

BROAD SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL TALKS.

NO LOVE FOR RUSSIAN BASES.

GOVERNMENT RATINGS HIGH DESPITE

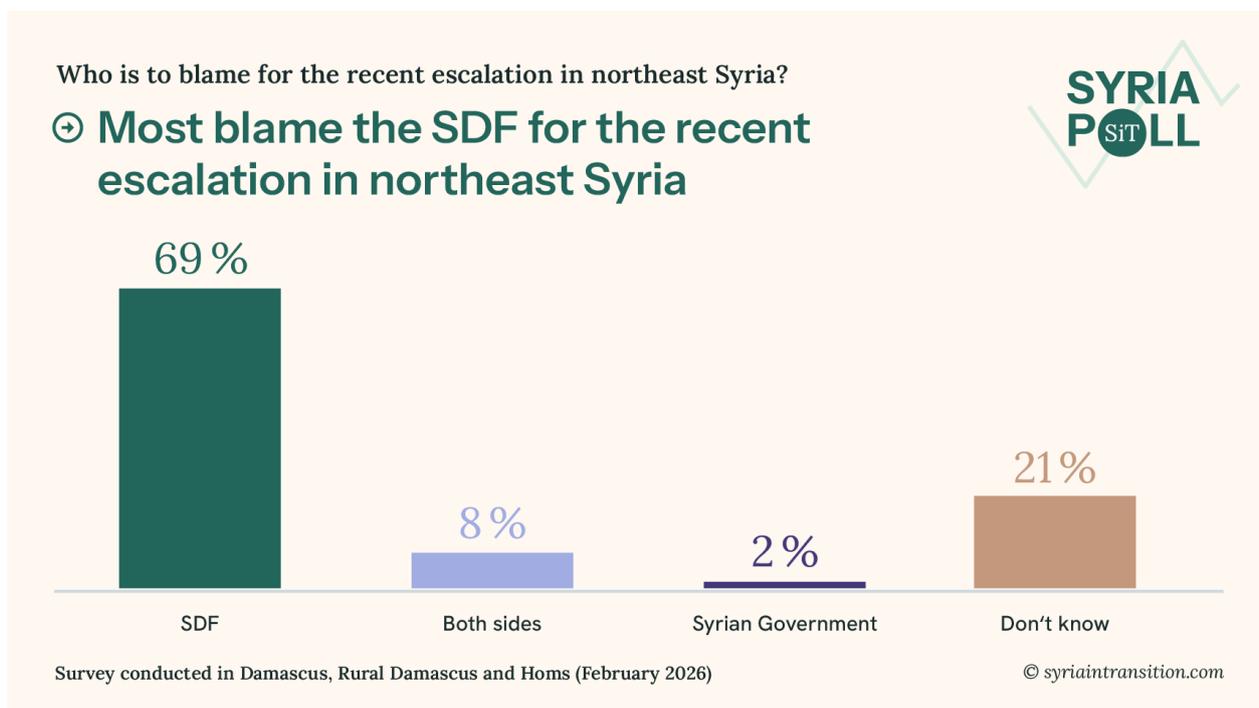
HARDSHIP. SDF TO BLAME FOR VIOLENCE.



February 2026

Welcome to the first wave of Syria Poll. This inaugural issue presents findings from surveys conducted in Damascus, Rural Damascus, and Homs in early February 2026, examining how residents assess their living conditions, government performance, and recent political developments.

1. The year has already been turbulent, with conflict and deal-making between the government in Damascus and the SDF. Among respondents, one pattern stands out: responsibility for the recent escalation is attributed to the SDF. A total of 69 per cent say that the SDF is to blame, while only 2 per cent attribute responsibility to Damascus.



