



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
For The People & The Press

DECEMBER 14, 2012

Israel Support Unchanged in Wake of Gaza Conflict

---

## Public Says U.S. Does Not Have Responsibility to Act in Syria

---

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Andrew Kohut**

President, Pew Research Center

**Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock**

Associate Directors

**Scott Keeter**

Director of Survey Research

1615 L St, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Tel (202) 419-4350  
Fax (202) 419-4399  
[www.peoplepress.org](http://www.peoplepress.org)

---

# Israel Support Unchanged in Wake of Gaza Conflict

## Public Says U.S. Does Not Have Responsibility to Act in Syria

As fighting in Syria rages on between government forces and anti-government groups, the public continues to say that the U.S. does not have a responsibility to do something about the fighting there. And there continues to be substantial opposition to sending arms to anti-government forces in Syria.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Dec. 5-9 among 1,503 adults, also finds little change in the public's sympathies in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians: 50% say they sympathize more with Israel while just 10% sympathize more with the Palestinians.

Only about quarter of Americans (27%) say the U.S. has a responsibility to do something about the fighting in Syria; more than twice as many (63%) say it does not. These views are virtually unchanged from March.

Similarly, just 24% favor the U.S. and its allies sending arms and military supplies to anti-government groups in Syria, while 65% are opposed. These opinions also are little changed from March.

Comparable majorities of Republicans (66%), Democrats (61%) and independents (65%) say the U.S. does not have a responsibility to do something about the fighting in Syria, and all partisan groups also oppose arming anti-government groups.

### Continued Opposition to U.S. Involvement in Syria

<i>Does the U.S. have a responsibility to do something about ...</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>DK</b>
	%	%	%
<b>Fighting in Syria</b>			
December 2012	27	63	10=100
March 2012	25	64	11=100
Fighting in Libya (3/11)	27	63	10=100
Ethnic genocide in Darfur (12/06)	51	36	13=100
Ethnic fighting in Kosovo (3/99)	47	46	7=100
Fighting between Serbs and Bosnians (6/95)	30	64	6=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

### Most Still Oppose Arming Anti-Government Groups in Syria

<i>U.S. and allies sending arms to anti-gov't groups in Syria</i>	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>DK</b>
	%	%	%
December 2012	24	65	11=100
March 2012	29	63	9=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Those who have heard a lot about the situation in Syria offer modestly more support for U.S. involvement than those who have heard less (35% vs. 22%), but still, on balance, say the U.S. does not have a responsibility to get involved.

Opinions about the United States' responsibility to act in Syria are similar to views about obligation to act in Libya, before the U.S. and its allies launched airstrikes against Moammar Gadhafi's forces. In March 2011, just 27% said the U.S. had a responsibility to do something about the fighting in Libya -- the same percentage that says that about Syria today. Higher percentages said the U.S. had a responsibility to do something about the fighting in Darfur in 2006 (51%) and fighting between Serbs and Bosnians in Kosovo in 1999.

There has long been little public interest in the conflict in Syria. In a separate survey conducted last week (Dec. 6-9), just 19% say they are paying very close attention to political violence in Syria, while 28% say they are following this story fairly closely. About half (52%) are paying little or no attention to developments there.

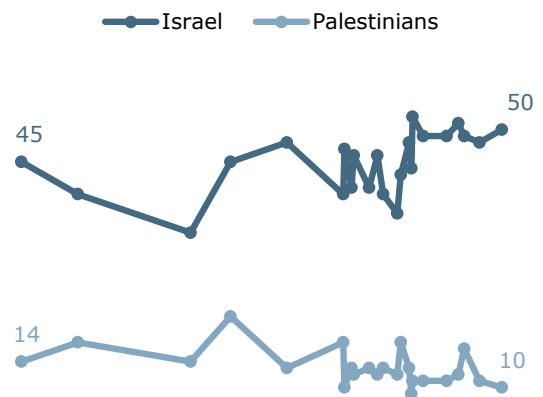
## Public Continues to Sympathize with Israel over Palestinians

For decades, the public has sympathized with Israel over the Palestinians and that remains the case today. Overall, 50% say they sympathize more with Israel, compared with just 10% who say they sympathize more with the Palestinians; almost a quarter (23%) do not offer an opinion while 13% volunteer that they sympathize with neither side, and 4% say both.

