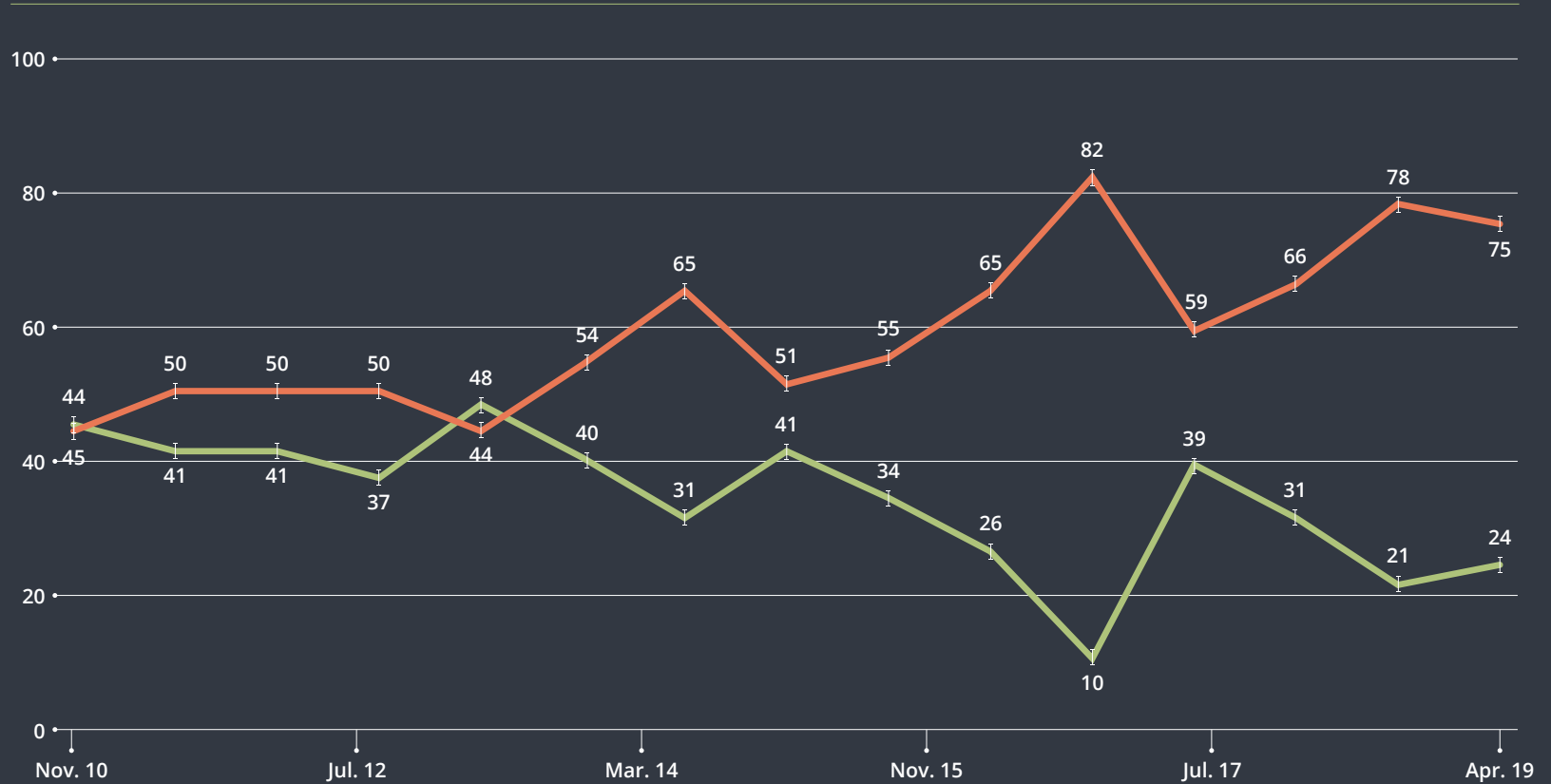
**Iraqis view national government as ineffective; subnational government fares slightly better.** Most Iraqis see the government as ineffective both at the national and local level. Only 30 percent say the Iraqi government is very or somewhat effective, down 15 points since April 2018. Subnational governments fare a bit bet-

ter, with 37 percent saying their district is very or somewhat effective, and 39 percent in the KRI saying the KRG is very or somewhat effective. However, a lower proportion—28 percent—hold positive views of provincial councils.

Views toward governors tend to be more positive than those toward the Iraqi government. In the South, West, and KRI, Iraqis are much more likely to say they approve of their governor than national government leaders. In fact, in these three regions, majorities or large pluralities approve of the work their governor is doing, with Baghdad being the exception.

Another drag on views toward the government comes from the public's limited awareness of the government's priorities. The same proportion, 74 percent, say they do not have a sense of the local government's or the Iraqi govern-

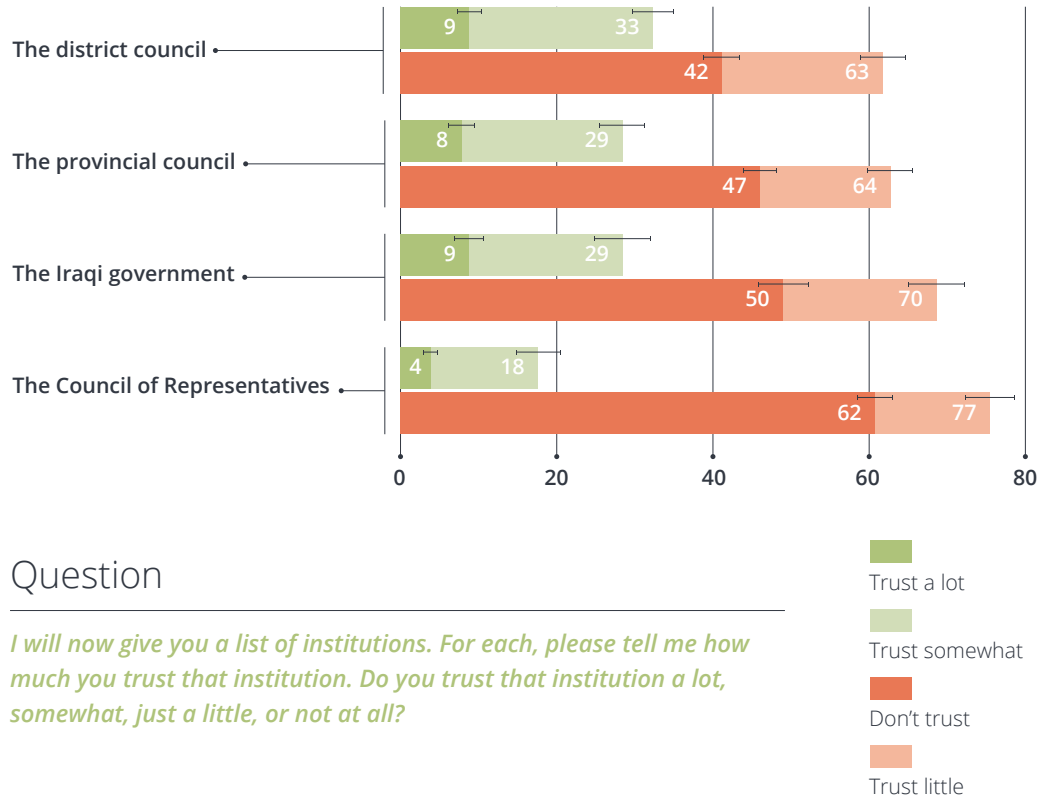




### Question

*Generally speaking, do you think that things in Iraq are going in the right direction, or do you think things are going in the wrong direction?*

Right direction Wrong direction



### Question

*I will now give you a list of institutions. For each, please tell me how much you trust that institution. Do you trust that institution a lot, somewhat, just a little, or not at all?*

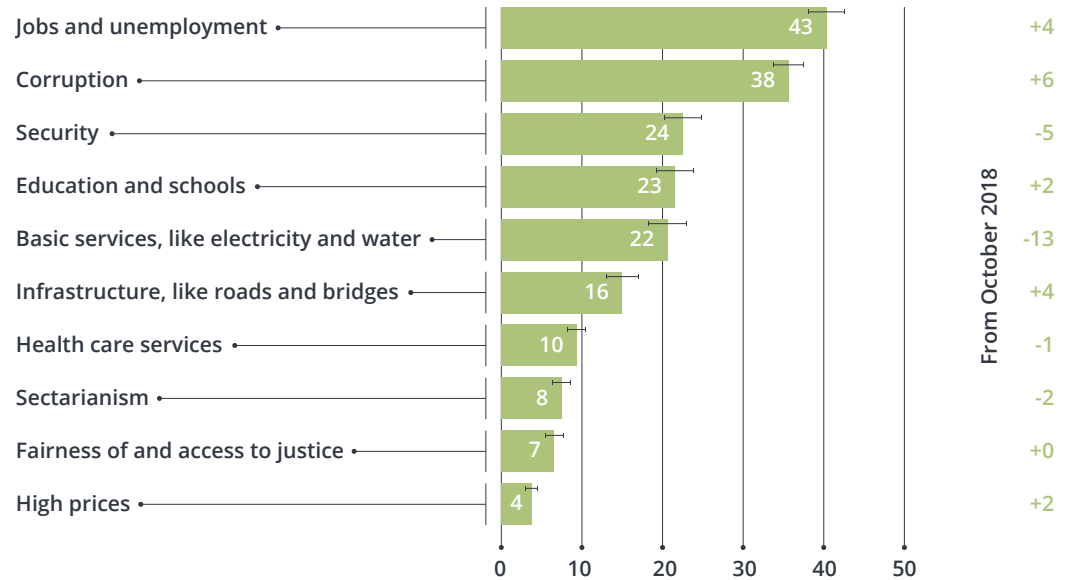
ment's priorities. These results remain consistent with past findings and continue to show that the government lacks an effective communication strategy that reaches average Iraqis.

**Lack of employment opportunities and corruption most important for government to address.** Soaring unemployment and a sense that the national wealth is being squandered by corrupt leaders are top-of-mind issues for Iraqis. Very large majorities say three key issues are getting worse: Corruption (83 percent say it is getting worse), job opportunities (83 percent) and cost of living (73 percent); and the first two are the top concerns that they want the government to address. This frustration with the economy may also be in part due to the government not directly providing Iraqis with jobs or salaries. Iraqis rely heavily on the government for their economic well-being, with 70 percent saying their situation can only improve with government assistance or salaries. Less than 1 in 4 say they are able to substantially improve their own personal economic situation without government help. This confirms past research with a focus on employment that shows that

Iraqis mainly look to the government for employment, as opposed to the private sector.

**Poor views of government persist even as service delivery perceptions improve.** A 53 percent majority say basic services are getting better (up 15 points since October 2018), including 74 percent in Basra (up 36 points since October 2018), where a severe water crisis was an urgent concern less than one year ago. Whether these results hold during the summer months when electricity and water demands are higher is yet to be seen, but Iraqis are understandably unwilling to give credit to the government for performing its most basic functions, especially under weak economic conditions.

**Reconstruction efforts seen as insufficient in liberated areas.** Views are mixed on the government's response to reconstruct areas once occupied by Daesh, but more negative views are held by those in areas where reconstruction is needed the most. In Baghdad, for example, 63 percent say the government's reconstruction efforts are getting better compared to just 39 percent in the West region. In

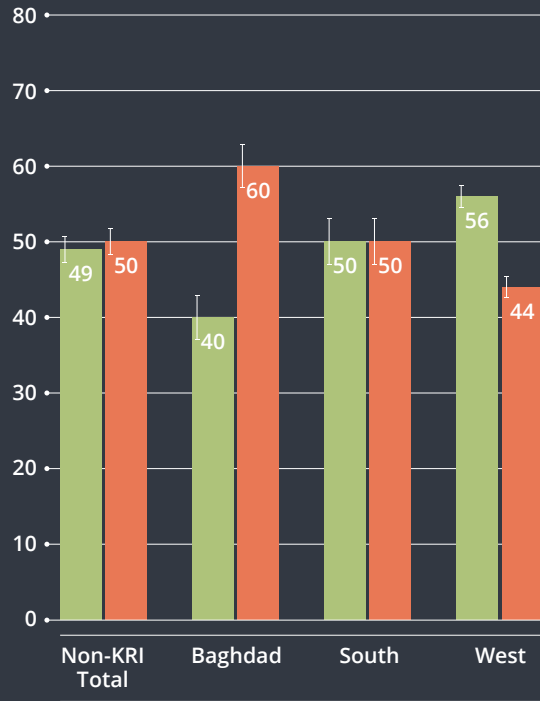


## Question

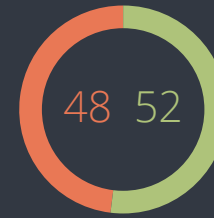
*I am going to read you a list of concerns that some people may have. Please tell me which two of these are the most important for the Iraqi government to address.*