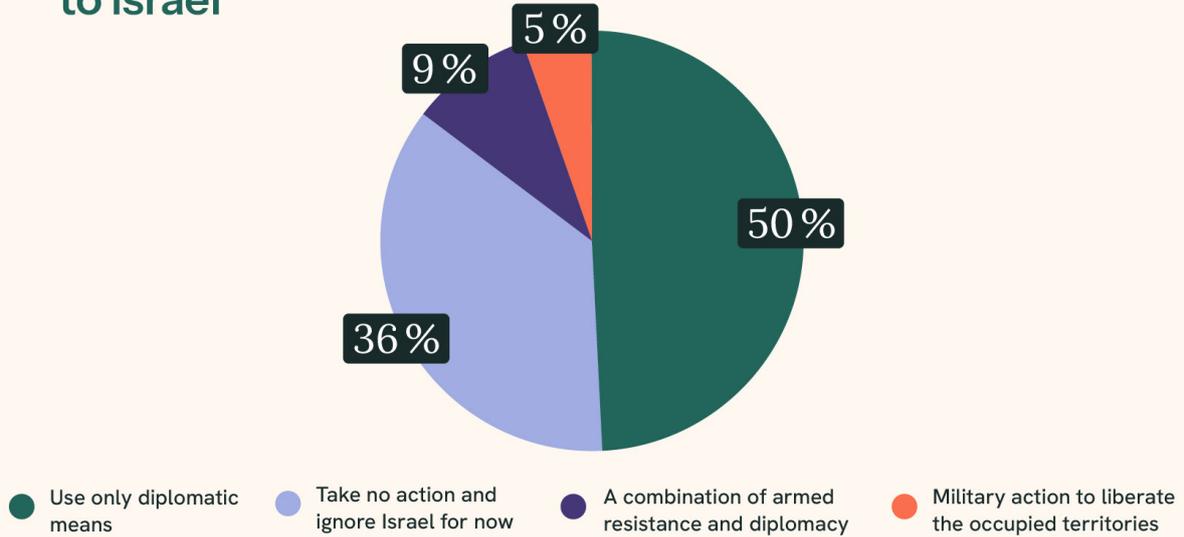
2. In southern Syria, tensions are also simmering amid Israel's continued incursions and occupation of Syrian land. However, only 5 per cent of respondents favour a purely military response. Most respondents prefer non-military options, with 50 per cent supporting diplomatic engagement and 36 per cent favouring no immediate action. A smaller share (9 per cent) supports a combination of military and diplomatic measures.

Visit syriaintransition.com/en/home/syriapoll to read the latest wave on your browser in both English and Arabic and to access the archive. Syria Poll is made possible through the support of the GIZ Syria Peace Initiative (funded by the European Union, Germany, and Denmark), and the Open Society Foundations. We thrive on continuous exchange with our readership. We kindly invite you to reach out with criticism, ideas, information, or just to say hello at info@syriaintransition.com

What should the Syrian government do in response to Israeli aggression and occupation of Syrian territory?



⊕ **Diplomacy is the preferred response to Israel**



Survey conducted in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Homs (February 2026)

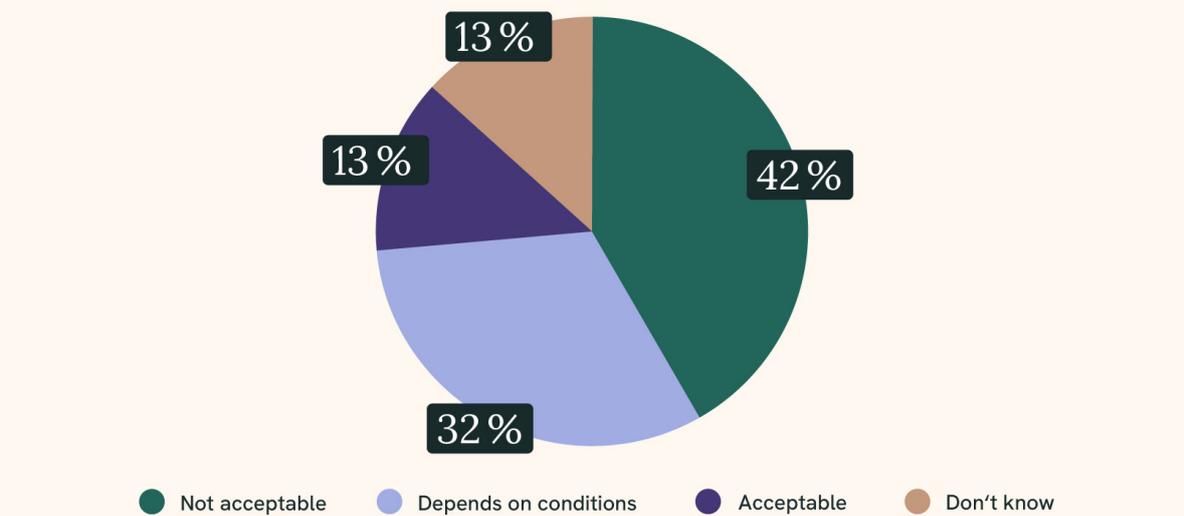
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3. The continued presence of Russian military bases in Syria elicited mixed views. 42 per cent say it is not acceptable at all, while 32 per cent are more pragmatic and say that it depends on conditions. Only 13 per cent consider it generally acceptable.

