



مركز تريندز للبحوث والاستشارات  
TRENDS RESEARCH & ADVISORY

استشراف المستقبل بالمعرفة  
Knowledge Empowers Future



## **OPINION POLL**

# **JOE BIDEN'S FIRST MONTH IN OFFICE: MEASURING PUBLIC OPINION ON POLICIES TOWARD THE MENA REGION**

# Measuring public opinion on Biden's Middle East policies during his first month in power



## RESULTS



**Not Sure**

38.1%

**Q1**

Are Joe Biden's policies helping in ensuring security and stability in the Middle East?

**Negative Step**

52.4%

**Q2**

What do you think of the Biden administration's decision to remove the Houthi militia from the terrorist group's list?

**It is not yet clear**

66.7%

**Q3**

How would you evaluate Biden's policy toward Iran?

**NO**

38.1%

**Q4**

Will Biden succeed in reviving the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and enhance opportunities for peace in the region?

**Yemen crisis**

38.1%

**Q5**

Which of the following crises (Yemen crisis, Syria crisis, Libya crisis) is likely to get resolved during the Biden administration?

**Not sure**

42.9%

**Q6**

How will the Biden administration deal with political Islamist groups and the Muslim Brotherhood?

**Yes**

35.7%

**Q7**

Will the Biden administration enhance its openness toward the GCC countries?

**Limited**

61.9%

**Q8**

What are the chances of settling the Middle East crises under the Biden administration?



## **Executive Summary**

### **Respondent Categories:**

- Respondents from the Middle East constitute 88.1 percent of the surveyed sample; the remaining 11.9 percent are from other regions.
- Male respondents showed greater interest in the survey (64.3 percent) than females (35.7 percent).
- The majority of the respondents have postgraduate degrees (61.9 percent), while 38.1 percent have bachelor's degrees.

### **Survey Highlights:**

- 38.1 percent of the respondents say they are unsure whether Joe Biden's policies will help ensure security and stability in the MENA region.
- 52.4 percent of the respondents think the Biden Administration's decision to delist the Houthi militia as a terrorist organization is a "negative step."
- 66.7 percent say Biden's policy toward Iran is unclear about whether it will resolve all the outstanding issues with Tehran or lead to escalation.
- 38.1 percent of the respondents said Biden would not succeed in reviving the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, hence not strengthening the MENA region's chances for peace.
- 38.1 percent of the respondents say that the Biden administration will likely resolve the Yemen's crisis, besides crises in Syria, Libya, and elsewhere.
- 42.9 percent of the respondents say they are not sure about how the Biden administration will deal with political Islamist groups and the Muslim brotherhood. They are unclear whether the US will continue to negotiate with these groups, impose sanctions on them or ban and designate them as terrorist organizations.
- 35.7 percent among the surveyed sample believe that the Biden administration will enhance its openness toward the MENA region, especially the GCC countries.
- 61.9 percent of respondents believe the chances of settling MENA crises during the Biden administration are limited.



## Introduction:

As part of its opinion polls series, TRENDS Research & Advisory conducted a survey – ***Biden Administration’s First Month in Office: Measuring Public Opinion on Policies Toward the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region*** – between February 22, 2021, and March 08, 2021.

The survey reached out to experts and researchers working at research centers, think-tanks, and academic institutions. The idea was to understand their views and expectations about the newly-appointed US President Joe Biden’s policy toward MENA issues and crises during his first month in office.

The survey contains several questions highlighting the respondents’ views of the Biden policy toward the MENA region on specific issues.

A random sample of 336 experts and researchers from different think-tanks and academic institutions participated in this survey. The sample contains both males and females belonging to different nationalities, age groups, and educational backgrounds.

## Survey Objectives:

- 01 To understand the views of experts, researchers, and academics about whether Biden's policies will help ensure the MENA region's security and stability.
- 02 To understand the opinions of experts, researchers, and academics about the Biden Administration decision to delist the Houthi militia as a terrorist organization.
- 03 To analyze how experts, researchers, and academics assess Biden's policy toward Iran and whether it will achieve its goals.
- 04 To explore the views of experts, researchers, and academics about whether Biden will succeed in reviving the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and strengthening the MENA region's chances for peace.
- 05 To understand the opinion of experts, researchers, and academics on which of the MENA crises Biden is likely to resolve.
- 06 To analyze the views of experts, researchers, and academics on how the Biden administration will deal with political Islamist groups and the Muslim
- 07 To understand whether the Biden administration will enhance its openness toward the MENA region in general and the GCC countries in particular.
- 08 To analyze the chances of resolving crises facing the MENA region under the Biden administration.



## Methodology

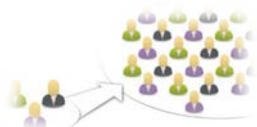


An electronic questionnaire was designed for the purpose of this survey.

### Questionnaire Format



The sample consists of experts and researchers from various think-tanks, and academic institutions.



### Sample Selection

Owing to the difficulty of reaching the target audience, we used the snowball sampling method. We sent a questionnaire link to experts and researchers from various think-tanks and academic institutions whose data are available at the TRENDS Research & Advisory. We requested them to share the link with other people fitting the characteristics of the intended sample. The sample size reached 336 persons, with a  $\pm 5$  percent error margin.



### Data Collection

The electronic data collection method was used whereby the questionnaire was posted on the TRENDS website.



### Data Analysis

SPSS and Excel statistical programs were used to process and analyze the data, extract tables and graphs, and prepare the statistical report.

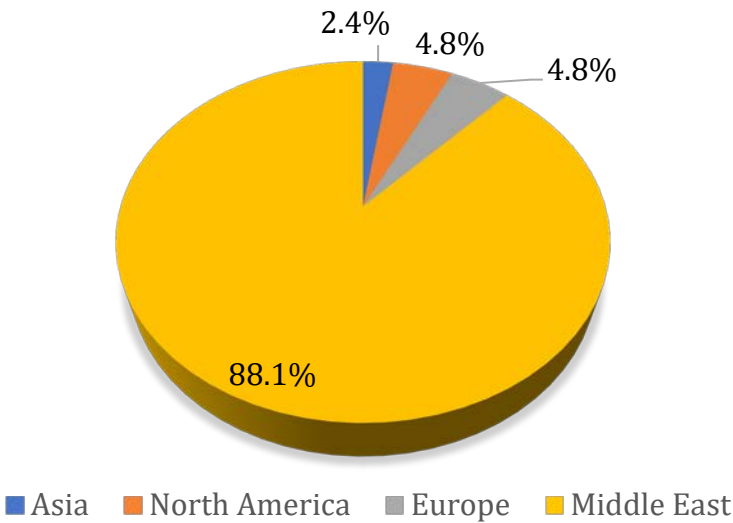


### Duration of the Survey

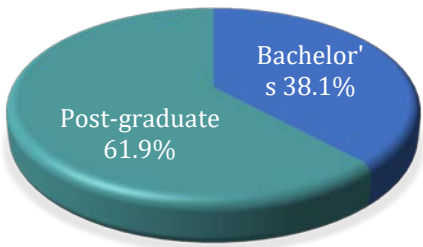
The data were collected between February 22, 2021, and March 8, 2021.

