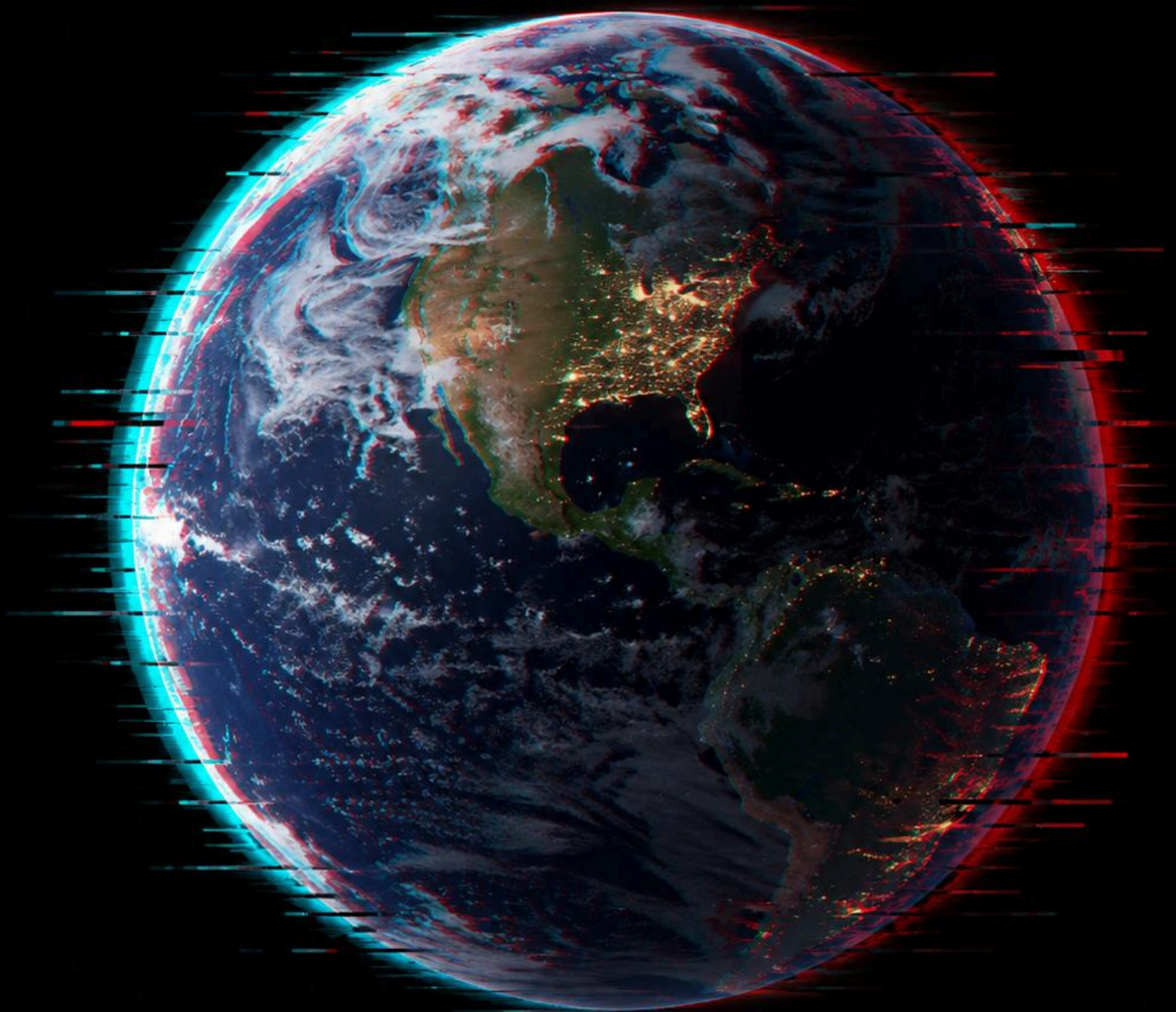


Democracy Perception Index 2026

The world's largest annual study on how
people perceive democracy



SPECIAL FEATURES

Security and Defense
Global Conflicts
Perception of Countries

Welcome

The Democracy Perception Index (DPI) is the world's largest annual study on how people perceive democracy, conducted by Nira Data in collaboration with the Alliance of Democracies. The 2026 edition offers an unprecedented comparison of global attitudes towards democracy across 98 countries. Results are based on nationally representative interviews with over 94,146 respondents from 98 countries conducted between March 19th and April 21st, 2026.

The DPI was published ahead of the 2026 Copenhagen Democracy Summit to support the discussion on the global state of democracy.

Dr. Nico Jaspers

CEO at Nira Data

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- ▶ **94,146**
respondents
- ▶ **98**
countries
- ▶ **Spring 2026**
March 19th - April 21st
- ▶ **90%+**
of the global population represented

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Foreword

The Democracy Perception Index 2026 was published ahead of the 2026 Copenhagen Democracy Summit to support the discussion on the global state of democracy.



“ The fast decline of the United States’ perception around the world is saddening but not shocking. Far more concerning to me is that many Europeans still do not recognise the threats facing them and the urgent need to build our own deterrence.

Democracy is still in demand around the world but our leaders must step up to show that our democratic systems can still offer a vision of optimism and hope for voters.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Chair of the Alliance of Democracies Foundation, former NATO Chief, and Danish Prime Minister



“ The 2026 Democracy Perception Index highlights how quickly global perceptions can shift in response to geopolitical tensions, conflict, and economic uncertainty. The declining image of the US and its increasingly widespread perception as the world's biggest threat - combined with widespread pessimism in parts of Europe - is deeply concerning.

At the same time, this year’s survey also finds that people still believe in democracy - but they are increasingly unconvinced that it is working for them. What we see is not declining demand, but rising expectations: citizens are looking for systems that deliver security, stability, and economic progress. This growing disconnect between democratic ideals and lived reality is a defining challenge for leaders today.

Dr. Nico Jaspers, CEO at Nira Data

Executive Summary

The Democracy Perception Index, released by Nira Data and the Alliance of Democracies Foundation, is the ninth installment of the world's largest annual study on democracy covering 98 countries and representative of more than 90% of the world's population. It was prepared for the annual Copenhagen Democracy Summit on May 12-14.

State of Democracy

- ▶ Global commitment to democracy remains remarkably strong. Over two-thirds of people worldwide say it is very important to have democracy in their country.
- ▶ Yet people are pessimistic about where their country is headed. Far more people say their country is moving in the wrong direction than the right, particularly in democracies. Europe is the most pessimistic region by a wide margin, with France and Germany among the least optimistic countries. By contrast, China stands out as the country with the highest public optimism in the direction their country is headed.
- ▶ When asked what the main purpose of democracy is, most people prioritise improving living standards and well-being above all else. This is the top answer in 62% of countries surveyed, above promoting a fair and peaceful society (18%), freely choosing the government (10%) and protecting individual rights and freedoms (9%).
- ▶ The Democracy Perception Index (DPI) examines these views in greater depth by measuring how citizens rate eight core democratic dimensions in their own country. Established democracies, particularly the Nordic countries, lead the rankings. But some non-democracies also score highly, most notably China, where citizens give positive ratings to the rule of law, civic education, and peaceful transitions. Across the world, government transparency is the dimension citizens rate worst.

Security and Defense

- ▶ Most of the world prefers cooperation, alliances, and international law over militarization, but the countries closest to active conflict are the ones most willing to spend, fight, and prepare for war.
- ▶ Most people support a rules-based international order: on average, 50% agree that countries should follow international laws even when this limits their freedom of action, while 31% disagree. Most people are also not concerned about the possibility of their country being attacked, with the exception of countries facing active or recent conflict, such as Ukraine, Georgia, Lebanon, and Palestine.
- ▶ When asked what their country should do to protect itself, most people choose strengthening alliances over military investment, nuclear deterrents, or mandatory service. Military investment is the top priority in 18 countries, mostly in MENA and parts of Asia-Pacific. Public opinion in Europe on increasing defense spending is divided, with strong support in the Nordic countries and Eastern European frontier states (Ukraine, Poland), and clear opposition in Southern Europe.
- ▶ Willingness to fight if attacked is highest in MENA, where an average of 62% of people aged 18-55 say they would fight to defend their country, and lowest in Europe (37%). Across the world, willingness to fight is also higher in authoritarian countries (50%) than in democracies (41%).
- ▶ The vast majority of people around the world are opposed to the United States having military bases in their country: in 86 out of 97 countries, more people say “no” to US bases than “yes”. Only in 4 countries are more people in favor than against: Puerto Rico, Poland, Israel, and South Korea.

Executive Summary

Global Conflicts

- ▶ Respondents were asked which side they agree with in five active or potential conflicts: Russia vs. Ukraine, Israel vs. Palestine, China vs. Taiwan, the United States vs. Iran, and the United States vs. Greenland/Denmark.
- ▶ Global public opinion does not align neatly into pro- or anti-Western camps. Each conflict produces its own coalition of countries, and the United States is often on the less popular side.
- ▶ In the war between Russia and Ukraine, 55 of 98 countries agree more with Ukraine and 30 with Russia. Europe agrees overwhelmingly with Ukraine, while MENA leans toward Russia. In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, 51 countries agree more with Palestine and only 17 with Israel; MENA is overwhelmingly pro-Palestine, while the Americas mildly lean toward Israel.
- ▶ The United States is on the less popular side of three of the five conflicts. Only 17 of 98 countries agree more with Israel than with Palestine, only 28 agree more with the United States than with Iran, and only 2 agree more with the United States than with Greenland and Denmark. In the latter, even the US public itself leans toward Greenland and Denmark by 12 points.
- ▶ In a hypothetical conflict between China and Taiwan, 41 countries agree more with Taiwan and 38 with China, the closest split of the five and the question with the highest share of "don't know" responses (38% globally).

Perception of Countries

- ▶ For the second consecutive year, perception of the United States has declined globally. The US is now among the five most negatively perceived countries in the world.
- ▶ The most positively perceived countries in the world remain a stable group of small and mid-sized democracies, including Switzerland, Canada, Japan, Sweden, Italy and Norway. The most negatively perceived country is Israel, followed by North Korea, Afghanistan, Iran, and the United States.
- ▶ The US is now perceived more negatively than positively in most countries surveyed, with the sharpest decline in Europe and the Americas. China and Russia have held steady over the same period, so the slide in perception of the US is the most pronounced shift captured in this year's data.
- ▶ China is increasingly seen more favorably than the US in most countries in the world, including across most of Europe. For the first time, Russia is also seen more favorably than the United States on average across the world.
- ▶ Is the world splitting into pro-US and pro-China or pro-Russia camps? The data suggest a different story: global dealignment, not global realignment. Views of the US have become more negative in many countries, but this has not translated into a comparable rise in positive views of China. Attitudes toward China, and to a lesser extent Russia, have improved slightly, but the larger trend is toward a world less clearly aligned with any major power.

Perception of Democracy

This chapter looks at people's perception of democracy. It starts with the question of how important democracy is to people, then asks what people understand by democracy and finally looks at how people perceive key elements of democracy - such as the impact of elections - in their own countries. Based on 8 of such elements, we construct the "Democracy Perception Index" (DPI), which ranks countries according to how democratic they are perceived to be by their citizens.

**This chapter draws on data from the
DPI Dashboard**

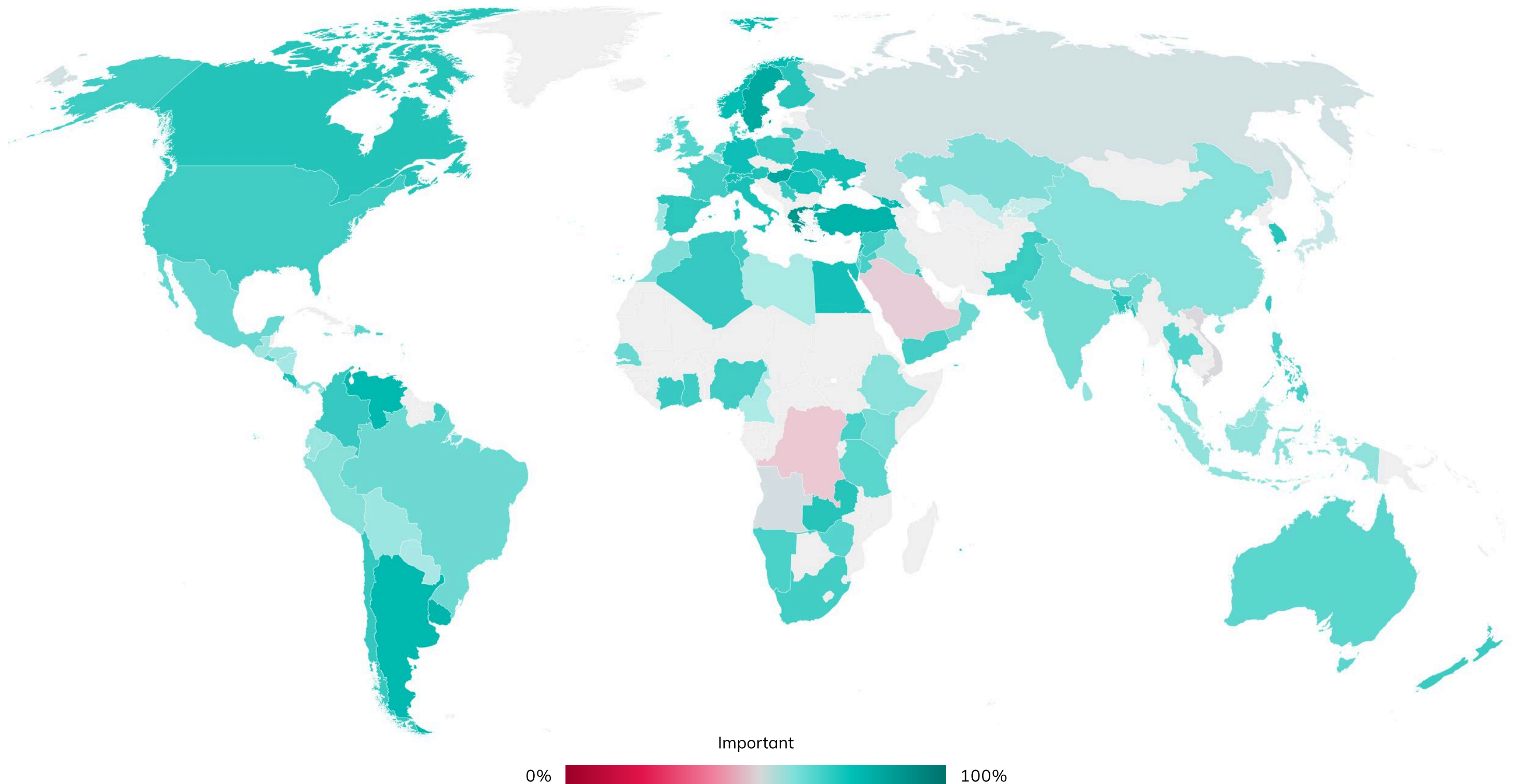
Please visit niradata.com/dpi-dashboard to access the dashboard

Importance of Democracy

Faith in democracy remains high across the world. A majority of people surveyed in almost every country say it is extremely or very important for their country to be a democracy. This ranges from the highest levels in Greece, Hungary, and Sweden to the lowest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Saudi Arabia, and Vietnam.

Democracy is important for people around the world

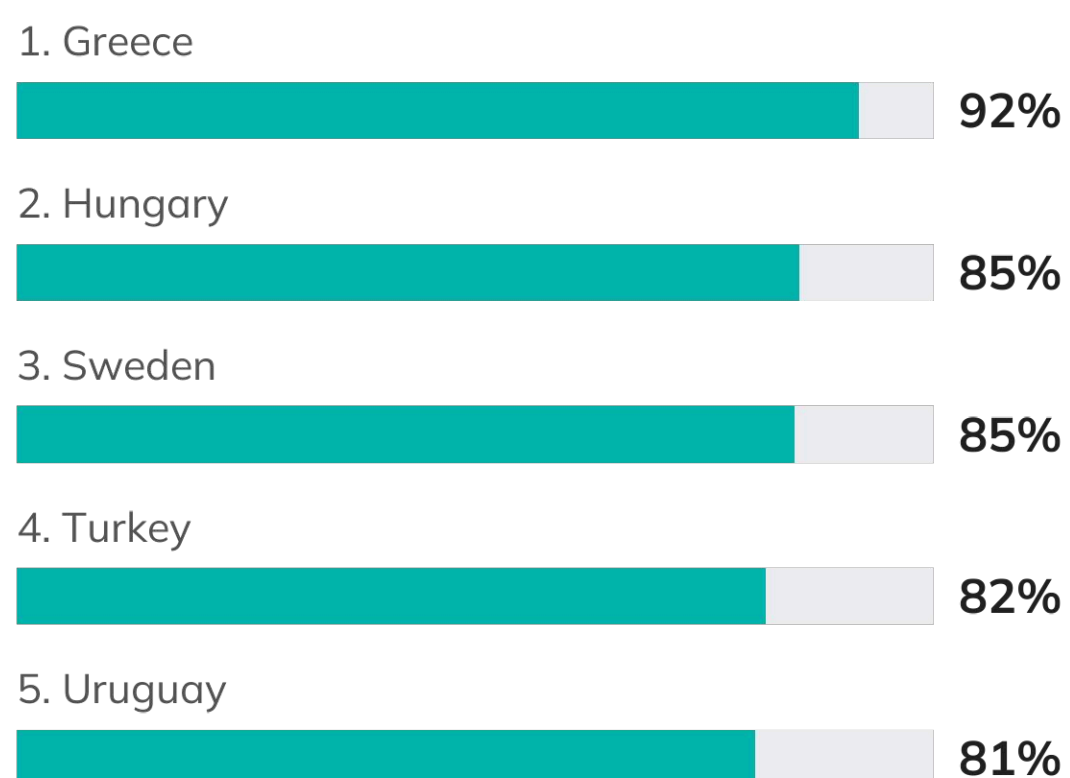
% say that it is 'extremely' or 'very' important to have democracy in their country



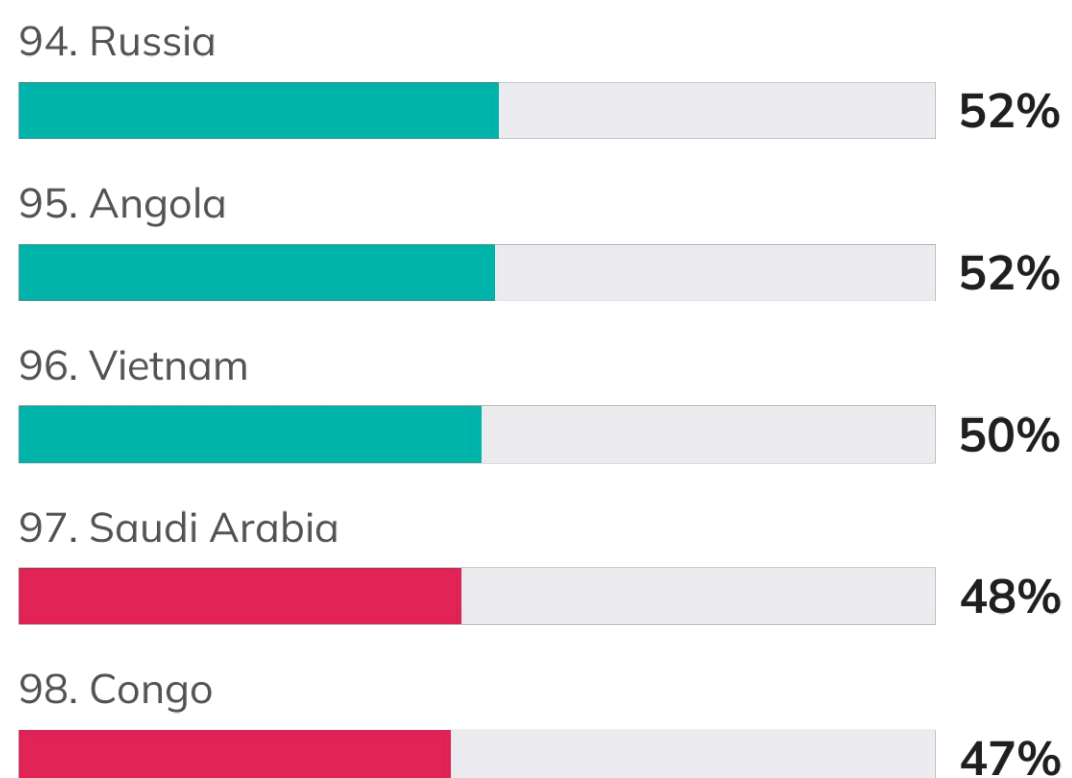
Importance of democracy

% of responses: "Extremely important" or "Very important"

Top 5



Bottom 5



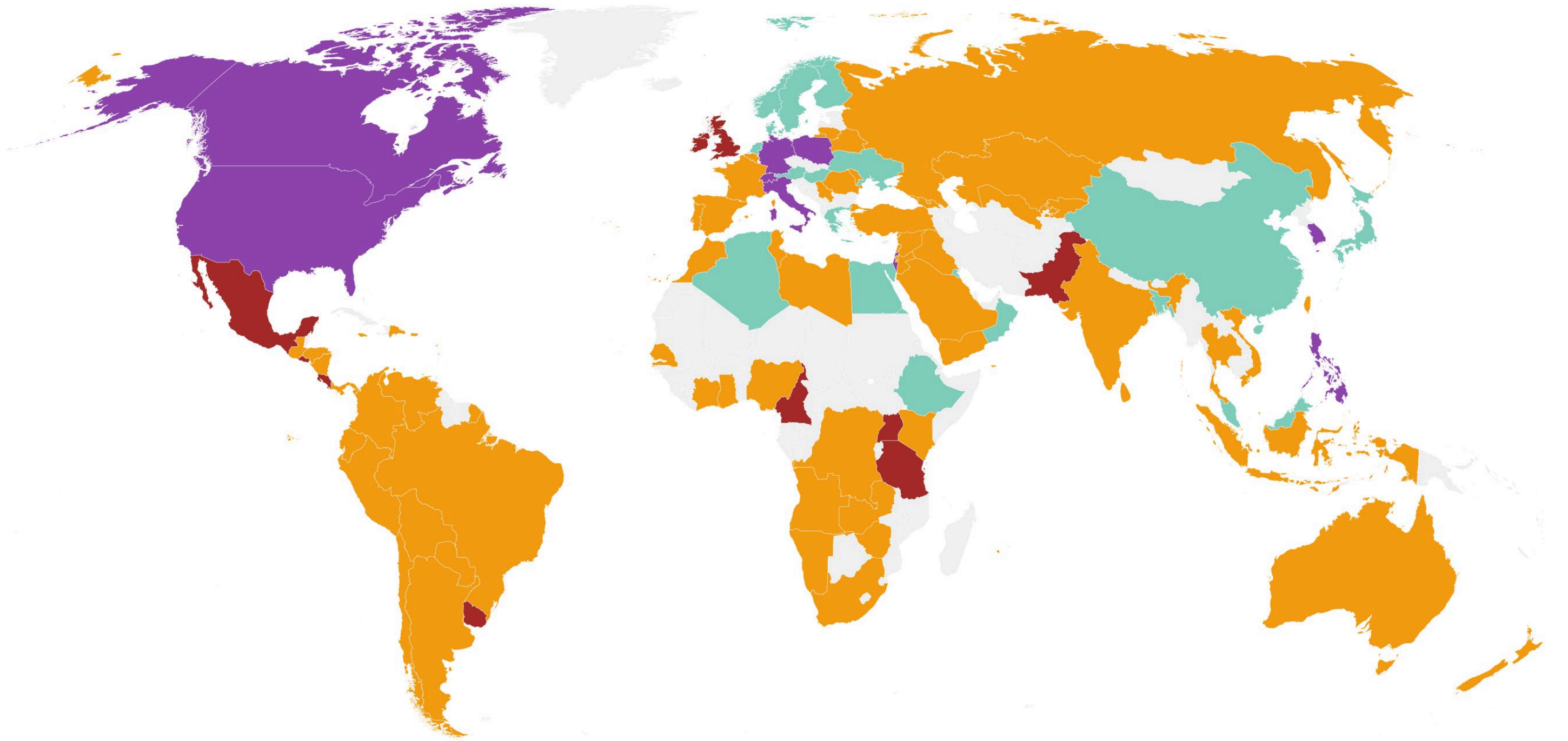
In your opinion, how important is it for your country to be a democracy?
Extremely important / Very important / Moderately important / Slightly important / Not important

Purpose of Democracy

People around the world have different opinions on what the main purpose of democracy is. In most countries, people say its main goal is to improve living standards and well-being. In several countries, including China, Sweden, Japan, and Greece, promoting a fair and peaceful society is the top priority. And in countries including the United States, Germany, Italy, and Canada, protecting individual rights and freedoms comes first.

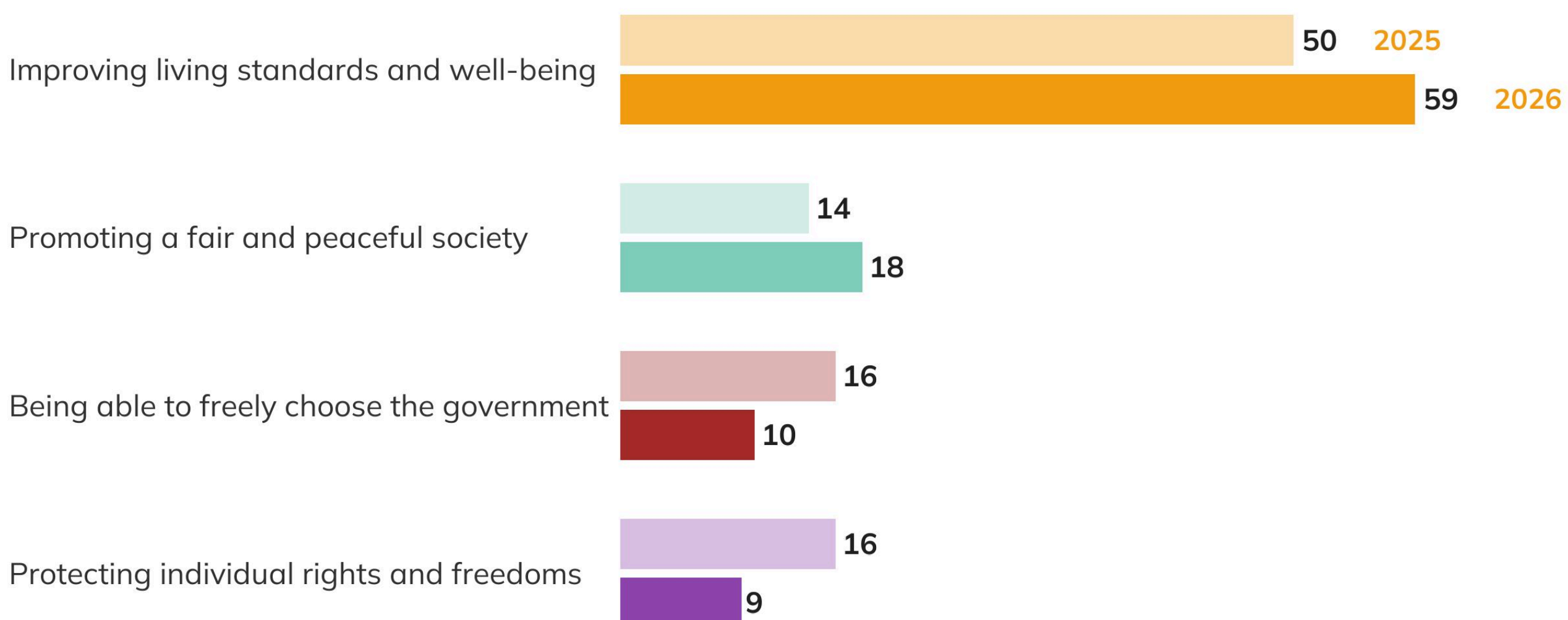
Most people say the main purpose of democracy is to improve living standards

top response option by country



Change in top-selected purpose of democracy (2025-2026)

number of countries that selected each answer as their top purpose, in 2025 and 2026



Which of the following would you say is the most important purpose of democracy? (single choice among 4 options)

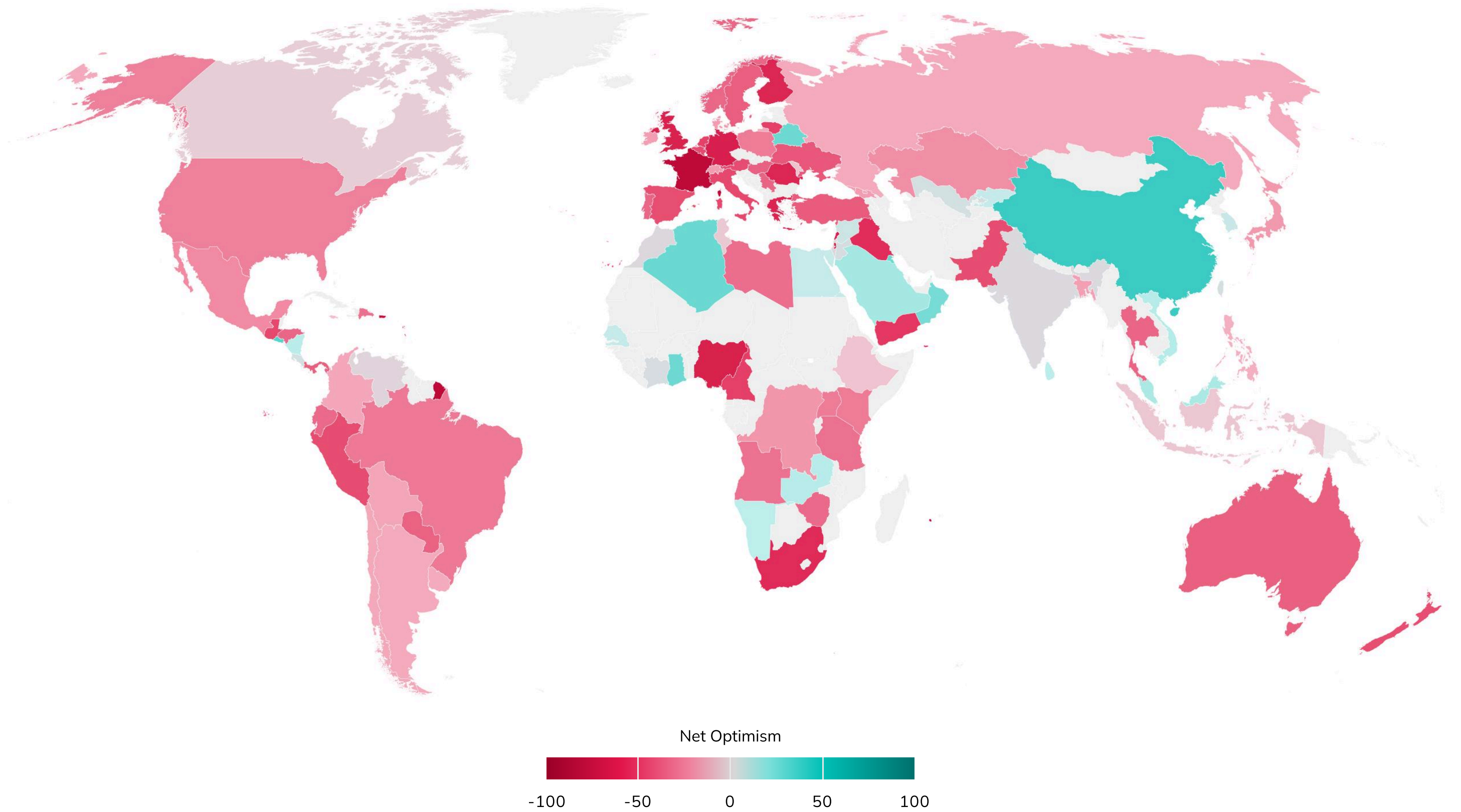
Improving living standards and well-being / Promoting a fair and peaceful society / Being able to freely choose the government / Protecting individual rights and freedoms

Country Direction

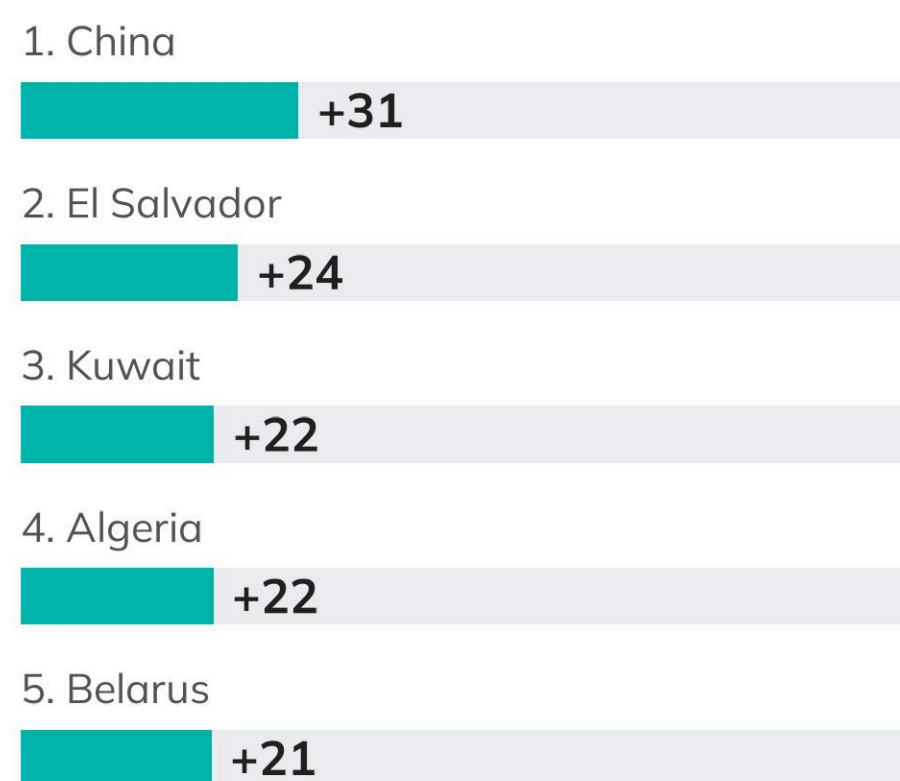
Far more people around the world say their country is headed in the wrong direction than the right direction. The countries with the highest net optimism are China, El Salvador, Kuwait, Algeria, and Belarus. The least optimistic are France, Puerto Rico, Lebanon, Germany, and Nigeria. Across all regions, Europe is the area with the lowest optimism.