Attitudes on this question have been stable over the past six years, after showing more volatility in the middle of the last decade.

There continue to be stark partisan differences in Middle East sympathies. Conservative Republicans maintain strong support for Israel with fully 75% saying they sympathize with Israel compared with just 2% who sympathize with the Palestinians. By contrast, liberal

### Sympathize More With ...



1978 2012

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. 1978-1990 data from Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

Democrats are much more divided: 33% sympathize more with Israel, 22% with the Palestinians. Independents sympathize more with Israel by a 47% to 13% margin.

Among religious groups, white evangelical Protestants remain strongly supportive of Israel. Two-thirds (67%) say they sympathize more with Israel; only 5% say they sympathize more with the Palestinians. Opinion among other religious groups is more mixed. Catholics, for example, offer more sympathy for Israel than the Palestinians by a 44% to 11% margin.

There also are age differences in Mideast sympathies. About four-in-ten (38%) people younger than 30 sympathize more with Israel than the Palestinians. That is only slightly lower than the percentage of 30-49 year olds who sympathize with Israel (46%). However, more than half of those 50 and older (58%) sympathize with Israel more than the Palestinians. Age differences were more modest in 2011 and 2010.

### Evangelicals, Older People More Likely to Sympathize with Israel

	Sympathize more with ...			
	Israel	Palestinians	Neither	Both/DK
	%	%	%	%
Total	50	10	13	27=100
18-29	38	15	16	31=100
30-49	46	9	15	30=100
50-64	58	8	11	23=100
65+	58	9	11	23=100
Conserv Rep	75	2	6	18=100
Mod/Lib Rep	60	4	11	25=100
Independent	47	13	16	25=100
Conserv/Mod Dem	46	8	14	32=100
Liberal Dem	33	22	15	30=100
Protestant	56	7	13	24=100
White evangelical	67	5	8	20=100
White mainline	47	7	20	26=100
Catholic	44	11	14	31=100
White Catholic	47	11	16	25=100
Unaffiliated	40	16	15	30=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012.  
Whites include only those who are not Hispanic.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted December 5-9, 2012 among a national sample of 1,503 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (900 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 603 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 300 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by Abt SRBI. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus...</b>
Total sample	1,503	2.9 percentage points
Republicans	397	5.7 percentage points
Democrats	490	5.1 percentage points
Independents	527	5.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**DECEMBER 2012 POLITICAL SURVEY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**December 5-9, 2012**  
**N=1,503**

**QUESTIONS 1-52 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**NO QUESTIONS 53-59**

**ASK ALL:**

On a different subject,

Q.60 In the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians, which side do you sympathize with more, Israel or the Palestinians?

	<u>Israel</u>	<u>Palestinians</u>	<u>(VOL.) Both</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
Dec 5-9, 2012	50	10	4	13	23
May 25-30, 2011	48	11	4	15	21
Apr 21-26, 2010	49	16	4	12	19
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	51	12	4	14	19
January 7-11, 2009	49	11	5	15	20
May, 2007	49	11	5	17	18
August, 2006	52	11	5	15	17
July, 2006	44	9	5	20	22
May, 2006	48	13	4	14	20
Late October, 2005	43	17	5	16	19
July, 2005	37	12	5	19	27
July, 2004	40	13	7	18	22
Late February, 2004	46	12	8	15	19
April, 2002	41	13	6	21	19
Mid-October, 2001	47	10	8	18	17
Early September, 2001	40	17	6	23	14
September, 1997	48	13	5	16	18
September, 1993	45	21	3	18	12
<i>Chicago CFR</i> 1990	34	14	7	26	20
<i>Chicago CFR</i> 1982	40	17	8	19	16
<i>Chicago CFR</i> 1978 <sup>1</sup>	45	14	9	18	15

**NO QUESTIONS 61-63**

<sup>1</sup> In the 1978 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations survey conducted by the Gallup Organization, results are based on respondents who said they had "heard or read about the situation in the Middle East", which represented 87% of the public. As a context note, in both the 1978 and 1982 CCFR/Gallup surveys, this question followed a broader question: "In the Middle East situation, are your sympathies more with Israel or more with the Arab nations?" and in 1982, a question regarding "U.S. military aid and arms sales to Israel".

