

# PEOPLE ON WAR

## Country report Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories **ICRC worldwide consultation on the rules of war**

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Report by Greenberg Research, Inc.

EVEN WARS HAVE LIMITS EVEN WARS HAVE LIMITS EVEN WARS HAVE LIMITS EVEN WARS HAVE



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## About the People on War project

To mark the 50th anniversary of the modern Geneva Conventions (on 12 August 1999), the ICRC launched its People on War project with the aim of building greater respect for fundamental humanitarian principles. At centre stage is a worldwide consultation giving the general public a chance to air their views on the many facets of war. The idea was that civilians and combatants alike would be able to share their experiences, express their opinions on what basic rules should apply in war, discuss why those rules sometimes break down and look at what the future holds.

With this in mind, the ICRC commissioned Greenberg Research, Inc. to design a research programme that would enable people to be heard in the most effective way possible. Under the guidance of Greenberg Research, ICRC staff and Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers carried out this consultation in 12 countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia/Abkhazia, Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, Lebanon, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia and South Africa), conducting in-depth, face-to-face interviews, group discussions and national public opinion surveys. Surveys on the basis of a questionnaire only were conducted in a further five countries (France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States) in order to reflect these people's perceptions of war.

Greenberg Research analysts then prepared a series of Country Reports on the basis of the findings. The reports open up this new, important discourse to a wider audience, while remaining conscious of the need to protect the safety of all those who participated.

By making this consultation public, the ICRC hopes to initiate a local and international debate on the humanitarian aspects of war — a debate that should be joined by the major political players, international and non-governmental organizations and aid specialists.

## Greenberg Research, Inc.

Greenberg Research is an opinion research firm that has worked for over two decades to help organizations and leaders around the world advance their goals in the face of rapid change. It specializes in using advanced methods of opinion research — surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews — to help form strategies for political parties, corporations and non-governmental organizations.

Greenberg Research has extensive experience in Europe and the United States, but also in the Middle East, Asia, southern Africa and Central and South America. It has conducted research in war-torn, politically complex and remote settings. In its work for corporations and non-governmental organizations, it has explored a broad range of global issues, including landmines, genetic engineering, climate change, race and gender relations, trade and information technologies.

<p><b>The opinions expressed in this report are not those of the ICRC. The ICRC retained Greenberg Research, Inc. to design and oversee the People on War consultation. Greenberg Research compiled and analysed the results and is responsible for the content and interpretation.</b></p>
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## Country context

Israelis and Arabs have been at war for more than 50 years. The conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians — centred on territory that each side claims as its own — and five full-scale wars between Israel and neighbouring Arab nations have cost the lives of tens of thousands of people and created an atmosphere of continuous hostility. The conflict has drawn in almost the entire Middle East, and prompted the involvement of the superpowers, the United Nations (UN) and other international institutions. In the past decade, an ongoing peace process between Israelis and Palestinians has been under way, aimed at achieving a permanent settlement to this long-standing dispute. However, various obstacles still stand in the way, including opposing religious and ideological convictions that have led to disagreement on key issues — such as the status of Jerusalem, the settlements and land and water rights — and the presence of militant groups on all sides who reject the peace process.

Jewish immigration into Palestine increased during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the League of Nations gave the United Kingdom the mandate to administer Palestine. The Palestinian-Arab nationalist movement gained in strength parallel to the establishment of the Jewish community in British-controlled Palestine. In 1947, following the Second World War and the Holocaust, the UN endorsed the partitioning of Palestine to create a Jewish State along with a Palestinian State. Subsequently, Jewish immigration increased after the Second World War and tension and hostilities between Jews and Palestinians grew drastically.

Following the British withdrawal from the region and the Israeli declaration of independence in May 1948, the fighting escalated, with the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon fighting alongside the Palestinians to prevent the creation of an independent State of Israel and resist the partition plan. An estimated 800,000 Palestinian inhabitants fled the fighting or were driven away. They found refuge in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, as well as in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Arab armies having been repelled, Israel expanded its territory beyond the borders of the UN partition to cover significant portions of Palestine, excluding the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, which subsequently came under Jordanian and Egyptian control, respectively.

Armistice agreements signed between the warring parties in 1949 brought only a veneer of peace to the region, as Arab States pressed for the liberation of occupied Palestine. Fighting between Israel and its neighbours continued, with Israeli troops occupying and then evacuating the Sinai Peninsula during the Suez crisis in 1956. During the Six Day War of 1967, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Syria failed to gain any territory, while Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip and took the Golan Heights from Syria, provoking a new flux of refugees to neighbouring countries. Six years later, Syria and Egypt attacked Israel, sparking the Yom Kippur War, which resulted in their respective armies standing almost on the former cease-fire lines.

In 1978, the Israeli army occupied the southern part of the already war-torn Lebanon, and in 1982 it undertook a second larger invasion in order to crush the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), thus forcing the PLO leadership to flee Lebanon and settle in Tunisia. Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 1985 except for the southern sector. The first breakthrough in regional peace talks came in 1977 when Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat visited Israel. The Camp David agreements, in which, among other things, Israel agreed to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula, were signed later in 1979, eventually establishing normal diplomatic relations between Israel and Egypt.

In the past 20 years, although all-out war in the region has been avoided, the Arab-Israeli conflict has continued, as has the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israeli forces. In 1987, Palestinians in the occupied territories started an uprising (*intifada*), aimed at ejecting Israeli troops from the territories. Israel's response has been to try to crush the insurgency. Following international efforts to

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achieve peace in the Middle East after the 1991 Gulf War between Iraq and a US-led coalition, negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians started within the framework of the Madrid Peace Conference. In 1993, after secret negotiations, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the leader of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, signed the Oslo Accords in which Israel and the PLO recognized each other and embarked on a peace process. The signing of the Oslo Accords made way for an interim period for the phased withdrawal of Israeli forces from parts of the occupied territories and a progressive transfer of territorial and administrative jurisdiction to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The thorniest issues — among them the final status of these territories — were left for the negotiations scheduled to begin in 1996.

In the interim, Israel and Jordan concluded a peace treaty in 1994 and the Palestinians set up the Palestinian Authority and organized elections in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Opponents of the plan on both sides responded by stepping up their activities: Palestinian extremists committed a spate of suicide bombings killing Israeli civilians, an Israeli extremist killed Palestinian worshippers in Hebron, and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist. The Israeli government changed, and the peace process came to a virtual standstill, despite attempts to push it forward by the United States. The stalemate was partially broken in October 1998 with the signing of the Wye River Accords in which Israel agreed to additional partial withdrawal from the territories. The final status negotiations, resumed in the wake of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement of September 1999, will have to address many unresolved issues, including the final status of the Palestinian entity and its territorial size, Palestinian refugees and their right of return, the release of prisoners, the status of Jerusalem, the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and the issue of water.

For peace to be achieved between Israel and its northern neighbours, Syria and Lebanon, agreements will have to be found to solve the issues at stake, among other things, the occupied Golan Heights and occupied southern Lebanon. Huge obstacles still need to be overcome to reach a permanent settlement of these conflicts, to achieve a lasting, peaceful coexistence between the peoples of the region, and to put an end to the violence and suffering that has been caused by this enduring conflict.

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## Country methodology

The findings in this report are based on a consultation carried out by the ICRC in Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories under the supervision of Greenberg Research and with the assistance of two local opinion research partners, Telseker, based in Tel Aviv, and Market Research Organization (MRO), based in Amman. The aim was to assess the impact of armed conflict on people's lives and to allow people to share their personal experiences and opinions on a range of issues, from the armed conflict itself and the limits of warfare, to the impact of international law, including the Geneva Conventions.

The Israeli-Palestinian consultation consists of three elements:

- Eight **focus groups** (FG), recruited by the ICRC delegation and moderated by the local partners under Greenberg Research supervision. Telseker conducted four focus groups among Israelis, and MRO conducted four groups among Palestinians from the occupied and the autonomous territories. The focus groups were held between 8 and 11 June 1999. Focus groups were organized separately among Israelis and Palestinians according to the nature of their war experience. Israeli groups were held in Tel Aviv among former conscripts, retired senior officers and bereaved women, and among the inhabitants of Kiryat Shmona.<sup>1</sup> Palestinian groups were held with returnees and young people from Gaza, and female teachers and wives of detainees from Ramallah, in the West Bank.<sup>2</sup> The groups were monitored from a separate area and simultaneously translated into English.
- Twenty-three **in-depth-interviews** (IDI) conducted by ICRC staff: 11 with Israelis, between 14 and 26 June 1999, and 12 with Palestinians, between 13 and 20 June 1999. Interviews with Israelis included a member of a kibbutz, a captured combatant, settlers, a Holocaust survivor and an orthodox rabbi. The interviews with Palestinians included an ambulance driver, an ex-detainee, a journalist and a preacher from a mosque. Each interview was audiotaped and then transcribed and translated into English by the local partners.
- Two **quantitative surveys**, one conducted among the Israeli population, and the other among the Palestinian population of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. A total of 928 respondents were surveyed — 442 Israelis and 486 Palestinians — all at least 18 years or older and stratified geographically according to population. The survey among Israelis was conducted by the "Magen David Adom" (MDA) and Telseker. The survey among Palestinians was administered by the "Palestine Red Crescent Society" (PRCS) and supported by MRO. Both local partners worked under the supervision of Greenberg Research. The survey among Israelis took place between 4 June and 20 July 1999. The survey among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza took place between 6 and 19 June 1999. The same questionnaire, developed by Greenberg Research in association with the ICRC, was used in both surveys. Total percentages reported here are subject to a sampling error of +/- 4.75 percentage points (at a 95 in 100 confidence level). Reported percentages from the Israeli sample of 442 respondents are subject to a sampling error of +/- 6.75 percentage points. From the Palestinian sample of 486 respondents, percentages are subject to a sampling error of +/- 6.5 percentage point.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kiryat Shmona is an Israeli town situated in northern Israel near the Lebanese border.

<sup>2</sup> The returnees are exiled Palestinians who returned to the Palestinian territories after 1994 in accordance with the Oslo Accords signed by Israel and the Palestinians.

<sup>3</sup> These estimates are based on population values of 50 per cent. Obviously many reported percentages are lower or higher than that; higher percentages would have a smaller sampling error. For example, a reported percentage of 90 per cent for the total population would have a sampling error of +/- 2.7 percentage points.

## Executive summary

A half-century of seemingly unremitting conflict in the Middle East has brought down the normative and behavioural barriers that are supposed to protect civilians and prisoners in war. Perhaps as in no other place in the world, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the Arab States, has engaged entire societies and left the distinction between combatants and civilians in tatters. The consequences are evident in the depth of mobilization in both societies, the scale of disruption and injury, the permissive attitudes towards the treatment of prisoners, and in the heightened willingness of all parties to put civilians at risk.

That the prohibitions designed to protect “innocent” civilians would falter here is particularly striking given the strong religious and ethical prohibitions that govern the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians. Across the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, Palestinians referred regularly to the Quran’s requirement to protect the innocent, the elderly, the infirm, women and children. Israelis were consumed with the ethics of war and occupation and recited parables and historical examples that provide guidance today on how soldiers should behave. Nonetheless, the 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973 wars with the Arab States, the war that began in Lebanon in 1975, including a subsequent Israeli involvement that continues to this day, the Gulf War and, most importantly, the ongoing occupation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank have drained the prohibitions and parables of their lifeblood. The perception of this conflict as a total one has left everyone fully exposed.

The main findings of the consultation carried out among Israelis and Palestinians are summarized below:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict draws its intensity from the irreconcilable dispute at its heart: the right to live on territory claimed by two peoples. The Palestinians see the conflict as a matter of fighting an occupation of their land. The Israelis see it as a fight for the survival of their hard-won country in an insecure, unstable neighbourhood.

**Total conflict.** Israeli and Palestinian societies have mobilized for war to an extent greater than perhaps any other place in the world.

- Fifty-four per cent of Israelis surveyed have been combatants in the war. This includes 80 per cent of men and one-third of women. Forty-nine per cent of Palestinians say they were combatants, including 42 per cent of women.
- Roughly seven in every ten respondents (73 per cent of Israelis and 69 per cent of Palestinians) say they have taken sides in the conflict.

*The Palestinian view.* Palestinians view the conflict as an occupation of their homeland which has taken an immense toll on combatants and civilians alike.

- More than one in five (22 per cent) of those surveyed say a family member has been killed in the conflict.<sup>4</sup>
- About one in four report being wounded (24 per cent) or imprisoned (25 per cent). Thirty-nine per cent report being tortured, a number that likely includes those physically assaulted by soldiers.
- Fully three-quarters of those surveyed say they lived in areas under enemy control.

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<sup>4</sup> It is possible that respondents broadly interpreted the phrase “family member”.

- The conflict also had a terrible impact on the spiritual and economic lives of Palestinians. Eighty-two per cent report having lost contact with important religious sites and 60 per cent say they lost the ability to earn a living. The dominant terms used to describe the conflict are “humiliating”, “hateful” and “horrible”.
- Men under 40 years old have experienced the conflict most intensely. Thirty-eight per cent say they were wounded, 45 per cent report being imprisoned and almost two-thirds (63 per cent) say they have been tortured.

*The Israeli view.* Israeli perspectives on the conflict are based on the notion of “survival” in an insecure environment stemming from, among other elements, the threat of terrorist acts. Their society has been on a constant war footing since the country’s founding, but Israelis have not suffered the same degree of injury and upheaval as Palestinians.

- Israeli losses have been heavy, nonetheless. Sixteen per cent of those surveyed say a family member has been killed in the conflict. Six per cent report being wounded.
- In a striking contrast to Palestinian experiences, only 1 per cent report being imprisoned and no Israelis say they were tortured, compared with 25 and 39 per cent of Palestinians, respectively.
- Israelis describe the impact of the conflict in less emotional and more pragmatic terms than Palestinians. Thirty-one per cent say it has provoked feelings of “uncertainty” and 25 per cent call it “disruptive”. One in five (21 per cent) say the conflict has left them feeling “powerless”, but they are far less likely to characterize it as “hateful” or “humiliating”.
- Older men (50 years and older) have experienced the conflict most intensely. Sixteen per cent were wounded, for example, compared with 6 per cent of younger men (under 50 years of age).

**Limits in war.** Israelis and Palestinians alike bring strong historical and cultural traditions to bear when thinking about the nature of war and its limits.

*The Israeli moral code.* Israelis ground their beliefs that certain actions are unacceptable in war in a personal moral code strongly shaped by examples of behaviour drawn from history.

- Although more than one-third of Israelis (36 per cent) say everything is allowed in war, a large majority believe certain actions are unacceptable. Of that majority, 79 per cent say these actions should be barred because they are “wrong”.
- Almost three-quarters (73 per cent) say such actions are wrong because they violate “one’s personal code”. Sixty-four per cent cite the protection of “human rights”, while 40 per cent cite the law.
- In focus groups and in-depth interviews, Israelis who accept the idea of limits in war — both combatants and civilians — root their beliefs in a strongly normative code that guides the treatment of human beings. This personal code is shaped by historical examples of behaviour they have been taught in school or by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

*Palestinian religious prohibitions.* For Palestinians, religious beliefs lie at the core of their acceptance of the concept of limits in war.

- Only 9 per cent of Palestinians — one-quarter the percentage of Israelis — believe that there should be no limits on what combatants can do when fighting the enemy.
- Asked to describe the limits, 84 per cent of Palestinians — compared with 27 per cent of Israelis — mention attacks on non-combatants, including children and the elderly (34 per cent), rape and abuse of women (29 per cent) and attacks on unarmed civilians (21 per cent).
- Asked why such actions should be prohibited, nearly two-thirds say it is because they are “wrong”, while one-third say they “cause too many problems”.
- Fully 80 per cent of Palestinians say religious beliefs are the reason to avoid certain acts (compared with 19 per cent of Israelis); in focus groups, religious texts and aphorisms were cited. Seventy-two per cent cite “human rights” as the basis for limits.

**The civilian-combatant barrier.** The principle of a separation between combatants and civilians during wartime has been all but demolished by 50 years of total engagement in conflict. The Israelis and Palestinians surveyed accept a wide range of practices that endanger civilians, while reaching strikingly similar conclusions about what barriers would help limit war.