Is it acceptable for Russia to keep military bases in Syria?



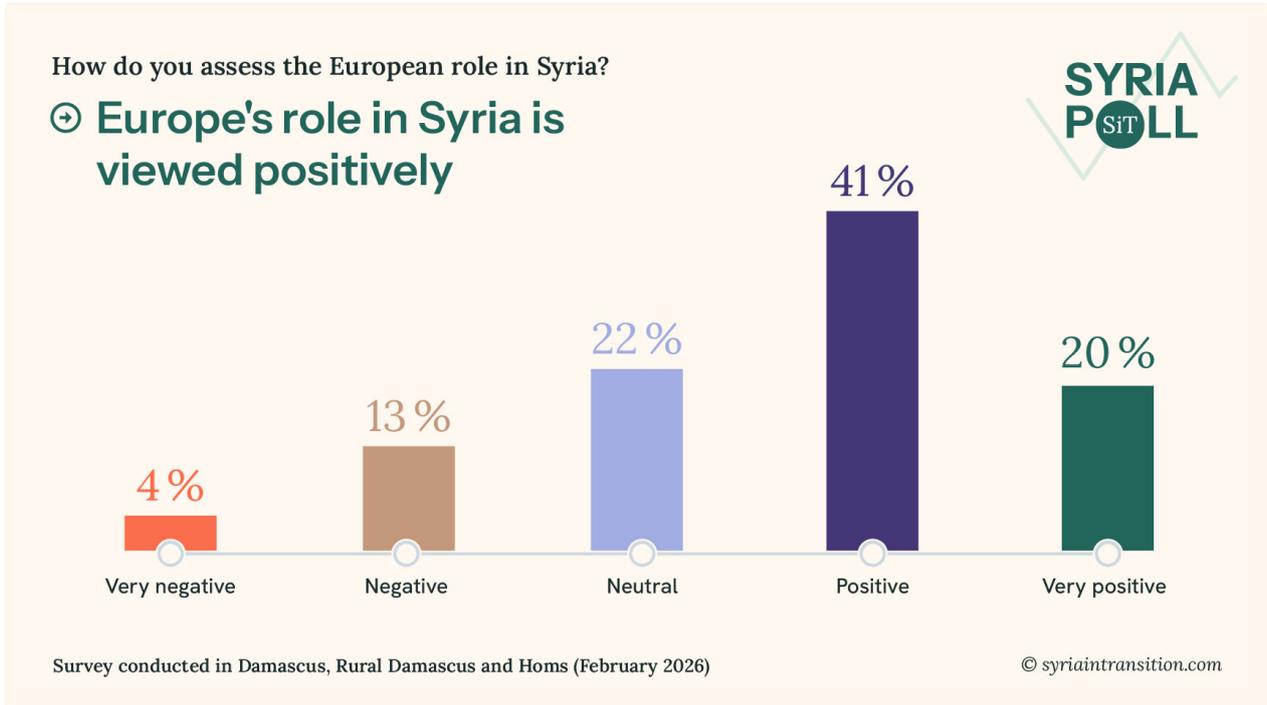
⊕ **Many reject Russian bases in Syria, but views are mixed**



