

PERCEPTIONS OF PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN

Perceptions Survey Data Overview

[View the full Survey Report](#)



SURVEY OVERVIEW

This interactive data report presents the key findings from a survey conducted in South Sudan, by PeaceRep, Detcro, USIP and other partners, and allows users to explore and gain insights from this one-of-a-kind data source.

The three-wave survey recorded the views of 8,843 people from 12 counties across 9 states and special administrative areas, covering urban, rural and IDP camp environments. Respondents were asked questions about their daily experiences of safety, based on indicators of 'everyday peace' developed through focus groups. They also shared their views on a wide range of related topics, including elections, governance arrangements, security arrangements, trust in public authorities, civic space, national identity, and social cohesion, among others.

Wave Dates ● Aug-Sept 2021 ● Feb-Apr 2022 ● May - June 2022



3

Waves

12

Counties

8843

Total Respondents

[Go to Survey Sample Overview](#)



EXPLORE KEY FINDINGS PAGES ON...

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Peace & Security



Public Authority



Governance



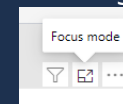
Elections



TIPS ON USING DASHBOARD:

- Use the page at bottom to show list of pages or use the arrows to navigate to next page.
- Find links to all pages on the contents page (next page) or links to relevant pages at the bottom of 'Key Findings' pages.
- Use ctrl+ to select more than one value from a filter, or a visualization.
- When clicking a data point on a chart/visual, the rest of that page will highlight the relevant data for that selection. Hover over the highlighted areas for detail.
- To view a visual in full screen, use the 'Focus Mode' button, which is located at the top right of the visual when you hover.
- To return home (here), refresh browser, or click the PeaceRep logo at the top left corner.

[Find out more on the project](#)



Peace and Security

Key Findings

Perceptions of Peace & Security

Prospects of Peace
Everyday Safety Indicators Map
Currently at Peace?
Hope & Despair
At Peace & Everyday Security
Prospects & Everyday Security

Perceptions of Peace & Conflict

R-ARCSS Confidence
Perceptions of R-ARCSS
Perceptions of Conflict Levels
Conflict Levels (UCDP)
Perceptions of Conflict vs...
Sexual & Gender Related...

Local Peace, Issues & Agreements

Awareness of Peace Processes
Community Peace
Local Issues
Peace Actors
Local Agreements in PA-X

Public Authority

Key Findings

Authority & Peace

Dealing with Armed Groups

Care for Community

Authority & Safety

Authority & Peace Perceptions

Dealing with Local Issues

Authority & Actors

Compliance with Authorities

Governance

Key Findings

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Government Reconciliation

Effective or Accountable?

Unification of Forces

What is most important?

Army Governance

Government Responses to Insecurity

Electoral System Preference

Elections

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Voting Patterns & Influence

Should elections be held?

Political Parties Visions

Voting & Violence

Political Parties & Security Levels

Other topics:

South Sudanese Identity

Defining own Identity

Tribes

On a mobile phone?

View Everyday Safety levels →

View Political Parties visions →



AUTHORS: David Deng, Sophia Dawkins, Christopher Oringa and Jan Pospisil

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The views in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent the views of Detro, USIP, AF/SSS, or FCDO.

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David Deng is a human rights lawyer who has been conducting research and advocacy in South Sudan since 2008. Deng's work has touched on a range of issues, including citizen perspectives on peace processes and transitional justice, land governance, and housing, land and property (HLP) rights, and local security and justice provision.

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Sophia Dawkins is a doctoral candidate at Yale University researching peace processes, human rights and civilian protection issues. Sophia has worked in peacebuilding in South Sudan since 2010. She was a 2019-2020 US Institute of Peace Jennings Randolph Peace Scholar, and her work appears in diverse outlets, including the Washington Post, Political Violence at a Glance, and peer-reviewed Journal of Peace Research and European Journal of International Law.

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Christopher Oringa is a lecturer at the Institute of Peace, Development and Security Studies in the University of Juba. Since joining the University of Juba in 2013, his research has focused on peace and development, IDPs and refugees, and education in fragile contexts. He also studies how people, organizations and societies can better resolve their conflicts and innovate in response to complex problems. His work is highly interdisciplinary, drawing on social science, environmental studies, social psychology, philosophy and complex system theory.

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Jan Pospisil is Associate Professor at the Centre for Trust, Peace, and Social Relations at the University of Coventry. He is a co-investigator of PeaceRep, a FCDO-funded research program located at the University of Edinburgh. His research focuses on peace processes, political settlements, humanitarian negotiations, and resilience. Jan's most recent monograph on South Sudanese conflicts has been published with transcript in 2021. His previous monograph, "Peace in Political Unsettlement: Beyond Solving Conflict", has been published with Palgrave Macmillan in 2019.

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PERCEPTIONS OF PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN

Survey Sample



SURVEY & SAMPLE OVERVIEW

3

Waves

8843

Total Respondents

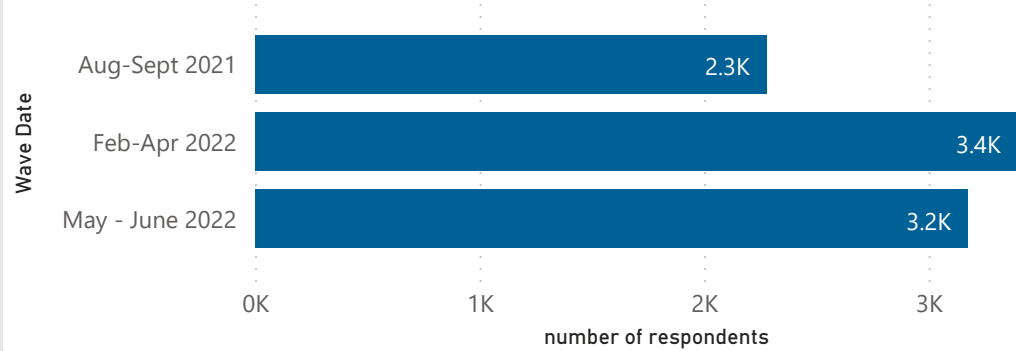
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ADM1 States

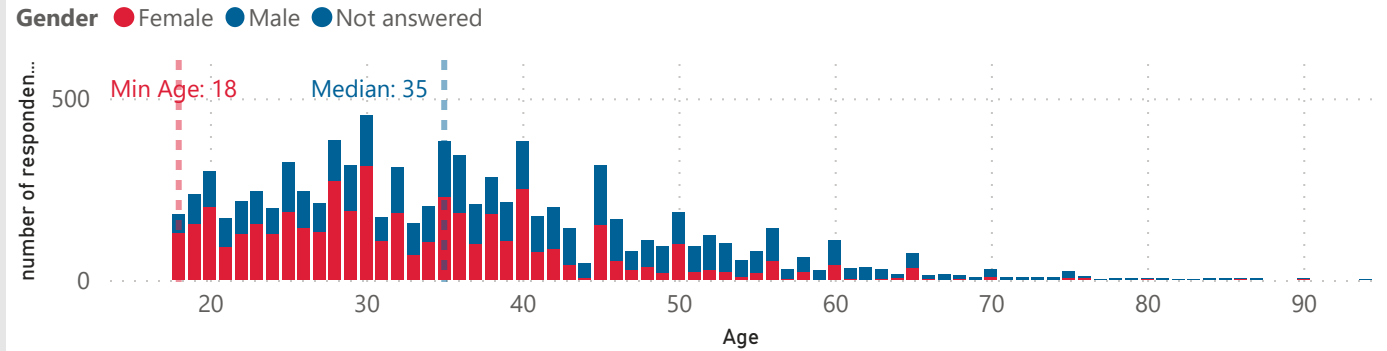
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ADM2 Areas