**ASK ALL:**

Q.64 How much, if anything, have you read or heard about recent political violence in Syria? Have you heard...**[READ]**

Dec 5-9 <u>2012</u>		Mar 7-11 <u>2012</u>
38	A lot	36
44	A little	39
18	Nothing at all	25
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	1

**ASK ALL:**

Q.65 Do you think the United States has a responsibility to do something about the fighting in Syria between government forces and anti-government groups, or doesn't the United States have this responsibility?

	<u>U.S. has responsibility</u>	<u>U.S. doesn't have responsibility</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
Dec 5-9, 2012	27	63	10
Mar 7-11, 2012	25	64	11
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>			
Mar 10-13, 2011: <i>Fighting in Libya</i>	27	63	10
June, 2007: <i>Ethnic genocide in Darfur</i>	49	34	17
December, 2006: <i>Ethnic genocide in Darfur</i>	51	36	13
March, 1999: <i>Fighting between ethnic groups in Kosovo, a province of Serbia</i>	47	46	7
June, 1995: <i>Fighting between Serbs and Bosnians in what used to be Yugoslavia</i>	30	64	6

**ASK ALL:**

Q.66 Would you favor or oppose the U.S. and its allies sending arms and military supplies to anti-government groups in Syria?

Dec 5-9 <u>2012</u>		Mar 7-11 <u>2012</u>
24	Favor	29
65	Oppose	63
11	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	9

**NO QUESTIONS 67-78****QUESTIONS 79-90 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

**ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Dec 5-9, 2012	23	33	38	3	1	2	14	19
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012	26	34	34	3	1	3	13	16
Oct 24-28, 2012	28	33	33	4	*	2	12	16
Oct 4-7, 2012	27	31	36	3	1	3	15	15
Sep 12-16, 2012	24	35	36	2	*	2	14	16
Jul 16-26, 2012	22	33	38	4	*	3	14	15
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	17
Jun 7-17, 2012	24	33	39	2	*	2	17	17
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	24	32	36	4	*	4	13	14
Apr 4-15, 2012	24	31	39	3	*	2	15	15
Mar 7-11, 2012	24	34	36	3	1	2	16	17
Feb 8-12, 2012	26	32	36	4	1	2	13	17
Jan 11-16, 2012	22	31	42	3	*	2	17	16
Jan 4-8, 2012	26	31	35	4	*	4	14	14
<b>Yearly Totals</b>								
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--



**ASK ALL:**

TEAPARTY2 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Haven't heard of</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Refused</u>	<i>Not heard of/ DK</i>
Dec 5-9, 2012	18	29	50	2	1	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	19	29	47	1	3	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	19	25	52	2	2	--
Sep 12-16, 2012	18	26	53	2	2	--
Jul 16-26, 2012	16	27	54	2	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	19	27	49	3	2	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	21	25	52	2	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	16	25	54	2	3	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	20	26	50	3	2	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	19	29	48	2	2	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	18	25	53	2	2	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	20	24	52	2	2	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	18	25	52	2	3	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	19	27	50	2	2	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	20	27	51	1	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	19	27	51	2	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	20	27	50	1	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	20	24	53	1	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	20	26	50	3	2	--
May 25-30, 2011	18	23	54	2	2	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	22	29	47	1	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	19	25	54	1	1	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	20	25	52	2	2	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 <sup>2</sup>	22	22	53	2	2	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	24	22	50	2	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	22	26	49	2	2	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	27	22	49	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	29	25	32	--	1	13
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	28	24	30	--	1	16
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	29	26	32	--	1	13
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	22	18	37	--	1	21
Jun 16-20, 2010	24	18	30	--	*	27
May 20-23, 2010	25	18	31	--	1	25
Mar 11-21, 2010	24	14	29	--	1	31

**QUESTION 91 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

<sup>2</sup> In the February 2-7, 2011 survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."