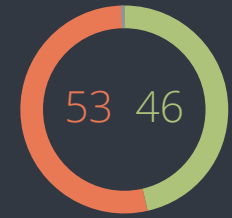
## IRAQ SURVEY REPORT



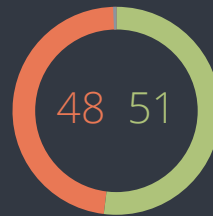
Younger women



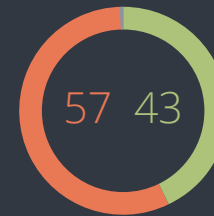
Younger men



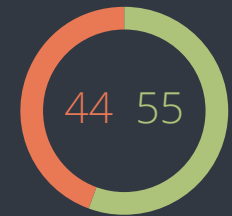
Urban



Older women



Older men



Rural

■ Almost certain/Probably 
 ■ 50-50/Would not vote 
 ■ Don't know/Refused to respond

## Question

*As you may know, the next Iraqi provincial elections in Iraq are scheduled to occur in November. Some people may not vote in those elections. What about you? Would you be almost certain to vote in the next provincial elections, would you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or would you not vote in the next provincial elections?*

---

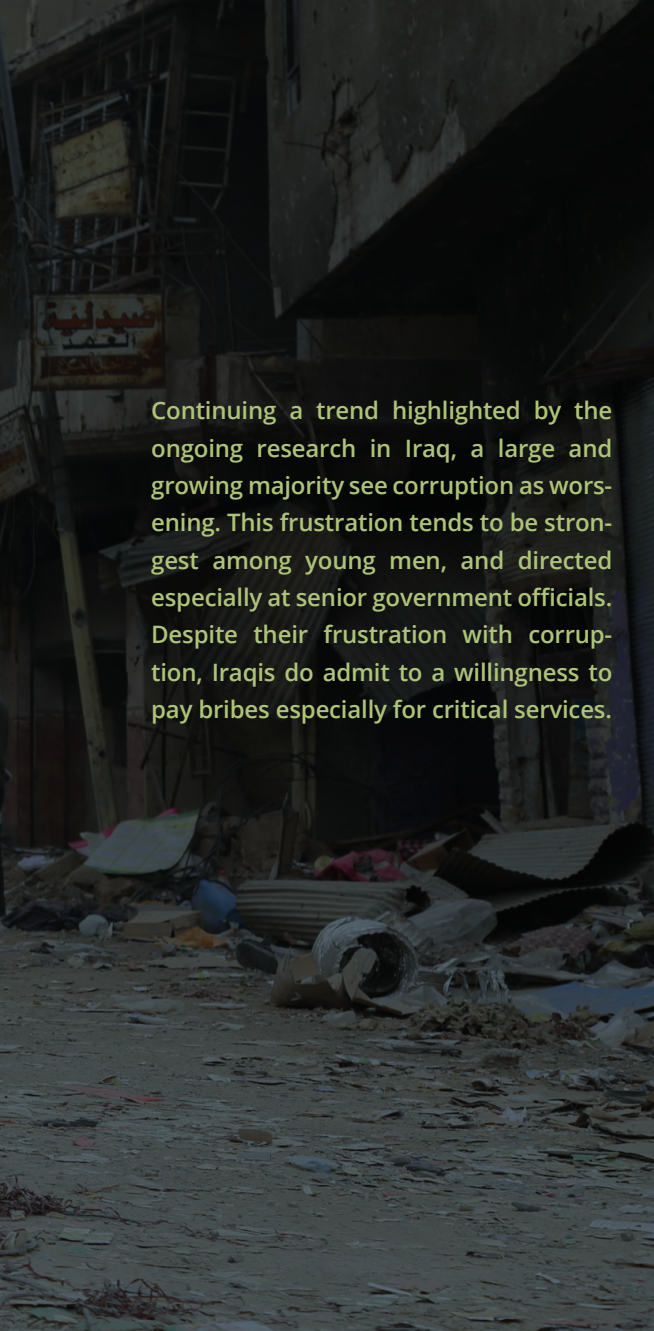
the West, negative views toward reconstruction are driven by Ninewa (73 percent say it is getting worse, up 9 points) and Kirkuk (62 percent, up 2 points), while more citizens in Anbar, Diyala, and Salahaddin perceive it as getting better relative to the findings in October 2018. Views of slow and inadequate reconstruction are particularly worrisome as rumors remain about Daesh sleeper cells and influence in the region.

**Majority of Iraqis unlikely to vote in provincial elections.** Discontent with the existing system has resulted in lower interest in participating in elections. In Iraq's 2018 parliamentary elections, only 44.5 percent turned out, a low in the post-Saddam era. With regard to the next provincial elections, for the first time in nearly a decade of NDI polling on this issue, 50 percent of respondents state there is only a 50-50 chance or no chance at all that they would vote. Turnout is usually lower in local elections, but the current survey indicates that views toward democratic participation

are particularly low, which could create a legitimacy problem for the next local government. While the timeline for the provincial elections remains unclear, the anticipated date of April 2020 means the government still has time to demonstrate its commitment to enacting much-needed electoral reform to earn the confidence and trust of voters.

**Voters willing to switch party allegiances in provincial elections.** Prolonged negotiations over forming the government, the breakdown of some electoral coalitions, and little progress on tackling citizens' everyday issues contribute to voters' prevalent willingness to switch parties. Among the Iraqis who say they voted in the 2018 parliamentary election, more say they would change their vote than vote for the same coalition again by a 48 percent to 42 percent ratio. Combined with the low expected turnout, this presents an opportunity for political parties to raise their profiles by successfully engaging and mobilizing voters.





Continuing a trend highlighted by the ongoing research in Iraq, a large and growing majority see corruption as worsening. This frustration tends to be strongest among young men, and directed especially at senior government officials. Despite their frustration with corruption, Iraqis do admit to a willingness to pay bribes especially for critical services.

---

## CORRUPTION

---

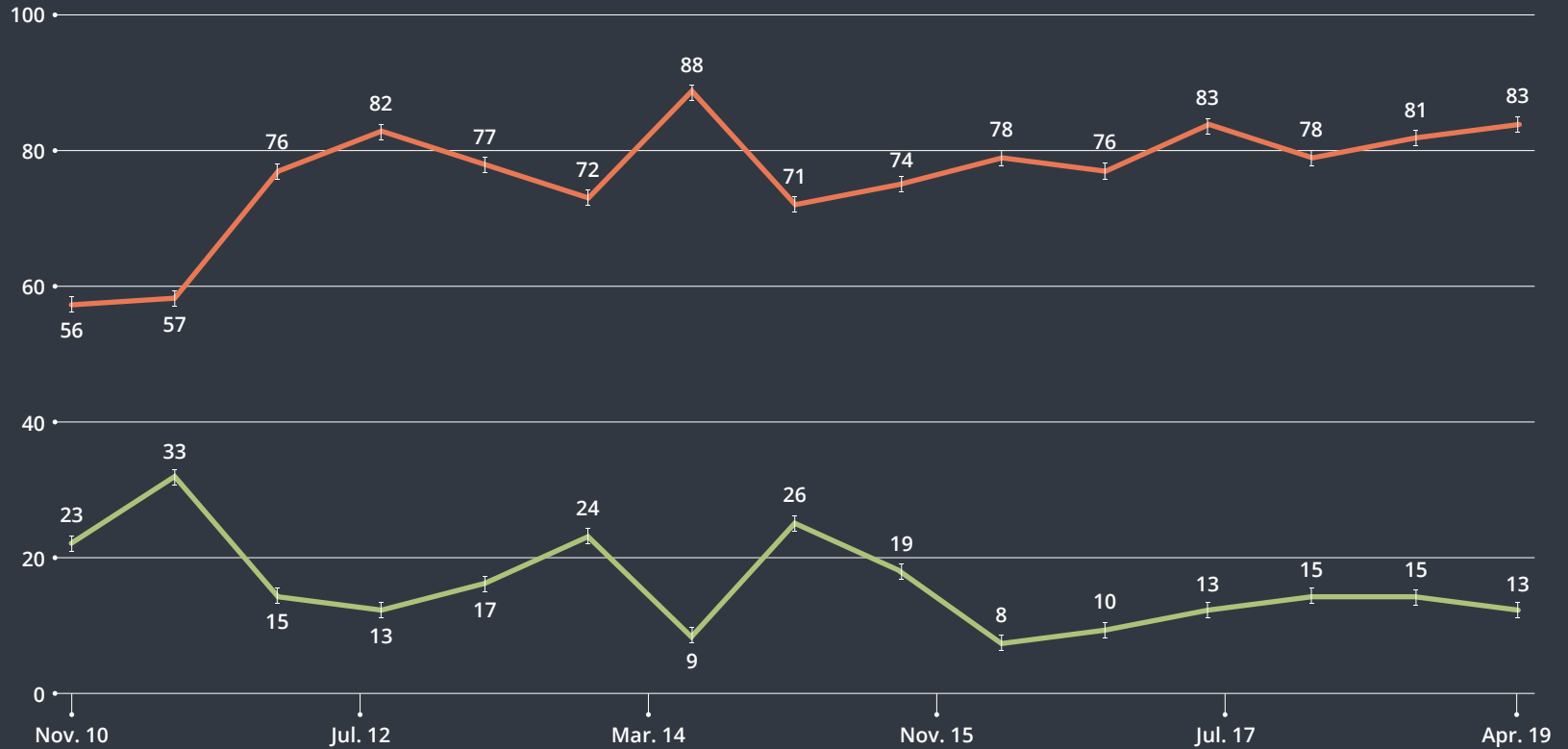
# Thriving in Governance Gaps

---

**Corruption remains a top concern.** As views toward security improve, corruption and the lack of job opportunities remain the major drivers of negative views toward Iraq's governing institutions. The new survey shows that only 13 percent of Iraqis believe that the fight against corruption is getting better in Iraq—compared to 83 percent who say corruption is getting worse. The highest level of concern about corruption recorded by NDI polls (88 percent) was in 2013, just before the rise of Daesh. Majorities say corruption is getting worse across all regions of the country, with the highest proportion in the KRI at 93%. Now 38 percent say corruption is one of the top two concerns the national government needs to address, up six points since October. At the governorate government level, 36% say it is the top concern they want addressed, more than the economy, schools, or reconstruction.

**Iraqis most concerned about corruption among senior government officials.** Deep concern about corruption is both linked to perceptions of senior government officials and the day-to-day corruption that people experience. A large 82 percent of Iraqis say they are extremely or very concerned with corruption among senior government officials. Areas where people may experience corruption more directly in their day-to-day lives also draw high concern, with 72 percent saying they are extremely or very concerned with corruption in education and 68 percent extremely or very concerned about corruption in the healthcare system. Overall, more than three in ten Iraqis say they are required to give gifts or informal payments at least half the instances they need a government official to get something done. Reflecting the more positive views toward security forces, there is a drop off in concerns





### Question

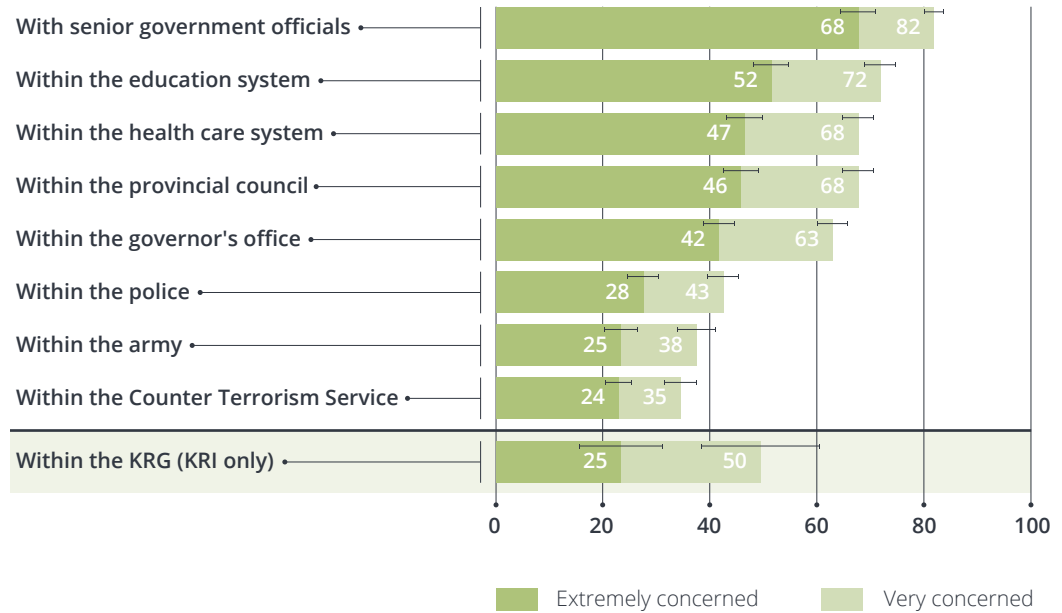
■ Better
 ■ Worse

*Now, I will read you a list of issues. Please tell me if you think this issue is getting better or worse in Iraq: Corruption.*

about corruption in the Iraqi police, army, and the Counter Terrorism Service.

**Young men are the most concerned about corruption.** Younger Iraqis are particularly focused on corruption, and it is the concern listed most often among young men. Women are relatively less focused on corruption in most areas, likely due to their restricted movement and less frequent interaction with government officials, providing fewer opportunities to deal directly with corruption’s perpetrators. Women are 11 points more likely than men (74 percent to 63 percent) to say they are rarely or never expected to give a bribe when interacting with government officials.