Characteristics of the Sample

Sample Distribution – By Region



Sample Distribution  
By Academic Qualification



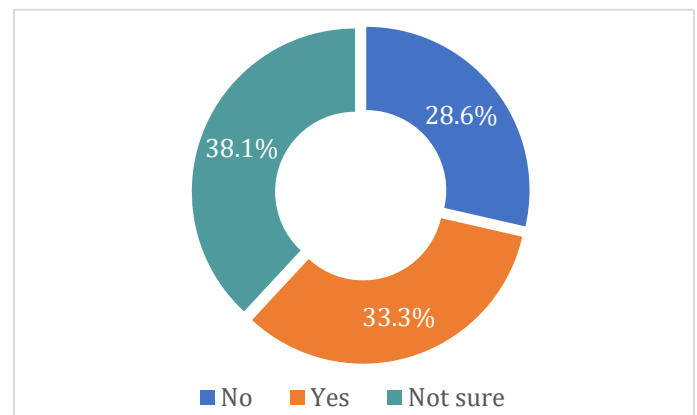
Sample Distribution – By Gender



## Main Findings:

### 1. Will Joe Biden's policies help ensure security and stability in the MENA region?

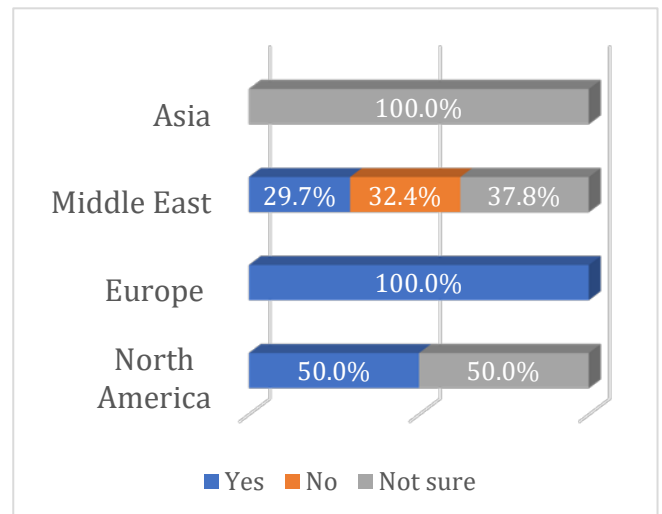
Responding to this question, 38.1 percent of the respondents said they are unsure, while 33.3 percent believed that Joe Biden's policies would help ensure the MENA region's security and stability. Another 28.6 percent said his policies would not help.



In terms of region, 100 percent of the respondents in Europe believe that Biden's policies will help ensure security and stability in the MENA region. In comparison, 100 percent of Asian respondents are not sure.

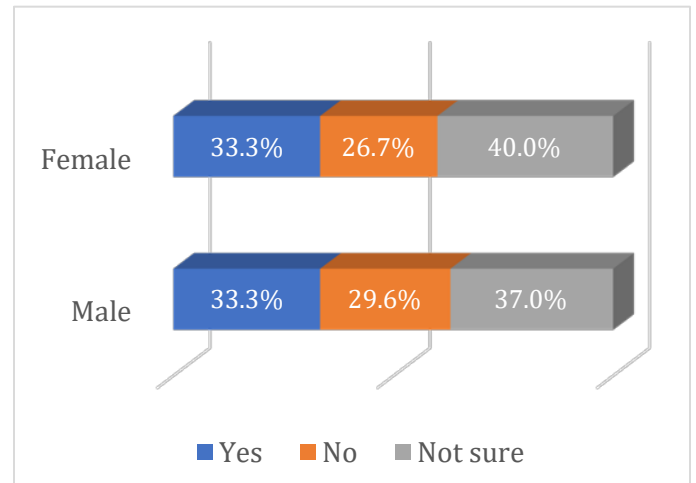
Half of the North American respondents see the Biden policies helping ensure the security and stability in the MENA region, while the other 50 percent say they are not sure.

As many as 37.8 percent of the Middle East respondents were unsure whether Joe Biden's policies will help the MENA region's security and stability. In comparison, 32.4 percent do not believe they will help. However, 29.7 percent also said they would help.

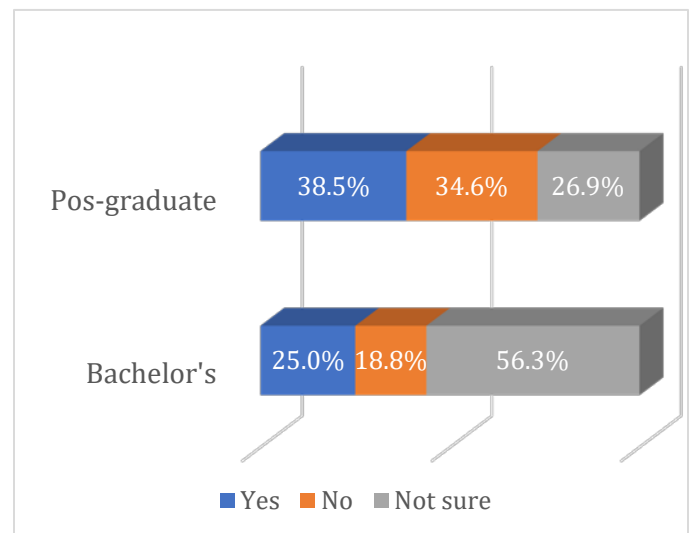




On a gender scale, 33.3 percent of males and females believe that Biden's policies will help ensure the MENA region's security and stability. However, forty percent of females say they are not sure, and 37 percent of males said the same.