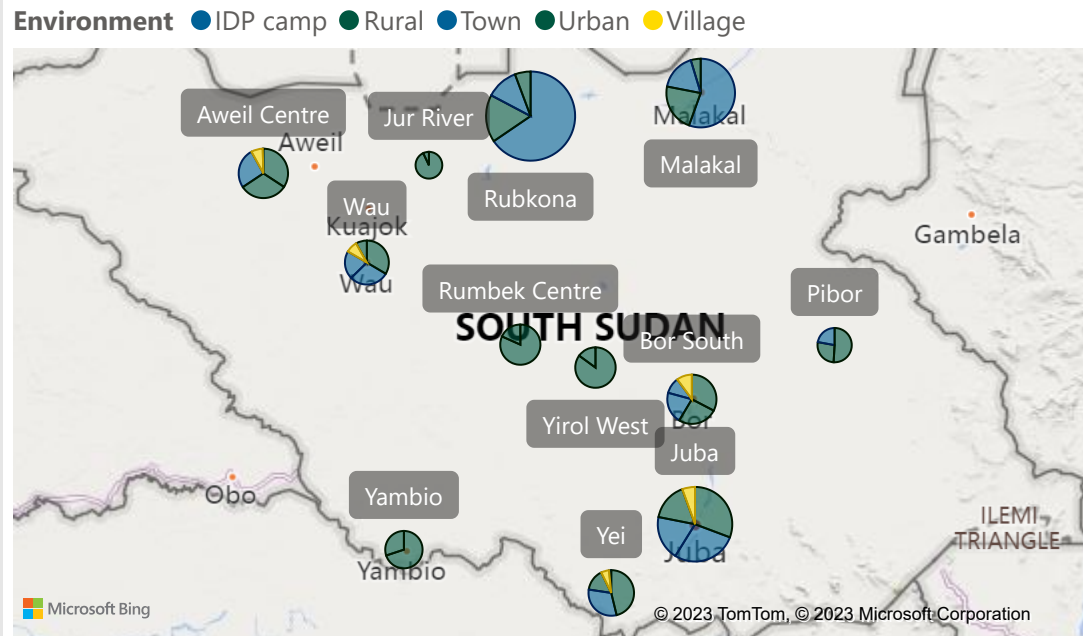
Wave Dates and Number of Respondents



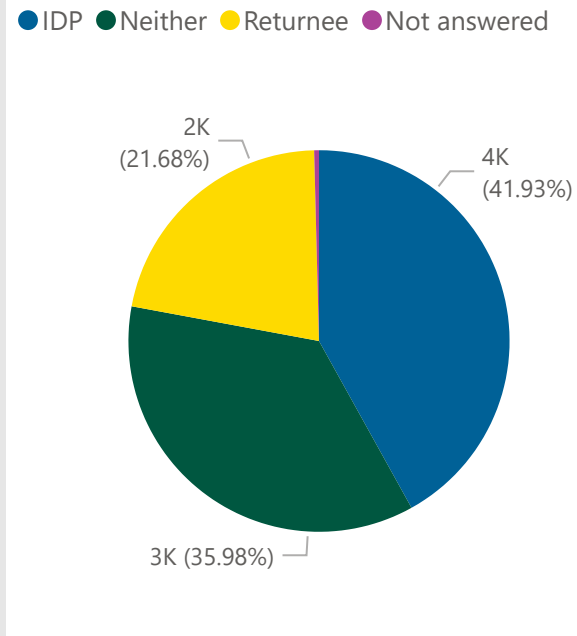
Gender and Age Distribution



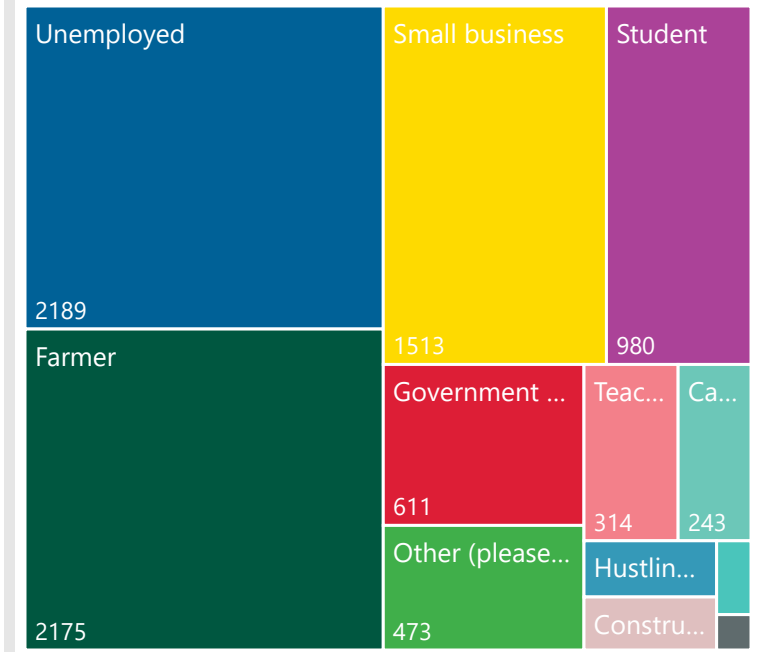
Respondents and Type of Environment by ADM2 Level



Displacement Status



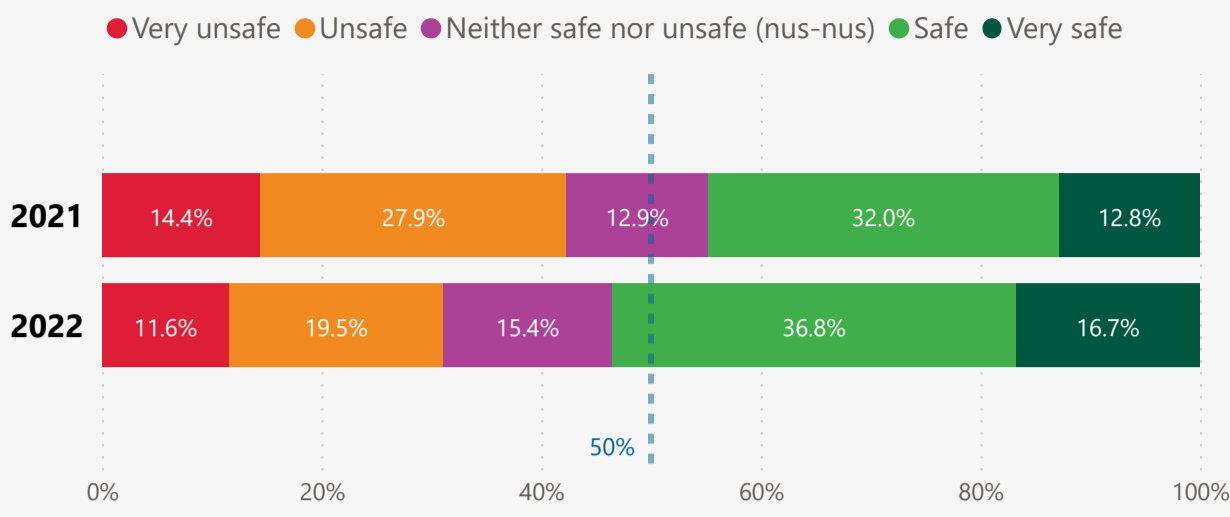
Occupation



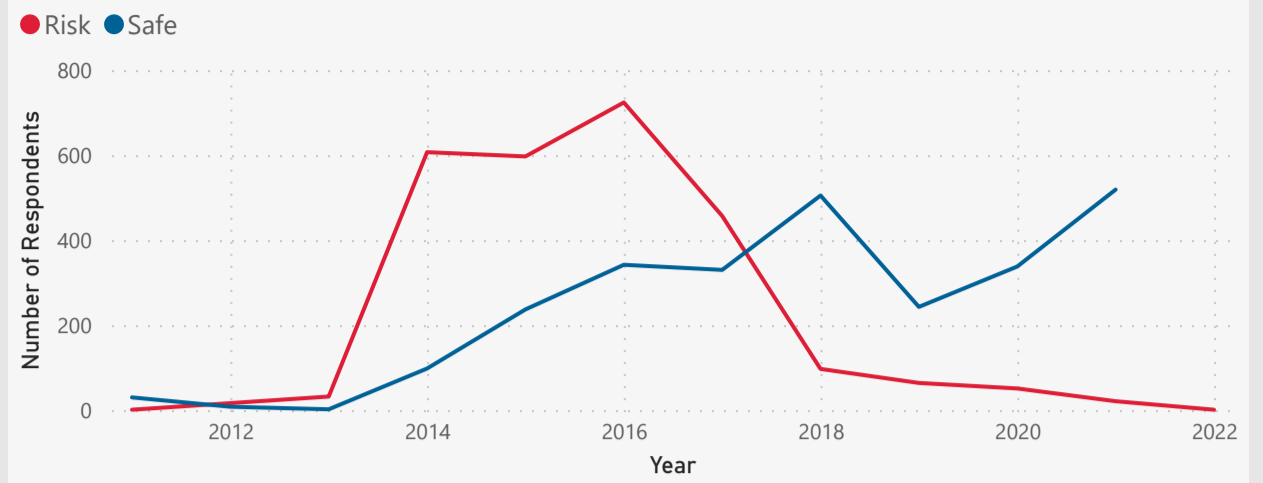


1. Overall, respondents felt **safer** in [the first half of] 2022 than in 2021 in their everyday lives in general, and more comfortable voicing opinions compared to previous years in the conflict, highlighting the importance of sustaining the political transition.

All Everyday Security Indicators

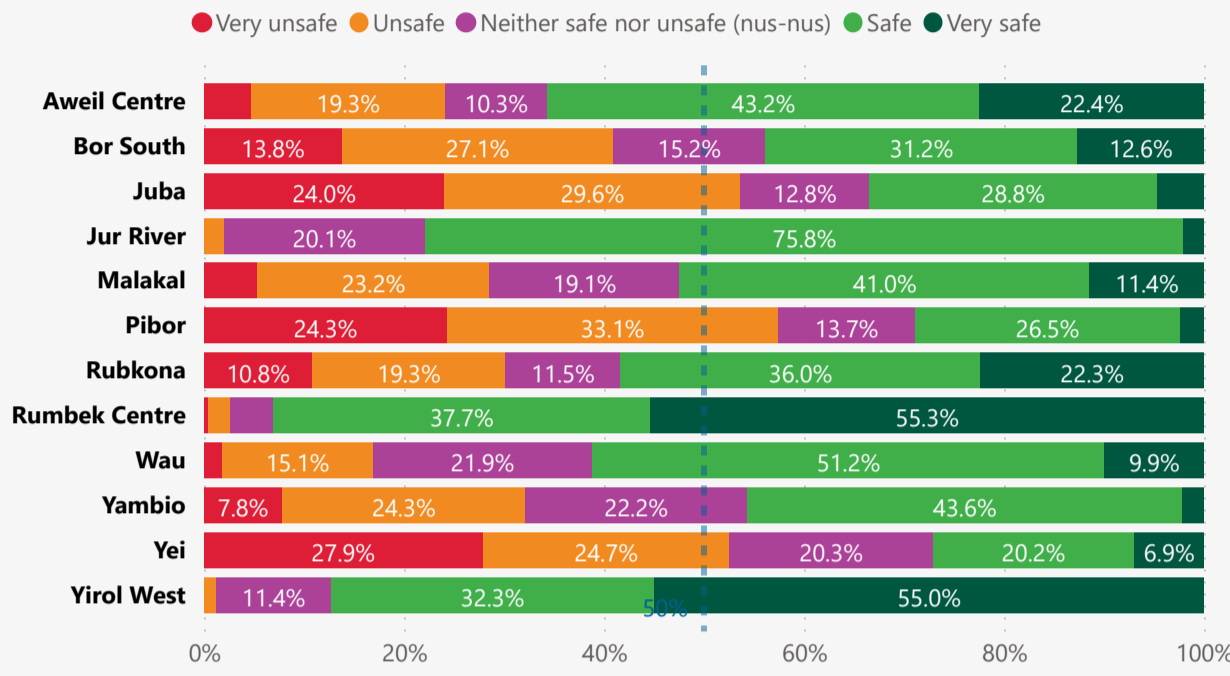


In what year since independence have you felt most at risk/most comfortable voicing your opinion on politically sensitive issues?