**Corruption—one of several key drivers behind the public demonstrations.** More than two out of three Iraqis approve (68 percent, down eight points) of the most recent public protests, including strong majorities in Baghdad, the South, and West regions. Those who see corruption as a top concern at the national or governorate level are only a bit more likely to approve of these protests, suggesting that lack



### Question

*I will now give you a list of types of corruption. For each, please tell me how concerned you are about that type of corruption—extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, just a little concerned, not at all concerned.*

of opportunities and poor services play just as much of a role.

Half of Iraqis think bribes are acceptable for government services. Despite intense corruption concerns, some Iraqis show openness to paying bribes in order to get things done in their personal lives. Slightly more than one in four Iraqis say it is acceptable in all or most interactions with government officials, with another five percent saying it is acceptable half the time, and 17 percent saying rarely. A bare 52 percent majority say it is never acceptable.

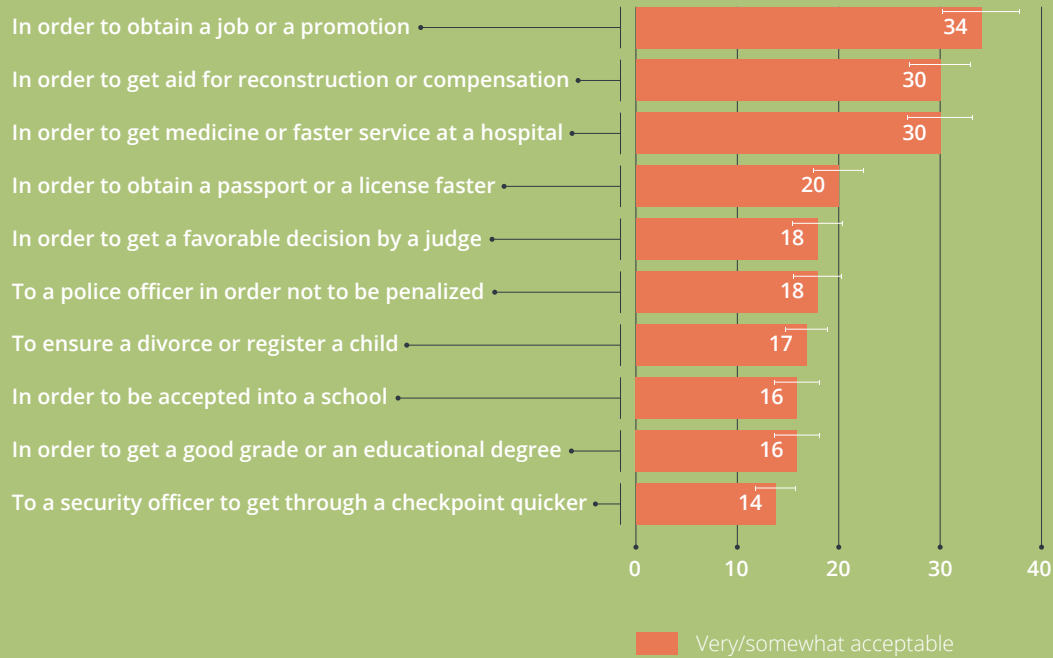
Acceptance of bribery is higher in places where people are reliant on them for survival or eco-

nomics subsistence. At least three in ten say bribes are very or somewhat acceptable in order to obtain a job or promotion, to get aid for reconstruction or compensation, and to get medicine or faster service at a hospital. For Iraqis who encounter these situations, there is often little alternative, so many will end up accepting the compromise that they have to pay a bribe. Less than 20 percent say it is very or somewhat acceptable to pay a bribe to a police or security officer, to a judge, or to get an advantage in education.

**Corruption is less acceptable in KRI.** In KRI, the focus on and rejection of corruption is usually stronger and that holds for the most recent survey. Half of all respondents in the KRI say

corruption is one of the top two issues they want the Iraqi government to address. Unlike in the rest of the country, those in the KRI are very concerned with corruption in the Iraqi security forces, such as the Iraqi police and army. Yet, they also see corruption occurring within the KRI. Half of those living in the KRI say they are extremely or very concerned about corruption within the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). In the KRI, there is a much lower tolerance for bribes, with an overwhelming 95 percent saying it is rarely or never acceptable to pay a bribe. Even on issues where other Iraqis are more willing to pay bribes, such as to get a job or to get medicine, there is little stated tolerance for informal gifts or bribes to get things done.





## Question

*For each of the following, please tell me how acceptable you think it is to give a gift or informal payment for that specific action—very acceptable, somewhat acceptable, barely acceptable, or not acceptable at all.*

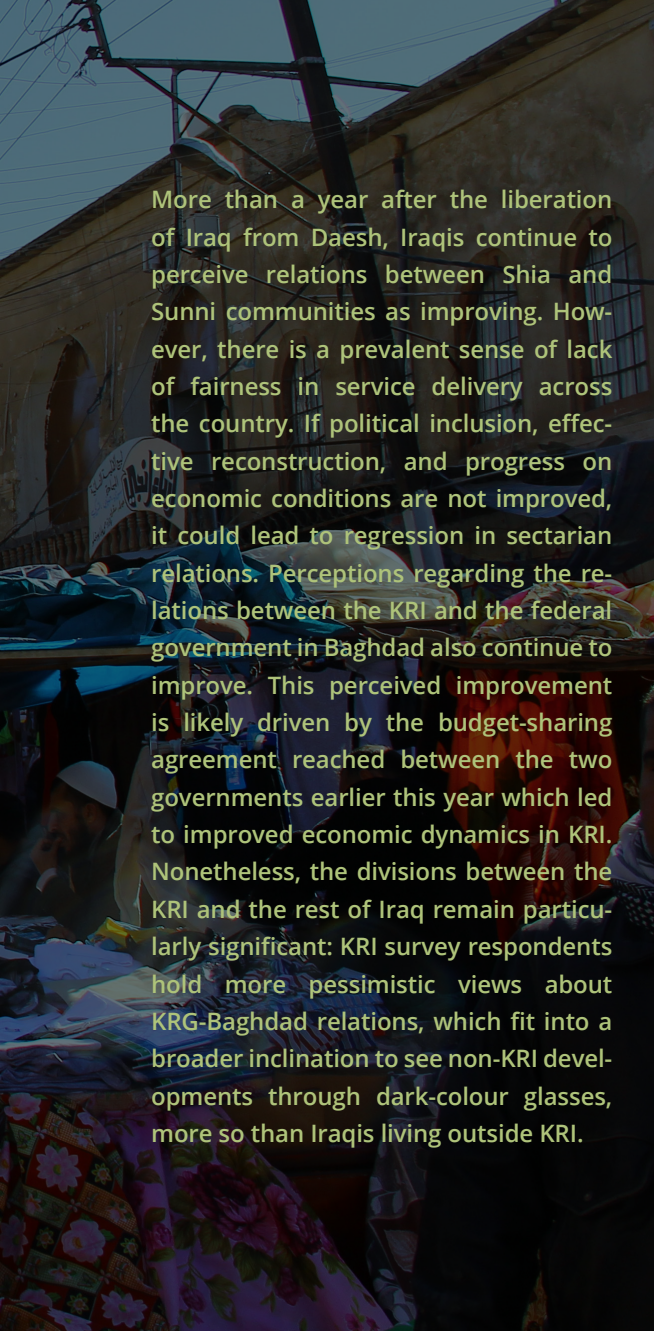






محل  
قاسم  
لبيع  
ملابس اطفال  
الاولى - الثاني  
داخل البازار / بازار





More than a year after the liberation of Iraq from Daesh, Iraqis continue to perceive relations between Shia and Sunni communities as improving. However, there is a prevalent sense of lack of fairness in service delivery across the country. If political inclusion, effective reconstruction, and progress on economic conditions are not improved, it could lead to regression in sectarian relations. Perceptions regarding the relations between the KRI and the federal government in Baghdad also continue to improve. This perceived improvement is likely driven by the budget-sharing agreement reached between the two governments earlier this year which led to improved economic dynamics in KRI. Nonetheless, the divisions between the KRI and the rest of Iraq remain particularly significant: KRI survey respondents hold more pessimistic views about KRG-Baghdad relations, which fit into a broader inclination to see non-KRI developments through dark-colour glasses, more so than Iraqis living outside KRI.

---

## SOCIAL COHESION

---

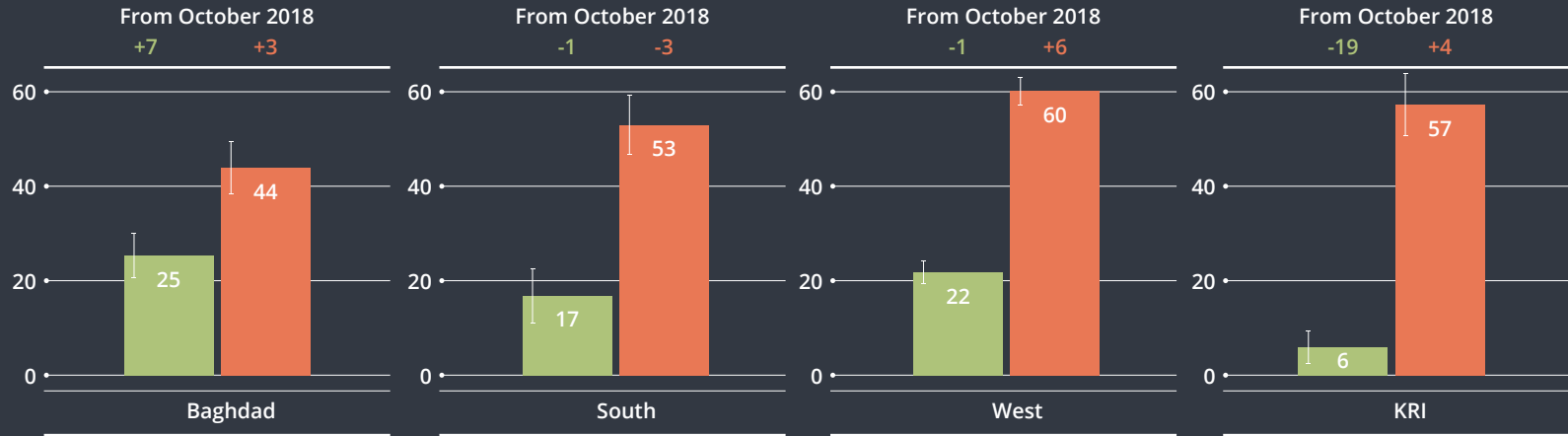
# Iraqi Identity Consolidates, but Politics Seen as Divisive

---

**Iraqi identity gaining momentum and sectarianism decreasing.** Just under 2 out of 3 Iraqis (63 percent) say sectarianism in the country is getting better, while almost 3 out of 4 (74 percent) say relations between Sunnis and Shias are improving. Iraqis are also four times more likely to first identify themselves as Iraqi than by their religion or sect. In fact, roughly 3 out of 4 in Baghdad, the West and the South first identify as Iraqi. In comparison, only 14 percent identify first with their religion or sect while 9 percent identify first with their tribe.