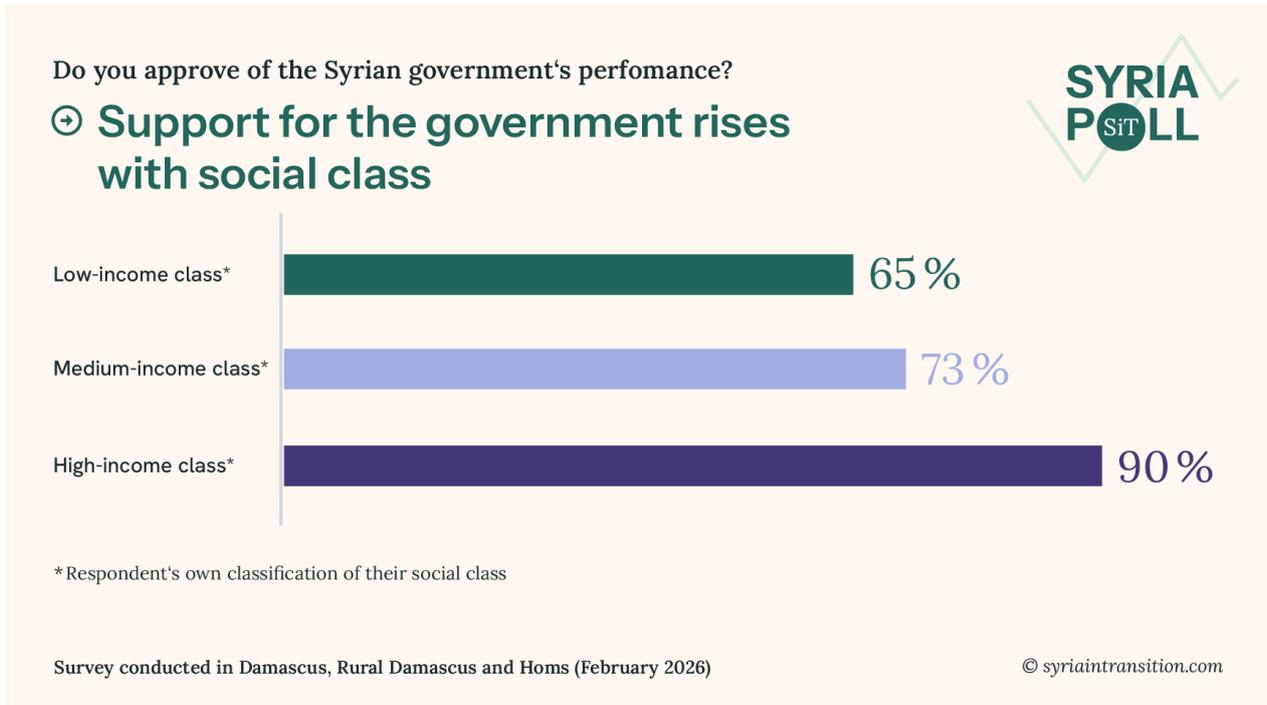
Survey conducted in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Homs (February 2026)