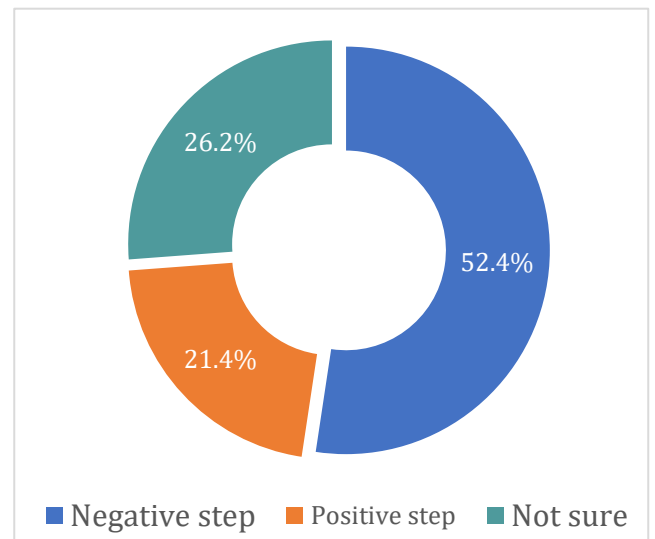


In terms of educational level, 56.3 percent of bachelor's degree holders are unsure whether Biden's policies would help ensure the MENA region's security and stability. In comparison, 38.5 percent of postgraduate degree holders believe that they will help.

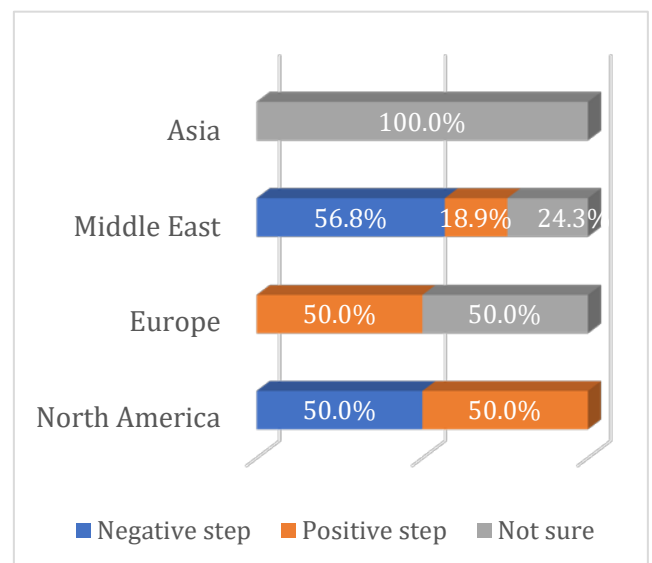


## 2. What do you think of the Biden administration's decision to delist the Houthi militia as a terrorist organization?

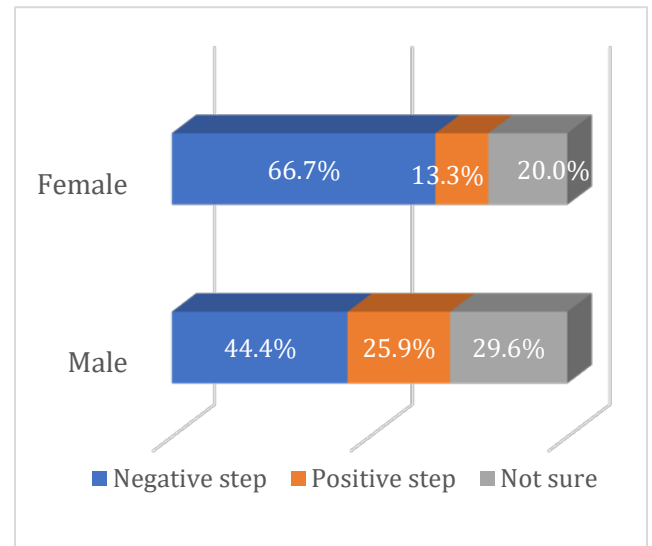
Responding to this question, 52.4 percent of the respondents called the decision a “negative step,” 21.4 percent think of it as a “positive step” while 26.2 percent said they are unsure about its outcome.



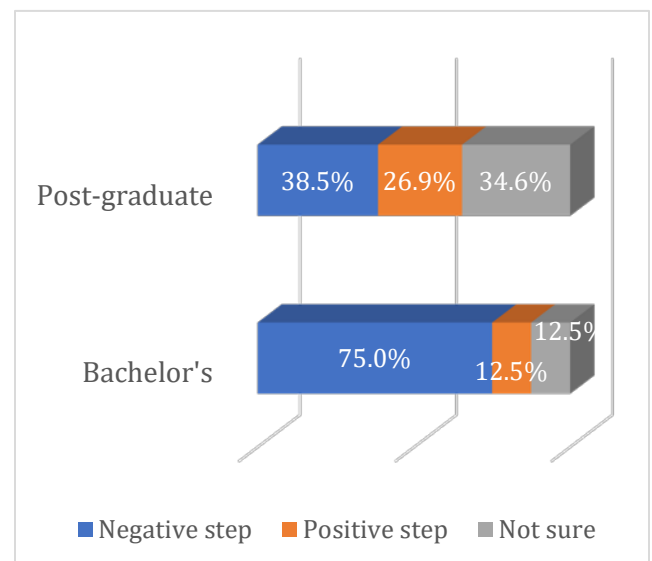
All respondents from Asia say they are unsure about the outcome of Biden's decision to delist the Houthi militia as a terrorist organization, while 56.8 percent from the Middle East consider it a “negative step.” However, 50 percent of the European respondents consider it a “positive step,” and 50 percent are unsure about its result. Respondents from North America are equally divided between those who think of it as a “positive step” and those who consider it a “negative step.”



The results showed a significant agreement between male and female respondents regarding the Biden administration's decision to delist the Houthi militia as a terrorist organization. Compared to 66.7 percent of females considering it a "negative step," 44.4 percent of males thought it the same.

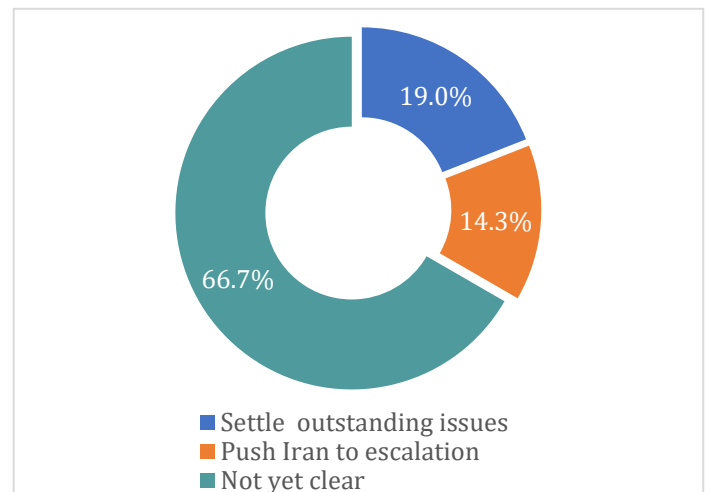


Classified on the education level, 75 percent of bachelor's degree holders considered the decision a "negative step," and so did 38.5 percent of postgraduates. However, 34.6 percent of postgraduates are also unsure about the outcome of the decision.