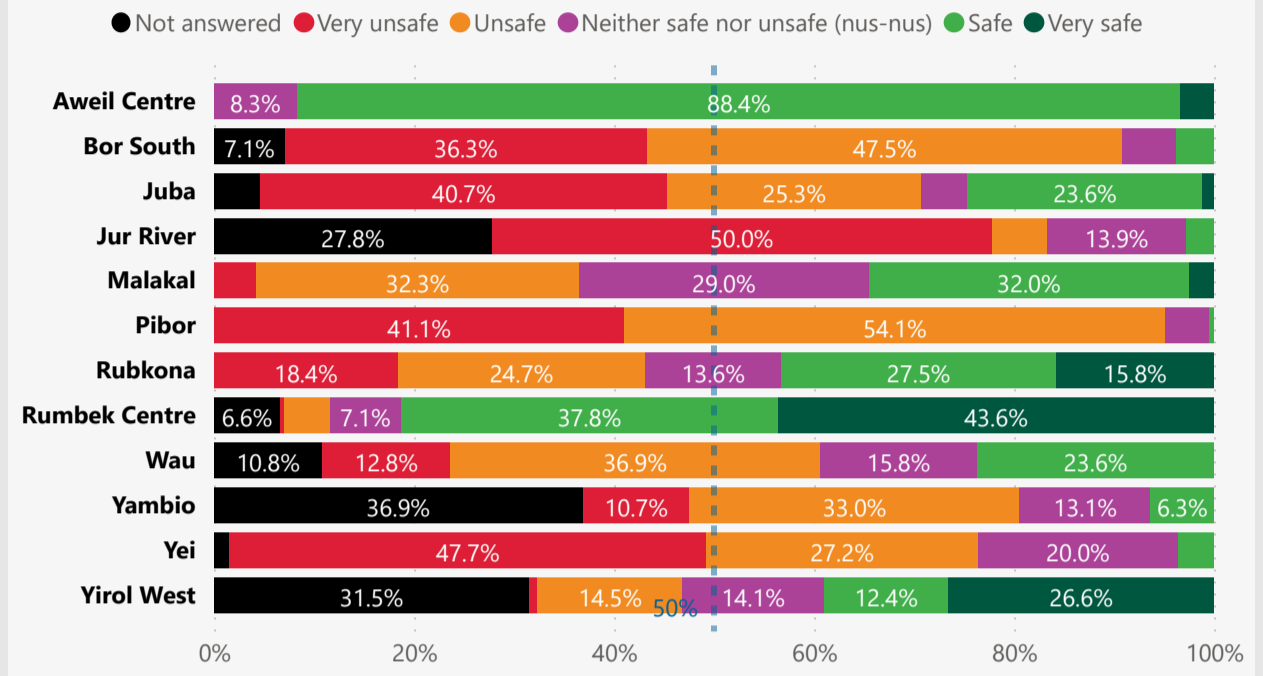


2. However, this was not the experience everywhere as citizens in places like **Yei, Pibor** and **Juba** have experienced persistent and acute insecurity.

All Everyday Security Indicators (2021 & 2022)

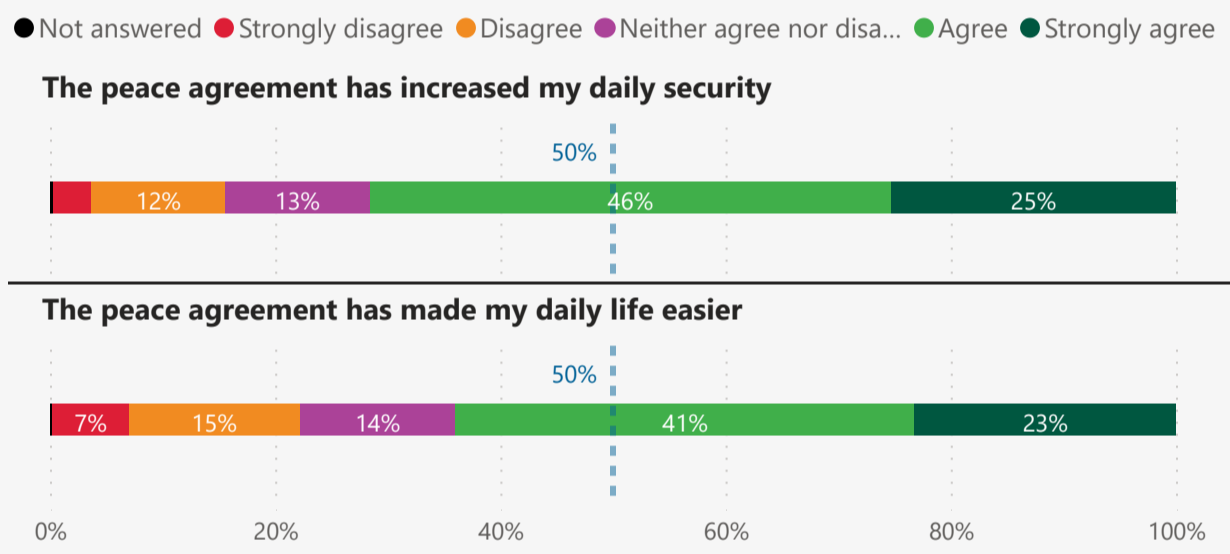


At present (2022), how safe do you feel speaking publicly on politically sensitive issues?

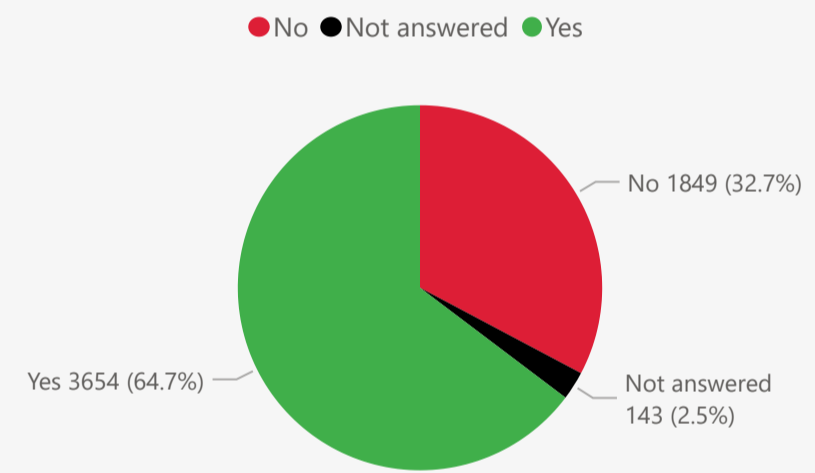


These findings highlight the importance of sustaining the political transition as it appears to be producing a general increase in stability, though it is not evenly distributed. This underlines the need for stabilization policies to prioritize the acute needs of places like Pibor and Yei.

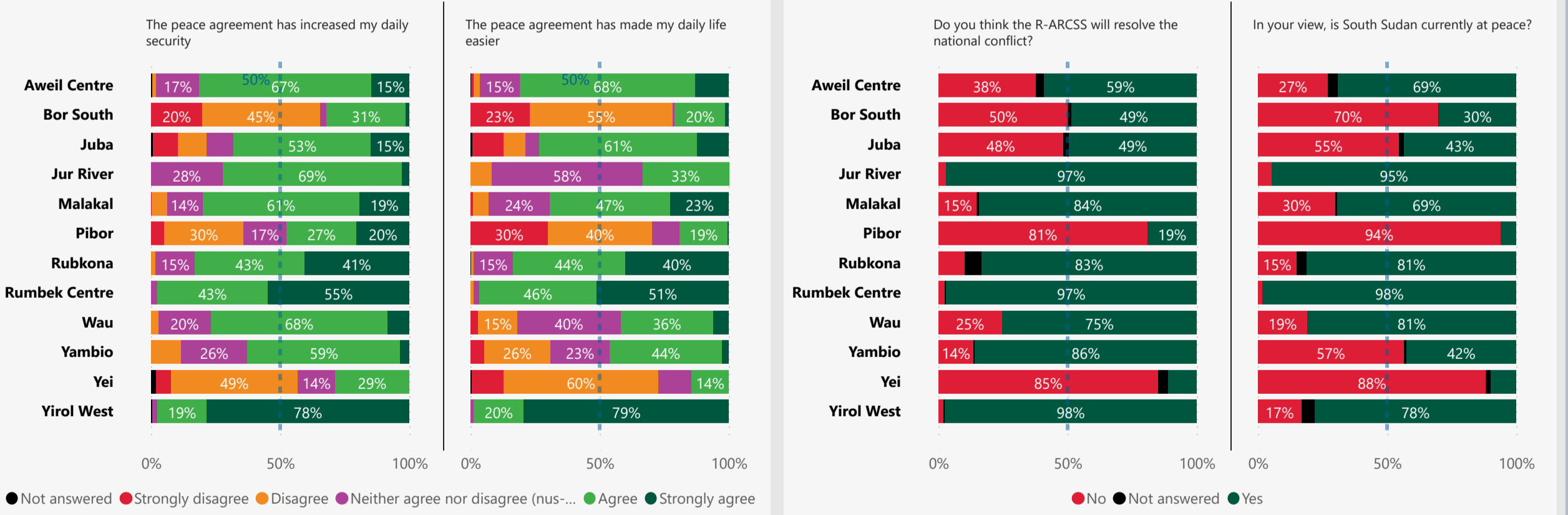
3. The **majority** of respondents believed that the Revitalized agreement has **improved** their **daily security** and made their **daily life easier**, and had high confidence levels that the **R-ARCSS will resolve the national conflict**.