- The largest blocs of Israelis and Palestinians (58 and 43 per cent, respectively) support a conditional principle: that combatants should attack combatants and avoid civilians “as much as possible”.
- More so than people in any other country studied by the ICRC, Israelis and Palestinians countenance attacks on civilians during wartime. A minority of Israelis (33 per cent) and Palestinians (41 per cent) support the principle that combatants should attack only other combatants and “leave civilians alone”. Seven per cent of Israelis and 16 per cent of Palestinians agree that both combatants *and* civilians are fair targets.
- Significant minorities — 22 per cent of Israelis and 31 per cent of Palestinians — approve of selective attacks on civilians if the other side is doing the same thing.
- Israelis and Palestinians agree on the acceptability of a wide range of actions that threaten civilian lives and property. Hostage-taking is accepted by large majorities. More than one-third of both populations accept attacks on populated areas, knowing that women and children would be killed. Almost two-thirds of Israelis (64 per cent) and nearly half of Palestinians (43 per cent) approve of using landmines to stop the enemy, even though civilians might get injured. An exception to this trend is made for the defiling of religious places and graves.
- Focus groups and in-depth interviews reveal that a permissive environment has been created by the ongoing conflict in the territories. Describing the situation in Gaza and the West Bank, Israeli soldiers spoke of the “unwritten laws” that allow them to control and intimidate Palestinians who live in the territories. Many are deeply troubled by the situations they face and described certain actions as abnormal or abhorrent.
- Women are less likely than men to accept the concept of war without limits — both in principle and practice. Among Palestinians, for example, 55 per cent of women approve the use of mortal remains in order to get something in exchange, compared with 70 per cent of men. And 44 per cent of women would approve of torture to gain important military

information, compared with 53 per cent of men. Among Israelis, only 49 per cent of women would accept the barter of mortal remains, compared with 61 per cent of Israeli men. Thirty-eight per cent of Israeli women approve of torture to gain important military information, compared with 51 per cent of men.

**Treatment of combatants and prisoners.** In the environment created by the total conflict, the protection of prisoners has broken down, particularly among the Israeli community.

- On the surface, majorities of both communities support international standards for the treatment of prisoners, such as allowing prisoners to have contact with their relatives or to receive visits from representatives of independent organizations.
- This support for protection breaks down when it comes to torture. Near majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians (44 and 48 per cent, respectively) say it is acceptable to torture prisoners in order to obtain information.
- There is small but telling support among both Israelis (15 per cent) and Palestinians (20 per cent) for killing prisoners if the other side were doing the same.
- Palestinian attitudes stem from direct experiences in the conflict. Of those imprisoned or living under enemy control, 73 per cent report they were mistreated and more than one-third (36 per cent) say they were physically injured.
- When respondents are asked if they would save the life of a surrendering enemy combatant or help a wounded enemy combatant who had killed a person close to them, 35 per cent of Israelis and 46 per cent of Palestinians say they would not.
- Palestinian experiences have generated a “regime of reciprocity”, in which special circumstances — i.e., harsh attacks by Israelis — justify extraordinary responses.

**Explaining the erosion of limits.** Israelis and Palestinians give radically different explanations as to why the limits in war that are meant to protect civilians and prisoners have broken down.

*Palestinian responses.* Palestinians set aside their religious beliefs regarding the limits in war in the face of what they see as an enemy that is totally committed to waging war, regardless of the consequences for civilians. The focus groups and in-depth interviews reveal three elements in their thinking:

- Palestinians believe they must respond in kind to what they see as *the total commitment of Israelis* to destroy their society. In focus groups, they portray themselves as “forced” to go beyond the limits in war.
- Palestinians see themselves engaged in *an unequal conflict* where they stand powerless before a strong country and therefore have to use whatever means available.
- Palestinians justify breaking the civilian-combatant barrier as a response to *Israel's failure to accept limits in war*.

*Israeli responses.* The legitimacy of the goals and institutions that seek to preserve a Jewish State and the character of the conflict in the territories are at the centre of Israeli explanations for why they

have set aside or amended their normative code governing the limits on wartime behaviour. The focus groups and in-depth interviews reveal five elements in their thinking:

- Israelis justify their actions by citing *the historical goals* of establishing and defending the Jewish State and its territory.
- In the context of what they see as *the involvement of the whole Palestinian society* in the conflict, Israeli soldiers and civilians legitimize actions against Palestinian civilians.
- The concepts of *reciprocity* and retaliation take hold among Israelis when they contrast actions by Palestinian “terrorists” that deliberately target Israeli civilians with what Israelis see as their deliberate efforts to avoid attacking Palestinian civilians.
- The *legitimacy of the Israeli State* and army and their decisions and orders allow Israeli soldiers to accept the disjunction between certain actions they take and their personal moral code. The State authorities are also held in very high esteem by civilian respondents.
- Israelis accept the erosion of the limits on wartime behaviour because they believe the government made *a decision to strike broadly to achieve national goals* by imposing law and order in the territories. Asked why soldiers or fighters attack or hurt civilians, the main explanation for Israelis is the commitment to national goals: one-third cite soldiers’ commitment to the cause; determination to win at any cost (22 per cent) and following orders are also cited. About one-quarter, however, say people “lose all sense during war” or “hate the other side so much”.

**International rules of war and war crimes.** Although there is widespread awareness of international conventions setting limits in war, both Israelis and Palestinians are sceptical that such rules keep wars from getting worse. Both groups support punishment of people who break important laws during war, but they are ambivalent about how to punish wrongdoers.

- Eighty-nine per cent of Israelis have heard of the Geneva Conventions, though 38 per cent describe them inaccurately. Israelis familiar with the Conventions focus mostly on the protection of prisoners (43 per cent).
- About two-thirds of Palestinians have heard of the Geneva Conventions (65 per cent), but fully two-thirds of those respondents describe them inaccurately (68 per cent) and are unable to provide any specific detail on their function.
- Palestinians and Israelis are equally cautious about the power of the Geneva Conventions; about 40 per cent of each group think they prevent wars from getting worse.
- Israelis and Palestinians demonstrate a relatively low level of support for punishment of war criminals. Only half of Israelis accept either the concept of war crimes or of putting wrongdoers on trial.
- Palestinians are much more likely than Israelis to give the responsibility for punishing war criminals to an international criminal court (76 per cent compared with 30 per cent). Israelis look to their country’s courts, government or military to punish wrongdoers.

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**The red cross emblem and the role of the ICRC.** The red cross emblem is extremely well known by both Israelis and Palestinians. It is seen primarily as protecting prisoners of war. More broadly, both communities would turn first to the ICRC if civilians need protection.

- Eight in ten Palestinians and nine in ten Israelis can correctly identify the red cross emblem.
- Israelis and Palestinians believe the primary mission of the red cross emblem is to protect prisoners of war. More than one-third of Israelis and Palestinians associate the emblem with that goal, followed by 22 per cent who see its mission as protecting the wounded and sick.
- The ICRC is chosen by almost nine in ten respondents (83 per cent of Israelis and 90 per cent of Palestinians) as the independent organization whose representatives should be allowed to visit prisoners.
- Thirty per cent of Palestinians and 31 per cent of Israelis say the ICRC plays a big role in helping those in need during the conflict. Palestinians were more likely to mention the UN (65 per cent) and religious leaders (41 per cent). Israelis say international humanitarian organizations (36 per cent) and Israeli soldiers (33 per cent) played the largest role.
- The ICRC/Red Cross is the first choice of both Palestinians and Israelis (53 and 31 per cent, respectively) when they are asked who they would turn to for protection if civilian areas are attacked or besieged. UN agencies are identified by 27 per cent of Palestinians. About 20 per cent of Israelis say they would turn to other international organizations, humanitarian groups or their own government.

The length of the conflict and the fight to achieve seemingly irreconcilable goals has left both Israelis and Palestinians pessimistic about the future. Fifty-nine per cent of Palestinians foresee more conflict in the future, while only 28 per cent are optimistic about prospects for peace. While 45 per cent of Israelis are optimistic, a majority say conflict will continue or refuse to predict the future. The ups and downs of the peace process and the all-encompassing character of the conflict have left people cautious about the ability of nations and people to limit the scope of war.

## The total conflict

The communities most directly involved in the Israeli-Arab conflict, the Israelis and Palestinians, describe this conflict in total terms — two peoples who believe they have an historic right to have as their homeland the same territory in the Middle East. On this point, there is little confusion, complexity or dissension in the in-depth discussions. When asked to describe this conflict to an outsider, Israelis recount the expulsion of the Jews some 2,000 years ago and the conflict occasioned by their return to the Jewish homeland. The result is a war between two peoples with irreconcilable claims, seeking to assert their legitimacy and dominance in the area:

We belong to this place historically. This used to be our land 2,000 years ago, and we came back after 2,000 years. We also have with us a document that proves we belong here. Our new neighbours who settled in this place and in the surrounding countries refuse to accept our return to this land, even though this right has been acknowledged by all the countries of the world in a UN declaration. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

I want you to understand that [this is]... strife over a piece of land, over the right to live someplace... The struggle concerns the right of return, and each side believes it has proof of its right to this country. Right now we're the stronger ones, and that's why we're here. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

There are the Jews living in Israel, who established a State of their own after 2,000 years of exile and so on. And as a result of their arrival here, became embroiled in a state of conflict with the population that had been living here before their arrival, who also consider this place to be their homeland. (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

The Israeli nation was expelled from its home 2,000 years ago, and as a result of international political considerations, it has returned. Is it allowed to take its land back? (IDI, father of combatant missing-in-action, Tel Aviv)

In concept, the description is not very different from the one offered by many Palestinians. They see the Israelis as asserting an historic right to Palestinian land, which entails displacing the Palestinian people from their land.

The struggle is historical. We were reallocated from our land and we have the right to get it back. Historically, the land is not theirs, and it was a plan to occupy our land. Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine. (FG, returnees, Gaza)

The Israelis have an ambitious plan of greater Israel, from the Nile to Furat, and this threatens the Arab existence in the north, south and east. (FG, returnees, Gaza)

The Israelis consider themselves that they are our substitutes on our land in this geographical place. Their aim is to be on our ruins after annihilating us as a population. (IDI, ex-detainee, Gaza)

These two societies' historic and religious claims to the same territory have produced a total conflict. As a consequence, both societies have mobilized for war, as perhaps no place else in the world. Half the population in both communities describe themselves as combatants who have carried weapons in

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2 the Israeli-Arab conflict, including the Palestinian conflict. Overall, 54 per cent of Israelis say they have been combatants, including 80 per cent of men (nearly 90 per cent over 50 years of age) and one-third of Israeli women. The near-complete mobilization is also evident among the Palestinians surveyed: 49 per cent overall and 63 per cent of younger men describe themselves as combatants who have carried weapons. Almost half the Palestinian women (42 per cent), including 56 per cent of older women, say they were combatants.

The conflict has engaged nearly the whole of these two societies: 73 per cent of Israelis and 69 per cent of Palestinians say they supported a side. Consequently, both Israelis and Palestinians have come to believe that these are entire societies in war, fully mobilized to assert their claims and engage each other. A former soldier in Israel, for example, described every war up until 1973 as “an eternal fight for existence” and, as a result, “Our people as a whole fought... The whole of the Israeli people, without exception, were at war.” The Palestinians described a conflict of similar scope: “The combatants were the Palestinian people who were reallocated and scattered by the force of weapons.” (FG, returnees, Gaza) Within Palestinian society, that produces combatants at all levels:

People of all levels, school students, university students, combatants on the front line and women at home. All Palestinian categories were affected by the Israeli occupation and therefore contributed in the struggle. The main aim of the revolution was to release our land and have our own country just like the others. All Palestinians contributed in this struggle. The struggle took many shapes, ranging from armed struggle to merchants and journalists. The struggle against the Israelis took many shapes, and the unarmed combatants had a role that is not of any less value than the armed combatants. (FG, returnees, Gaza)

I consider every Palestinian a combatant. Not only the one that throws the stones is a combatant. The teacher that raises a new generation is a combatant, because she is raising a generation that would build their country. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

#### **For the Palestinians — an occupation**

The Palestinians in the territories describe this conflict as an occupation — one that has taken an immense toll on nearly the whole of the Palestinian population. Fully three-quarters of the Palestinians in this survey say they have lived in areas under “enemy control” or still do: 64 per cent say they live or have lived in areas under enemy control, plus another 11 per cent who say they were both imprisoned and lived under enemy control. Another 15 per cent say they were imprisoned.

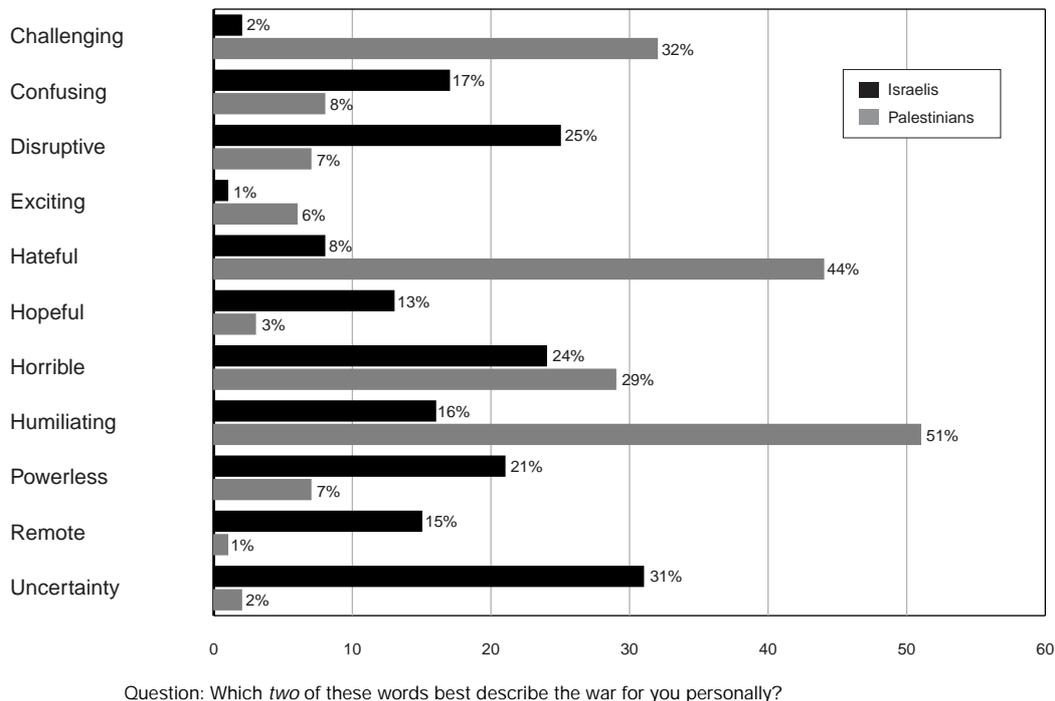
The dominant terms used by Palestinians in the territories to describe the conflict are “humiliating” (51 per cent) and “hateful” (44 per cent), as well as “horrible” (29 per cent); one-third describe the conflict more ambiguously, as “challenging” (32 per cent). (See Figure 1.)

The Israeli-Arab conflict, including the Palestinian conflict, has exacted a high price among Palestinian fighters and civilians. Seventy-three per cent of Palestinians surveyed say they have lost contact with a close relative and 82 per cent have lost access to important religious sites; 60 per cent say they have lost the ability to earn a livelihood. Property losses among Palestinians are widespread: 46 per cent have lost access to their property; 41 per cent report serious damage to their property; and 30 per cent say their property was confiscated. A sizeable portion, 29 per cent, have had their identity papers confiscated. The fighting has taken a heavy toll on the Palestinian population: 22 per cent say a family member has been killed,<sup>5</sup> and 25 per cent report being imprisoned and 24 per cent wounded. Fully 39 per cent report being tortured, which is larger than the percentage of interviewees that report having been detained at some point; based on the focus groups, it likely represents the percentage who report being

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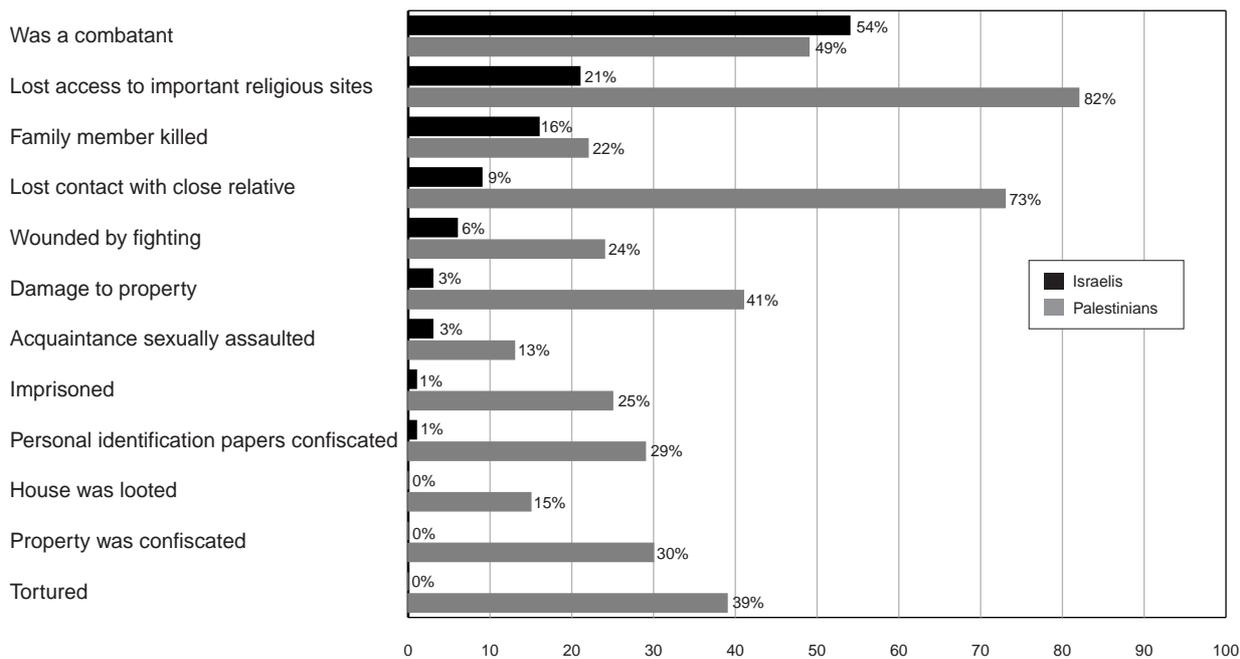
<sup>5</sup> It is possible that respondents broadly interpreted the phrase “family member”.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Personal description of the war**  
 (per cent of total population responding)<sup>6</sup>



physically assaulted by soldiers. A large number, 13 per cent, say they knew someone well who was sexually assaulted, but that may have a broader meaning than rape.<sup>7</sup> (See Figure 2.)