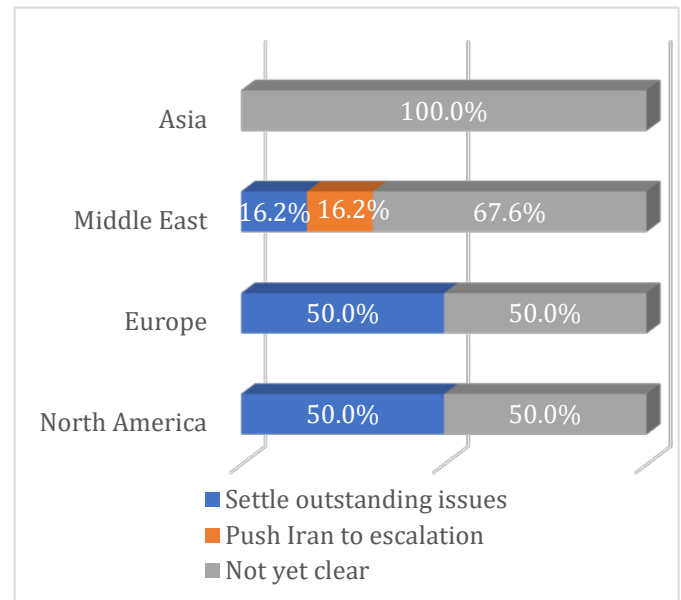


### 3. How do you assess Biden's policy toward Iran?

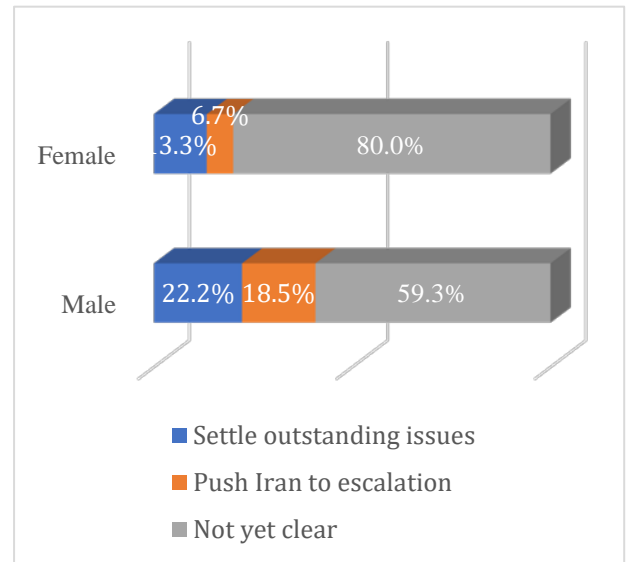
In response to this question, 66.7 percent of the respondents said the picture is not clear concerning Biden's policy toward Iran. In comparison, 19 percent said his policies would settle all outstanding issues with Iran. Another 14.3 percent believe they will push Iran toward escalation.



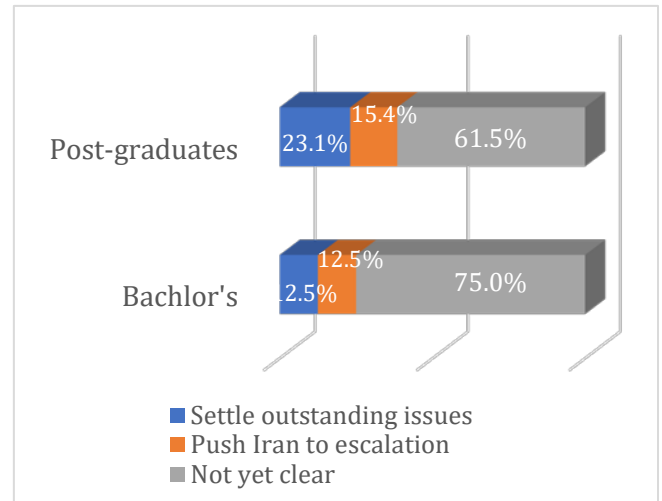
In terms of region, the results show that 100 percent of Asian respondents say they still do not have a clear picture of Biden's policy toward Iran. As many as 67.6 percent of respondents from the Middle East also say the picture is still unclear. Respondents from Europe and North America are equally divided between those who believe that Biden's policies would resolve all outstanding issues with Iran and those who say that the picture is unclear.



On a gender scale, 80 percent of females say the picture is unclear concerning Joe Biden's policy toward Iran, compared to 59.3 percent of males. However, 22.2 percent of males believe that this policy will settle all outstanding issues, compared to 13.3 percent of females. 18.5 percent of males and 6.7 percent of females expect that this policy will push Iran to escalation.

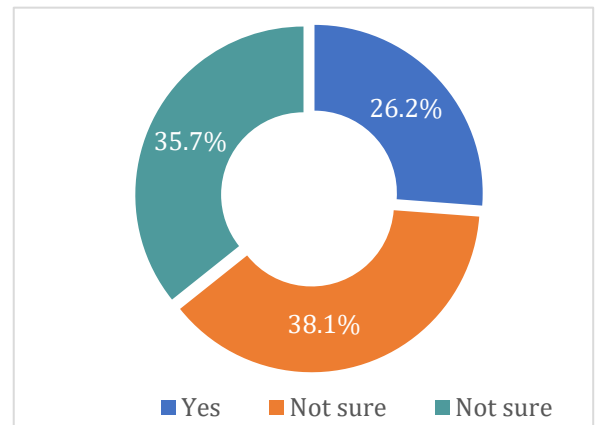


In terms of educational level, 75 percent of Bachelor's degree holders do not yet have a clear picture of Biden's policy toward Iran, compared to 61.5 percent of postgraduates. 12.5 percent of Bachelor's degree holders and 23.1 percent of postgraduates expect that this policy will settle all outstanding issues. 2.5 percent of Bachelor's degree holders and 15.4 percent of postgraduates expect that this policy will push Iran to escalation.

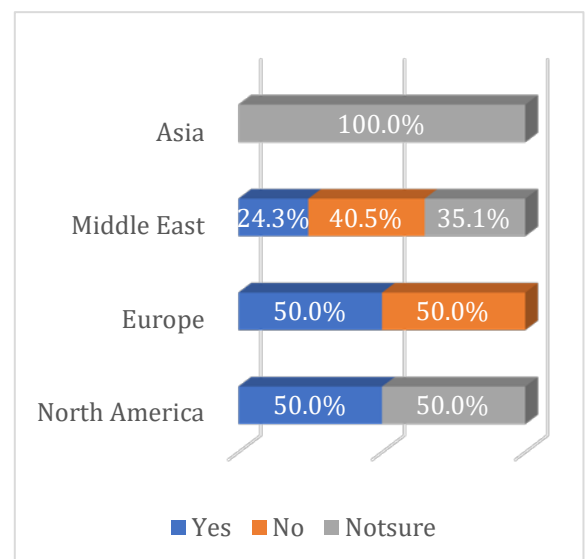


#### 4. Will Biden succeed in reviving the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and strengthening the MENA region's chances for peace?