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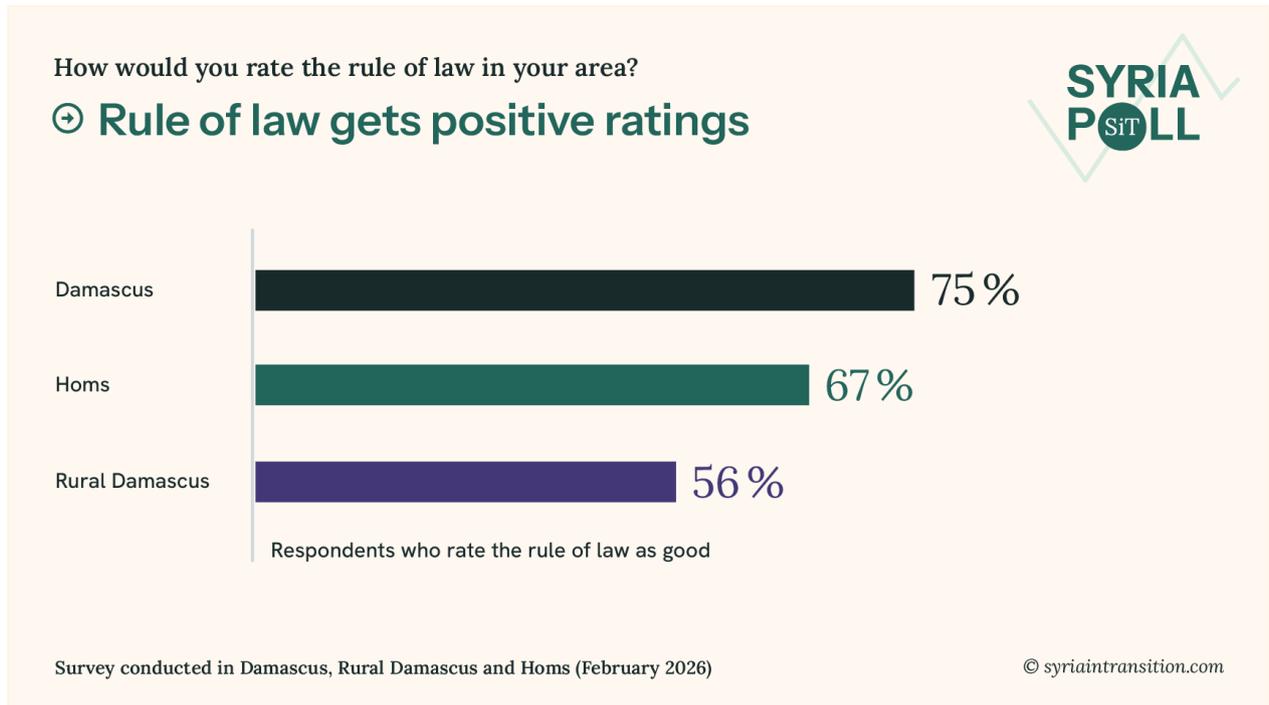
4. A majority of respondents appreciate the European role in Syria, with 61 per cent rating it as either very positive or positive. 17 per cent say that it is negative or very negative.



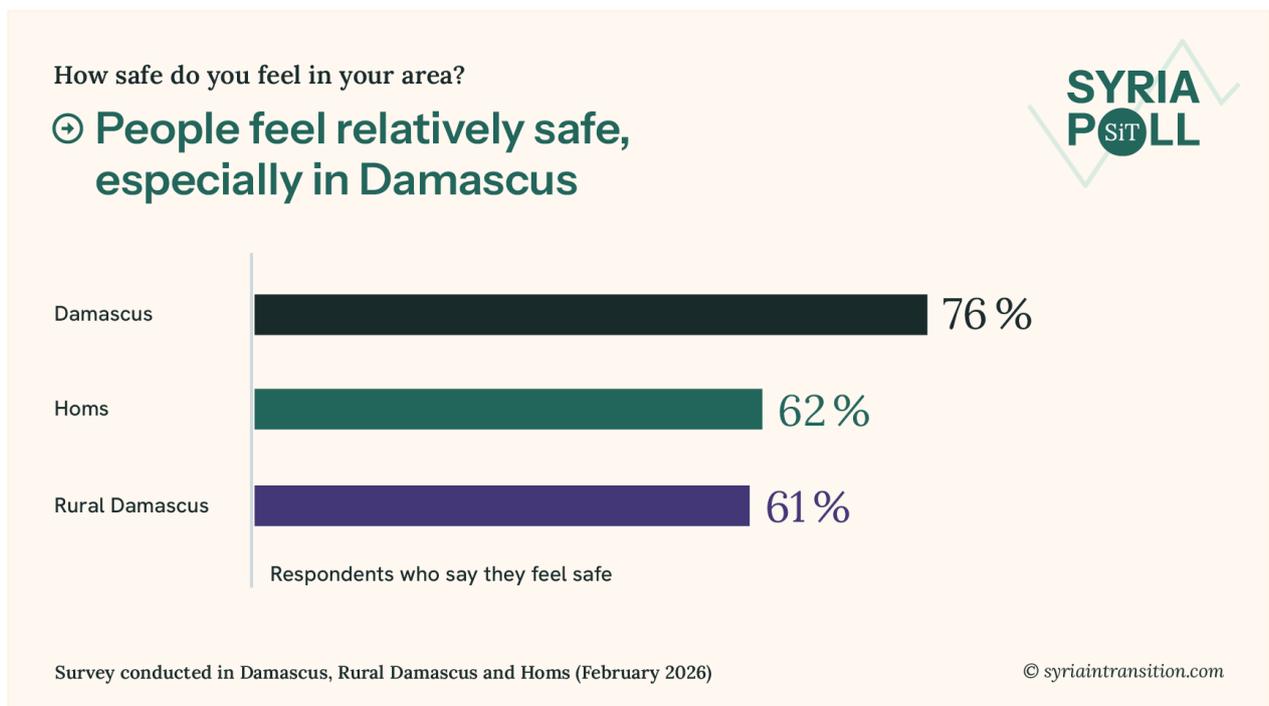
5. A majority express support for the government. Support rises with self-identified social class: around 90 per cent of those who identify as upper class express moderate or strong support, compared to 65 per cent among those who identify as lower class.