**FIGURE 2**  
**The war experience**  
 (per cent of total population responding)



<sup>6</sup> Values add up to more than 100 per cent as respondents were asked to give their top two choices.

<sup>7</sup> In the focus groups and in-depth interviews, none of the Palestinian participants described sexual assaults, though many describe women being humiliated or men being humiliated in front of women.

Palestinian men have experienced the conflict most intensely, particularly younger men under 40 years, a large majority of whom report that they have been “fighters” in this conflict. Almost three-quarters of these men indicate in the survey that they have lost the ability to earn a livelihood; almost half have had their identity papers confiscated. A large majority (63 per cent) say they have been tortured (or physically assaulted by soldiers); 45 per cent say they have been imprisoned and 38 per cent wounded in the conflict. Older Palestinians are much more likely to report damage to property or being forced to leave their homes.

### **For the Israelis — uncertainty and the costs of war**

For the Israeli population today, the conflict with the Arab States and the Palestinians centres on “survival” and their place on this land. These fundamental goals, contested over many decades, have put people on a war footing, as in few other places. One of the bereaved women spoke of living in the “context of an entire system of a State that has been at war since the day I was born”. (FG, bereaved women, Tel Aviv)

Israelis describe this conflict as “disruptive” (25 per cent), full of “uncertainty” (31 per cent), and leaving them “powerless” (21 per cent). It is a war that has left Israelis insecure about their situation. They are experiencing the conflict differently from the Palestinians. One-quarter of Israelis say “horrible” best describes their own experience in the war, but few describe a conflict that has made them feel humiliated or hate. (See Figure 1.)

While Israeli society is fully mobilized and committed to historic national goals, people have not faced the scale of upheaval and injury reported by the Palestinians.<sup>8</sup> The losses in the conflict are heavy, to be sure: 16 per cent of Israelis surveyed report that a member of their immediate family has been killed during the conflict; 9 per cent have lost contact with a close relative; and 6 per cent were wounded. One in five report that they have lost access to important religious sites (21 per cent).

In Israel, it is the older men who have experienced the conflict most intensely: 16 per cent were wounded, for example. While younger men have nearly all served as combatants, just 6 per cent have been wounded. In the context of the Israeli-Arab conflict, a very small percentage of Israelis – 4 per cent – have been forced to leave their homes or found themselves in an area that came under “enemy” control (2 per cent).

### **The future**

The ongoing conflict and the struggle to achieve seemingly irreconcilable goals have left the people in this part of the Middle East pessimistic about the future. A sizeable bloc of Israelis, 45 per cent, think there will be lasting peace in the future, but a majority do not know what will happen or see successive periods of peace and conflict. A little more than one-quarter of Palestinians, 28 per cent, are optimistic about the prospects for peace; an overwhelming majority, 59 per cent, expect more conflict in the future. The ongoing and all-encompassing character of this war has left people cautious about hoping for peace and, as will be seen below, cautious about the ability of nations and people to limit the scope of war itself.

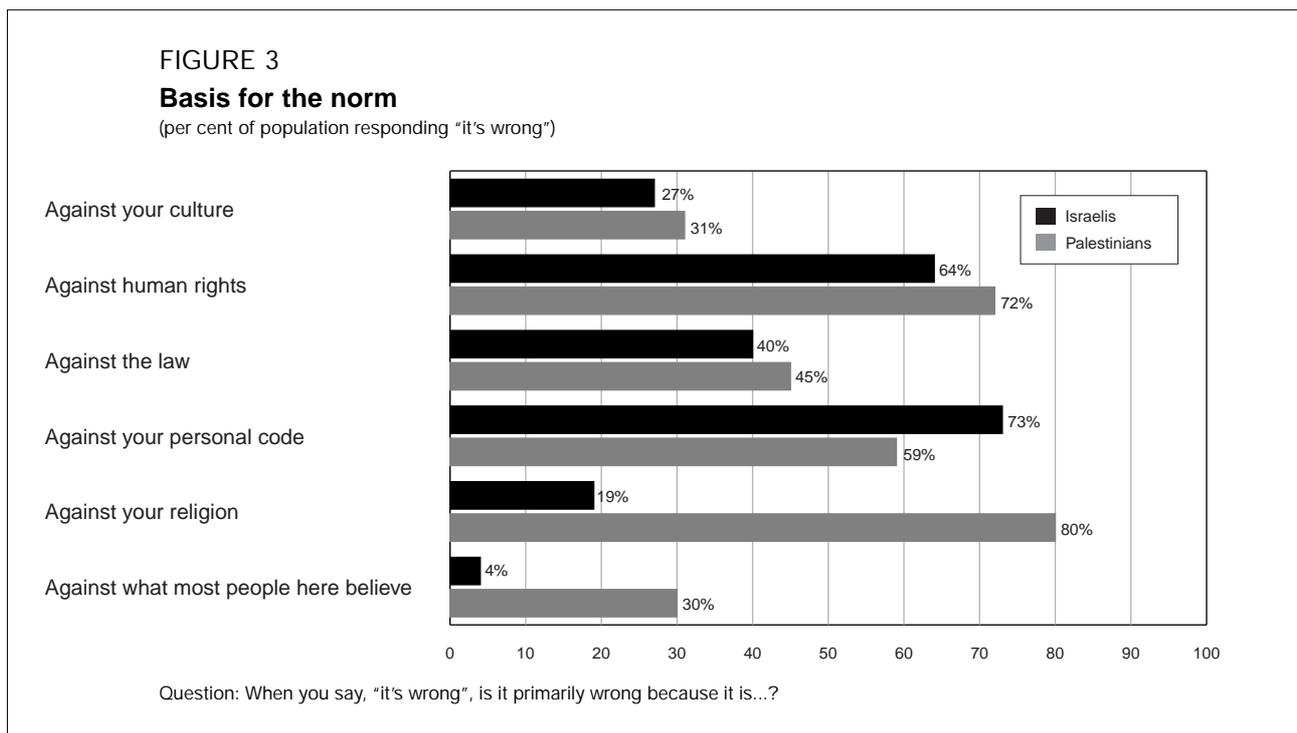
<sup>8</sup> The study specifically asked about the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestinian conflict, and did not ask people about their experience in Europe or the Middle Eastern States. For example, just 5 per cent of Israelis born in Europe or in States in the region report being “forced to leave home in this conflict”.

## Normative limitations on the scope of war

The Israelis and Palestinians bring traditions to this conflict that say war must have limits. Whether combatants should protect certain populations is not a remote issue here. Combatants and civilians, people of high and low standing, think about the nature of war and what their traditions say are the right things to do.

### The Israeli code: parables and history

A large majority of Israelis say some things are unacceptable in war.<sup>9</sup> For that majority, these acts are barred because they are “wrong”. For them, it is a question of personal and human values: 73 per cent say these acts are wrong because they are against their “personal code” and 64 per cent because they violate “human rights”. (See Figure 3.)



Across the Israeli focus groups, soldiers and non-combatants pointed to moral codes that require one to avoid actions that “detract from the value of life”. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv) Some spoke of practical issues, such as a Kantian hope for reciprocal treatment from one’s enemy; a few described a child witnessing the humiliation of his or her mother and the consequences for future reconciliation. But for the most part, Israelis discussed proper limits in terms of “moral-ethical guidance”. (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

Israelis who accept the idea of limits in war think of a code, with a strong normative quality, that would guide the way a human being is to be treated. That code, according to the retired officers, would bar “killing captives, like killing innocent people”. “It’s forbidden to take the life of those who are incapable of harming you, who aren’t affecting the fighting.” (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv) A father of a missing soldier said, “It is a moral calling, when a man cannot fight, then he is under your control”. (IDI, father of combatant missing-in-action, Tel Aviv) An ex-soldier explained why: “As soon as a soldier is captured, he should be treated as a human being.” Thus, mistreating prisoners — indeed, to rob, pillage or rape — “offends the moral value of human dignity”. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv) One of the settlers observed, “They should not whip them or be cruel. I think the Israeli people, Bless the Lord, uphold these

<sup>9</sup> More than one-third (36 per cent), however, say everything is allowed.

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6 rules". (IDI, settler, Tel Aviv) An orthodox rabbi affirmed the role of such a code, though rooted in universal beliefs:

I think these are universal values, and they're universal not because the UN determined them to be, but because it seems that in the human soul there are certain deeds that are commonly considered as unseemly. A cultured person doesn't behave like that... Up till now I've never encountered any points of disagreement between the universal values and those of the Torah. I've never found any. (IDI, orthodox rabbi, Jerusalem)

The former soldiers talked of rules that become the norm, and thus can constrain what happens in battle: "A norm must be developed... in order to help those who find it difficult to restrain actions." The code must take a form, people believe, so that average citizens, now as soldiers, can "reason and understand" what they must not do. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

These codes or norms governing behaviour were not arrived at casually. Throughout the focus groups and in-depth interviews, Israelis drew on historical and metaphorical examples taught to them in school or in the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). These examples are foremost in the minds of Israelis as they fight their enemies. First, there is the example of the Thirty-Five — the Palmach group on its way to aid the Etzion Block during the 1948 war. They chose to free a Bedouin shepherd, an act that led to all 35 fighters being killed by Palestinian villagers. Then there is the example of Yossi Kaplan, who came to a cave in the Jordan valley and saw a woman breast-feeding her baby, while standing in front of a terrorist. Kaplan holds his fire and dies at the hands of the terrorist, as do his two comrades, Hannan and Boaz. Then there is Kfar Kassem — a case in which 47 Arab peasants returning from the fields, unaware of an Israeli-imposed curfew, were shot by IDF soldiers.

As a result, most of the Israelis believe that their soldiers go into battle, not just with the moral code developed for the IDF by prominent Israeli philosophers, but also go with a *personal* moral code — a code that must guide you when "you stand alone in those situations where you ask yourself these hard questions". (IDI, member of a kibbutz, Tel Aviv)

As Israelis try to grapple with the idea of putting brakes on war during a "total conflict", they draw on parables and historical examples from the post-1948 conflict. They do not refer to the Jewish experience in Europe. The Holocaust, during which State power was used with the aim of exterminating an entire people, was only rarely mentioned by Israeli respondents in the focus groups or in-depth interviews when discussing the limits in war. The norms that limit what combatants can do have been developed wholly in the context of Israel and of the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian conflicts.

### **Palestinians: religious prohibitions**

Asked whether fighters and soldiers should not be allowed to do certain things when fighting their enemy, Palestinians focus very clearly on the killing of children and the elderly (34 per cent), the rape and mistreatment of women (29 per cent) and attacks on unarmed civilians (21 per cent). For the great majority of Palestinians, these actions should not be allowed because they are "wrong" (62 per cent). One-third say they should not be allowed because they "cause too many problems", particularly hatred and division.

While many Palestinians (72 per cent) also cite "human rights" as a reason to avoid such acts, the dominant reason is that they go against their religion (80 per cent).<sup>10</sup> (See Figure 3.) In the in-depth discussions in this consultation, religious tenets were very much in the front of people's minds.

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<sup>10</sup> Only 19 per cent of Israelis say that such actions are against their religion.

When the combatants carry their guns and decide to go to war, the [principle] that we can ask of them is the historical saying: "Not to Kill old people, not to kill a woman, not to kill a child, not to cut a tree, not to attack mosques or churches". (FG, returnees, Gaza)

If he was not armed, I would not hurt him because it is against our tradition. The unarmed person is weak and cannot defend himself, so I cannot kill him. (FG, returnees, Gaza)

In our worst days, we never hurt a prisoner even when we were bleeding. Prisoners used to get good and human treatment from us. We believe in human rights and our religion as Muslims and Christians forbid us from hurting prisoners. Those who kill prisoners are murderers and can not be humans. (FG, returnees, Gaza)

Because God said "Don't cut a tree, don't kill a child, don't kill an old person." God said so. (FG, wives of detainees, Ramallah)

I was there during [the] Chabra and Shatila massacres and I used to carry a video camera. I recorded everything that happened then. I remember seeing pregnant women killed, men cut into pieces. If we have peace, everybody will win. Nobody will benefit from the massacres regardless of his nationality. All religions forbid the killing of innocent people. I wish we have peace and being able to visit the Jews and the Jews to visit me. We are ready to do that, and can do it. (FG, wives of detainees, Ramallah)

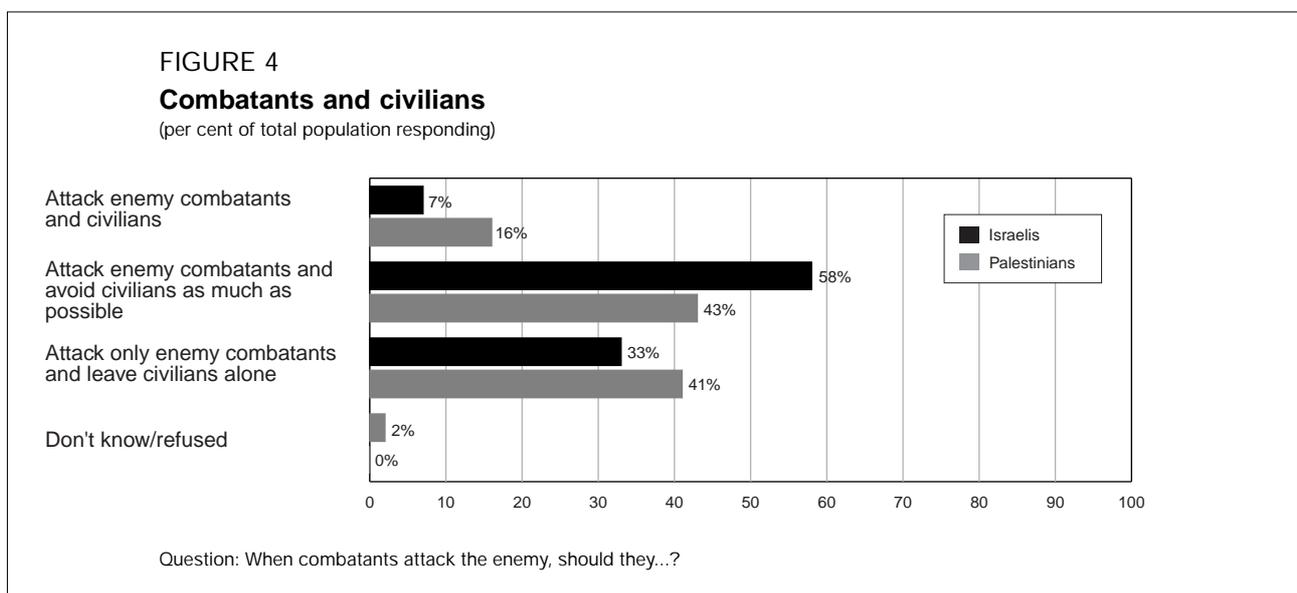
Some Palestinians affirmed the religious principle of limits, despite the fact that the occupation seemed to brook no limits: "Everything in war is allowed... but we, as Palestinians, our morals do not allow us to do certain things in war like the things they do. An Israeli soldier would kill a child... I've seen this sight personally... but as a Palestinian I do not accept that and would not do such a thing." (FG, young people, Gaza)

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## A conflict of few limits

The combatants and civilians in this conflict carry with them strong personal codes, human values and religious principles — all of which dictate that combatants in conflict must restrain their behaviour in order to protect the innocent. Yet the competing goals of the two peoples, the total engagement in the conflict and the experience of war and occupation have tested these normative barriers and led them to be breached. For both Israelis and Palestinians, the conflict has all but demolished the principle of a separation between combatants and civilians.

The absolute principle that combatants should attack only combatants and leave civilians alone only wins minority support here: 33 per cent of Israelis and 41 per cent of Palestinians. The biggest bloc of Israelis support a conditional principle: “attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians *as much as possible*” (58 per cent), as does the largest bloc of Palestinians (43 per cent). Not insignificant numbers support in principle attacking *both* enemy combatants *and* civilians: 7 per cent of Israelis and 16 per cent of Palestinians. (See Figure 4.)