Do you think the R-ARCSS will resolve the national conflict?



4. However, this increase in stability was also not evenly distributed, as the more unsafe people felt, the more skeptical they were of the national peace agreements. These experiences varied starkly by location.



This underlines findings that for South Sudanese to buy into national agreements, citizens need to observe direct improvements to their daily safety.

Explore responses to questions related to everyday peace and safety, by location, environment, gender and other variables for the following topics..

Perceptions and Feelings of Peace and Security

- Everyday Safety Indicators Map
- Currently at Peace?
- Prospects of Peace
- Hope & Despair
- At Peace & Everyday Security
- Prospects of Peace & Everyday Security

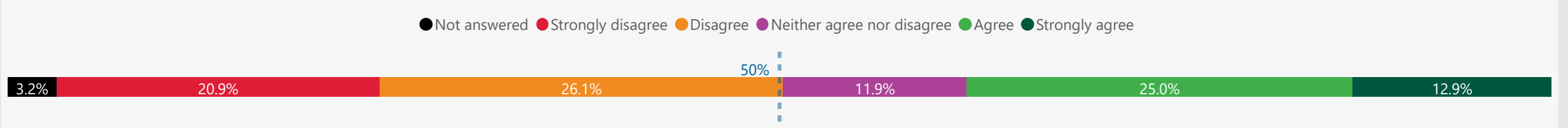
Perceptions of Peace and Conflict

- R-ARCSS Confidence
- Perceptions of Conflict Levels
- Perceptions vs UCDP
- Perceptions of R-ARCSS
- Conflict Levels (UCDP)
- Sexual & Gender Related Violence

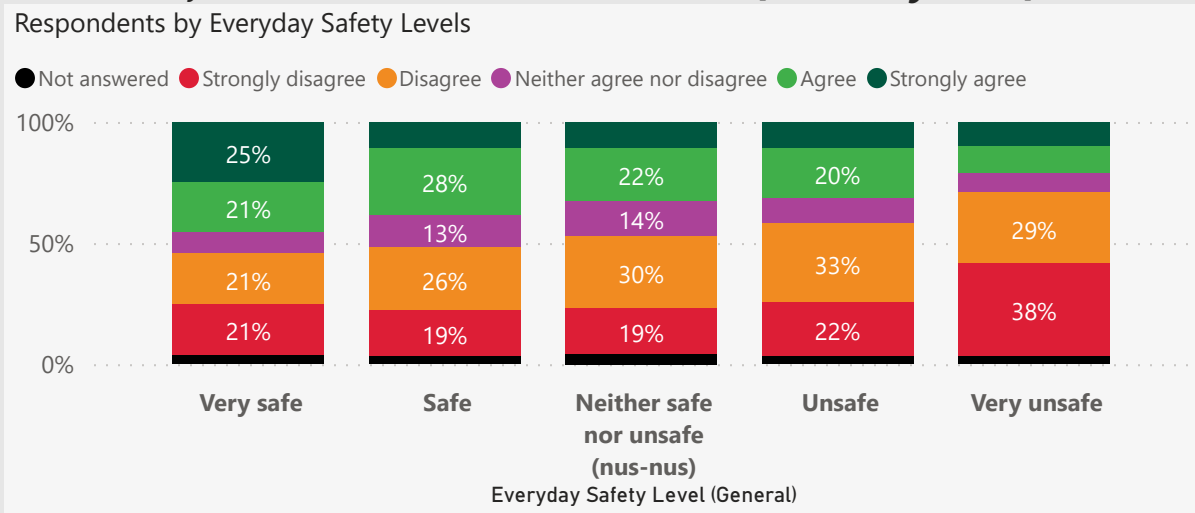
Local Issues, Peace and Agreements

- Community Peace
- Peace Actors
- Local Issues
- Local Agreements in PA-X

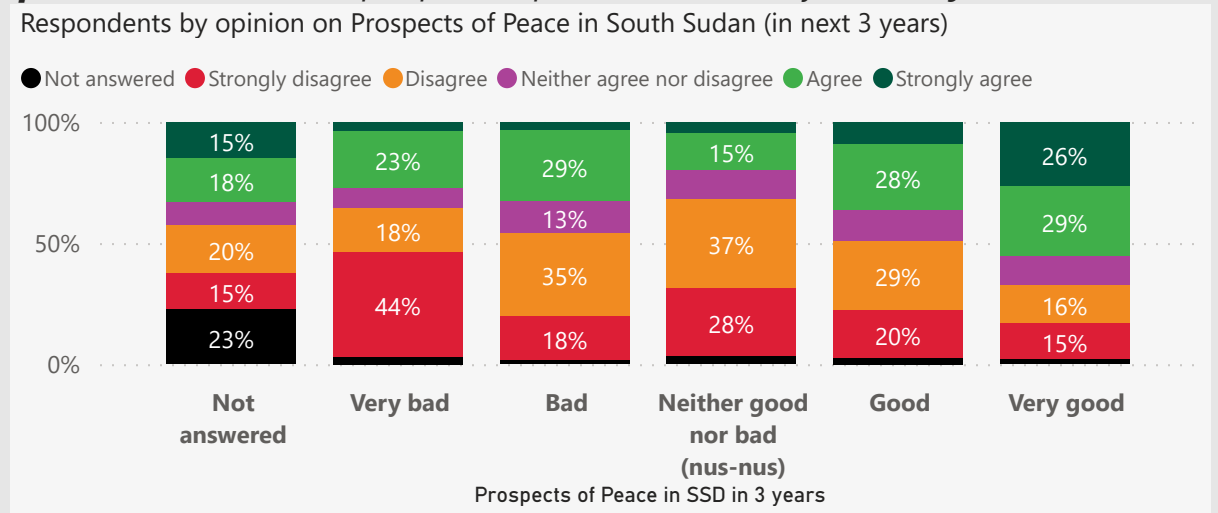
1. More respondents **disagreed** (~47% strongly disagree/disagree) than agreed with the statement: **"the national government cares about my community"**



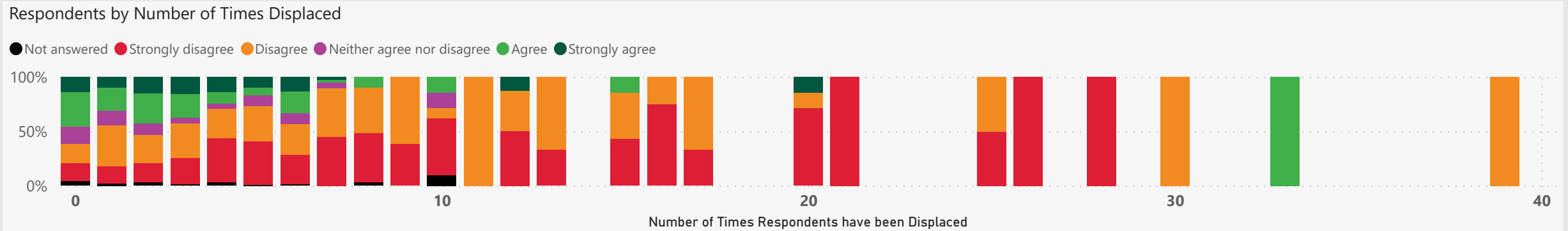
Respondents were more likely to **disagree** with the statement if their everyday security levels (across all indicators) feels 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe'.



Respondents were more likely to **disagree** with the statement, if they were **pessimistic** about the prospects of peace in the next 3 years ('very bad' or 'bad').