While answering this question, 38.1 percent of the respondents said that Biden would not succeed in this matter. In comparison, 35.7 percent said they are unsure whether he will succeed or not, while 26.2 percent said Biden would achieve this goal.



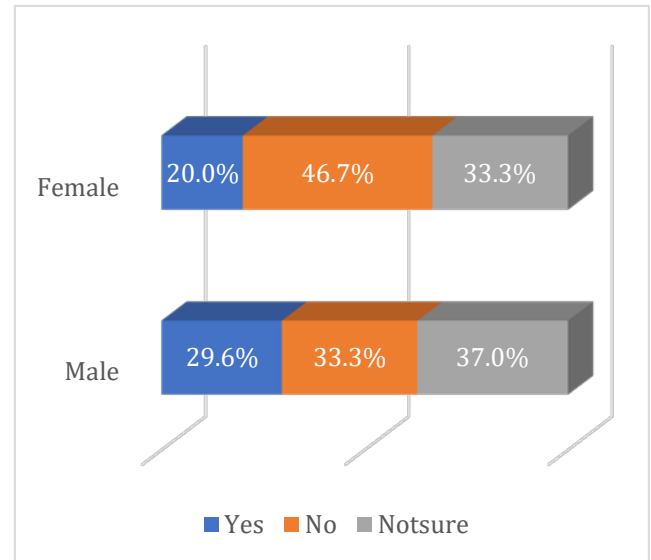
A 100 percent of the Asian respondents are unsure whether Biden will succeed in reviving the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and strengthening the MENA region's chances for peace. In comparison, 40.5 percent from the Middle East believe that Biden will not succeed. Around 35.1 percent say they are unsure, and 24.3 percent think Biden will revive the negotiations. Only half of the European respondents said Biden would succeed in achieving this goal. North American respondents were equally divided between those who believe that Biden will succeed and those who do not think so.





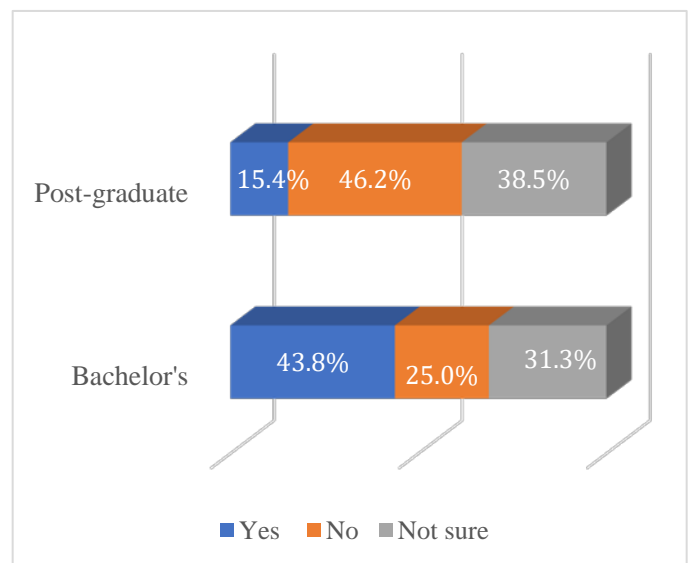
On a gender scale, 46.7 percent of the female respondents think Biden will not succeed in reviving the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and strengthening the MENA region's chances for peace, compared to 33.3 percent of males who think so.

While 37.0 percent of males and 33.3 percent of males are unsure about Biden's success, 29.6 percent of males and 20 percent of females say Biden will succeed in achieving this goal.



The results also reveal that 43.8 percent of Bachelor's degree holders believe that Biden will succeed in reviving the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and strengthening the MENA region's chances for peace.

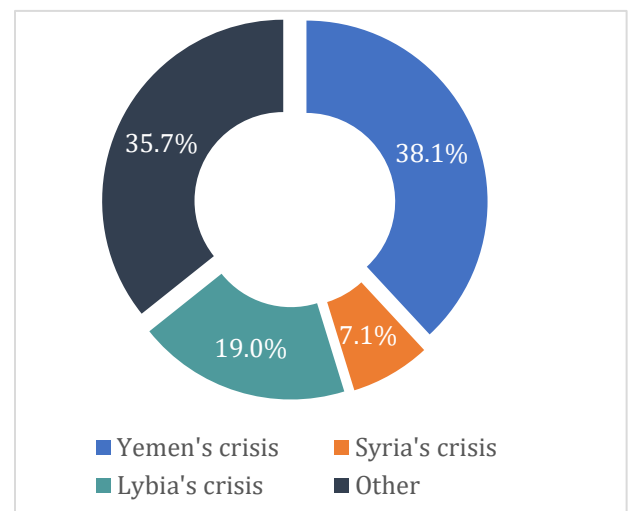
In comparison, 31.3 percent in this category were unsure, and 25 percent do not expect him to succeed. On the other hand, 46.2 percent of postgraduates do not expect Biden to succeed, 38.5 percent are unsure about it, while 15.4 percent believe he will succeed.



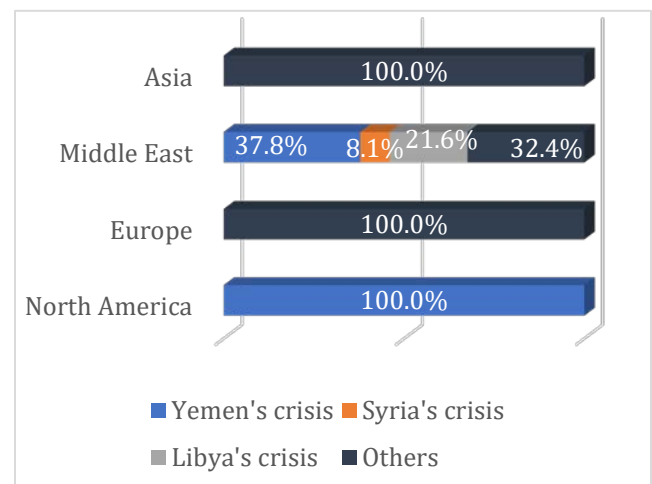
## 5. Which of the following crises (Yemen, Syria, and Libya) are likely to get resolved during the Biden administration?

Responding to this question, 38.1 percent of the respondents expect Yemen's crisis to be resolved while 19 percent expect Libya's, and only 7.1 percent expect Syria's crisis resolution.