The breakdown of the barriers that protect civilians during violent conflict is very evident in the Israelis' responses to the open-ended question: “Is there anything that fighters or soldiers should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy?” A large minority of Israelis, 36 per cent, say everything is allowed in war, whereas only 9 per cent of Palestinians say the same. Those Israelis who offer specific limitations tend to focus on prisoners of war and killing without reason. More than one-quarter (27 per cent) of Israelis say attacking innocent people — children, the elderly or unarmed civilians — and rape should be off-limits, but that is well below the response for the Palestinians, 84 per cent of whom mention innocent people.

### Openness to putting civilians at risk

Not surprisingly, Israelis and Palestinians differ in their reactions to some important practices in this conflict — such as imposing curfews on communities as a security measure and destroying someone's house as a form of punishment. But much more striking is how this protracted conflict has brought these two peoples to fundamentally similar conclusions on the limits in war. Israelis and Palestinians alike accept a wide range of practices that endanger civilian populations and draw them into the conflict at great risk.

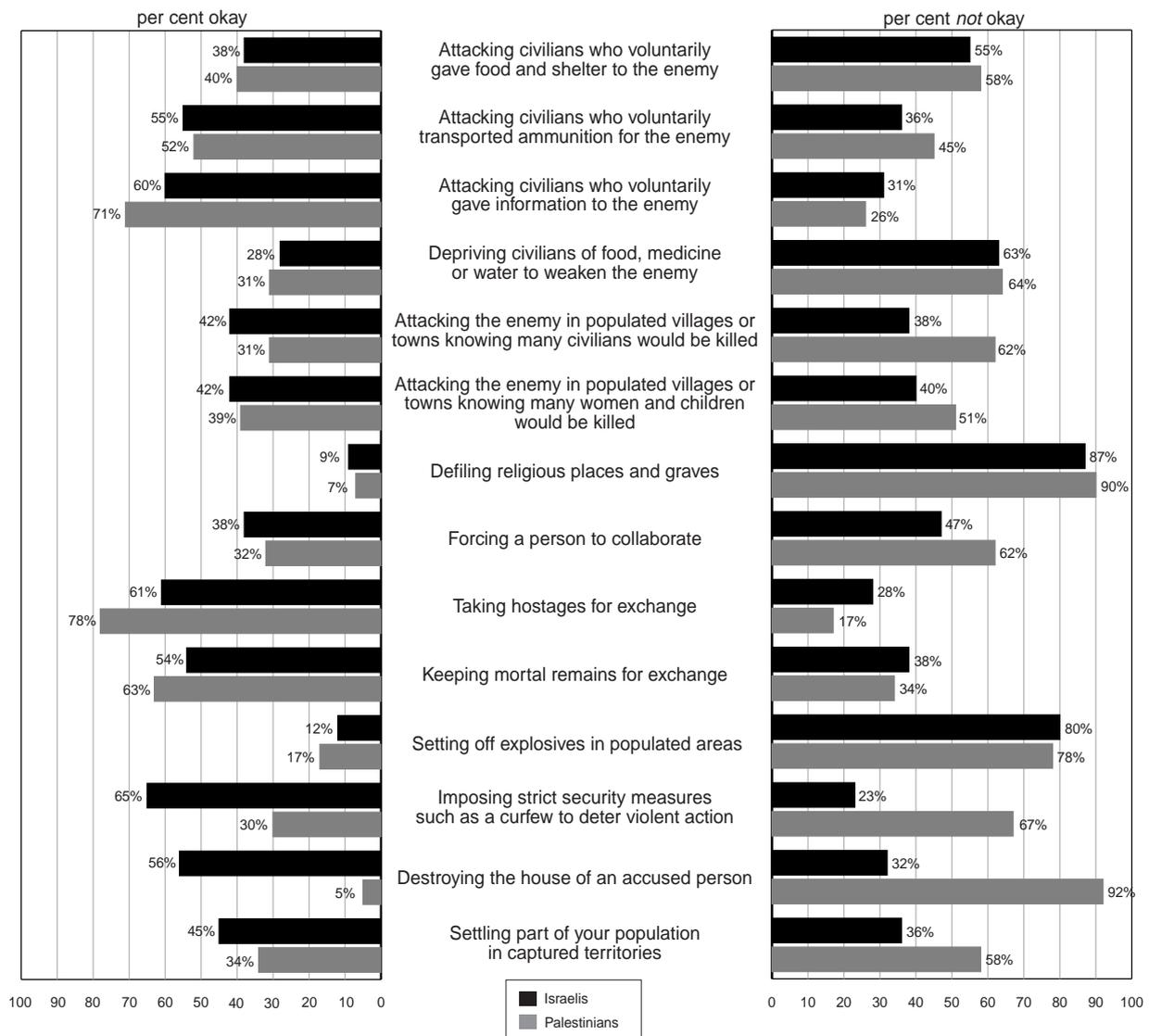
Large majorities of Israelis and Palestinians say it is “part of war” (and not “wrong”) to take hostages in order to get something in exchange, to attack civilians who collaborate with the enemy, and to

keep mortal remains in order to get something in exchange. More than 40 per cent of Israelis and more than one-third of Palestinians accept attacks on populated areas, knowing that many women and children would be killed, and accept settling part of their own population in territories captured during the conflict. About 30 per cent of both populations accept the notion of siege — depriving the civilian population of food, medicine or water to weaken the enemy.

The permissiveness towards such practices in combat is very evident when it comes to landmines. Almost two-thirds of Israelis (64 per cent) and nearly half of Palestinians (43 per cent) say it is acceptable to plant landmines to stop the movement of enemy fighters or soldiers, even though civilians may step on them accidentally.

Lastly, a not insignificant number of people here have come to accept direct acts of terror as a reality of the conflict: 12 per cent of Israelis and 17 per cent of Palestinians say it is part of war (and not wrong) to set off “explosives in populated areas to weaken the resolve of the enemy”. Only defiling religious places and graves seems out of bounds for almost everybody. (See Figure 5.)

**FIGURE 5**  
**Acceptance of war practices**  
(per cent of total population responding)



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## The permissive environment

The experiences of the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian conflicts have created a permissive environment for attacks on civilians that is revealed in the discussions with both Palestinians and Israelis. Nearly all Israelis have served in the IDF and have had to accommodate, in some way, the experience of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. At the centre of that experience is the maintenance of law and order in the territories — which means soldiers engaged in conflict with the civilian population and with various kinds of Palestinian combatants, from stone-throwers to fighters. Israelis are fully conscious that the situation in the territories is different from a traditional cross-border incursion, like southern Lebanon. There, people speak of the role of international conventions and law: “Over there, it’s much easier to abide by your military codes.” (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

But in the territories, “We operate in an unclear moral framework since we don’t consider them a State and they don’t acknowledge our existence.” (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv) “When you’re in a state of war you act by one set of rules, whereas when you’re enforcing law and order in an occupied territory after the fighting’s over, the rules [on the civilian population] are much stricter.” (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv) In this “unclear framework”, soldiers find themselves directly in conflict with a whole society that must be dominated and controlled. The former soldiers describe the necessity of taking actions that harm civilians.

We have to differentiate between two things here. The fighting in the occupied territories is street fighting. It’s not a war waged against some army, it’s a psychological war. It’s important to know how to intimidate them, one way or another, to teach them their place. I’m not talking about rape and robbery, but I do believe that sometimes we do have to behave not as though we were on a visit to a friend’s house. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

Showing who is in charge also means degrading him. When you take everyone out of the house, including women, children and the elderly, have them sit on the ground and smack anyone who dares to utter a word — that’s degrading, and it’s done, and it had to be done. There’s nothing you can do about it. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

I agree as to innocent people. But as to the Palestinians, there we’re in contact with civilians who are fighting, so we have to break into houses. We have to... We have to do many things that we wouldn’t have to do when facing an enemy country — such as enter a town full of civilians... (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

Though the soldiers accept that they must be violent or abusive to civilians or protestors, they believe, at the same time, that certain actions are abnormal and abhorrent. The line between “humiliating” and “hurting” someone and doing something abhorrent seems to be defined by example:

If we consider rape, robbery and other immoral acts, there’s no reason to commit them in the occupied territories, just as there’s no reason to commit them on the other side of the border. The fact that we’re looking at two different kinds of fighting means we have to find appropriate solutions, but it doesn’t mean we have to start behaving abnormally and unjustifiably. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

In the context of the territories, one senior officer said, “There’s a big difference between killing and beating with clubs.” (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

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Even with this limitation, the result has been a conflict that produces a lot of violent confrontations with broad segments of Palestinian society. The rules and historic examples that were to govern the behaviour of soldiers in the Israeli-Arab conflict were put under great pressure by the ambiguous situation in the territories, as one ex-soldier put it: "What happened in the territories was also war, but war of a different kind of fighting. It's only natural that the aberrations in such a war also are different." One ex-soldier described a "total context" that leads to encounters:

You become totally immersed in it and you start regarding every person who looks at you — not only the young activists, aged 16 to 22, who are the instigators of the incident you've been called in to bring under control – but also everyone else at the scene with whom you have eye contact, as your enemy. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

The soldiers described a context that requires their direct engagement with the Palestinian population:

I served in the territories for four years... But let's say you're an Arab and I'm an Israeli, and you insult me. I insult you back... (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

In one word, provocation... (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

I'm saying, it's not allowed, but it's extremely difficult to stop yourself from acting, and I speak from experience... (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

When your life is in danger, when some 12-year-old girl and her friends are throwing bricks at you and your platoon commander gets hurt, you open fire straight away. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

It's all very nice, there are things which are allowed and others which are not. But the reality that existed in the occupied territories was that there used to be this unwritten law that it's unthinkable for the conquered to insult the conquerors. If one of the conquered people dared to say anything or curse a soldier he would be smacked in the face. These were the rules of the game. They weren't official but this is how things were. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

Now, you're aware of the rules and you know very well that they don't allow you to hurt a civilian, but this guy is ignoring you and, to him, you are a policeman, you're the one in charge, and not because you asked to be there. And so there are cases when this guy gets kicked right in the stomach and finds himself on the ground. End of story. (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

I'd put it this way: soldiers reach the point of attacking civilians usually as a result of being insulted or frustrated — insulted by the civilian population. And in many cases, because they were ordered to. (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

It's basically a matter of: "You're threatening me, so I'll retaliate." It was never a case of soldiers entering a house and starting to beat up some guy who was still in bed — something I consider illegitimate. These things happened in situations of hostility, of violence, when the soldiers' lives were threatened. (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

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Although the army received orders to enforce law and order, which meant using tear gas, water hoses, clubs, throwing gravel, you name it, I'm telling you it's better for an army not to be reduced to such conditions. For as soon as you order a soldier to take up a club, you can no longer control his actions. He'll start finding his own interpretations of what goes on out there. (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

Soldiers were often aware of the consequences of their actions and deeply troubled by them, but nonetheless found themselves caught up in this conflict with civilians:

But it means you've just hurt a civilian — a woman — and humiliated her in front of her four-year-old son who'll bear this memory all his life and hate us for it. But you're in the middle of detaining the suspect who also happens to be her son, and she starts clinging to your battle vest. Aren't you going to push her off? You only have to grab her hand and... Come on! You push her off, damn it. That's what you do! (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

For the most part, the soldiers supported punishments premised on collective responsibility, such as the destruction of houses, though some were troubled by the practice: "That is sad. That's terrible and all that, but... it's part of the rules of the game the conqueror and the conquered play." "This is the punishment." "In certain cases, collective punishment is in order." "If we're talking about the occupied territories, I think it's alright." (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv) The retired officers generally accepted the idea, but argued over the merits:

As someone who personally executed orders on the tearing down of houses — I blew up dozens of houses — I categorically object to it. I also think that it's harmful rather than effective. Despite the fact that it's legal, in accordance with the Emergency State Regulations formulated by the British in 1945 against us — which we integrated into our law system, just as the Jordanians did — I categorically object to it. (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

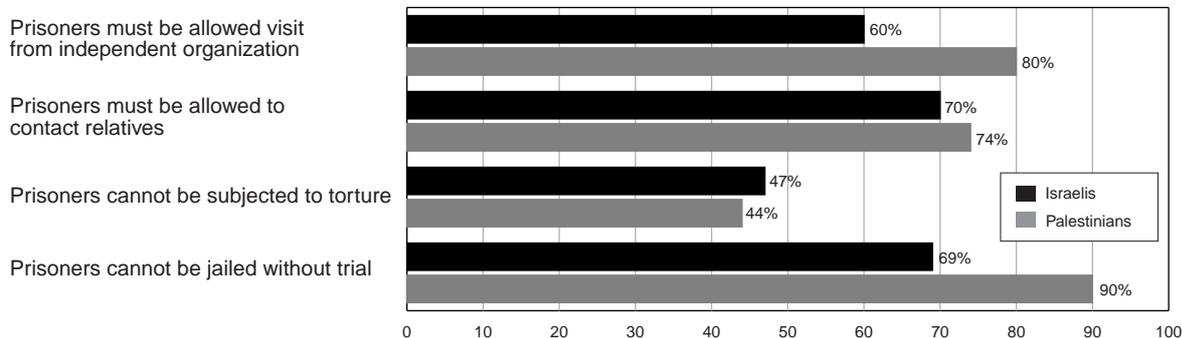
You sometimes find yourself in a situation where you start asking yourself whether there's a suitable individual punishment you can mete out, or if you have to use collective punishment. The family knew what was going on and helped him, and this brings you to a series of decisions you have to make based on the information available to you... (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

Such conflicting feelings were mirrored in Israeli society: one Russian immigrant thought such practices reminded her of Stalinist times; others, particularly in Kiryat Shmona, accepted collective punishment if the authorities thought it was the proper response.

### **Prisoners exposed**

In this environment, obligations with regard to prisoners have lost their hold in both communities, but particularly among Israelis. Large majorities of Israelis (69 per cent) and Palestinians (90 per cent) surveyed believe those suspected of illegal activities cannot be jailed without trial. They also believe that those who are held prisoner in the Israeli-Arab conflict (including the Palestinian conflict) must be allowed to contact relatives (70 and 74 per cent, respectively). In addition, a large majority of Palestinians believe prisoners must be allowed a visit from a representative of an independent organization (80 per cent). Just 60 per cent of Israelis believe prisoners in this conflict must be allowed such visits. (See Figure 6.)

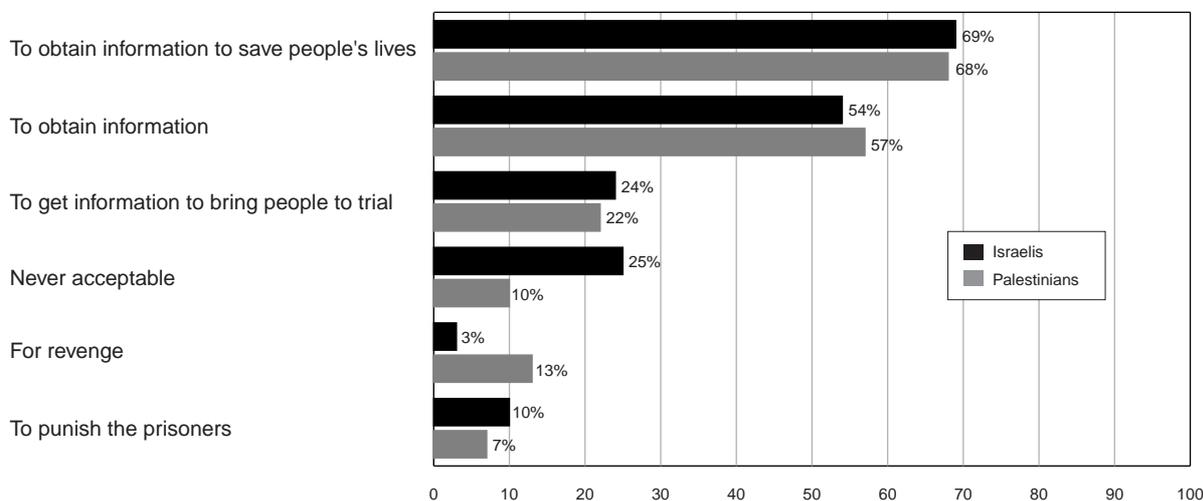
**FIGURE 6**  
**Captured enemy combatants**  
(per cent accept obligations)



Question: Now let me ask you how prisoners should be treated.

The real breakdown of protections is apparent when it comes to torture. Less than half of Israelis (47 per cent) and Palestinians (44 per cent) say a prisoner cannot be subjected to torture to obtain important military information.<sup>11</sup> Majorities of Israelis and Palestinians say it is acceptable to subject prisoners to abuse to obtain information that will save people's lives but also just to obtain information. (See Figure 7.)