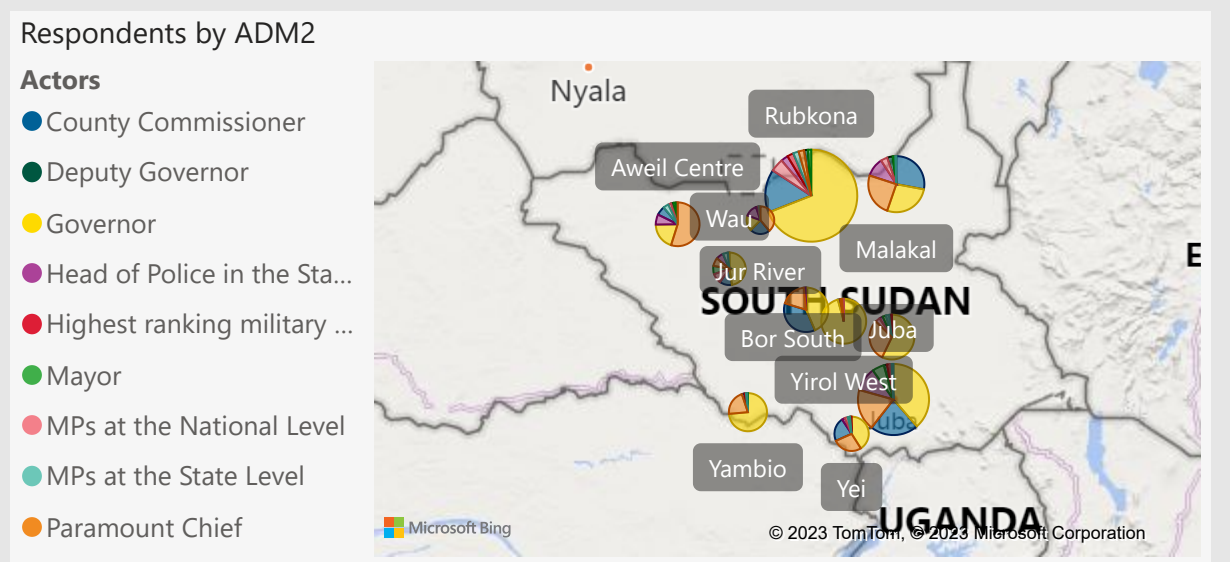
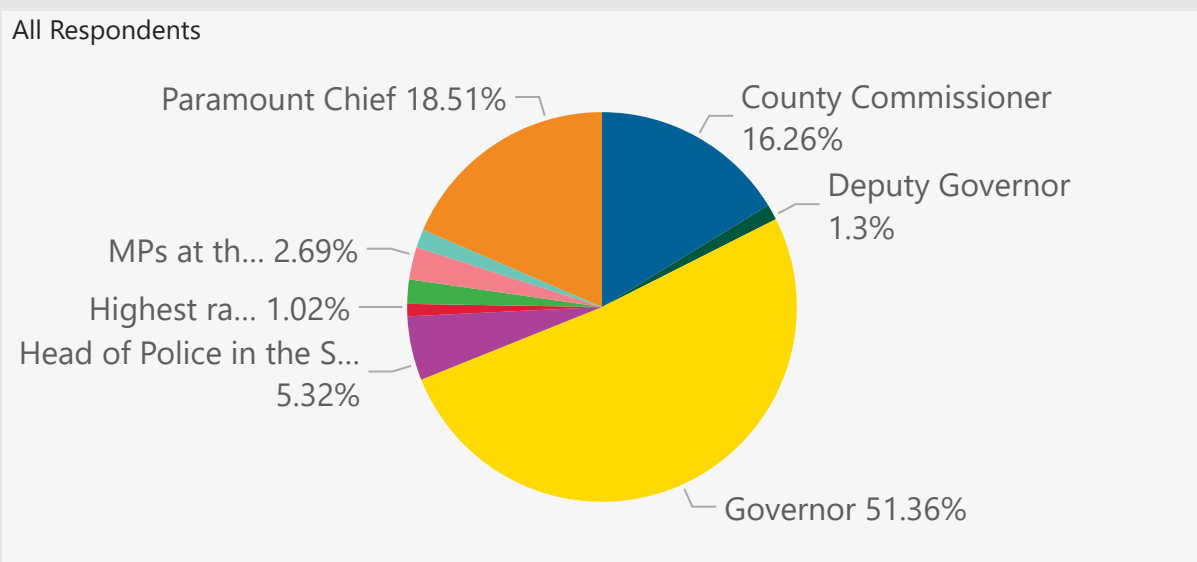


Respondents who have been **displaced more**, are more likely to **disagree** with the statement **"the national government cares about my community."**



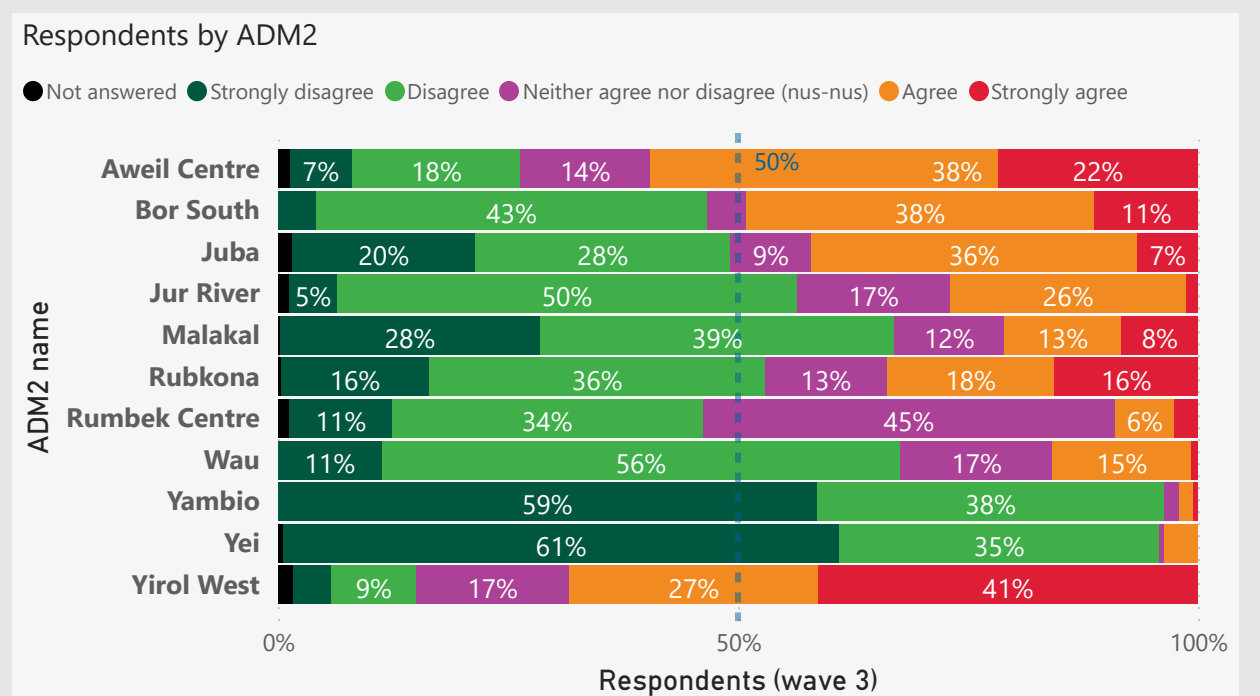
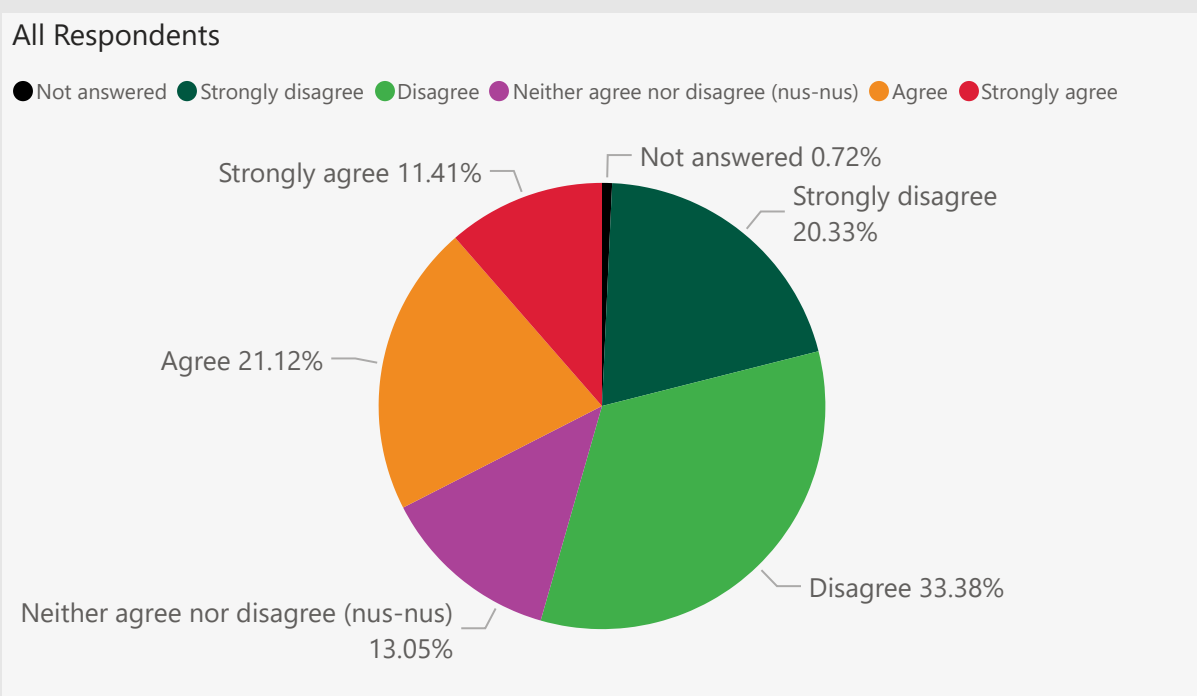
2. Responses to the question: **"who is most influential in making decisions about the safety of your community?"** showed that **National Political Leaders** have **limited influence** in decisions about safety at a local level. **Governors** and **County commissioners** are **most influential** in the majority of areas.

However, this is not the case in outlier **Aweil**, as the **majority (~55%)** believe that the **Paramount Chief** holds the most influence in decisions about safety in Aweil (where a number of local agreements have been brokered by traditional authorities). By contrast, **only 2%** of respondents in **Rubkona** (where displacement levels are high) said the Paramount Chief was influential.



3. Traditional Authorities are perceived to have power in motivating families to engage in armed struggle, with a **third of all respondents agreeing** with the statement: **"If Traditional Leaders in my community told my family that a member should join an armed group, we would comply."**

However, this varied by location; in **Yei, Yambio** and **Rumbek**, very **few** respondents agreed ('agree' or 'strongly agree'). Whereas, in **Yirol West, Aweil, Bor South** and **Juba** **almost half** of the respondents felt that traditional authorities **could** encourage their family members to join armed groups ('agree' or 'strongly agree').



Although the majority disagreed with compliance to join armed groups, one third of all respondents agreeing ('agree' or 'strongly agree') represents a high level of influence held by traditional leaders across the country.

These variations by location were **not** correlated with conflict exposure, displacement status or living environment. Thus, it seems that traditional authorities legitimacy is more strongly determined by social ties in every community.