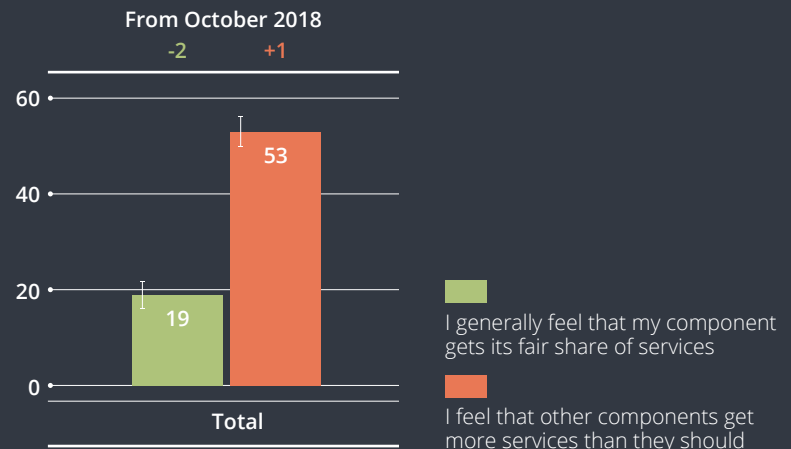
**Divisions fueled by politics and gap between citizens and state.** Even though Iraqis hold a shared identity and feel that Shia/Sunni relations are improving, there is still a sense of division within the country. A 64 percent majority say the country is divided as opposed to

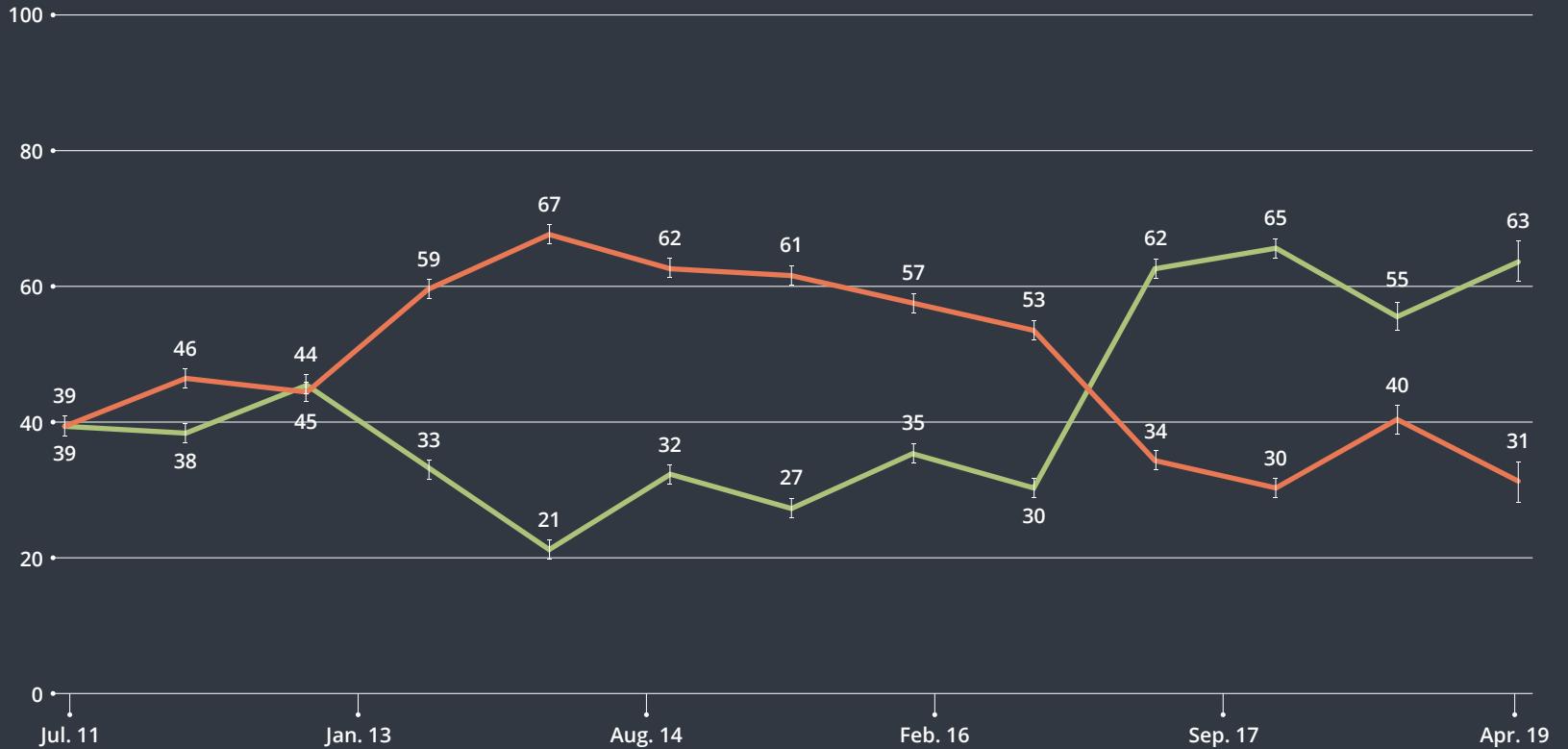
unified. Only in Baghdad, the most heterogeneous region, do a majority say the country is unified, while large majorities in the South, West, and KRI say the country is more divided. This sense of division is driven by conflicts related to politics and politicians, as well as foreign countries that have influence in Iraq. As seen in previous surveys, the trend in a sense of division is therefore not necessarily along religious or ethnic lines but rather a citizen-government divide. More than half (52 percent) say one of the two biggest divisions Iraq faces is between political parties, while 32 percent say the biggest division is between politicians and society. Another 39 percent say one of the two biggest divisions that Iraq faces is between countries with influence in Iraq like the U.S. and Iran. In comparison, only 28 percent say the biggest division is between Sunni and Shia.



### Question

*I'm going to read you some pairs of statements and for each one, I want you to tell me which statement comes closer to your point of view: I generally feel that my component gets its fair share of services. I feel that other components get more services than they should.*



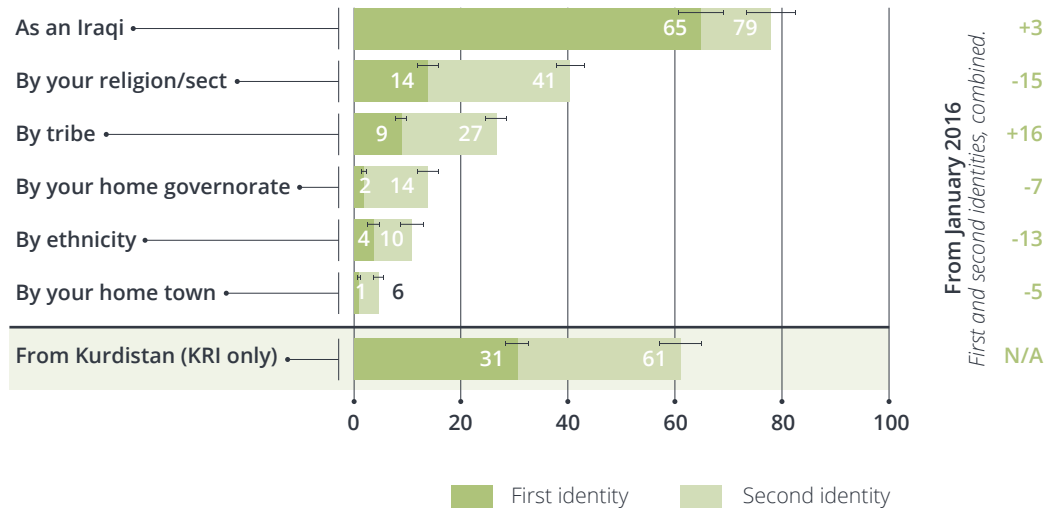


## Question

■ Better
 ■ Worse

*Now, I will read you a list of issues. Please tell me if you think this issue is getting better or worse in Iraq: Sectarianism*



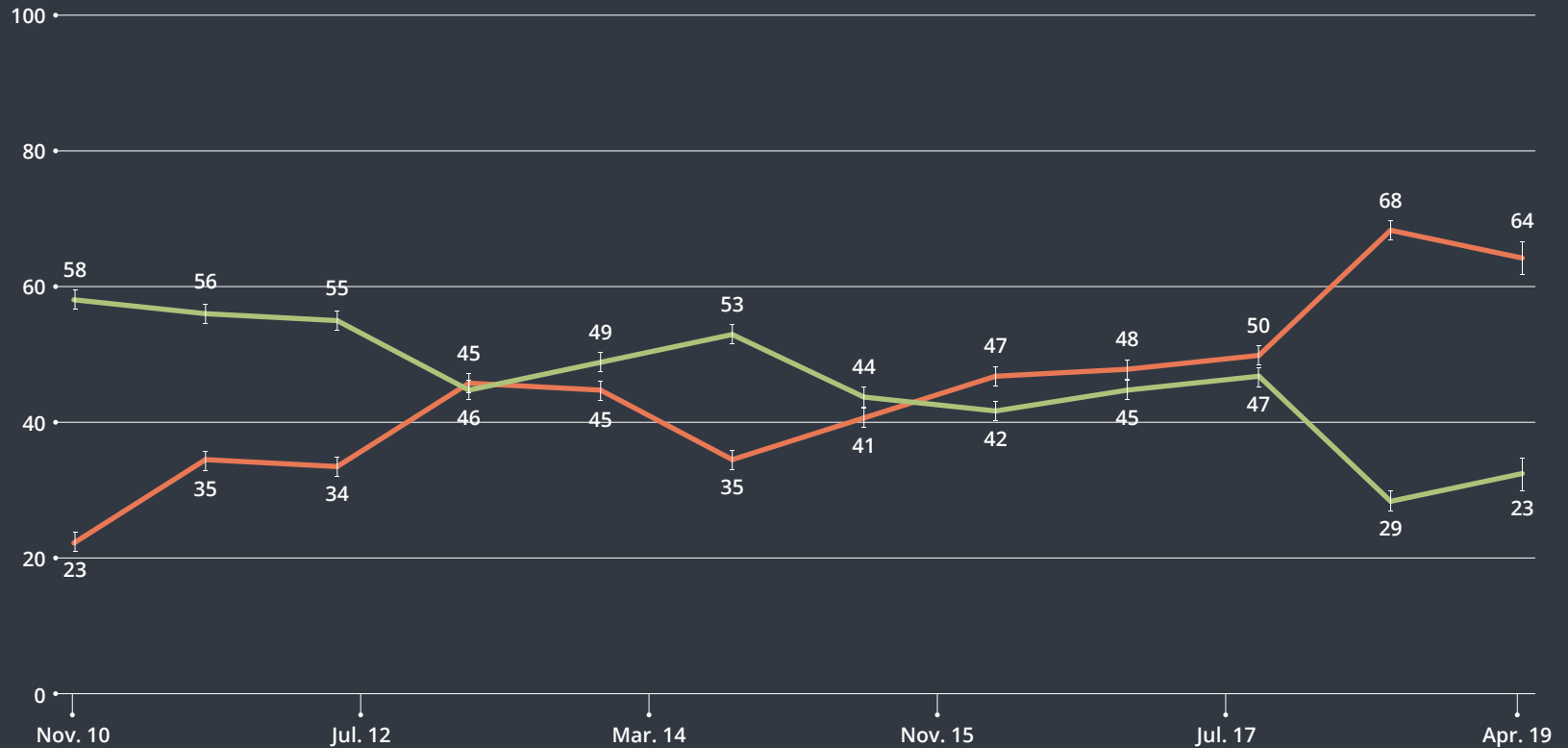


**Erbil—Baghdad relations improving.** As seen in past research, views in the KRI are markedly more negative toward national cohesion compared to the rest of the country. Only 6 percent in the KRI feel sectarianism is improving and only 3 percent say Iraq is a mostly unified country. Only 1 percent in the KRI identify first as Iraqi, while 51 percent identify first with being Kurdish or from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. While respondents in the KRI more broadly view unity in Iraq as not improving, there is some improvement in views regarding relations between the KRG and the federal government in Baghdad. One in 4 in the KRI now say these relations are improving, up 16 points from early 2018. Outside of the KRI, 48 percent now feel that relations between the KRI and the rest of the country are improving, a sentiment that has shown consistent improvement over five waves of research dating back to 2015. The long-awaited budget-sharing agreement and a desire by the main Kurdish parties to engage in the political process after elections for the Kurdistan Parliament—Iraq (held in September 2018) led to an overall improved mood in the KRI, with 43 percent now feeling their region is going in the right direction, up 11 points since a year ago.

## Question

*Now I am going to read you a list of different ways people choose to identify themselves. Imagine someone you trusted asks you about your background. From the following list, what would be the first way you would identify yourself?*