However, 35.7 percent of the respondents expect that the Biden administration will settle crises other than these.

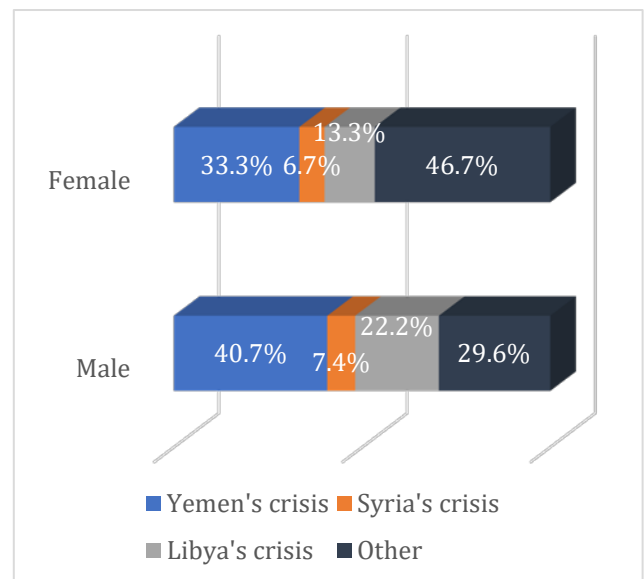


All of the respondents from Asia and Europe expect the Biden administration to settle crises other than those in Yemen, Syria, and Libya. In contrast, 100 percent of the North American respondents expect that Yemen's crisis will be settled. A total of 37.8 percent of respondents from the Middle East expect the settlement of Yemen's crisis, and 32.4 percent expect the settlement of crises other than those of Yemen, Syria, and Libya.



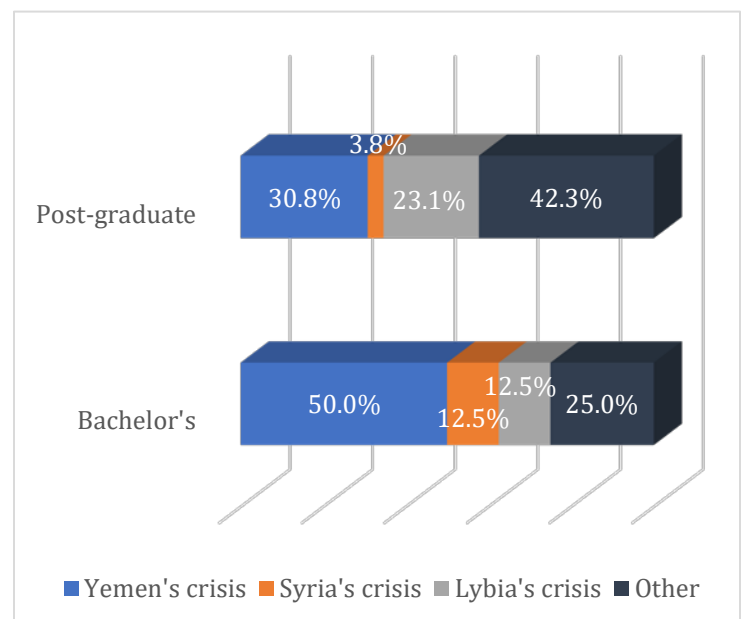
On a gender scale, 40.7 percent of males expect that the Biden administration will settle Yemen's crisis, while 22.2 percent expect it to resolve Libya's crisis. In comparison, 7.4 percent expect the settlement of Syria's crisis, and 29.6 percent expect Biden to solve crises other than these.

Among female respondents, 46.7 percent expect Biden to settle crises other than Yemen and Syria, while 33.3 percent expect a solution to Yemen's crisis. Another 13.3 percent expect Libya's crisis solution, and 6.7 percent expect a solution to Syria's crisis.



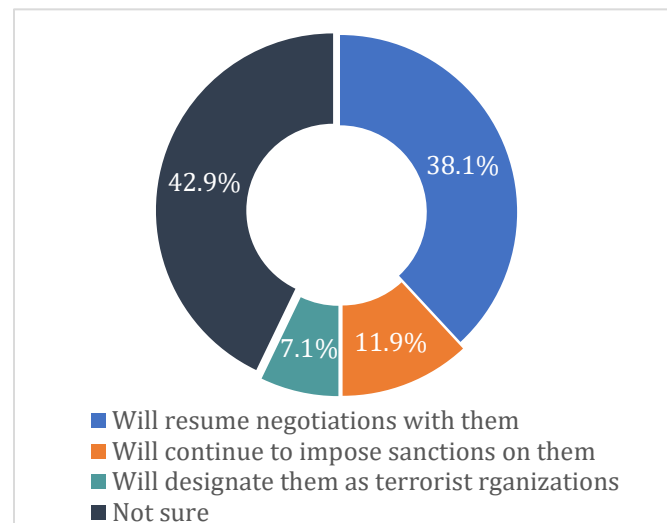
In terms of educational level, 50.0 percent of Bachelor's degree holders expect the Biden administration to settle Yemen's crisis. In comparison, 12.5 percent of them expect a solution to both Libya's and Yemen's crises. Another 25 percent expect a solution to crises other than these.

On the other hand, 42.3 percent of postgraduates expect the Biden administration to resolve crises other than those in Yemen, Syria, and Libya. A total of 30.8 percent expect a solution to Yemen's crisis, 23.1 percent expect a resolution of Libya's crisis, and 3.8 percent expect a solution to Syria's crisis.



## 6. How will the Biden Administration deal with political Islamist groups and the Muslim brotherhood?

Replying to this question, 42.9 percent of the respondents said they are unsure how the Biden administration will deal with political Islamist groups and the Muslim Brotherhood. While 38.1 percent of them expect the Biden administration to resume negotiations with them, 11.9 percent expect it to impose restrictions, and 7.1 percent expect it to designate them as terrorist organizations.



In terms of region, 100 percent of Asian respondents say they are unsure how the Biden administration will deal with political Islamist groups and the Muslim Brotherhood. Also, 43.2 percent in the Middle East are unsure. In comparison, 35.1 percent expect the Biden administration to resume negotiations with them, 13.5 percent expect it to impose restrictions on them, and 8.1 percent expect it to designate them as terrorist organizations. However, 100 percent of European respondents expect the Biden administration to resume negotiations with political Islam groups and the Muslim brotherhood. In contrast, North American respondents are equally divided between those who expect a resumption of negotiations and those who do not.