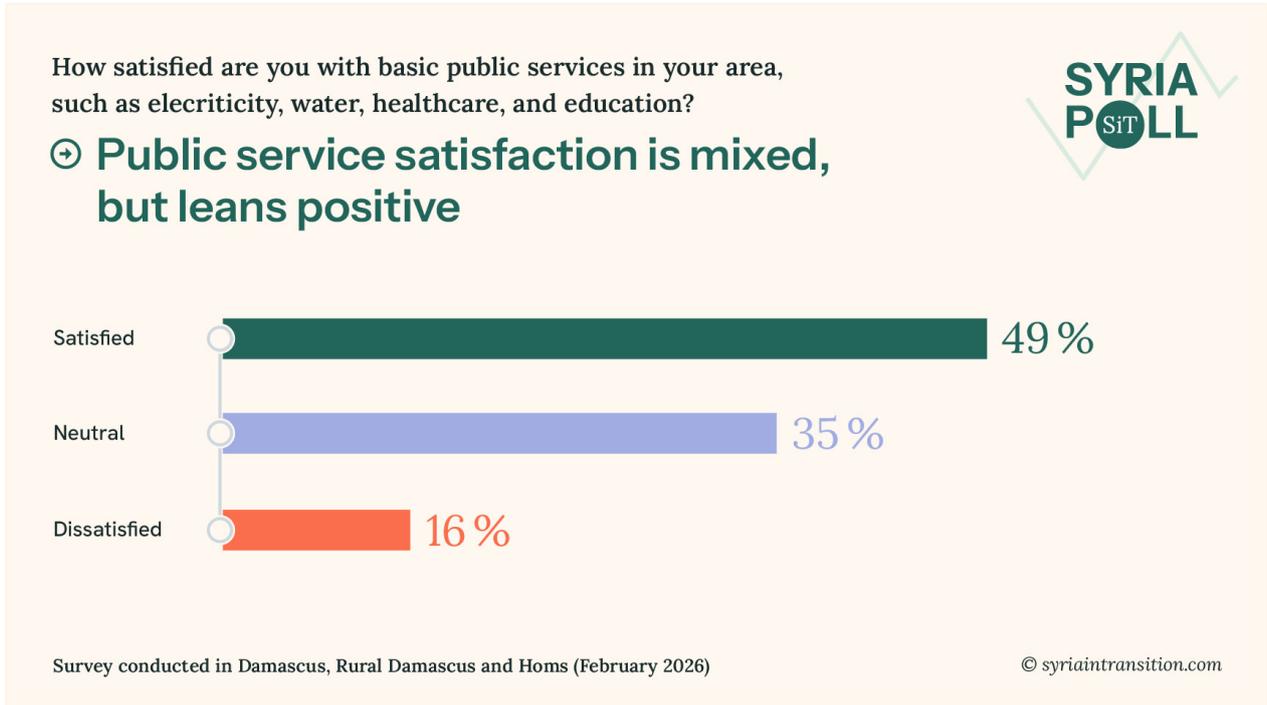
6. A majority rate the rule of law positively, with higher levels in Damascus than elsewhere. Around 75 per cent in Damascus rate it as good, compared to 67 per cent in Homs and 56 per cent in Rural Damascus.