Is your country heading in the right direction?

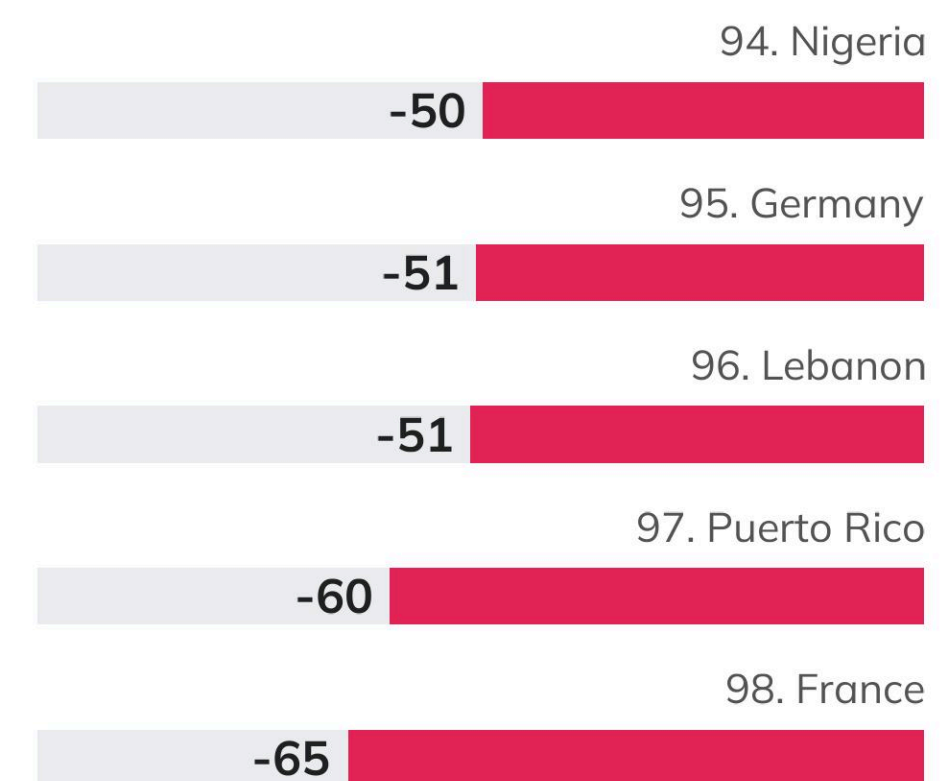
Net optimism: % 'Yes' - % 'No' (negative = more say wrong direction)



Top 5



Bottom 5

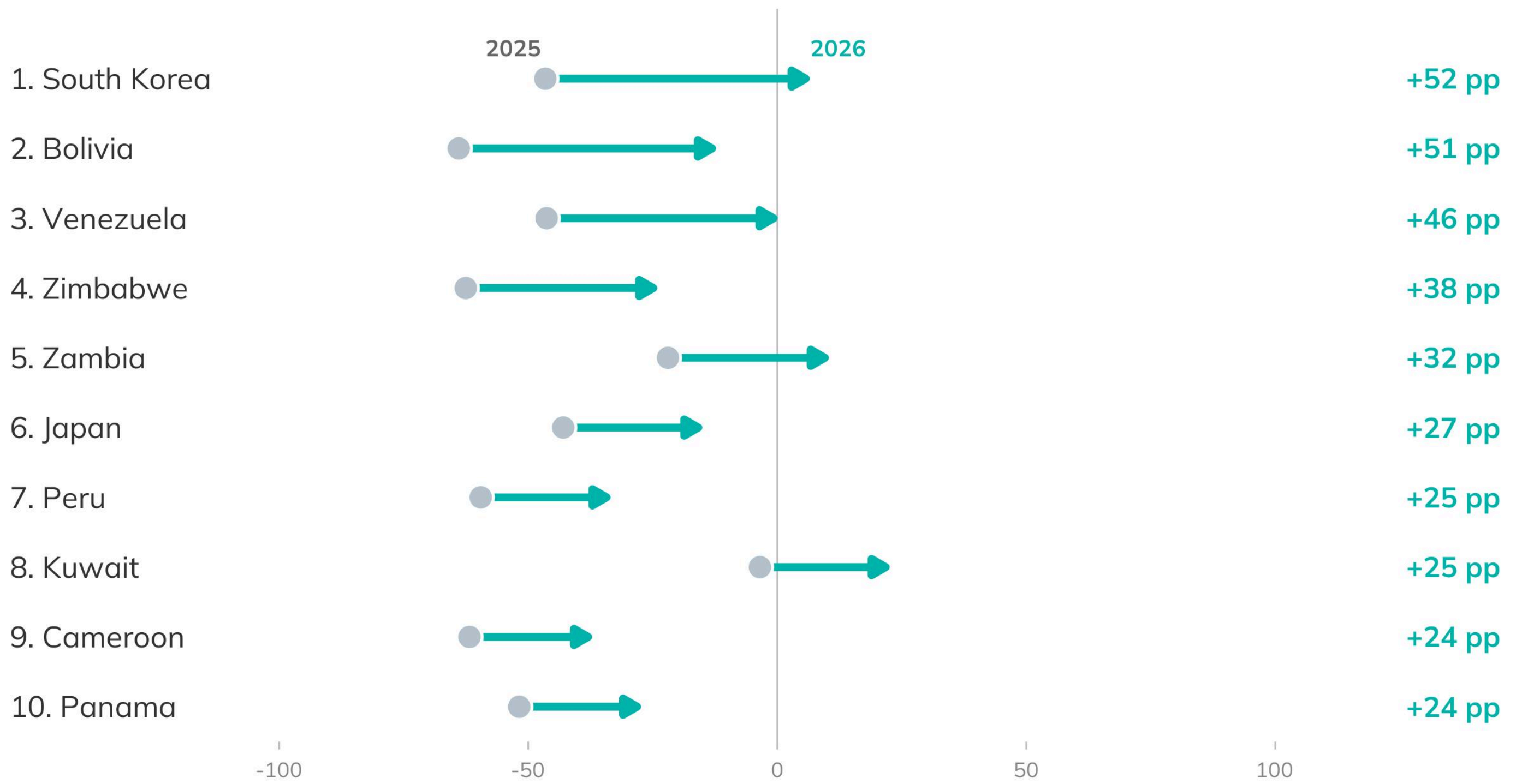


Think about your country in general. Would you say that things are currently moving in the right direction?
Yes / Not sure / No

Country Direction Trend

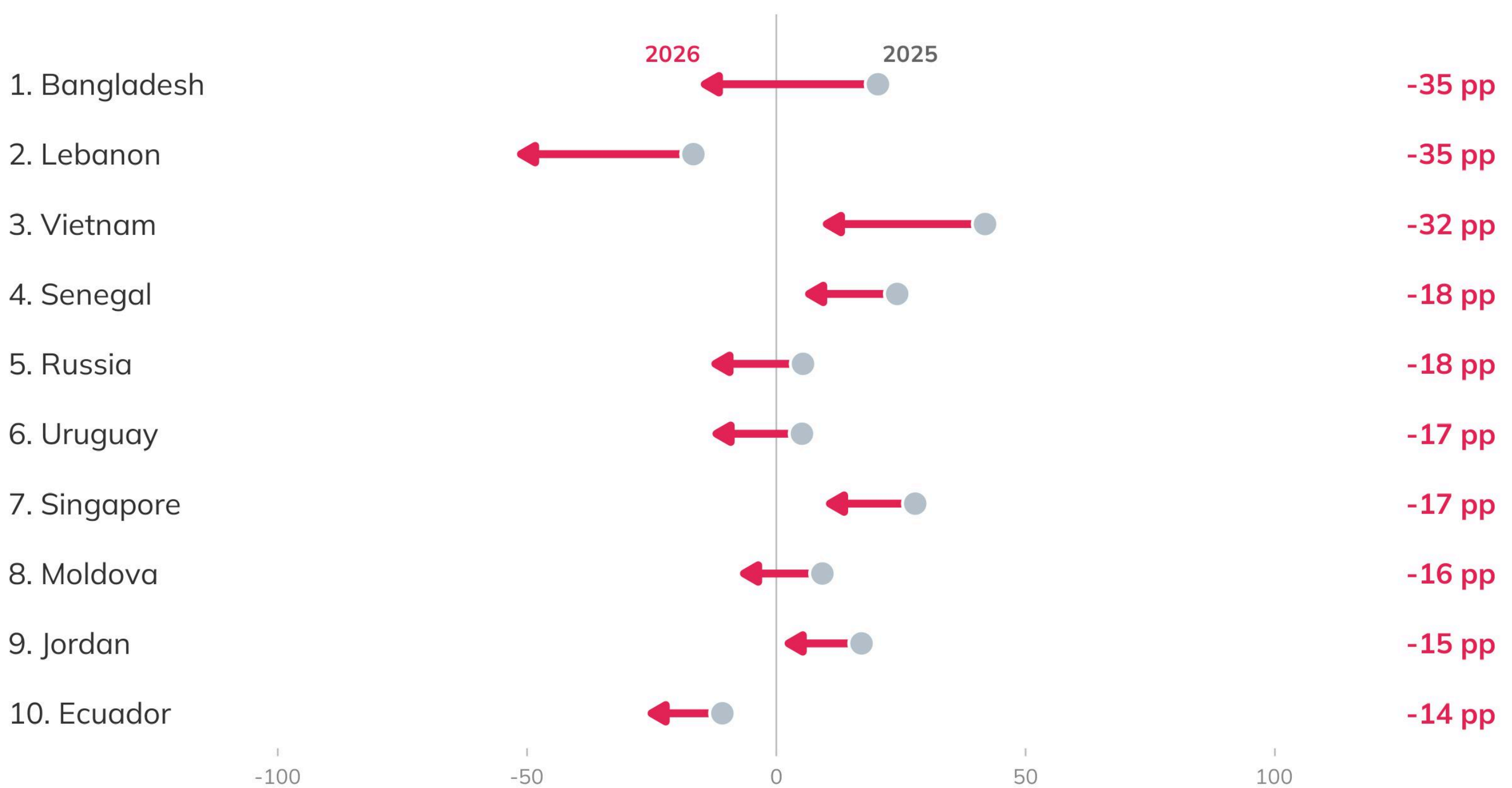
Biggest increases in optimism about the direction of the country

Change from 2025 to 2026, net optimism: % 'Yes' - % 'No'



Biggest decreases in optimism about the direction of the country

Change from 2025 to 2026, net optimism: % 'Yes' - % 'No'



Think about your country in general. Would you say that things are currently moving in the right direction?
Yes / Not sure / No

The Democracy Perception Index

The 2026 Democracy Perception Index (DPI) ranks 98 countries based on how citizens perceive the political system and public institutions in their own country.

What the DPI measures

Most democracy indices rely on expert assessments of laws, institutions, and political systems. The DPI takes a different approach: it asks citizens directly how they experience democracy from the inside.

The DPI uses eight questions that capture key features of democratic life, without asking respondents to judge technical aspects of government. Each question focuses on something citizens can reasonably observe, regardless of country, education, or level of political engagement.

The eight questions are grouped into two component scores:

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Whether people feel able to take part in political life through elections, free speech, political choice, and civic understanding.

- Elections
- Freedom of Speech
- Political Pluralism
- Civic Education

INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY

Whether people see public institutions as fair, transparent, law-bound, and stable.

- Separation of Powers
- Rule of Law
- Government Transparency
- Peaceful Transitions

Reporting these two component scores separately matters because they capture different aspects of democratic life. A country can score well on participation but poorly on institutions, or the reverse.

Because the DPI measures perceptions, high scores do not necessarily mean that a country would be rated as democratic by outside experts. In countries with restricted media environments, limited political competition, or strong state narratives, citizens may still report positive views of political participation or institutional performance. The DPI should therefore be read as a measure of public perception, not as a substitute for expert assessments of democratic rights and freedoms.

How the DPI score is calculated

For each country and each of the eight questions, a question score summarizes the distribution of responses in a single number between -100 and +100. The formula is simple:

Question score = % positive – % negative

This is the standard net score: the share of citizens giving a positive answer (the top two response categories) minus the share giving a negative answer (the bottom two). “Neutral” responses sit at zero and pull the score toward the middle. A country where 60% of citizens answer positively and 20% negatively scores +40; one where 30% answer positively and 50% negatively scores -20. Respondents who answer “Don’t know” or skip a question are excluded from that question’s calculation.

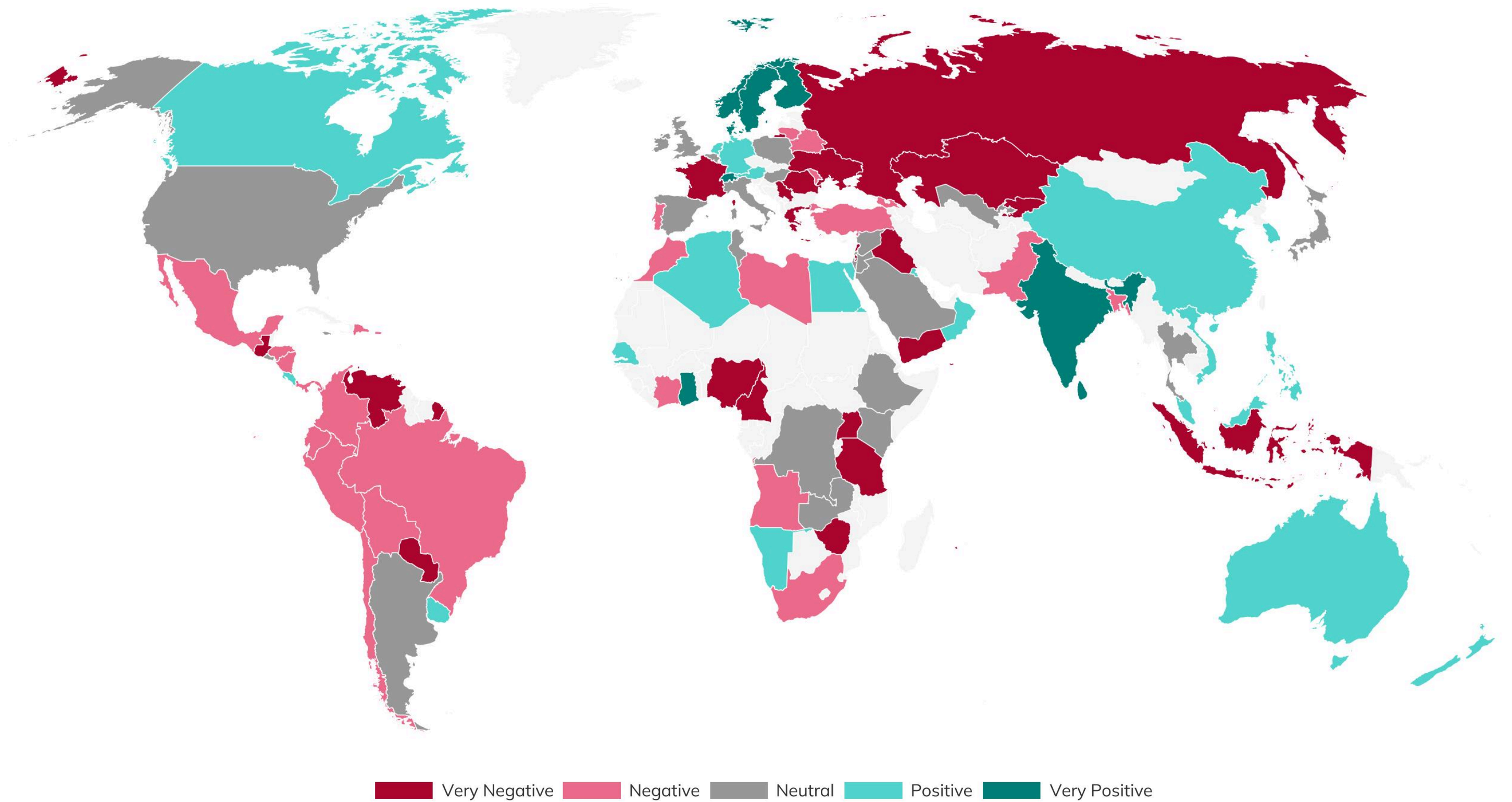
Each country’s DPI score is the average of its eight question scores.

Global Perception of Democracy

The Democracy Perception Index (DPI) measures how citizens rate the lived experience of democracy in their own country. It combines eight survey questions across two dimensions: Citizen Participation, capturing how people perceive their ability to take part in political life through elections, free speech, political choice, and civic education; and Institutional Quality, capturing whether people see public institutions as fair, transparent, constrained by law, and able to transfer power peacefully. The countries with the highest ratings from their citizens are Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Switzerland, all democracies. But some non-democracies also score highly, most notably China, Oman, and Vietnam, driven in part by positive perceptions of the rule of law, civic education, and peaceful transitions of power.

Democracy Perception Index 2026

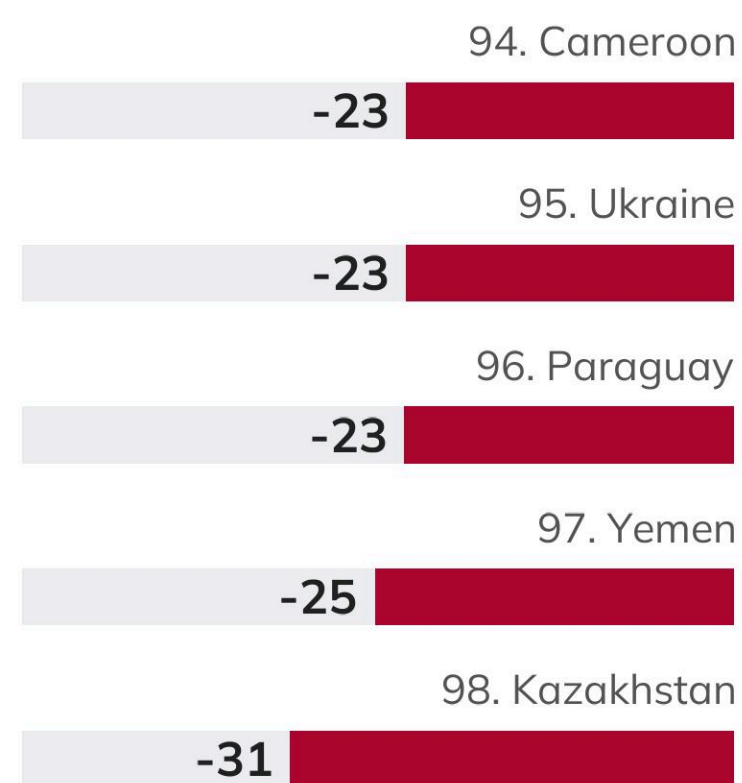
Overall DPI Score = average of 8 perception questions (% positive - % negative).



Top 5



Bottom 5



Composite of 8 democracy-dimension questions

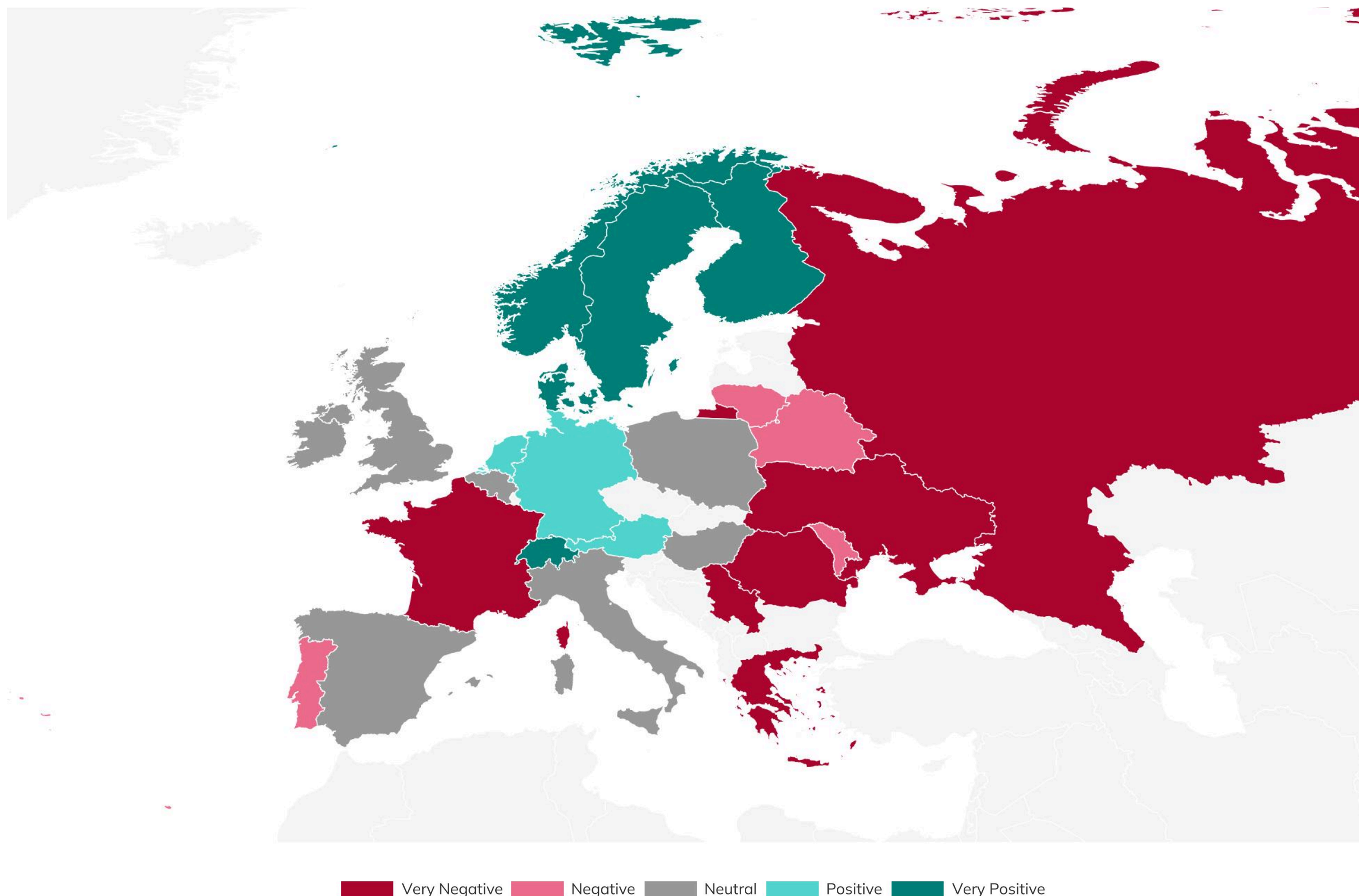
Index Score = % positive - % negative, averaged across dimensions. Countries binned into 5 tiers at ± 5 and ± 15

Perception of Democracy in Europe

Public evaluations of democratic performance differ widely across Europe. The Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland), together with Switzerland, receive the highest ratings, all in the Very Positive tier. Ukraine, Romania, Russia, France, and Serbia receive the lowest, all in the Very Negative tier. The regional average is just below neutral.

Perception of democracy in Europe

Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$ on Index Score)



Top 5



Bottom 5



Composite of 8 democracy-dimension questions

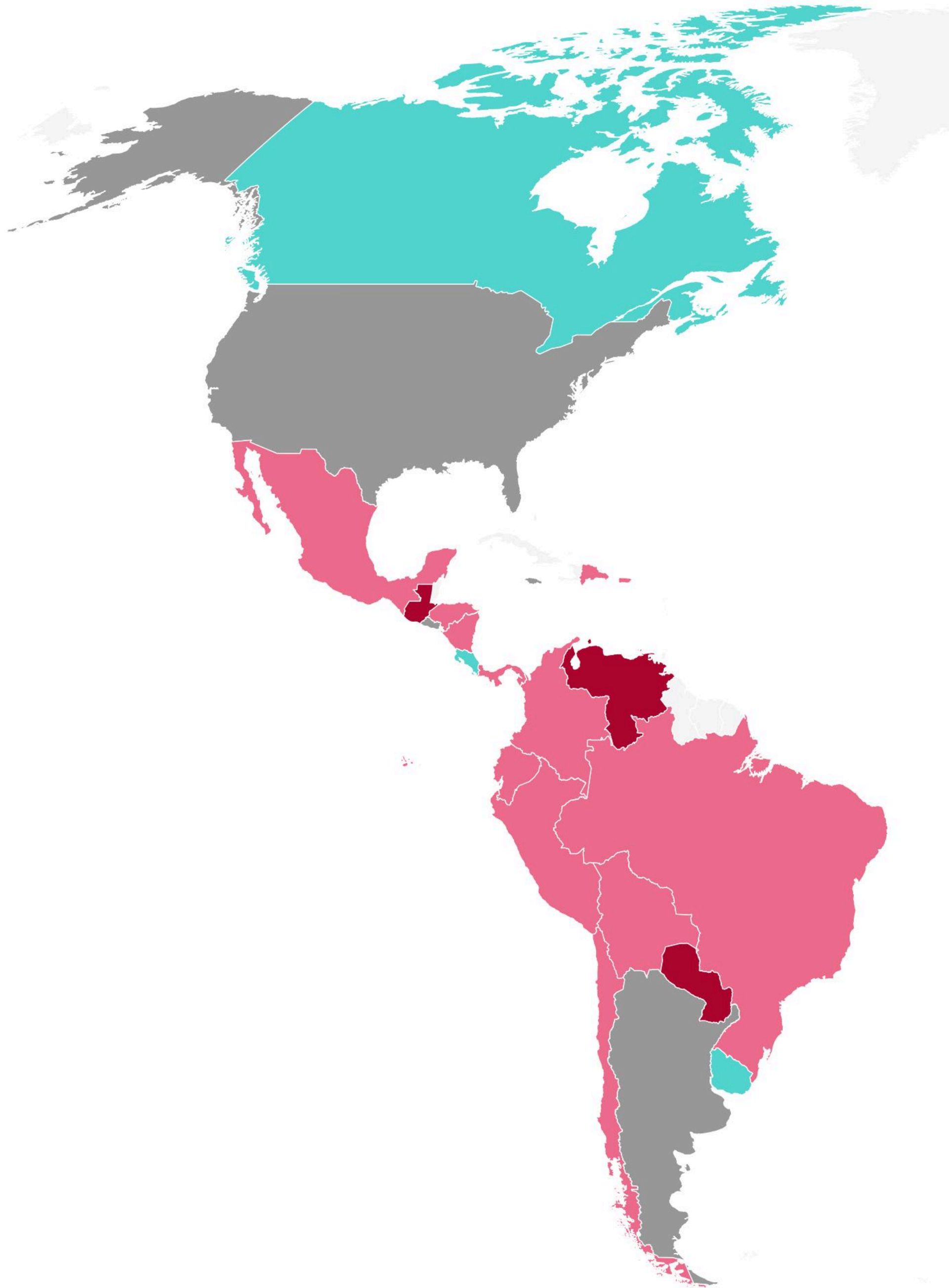
Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$)

Perception of Democracy in the Americas

Public evaluations of democratic performance across the Americas are generally low. Only Canada, Costa Rica, and Uruguay receive positive ratings. Paraguay, Venezuela, and Guatemala receive the lowest, all in the Very Negative tier. The regional average is negative.