**FIGURE 7**  
**Torture**  
(per cent of total population responding)

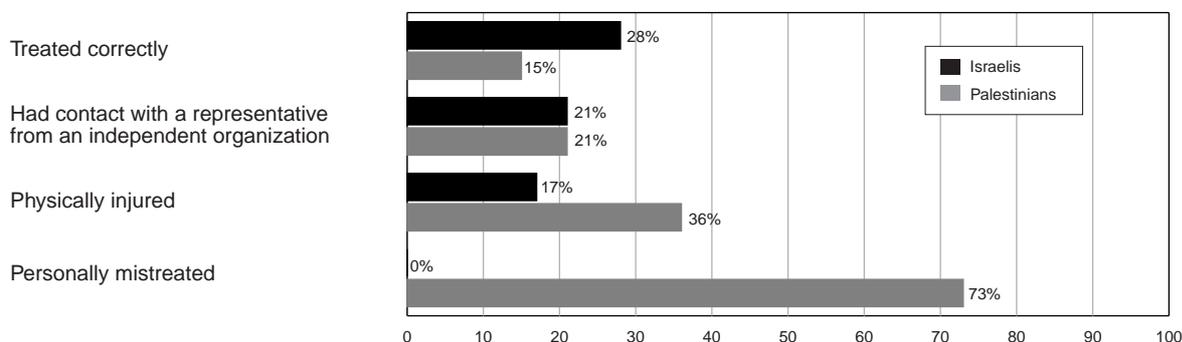


Question: Under what circumstances would it be acceptable to subject a prisoner to abuse?

For Palestinians, at least, the permissive attitude towards abuse of prisoners comes from their direct experience of the conflict. As indicated earlier, one-quarter say they were prisoners and three-quarters say they lived in areas that came under enemy control. Three-quarters of these Palestinian respondents report that they were mistreated (73 per cent); 36 per cent say they were physically injured. Only 21 per cent say they were allowed contact with a representative of an independent organization. (See Figure 8.)

<sup>11</sup> In addition, Israelis are somewhat more likely to accept torture when the question is asked specifically about what "your side" can do. Palestinians are somewhat less likely to accept torture when it is asked about "your side".

FIGURE 8

**While under enemy control**(per cent of those who were imprisoned or who lived under enemy control)<sup>12</sup>

Question: Please tell me if any of the following happened to you while under enemy control.

**The common gender gap**

The breakdown of the barriers protecting non-combatants under the pressure of this total conflict is most advanced for men in both the Israeli and Palestinian communities. Women are more cautious about giving in to the idea of war without limits. That “gender gap” can be found in almost every area of potential risk to civilians and treatment of prisoners.

To start with, the gap exists in principle. Among Israelis, only 30 per cent of men but 40 per cent of women say that combatants should attack only combatants and leave civilians alone — a difference of ten percentage points. Among Palestinians, the difference is four percentage points (39 per cent of men and 43 per cent of women).

The gap grows when it comes to a broad range of potential practices in war. Among the Palestinians, just 55 per cent of women think it is acceptable to use mortal remains to get something in exchange, compared with 70 per cent of men (15-point gap). Just 30 per cent of women would support attacking villages with large civilian populations, compared with 39 per cent of men (nine-point gap). The gap grows to 19 points on the use of landmines: 36 per cent of women support their use versus 55 per cent of men. Lastly, on the issue of torturing prisoners to gain information, 53 per cent of men would allow it, compared with 44 per cent of women (nine-point gap).

Among the Israelis, women are similarly inclined to reject these practices. Men are 12 points more likely to accept the use of mortal remains in order to get something in exchange (61 per cent, compared with 49 per cent of women), nine points more likely to accept attacks on populated villages or towns (47 to 38 per cent), and 14 points more likely to support the destruction of the houses of people accused of misdeeds (64 to 50 per cent). Men are also more likely to accept the use of landmines to block the enemy, even if civilians end up being hurt (71 to 60 per cent, an 11-point gap). Lastly, a majority of Israeli men (51 per cent) accept torture to gain information, but only 38 per cent of Israeli women would countenance such treatment (13-point gap). Gender roles matter in these two very different societies, pushing women to be more protective of limits and men to be more open to breaching them.

<sup>12</sup> The number of Israelis who reported that they were imprisoned or lived under enemy control is 13.

## Explaining the erosion of limits

The total conflict that Israelis and Palestinians have endured for more than 50 years has left these two peoples prepared to relax many of the limits in war that might otherwise protect civilians and prisoners. Both have gone down this path, despite moral codes and religious teachings that say war must have limits. How do we explain the failure of these tenets to maintain the limits in the Israeli-Arab and Palestinian conflicts? On this question, Palestinians and Israelis offer radically different explanations.

### Palestinian responses

For the Palestinians, the explanation of the erosion of limits lies in the character and behaviour of their enemy in this conflict. Although Palestinians are guided by religious convictions that set limits, the rules are set aside in light of what they see as a total Israeli commitment to realize their goals by waging a war, which, in Palestinian eyes, has few restraints with regard to civilians.

*The total commitment of Israelis.* Palestinians see themselves involved in conflict with a society that is totally mobilized and committed to achieving its ends: "Ninety per cent of the Israeli society consists of soldiers and reserves." (FG, wives of detainees, Ramallah) "The Israelis are known to be 90 per cent military, even if they did not wear the military uniform. It is hard to make a difference." (IDI, ex-detainee, Gaza) "We look at the Israeli people, they are all fighters, they all join the army." (IDI, ID confiscated, West Bank) "The Jews, even their women, are trained." (IDI, old man, Tel Aviv)

The Palestinians see generations of Israeli society who have committed themselves over a half century to the total exclusion of the Palestinians from the land:

The Israeli combatants can be also categorized into three generations. First, the religion generation that took its beliefs from the Old [Testament] and claimed that this is their land which covers the Nile to Furat, as written on their temple, and that if they kill a Palestinian, they would go to heaven. The second generation is the businessmen who came to Israel to invest and to kick the Palestinians out from their land. The third category is the volunteers who were 14 or 15 years old and came to Palestine to take the land from their owners. (FG, returnees, Gaza)

[When] the Jew goes to the testament school, they teach them that the Old Testament says, "The Jews entered Bethlehem and killed everyone." The Jews entered Jericho and killed everyone and the same in Jerusalem and Hebron. They believe that killing Palestinians is a holy thing, and they even don't apply the ten commandments except to Jews. (FG, returnees, Gaza)

This is a policy that they follow to occupy as much land as possible. They destroyed many villages and forced people to leave it, then returned to it and built it again... They want the land to be free from Arabs. They knock down the houses of those who throw stones. Nobody can stop them. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

The total engagement and sweeping goals lead Israelis, according to the Palestinian discussions, to wage a total war on the ground: "They killed our children and knocked down our houses and took our land." (FG, female teachers, Ramallah) As a Palestinian injured during the war observed, "In one bullet, they would not differentiate between a military or civilian or an elderly or a woman." (IDI, war-wounded, Gaza)

Palestinians believe they must respond in a total way to what they see as a total assault on their society. One of the teachers concluded, "When they knock down our houses, occupy our land, close our schools and prevent us from teaching our children, then we have to fight the enemy in every possible way." (FG, female teachers, Ramallah) The injured Palestinian declared, "In such a case, I would be forced to treat them the same way. I am waiting for us to have an army in order to fight." (IDI, war-wounded, Gaza) Basically, Palestinians believe they are engaged in a conflict that requires pushing the limits aside.

Our conflict is old and tough and is not restricted on borders or battlefields. Our conflict is expressed by daily fighting with the settlers and soldiers from the other party. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

Attack civilians is an available tool to pressure those who occupied our land, and whatever is done in this regard is legitimate, although I might feel sorry for a child who is hurt in a different part of the world. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

Our struggle turned to attacking civilians because at the start the Israelis wanted to empty out our country from its people. All civilians are combatants, and all combatants are civilians. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

Sometimes we have to kill innocent people, but the occupation forced us to do so. (FG, wives of detainees, Ramallah)

*The unequal conflict.* The Palestinians see themselves engaged in a conflict in which they stand almost powerless before a great power. A student depicted a "Palestinian child" who "for seven years defied the tank with a stone". (FG, young people, Gaza) When you are fighting with almost no weapons against a country, then you have to use whatever means are available.

The Arab countries don't support us enough, and we have no weapons. We have no country on our land, and therefore the only thing we can do is to attack them and their civilians till they comply with our demands. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

We have no army, and we rely on our people to do the job. Any tool that is available should be taken advantage of. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

Our problem is that our war was never [been] classic. I mean it was never an army against an army. Therefore, the fight was never balanced. When we used to fight in the streets, we used to use stones against their weapons, and there was no balance... [Therefore] any Israeli living in the settlements is a combatant, and therefore I have the right to fight him whether they were children or women or old people because they were located here for a clear fundamentalist political reason. (FG, wives of detainees, Ramallah)

In an in-depth interview, a preacher at a mosque declared that combatants must not kill children and women, but only "if the armies were equal". (IDI, preacher in mosque, Gaza)

*Israelis don't accept limits.* It is taken as fact among the Palestinians that Israelis do not believe in the distinction between combatants and civilians and do not accept the Geneva Conventions. The Israelis, in their view, are shaping the rules of this war, which allows combatants to do almost anything.

The Arab-Israeli war was classic, and it was subject to [the] Geneva Conventions in a way or another, while the Israeli enemy does not recognize the Geneva Conventions and does not recognize the right of prisoners and civilians whose land and water were occupied. (FG, returnees, Gaza)

The Israelis never complied with the law and used to barge in our houses to search them. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

They gave themselves the right to use any way to control the situation. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

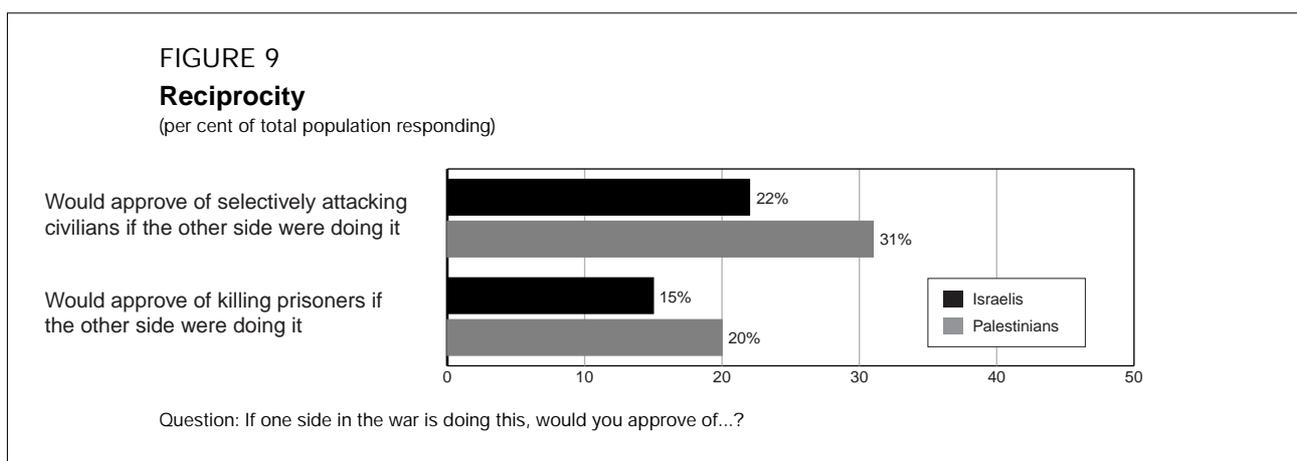
International agreements stipulate that the innocent should not be fought and, on the contrary, the Israeli occupation did not distinguish between civilians and militants... They would use the stick to break the limbs of the innocent Palestinian. (IDI, ambulance driver, West Bank)

In the extreme case, Palestinians believe, Israelis have allowed massacres of Palestinians, without any law coming into play to punish the wrongdoers.

The Israeli occupation killed innocent children; they would enter the houses. In the Der Yassin massacre, they entered the houses and killed innocent children. (IDI, ambulance driver, West Bank)

The massacres history will not forgive. How can we forget these massacres, like Sabra and Shatila, for example. (IDI, ID confiscated, West Bank)

*Reciprocity.* While a majority of Israelis and Palestinians reject the idea of reciprocity in war, there are significant minorities in both communities that would kill prisoners or selectively attack civilians if the other side were doing it. Among Palestinians surveyed, one in five support the killing of prisoners (20 per cent) and one in three support selectively attacking civilians (31 per cent) in retaliation for similar actions by the other side. Among Israelis surveyed, 15 per cent support killing prisoners and 22 per cent attacking civilians. This makes reciprocity a strong principle in this conflict. (See Figure 9.)



In the focus groups, many Palestinians resisted the idea of attacking civilians: "I find attacking children and women something disgusting." (FG, female teachers, Ramallah) Yet, a large proportion of the respondents felt that "sometimes it is [a] natural reaction in war to take revenge for my child that was killed in war and kill a soldier on the other side." For many, attacking in revenge is "dependent on the level of

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18 suffering I feel.” (FG, female teachers, Ramallah) Many of the participants described graphic experiences that, in their mind, warranted some kind of reciprocal action.

When I see an Israeli soldier standing on a child’s neck in Bethlehem, I would be very happy when I see an Israeli child getting the same. It is not that I don’t respect humans, but I feel very happy when I see their children bleeding and their parents weeping on them. They are attacking civilians at home, and therefore I would be very happy if our combatants take revenge... It is natural to react. (FG, female teachers, Ramallah)

Nothing is forbidden because their acts are usually a counteraction to what the enemy had done earlier. (FG, young people, Gaza)

From my point of view, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. We want to deprive their children from freedom exactly as they deprived our children from freedom. I should use the same means that the Israeli is using against me. When a Jew breaks into an elementary school and starts shooting left and right at children and mutilates them, his aim would be to make the next generation of Palestinians incapable... [Then], why should I allow that their next generation be a good one. I should treat them exactly like they treat me. (FG, young people, Gaza)

Because when they kill 500 POWs from my side, this means that they have destroyed 500 families who were hopeful to meet again with their relatives who were taken. To take revenge for those families, I kill their POWs. When the other side kills our POWs, I would immediately kill their POWs. Because whoever kills my brother, I kill his son. We don’t like bloodshed, but we are not less courageous. When they kill one of us, we kill one of them. How can I save him when he killed my brother or my father. I would definitely kill him, cut him to pieces and throw his body to the dogs. (FG, young people, Gaza)

“When my house is destroyed,” one Palestinian man observed, “the other side should understand that I have the right to get it back.” (IDI, war-wounded, Gaza). For the preacher, this is a point of principle in Islam that is operative in some circumstances: “Suppose an enemy is killing children and then you forbid yourself to kill children. Suppose the enemy is displacing people from their land and you do not do the same thing.” For these special circumstances — “and not in all circumstances” — Islam “generated” a “regime of reciprocity”. In this conflict, the circumstances sometimes justify extraordinary action: “Muslims must carry out any action that protects the blood of Muslims. If killing enemy prisoners deters the enemy from killing the Muslim prisoners, I agree.” (IDI, preacher in mosque, Gaza)

### **Israeli responses**

The Israeli answer to the question why the normative code has been set aside or amended centres on the legitimacy of the goals and institutions that seek to preserve a Jewish State on this land.