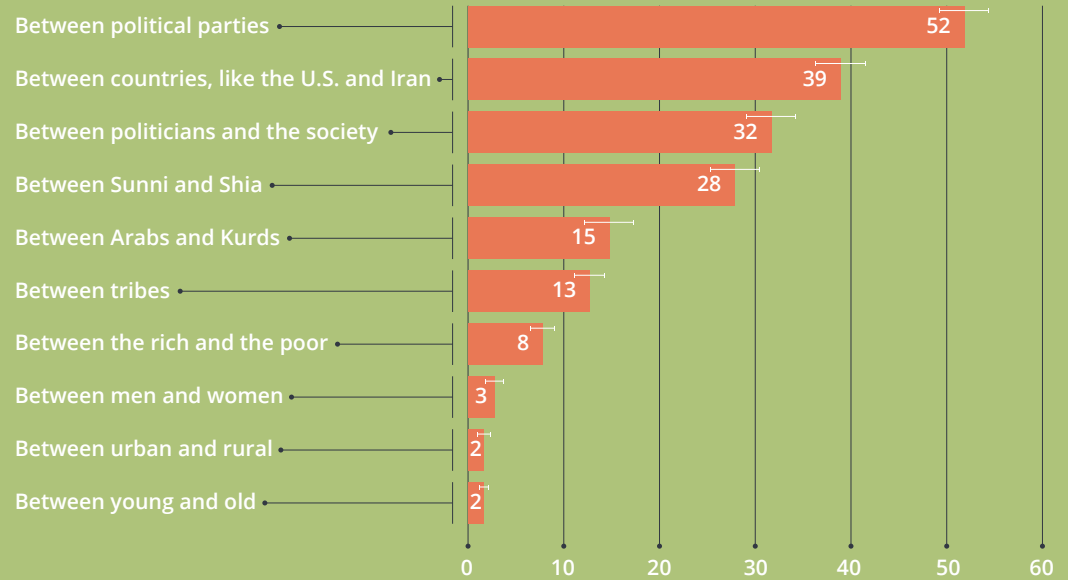
## IRAQ SURVEY REPORT



### Question

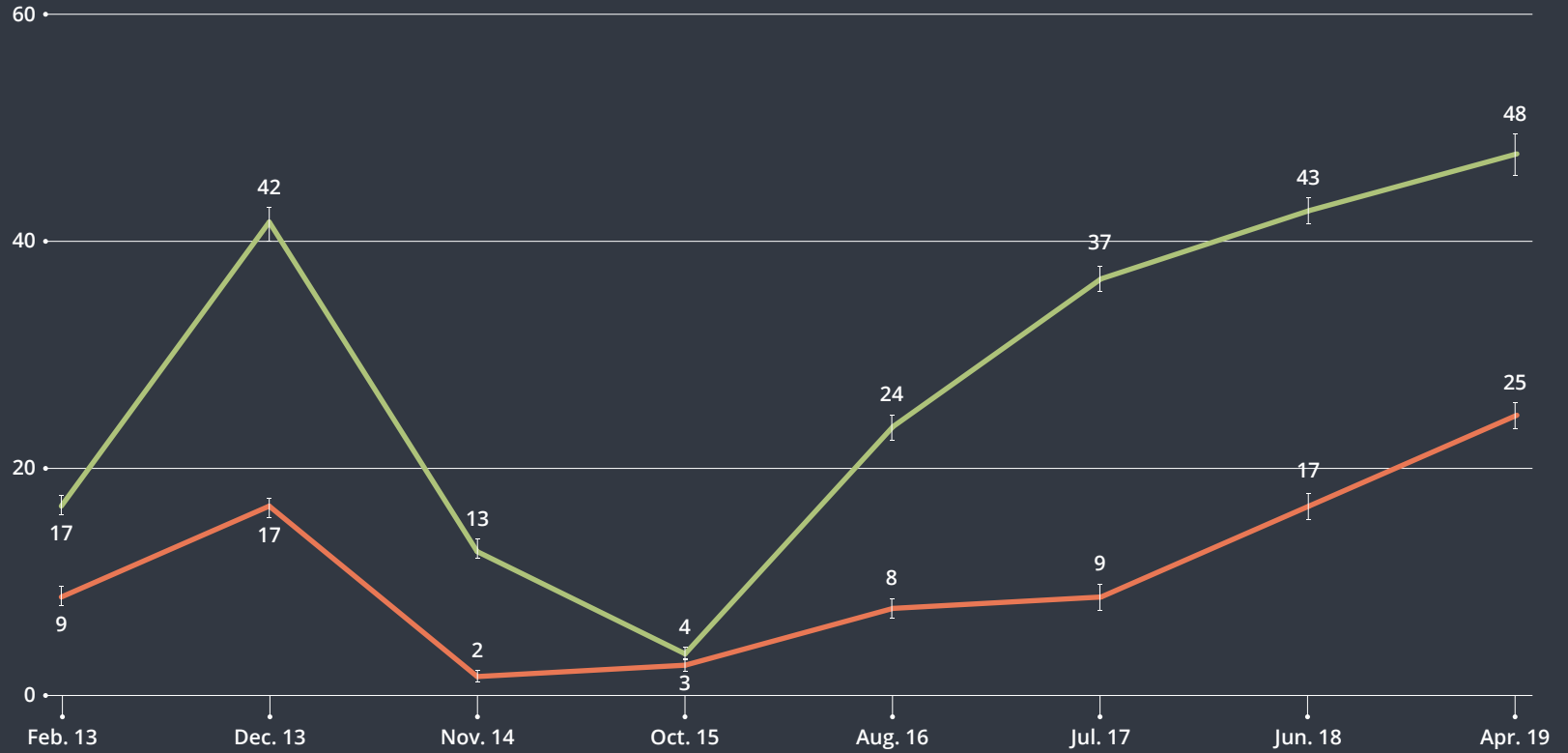
*I'm going to read you some pairs of statements and for each one I want you to tell me which statement comes closer to your point of view.*

- Iraq is mostly a unified country
- Iraq is mostly a divided country



## Question

*I am now going to read a list of different divisions some people say that Iraq faces. Which two of the following are you most concerned about in Iraq?*



### Question

*Now, I will read you a list of issues. Please tell me if you think this issue is getting better or worse in Iraq: (Relations between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the central government.) Note: % saying "better"*

■ Non-KRI ■ KRI





---

## GENDER

---

# Women's Rights Getting Worse but Demand For Equality Increasing

---

Women in Iraq are at a pivot point rather than on a certain path toward equality, facing both new opportunities to further improve their status and pushback from those with more traditional values. Iraqi women continue to face significant obstacles that limit their personal freedoms, including an inability to travel freely, widespread harassment, and domestic violence. Many of the constraints on women's rights are driven by societal, familial, and religious pressures, as well as a culture of shaming that forces women to self-censor their actions and hinders efforts for greater equality.

**Women's rights getting worse.** The new survey shows that demand for gender equality goes beyond the reality of gender dynamics in Iraq today. A strong 61 percent majority think that women are treated differently than men. Similarly, a 54 percent majority think women's rights are getting worse, including majorities in Baghdad, the South, and West regions of Iraq. As with many issues, views in the KRI differ: A 70 percent majority say genders *are* treated equally; but even there, only 20 percent say women's rights are improving, down 26 points since last October.

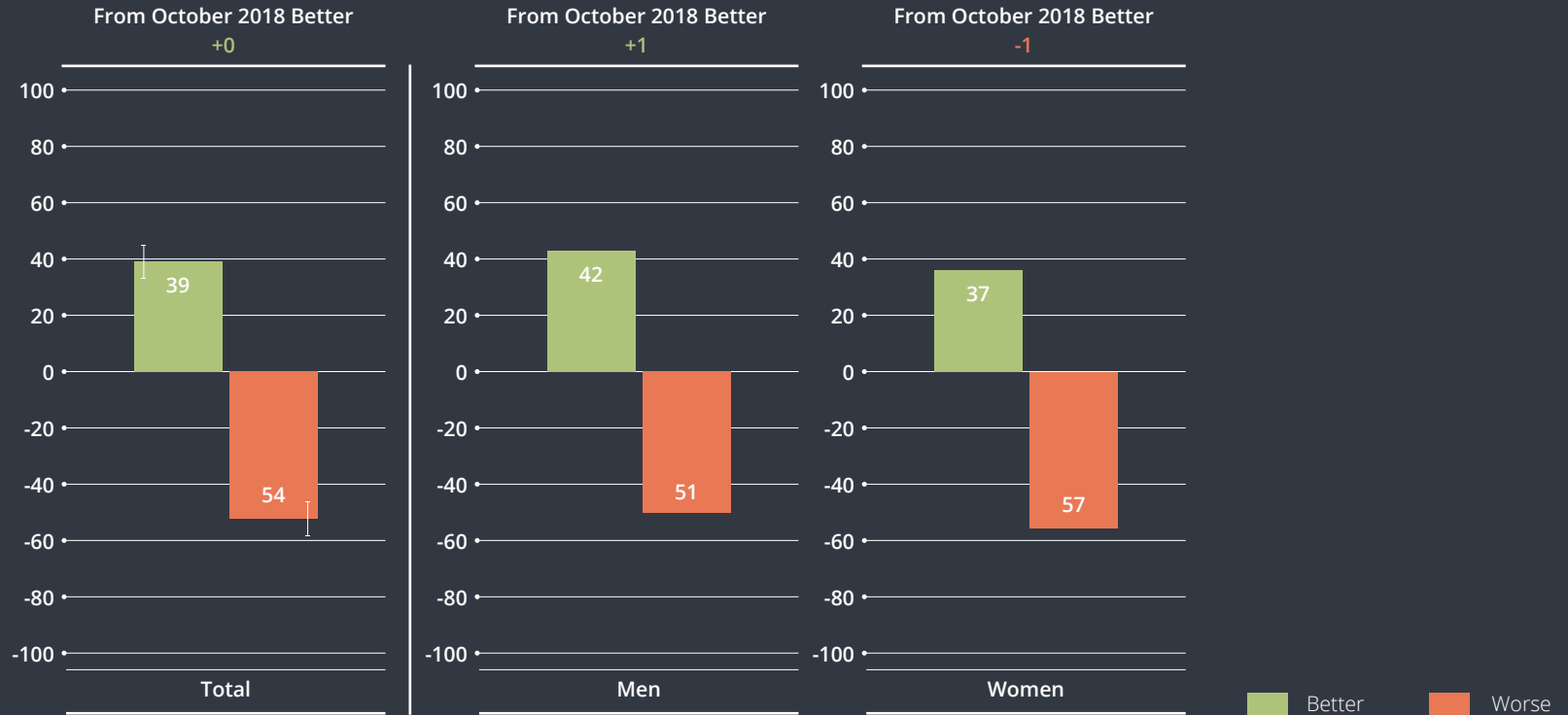
**High demand for equality.** Despite the views toward worsening equality, Iraqis show a very strong desire for women to gain more rights. A 73 percent majority think that men and women *should* have equal rights and 62 percent think women should receive more rights than they

have today. Women are significantly more likely than men to say that women need more rights, but a slim 51 percent majority of men still agree, while only 18 percent disagree. Nevertheless, as past public opinion research shows, support for women's rights as an abstract concept is more common than willingness to challenge traditional gender roles in reality.<sup>3</sup>

**Harassment of women is widespread.** The survey findings validate findings of separate recent research<sup>4</sup> indicating that the prevalence and tolerance of harassment help explain some of the discrepancy between demand for and reality of gender equality. Fully 82 percent of Iraqis agree with the statement that "harassment is

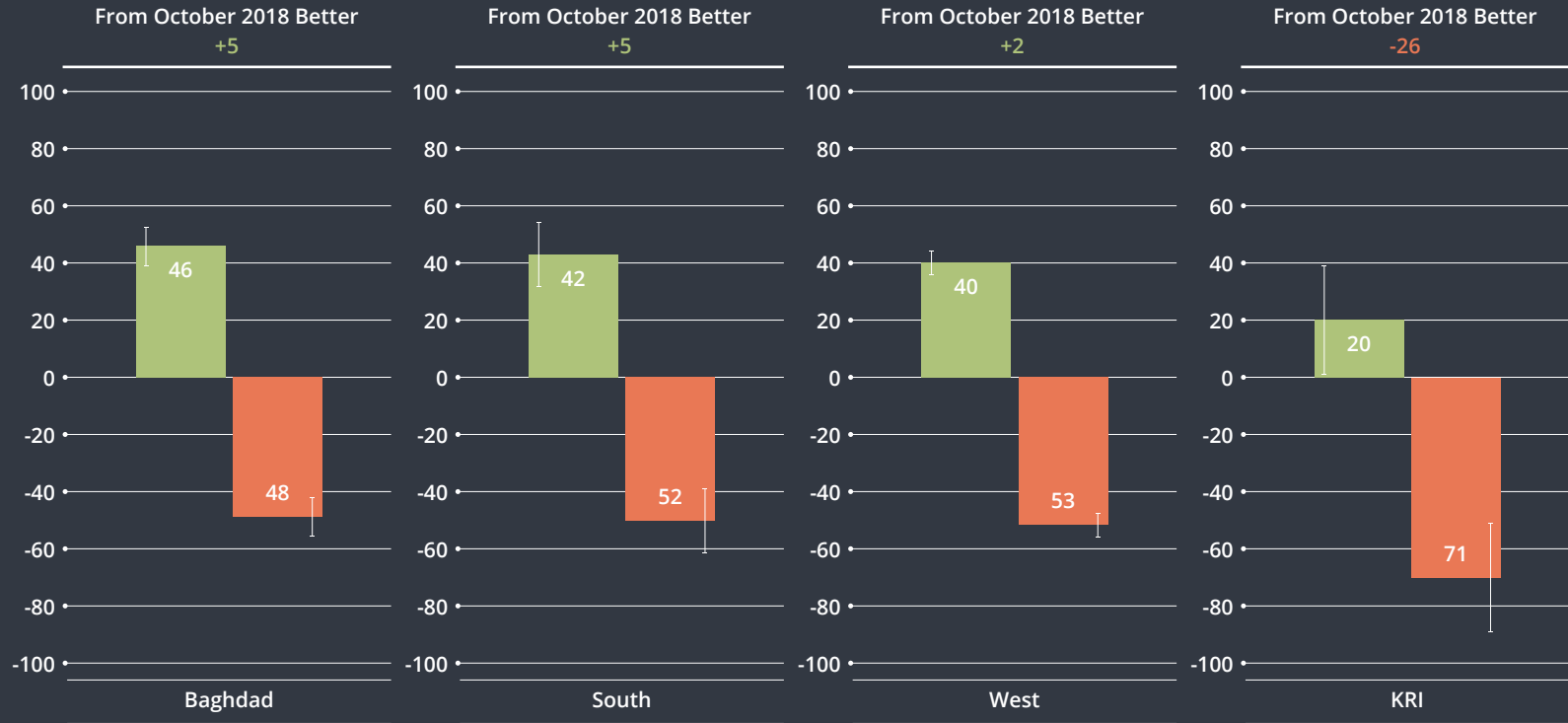
<sup>3</sup> NDI, *Survey Report: Iraqis Call on the New Government for Jobs, Services, and Reconstruction*, pg. 54-56, Oct. 2018

<sup>4</sup> NDI, *Focus Group Discussions Report: Opening Up New Opportunities for Women in Iraq*, pg. 17, December 2018