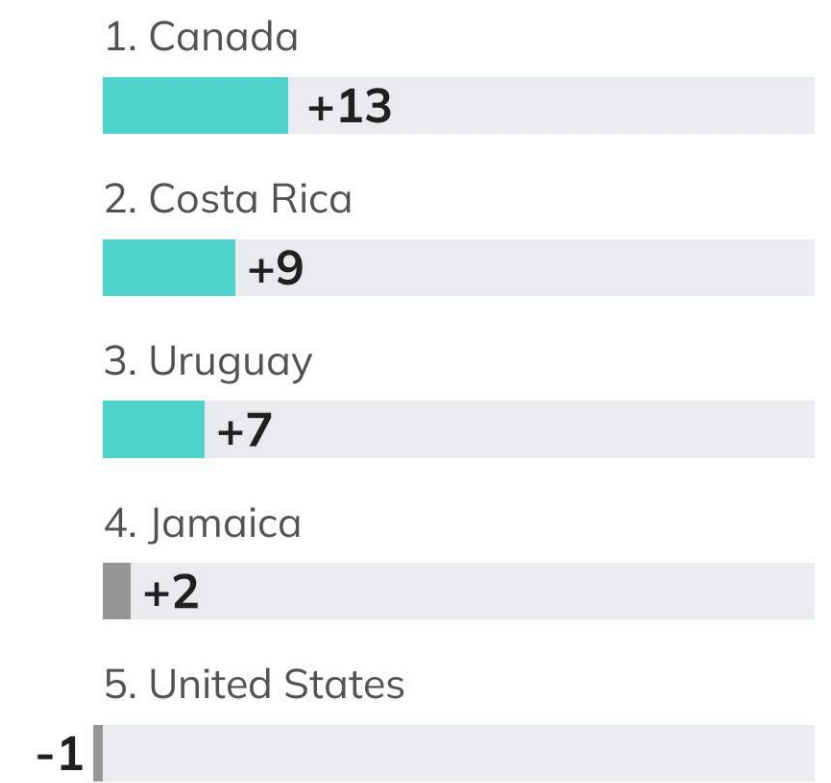
Perception of democracy in the Americas

Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$ on Index Score)



Very Negative Negative Neutral Positive Very Positive

Top 5



Bottom 5



Composite of 8 democracy-dimension questions

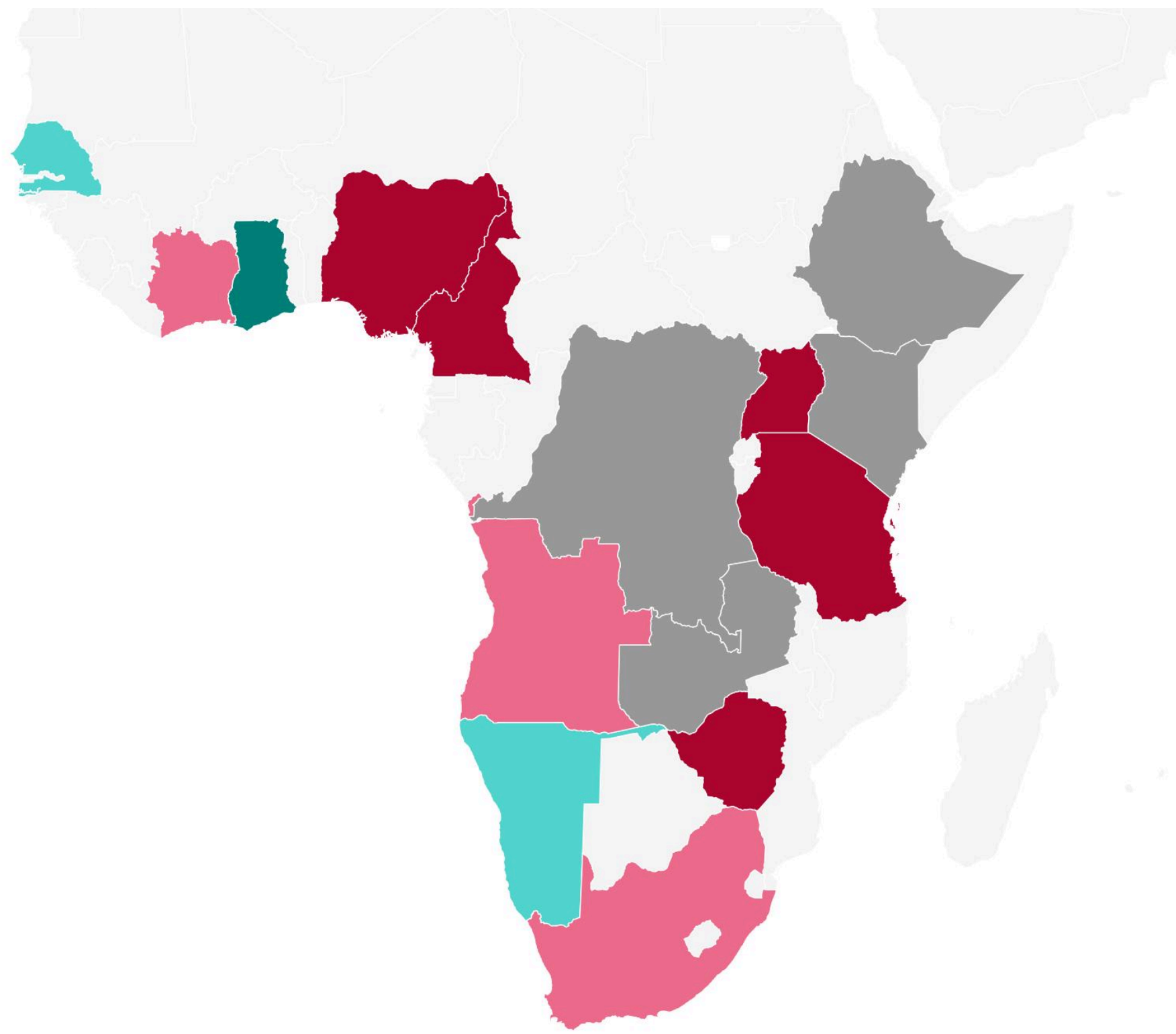
Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$)

Perception of Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa

Public evaluations of democratic performance vary widely in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ghana stands out with the highest rating in the region, followed by Namibia and Senegal. Cameroon, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe receive the lowest, all in the Very Negative tier. The regional average is negative.

Perception of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa

Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$ on Index Score)



Very Negative Negative Neutral Positive Very Positive

Top 5



Bottom 5



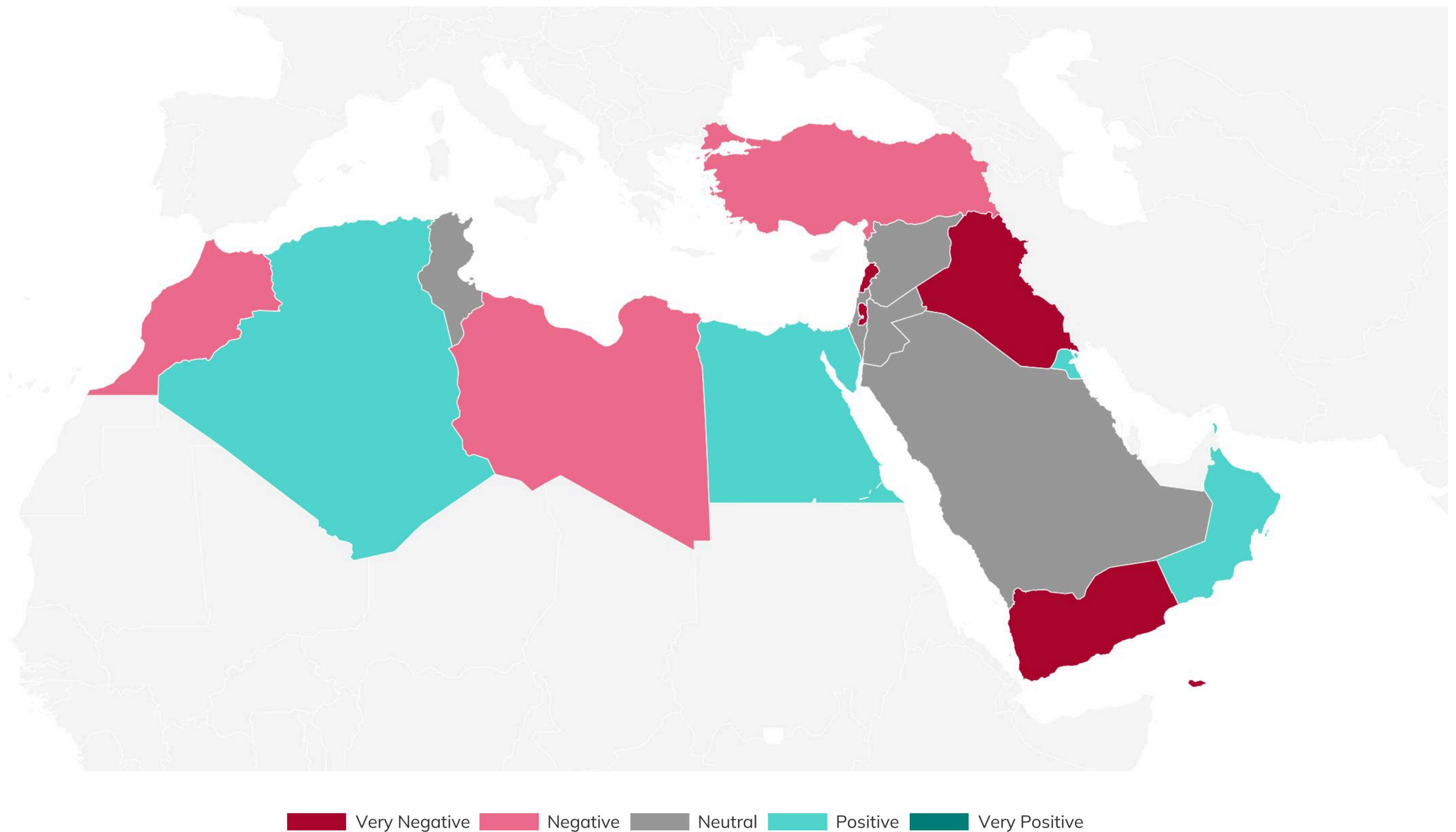
Composite of 8 democracy-dimension questions
Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$)

Perception of Democracy in MENA

Public evaluations of democratic performance in the Middle East and North Africa vary widely. Oman, Algeria, Kuwait, and Egypt receive the highest ratings, all in the Positive tier. Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon, and Iraq receive the lowest, all in the Very Negative tier. The regional average is negative.

Perception of democracy in MENA

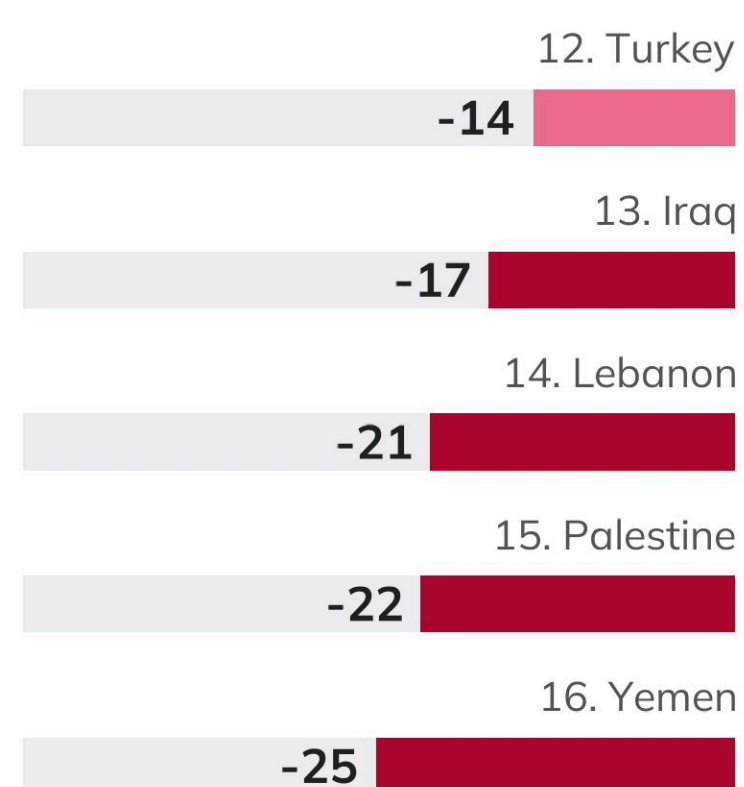
Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$ on Index Score)



Top 5



Bottom 5



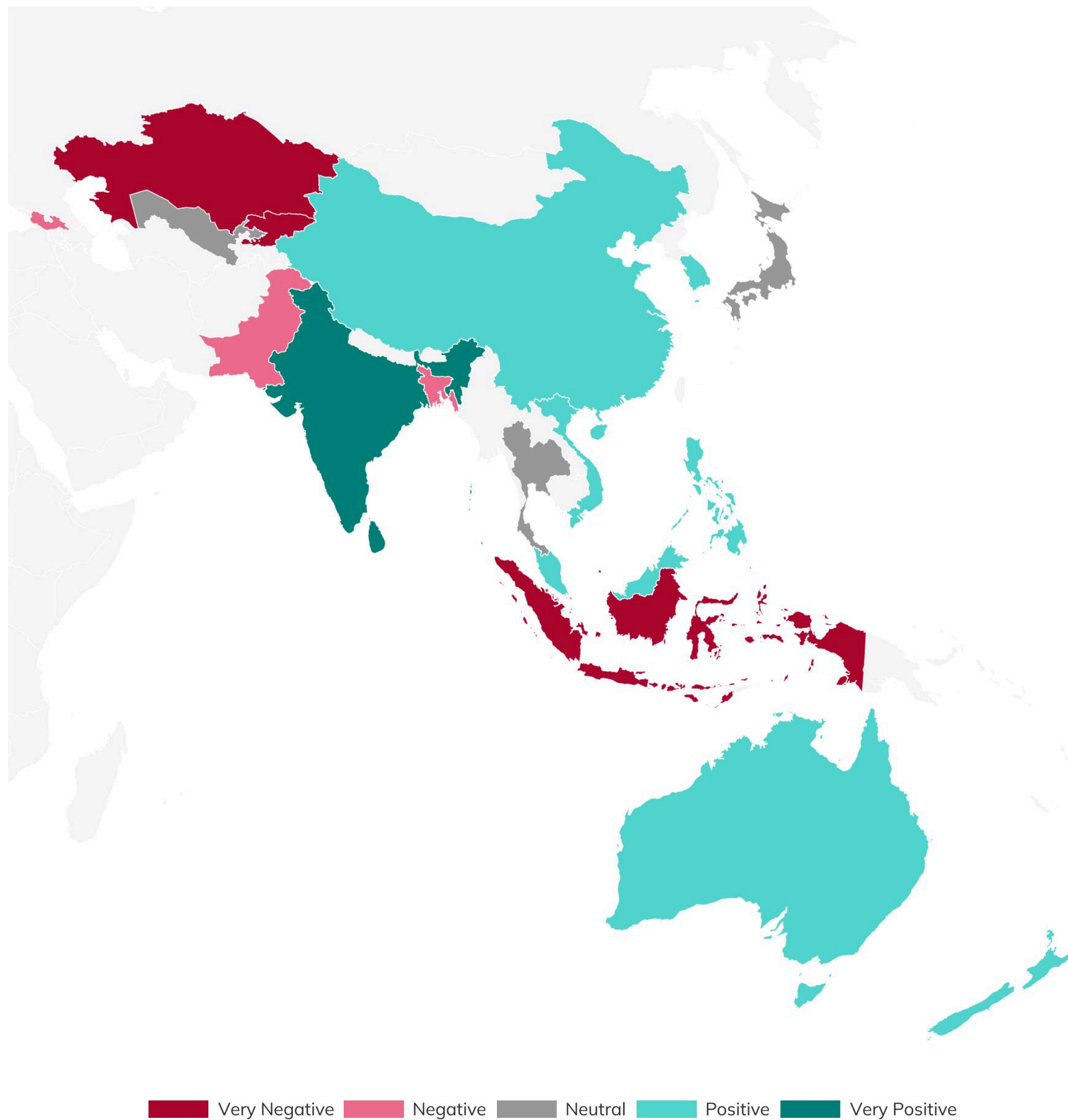
Composite of 8 democracy-dimension questions
Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$)

Perception of Democracy in Asia-Pacific

Public evaluations of democratic performance in the Asia-Pacific region cover a wide range. Sri Lanka, India, China, South Korea, and New Zealand receive the highest ratings. Kazakhstan, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan receive the lowest, all in the Very Negative tier. The regional average is roughly neutral.

Perception of democracy in Asia-Pacific

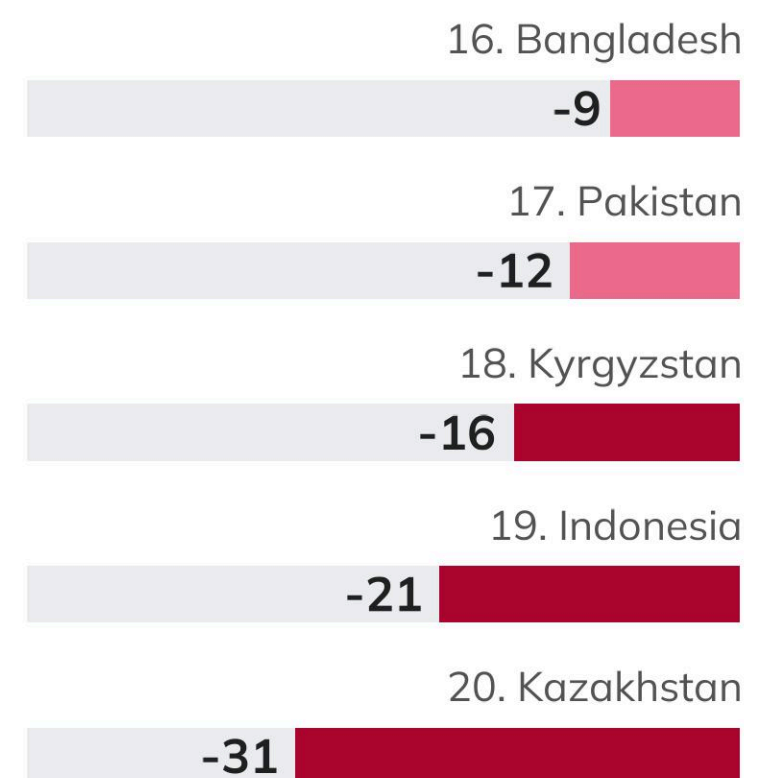
Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$ on Index Score)



Top 5



Bottom 5



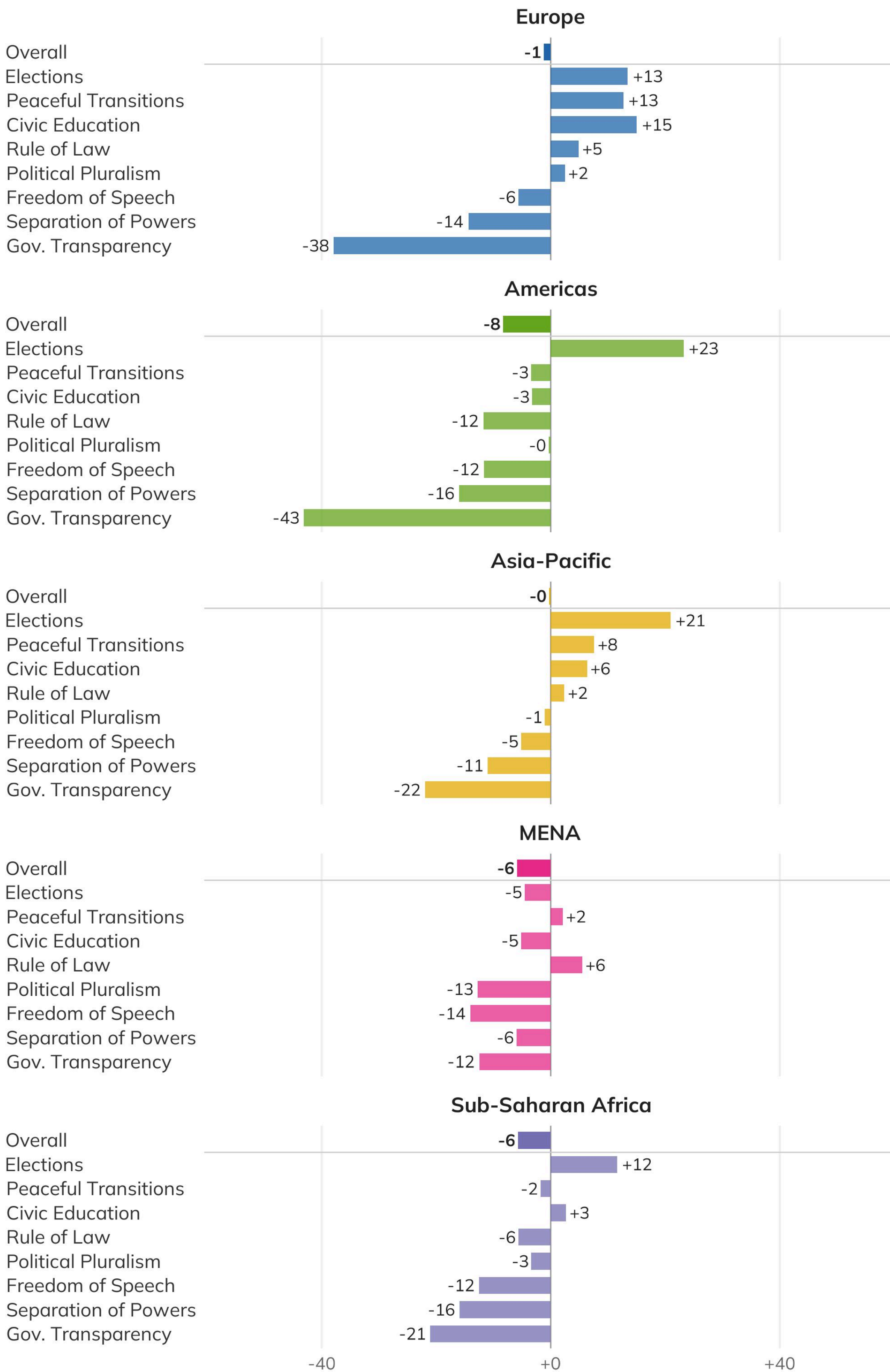
Composite of 8 democracy-dimension questions
Tier classification per country ($\pm 5 / \pm 15$)

DPI Components by Region

Citizens in most regions rate their governments most critically on government transparency, especially in the Americas and Europe, and most positively on the impact of elections, led by the Americas. Two exceptions: Europe rates civic education above elections, and MENA rates freedom of speech most critically, elections slightly negative, and the rule of law highest.

Regional averages on each democracy dimension

Net score per democracy dimension (% positive - % negative, averaged across countries within each region)



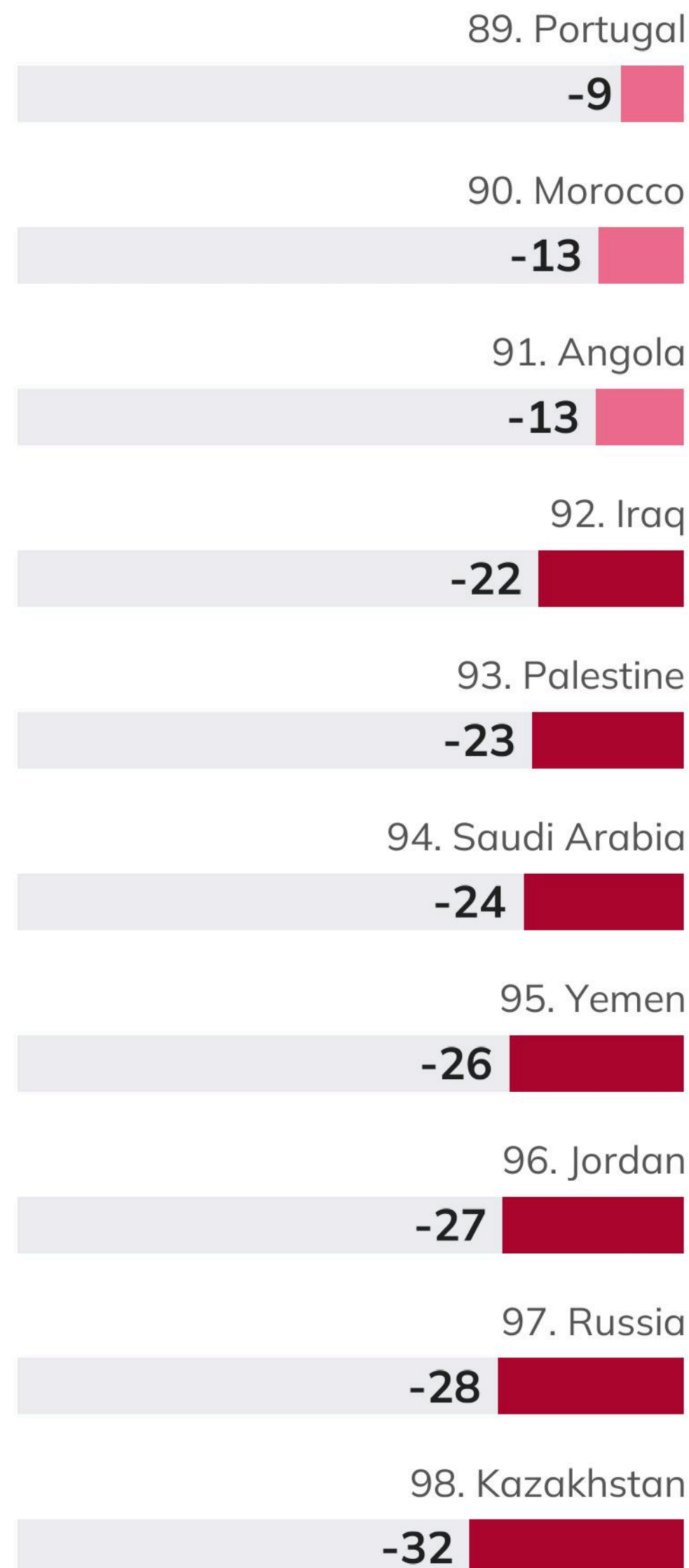
Perception of Impact of Elections

Most people around the world feel their elections have a meaningful impact on the political direction of their country. Hungary, South Korea, and Taiwan have the most positive evaluations, while Kazakhstan, Russia, and Jordan have the most negative.

Top 10



Bottom 10

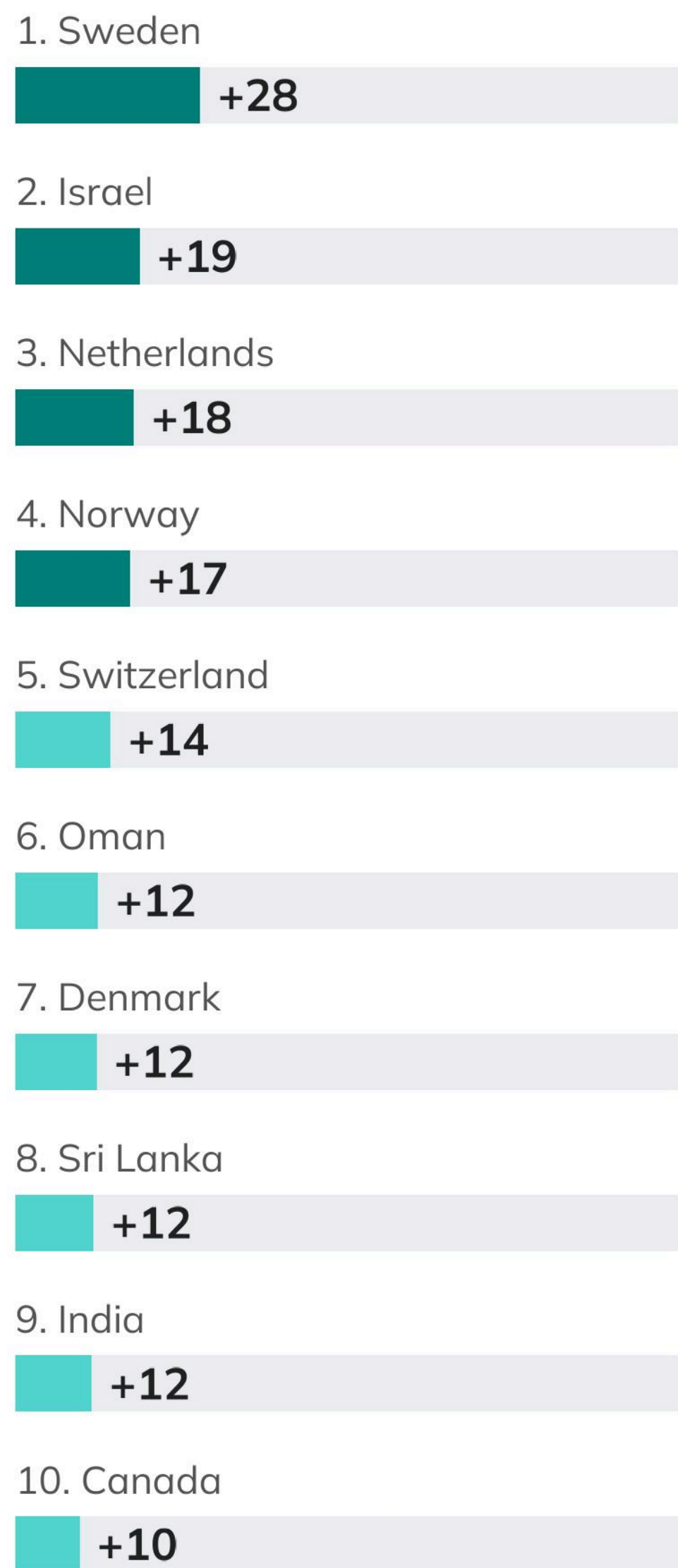


How much impact do you think elections can have on your country's political direction?
 Very big impact / Big impact / Moderate impact / Small impact / No impact

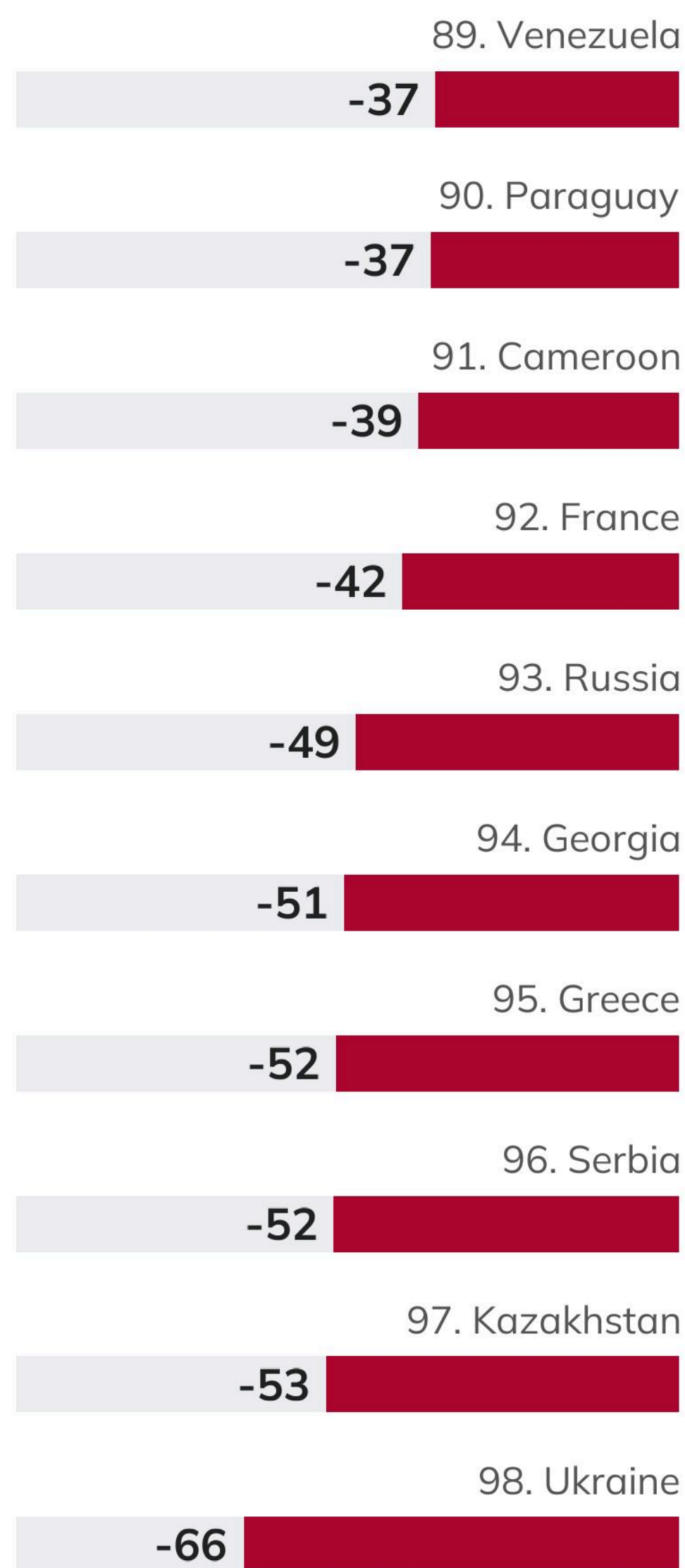
Perception of Separation of Powers

People around the world have weak faith in the separation of powers: most doubt that their courts will stop the government if it breaks the law. Sweden, Israel, and the Netherlands have the most positive evaluations, while Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Serbia have the most negative.