*Historical goals.* Israelis begin with the 2,000-year exile of Jews from Palestine and their return, which is taken to be the undisputed goal of the State. Israelis have joined this conflict to assert the goal and to defend the State that they have created. If certain actions advance that historical purpose, then there is a strong justification for them. This principle is reflected in what Israelis believe is permissible and not permissible in the comments below:

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If our soldiers go to war for a certain purpose, and they're confronted by towns and villages that supply our enemy with shelter and support, and if we must achieve the goals we set for ourselves, then it would be considered part of the war activities. (IDI, Holocaust survivor, Tel Aviv)

I think that personally I wouldn't want to get to the point where I start planting mines, but if the enemy must be stopped, then even the planting of mines is justified. As to the population — sometimes in war you're left with no choice. When fighting in a populated area, there's no other choice — in order to stay alive and save your country, you sometimes allow yourself to hurt civilians. (IDI, Holocaust survivor, Tel Aviv)

The principle operates in the converse as well: "If he killed as a soldier defending his country, then his soul was not corrupted, but if he also did things that weren't necessary for the defence of his country — like abusing captives, raping women, abusing children or whatever — then he corrupted his own soul, even if no one ever gets to know about it." (IDI, orthodox rabbi, Jerusalem)

An orthodox rabbi was very clear, "Whatever is essential for achieving the goals of the war is justified" — given the fundamental goal of this particular war. If the politicians choose to have the civilian population taking "part in the fighting, then they should add it to the goals of the war". (IDI, orthodox rabbi, Jerusalem) That logic, guided by the compelling goals that motivate the war, produces direct consequences for civilians:

[One] of my goals when going to war, besides crushing the enemy's army, is to hold on to this territory. So one of the goals of the war would be to settle my own people in this territory, and sometimes it would even be justified to expel, or conduct a population exchange in this regard. If this is done just in order to harm the enemy's civilian population, then it will be categorized as wrong. But as a part of the justified goals of the war — and every case should be examined separately — it's no doubt justified. (IDI, orthodox rabbi, Jerusalem)

*The whole Palestinian society is involved.* Former Israeli soldiers, in particular, felt like they were fighting a people, a whole society. They say they were fighting "the people", "everybody". (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv) One of the senior officers observed, "It's a modern war, everybody's involved — children, women, the elderly." (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv) In the context of the *intifada*, soldiers found themselves in conflict with the Palestinian youth as a whole, joined together by their common grievance: "All those taking part in the fighting are youngsters whose parents were humbled or whose families were personally hurt in one way or another." (FG, former conscripts, Tel Aviv)

In this total context, soldiers and civilians in Israel accept that civilians readily become a part of the battle — at least on the Palestinian side. If civilians provide information to their fighters or if they voluntarily provide food and shelter, then they are legitimate targets: "Of course, they must be attacked... After all, if they are against us and they provided important information, then of course we must." (IDI, settler, Tel Aviv) When whole communities are involved in the struggle, then one may act to deprive the civilian population of essentials: "I believe it is... it depends on where the war is being waged. If the entire population is like people in Nablus, then of course they must be deprived of everything." (IDI, settler, Tel Aviv)

In an in-depth interview, a settler sees a Palestinian society that is totally engaged and committed to battle against the Israelis:

With regard to the Palestinian people — the so-called Palestinian people — under Israeli occupation, there's no doubt that the whole society is involved without exception... I still see their society as being totally mobilized without exception, just as an army reservist, I could see eight-year-olds readily throwing stones and glass at you without thinking about it... (IDI, settler, Shiloh)

That total conflict is rooted, according to the settler, in the all-consuming goals that the sides bring to the conflict: "Israel isn't interested in conquering the Arab countries, and our conflict with the Palestinians isn't only a conflict over territory either. It's a conflict of identity, and the negation of the other side." (IDI, settler, Shiloh)

*Reciprocity.* Though they resist reciprocity as a principle, soldiers in the field speak of "retaliation" as a normal part of achieving law and order in the territories. Indeed, acts of terror in Israel seem to broaden how soldiers can respond in dealing with the Palestinian population: "It ought to work for both sides, and when the Palestinians plant bombs in buses full of civilians, when the Palestinians indiscriminately kill civilians, women and children, it's a very serious offence." (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv) Israeli soldiers carry "around a lengthy booklet of rules" but, "as far as we know... the Palestinians don't have such a booklet of rules." (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

The civilian population in Kiryat Shmona, frequently under bombardment from across the Lebanese border, were also looking for evidence that combatants and civilians on the other side share their pain about civilian casualties in the war. Belief that there are reciprocal limitations is important as civilians weigh the relevance of their own codes and norms:

Because when we hear about these things on TV, it hurts just as much as if it had happened to us. But we don't know if they're sorry when these things happen to us, and I'm sure they're not. I'm sure that they don't mind when our civilians are killed, but we are sensitive to their losses after all. (FG, inhabitants, Kiryat Shmona)

Pardon me, I have a very important question. Why is it that when we raid Lebanon or anything like that, we always make sure that the civilians evacuate the place, so why don't they think about us? Why don't they care if a bomb falls on us? They don't care if little children are in the house. (FG, inhabitants, Kiryat Shmona)

I think that in this case we have very mixed emotions, because if the enemy allows himself to attack civilians, then I sometimes say: "Damn it, why shouldn't we attack civilians as well?" But it's a guerrilla war, when they launch their bombs they're amid a civilian population, these are innocent civilians who have nothing to do with it. But when I'm mad and angry about things that happen — I ask why, why shouldn't they be attacked? Why? Why are they different from us? (FG, inhabitants, Kiryat Shmona)

In the absence of evidence that Palestinians draw firm distinctions between combatants and civilians, some Israelis come to question their own commitment to such distinctions.

*The legitimacy of the State.* Israelis enter this discourse believing that the State — including the elected leaders, the military, the law and the courts — is legitimate. The decisions they make are presumed to be correct, even if they seem to conflict with a literal reading of the norms. Political and military leaders and judges weigh the ultimate goals of the State and threats to its existence and decide

what policies are appropriate. Not many Israelis in these discussions were ready to question these decisions.

For the soldiers, the decision-makers have a presumed legitimacy that allows many of them to accept the apparent disjunction with their personal, moral-ethical code. Soldiers believe the authorities are in the proper position to make such judgements, and thus it is not up to them to agonize over the divergence between principle and practice.

The soldiers are sent out on this task by their country's legitimate government and they're expected to fulfil the task as well as they can, while trying to maintain human dignity. (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

I don't accept that punishment must be selective and never collective. Each such case is examined thoroughly. And the matter of tearing down houses goes all the way up to the Defense Minister, in terms of authorization... as high as the Supreme Court. (FG, retired senior officers, Tel Aviv)

There are rules for opening fire, rules that cannot be arbitrarily violated. This is a law. (IDI, member of a kibbutz, Tel Aviv)

One former soldier pointed to the court decision involving the commander of the *Shayetet* (marine commando unit), who killed a bound prisoner of war: "They declared certain situations exist within combat in which a commander is permitted to kill people, and he is not punished and does not stand trial. On the contrary, he even gets decorated for it." (IDI, member of a kibbutz, Tel Aviv)

The Israeli State and the IDF have such a high standing and legitimacy in the eyes of the Israeli population that there is a great reluctance to believe that they would put civilians at risk or breach the normative limits without sound reasons. The Israeli public gives them a great deal of space to operate, and thus avoids questioning the erosion of the code:

[Destroying a house] They deserve it. The IDF doesn't do things for no reason. (FG, inhabitants, Kiryat Shmona)

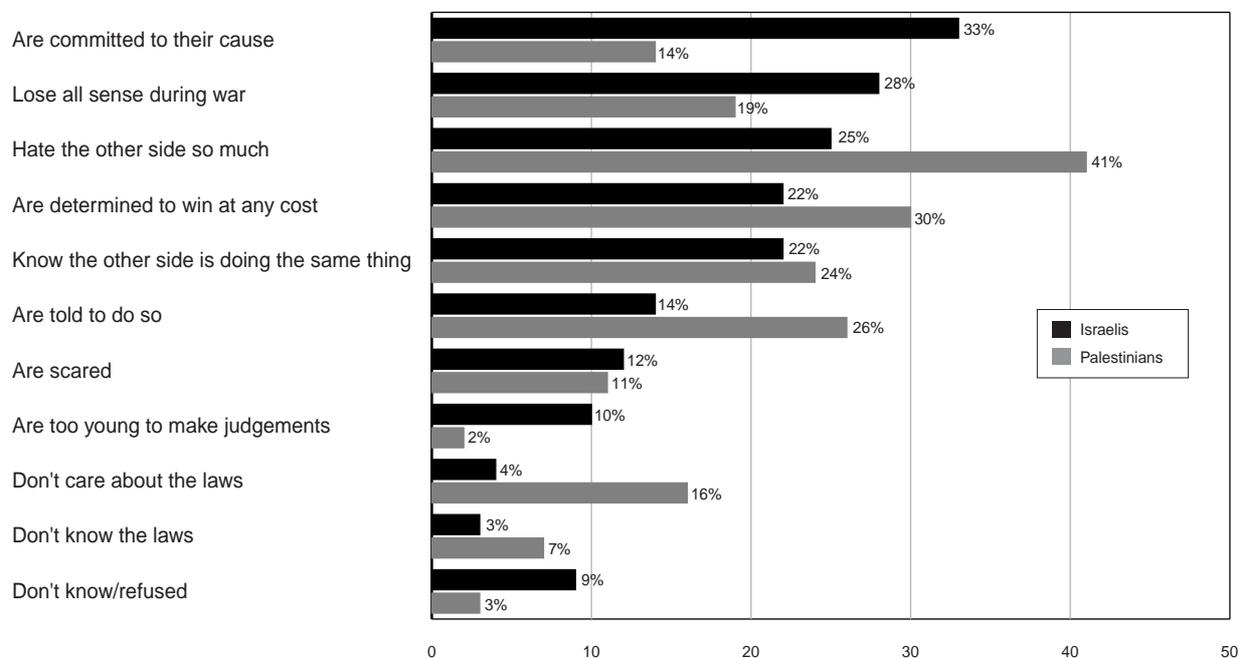
During the war, we blow up houses. It was completely legal... Houses were not destroyed unless there was a warrant. It was absolutely legal. (IDI, member of a kibbutz, Tel Aviv)

*A decision to strike broadly to achieve national goals.* Israelis are able to accept the erosion of limits because they think the government made a decision to impose law and order in the territories. That decision requires Israeli soldiers to strike broadly against the civilian population. According to the survey, Israelis do not think civilians have come under attack because soldiers have gone out of control. The moral-ethical tenets have not been breached because combatants have lost all sense, given in to base instincts, fallen too much under the influence of drink or drugs, or because child soldiers have been allowed to wield weapons and endanger adults. The tenets are under siege because of the character of this conflict.

When asked why combatants would attack or hurt civilians, even when norms and laws say it is wrong, 28 per cent do point to combatants losing all sense during war. Another 25 per cent mention the hate that people feel for the other group. (The Palestinians believe that hate is the most decisive factor, with 41 per cent mentioning it.) But the main explanation for Israelis is the strong commitment to national goals: 33 per cent say people compromise the rules because they are committed to their cause; 22 per

22 cent say it is because combatants are determined to win at any cost; another 14 per cent say it is because they are told to do so. Almost one-quarter of Israelis (22 per cent) focus on reciprocity — because the other side is doing the same thing.

**FIGURE 10**  
**Why combatants attack civilians**  
 (per cent of total population responding) (top two responses)



Question: Which *two* of the following reasons best explain why soldiers and fighters attack or hurt civilians, even though many people say it is not okay and maybe against the law. Is it because they...?

For Israelis, the willingness to lower the barriers protecting civilians has a rational or purposeful quality. No one in the in-depth research spoke of combatants' behaviour as random or emotional or motivated by animosities. Sometimes people spoke of soldiers scared for their lives, but that was not offered as a general explanation. Repeatedly in the focus groups, participants mentioned Prime Minister Rabin's general directive with respect to the *intifada*: "Break their bones!"

That official sanction gets assimilated into the actions of soldiers, as evident in the words of this kibbutz soldier:

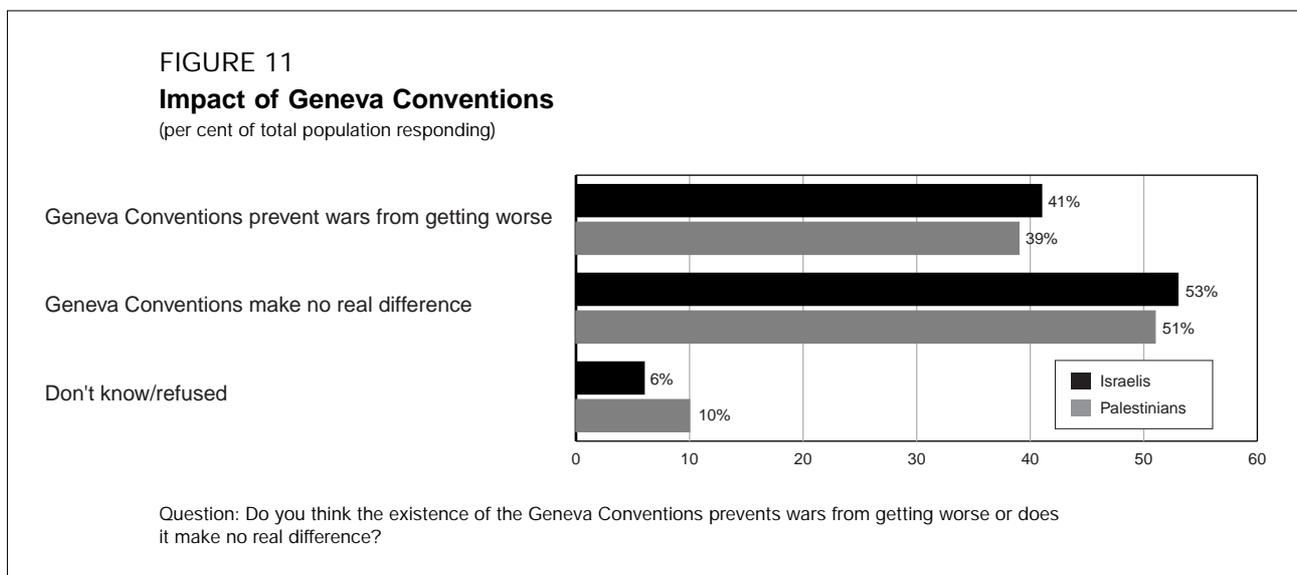
[When] you are chasing after 15-year-old kids who are throwing stones when you are dispersing a demonstration. When you chase and grab them and you are sweating — it may be compared with a child's game: "Are we or are we not allowed to hit them?" We can say that it is not allowed. Rabin, rest his soul, said: "We should break their bones." So I can not say it is not allowed to hit, I did it myself. When I grabbed that 15-year-old kid who threw stones, after I ran after him and finally grabbed him, I hit him. (IDI, member of a kibbutz, Tel Aviv)

## The limited scope of international conventions

International conventions or the rules of war play a limited role in the consciousness of both Palestinians and Israelis. In this protracted conflict that has blurred the lines between civilians and combatants, the publics on both sides know little about the Geneva Conventions and are sceptical that such rules could really prevent things from getting worse.

Israelis have heard of the Geneva Conventions (89 per cent), though 38 per cent give an inaccurate description of them. Fully 27 per cent say they have something to do with human rights or civil rights. Those who describe the Geneva Conventions correctly focus almost entirely on the Conventions' mandate to protect prisoners (43 per cent). Only around 20 per cent mention provisions that set limits in war or protect civilians. This focus was very apparent in the reflections of an Israeli who had been held prisoner by the Egyptians: "Look, I must say that I once read the Geneva Conventions. After I was captured, it interested me. I don't remember what else it mentioned there besides prisoners of war." (IDI, former prisoner of war, Tel Aviv) In contrast, fewer Palestinians (two-thirds) have heard of the Geneva Conventions, though 68 per cent of these give an inaccurate description.

When told that the "Geneva Conventions are a series of international treaties that impose limits in war by describing some rules of war", Palestinians and Israelis remain equally cautious about their efficacy. Only about 40 per cent of each think they prevent wars from getting worse. (See Figure 11.)

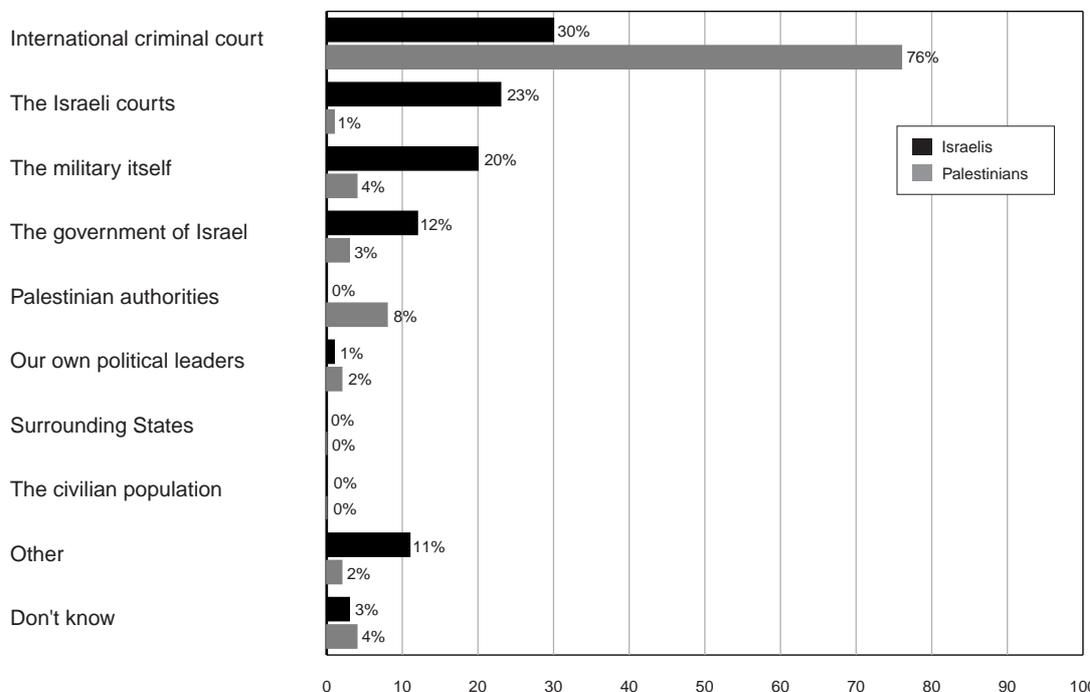


### War crimes

In the context of the Israeli-Arab conflict, including the Palestinian conflict, the public here supports the concept of war crimes and trials of wrongdoers, though significant minorities are unsure. For example, about three-quarters of Israelis agree that some rules are so important that, if broken during war, the person who broke them should be punished; and two-thirds of these respondents would put the wrongdoers on trial. But that means only half of Israelis accept *both* the concept of war crimes *and* putting the wrongdoers on trial. The level of support among Palestinians for war crimes is also somewhat constrained, compared with other populations surveyed by the ICRC. Just 61 per cent say there are crimes so serious that the perpetrators should be punished, though 83 per cent of these would put them on trial. Still, only about half of Palestinians — comparable to the level of Israelis — accept both the concept of crimes and trials.