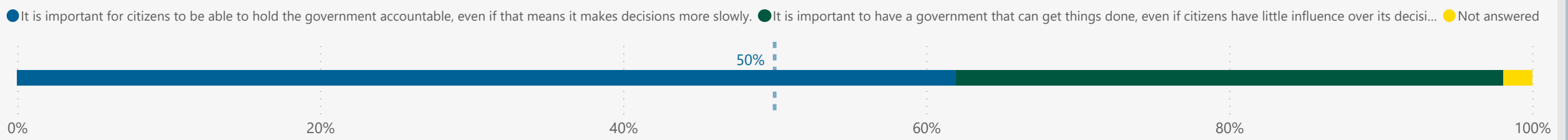
Conclusions:

- National leaders face a legitimacy challenge; many citizens believe the national government neither cares about their community, not has great influence to make decisions that effect their safety.
- The most unsafe, and displaced communities feel the weakest stake in national government - and these are the most difficult populations to reach through public consultations and service delivery. However, if they are continuously excluded, the national government will face difficulties in establishing a trusted and meaningful central state for all South Sudanese.
- National leaders should work through local leaders (formal and traditional) as they have high levels of trust among citizens, particularly traditional authorities, state governors and local governments.
- In contexts like Yirol and Aweil, policy makers may find traditional authorities to be an important partner in dissuading citizens to join armed groups.

Explore responses to questions related to **public authorities**, by location, environment, gender and other variables for the following topics..

Care for Community 	Authority & Safety 	Authority & Peace 	Authority & Peace Perceptions
Authority & Actors 	Dealing with Armed Groups 	Compliance with Authorities 	Dealing with Local Issues

1. South Sudanese **strongly** (~62%) prioritize government **accountability**. Those who were otherwise divided on how the government should rule, rallied around accountability.

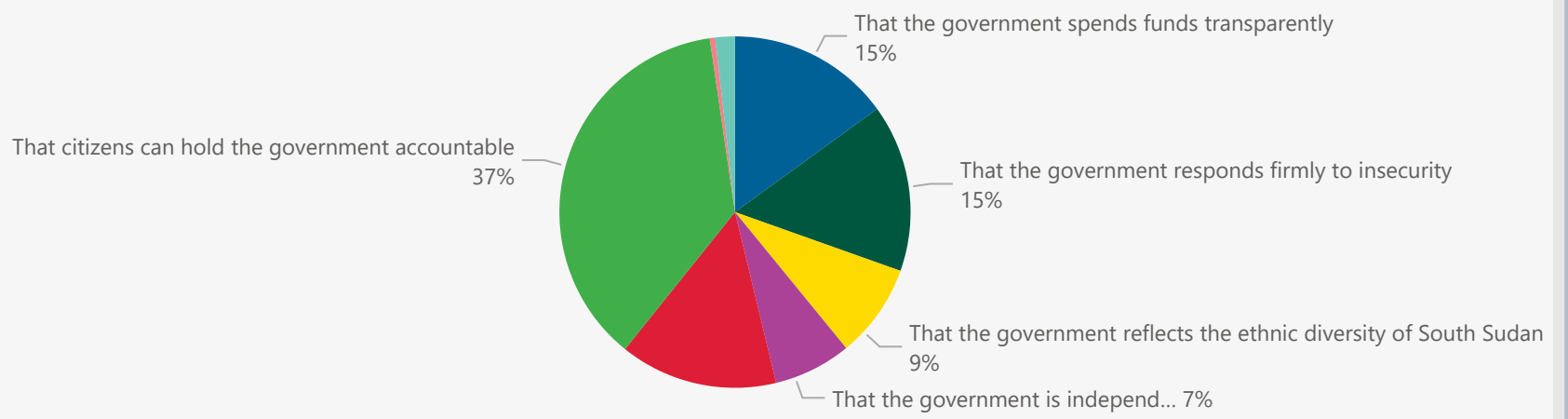


Overall there was overwhelming support for parliamentary input into presidential decision making, even if that slowed down decisions.

Citizens capacity to hold the government accountable was listed as the most important thing for **more than a third** (37%) of all respondents (in Wave 2).

What is most important?

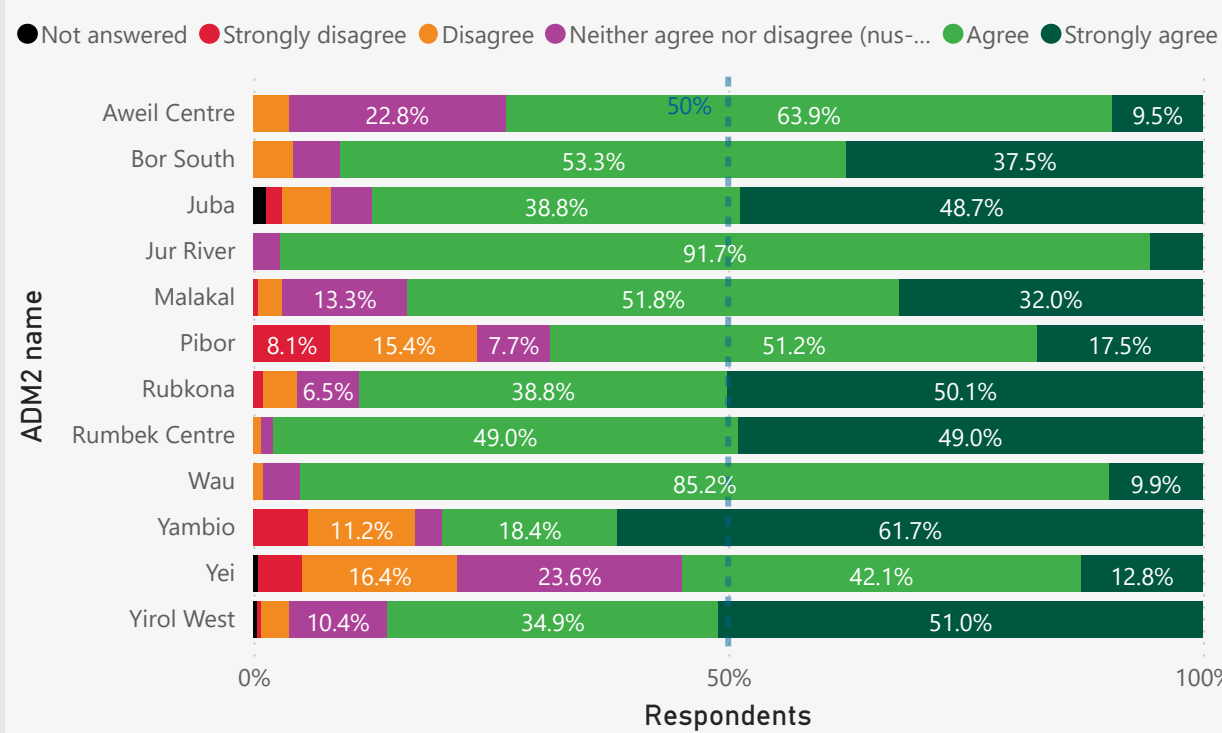
- That the government spends funds transparently
- That the government responds firmly to insecurity
- That the government reflects the ethnic diversity of South Sudan
- That the government is independent of the army
- That the government can get things done efficiently
- That citizens can hold the government accountable
- Not answered
- None of the above



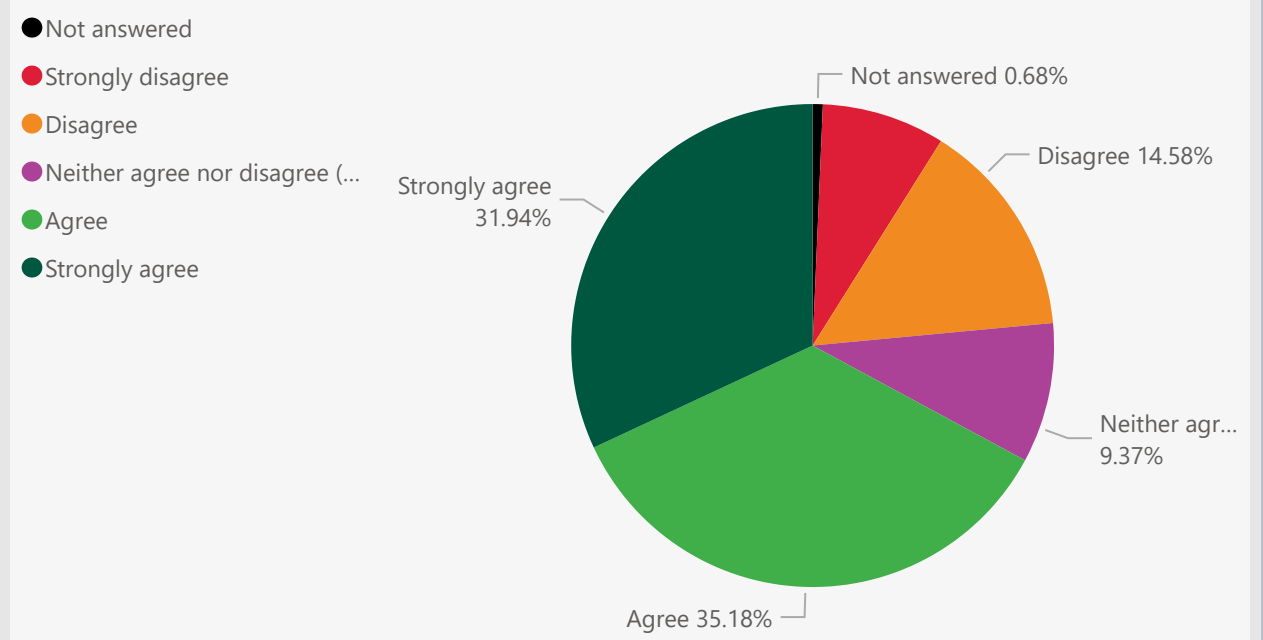
This preference for accountability highlights the importance of policies that preserve a strong parliament. Mechanisms for citizen input into government should be created. These are central to arrangements for an extended transition period.

2. There is a consensus across all locations and living environments, that army unification increases local stability. If government and opposition forces are not unified, elections should be delayed.

The Unification of Forces will improve the security in this area.



