

FES Global Census 2022 executive summary

On behalf of FES, YouGov surveyed 14,998 respondents across fifteen countries to complete the FES Global Census 2022 project. The survey was fielded from August 18-31, 2022. This survey included respondents from Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States, Tunisia, and Turkey. This brief executive summary, accompanying a deeper analysis product, summarizes the results.

The events of the past year have made people believe the world is an even more dangerous place now than in the recent past.

For the third year of the FES Global Census, more respondents have said they believe events around the world have had more of a negative impact on their own lives than positive than they have in the past. This includes a majority of respondents in the US, Brazil, France, Germany, Japan, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, South Korea, and Tunisia saying world events have had a negative impact on their lives. Even in countries where respondents feel things are going more positively than negatively, including India, Indonesia, and Argentina, the share of respondents who say things are going negatively has increased from previous waves of the FES Global Census

As a result, there is general skepticism about whether or not the world will be a better place in the future than it was in the past.

In all the countries in our sample except for Kenya, Indonesia, India, and South Africa, less than 15 percent of respondents said they believed the world would be "much better off" in the near future than in the past. Respondents in most of the countries in our sample are narrowly split, between 60-40 to 50-50, on whether their country has become too involved in global events overall. Specifically, people report being very worried about rising energy prices and high levels of inflation, which impact the whole world, not just a few wealthy countries. Over two-thirds of respondents in all but four countries in our sample (Poland, India, Japan, and South Korea) said they were "very" or "extremely" worried about energy prices and inflation in the near future. Negligible shares of respondents in all countries said they were "not at all worried" about these things

People believe these problems are rooted in violent conflicts unfolding around the world, particularly Russia's war against Ukraine, as well as in the economic consequences of inflation and rising prices.

Overwhelming majorities of respondents across our sample, from the US to Indonesia to South Africa to Germany report that the war between Ukraine and Russia has had a large impact on "day-to-day things like the cost of energy." Despite (or perhaps because of) the

costs the war has imposed, the overwhelming majority of respondents in all but two of the countries in our sample supported providing material support to Ukraine in its defense against Russia. Support for providing support to Ukraine to defend itself against Russia drops significantly, however, when respondents are asked if sanctions are worth the possibility of rising energy prices.

Additionally, respondents in most countries in our sample support adding Sweden and Finland to NATO. Support for adding Ukraine to NATO is generally lower in most countries, but most countries still are overall more in support of adding Ukraine to NATO than in opposition.

Large shares of respondents in each of the countries in our sample said they would prefer to “increase” rather than “decrease” their own defense spending. This includes roughly 30-40 percentage point margins in favor of increasing defense spending in countries like France, Japan, the UK, India, and Poland. Additionally, all but one country in our sample overwhelmingly supports allowing Finland and Sweden to join NATO, and all but two countries support allowing Ukraine to join NATO.

People around the world demand the UN step up to deal with these problems.

In all but four countries in our sample, more respondents said they believed existing global institutions like the UN were best suited to solving the problems we’re dealing with right now, rather than seeing the need to build new global institutions. In each of the countries in our sample, between 52 percent and 66 percent of respondents said they thought the UN should “focus more” on helping to “keep the world safe from terrorism and rogue nations,” “protect democratic freedoms around the world,” and to help resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Majorities in most of the countries in our sample also wish the UN was more involved in dealing with things like combating climate change and promoting economic development around the world.

When it comes to the agenda the UN should focus on at the next General Assembly, respondents were overwhelmingly concerned with protecting human rights, ending the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and preventing further conflicts from arising from rogue nations or terrorist organizations.

The world is not sure if the US is up to the challenges the world faces in 2023 and beyond.

Less than half of respondents in any country in our sample said they believed President Joe Biden was currently showing leadership in “keeping the world safe from terrorism and rogue nations.” While respondents in most countries said they were more likely to trust the US to help resolve conflicts around the world than they trusted the EU, UN, Russia, or China to do the same, in no country in our sample did an outright majority select the US - hardly a

glowing mandate for the Biden Administration. Biden's approval is overall positive in closely allied countries like the UK and Germany, but up to a quarter of respondents in the UK and about 1 in 6 respondents in Germany say they are still unsure of Joe Biden overall

Approval of Joe Biden on general topics like "foreign policy" are high, but respondents across the FES Global Census sample do not think the US is showing leadership on key issues like keeping the world safe and on dealing with climate change. In every country in the sample, including the United States, less than 25 percent of respondents felt the US was showing "a great deal of leadership" on the subject of climate change.

Non-democracies may have an opening as a result

Considerable pluralities of respondents in several countries, including France, Brazil, South Africa, and Kenya see foreign direct investment from China as a positive thing rather than negative. For better or for worse, most respondents in every country in our sample believed China would continue to grow more powerful in the future. In particular, respondents Kenya, South Africa, Indonesia, and Brazil saw China's continued growth as an opportunity for their own countries.

Although some countries are optimistic about the potential future of rising non-democracies, countries generally continue to believe in the value of democracy.

In all countries in our sample, only negligible shares of respondents said they "do not really value democracy," with most actively preferring it as the best form of government and others saying they prefer it except in emergency situations or if things in their country were going very badly. Across the sample, more respondents said democracy was more resilient than non-democracy when it came to crises like COVID and economic downturns.

Key international organizations that are integral to global safety continue to have strong approval ratings. Large majorities of countries have high net favorability toward organizations like the European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the United Nations. This includes non-member states. For example, favorability toward NATO is high in countries in South America and Asia that are not NATO member states, with similar results for both the EU and UN. The United Kingdom remains skeptical of the EU, with UK respondents feeling split 45-38 on the organization.