Top 10



Bottom 10

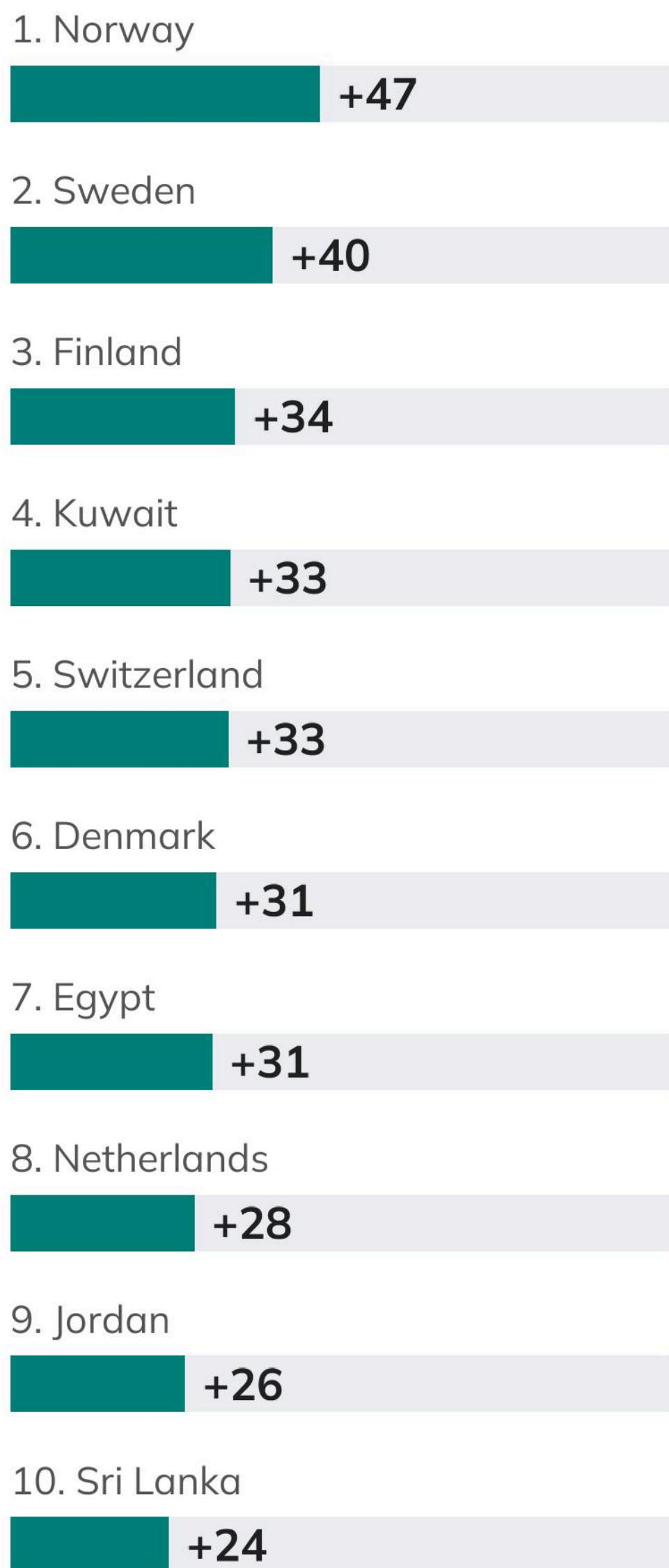


How likely do you think it is that courts in your country will stop the government if it violates the law?
 Very likely / Somewhat likely / Neutral/Uncertain / Somewhat unlikely / Very unlikely

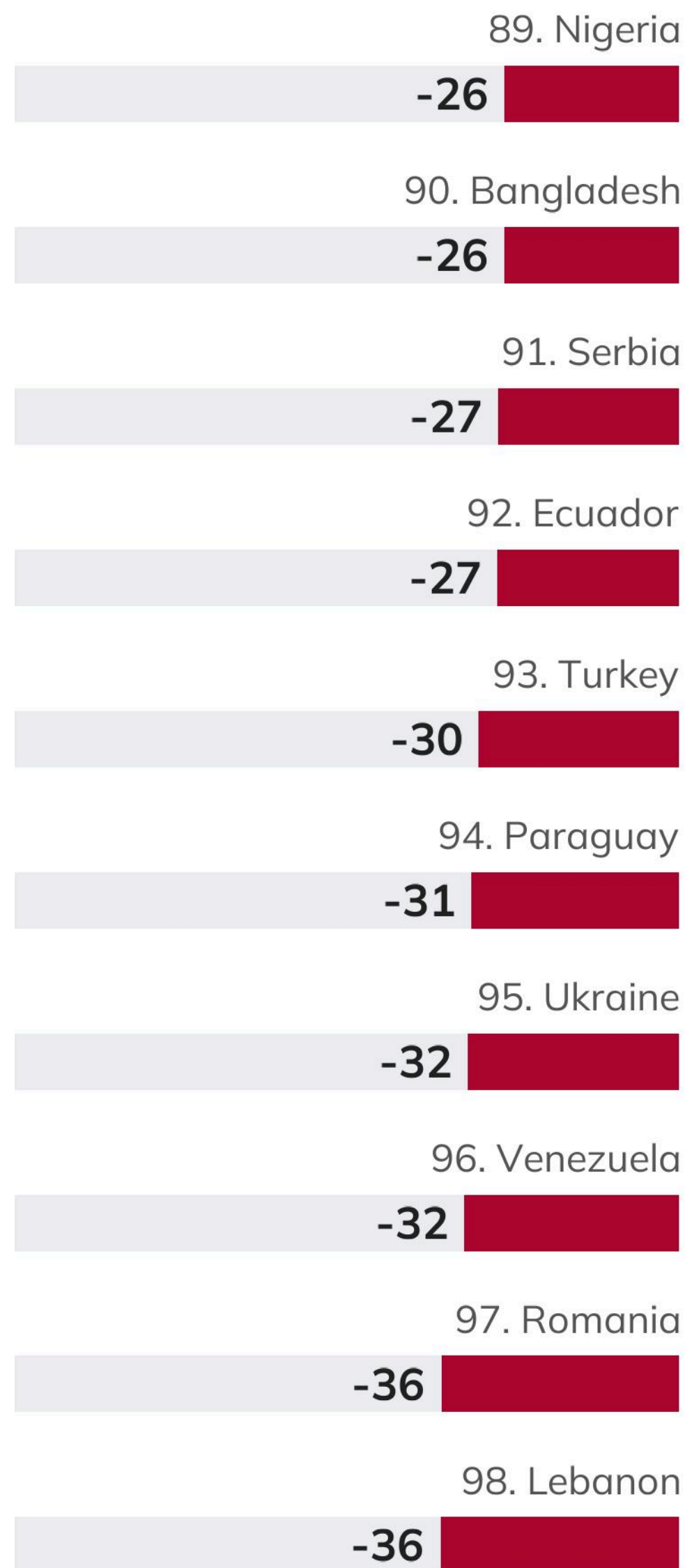
Perception of Rule of Law

Public confidence in the rule of law is mixed worldwide. The Nordic countries, Switzerland, Kuwait, and Egypt have the most positive evaluations of whether their courts make fair and impartial decisions. Lebanon, Romania, and Venezuela have the most negative.

Top 10



Bottom 10

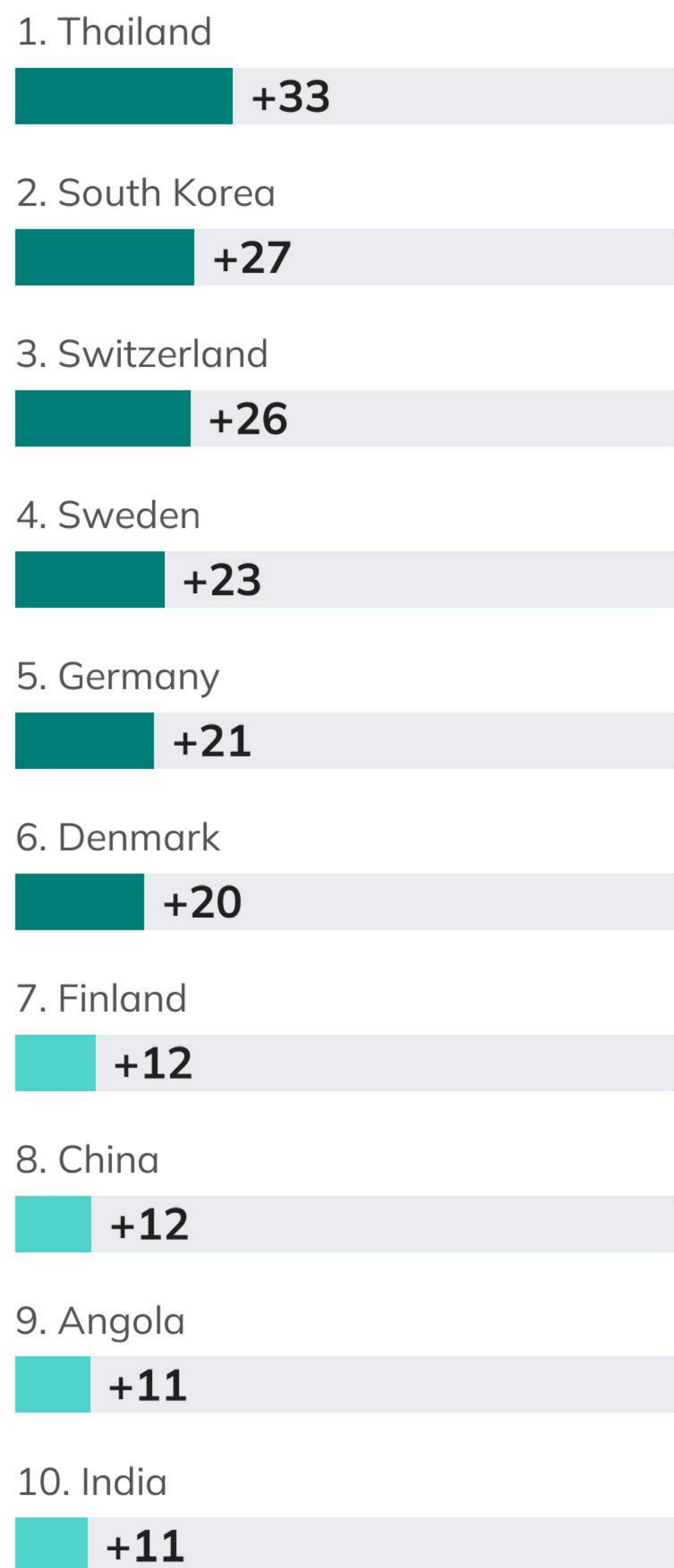


How often do you think that courts in your country make fair and impartial decisions?
 Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Always

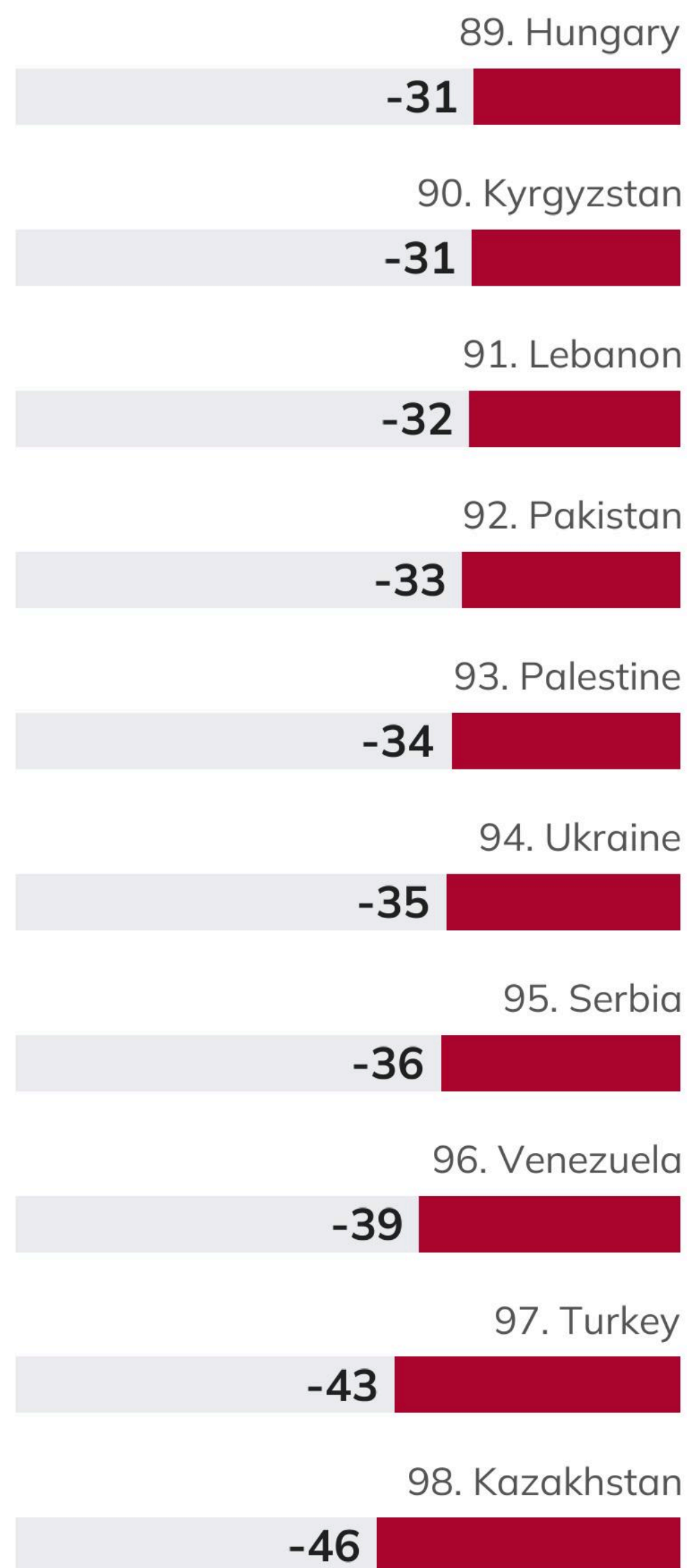
Perception of Freedom of Speech

Public perceptions of freedom of speech are slightly negative on average. Thailand, South Korea, and Switzerland have the most positive evaluations of whether journalists and civil society can criticize the government without consequences. Kazakhstan and Turkey have the most negative.

Top 10



Bottom 10

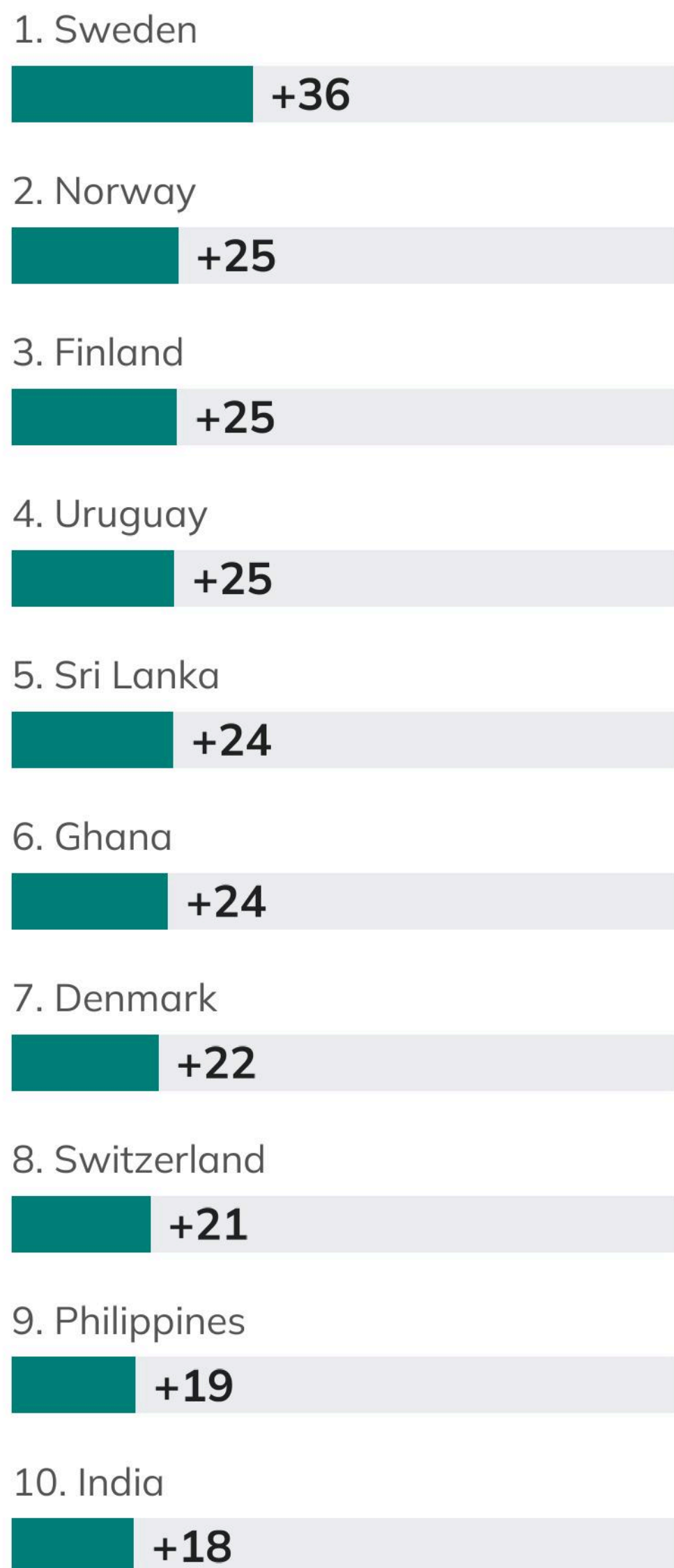


How likely do you think it is that journalists or civil society organizations in your country face negative consequences when criticizing the government?
 Very unlikely / Somewhat unlikely / Neutral/Uncertain / Somewhat likely / Very likely

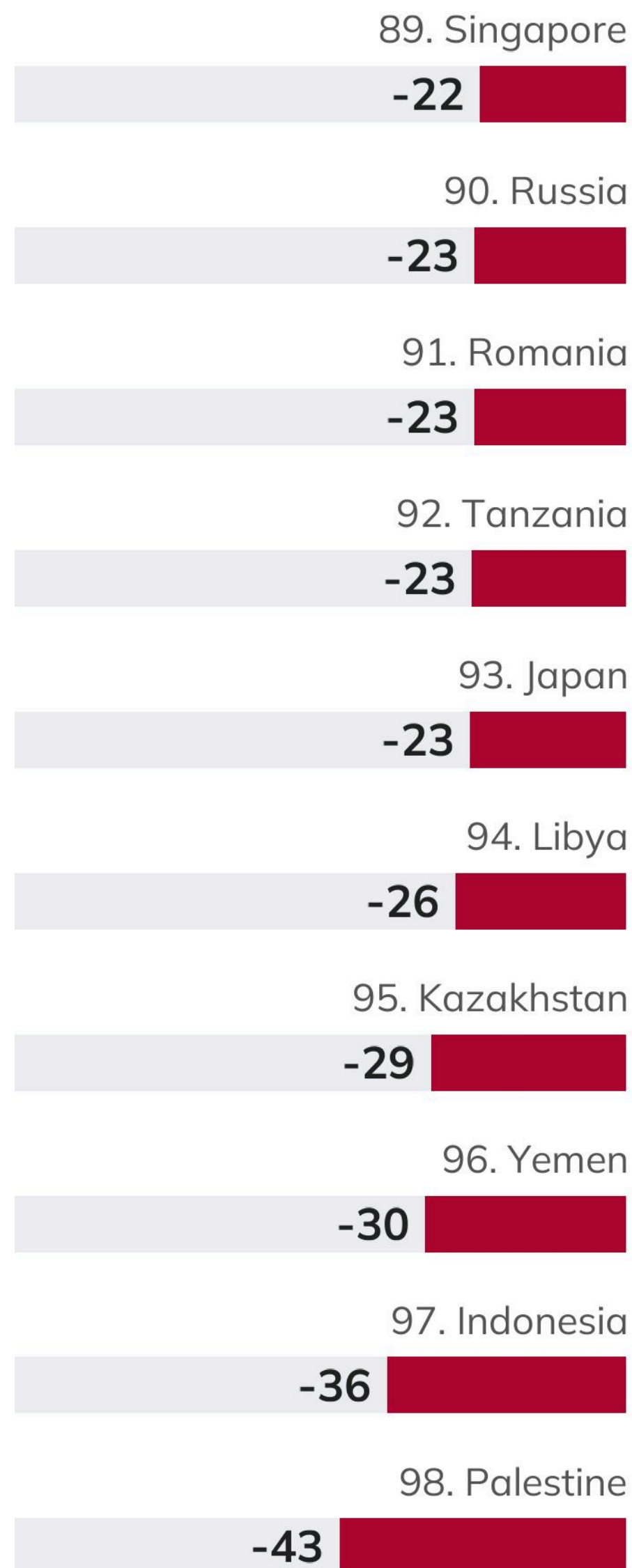
Perception of Political Pluralism

Around the world, citizens are evenly divided on whether different political beliefs are represented in their country's political system. Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Uruguay have the most positive evaluations. Palestine and Indonesia have the most negative.

Top 10



Bottom 10

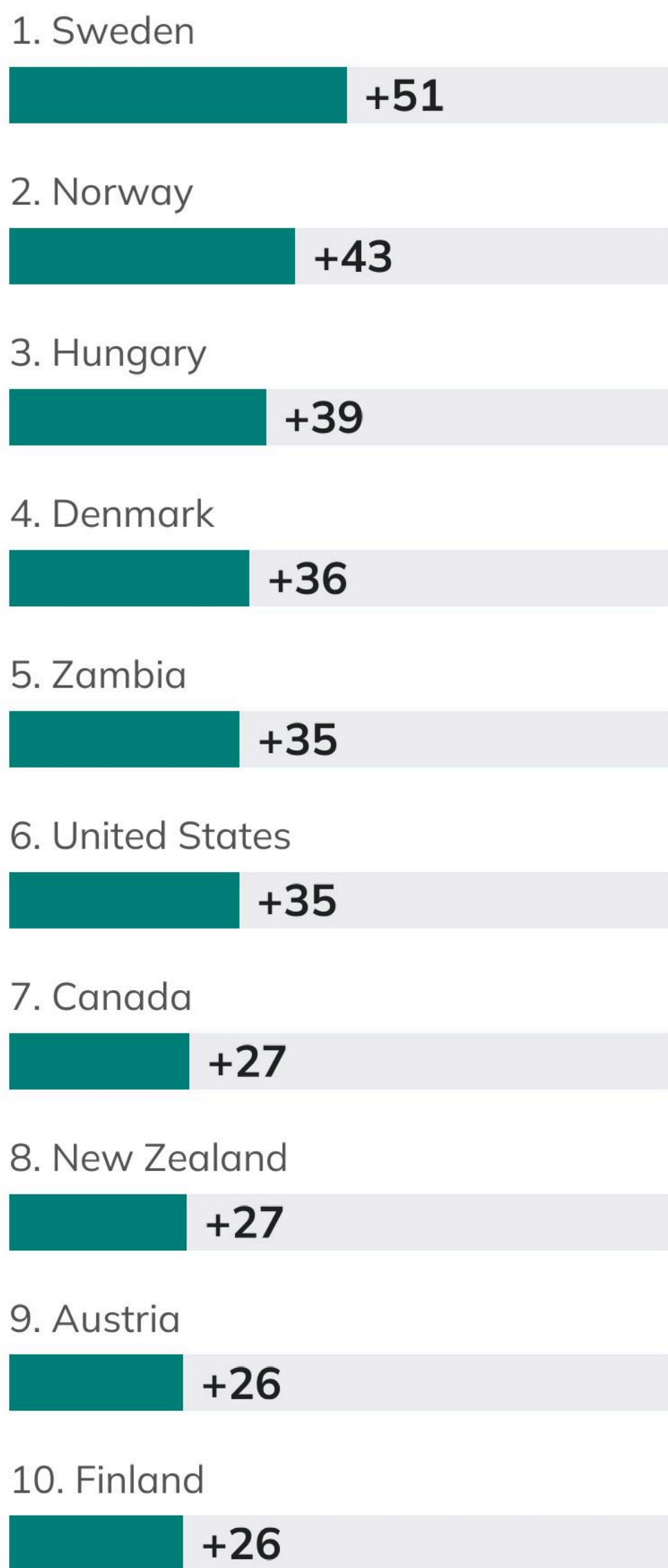


To what extent do you think different political beliefs are represented in your country's political system?
To a very large extent / To a large extent / To some extent / To a small extent / Not at all

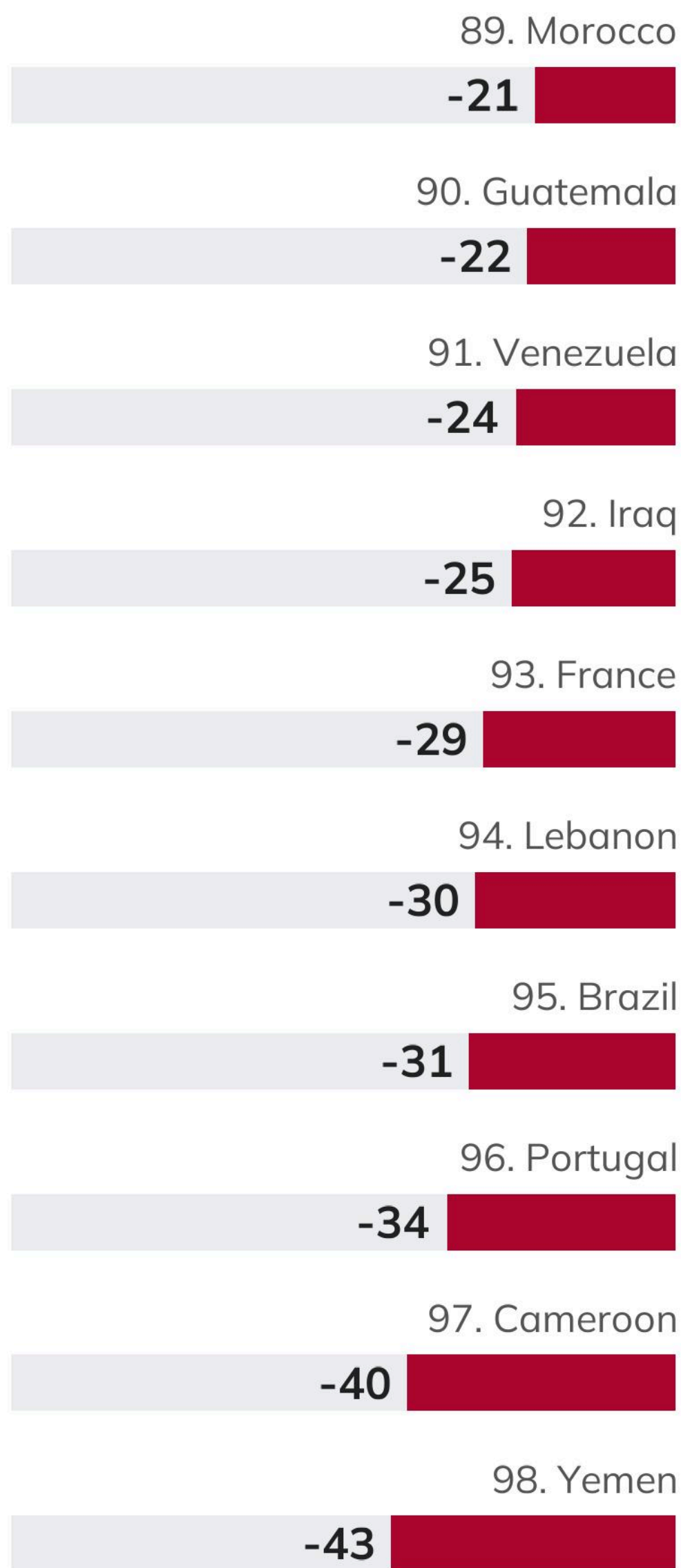
Perception of Civic Education

Globally, citizens are evenly divided on whether they understand how their country's political system works. The Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark) lead, alongside Hungary, Zambia, and the United States. Yemen and Cameroon have the lowest levels of self-reported understanding.

Top 10



Bottom 10



How well would you say that you understand your country's political system and how it functions?
Very well / Fairly well / Somewhat well / Not very well / Not well at all

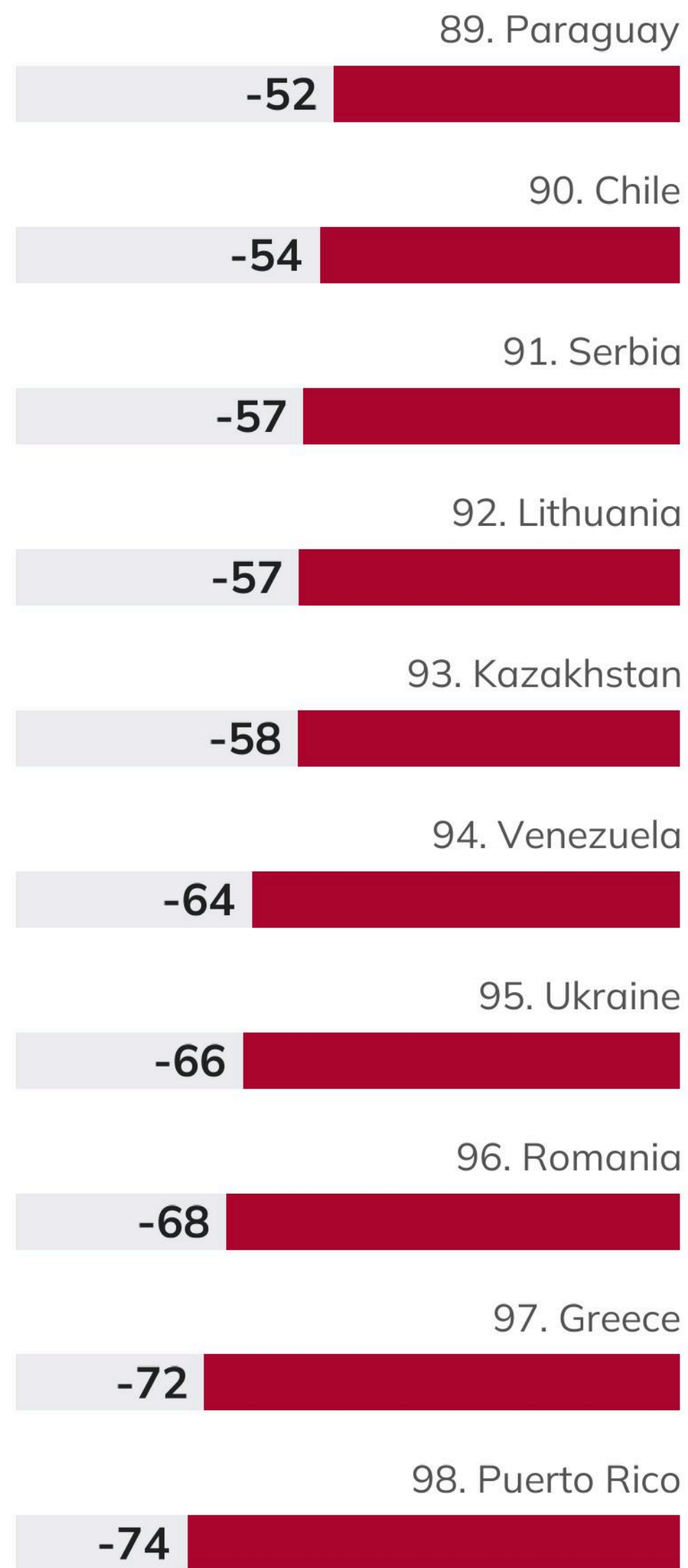
Perception of Government Transparency

Government transparency is the most negatively perceived dimension worldwide. Citizens overwhelmingly believe their governments withhold important information from the public. The most positive evaluations come from a handful of less democratic states, including Oman, Ethiopia, Vietnam, and China. Puerto Rico and Greece have the most negative.