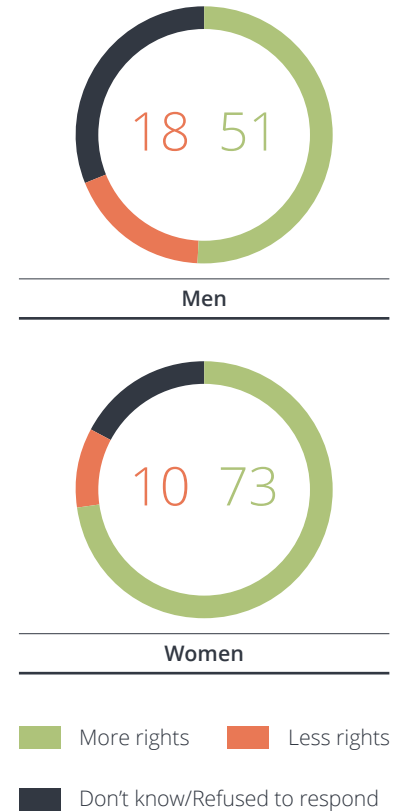
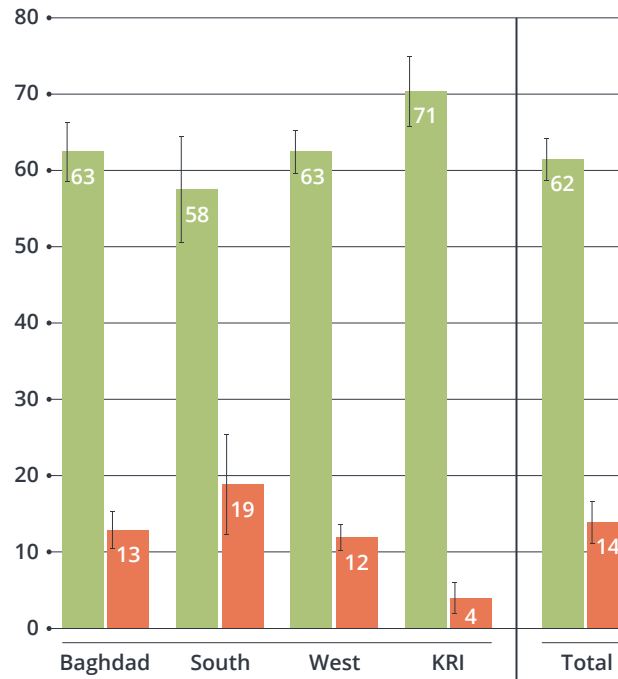
## Question

*Now, I will read you a list of issues. Please tell me if you think this issue is getting better or worse in Iraq: Women's Rights.*



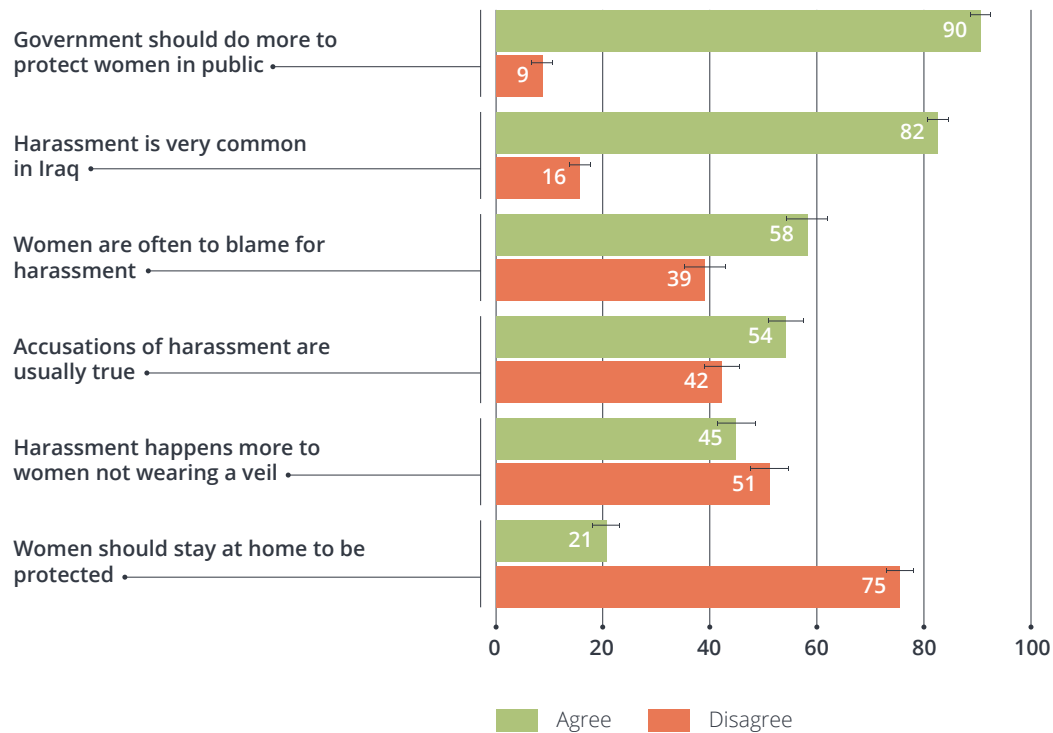
very common in Iraq,” including 88 percent of Iraqis under 35. Harassment is viewed as very or somewhat common on the street (78 percent), at the workplace or while looking for a job (69 percent), while interacting with government (56 percent), and while interacting with the police and security forces (43 percent). Both men and women say harassment is likely in many public and private areas, but men are much *more* likely to think harassment of women occurs at the workplace and when interacting with government or security forces. This shows a high level of awareness among men and suggests they may be receptive and influenced by a public awareness campaign. On the other hand, it could also signify men’s exaggerated concern to justify restrictions of women’s freedoms or movement. To be effective, public awareness campaign will need to be matched by training programs and internal policies for government employees and security forces, as well as a better enforcement of existing anti-harassment legislation.

**Women blamed for harassment.** Harassment is common, and many also blame women for it. A 58 percent majority agree with the



### Question

*Generally speaking, do you think women in Iraq should receive more rights than they have today, less rights than they have today, or should there be no change in the rights they have today?*



statement that “women are often to blame for harassment.” Iraqis are split on whether wearing a veil decreases harassment—a small 51 percent majority say going out without a veil leads to more harassment. Some of this sentiment comes from women. In fact, women are slightly *more* likely than men to agree with the statement “women are often to blame for harassment” (60 percent of women to 54 percent of men). Interestingly, respondents with a first-born son—especially women with first-born sons—are more likely to blame women.

**Iraqis want government to do more.** Regardless of views toward blame, Iraqis agree the status quo on harassment should change. There is overwhelming agreement that the government should do more to protect women in public (90 percent). Voters want their government to do more to help women, and this likely extends beyond desire for new laws, to implementing protections in most public locations. Iraqis want more protection for women, as opposed to confining them to home. A strong 75 percent majority of Iraqis *do not* agree that women should stay home as a means to protect themselves from harassment.

## Question

*I will now read you a list of statements related to harassment. For each please tell me if you agree or disagree with that statement.*



---

**Domestic violence is common.** The need for better women's rights and protections exists within Iraqi households as well. Domestic violence is considered common, with 79 percent saying it is very or somewhat common (67 percent in the KRI). Women are more likely to say domestic violence occurs: 59 percent of women outside of the KRI state it is *very* common, compared to 48 percent of men. More than 1 in 3 Iraqis also state that they know a family member or close friend who has been a victim of domestic violence and 14 percent of women state they have been a victim themselves, although the real figure is likely to be higher as women respondents may not be willing to admit to interviewers that they have been a victim, especially since past research has shown how strong the sense of shame can be.

**Domestic violence acceptable to some, particularly young men.** In addition to the pervasiveness of domestic violence, there is some tolerance for it. Nearly 1 in 4 Iraqis think that physical punishment of wives in the home is always or sometimes acceptable, while 16 percent in the KRI agree. Young men are the most

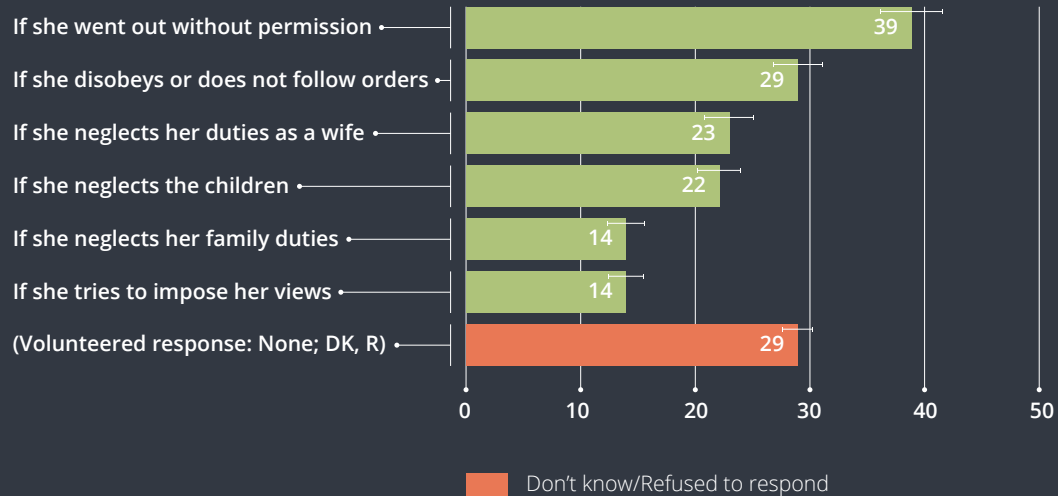
likely to say physical punishment is acceptable (35 percent of young men outside the KRI), suggesting they are a critical target group for any public awareness campaign. More alarmingly, when presented with situations in which domestic violence may be used to reinforce traditional gender roles, only 33 percent *do not* find them acceptable in any situation. Illustrating the limited choice and control that some women have over key aspects of their everyday lives, pluralities of Iraqis say domestic violence is acceptable if a wife went out without permission (39 percent), if she disobeys or does not follow orders (29 percent), or if she neglects her duties (23 percent). On all three measures, women are just as likely as men to say these are acceptable reasons to physically punish a wife. Qualitative research has shown that core values are often anchored in religion, which few are willing to challenge.<sup>5</sup> The risk of violence for leaving the home without permission highlights the constraints that women face in reporting abuse, finding work, building networks, and getting necessary services.

<sup>5</sup> NDI, *Focus Group Discussions Report: Opening Up New Opportunities for Women in Iraq*, pg. 24, December 2018





Karam Hassawy, Mosul, 2018 © NDI



## Question

*I will read a list of situations where physical punishment of a wife in the home might be acceptable. Please tell me which of the following would be a time that physical punishment of a wife would be acceptable, if any.*





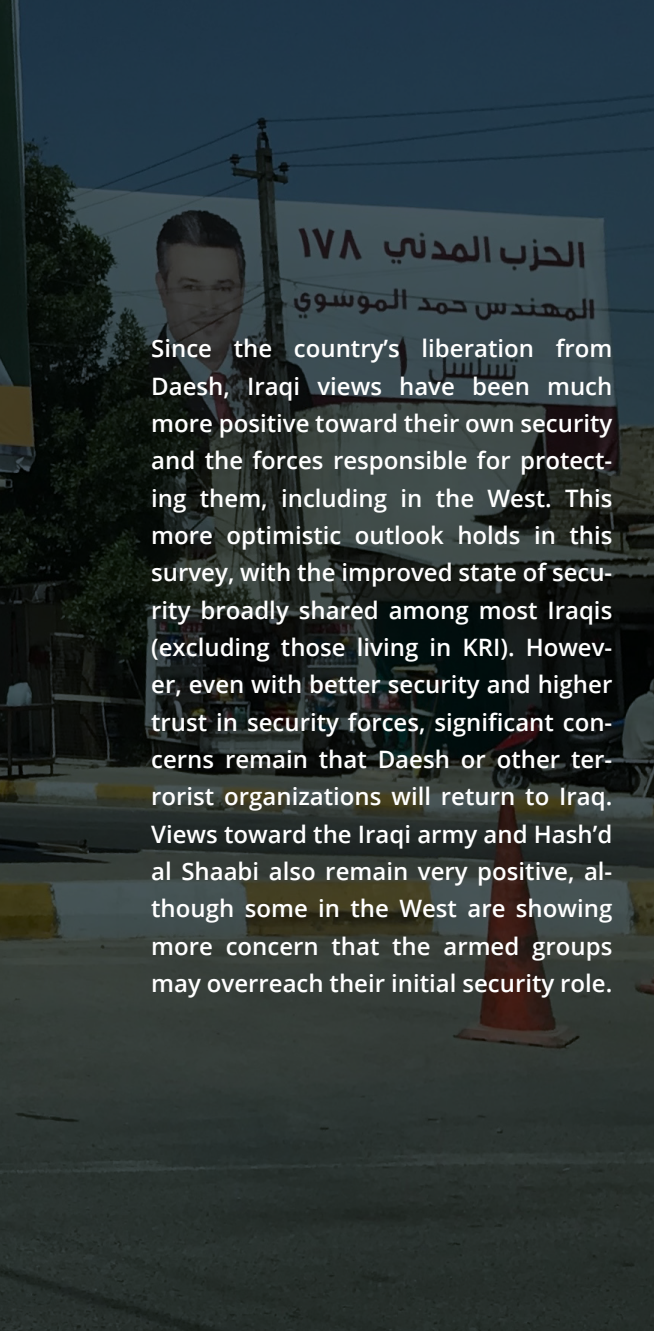
تحالف الفتح

رقم التسلسل

الشيخ د. همام حمودي

الشيخ د. همام حمودي





Since the country's liberation from Daesh, Iraqi views have been much more positive toward their own security and the forces responsible for protecting them, including in the West. This more optimistic outlook holds in this survey, with the improved state of security broadly shared among most Iraqis (excluding those living in KRI). However, even with better security and higher trust in security forces, significant concerns remain that Daesh or other terrorist organizations will return to Iraq. Views toward the Iraqi army and Hash'd al Shaabi also remain very positive, although some in the West are showing more concern that the armed groups may overreach their initial security role.