Both Palestinians and Israelis accept that the prosecution of violators is based on international law, but the similarities end there: 76 per cent of Palestinians would make an international criminal court responsible for punishing the wrongdoers, but only 30 per cent of Israelis would do so. Instead, Israelis would look to the military (20 per cent) or the Israeli courts and government (35 per cent). (See Figure 12.)

**FIGURE 12**  
**Who should punish wrongdoers?**  
 (per cent of total population responding)



Question: If these rules are broken in war who should be responsible for punishing the wrongdoers?

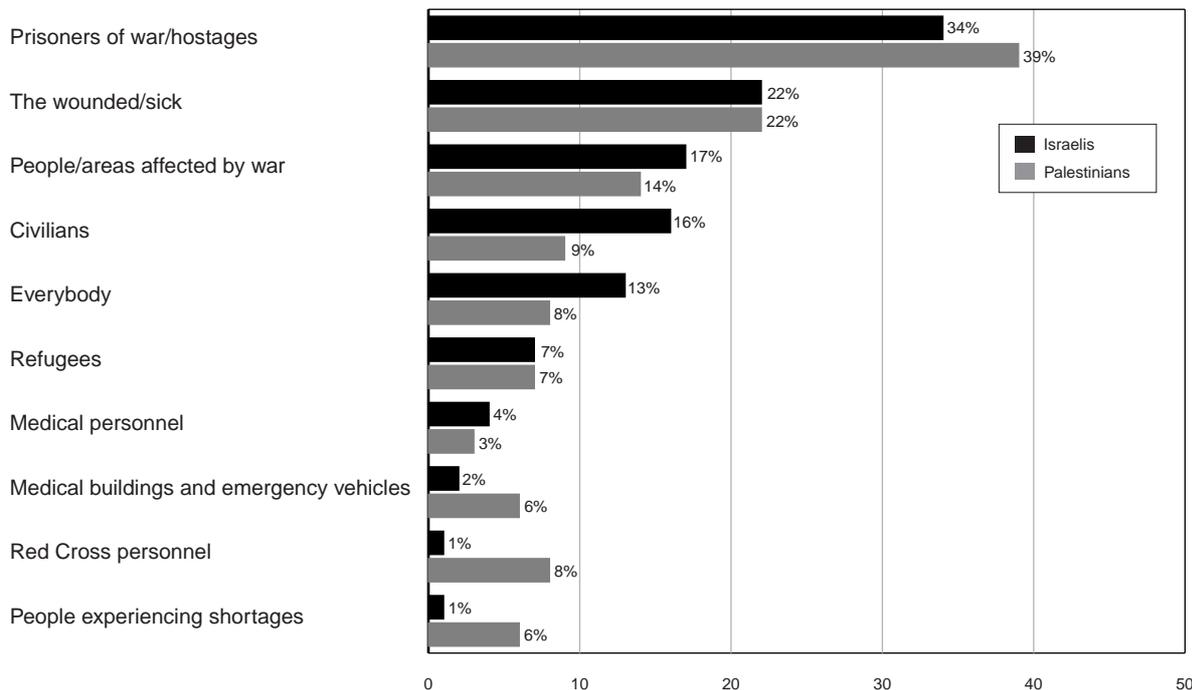
**Protection**

The role of the ICRC with respect to the protection of prisoners is widely accepted among Israelis and Palestinians. When respondents accept that independent representatives must be allowed to visit prisoners, the representative of choice is the ICRC: 83 per cent of Israelis and 90 per cent of Palestinians. (Human rights group representatives are the second choice for both publics.) Among those Palestinians who were imprisoned and visited during the conflict, 79 per cent say it was by a representative of the ICRC. In fact, when shown the red cross emblem, over 80 per cent of Palestinians and 90 per cent of Israelis say they are familiar with it, and the largest number associate it with protecting prisoners of war and hostages (39 per cent of Palestinians and 34 per cent of Israelis), followed by helping the wounded and sick (22 per cent of each). (See Figure 13.)

When thinking more broadly about helping those in need during the conflict, the ICRC is seen to play a less dominant role. For the Palestinians, it was, above all, the UN that played the biggest role (65 per cent) — likely reflecting its role with the refugee population. After that, Palestinians credit religious leaders with playing a large role (41 per cent), followed by the ICRC (30 per cent). Israelis, on the other hand, say international humanitarian organizations (36 per cent), Israeli soldiers (33 per cent), the ICRC (31 per cent) and the MDA (12 per cent) played the largest roles. (See Figure 14.)

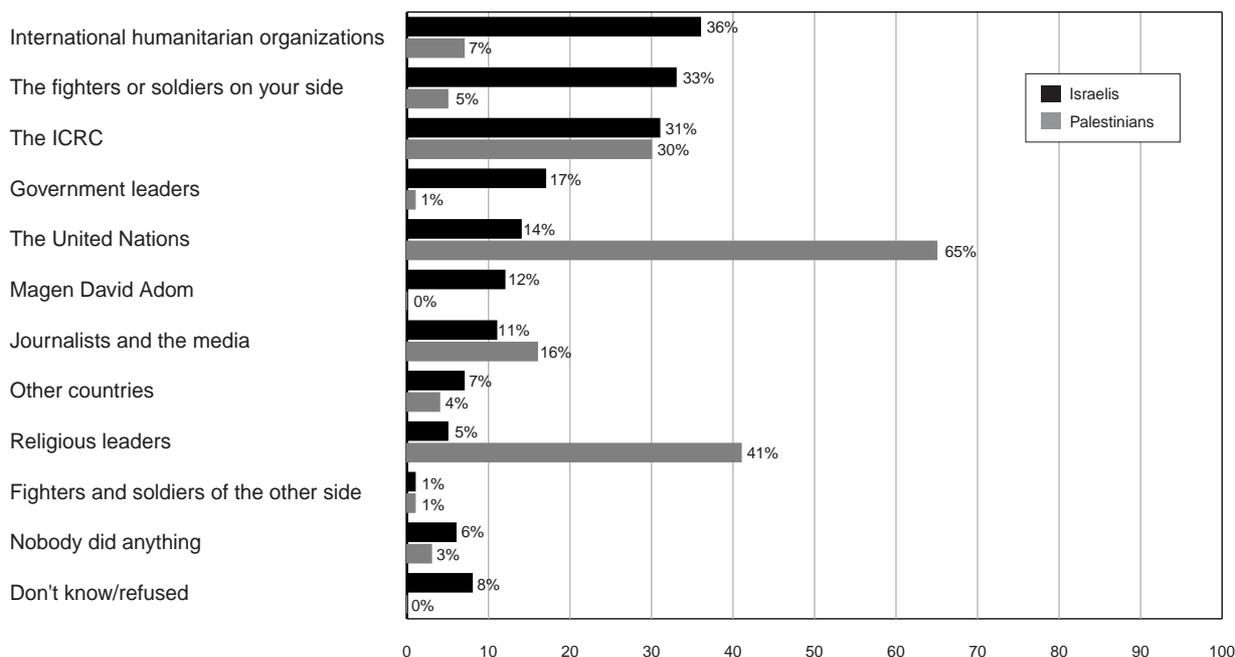
If civilian areas came under attack or if villages are cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity, Palestinians would turn to the ICRC/Red Cross for protection (53 per cent), followed by UN

**FIGURE 13**  
**Red Cross and protection**  
 (per cent of total population responding)



Question: What kind of people or things does this symbol (red cross) protect?

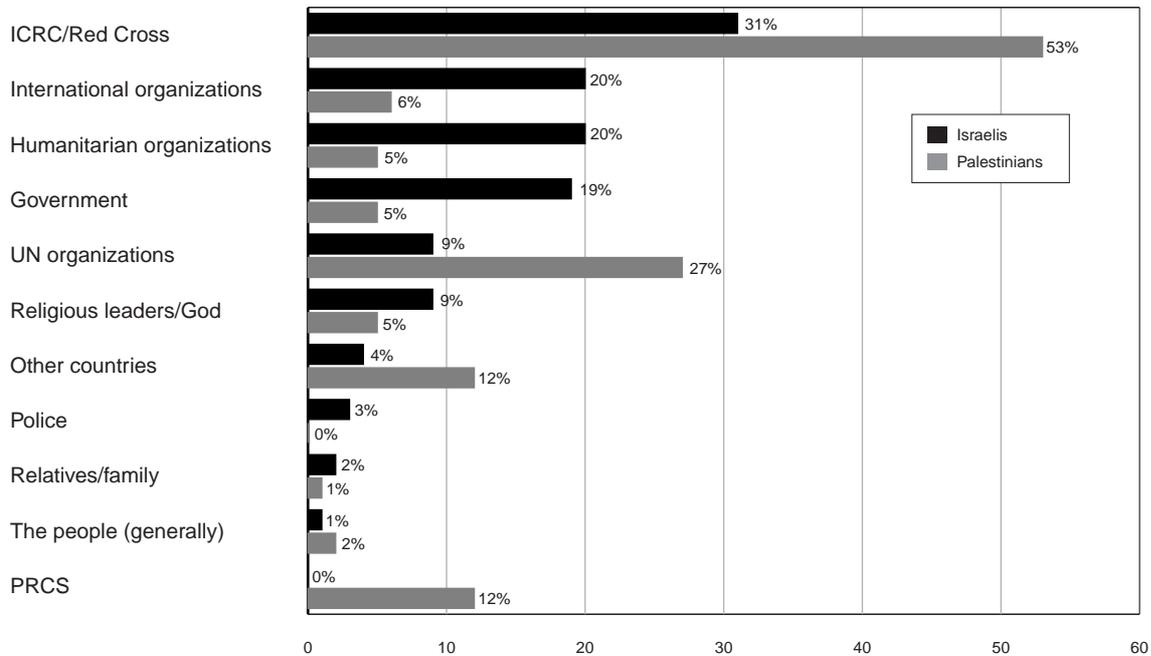
**FIGURE 14**  
**Biggest role**  
 (per cent of total population responding) (top two responses)



Question: Please tell me which *two* of these organizations have played the biggest role during the Israeli-Arab conflict, including the Palestinian conflict, to stop civilian areas from being attacked or cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity.

26 organizations (27 per cent). Among Israelis, a smaller number would turn to the ICRC/Red Cross (31 per cent), though for them no other organization plays a bigger protective role. Twelve per cent of Palestinians also say they would turn to the PRCS. Israelis would not turn to the UN but to other international (20 per cent) and humanitarian (20 per cent) organizations and their own government (19 per cent). (See Figure 15.)

**FIGURE 15**  
**Turn to for help**  
 (per cent of total population responding)



Question: Let me ask what can be done if, during the Israeli-Arab conflict, including the Palestinian conflict, civilian areas are attacked, towns or villages being cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity. To whom would you turn to get help or be protected?

The length of the conflict, the ups and downs of the peace process and the total character of the conflict have left both Israelis and Palestinians cautious about the ability of nations and people to limit the scope of war.

## Annex 1: General methodology

The ICRC's worldwide consultation on the rules of war, which is the cornerstone of the People on War project, was carried out in 12 countries that have been ravaged by war over the past decades. In each case, the ICRC conducted a public opinion survey with a representative sample of the country's population and organized in-depth interviews and focus groups with those involved in or directly affected by the conflict.

For comparative purposes, the views of people were also sought in France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States on the basis of the opinion survey only.

The consultation was based on three principal research methods:

- A survey of 1,000 (in some cases 1,500) respondents representative of the country's general population;
- Focus groups (between 8 and 12 depending on the country) allowing a professionally moderated and intensive discussion in small groups;
- In-depth, face-to-face interviews (about 20 in each country) with individuals with specific war experiences.

In almost every case, the ICRC and local Red Cross or Red Crescent staff conducted the interviews, organized the focus groups, including recruitment of participants, and helped with translation/interpreting. Greenberg Research, with a local partner company, developed the sample design for the survey, processed data in electronic form, provided moderators and prepared transcripts.

### Opinion survey

*Questionnaire.* The opinion survey questioned people on their war experiences and views on international humanitarian law. The survey was mainly standardized for all countries, though the wording was modified to reflect each context and to achieve consistent meaning. About 10 per cent of the questions were contextual and in many cases unique to the country. In an additional five countries, the questionnaire was designed to elicit people's perceptions on war and humanitarian law.

The questionnaires were developed by Greenberg Research, in consultation with the ICRC, on the basis of interviews with humanitarian law experts in the United States and Europe. The survey and questions were pre-tested in Mozambique and Colombia.

*Sample design.* In each country, interviews were held with 1,000 to 1,500 respondents, selected by a stratified, multistage cluster sampling method. The sample was stratified to ensure representation (500 interviews) from each of the principal conflict-affected geographic areas or ethnic/religious groups. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, this meant some 1,500 interviews (500 from Republika Srpska and 500 each from the Bosniac and Croat areas of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina); in Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, this meant 1,000 interviews (500 in Israel and 500 in the occupied territories and the autonomous territories). These areas were divided into urban and rural geographic units (strata), to ensure representation of urban and rural populations.

The local partner randomly selected small geographic units within these strata. These units – 100 to 200 in each country – constituted the sampling points for the survey. In each geographic unit, 10 households (though fewer in some countries) were selected using a random route method appropriate to

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the country. In some cases, interviewers were provided with a map and a route; in others, interviewers were simply given a route and selection instructions.

Within households, respondents were selected using a Kish grid (a respondent selection key that employs a combination of random numbers, alphabet codes and the number of available members in a household to identify the appropriate respondent) or the birthday criterion (a respondent selection process that employs dates of birth to determine the appropriate respondent). Interviewers were to make three attempts to achieve a completed interview, including locating the respondent elsewhere. In nearly every country, non-response was below 10 per cent.

The demographic distribution of the surveyed respondents was compared with the best available census data on education, age, household type and occupation. Where the sample survey was sharply askew (e.g., too many college-educated or too many young respondents), statistical weights were applied to eliminate the bias.

Interviews carried out by phone reached 755 adults in France, 1,000 in Switzerland, 750 in the United Kingdom and 1,000 in the United States, and 1,000 face-to-face interviews were carried out in the Russian Federation.

*Survey administration.* In nearly all the countries, the survey was administered by the ICRC, with the assistance of Greenberg Research and a local research partner. Interviews were conducted by Red Cross or Red Crescent staff. Greenberg Research provided training, which typically took two days.

*Parallel research.* In three of the countries – Colombia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Philippines – Greenberg Research commissioned a parallel quantitative survey, administered by a local research company using professional interviewers, in order to identify patterns of bias. The results of the parallel studies were then compared with the results of the ICRC-administered surveys. The exercise found only a few areas of systematic bias. Those interviewed by the ICRC and Red Cross or Red Crescent staff, for example, were consistently more supportive of the ICRC's role and more aware of the Geneva Conventions and the rules of war. However, the parallel research found few systematic differences in opinions on international humanitarian law. The ICRC results closely resemble the parallel survey results on most other questions. (A technical report assessing the parallel research and Red Cross bias is available separately.)

### **In-depth research**

*Focus groups.* The focus groups provided a relatively unstructured environment for people to discuss their war experiences freely, express their views on the appropriate limits to war and consider possible actions against those who exceed them. To be effective, the groups had to be as homogeneous as possible, that is, the participants all had to have similar characteristics. Thus, in general, the participants in a group came from the same area, were all male or all female and shared an important experience (e.g., families of missing persons, ex-soldiers, ex-fighters, prisoners, teachers or journalists). The discussions were frequently intense and emotional and provide a rich commentary on how the public approaches these issues.

In each country, 8 to 12 focus groups were organized – four in each of the principal conflict areas. The participants were recruited by Red Cross or Red Crescent staff, based on guidelines provided by Greenberg Research. The local research company provided a professional moderator, who facilitated the discussions using guidelines prepared by Greenberg Research.

The discussions were held in focus-group facilities, school classrooms, hotel rooms and even in the open air, if, for example, they involved guerrilla fighters. ICRC, Red Cross/Red Crescent and

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Greenberg Research staff observed and listened to the discussions from an adjoining location, with simultaneous translation in English. The focus group discussions were recorded and later transcribed in English.

*In-depth interviews.* To help interpret the full meaning of the survey responses, about 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who had had specific war experiences. The in-depth interview guidelines repeated questions from the public opinion survey, although they allowed for open-ended, rather than categorized responses. Interviewers were encouraged to probe and follow up on responses.

The in-depth interviews involved a broad range of people – officers, medical personnel, students (secondary school and university), journalists, former combatants, refugees, displaced persons, family members of missing persons, war invalids and others.

The interviews were recorded on tape, transcribed and translated into English by the local partner.