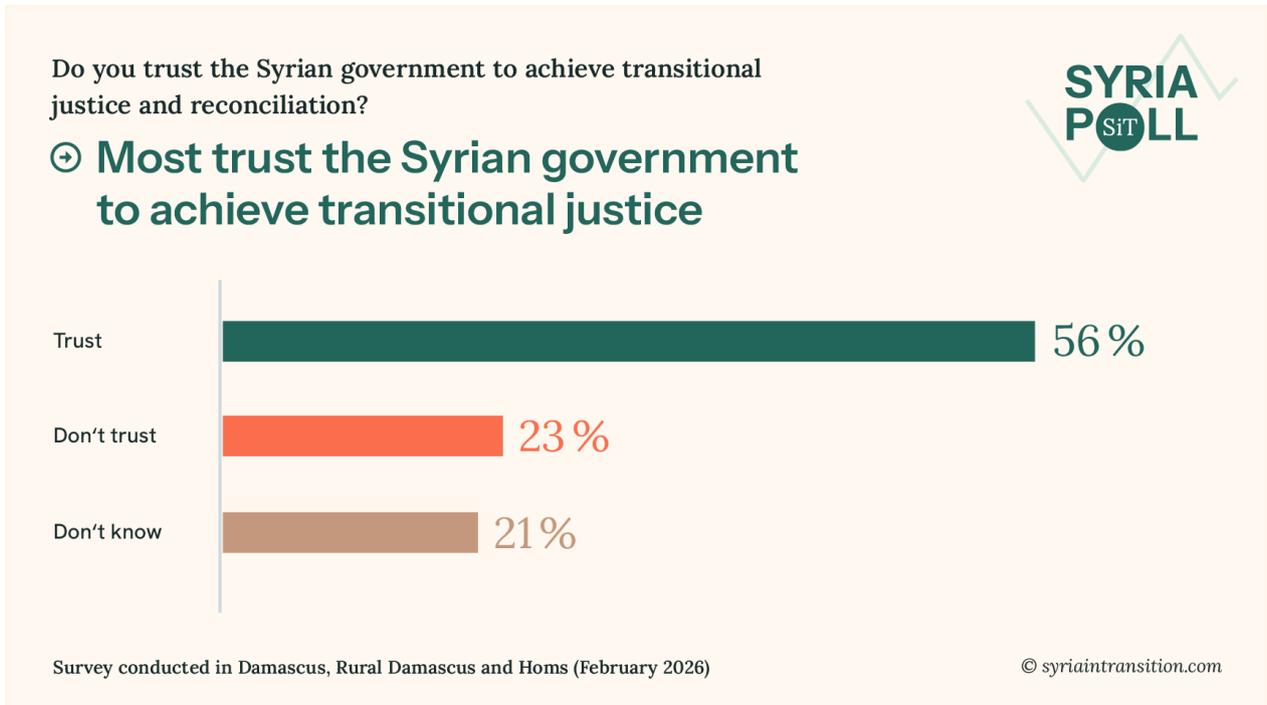
7. Perceptions of safety are generally positive, but vary across locations. Around 76 per cent in Damascus say they feel safe, compared to 62 per cent in Homs and 61 per cent in Rural Damascus.