Top 10



Bottom 10

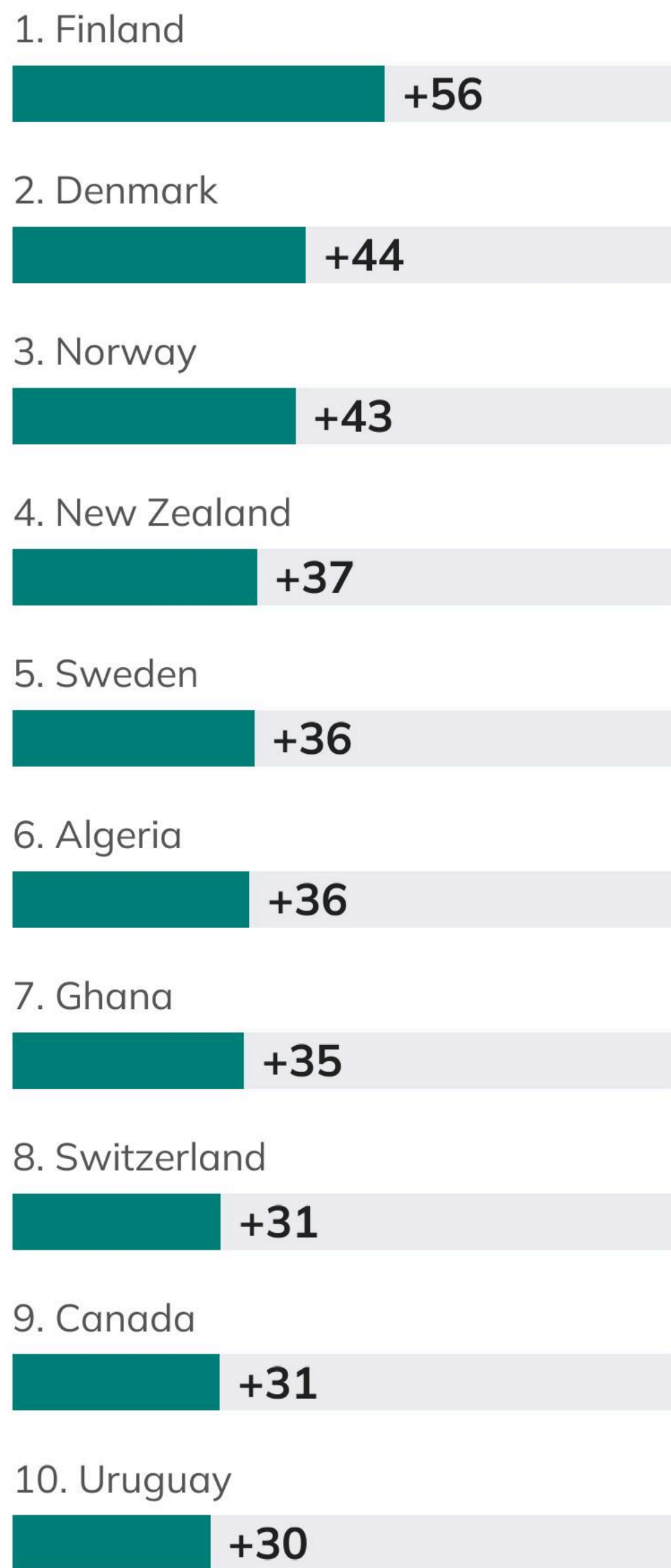


How often do you think the government withholds important information from the public?
 Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Always

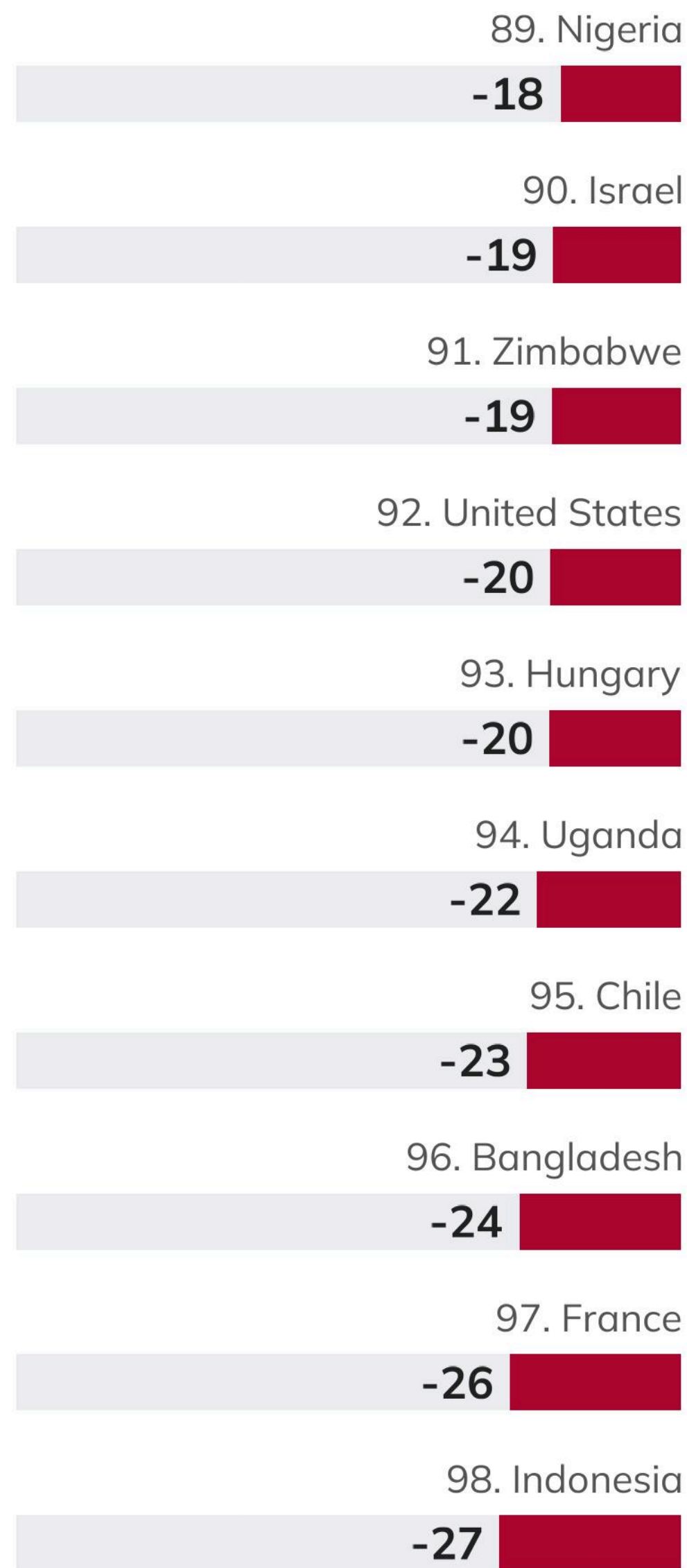
Perception of Peaceful Transitions

Globally, citizens are evenly divided on whether a future change of government can happen peacefully. Confidence is highest in the Nordic countries (Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden), New Zealand, Algeria, and Ghana. Indonesia and France have the most negative evaluations.

Top 10



Bottom 10



How likely do you think it is that a future change of government in your country will cause violence?
Very unlikely / Somewhat unlikely / Neutral/Uncertain / Somewhat likely / Very likely

Country Appendix — Higher Index Scores

	Index	Elections	Peaceful Transitions	Civic Education	Rule of Law	Pluralism	Free Speech	Sep. Powers	Transparency	
VERY POSITIVE	Sweden	+29	+35	+36	+51	+40	+36	+23	+28	-15
	Norway	+23	+22	+43	+43	+47	+25	+8	+17	-20
	Denmark	+21	+17	+44	+36	+31	+22	+20	+12	-16
	Finland	+20	+13	+56	+26	+34	+25	+12	+8	-14
	Switzerland	+19	+16	+31	+24	+33	+21	+26	+14	-16
	Ghana	+17	+39	+35	+24	+10	+24	+2	+6	-6
	Sri Lanka	+16	+36	+12	+18	+24	+24	+11	+12	-12
	India	+15	+30	+12	+22	+12	+18	+11	+12	+2
	POSITIVE	China	+14	+6	+29	+25	+23	+5	+12	+6
Canada		+13	+29	+31	+27	+23	+7	+9	+10	-32
South Korea		+12	+51	-2	+7	+16	+10	+27	+1	-13
Oman		+11	-9	+13	+16	+24	+12	+4	+12	+15
New Zealand		+11	+40	+37	+27	+15	+13	+5	-11	-41
Netherlands		+10	+8	+17	+23	+28	+8	+8	+18	-29
Philippines		+10	+38	+9	+18	+1	+19	-1	+6	-12
Vietnam		+10	+11	+11	+7	+16	+10	+5	+8	+8
Costa Rica		+9	+43	+12	+10	+7	+18	-0	+9	-24
Austria		+9	+24	+28	+26	+8	+12	+10	-5	-30
Malaysia		+9	+25	+14	+14	+7	+8	+0	+5	-5
Namibia		+8	+20	+12	+17	+14	+18	+5	+2	-23
Germany		+8	+18	+11	+22	+14	+13	+21	+1	-37
Senegal		+8	+30	+13	+5	+5	+10	+10	-3	-9
Kuwait		+7	+7	+8	+14	+33	+8	-5	+0	-9
Uruguay		+7	+19	+30	+11	+3	+25	+9	-3	-36
Algeria		+7	+4	+36	-1	+24	-1	+1	-8	-0
Egypt		+7	-1	+20	+11	+31	-4	-2	+6	-8
Australia		+7	+21	+26	+24	+4	-0	+11	+3	-36
NEUTRAL		Tunisia	+4	+19	+16	-7	+23	-12	-3	+2
	Belgium	+3	+9	+23	+4	+17	+5	+7	-8	-30
	Ethiopia	+3	+6	+8	-0	+8	-0	-14	+5	+9
	Zambia	+3	+35	+5	+35	+15	-5	-18	-22	-24
	Ireland	+2	-5	+21	+24	+7	-6	+8	-1	-31
	Jamaica	+2	+38	+18	+20	-5	+18	-5	-21	-47
	Singapore	+2	+14	+19	+11	+22	-22	-18	-4	-11
	Thailand	+0	+29	+18	-7	-13	+6	+33	-13	-51
	Hungary	-1	+69	-20	+39	+16	-10	-31	-22	-44
	United States	-1	+43	-20	+35	+7	+5	-18	-5	-51
	Kenya	-1	+29	-11	+1	-6	+8	-11	-1	-17
	Italy	-1	+8	+20	+13	+4	-10	-11	+2	-36
	Jordan	-1	-27	+19	+5	+26	-11	-6	-8	-10
	Israel	-2	+15	-19	+11	-3	-5	-10	+18	-21
	Saudi Arabia	-2	-24	-4	+12	+19	-6	-7	-5	-3
	El Salvador	-3	+33	-16	-2	-3	+1	-8	-9	-19
	Argentina	-3	+43	+8	+13	-21	+9	-8	-26	-44
	Spain	-3	+24	+7	+1	+5	+7	-10	-17	-44
	United Kingdom	-3	+13	+7	+16	+9	-9	-4	-12	-47
	Poland	-4	+33	-18	+4	-16	+18	-12	-6	-35
	Taiwan	-4	+50	-8	-19	-3	+17	-14	-22	-36
	Uzbekistan	-4	-3	+11	+4	+3	-8	-10	-18	-15
	Japan	-5	-9	+24	-7	+7	-23	-1	-17	-11
	Syria	-5	-6	-15	-4	+7	-15	-4	+4	-4
	Congo	-5	-3	+9	+2	-15	-13	-6	-8	-6

Country Appendix — Lower Index Scores

Country	Index	Elections	Peaceful Transitions	Civic Education	Rule of Law	Pluralism	Free Speech	Sep. Powers	Transparency
Colombia	-6	+46	-15	-6	-15	+6	-16	-5	-41
Georgia	-7	+40	+1	-3	-14	-14	-22	-51	+8
Nicaragua	-8	+8	-13	+1	-2	-4	-16	-17	-17
South Africa	-8	+12	-7	+13	-11	+2	-8	-17	-45
Moldova	-8	+15	-1	+8	-11	-9	-14	-14	-36
Morocco	-8	-13	+20	-21	+5	-21	-12	-8	-17
Bangladesh	-9	+34	-24	+5	-26	-5	-11	-7	-39
Belarus	-9	+0	-12	+21	+14	-15	-24	-28	-28
Ivory Coast	-9	+20	-8	-17	+3	-6	-18	-28	-18
Angola	-9	-13	-2	-11	-16	+1	+11	-16	-29
Chile	-10	+37	-23	+11	-20	+7	-16	-21	-54
Portugal	-10	-9	+16	-34	-10	+6	-3	-14	-34
Bolivia	-11	+14	-12	-16	-15	-0	-7	-17	-31
Honduras	-11	+25	-8	-15	-18	-1	-11	-17	-47
Puerto Rico	-11	+16	-10	+4	+9	-3	-10	-26	-74
Pakistan	-12	+12	-4	-1	+4	-8	-33	-24	-40
Lithuania	-13	-8	+17	+10	-4	+7	-30	-36	-57
Libya	-13	-1	-17	-12	-1	-26	-21	-7	-21
Brazil	-13	+0	-1	-31	-10	-6	-7	-8	-44
Mexico	-14	+20	-10	-7	-18	-10	-18	-23	-45
Ecuador	-14	+13	-11	-13	-27	-13	-11	-14	-37
Turkey	-14	+33	+8	+9	-30	-14	-43	-36	-40
Dominican Republic	-14	+10	+11	-21	-20	-6	-13	-28	-46
Peru	-14	+18	-15	-9	-25	-7	-16	-13	-47
Panama	-15	+12	-4	-18	-19	-4	-12	-23	-49
Uganda	-16	-3	-22	+11	-18	-14	-27	-30	-21
Kyrgyzstan	-16	-1	-0	-1	-17	-8	-31	-30	-39
Tanzania	-17	+18	-16	-18	-18	-23	-31	-23	-23
Zimbabwe	-17	-9	-19	+13	-11	-21	-29	-27	-33
Iraq	-17	-22	-14	-25	-7	-21	-26	-8	-17
Greece	-18	+9	+25	+7	-23	-12	-22	-52	-72
Serbia	-18	+22	-17	+12	-27	+8	-36	-52	-57
Nigeria	-20	-3	-18	+7	-26	-9	-29	-36	-44
France	-20	+13	-26	-29	-13	-18	-7	-42	-41
Guatemala	-21	+0	-13	-22	-25	-16	-20	-23	-47
Russia	-21	-28	-4	+19	-11	-23	-25	-49	-45
Romania	-21	+14	-4	+4	-36	-23	-18	-36	-68
Indonesia	-21	+23	-27	-15	-11	-36	-31	-25	-47
Lebanon	-21	-3	-18	-30	-36	-16	-32	-13	-23
Palestine	-22	-23	-5	-18	-10	-43	-34	-18	-26
Venezuela	-22	+49	-12	-24	-32	-17	-39	-37	-64
Cameroon	-23	-5	-6	-40	-18	-21	-27	-39	-27
Ukraine	-23	+7	+16	+6	-32	-15	-35	-66	-66
Paraguay	-23	-6	-1	-19	-31	-14	-24	-37	-52
Yemen	-25	-26	-17	-43	-17	-30	-27	-27	-15
Kazakhstan	-31	-32	-7	-3	-22	-29	-46	-53	-58

NEGATIVE

VERY NEGATIVE

Security and Defense

This chapter explores how people around the world view security, defense, and the principles that guide international relations today. As global tensions evolve, public opinion reveals both a strong commitment to international law and significant concerns about potential military conflicts. The findings highlight how citizens prioritize diplomacy and alliances over more confrontational defense strategies, while also shedding light on regional differences in willingness to personally defend one's country. The chapter also examines the divides in public opinion on defense spending, particularly in Europe, and a strong opposition to hosting US military bases.

This chapter draws on data from the Global Pulse dataset

Please visit niradata.com/global-pulse to access the full dataset

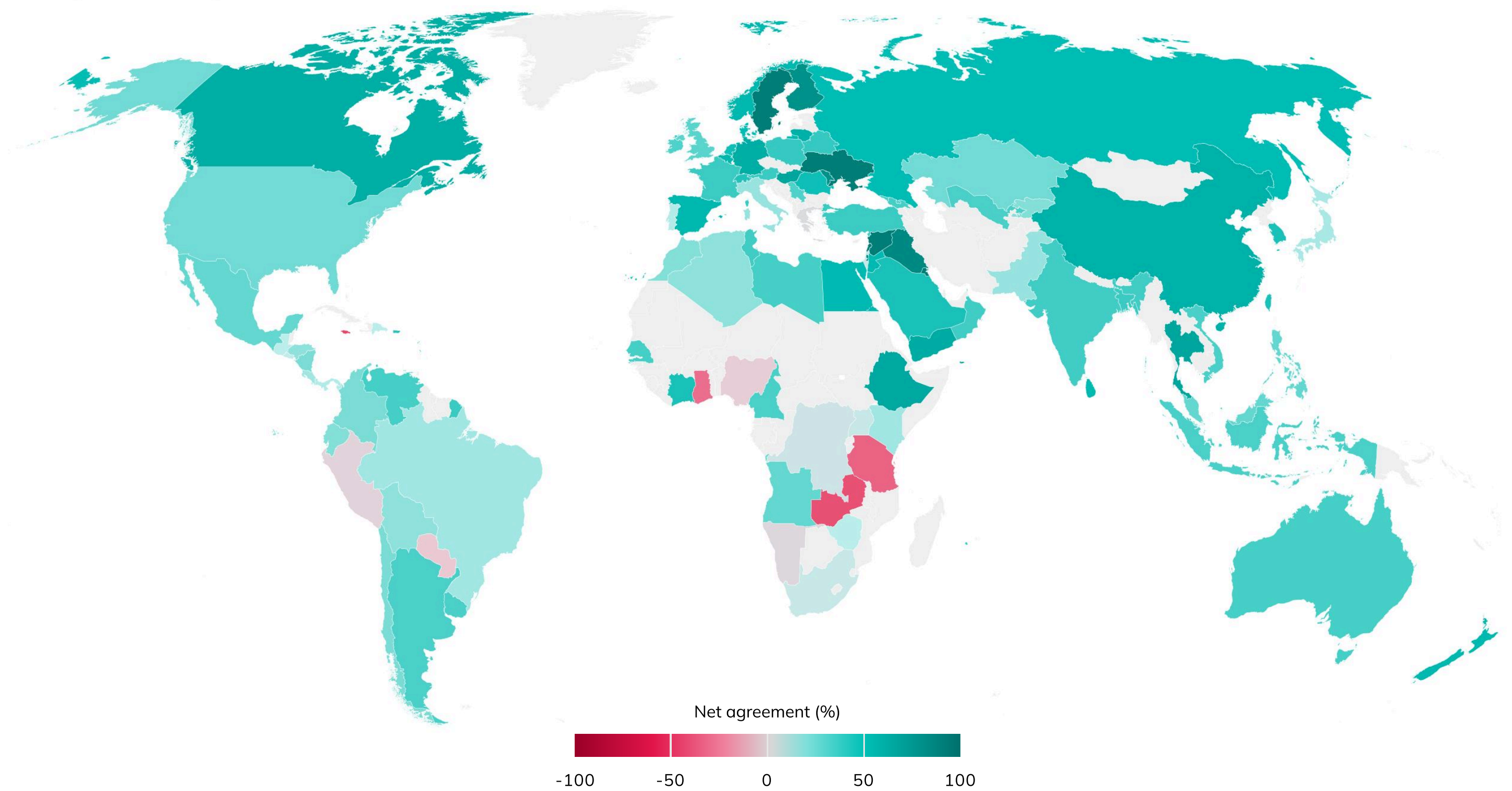
Attitudes Towards a Rules-Based World Order

Most people across the world support a rules-based international order. Asked whether countries should follow international laws even when it limits their freedom of action, an average of 50% of people agree across all 98 countries surveyed, while 31% disagree, resulting in a net agreement of +19 points.

Support is especially strong in Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, and parts of the Middle East, with the highest net agreement in Sweden, Kuwait, Lebanon, Ukraine, and Syria. A few countries, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, show lower levels of agreement, including Jamaica, Zambia, Tanzania, and Ghana.

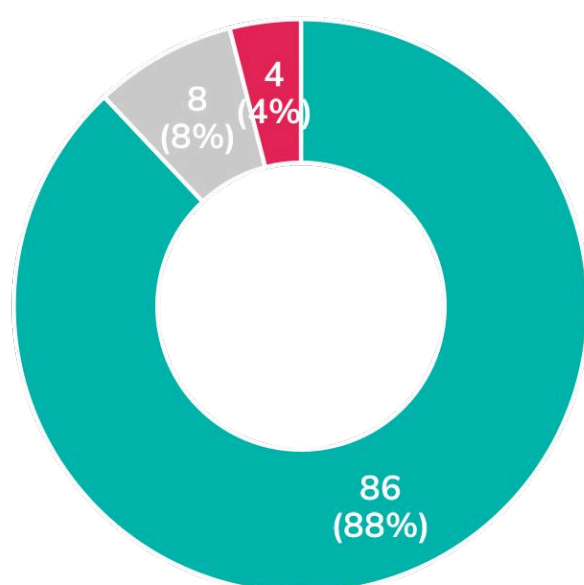
Most people agree that countries should follow international laws

Net agreement: % agree - % disagree



86 of 98 countries agree
4 disagree

"Countries should follow international laws and agreements, even if it limits their freedom of action."



■ Agree ■ Evenly divided
■ Disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Countries should follow international laws and agreements, even if it limits their freedom of action."
Strongly agree / Somewhat agree / Neither / Somewhat disagree / Strongly disagree

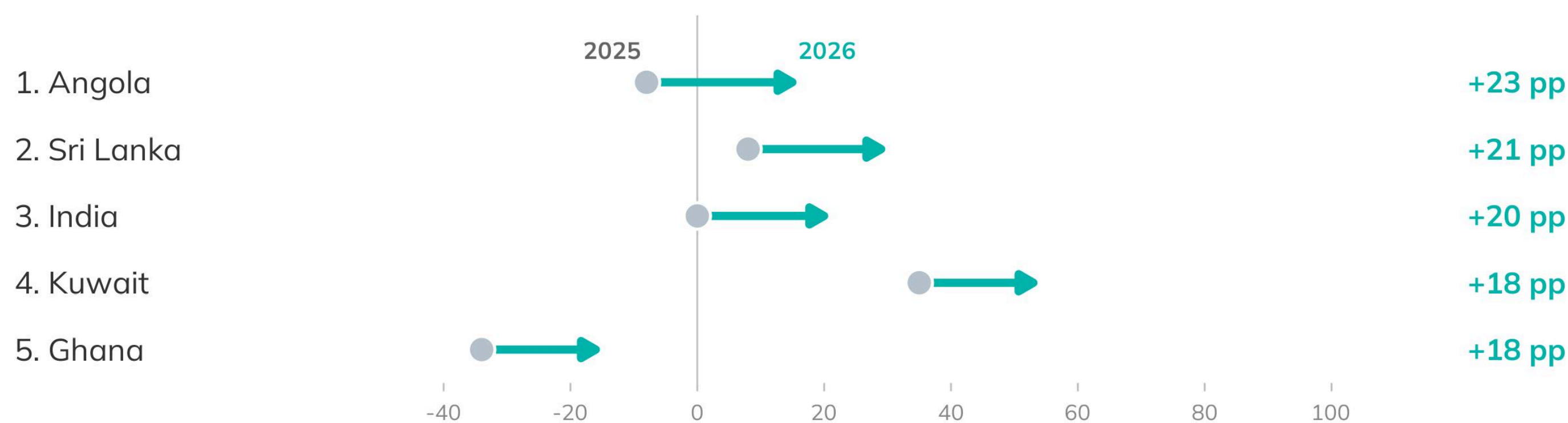
Attitudes Towards a Rules-Based World Order Trend

Global support for a rules-based international order has slightly strengthened since 2025, with average net agreement rising from +17 to +19 points.

Support has grown most in Angola, Sri Lanka, India, Kuwait, and Ghana. The largest declines are in France, Jordan, Denmark, Palestine, and Georgia.

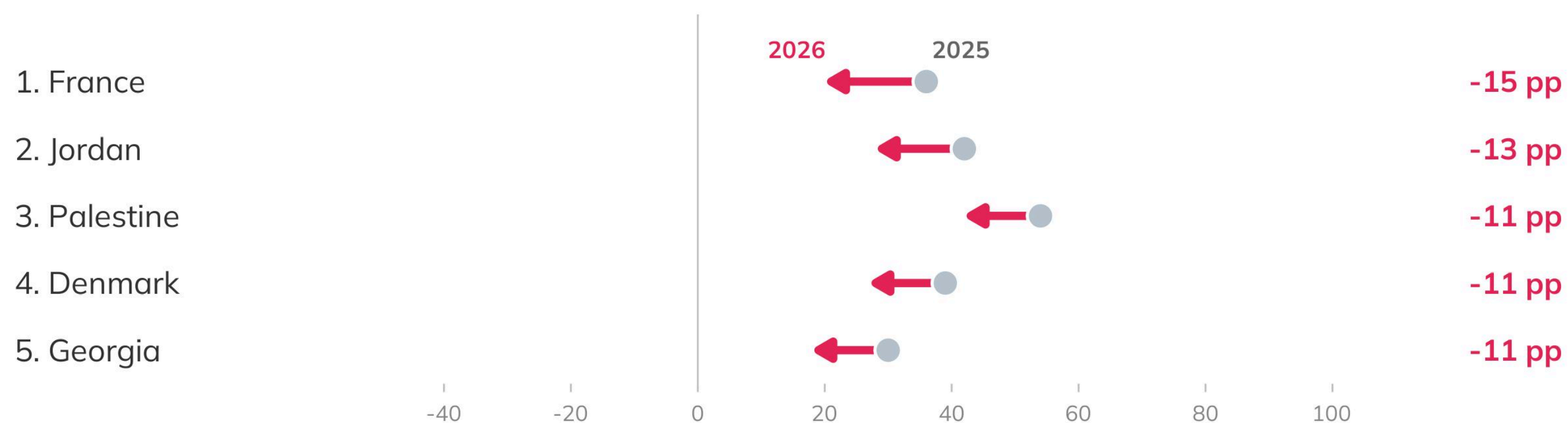
Biggest gains

Change from 2025 to 2026, net agreement (% agree - % disagree)



Biggest declines

Change from 2025 to 2026, net agreement (% agree - % disagree)



Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Countries should follow international laws and agreements, even if it limits their freedom of action."
Strongly agree / Somewhat agree / Neither / Somewhat disagree / Strongly disagree

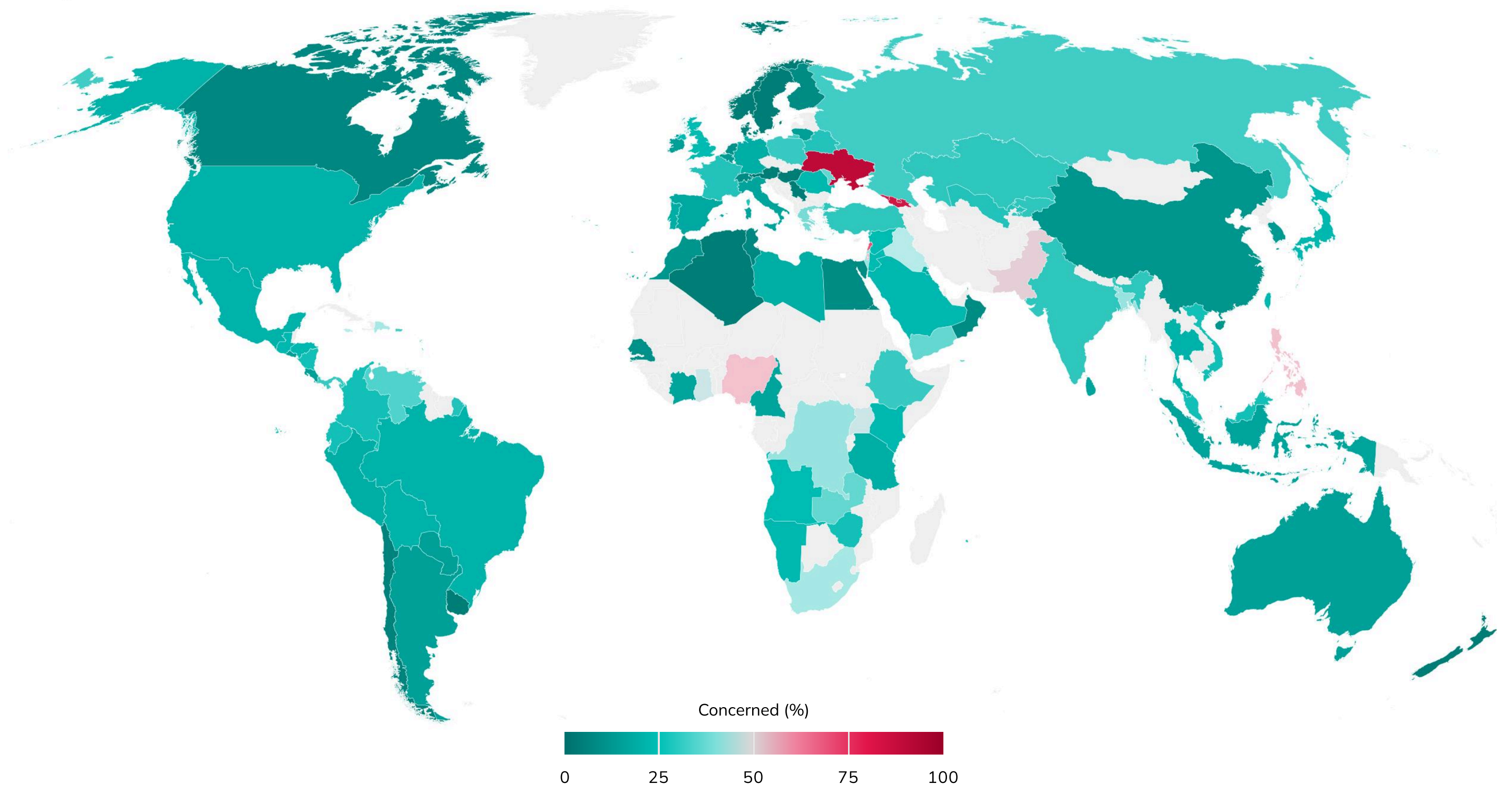
Fear of Foreign Attack

Most people around the world are not very concerned about the possibility of being attacked by another country. The highest levels of concern are concentrated in places with active or recent conflict — including Ukraine, Georgia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo — as well as parts of the Middle East, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

By contrast, concern is notably low in the United States and China, and in northern European countries like Sweden, Finland, and Norway.

Fear of foreign attack is highest in Ukraine, Georgia, and Lebanon

% Very or Extremely concerned



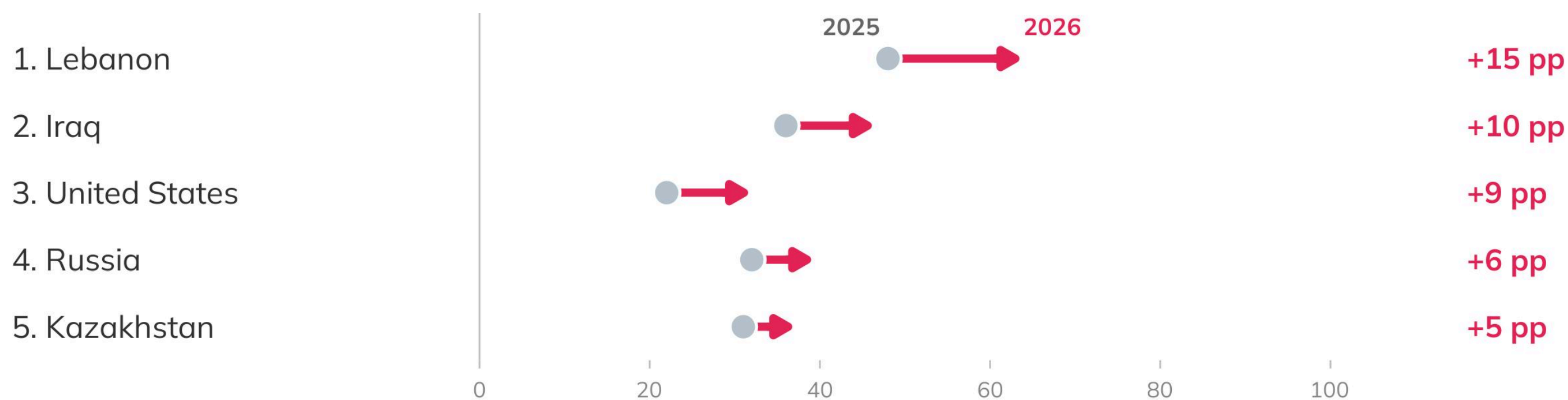
How concerned are you about the possibility of your country being attacked by another country in the near future?
Not at all concerned / Slightly concerned / Moderately concerned / Very concerned / Extremely concerned

Fear of Foreign Attack Trend

Fear of foreign attack has shifted notably in some countries since 2025. Concern has risen most in Lebanon, Iraq, the United States, Russia, and Kazakhstan. It has eased most in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Vietnam, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Ghana.