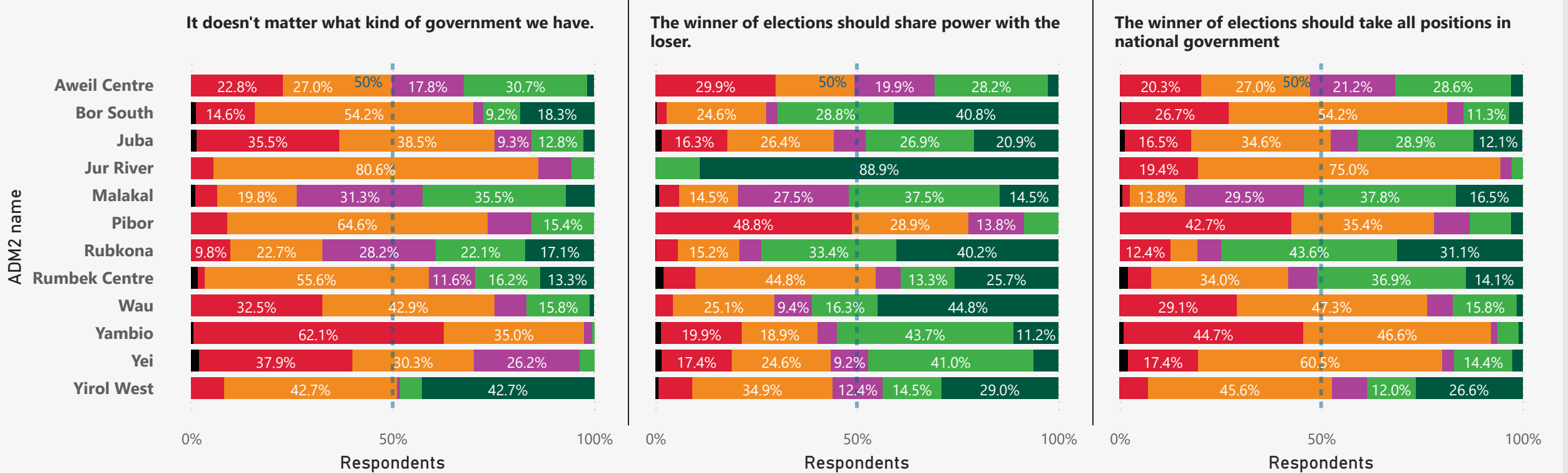
If government and opposition forces have not unified by the end of the transitional period in February 2023, elections should be delayed until they are able to unify.



This consensus highlights the importance of policies for unification of forces. It also indicates that if elections take place before unification of forces, insecurity is likely. An extended transition period should make this a priority.

3. There are variations by location, and gender on perceptions of what kind of government there is, and there is **no consensus** on the electoral system the South Sudanese prefer (power-sharing or first past the post).

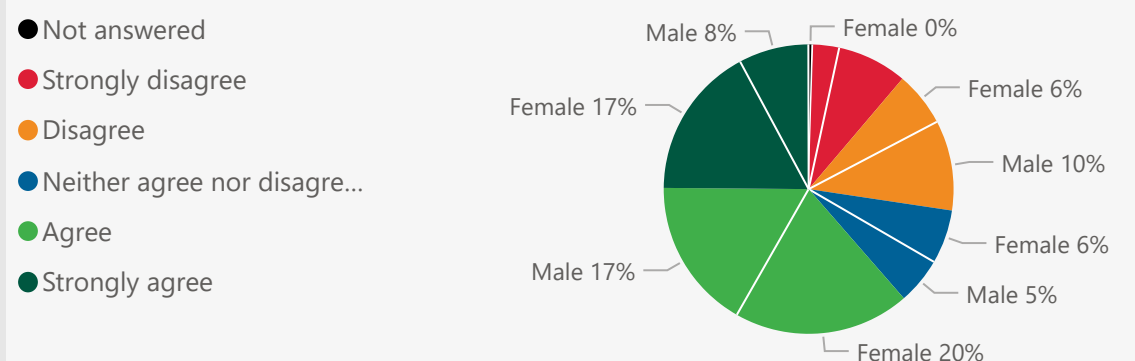
Legend: ● Not answered ● Strongly disagree ● Disagree ● Neither agree nor disagree (nus-nus) ● Agree ● Strongly agree



Respondents were also divided on how strongly the government should respond to insecurity, even if that meant violating human rights.

- **Women** were more likely than men to support security responses that were **strong**, but **violated human rights**.
- Respondents who identified as **'very unsafe'** voiced the strongest support for **forceful** government responses.
- However, those who felt moderately **'unsafe'** were the most likely group to **object** to the government responding firmly to insecurity, even if that meant violating human rights.

"The Government should respond firmly to insecurity, even if that means violating human rights sometimes"



Policy makers should not assume a power-sharing electoral system is the preference of the South Sudanese, as there is no consensus for either, despite past agreements and laws have favouring power-sharing. Security sector policies need to address the unique protection needs of people experiencing different degrees and types of insecurity, as some communities are vulnerable to national political generating local insecurity.

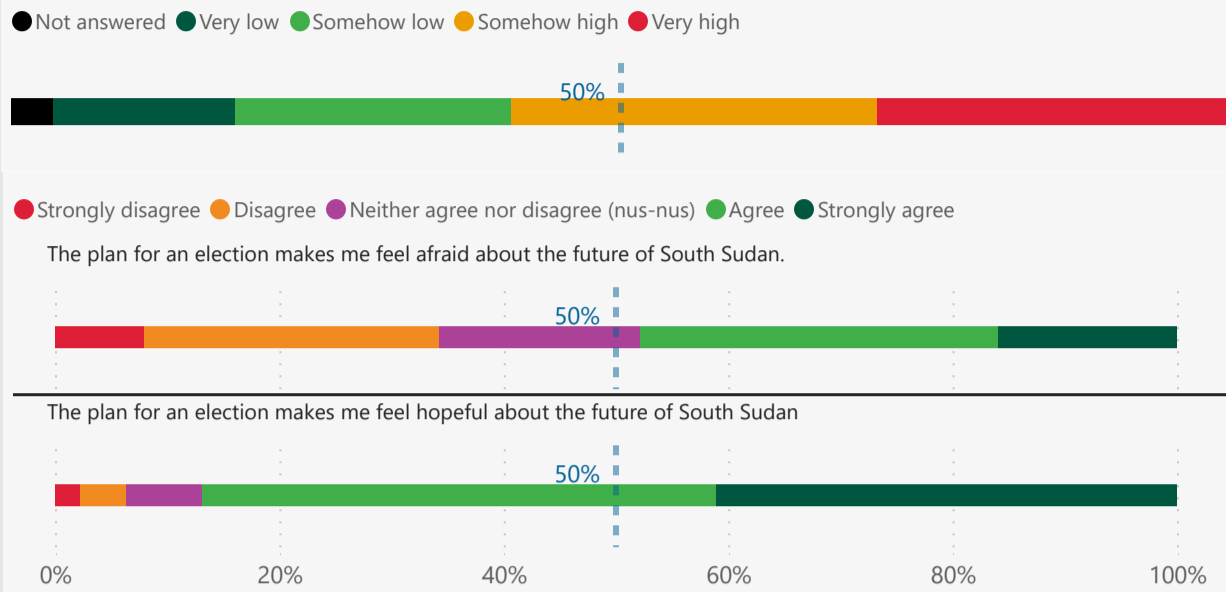
Explore responses to questions related to **governance**, by location, environment, gender and other variables for the following topics..

Government Reconciliation	Government Effectiveness	Effective or Accountable?	Electoral System Preference
What is most important?	Government Responses to Insecurity	Unification of Forces	Army Governance



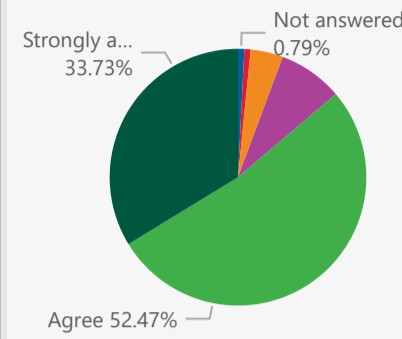
1. There is a consensus that elections are linked to a considerable risk of violence. Almost 60% think the risk of violence is high or somehow high, and 40% of respondents are both afraid and hopeful about elections.

How would you assess the risk of violence in relation to the elections?

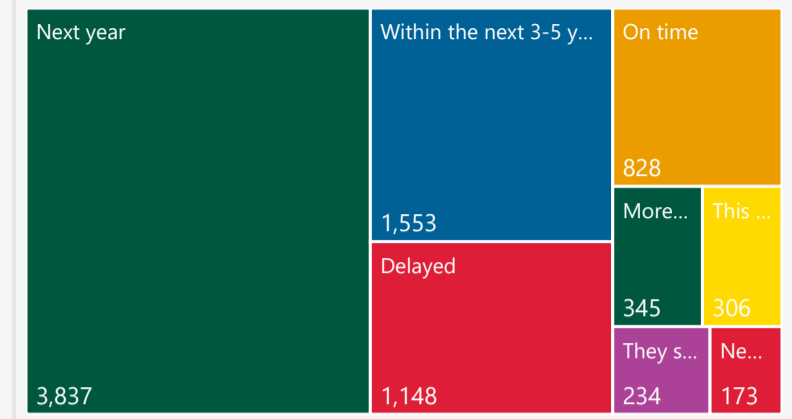


2. Despite the high risk of violence, the majority of South Sudanese think elections should be held (>80%), they should be held sooner rather than later, and that they will help the transition to peace.