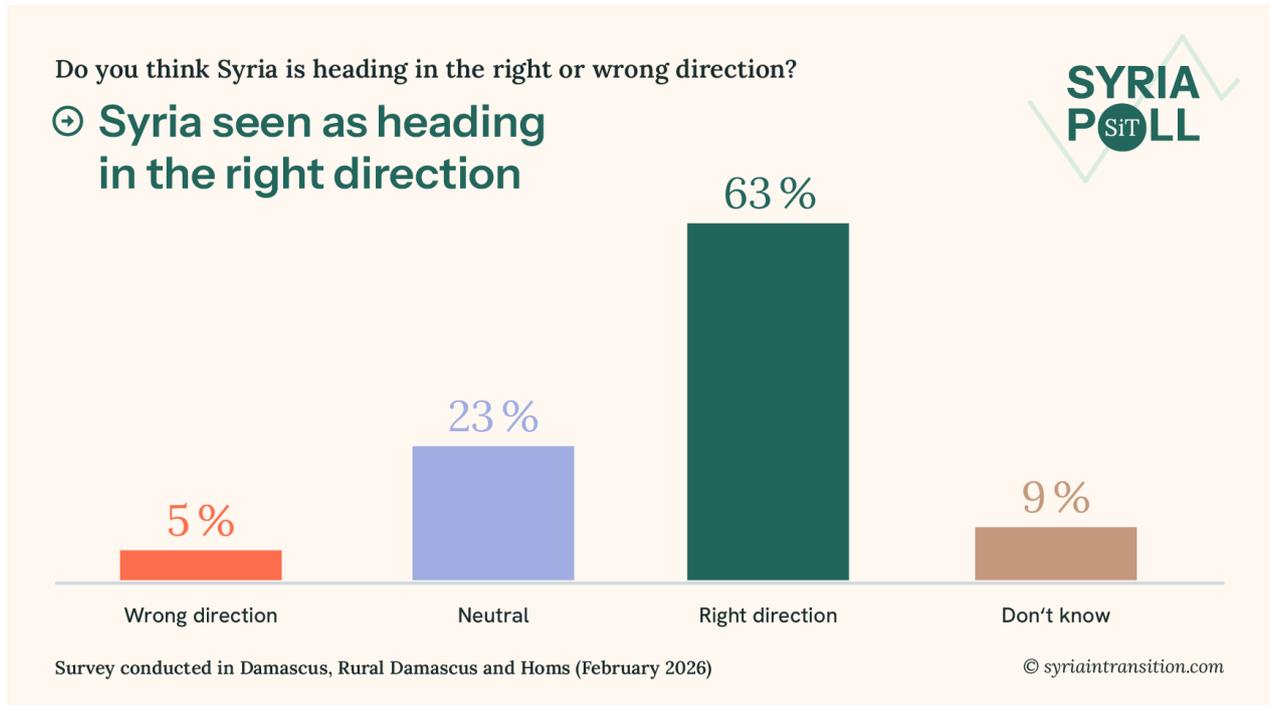
8. While 49 per cent of respondents report being satisfied, only 16 per cent say they are dissatisfied, and 35 per cent take a neutral position.



9. Most trust the Syrian government to achieve transitional justice
Most respondents express trust in the government to achieve transitional justice. While 56 per cent say they trust the government, 23 per cent say they do not, and 21 per cent are unsure.



10. Fourteen months after the collapse of the Assad regime, nearly two-thirds of respondents (63 per cent) say their country is heading in the right direction.



About Syria Poll

Syria Poll is a recurring, structured public opinion survey capturing Syrians' views on their personal circumstances, politics, the economy, and wider public affairs. It is produced with analytical support from the Clingendael Institute.

Numbers can help make complex realities more tangible, but they are never the whole story. When we ask about “transitional justice,” what do people actually understand by that term? After decades of dictatorship in which expressing a political opinion could come at a heavy price, how much of an answer reflects conviction, and how much reflects caution?

We are aware of these limits. That is why we do not treat numbers as final truths. In the coming months, we will expand the geographic reach of our surveys to make them more representative. We will also complement them with focus group discussions in different settings, so that we can better understand what lies behind the answers.

Methodology

The February wave was conducted in Damascus, Rural Damascus, and Homs over a five-day fieldwork period using face-to-face interviews administered on tablets (CAPI).

A total of 900 respondents were interviewed (300 in each governorate). The sample was designed to enable comparison across the three surveyed areas. It was therefore equally allocated across locations, rather than proportionally distributed according to population size. As a result, the survey is not nationally representative, and aggregate findings should not be interpreted as reflecting the population distribution of Syria as a whole.

Within each location, neighborhoods were selected to reflect variation in living standards (higher-, middle-, and lower-income areas). Gender and age quotas were applied to ensure demographic balance among respondents. Interviews were conducted in public settings by trained local field researchers. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and no personal identifiers were collected.