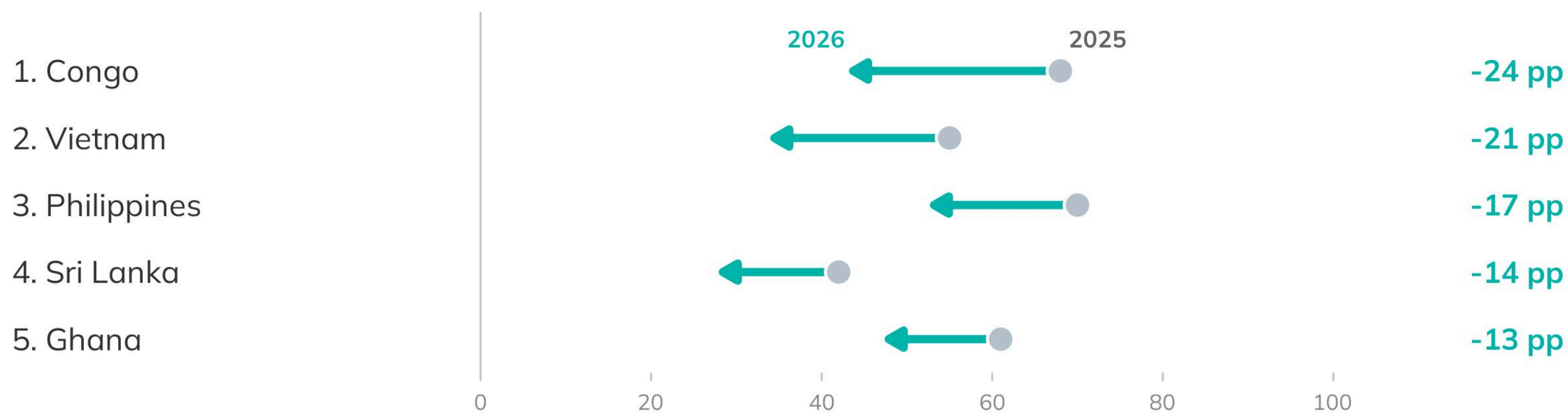
Where fear of foreign attack increased most

Biggest year-over-year rise in % Very/Extremely concerned



Where fear of foreign attack decreased most

Biggest year-over-year drop in % Very/Extremely concerned



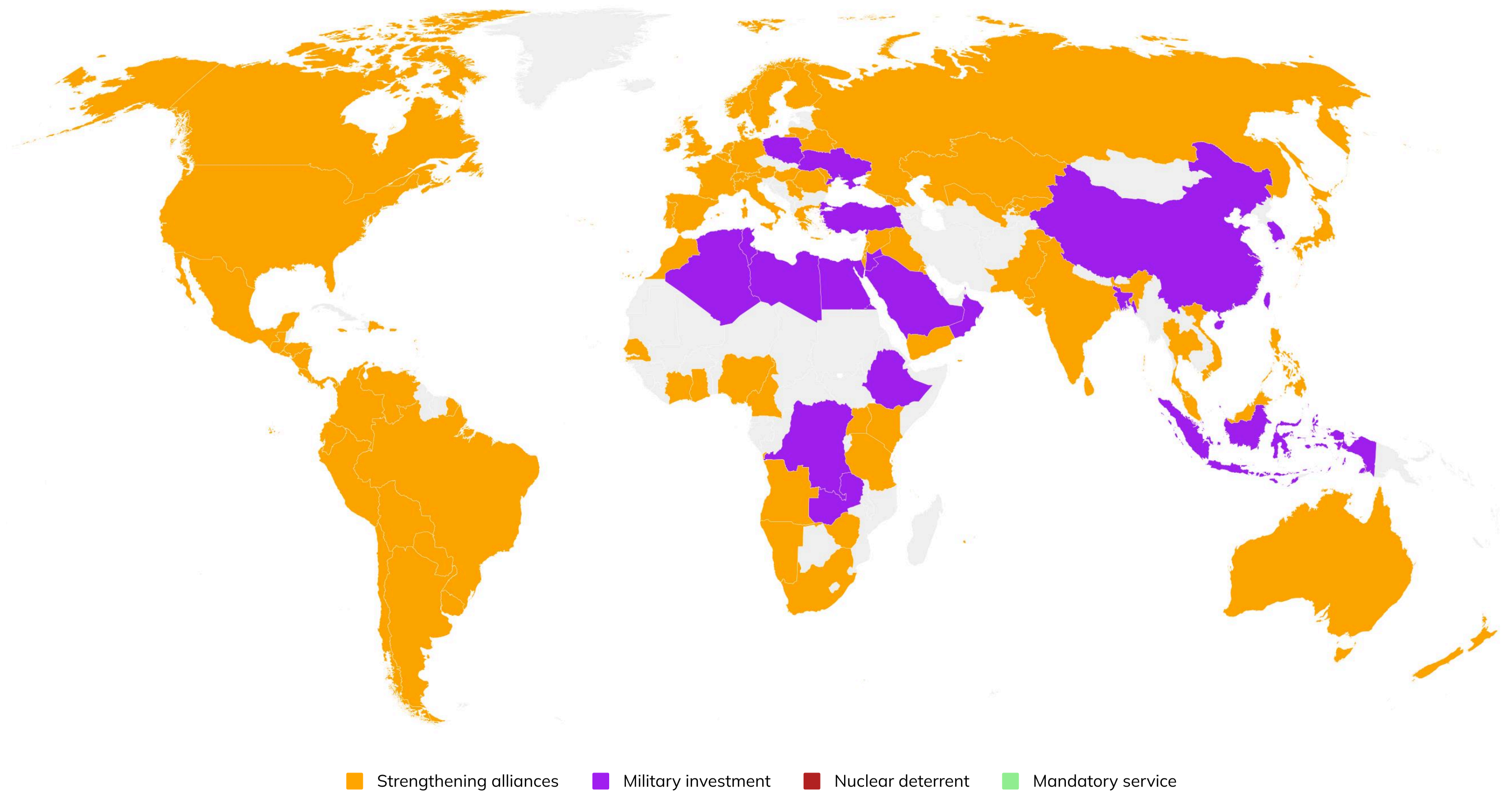
How concerned are you about the possibility of your country being attacked by another country in the near future?
 Not at all concerned / Slightly concerned / Moderately concerned / Very concerned / Extremely concerned

Priorities for Defense

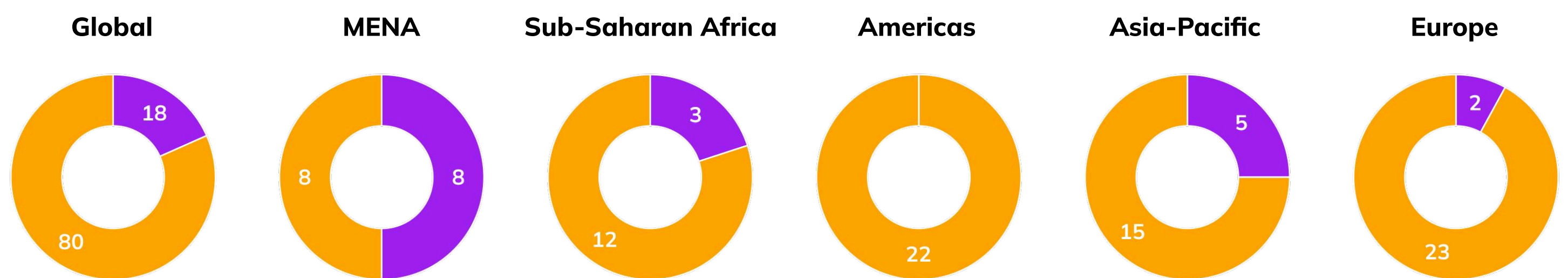
When asked what their country should do to protect itself against potential threats, people in most countries choose strengthening alliances. It is the top answer in 80 of 98 countries surveyed. Military investment is the leading priority in 18 countries, mostly in MENA (Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Oman) and parts of Asia-Pacific (China, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Bangladesh). Nuclear deterrent and mandatory service are not the top choice in any country.

Most countries prioritize alliances over military buildup

Most selected response per country



Number of countries that selected each answer as their top choice



The MENA region stands out as the most focused on military buildup, with more countries prioritizing increased investment in defense than in any other region.

In no country did most people select “Implementing or expanding mandatory military service” as their top choice.

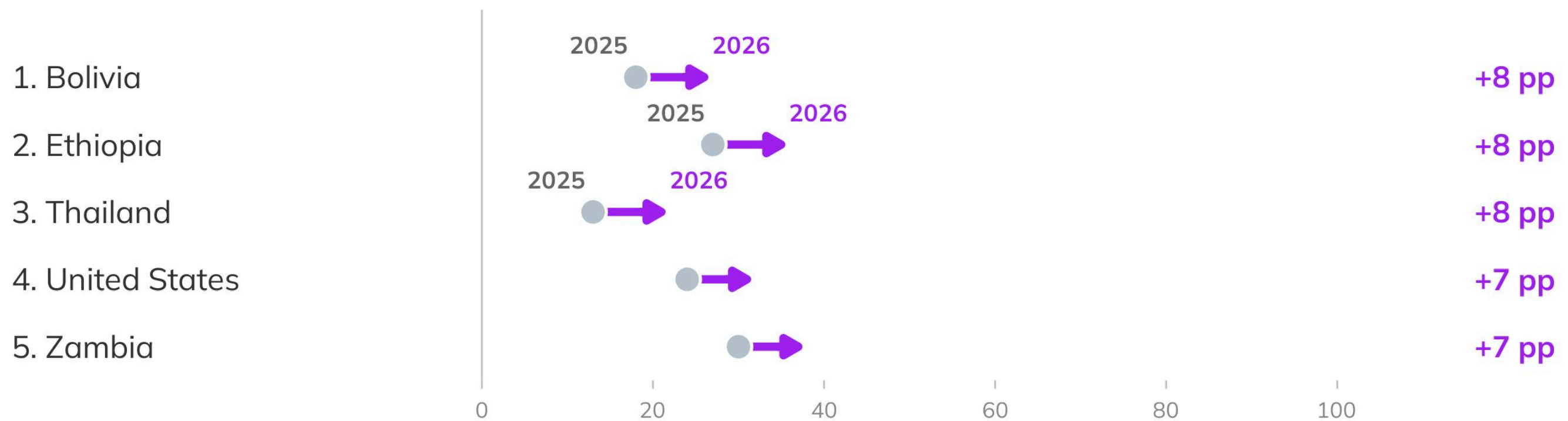
*If you had to choose, which of the following options should have the highest priority for your country to protect itself against potential threats from other countries?
Strengthening alliances and international partnerships / Maintaining or developing nuclear weapons as a deterrent /
Implementing or expanding mandatory military service / Increasing investment in national defense and military capabilities*

Priorities for Defense Trends

Among the 95 countries surveyed in both 2025 and 2026, the share that ranked “strengthening alliances” as their top defense priority has slightly declined (77 countries in 2026, down from 83). Support for increasing military investment has grown in their place, becoming the top priority in 18 countries (up from 11). The largest individual shifts toward military investment are in Bolivia, Ethiopia, Thailand, the United States, and Zambia.

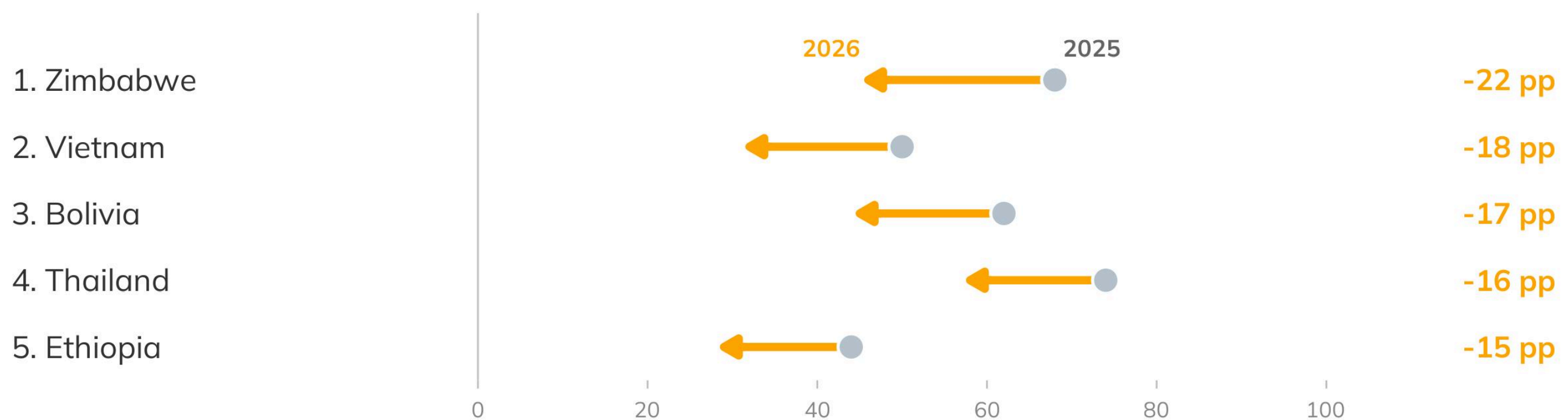
Where support for more military spending increased most

Biggest year-over-year rise in % picking ‘military investment’



Where support for alliances decreased most

Biggest year-over-year drop in % picking ‘alliances and partnerships’



If you had to choose, which of the following options should have the highest priority for your country to protect itself against potential threats from other countries?

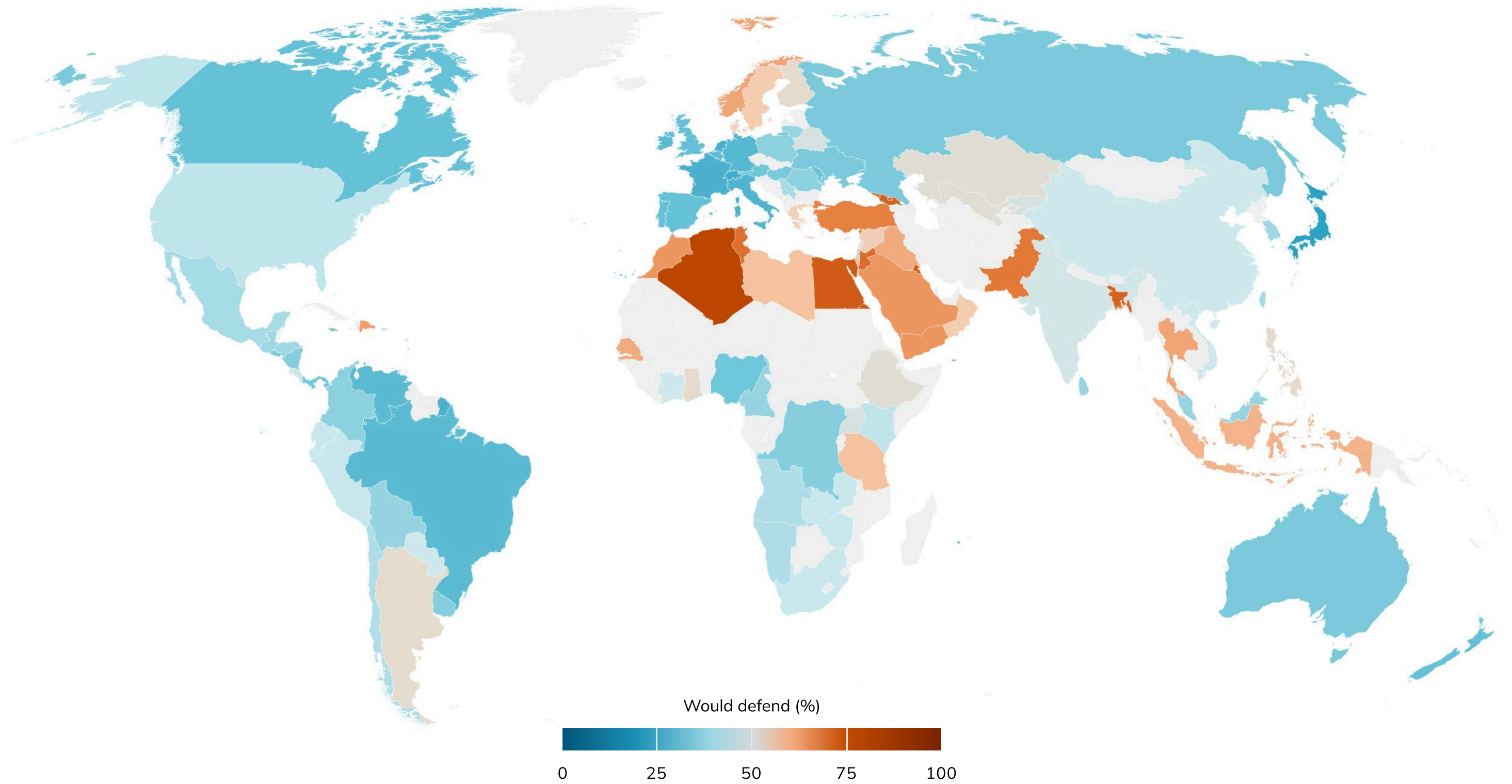
Strengthening alliances and international partnerships / Maintaining or developing nuclear weapons as a deterrent / Implementing or expanding mandatory military service / Increasing investment in national defense and military capabilities

Willingness to Fight for Their Country

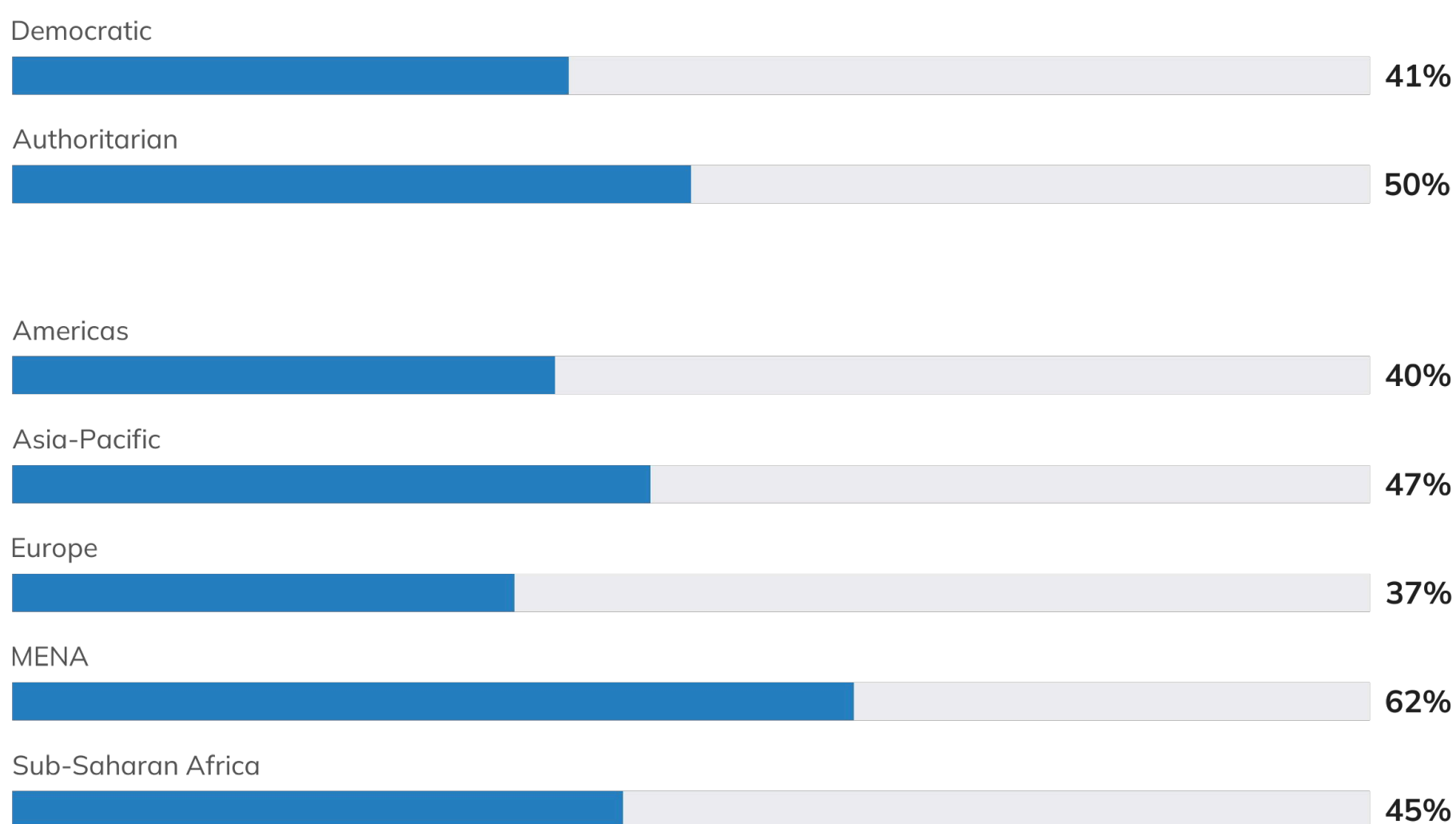
Across the Middle East and North Africa, an average of 62% of people aged 18-55 say they would personally fight if their country were attacked, the highest regional average in the world. In Europe, the share is roughly half as large (37%), with higher shares in countries like Norway, Sweden, Greece, Denmark, and Finland, but some of the lowest globally in France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, where fewer than one in three say they would be willing to fight to defend their country.

Majorities in the Middle East and North Africa say they would fight to defend their country

% of population aged 18-55 who say "Yes" (%)



By regime type and region



Across the world, the share of people aged 18-55 who say they are willing to fight to defend their country is much higher in authoritarian countries (50%) than in democracies (41%)

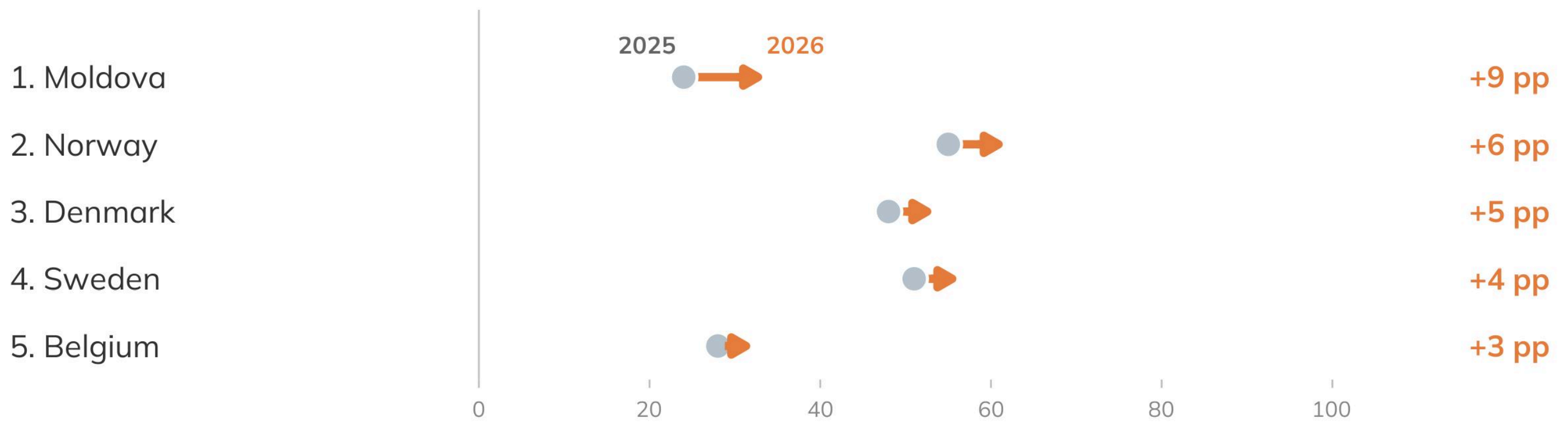
If your country is attacked by a foreign power, would you be personally willing to fight to defend it?
Yes / Not sure / No

Willingness to Fight for Their Country Trend

Willingness to fight has fallen significantly worldwide since 2025, with the global average dropping from 53% to 45%. The largest declines are in Vietnam, Malaysia, India, Libya, and Zambia. By contrast, willingness has risen in several Northern European countries, including Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, alongside Moldova.

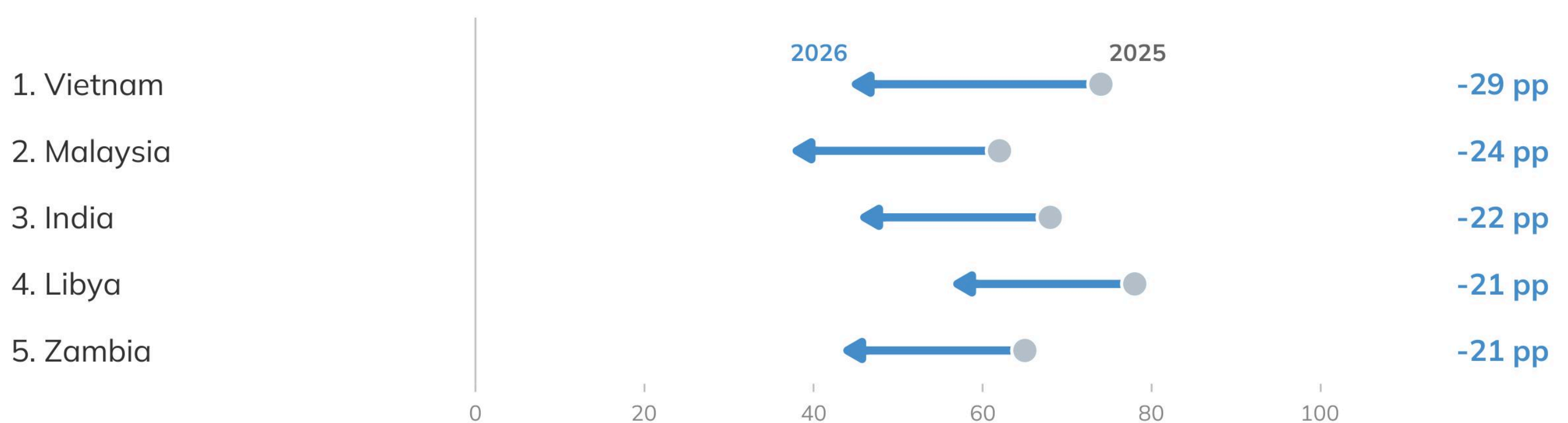
Where willingness to fight increased most

Biggest year-over-year rise in % (18-55) saying they would fight



Where willingness to fight decreased most

Biggest year-over-year drop in % (18-55) saying they would fight



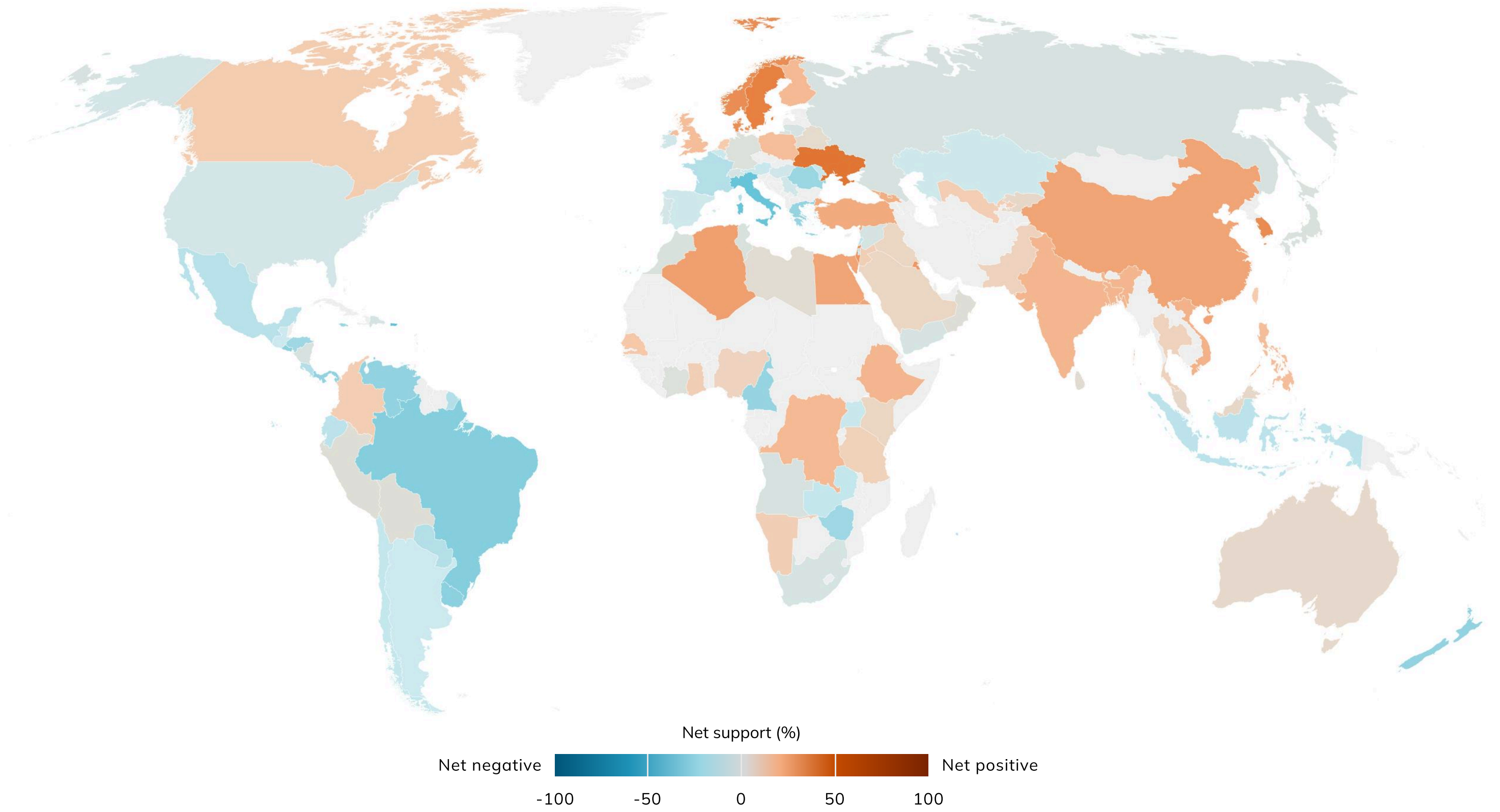
If your country is attacked by a foreign power, would you be personally willing to fight to defend it?
Yes / Not sure / No

Support for Higher Defense Spending

Around the world, public opinion is generally evenly split on whether to increase defense spending, even if that means higher taxes or cuts elsewhere. The strongest support comes from Ukraine, Sweden, South Korea, Norway, and Denmark. The strongest opposition is in Puerto Rico, Italy, Brazil, Uruguay, and El Salvador.

Support for higher defense spending

Net support: % Yes - % No



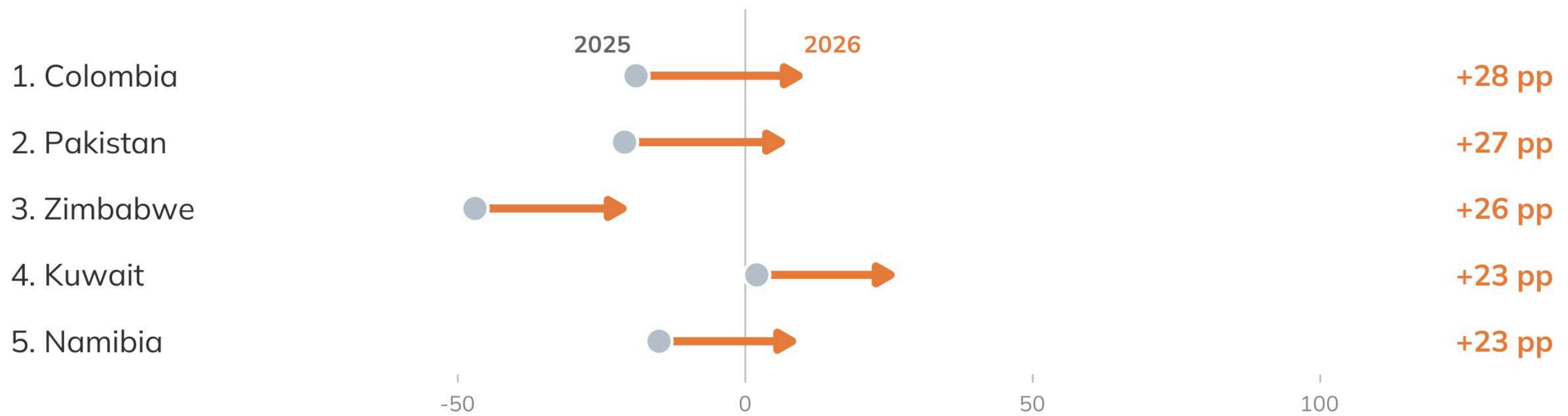
Would you support an increase in your country's defense spending even if that means higher taxes or reduced spending in other areas?
Yes / Not sure / No

Support for Higher Defense Spending Trend

Support for higher defense spending has shifted notably in many countries since 2025. The largest increases are in Colombia, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Kuwait, and Namibia. The largest decreases are in Poland, Romania, Kyrgyzstan, Taiwan, and Australia.