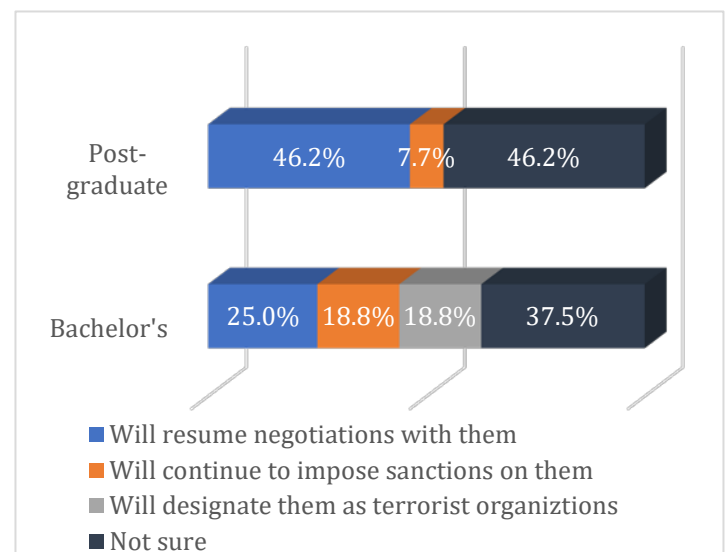


On the gender scale, 48.1 percent of male respondents say that they are unsure how the Biden administration will deal with political Islamic groups and the Muslim Brotherhood. In comparison, 44.4 percent expect it to resume negotiations with them, and 3.7 percent expect it to either impose restrictions or designate them as terrorist organizations.



On the other hand, 33.3 percent of female respondents are unsure how the Biden administration will deal with political Islamic groups and the Muslim Brotherhood. In comparison, 26.7 percent expect it to resume negotiations with them, and 26.7 percent expect it to impose restrictions.

On an educational scale, 46.2 percent of postgraduates expect the Biden administration to resume negotiations with political Islam groups and the Muslim Brotherhood. In comparison, 46.2 percent are unsure how it will deal with them. Another 7.7 percent expect the United States to impose restrictions on them.



Among Bachelor's degree holders, 37.5 percent say they are not sure how the Biden administration will deal with these groups, while 25 percent of them expect it to resume negotiations with them.

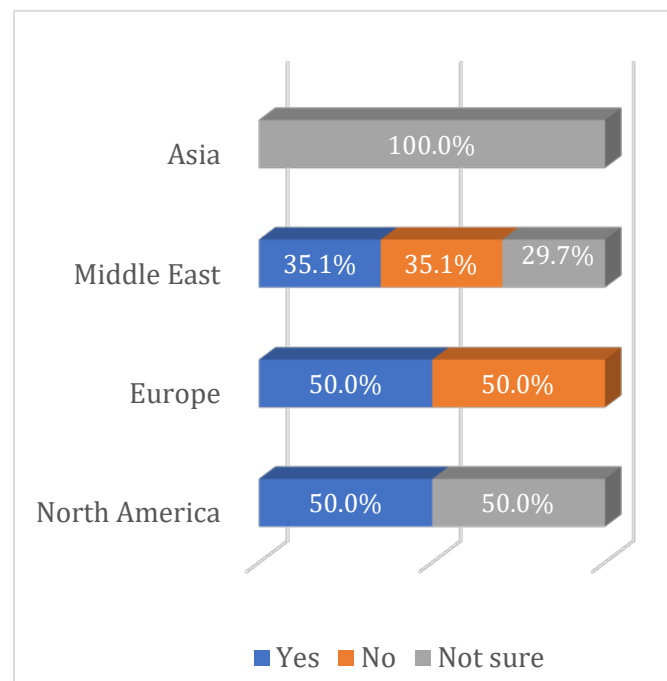
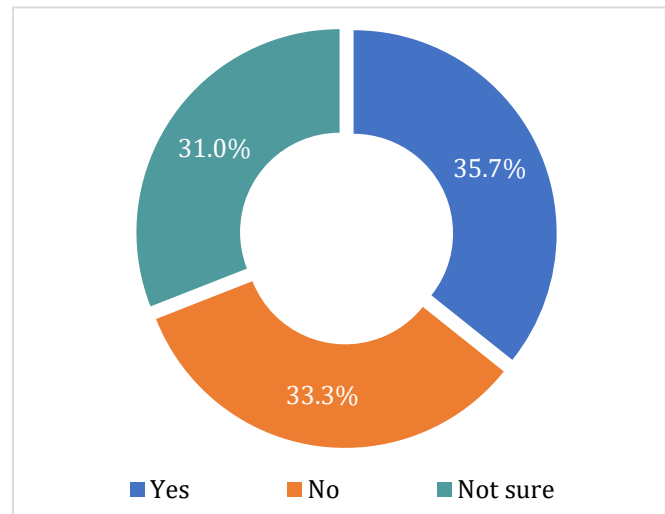
## 7. Would the Biden administration enhance its openness toward Mena and the GCC countries?

When the GCC respondents were asked about the possibility of the Biden administration enhancing its openness to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, 37.5 percent said it would happen, while 33.3 percent did not expect it. Thirty-one percent were uncertain.

All the Asia participants were not sure that the Biden administration would enhance its openness toward MENA, especially to GCC countries.

While 35.1 percent of participants from the Middle East said they expect the Biden administration to further open up to the MENA region, especially to GCC countries, 35.1 percent do not expect that to happen. Another 29.7 percent of respondents said they were uncertain.

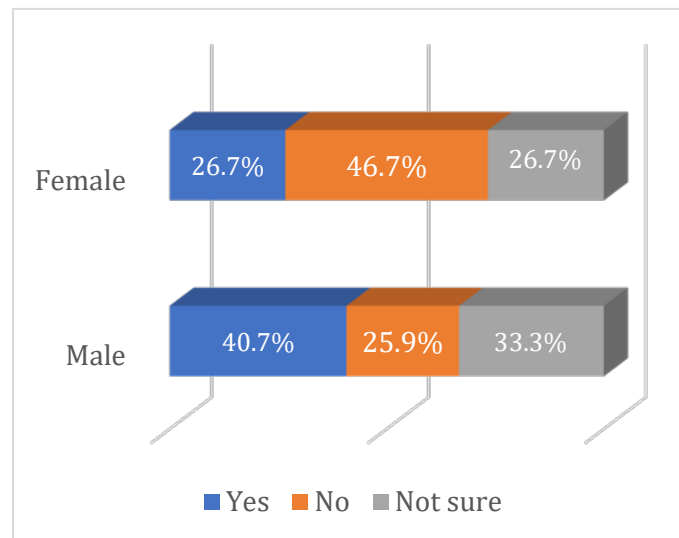
Half of the European respondents expect the Biden administration to enhance its openness toward MENA, especially to the GCC countries, while the remaining 50 percent do not expect that. Half the participants from North America also expected enhanced openness toward MENA while the other half were uncertain.