---

## SECURITY

---

# High Trust in Security Forces, but Concerns of Daesh Resurgence Persist

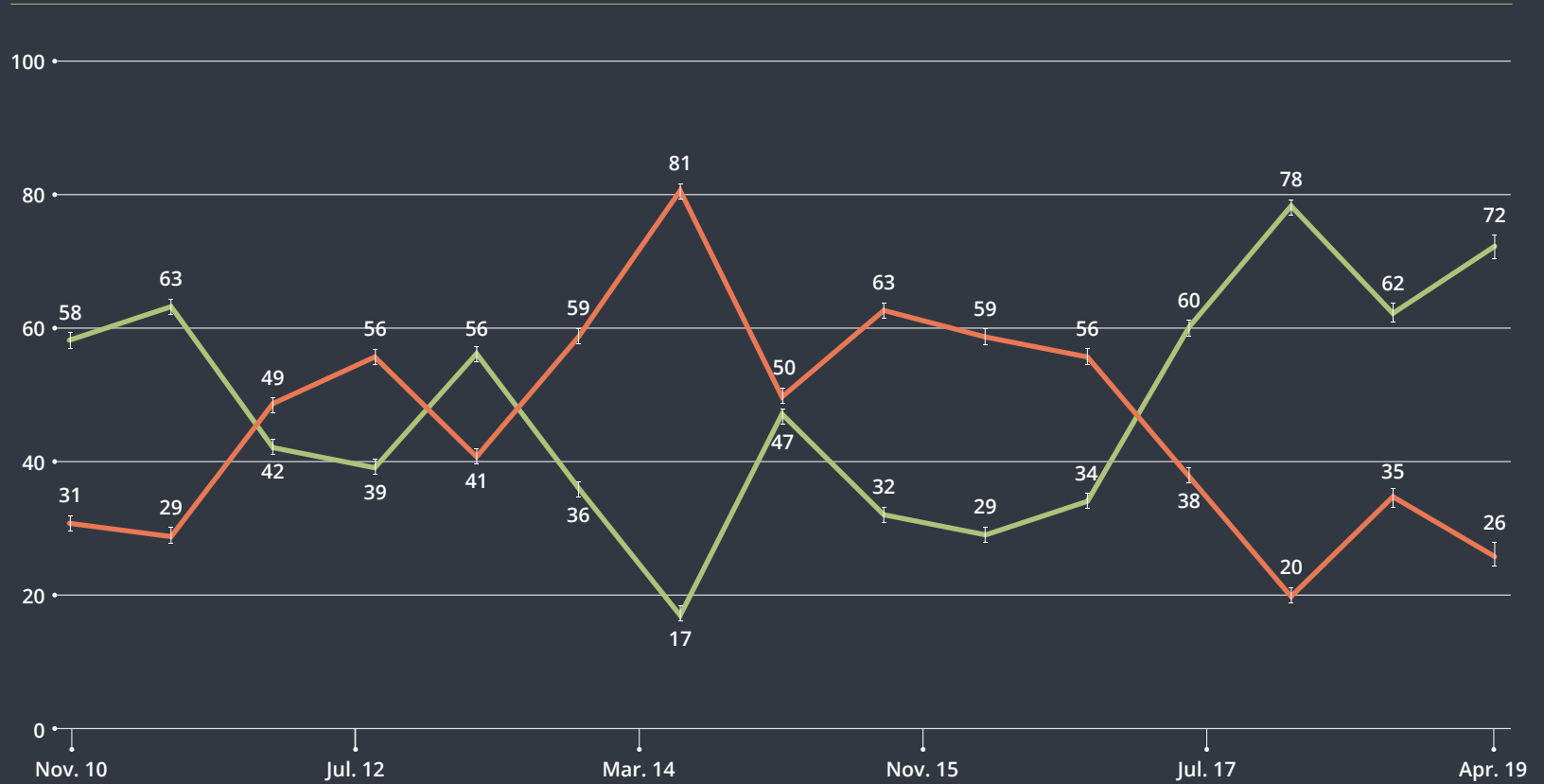
---

**Views on security situation continue to improve.** Views on security in the country continue to improve with 72 percent of Iraqis seeing security as improving, up 10 points since October 2018 and at one of the highest levels NDI surveys have measured since 2010. About 1 in 4 respondents nationally say security is getting worse, while strong and growing majorities in Baghdad (81 percent), the West (79 percent), and the South (75 percent) all agree security is getting better. As with many issues, views differ in the KRI, where only 39 percent say security is getting better, down 12 points since October 2018.

**Positive views on the police and the army.** Nationally, these positive views about security

coincide with positive views toward Iraq's security forces. Generally, views toward security forces are much more favorable than toward national and local governing institutions. For example, more than 7 in 10 say they trust the army, Hash'd al Shaabi, federal police, and local police "a lot" or "somewhat"; while less than 4 in 10 say they trust the justice system, district and provincial councils, the Iraqi Council of Representatives, and the Iraqi government. This suggests that getting buy-in and public support from security leaders may be critical in pushing through difficult or unpopular legislation, particularly any measures associated with the security situation such as initiatives for reconciliation, reconstruction, or assistance to victims or families of Daesh fighters.





### Question

■ Better ■ Worse

*Now, I will read you a list of issues. Please tell me if you think this issue is getting better or worse in Iraq: Security*

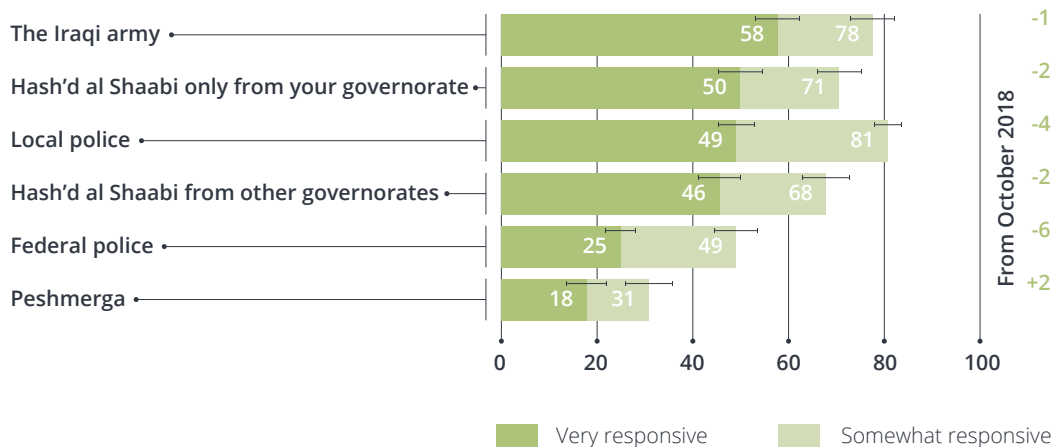
A 78 percent majority says the army would be responsive if they needed help, including 58 percent who say it would be *very* responsive. These views hold across several metrics, with 76 percent feeling favorable to the army, and 81 percent saying they trust it a lot or somewhat. Another positive indicator is that the local police, the law enforcement body in the immediate proximity of the citizen, is given credit for being very or somewhat responsive (81 percent.) On each of these measures, there is little change in the Iraqi public opinion from the previous survey in October 2018. Looking at the past 10 years of research, Iraqis started to feel more favorable to the army after the country was retaken from Daesh,<sup>6</sup> a trend maintained to date.

**Hash'd al Shaabi continues to receive high support.** About 2 out of 3 Iraqis feel favorable to Hash'd al Shaabi, with most of the unfavorable views coming from KRI. In addition, 73 percent of the country says they trust Hash'd al Shaabi a lot or somewhat. Fewer than 1 in 5

(17 percent) Iraqis say Hash'd al Shaabi is one of the two biggest threats they face on security.

The survey shows that the West holds slightly different views toward the role they want Hash'd al Shaabi to play, although there is still demand for Hash'd al Shaabi to fill in a num-

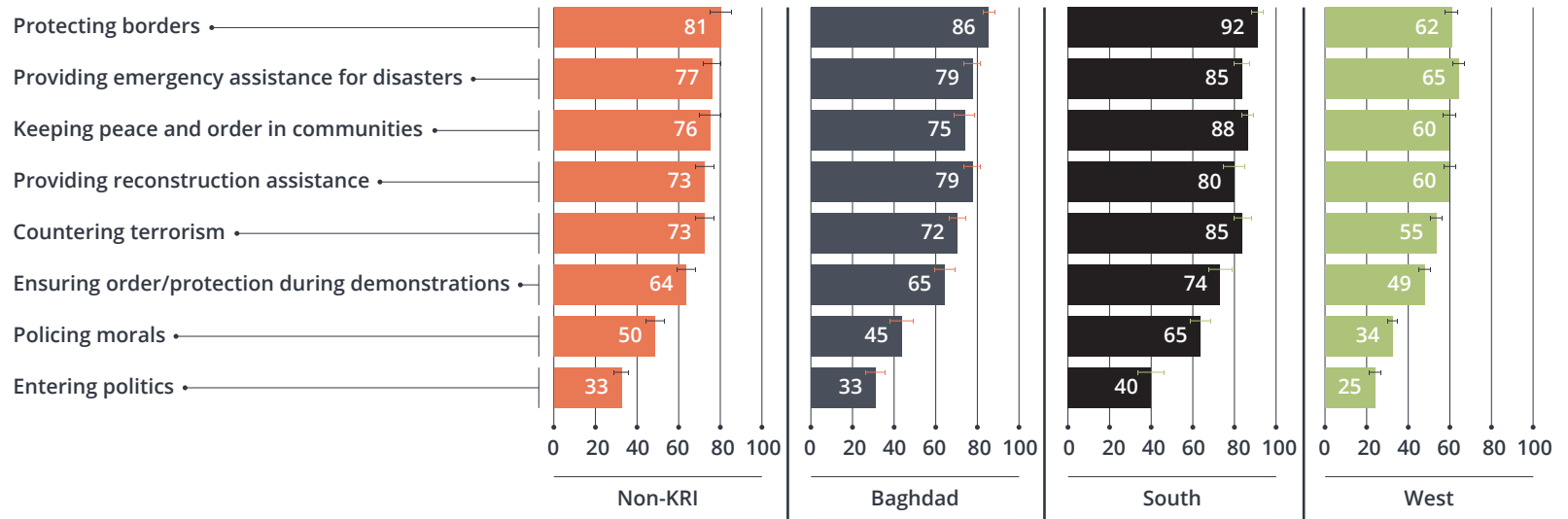
ber of security functions. Very large majorities in the South and Baghdad are very open to Hash'd al Shaabi fulfilling a diverse set of roles including: protecting borders, providing emergency assistance for disasters, keeping peace and order in communities, providing reconstruction assistance, and countering terrorism.



### Question

*Now I am going to ask about different groups in Iraq. For each one, please tell me how responsive they would be to you if you need help.*

<sup>6</sup> NDI, *Survey Report: Improved Security Provides Opening for Cooperation*, pg. 9-10, April 2017

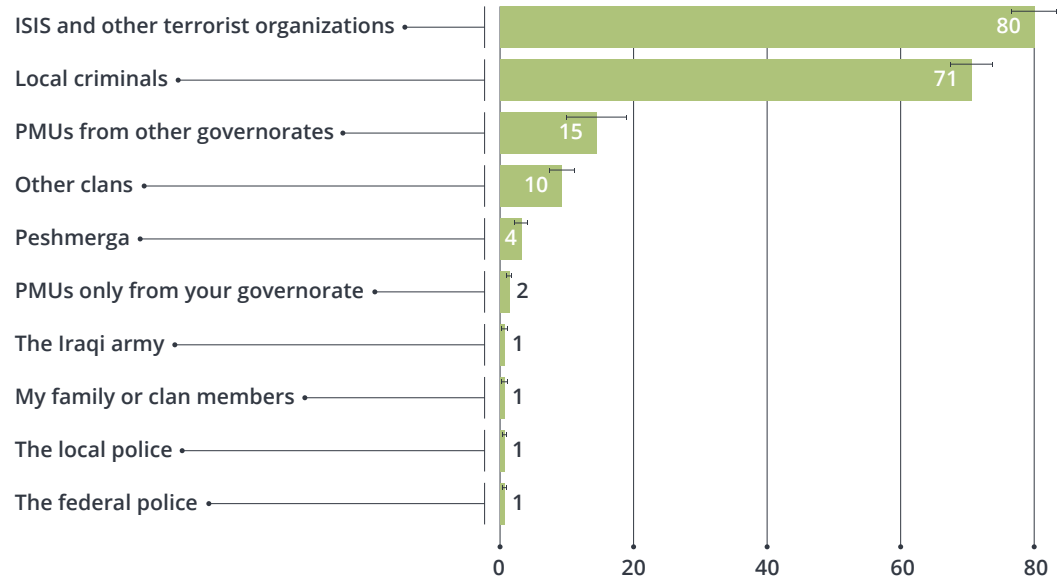


## Question

*Now I want to read a list of areas where Hash'd al Shaabi could play a role. For each one, please tell me if you approve or disapprove of Hash'd al Shaabi playing that type of role. Note: % who say "approve"*

Iraqis in all regions do not want to see Hash'd al Shaabi entering politics, even though many of its affiliates have already done so.