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## Annex 2: Questionnaire\*

### Introduction

We are doing a series of interviews on **[NAME OF COUNTRY]** and would like your help with that. Would it be possible to ask a few questions to the person who is 18 years or older and whose birthday is **[FIRST AFTER TODAY]**? **[IF NECESSARY: The interview will take about 30 minutes.]** The questions are about your experiences and opinions on the [war/armed conflict] in **[NAME OF COUNTRY OR REGION]**. Your identity will remain absolutely confidential.

Let me begin by asking you some questions about yourself to make sure we are talking to all kinds of people. If you don't want to answer, feel free to tell me so and we will move on to the next question.

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

[Don't know/refused]

2. How many years of school have you had? \_\_\_\_\_ years

[Don't know/refused]

3. What is your current family situation?

Married (have a husband or wife)

Single

Live together with someone (in a permanent relationship)

Divorced (or separated)

Spouse of missing person

Widow(er)

[Don't know/refused]

4. Do you have children? **[FOLLOW UP IF "YES"]** How many?

No children

Yes \_\_\_ children

5. What is your job now or are you not working?

Farmer

Manual worker

Skilled worker

Self-employed

Housewife/home care

Soldier (combatant)

Government employee

Private sector employee

Teacher/professor/intellectual

Pensioner/retired

Unemployed (but looking for work)

Unemployed (not looking for work)

Student

Other **[SPECIFY]**

[Don't know/refused]

\* This questionnaire is the standard one used in the 12 countries affected by conflict in the last decades. Some contextual questions were added for specific countries. These do not figure here, but are reflected in the findings presented in each Country Report.

6. Let me ask about the war in [COUNTRY NAME]. Did the war take place in the area where you were living or did the war take place mainly somewhere else?

- Area where you were living → GO TO Q7  
 Somewhere else? → GO TO Q8  
 Both [Volunteered response] → GO TO Q8  
 [Don't know/refused]? → GO TO Q8

7. [IF "AREA WHERE YOU WERE LIVING" IN PREVIOUS QUESTION] Did you live in that area before the [war/armed conflict], move voluntarily, or were you forced to move? [PROBE IF RESPONDENT SAYS "THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ARMED CONFLICT"]

- Live in same area  
 Moved voluntarily  
 Forced to move  
 [Don't know/refused]

8. [ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS] During the [war/armed conflict], did you ever find yourself in a situation of being a combatant and carrying a weapon?

- Yes — combatant, carried weapon  
 No — not a combatant  
 [Don't know/refused]

9. [ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS] Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy? [PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]

[IF NO RESPONSE, GO TO Q11]

10. [IF RESPONDENT GIVES ANY RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS QUESTION] Could you tell me the main reason why they should not do that? Is that because...? [READ AND ROTATE]

- It's wrong → GO TO Q10a  
 It just causes too many problems → GO TO Q10b  
 [Don't know/refused] → GO TO Q11

[FOLLOW UP IF MORE THAN ONE REASON SELECTED] Which would be the main reason?

10a. [IF "IT'S WRONG"] When you say, it's wrong, is it primarily wrong because it is...? [READ AND ROTATE] [TWO RESPONSES ALLOWED]

- Against your religion  
 Against your personal code  
 Against the law  
 Against what most people here believe  
 Against your culture  
 Against human rights  
 Other [SPECIFY]  
 [Don't know/refused]

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32 10b. **[IF "IT JUST CAUSES TOO MANY PROBLEMS"]** When you say, it just causes too many problems, are you thinking it...? **[READ AND ROTATE] [TWO RESPONSES ALLOWED]**

- Produces too much hate and division
- Causes too much psychological damage
- Produces too much destruction
- Causes too much physical suffering
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Don't know/refused]

11. Which two of these words best describe the war for you personally? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

- Horrible
- Disruptive
- Humiliating
- Exciting
- Hateful
- Challenging
- Hopeful
- Confusing
- Uncertainty
- Powerless
- Remote
- [Don't know/refused]

**Note: Version used in countries where there are no clear sides for most of the population; for countries where there are sides, half the surveys will be asked Version A (without sided wording) and half Version B (with sided wording).**

12. Now I would like to ask you some *general* questions about how, in your view, combatants should behave in times of war.

**Version A:** When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they...? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

**Version B:** When combatants from your side attack to weaken the enemy, should they... ? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

- Attack enemy combatants and civilians
  - Attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible
- OR**
- Attack only enemy combatants and leave the civilians alone
  - [Don't know/refused]

**[FOLLOW-UP IF CONFUSION ABOUT YOUR/OTHER SIDE]** Just imagine that there is a side in the conflict that you support more than any other side.

**Note: in the next set of questions we will be randomly splitting the sample in two. Version 1 will be asked of one half and version 2 will be asked of the other half. If there are clear sides to the war, Version 1 coincides with Version A and Version 2 coincides with Version B. (This means there will always be two and exactly two versions of the questionnaire.)**

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Let me ask you about some things that combatants may do to weaken the enemy they are fighting against. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it, to weaken the enemy.

13. **Version 1:** Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy combatants. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them in order to weaken the enemy?

**Version 2:** Attacking civilians who were forced to give food and shelter to enemy combatants. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them in order to weaken the enemy?

- Okay  
 Not okay  
 [Don't know/refused]

14. **Version 1:** Attacking civilians who voluntarily transported ammunition for enemy combatants defending their town. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them to weaken the enemy?

**Version 2:** Attacking civilians who were forced to transport ammunition for enemy combatants defending their town. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them to weaken the enemy?

- Okay  
 Not okay  
 [Don't know/refused]

15. I will now describe some situations that may happen during a [war/armed conflict]. For each situation, I would like you to imagine that you are part of that situation. Tell me how you think you would behave if the decisions were completely up to you. Here comes the first imaginary situation.

**Version 1:** Would you save the life of a surrendering enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?

- Would save  
 Would not save  
 [Don't know/refused]

**Version 2:** Would you help a wounded enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?

- Would help  
 Would not help  
 [Don't know/refused]

Now I'm going to ask your opinion on some of the things combatants might do in times of [war/armed conflict].

- 16a. **Version A:** What about depriving the civilian population of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy?

**Version B:** What about depriving the civilian population on the other side of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy?

Is that wrong or just part of war?

- 
- Wrong
  - Part of war
  - Both [Volunteered response]
  - [Don't know/refused]

16b. **Version A:** Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

**Version B:** Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help your side weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

- Laws — can't do that
- No laws
- [Don't know/refused]

17a. **Version 1:** What about attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many civilians would be killed?

**Version 2:** What about attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many women and children would be killed?

Is that wrong or just part of war?

- Wrong
- Part of war
- Both [Volunteered response]
- [Don't know/refused]

17b. **Version A:** Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

**Version B:** Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help your side weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

- Laws — can't do that
- No laws
- [Don't know/refused]

18. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** What about attacking religious and historical monuments, in order to weaken the enemy. Is that wrong or just part of war?

- Wrong
  - Part of war
  - Both [Volunteered response]
  - [Don't know/refused]
-

19. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** What about taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange? Is that wrong or just part of war?

- Wrong  
 Part of war  
 Both [Volunteered response]  
 [Don't know/refused]

20. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** Now a question about the "protected areas". Do you think that these "protected areas" are a good or a bad idea?

- Good idea  
 Bad idea  
 [Don't know/refused]

21. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** Did the "protected areas" make it better or worse for civilians during the war, or did they make no difference?

- Better  
 Worse  
 No difference  
 [Don't know/refused]

22. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE] Version 1:** Did the "Peace support operation" make it better or worse for civilians during the war, or didn't it make any difference?

**Version 2:** Did the "Peace support operation" make it better or worse for you personally during the war, or didn't it make any difference?

- Better  
 Worse  
 No difference  
 [Don't know/refused]

**Version A:** Let me ask you about some other things that might happen during war to weaken the enemy. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it in order to weaken the enemy.

**Version B:** Let me ask you about some other things that your side might do to weaken the enemy during war. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it in order to weaken the enemy.

23. First, are there types of weapons that should just never be used during war? **[FOLLOW UP IF YES]** What types of weapons would you think of? **[CHECK RESPONSE BELOW] [DO NOT READ CHOICES] [MULTIPLE ANSWERS ALLOWED]**

- Landmines  
 Laser weapons  
 Napalm  
 Nuclear weapons  
 Chemical weapons  
 Cluster bombs

- 
- Other [SPECIFY]
  - No types of weapons allowed
  - [Don't know/refused]

24. **Version A:** Combatants planting landmines to stop the movement of enemy combatants, even though civilians may step on them accidentally. Is it okay or not okay to do that if it would weaken the enemy?

**Version B:** Combatants on your side planting landmines to stop the movement of enemy combatants, even though civilians may step on them accidentally. Is it okay or not okay to do that if it would weaken the enemy?

- Okay, if necessary
- Not okay
- [Don't know/refused]

25. In war, combatants sometimes attack or hurt civilians, even though many people say it is not okay and maybe against the law. So please tell me why you think combatants attack civilians anyway.

**[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

26. Which *two* of the following reasons best explain why combatants attack or hurt civilians, even though many people say it is not okay or maybe against the law. Is it because they...? **[READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES]** **[FOLLOW-UP IF MORE THAN TWO REASONS SELECTED]** Which would be the two main reasons?

- Don't care about the laws
- Hate the other side so much
- Are determined to win at any cost
- Lose all sense during war
- Are too young to make judgements
- Don't know the laws
- Are often under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Are scared
- Are told to do so
- Know the other side is doing the same thing
- [Don't know/refused]

27a. Now let me ask you how *captured combatants* should be treated.

**Version A:** Must a captured enemy combatant be allowed to contact relatives, or doesn't that have to be allowed?

**Version B:** Must your side allow a captured enemy combatant to contact relatives, or don't you have to allow that?

- Must allow
  - Don't have to allow
  - [Don't know/refused]
-

27b. **Version A:** Is it true that a captured enemy combatant cannot be subjected to torture to obtain important military information, or can captured combatants be subjected to torture?

**Version B:** Is it true that your side cannot subject a captured enemy combatant to torture to obtain important military information, or can you subject captured combatants to torture?

- Cannot subject  
 Can subject  
 [Don't know/refused]

27c. **Version A:** Must a captured enemy combatant be allowed a visit by a representative from an independent organization outside the prison or camp, or doesn't that have to be allowed?

**Version B:** Must your side allow a captured enemy combatant to be visited by a representative from an independent organization from outside the prison or camp, or don't you have to allow that?

- Must allow → GO TO Q27d  
 Don't have to allow → GO TO Q28  
 [Don't know/refused] → GO TO Q28

27d. **[IF "MUST ALLOW"]** Which of the following people should be allowed to visit captured enemy combatants...? **[READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES] [ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES]**

- International Committee of the Red Cross representatives  
 UN representatives  
 Human rights group representatives  
 Journalists  
 Religious clerics/ministers  
 Other **[SPECIFY]**  
 [Don't know/refused]

Once again, I want you to *imagine* yourself in the following situations and tell me what you think you would do if the decisions were completely up to you.

28. **Version A:** If one side in the war is killing prisoners, would you approve the killing of prisoners by the other side or would you not approve it?

**Version B:** If the other side in the war is killing prisoners, would you approve the killing of prisoners by your side or would you not approve it?

- Would approve  
 Would not approve  
 [Don't know/refused]

**[FOLLOW UP IF RESPONDENT PROTESTS]** Just imagine you happen to find yourself in this situation.

29. In general, do you ever think that captured enemy combatants deserve to die?

- Think deserve to die  
 No  
 [Don't know/refused]

30. Now I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during the war. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the [war/armed conflict] in [COUNTRY NAME]. **[READ AND ROTATE ORDER]**

	Happened	Did not happen	Don't know/ refused
Forced to leave your home and live elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Imprisoned	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kidnapped or taken hostage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tortured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt humiliated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lost contact with a close relative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of your immediate family killed during the armed conflict (son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, grandchild)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serious damage to your property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wounded by the fighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combatants took food away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had your house looted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somebody you knew well was sexually assaulted by combatants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>[READ LAST]</b> Somebody you knew well was raped by combatants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

31. **[ASK ALL RESPONDENTS]** Were you imprisoned by enemy combatants or were you living in an area that came under enemy control?

Imprisoned by enemy combatants	<b>→ GO TO Q32</b>
Living in area under enemy control	<b>→ GO TO Q32</b>
Both [Volunteered response]	<b>→ GO TO Q32</b>
[Don't know/refused]	<b>→ GO TO Q34</b>
No response	<b>→ GO TO Q34</b>

32. **[ASK IF "IMPRISONED", "LIVED UNDER ENEMY CONTROL", OR BOTH]** Please tell me whether any of the following happened while you were under enemy control. **[READ AND ROTATE]** Did that happen or not?

	Happened	Did not happen	Don't know/ refused
You were personally mistreated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You were physically injured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You were treated correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>[READ LAST]</b> You had a contact with a representative from an independent organization to check on your well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

33. **[ASK ONLY IF CONTACT HAPPENED, OTHERWISE GO TO Q33]** Which of the following people did you have contact with to check on your well-being? **[READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES] [ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES]**

- ICRC representatives
- UN representatives
- Human rights group representatives
- Journalists
- Religious clerics/ministers
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Don't know/refused]

34. Now let me ask you for your opinion about something else, about young people being combatants. At what age is a young person mature enough to be a combatant? **[READ LIST UNTIL RESPONDENT CHOOSES AN ANSWER]**

- 14 or under
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- Above 21
- [Don't know/refused]

35. During the war, did you support [have you supported] one of the sides or did you not support any side?

- Supported a side
- Did not support a side
- [Don't know/refused]

36. Let me ask you something very different. Have you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions?

- Yes — heard
- No — not heard      **→ GO TO Q38**
- [Don't know/refused]      **→ GO TO Q38**

37. **[IF HEARD OF GENEVA CONVENTIONS]** Could you tell me what the Geneva Conventions are about? **[WRITE DOWN ANSWER AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE] [MARK APPROPRIATE RESPONSE]**

- Accurate **[ANY REFERENCE TO LIMITS IN WAR]**
  - Not accurate **[NO REFERENCE TO LIMITS IN WAR]**
-

38. Let me read you a statement about the Geneva Conventions:

*The Geneva Conventions is a series of international treaties that impose limits in war by describing some rules of war. Most countries in the world have signed these treaties.*

Do you think the existence of the Geneva Conventions prevents wars from getting worse or does it make no real difference?

- Prevents wars from getting worse
- No real difference
- [Don't know/refused]

39. Are you familiar with this? **[SHOW RED CROSS OR RED CRESCENT]** What does it stand for? **[DO NOT READ RESPONSES]**

- Red Cross
- Red Crescent
- Red Cross and Red Crescent
- Medical/Hospital
- United Nations
- Army
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Don't know/refused]

40. What kind of people or things does this symbol protect? **[WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

41. Are there rules or laws that are so important that, if broken during war, the person who broke them should be punished?

- Yes
- No → **GO TO Q46**
- [Don't know/Refused] → **GO TO Q46**

42. **[IF YES]** So what kind of rules or laws are you thinking about? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

43. **[IF RESPONDS TO PRIOR QUESTION, OTHERWISE GO TO Q46]** What are these rules based on? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

- [Country name]'s laws
  - International law
  - Religious principles
  - The values people hold
  - Other **[SPECIFY]**
  - [Don't know/refused]
-

44. If these rules are broken in war, who should be responsible for punishing the wrongdoers? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

- The government of [country name]
- The [country name]'s courts
- International criminal court
- The military itself
- The civilian population
- Your own political leaders
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Does not apply, rules are not broken]
- [Don't know/refused]

45. When the war is over, should people who have broken these rules...? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

- Be put on trial
- Be exposed to the public but not be put on trial
- Be forgotten when the war is over
- Be forgiven after the war
- Granted amnesty
- [Don't know/refused]

46. **[ASK ALL RESPONDENTS]** Let me ask what can be done *if* during the war civilian areas are attacked, towns or villages are cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity. To whom would you turn to get help or to be protected? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

- [Can't turn to anybody]
- [Don't know/refused]

47. I'm now going to describe different kinds of people and organizations. Please tell me which *two* of these have played the biggest role *during* the war to stop this. Here are the people and organizations: **[READ AND ROTATE] [RECORD THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT RESPONSES] [FOLLOW UP WITH: Which two have played the biggest role?]**

- The military and combatants on your side **[Version B]**
- The military and combatants of the other side **[Version B]**
- The military and combatants **[Version A]**
- Religious leaders
- International humanitarian organizations
- Journalists and the news media
- The United Nations
- The ICRC or Red Cross (or Red Crescent)
- Government leaders
- International criminal court
- Other countries
- [Nobody did anything]
- [Don't know/refused]

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48. In the future, would you like to see more or less intervention from the international community to deal with these kinds of issues?

- More intervention
- Less intervention
- [No intervention]
- [Don't know/refused]

49. Do you think the peace will last or do you think there will be more war in the future?

- Peace will last
- More war in future
- [Both]
- [Don't know/refused]

50. One last question, what did you learn from the war that you think others should know? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

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## **The ICRC's mission**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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