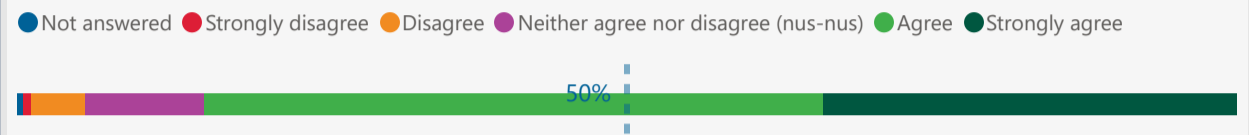
Elections should be held in South Sudan.



When should elections be held?

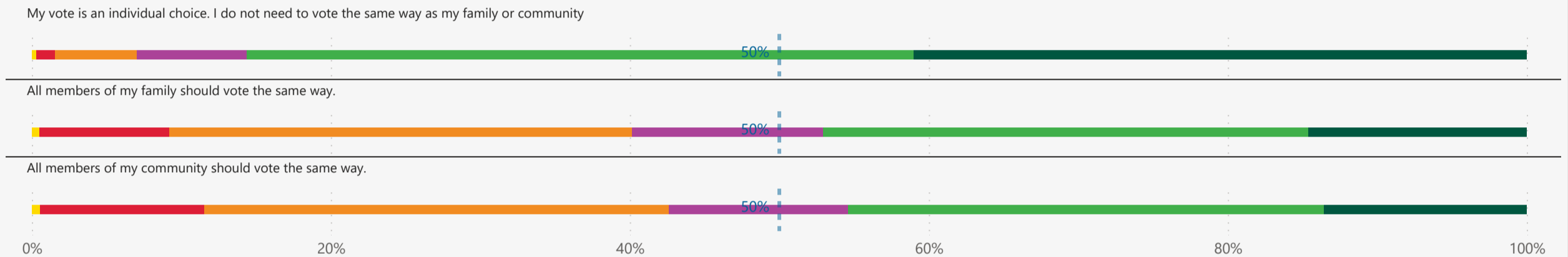


Elections will help South Sudan transition to peace.



3. Most likely, elections will be approached in community-voting patterns. While individual voting has strong backing in theory, South Sudanese still prefer their families and communities to vote the same way.

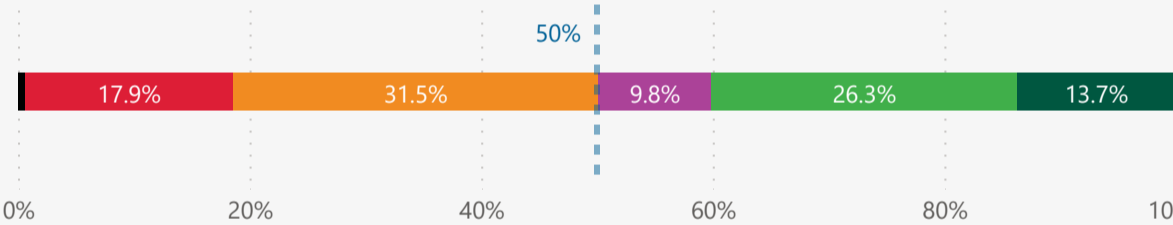
● Not answered ● Strongly disagree ● Disagree ● Neither agree nor disagree (nus-nus) ● Agree ● Strongly agree



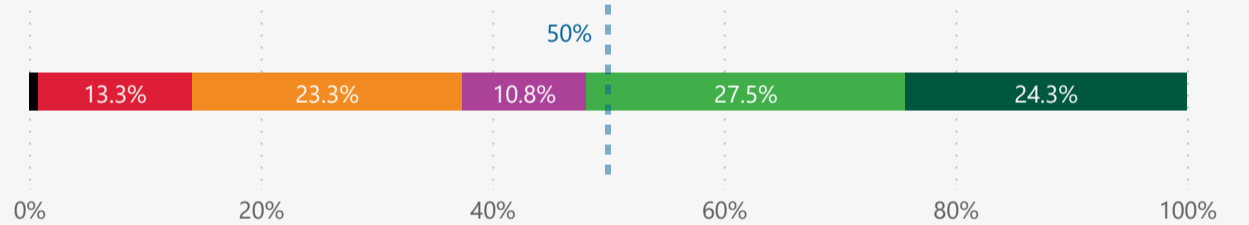
4. South Sudanese are split on whether elections should produce a winner-takes-it-all government, or if power-sharing and consociational arrangements should continue.

● Not answered ● Strongly disagree ● Disagree ● Neither agree nor disagree (nus-nus) ● Agree ● Strongly agree

The winner of elections should take all positions in national

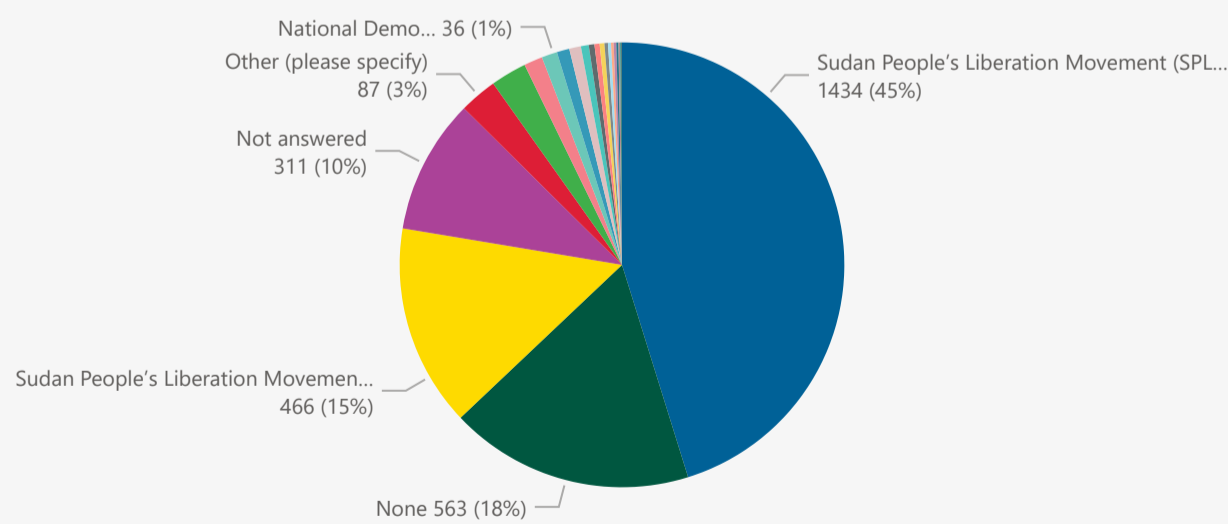


The winner of elections should share power with the loser.

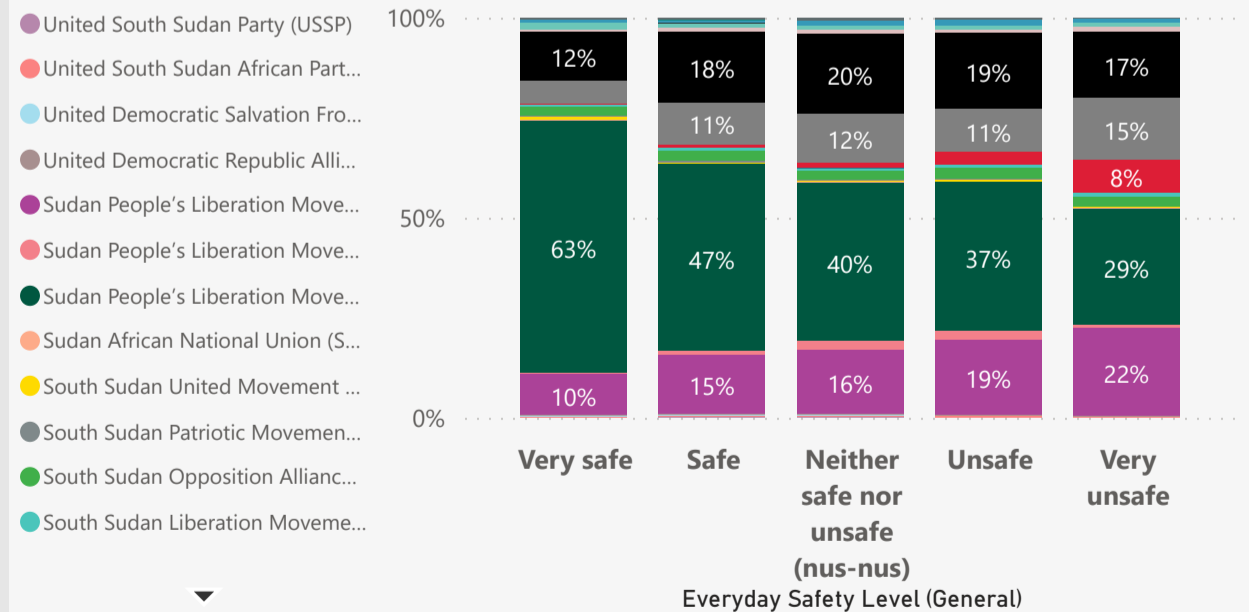


5. The political opposition has not yet been able to present credible voting alternatives (to the SPLM) that would be likely to perform well in upcoming elections, and the popularity of political parties is closely tied to the delivery of public goods and services, with the provision of local security being a critical one. **asked in wave 3 only**

Which political party do you think has the best vision for South Sudan? If you think that no political party has a good vision, you can answer 'none'.



Respondents by Everyday Safety Levels



Respondents that did not answer, or responded with 'none' represent over a quarter of respondents, who by their own assessment are politically homeless in South Sudan, showing a concerning level of political dissatisfaction.

Can see that there is a strong relationship between experiences of high levels of local security and support for the SPLM. However, when local security decreases, support for SPLM decreases, and support for the SPLM-IO increases

Explore responses related to elections, by location, environment, gender and other variables for the following topics..

Perceptions of Elections

Voting Patterns

Political Parties

Variations across Locations