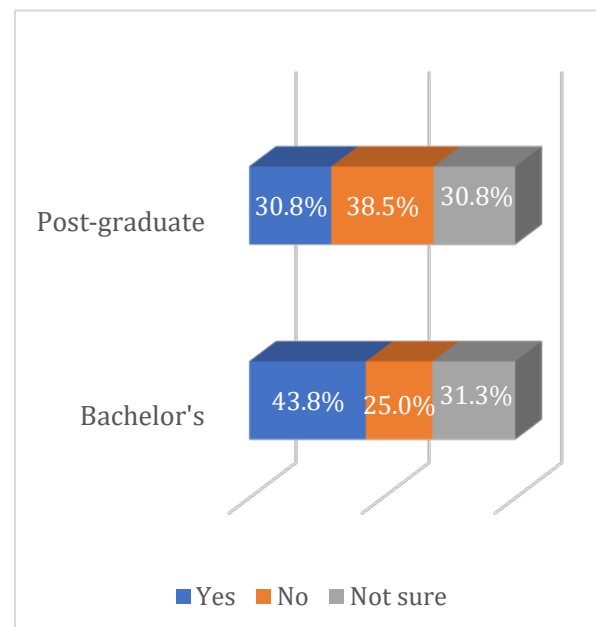
Among males, 40.7 percent expected the Biden administration to open up to the MENA region, especially GCC countries. However, 25.9 of males do not expect this to happen, and 33.3 percent of them were uncertain.

More than one-third of female participants in the poll do not expect the Biden administration to enhance its openness toward the MENA region.



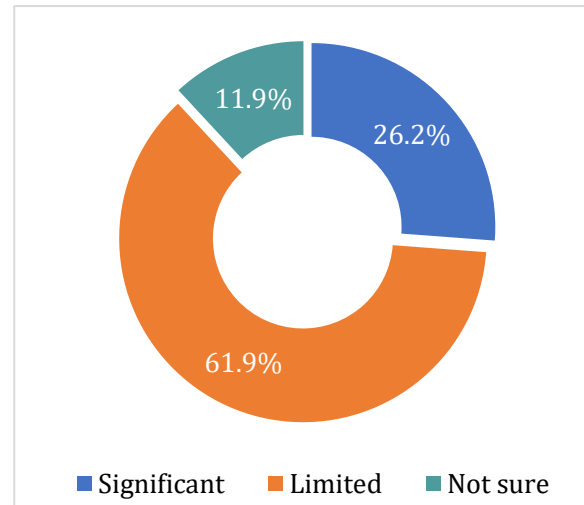
Almost half (43.8 percent) of BA holders expect the Biden administration to enhance its openness to MENA, especially to the GCC countries. However, 25 percent of them do not expect this to happen, while 31.3 of them were uncertain.

Among postgraduates, 38.5 percent do not expect the Biden administration to be more open toward MENA countries, especially the GCC. On the other hand, 30.8 percent of them expect that would happen, and 30.8 percent were uncertain.



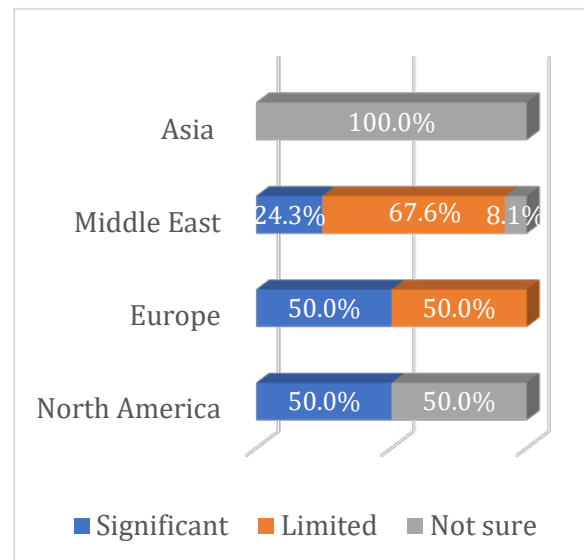
## 8. What are the chances of MENA crises getting resolved under the Biden administration?

A large majority of respondents (61.9 percent) believe that the chances of MENA crises getting resolved under the Biden administration are limited. However, 26.2 percent of them said the chances are good, while 11.9 percent were uncertain.



On a regional scale, the results showed that all respondents from Asia (100 percent) were uncertain about the resolution of the crises facing the MENA region under the Biden administration.

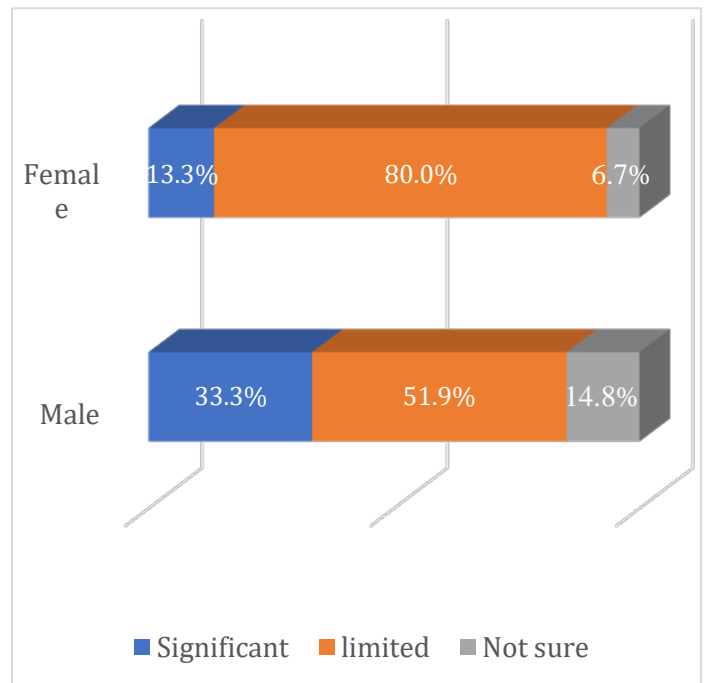
While 67.6 percent in the Middle East believe the chances are limited, 24.3 percent believed the chances are good.



Among respondents from Europe, 50 percent believe the chances are good while the other half called it “limited.”

Half of the North American respondents believe that the chances to settle MENA crises are reasonable under the Biden administration, while the other half were uncertain.

A vast majority of both female and male respondents view the chances are limited. The ratio was 80 percent among females and 51.9 percent among males.



Holders of BA and post-graduate diplomas view the chances as limited. The ratio was 62.5 percent among BA holders and 61.5 percent among holders of post-graduate diplomas.