**Growing concern about Hash'd al Shaabi in the West.** In the West, trust for Hash'd al Shaabi is lower than in the South or Baghdad, with 62 percent saying they trust them a lot or somewhat, down 5 points since October. Smaller majorities in the West, relative to the South or Baghdad, want Hash'd al Shaabi to fulfill many of their military roles. Meanwhile, majorities in the West *disapprove* of Hash'd al Shaabi ensuring order and protection during demonstrations or policing morals, suggesting that the overall acceptance level of Hash'd al Shaabi to move beyond a traditional security role is lower in the region. Growing concern about Hash'd al Shaabi in the West likely stems from perceived increased footprint and influence in the local economy, governance, and social dynamics. Despite these potential causes for concern, even in the West a 52 percent majority feels favorable to Hash'd al Shaabi and there is still interest in them playing a security and protection role along with the army.



## Question

*I am now going to read a list of different groups in Iraq. Based on what you know, which two of the following do you feel is the biggest threat to your day-to-day security?*

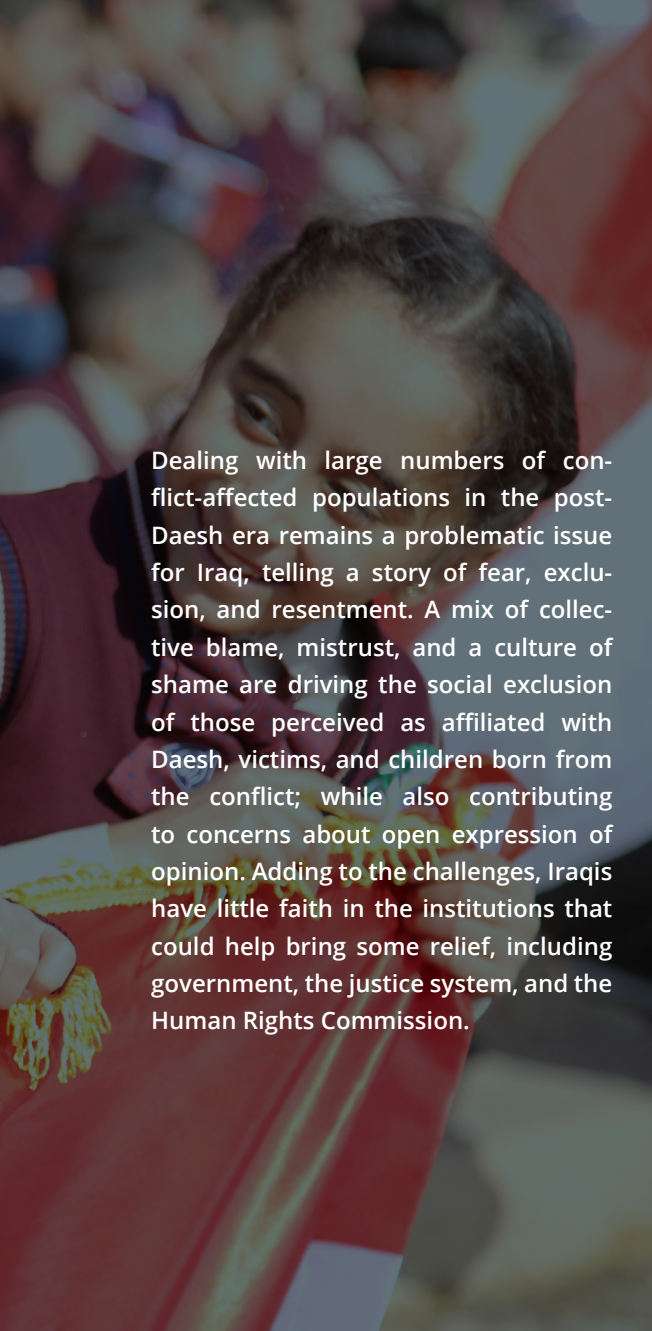


---

**Better security does not reduce concern about the return of Daesh.** Even with improving security and strong support for security forces, about a quarter of all Iraqis say security is one of their top two concerns. Now 68 percent say they are very or somewhat concerned that Daesh and other extremist organizations are going to reemerge, down 3 points since October. When it comes to identifying the two biggest threats people face with their security, 80 percent say it is Daesh and other terrorist organizations, while in the West 93 percent say so, up 9 points since October.

**Concerns about community violence increasing.** Almost as many (63 percent, down 6 points since October) say they are concerned that violence *in their own community* will get worse over the next six months. Whether due to unemployment or widespread availability of weapons, 71 percent say local criminals are one of their two biggest security concerns, more than 4 times those concerned with Hash'd al Shaabi, the army, or violence originating from other clans.





Dealing with large numbers of conflict-affected populations in the post-Daesh era remains a problematic issue for Iraq, telling a story of fear, exclusion, and resentment. A mix of collective blame, mistrust, and a culture of shame are driving the social exclusion of those perceived as affiliated with Daesh, victims, and children born from the conflict; while also contributing to concerns about open expression of opinion. Adding to the challenges, Iraqis have little faith in the institutions that could help bring some relief, including government, the justice system, and the Human Rights Commission.

---

## JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

---

# Communities Unwilling to Deal With Daesh Legacy

---

**Iraqis uninterested in reintegrating Daesh affiliated families.** Over 1.6 million Iraqis remain internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>7</sup> of which hundreds of thousands are still in camps; increasingly, many are suspected of having links to Daesh. Additionally, international media reports have raised the possibility of Iraqi nationals from Syria—captured when Daesh was being driven out of the country—being repatriated and placed in camps.<sup>8</sup> In an indicator of significant social distance, a majority of Iraqis (79 percent) would not accept suspected widows and abandoned or orphaned children of Daesh fighters moving into their neighborhoods. The highest disapproval comes from Baghdad and the KRI (both 87 percent). Only a

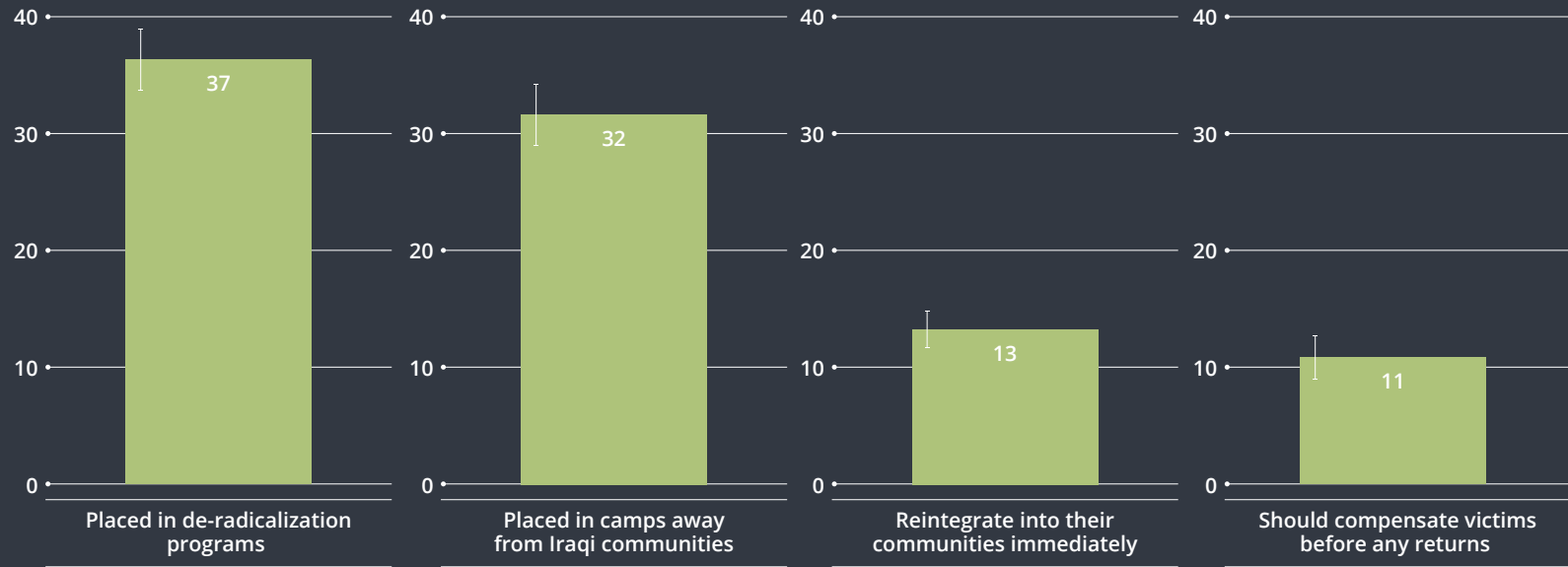
<sup>7</sup> IOM, *Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix*, April 2019

<sup>8</sup> *The Washington Post*, *Iraq is pushing to build an isolation camp for 30,000 Iraqis who lived under ISIS in Syria*, May 2, 2019

bit less in the South (78 percent) and the West (71 percent) would not accept having Daesh widows or children as neighbors.

Pluralities in all regions would prefer that these groups be isolated in de-radicalization programs to change hearts and minds (37 percent) or placed in camps away from Iraqi communities (32 percent). Only 13 percent say that they should be reintegrated into their communities immediately, and 11 percent believe they should compensate victims before any returns are considered.

This could be explained by the fact that large majorities of Iraqis outside KRI continue to consider Daesh the biggest threat to their security. Almost seven in ten are very or somewhat concerned that Daesh and other extremist groups



## Question

*As you may know, many widows and abandoned or orphaned children of Daesh fighters were forced to move during the conflict with Daesh. Please tell me which one of the following should be done with them?*

would re-emerge in their area. In contrast, there is widespread sympathy for widows and orphans of those who fought against Daesh, including the army, Hash'd al Shaabi, and other security forces. Large majorities say that they should receive monthly stipends or pensions (73 percent).

**Confidence in justice system is low but improving.** More Iraqis say the justice system is getting worse (48 percent) than better (41 percent), but positive views have improved since 2018. Views of the justice system across Baghdad, the South, and West are similar, with improvements in each region since October. Views toward the justice system in KRI are significantly worse and decreasing, with only 11 percent saying it is getting better. A majority of Iraqis do not trust the Human Rights Commission, although this may be a result of low public awareness of their activities.

One potential cause of the general lack of confidence in the formal justice system is an ongoing reliance on informal systems. Extrajudicial resolutions still occur regularly and are often

viewed positively, especially when punishing anyone with ties to Daesh. (Our past research shows large majorities want all Daesh detainees prosecuted.)<sup>9</sup> News reports heavily covered the cases of several protesters abducted and killed during last summer's wave of demonstrations in the South, and perpetrators remain unknown; other groups often seek justice on their own terms, outside the legal framework. While some members of the public may support them, others fear that ideologic or group affiliation might be utilized to manipulate public opinion and mobilize against voices that hold divergent social values or group interests.

**Many are not comfortable expressing their views freely:** The tension created by the legacy of Daesh may contribute to Iraqis' views toward freedom of expression. Iraqis are generally more likely to say they do not feel comfortable sharing their religious and political views within their community or online. Only 46 percent and 36 percent say they feel very or somewhat comfortable sharing their political opinions

<sup>9</sup> NDI, *Survey Report: Improved Security Provides Opening for Cooperation*, pg. 47-49, April 2017

within their communities and online, respectively. Much of this could be attributed to culture and a belief that these topics should only be discussed at home, but recent retributions against on online activity may also play a role. Additionally, a public debate on the "Law on Information Technology Crimes" earlier this year was widely criticized by civil society for its potential to criminalize acts that should be protected under freedom of expression, and handing of excessive powers to Iraqi authorities impose harsh sentences for vaguely worded offences.



Expressing your religious opinions...



Expressing your political opinions...



Very comfortable  
Somewhat comfortable

Question

Now, I want you to tell me how comfortable you are taking certain actions. For each one, please tell me if you are very comfortable taking that action, somewhat comfortable, a little comfortable, or not comfortable at all.





---

NATIONAL  
DEMOCRATIC  
INSTITUTE

---