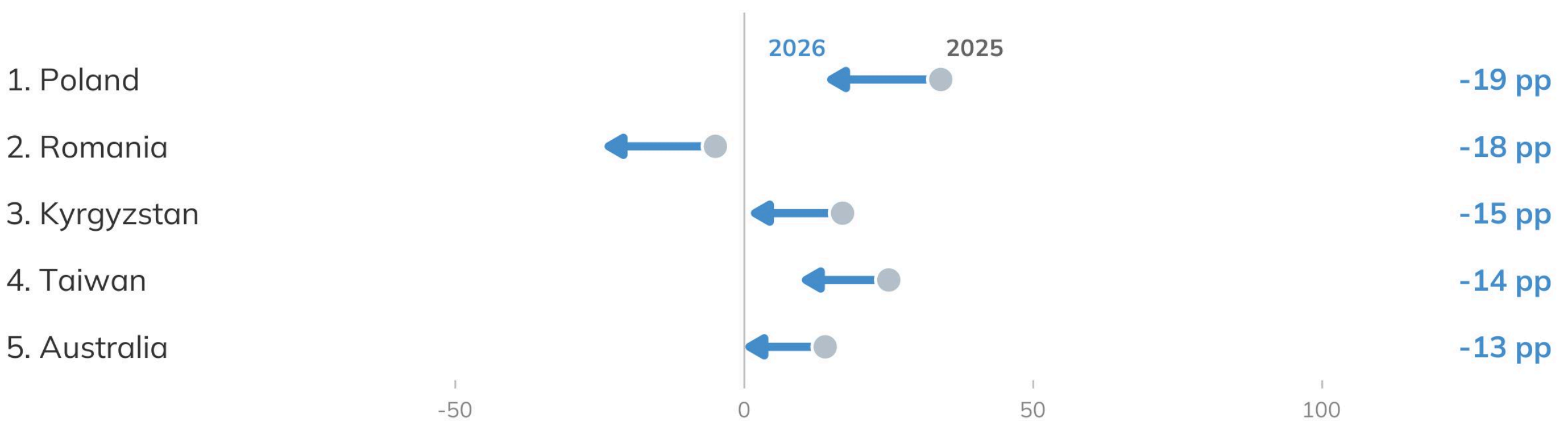
Where support for higher defense spending increased most

Biggest year-over-year rise in net support: % Yes - % No



Where support for higher defense spending decreased most

Biggest year-over-year drop in net support: % Yes - % No



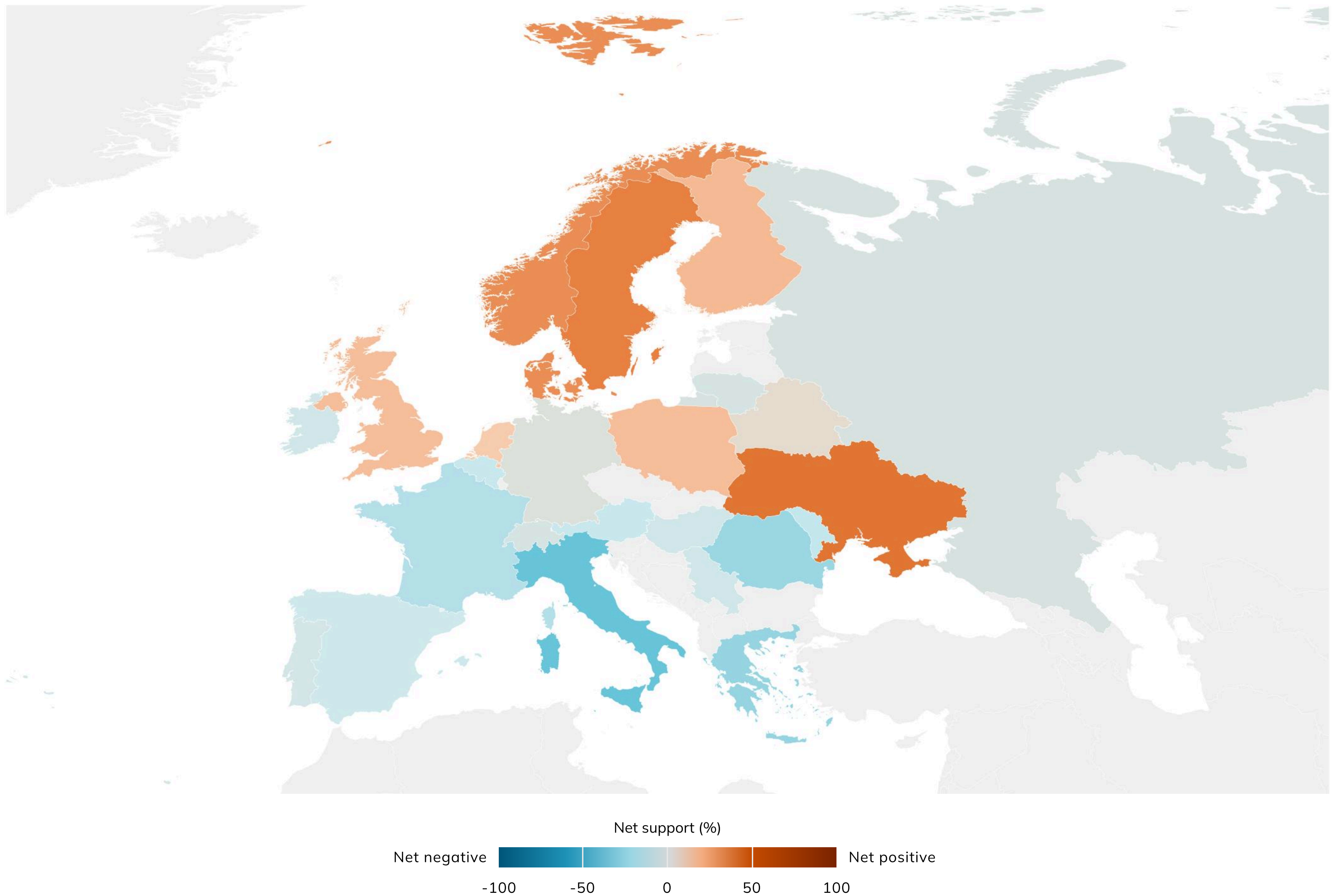
Would you support an increase in your country's defense spending even if that means higher taxes or reduced spending in other areas?
Yes / Not sure / No

Support for Higher Defense Spending in Europe

Europe is split on defense spending. Support is highest in the Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland) and on the Eastern frontier (Ukraine, Poland). By contrast, Southern European countries (Italy, Greece, Spain) and France are clearly opposed. The rest of Eastern Europe is divided.

Europe is divided about increased defense spending

Net support: % Yes - % No



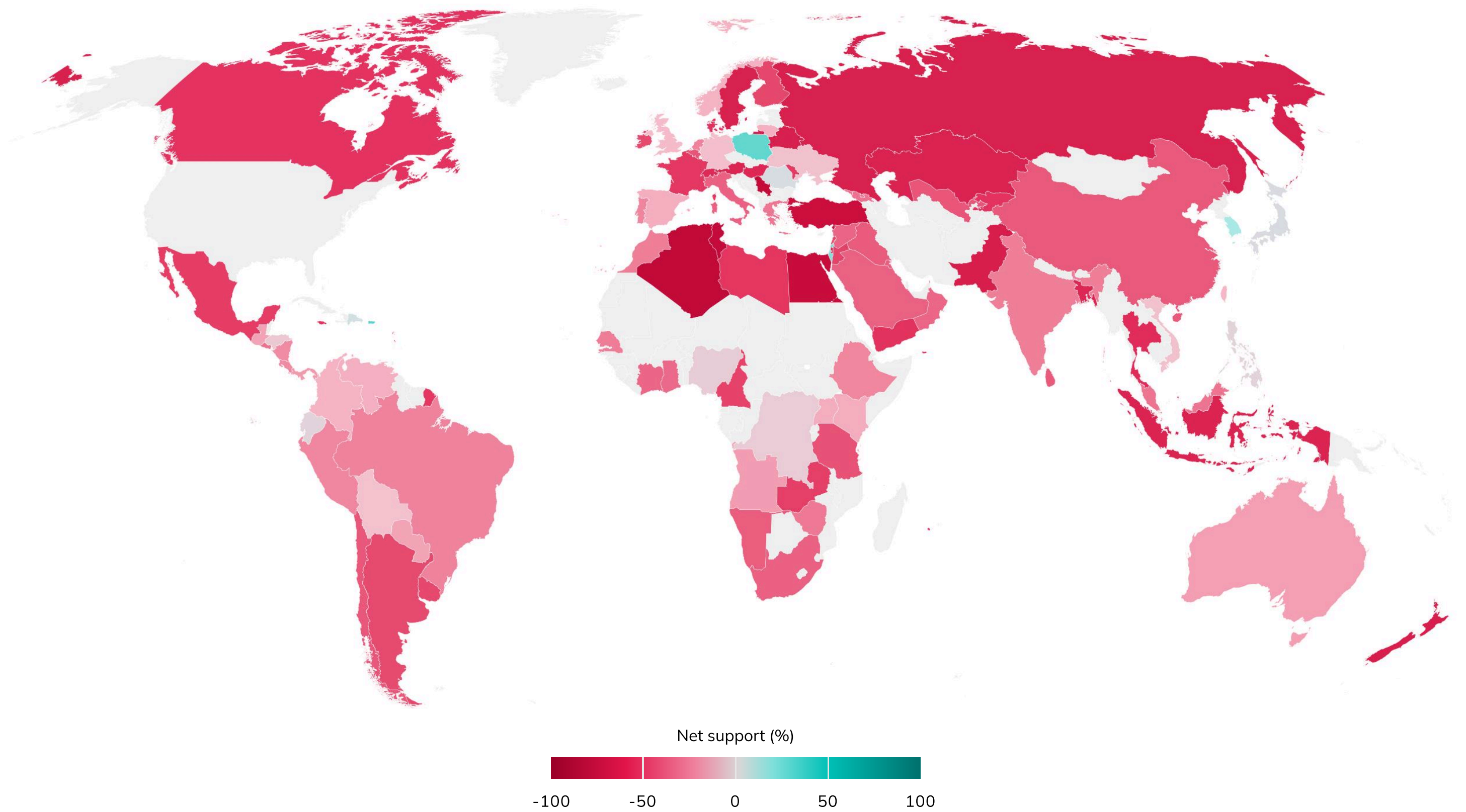
Would you support an increase in your country's defense spending even if that means higher taxes or reduced spending in other areas?
Yes / Not sure / No

US Military Bases

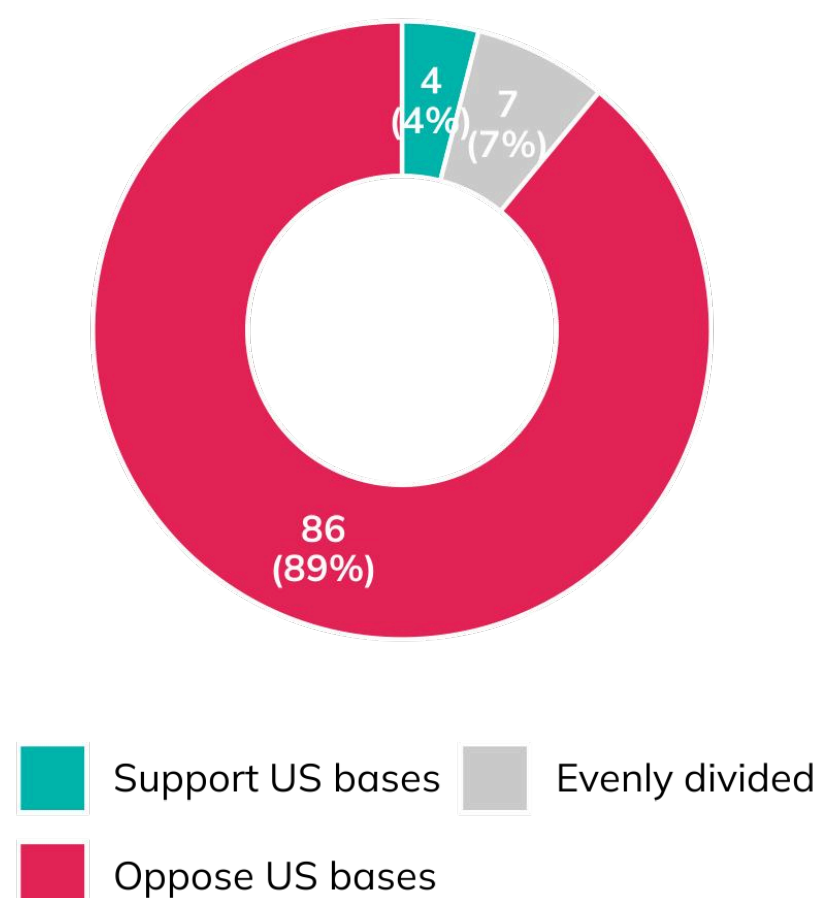
Most people around the world oppose having US military bases in their country. Only 4 of 97 countries surveyed have a clear plurality who say yes: Puerto Rico, Poland, Israel, and South Korea. Some other countries, including the Dominican Republic, Romania, Japan, and the Philippines, are evenly split. In the remaining 86 countries, a clear plurality say no.

Should the United States have military bases in your country?

Net support: % Yes - % No



4 of 97 countries support US bases
86 oppose



In your opinion, should the United States have military bases in your country?
Yes / No / Don't know

Methodology note:
Countries are classified as "evenly divided" when their support (% who say yes - % who say no) is within ± 5 percentage points.

Global Conflicts

This chapter looks at how publics around the world divide on five active or potential geopolitical disputes: Russia vs. Ukraine, Israel vs. Palestine, China vs. Taiwan, the United States vs. Iran, and the United States vs. Greenland/Denmark. For each conflict, respondents were asked which side they agree more with.

This chapter draws on data from the Global Pulse dataset

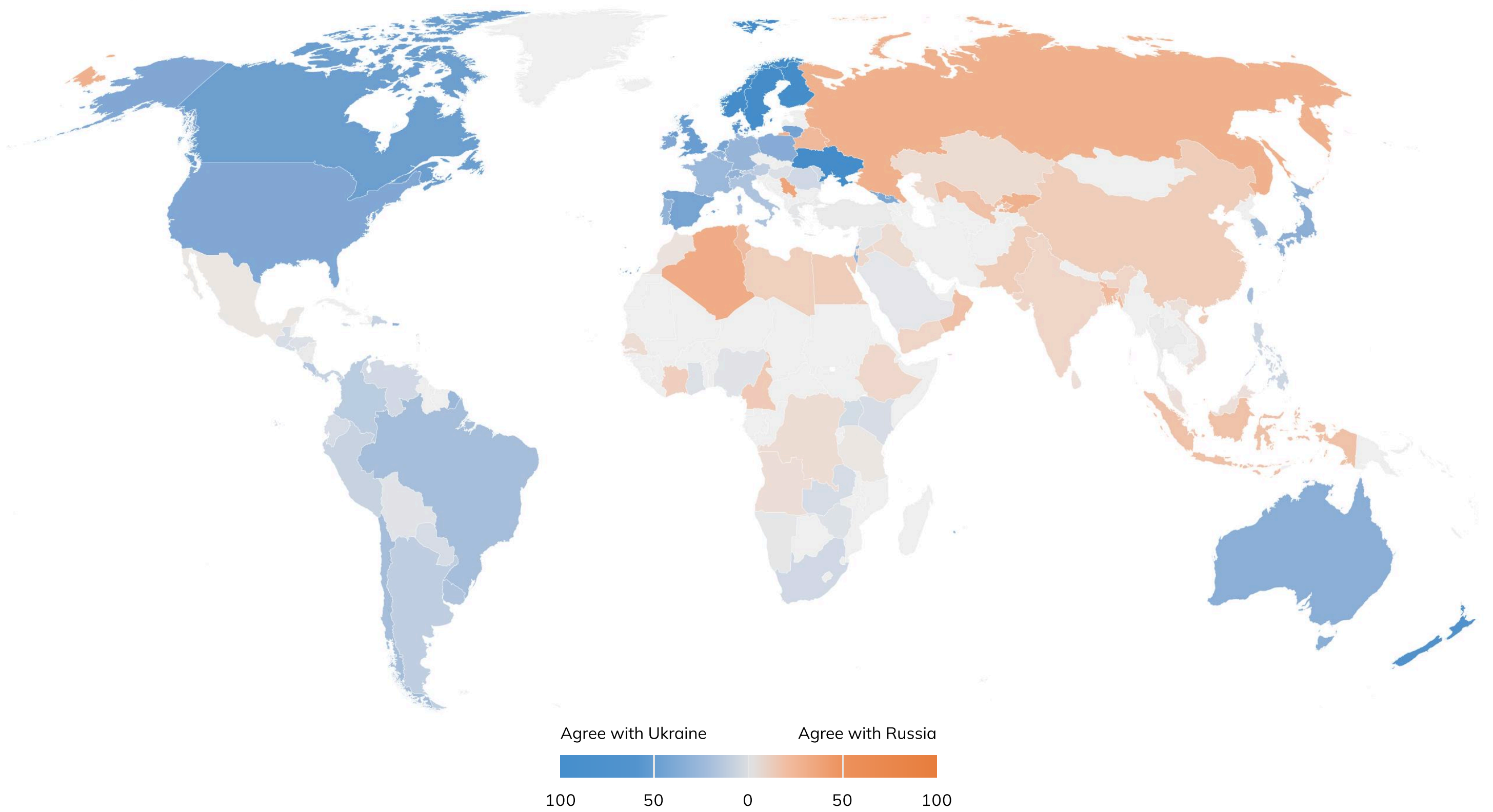
Please visit niradata.com/global-pulse to access the full dataset

Russia vs. Ukraine

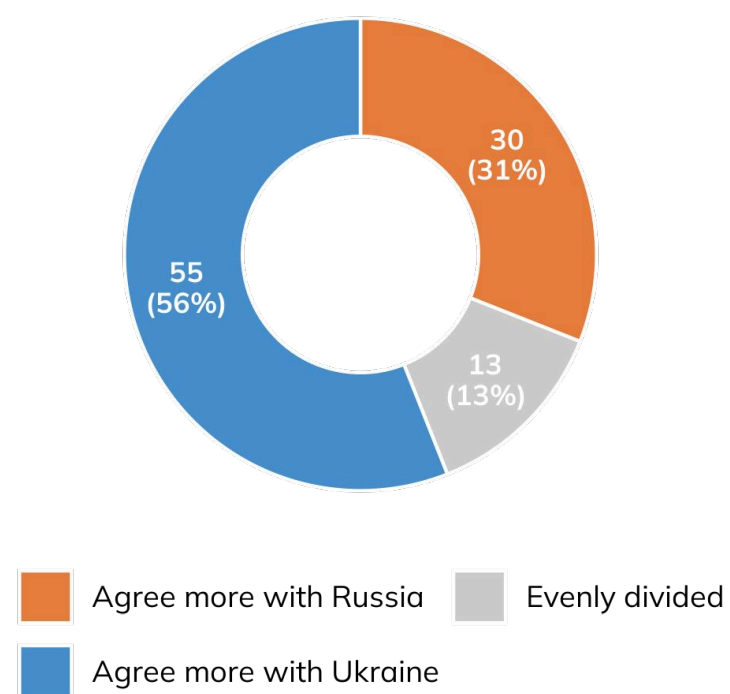
In the war between Russia and Ukraine, 55 of 98 countries surveyed agree more with Ukraine, 30 agree more with Russia, and 13 are closely divided. This is the most polarised of the five conflicts surveyed. On average, agreement leans 12 points toward Ukraine. The countries that agree most with Ukraine are Sweden, Norway, Finland, New Zealand, and Denmark. The countries that agree most with Russia are Serbia, Algeria, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, and Bangladesh. Europe agrees overwhelmingly more with Ukraine, and the Americas also lean toward Ukraine. Asia-Pacific is split, with strong pro-Ukraine views in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea, and pro-Russia leans in countries like Indonesia, India, China, and Pakistan.

Russia vs. Ukraine

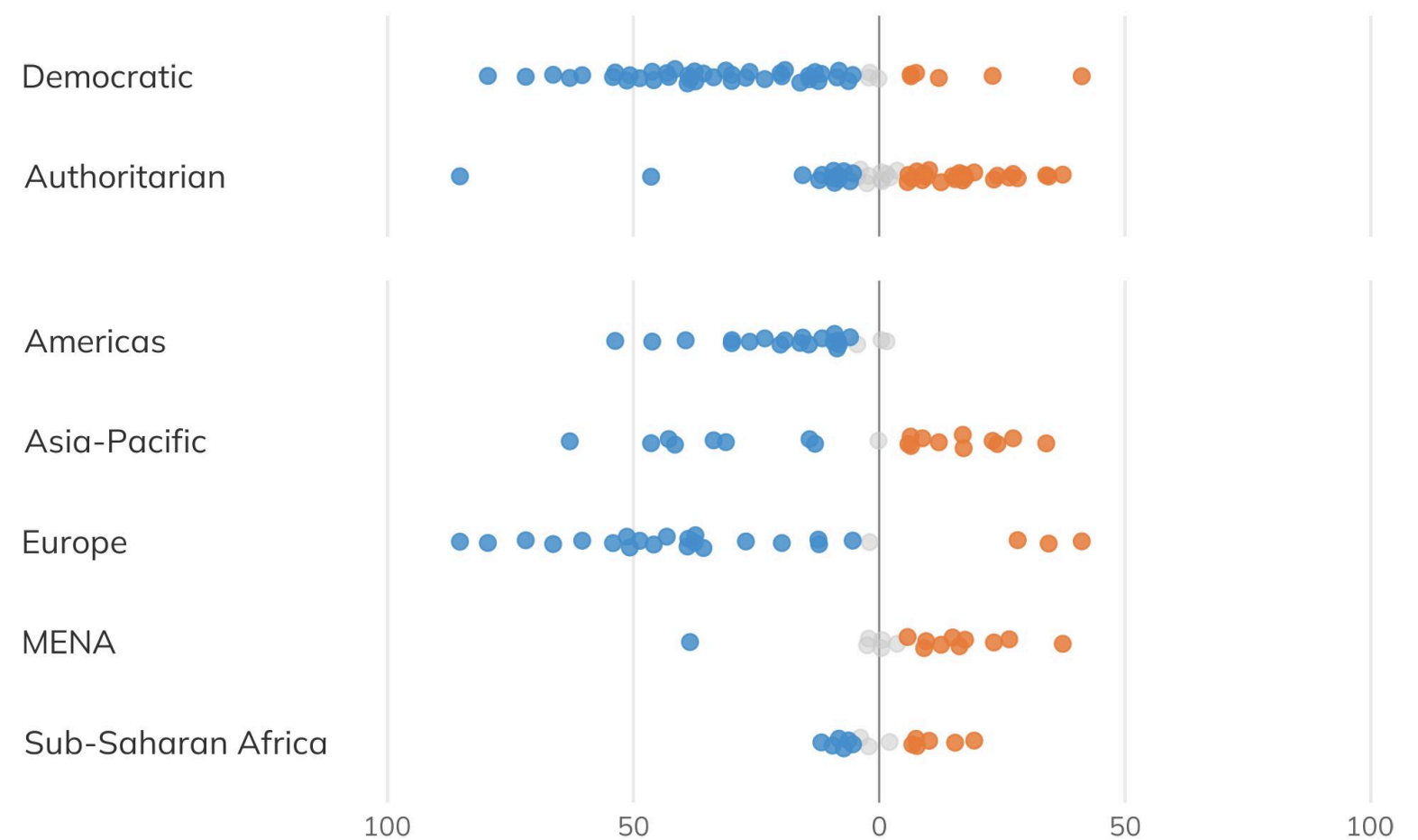
Net agreement: % who agree more with Russia - % who agree more with Ukraine



30 of 98 countries agree more with Russia
55 agree more with Ukraine



How countries divide on Ukraine vs. Russia



In the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which side do you agree with more?
Russia / Ukraine / Both equally / Don't know

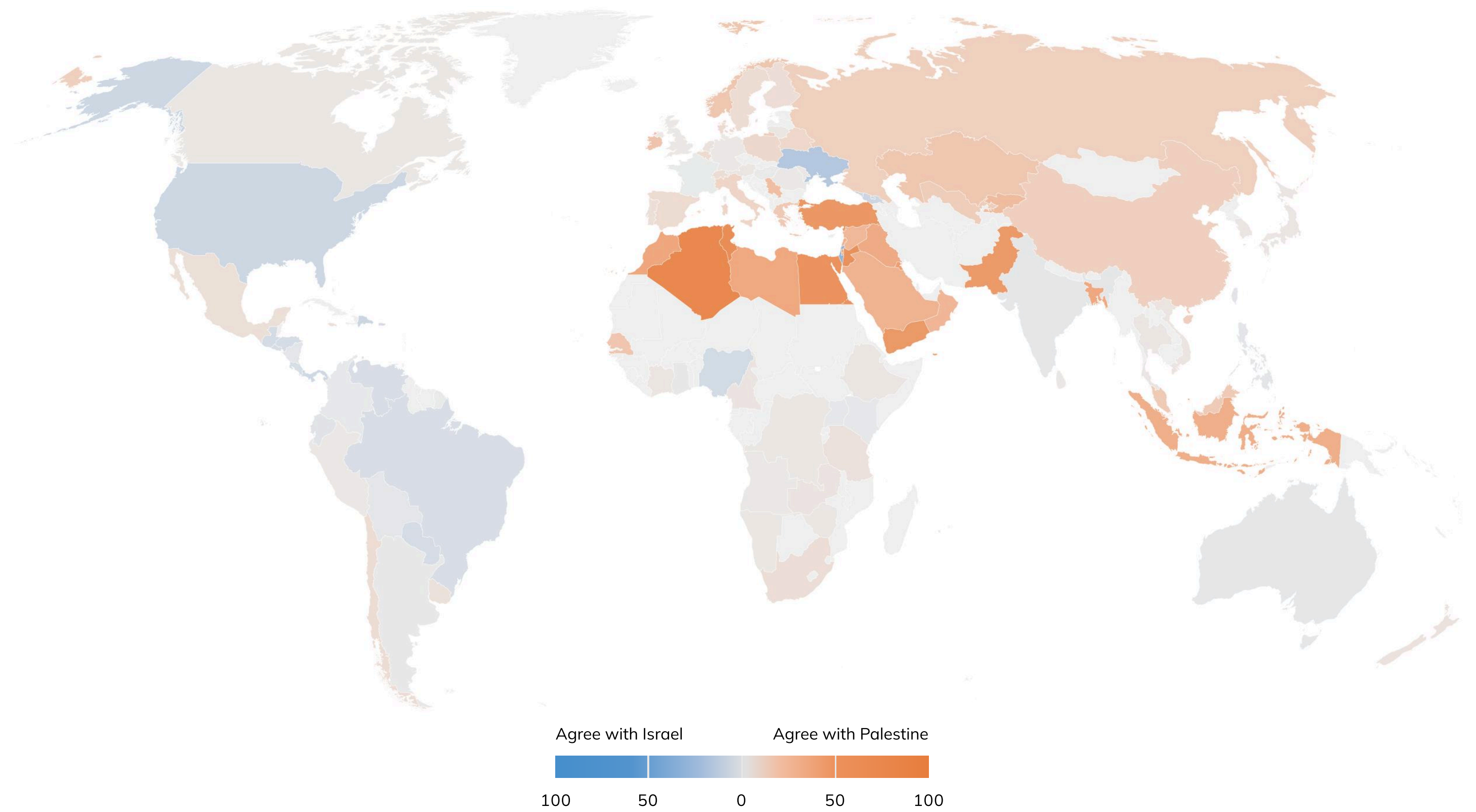
Methodology note:
Countries are classified as "evenly divided" when their net lean (% who agree more with one side minus % who agree more with the other) is within ±5 percentage points.

Israel vs. Palestine

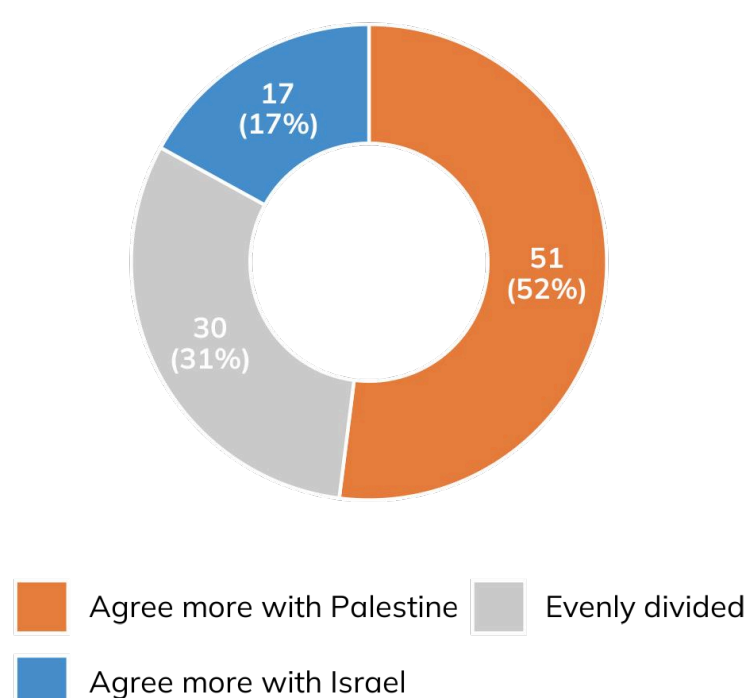
In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, 51 of 98 countries surveyed agree more with Palestine, 17 agree more with Israel, and 30 are roughly evenly divided. On average, agreement leans 14 points toward Palestine. The countries that agree most with Palestine are all in the Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, and Turkey. The countries that agree most with Israel are Ukraine, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Georgia, and Panama. MENA agrees overwhelmingly more with Palestine; Asia-Pacific and Europe also lean toward Palestine; Sub-Saharan Africa is roughly even; the Americas lean slightly toward Israel.

Israel vs. Palestine

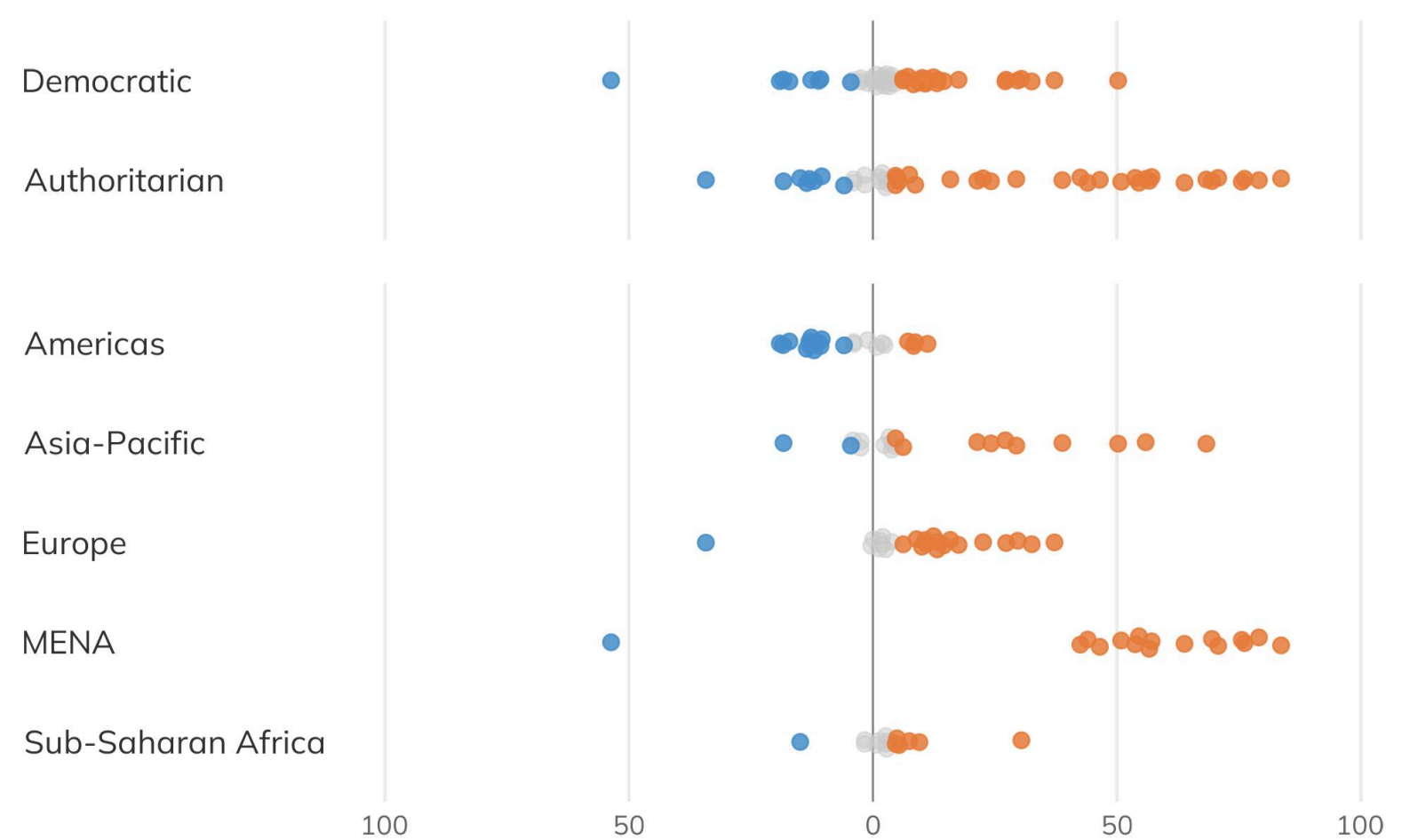
Net agreement: % who agree more with Israel - % who agree more with Palestine



51 of 98 countries agree more with Palestine
17 agree more with Israel



How countries divide on Israel vs. Palestine



In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which side do you agree with more?
Israel / Palestine / Both equally / Don't know

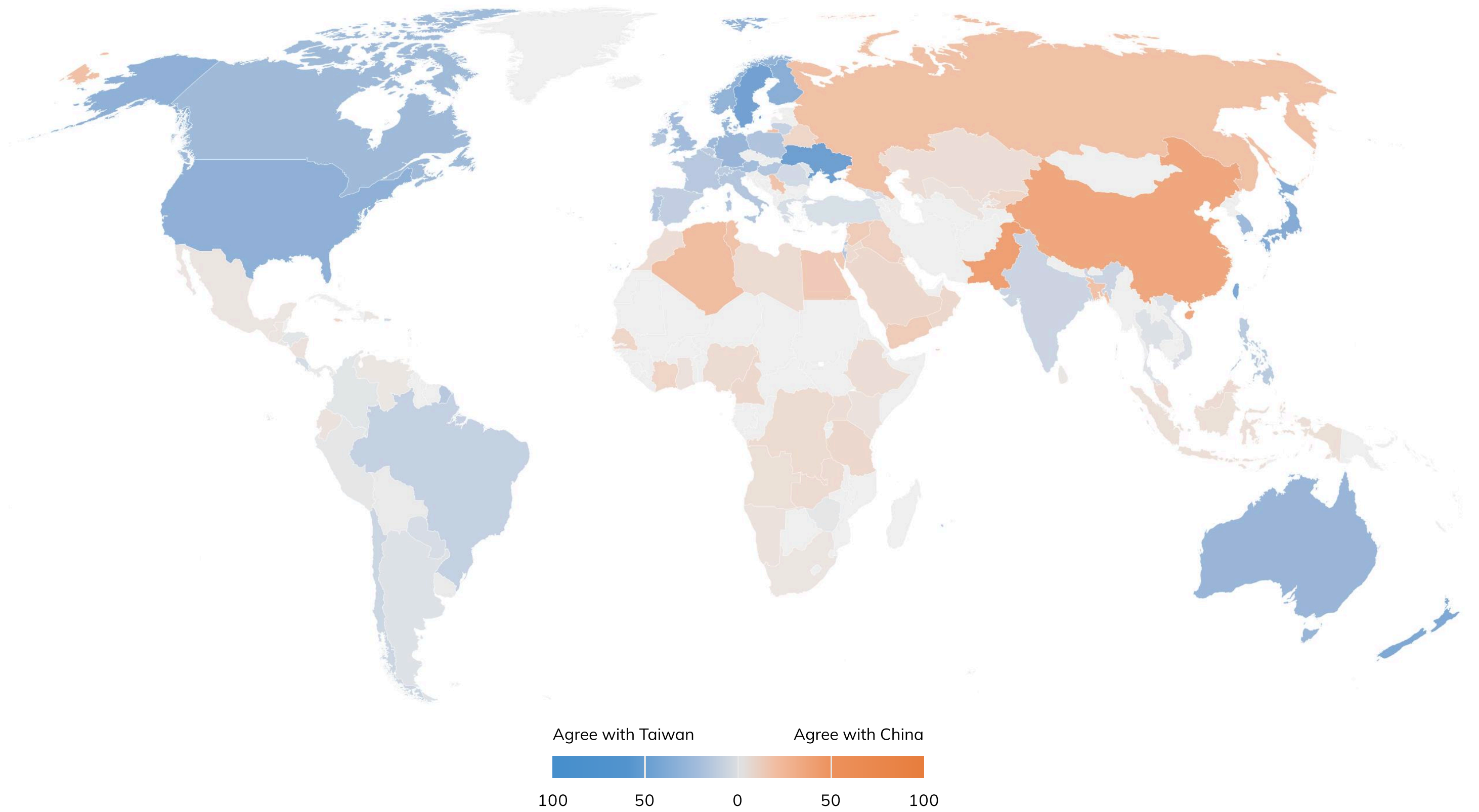
Methodology note:
Countries are classified as "evenly divided" when their net lean (% who agree more with one side minus % who agree more with the other) is within ±5 percentage points.

China vs. Taiwan

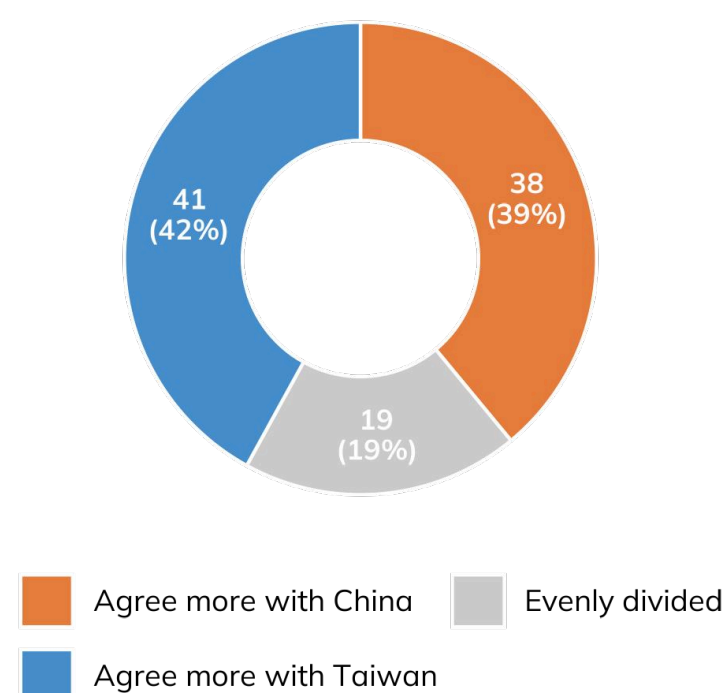
In a hypothetical conflict between China and Taiwan, 41 countries agree more with Taiwan, 38 agree more with China, and 19 are roughly evenly divided. The global average leans just 5 points toward Taiwan. This is the closest split of the five conflicts surveyed, and the question also has the highest share of "don't know" responses (38% globally). The countries that agree most with Taiwan are Ukraine, Sweden, New Zealand, Japan, and Finland. The countries that agree most with China are Pakistan, Algeria, Russia, Tunisia, and Bangladesh. Europe agrees more with Taiwan; MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa agree more with China; the Americas and Asia-Pacific each lean slightly toward Taiwan.

China vs. Taiwan

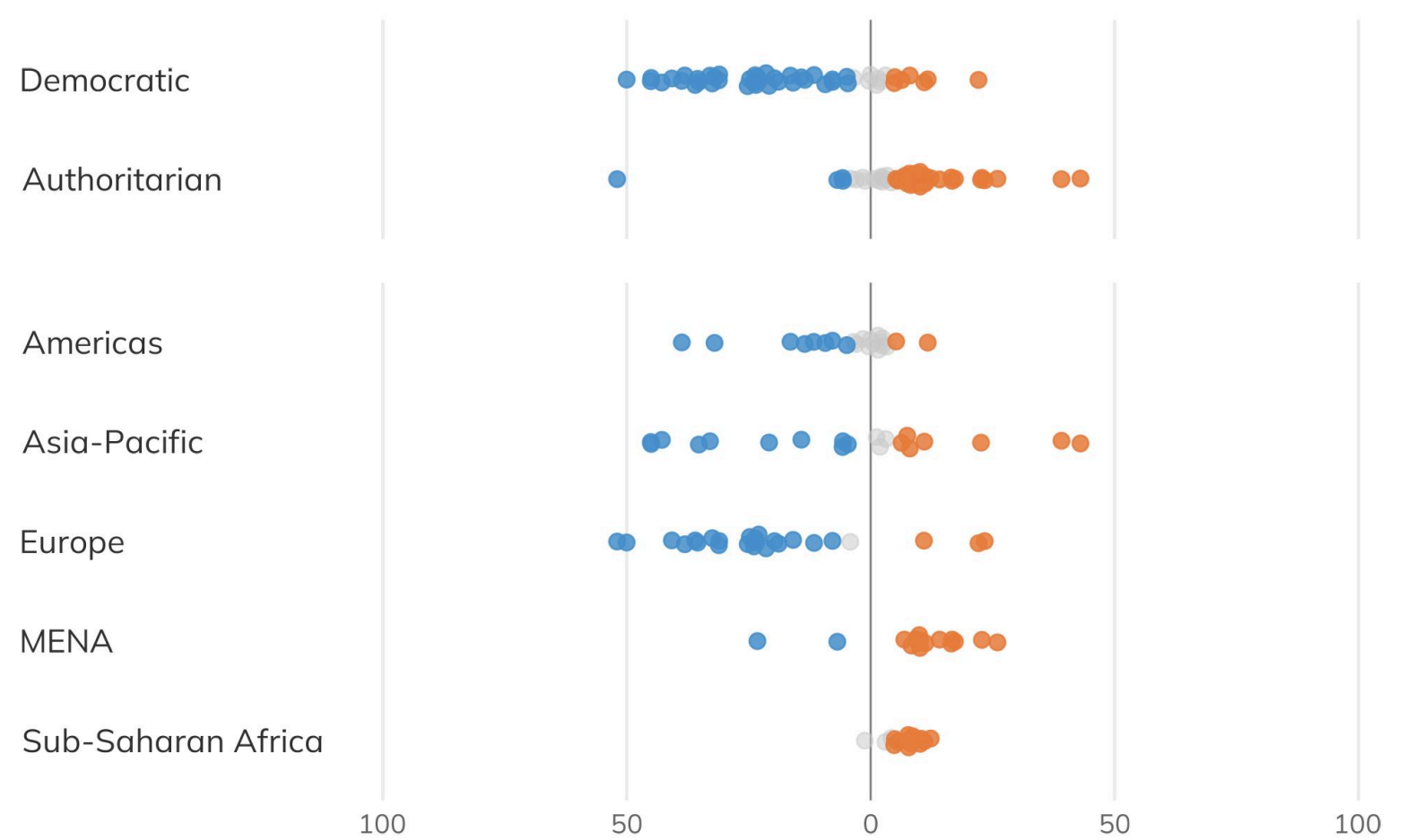
Net agreement: % who agree more with China - % who agree more with Taiwan



38 of 98 countries would agree more with China
41 would agree more with Taiwan



How countries divide on Taiwan vs. China



In the conflict between China and Taiwan, which side do you agree with more?
China / Taiwan / Both equally / Don't know

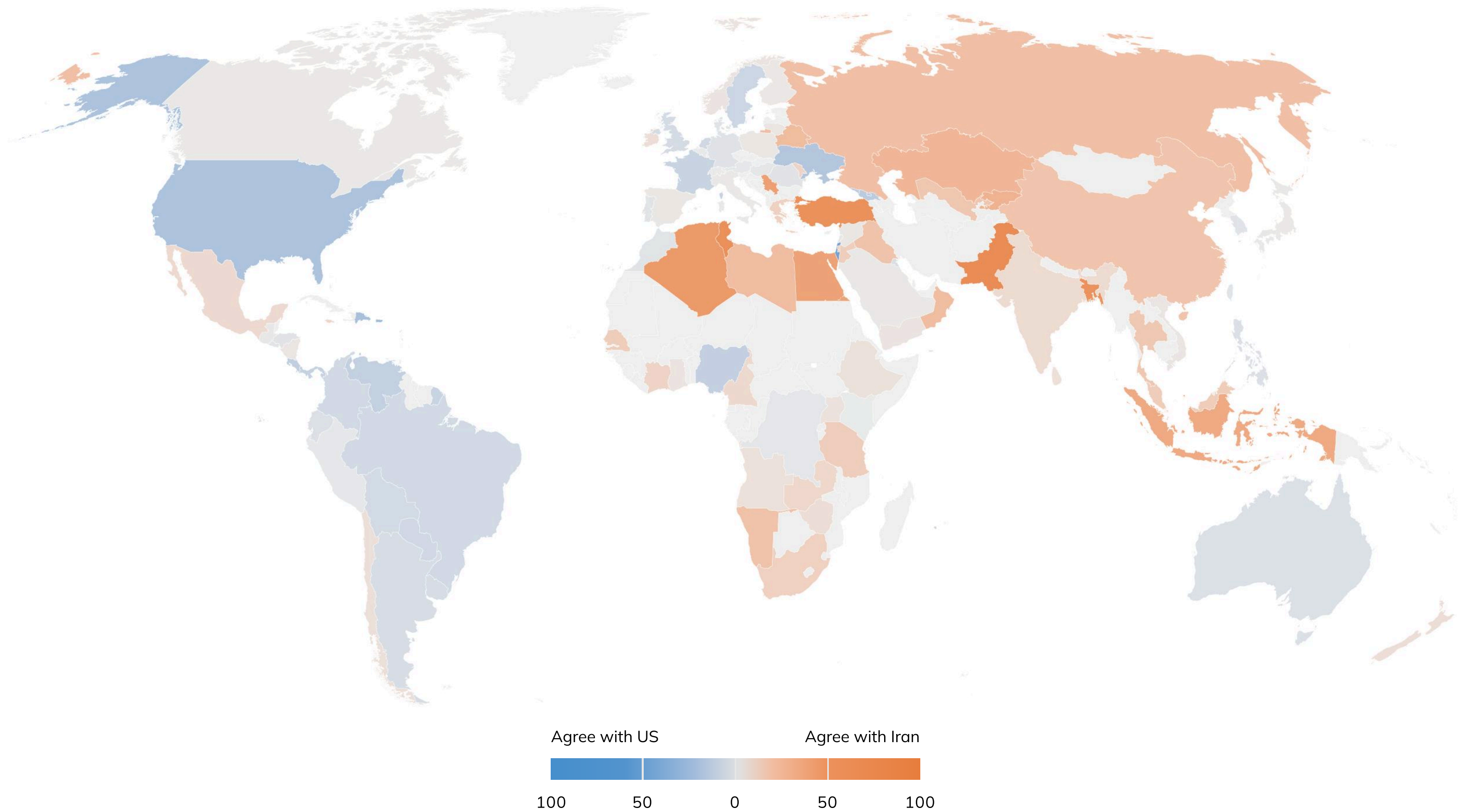
Methodology note:
Countries are classified as "evenly divided" when their net lean (% who agree more with one side minus % who agree more with the other) is within ±5 percentage points.

US vs. Iran

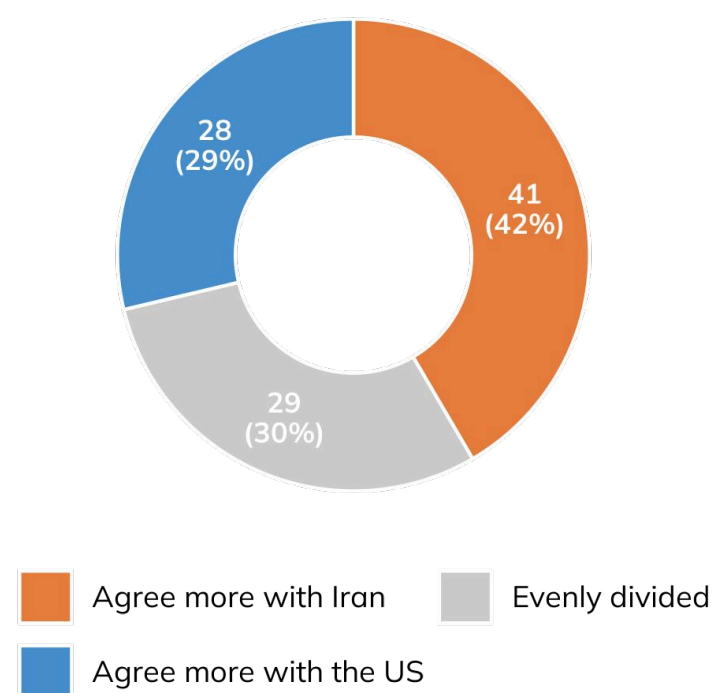
In the conflict between the United States and Iran, 41 countries agree more with Iran, 28 agree more with the United States, and 29 are roughly evenly divided. On average, agreement leans 6 points toward Iran. The countries that agree most with the United States are Israel, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Ukraine, and Georgia. The countries that agree most with Iran are Pakistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Bangladesh, and Algeria. The Americas agree more with the United States; Europe is roughly even; Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia-Pacific, and MENA all agree more with Iran.

US vs. Iran

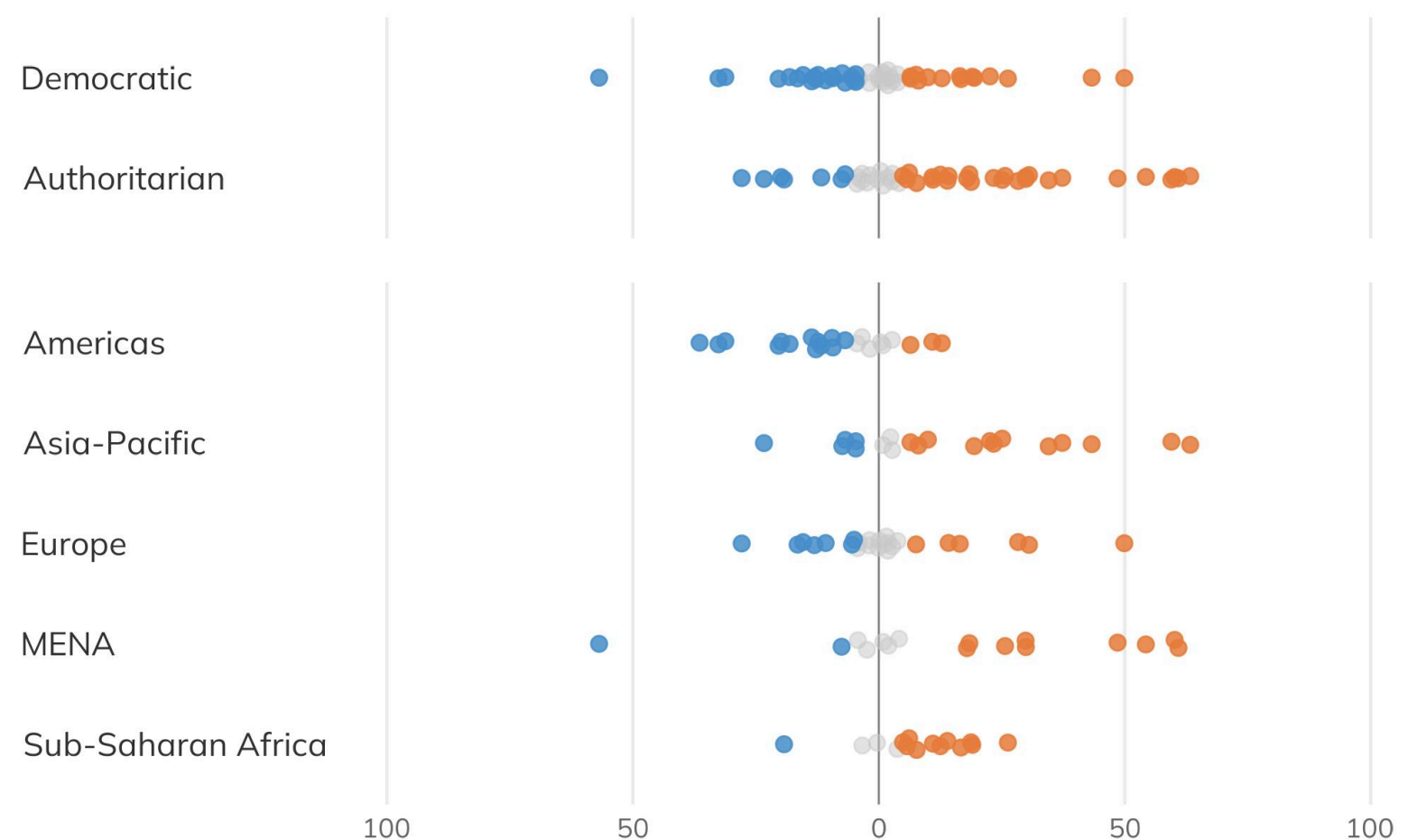
Net agreement: % who agree more with US - % who agree more with Iran



41 of 98 countries agree more with Iran
28 agree more with the US



How countries divide on the US vs. Iran



In the conflict between the United States and Iran, which side do you agree with more?
The United States / Iran / Both equally / Don't know

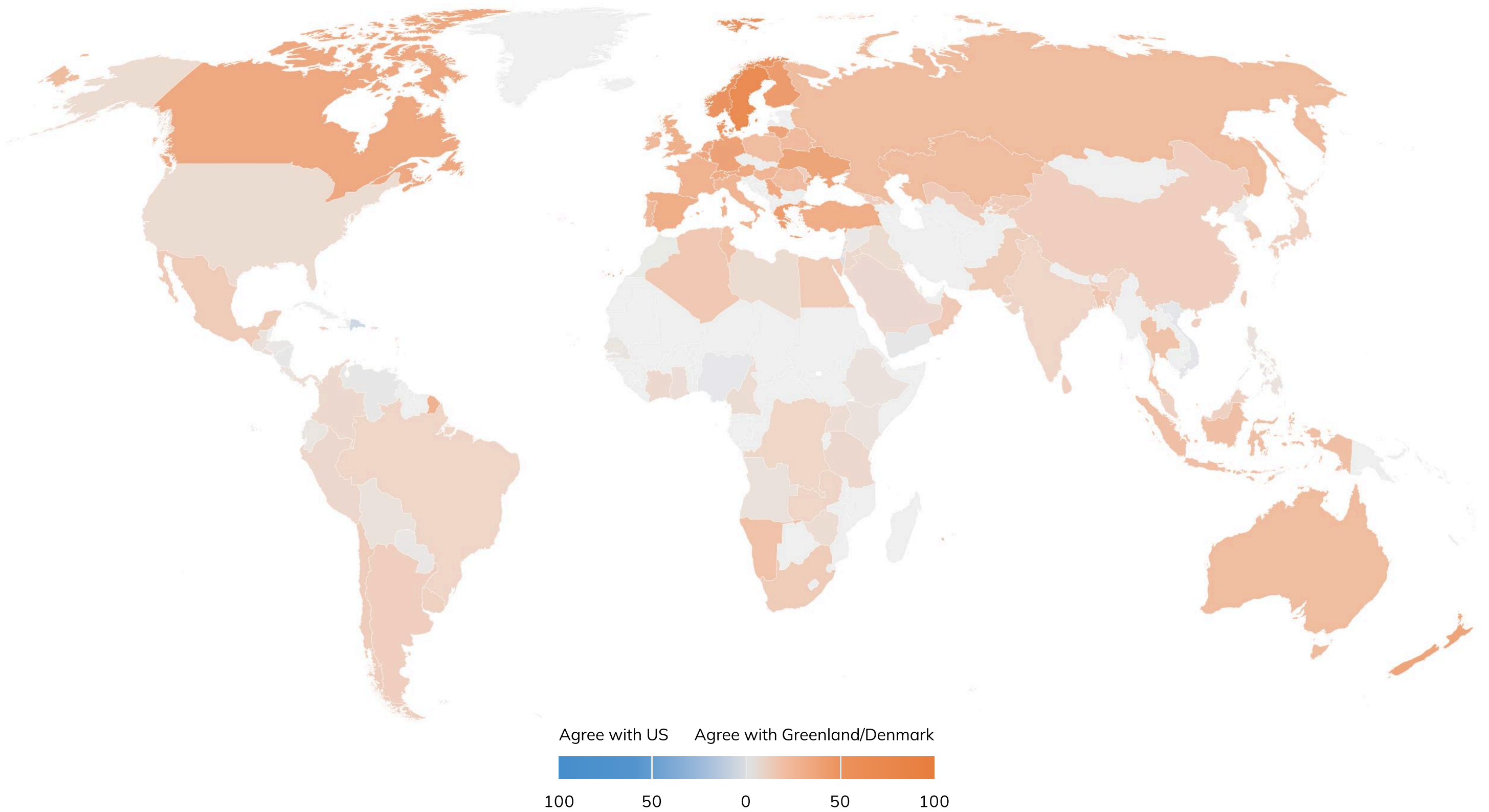
Methodology note:
Countries are classified as "evenly divided" when their net lean (% who agree more with one side minus % who agree more with the other) is within ±5 percentage points.

US vs. Greenland/Denmark

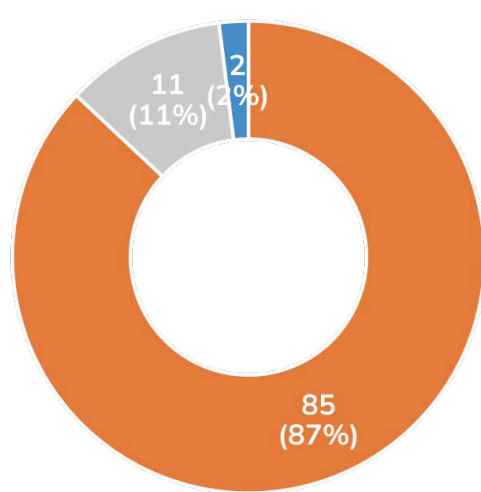
This is by far the most one-sided of the five conflicts. 85 of 98 countries surveyed agree more with Greenland and Denmark, only 2 agree more with the United States, and 11 are roughly evenly divided. On average, agreement leans 26 points toward Greenland and Denmark. Even the US public itself leans 12 points toward Greenland and Denmark. The two countries with a clear lean toward the United States are the Dominican Republic and Israel. The countries that agree most with Greenland and Denmark are Sweden, Norway, Finland, Greece, and Germany. Every region agrees more with Greenland and Denmark on average; Europe most strongly, followed by Asia-Pacific, MENA, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Americas.

US vs. Greenland/Denmark

Net agreement: % who agree more with US - % who agree more with Greenland/Denmark

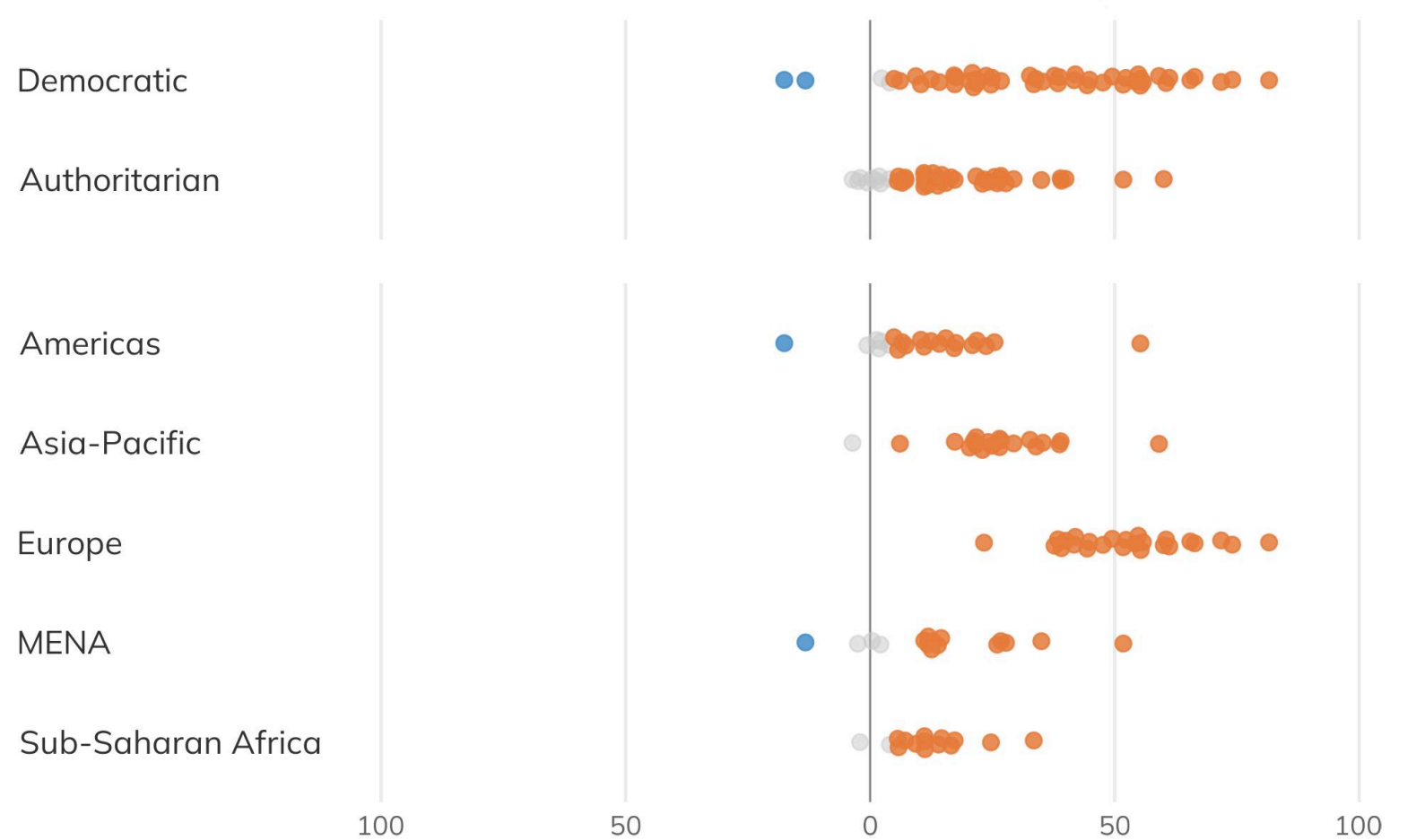


85 of 98 countries agree more with Greenland/Denmark
2 agree more with the US



■ Agree more with Greenland/Denmark
 ■ Evenly divided
■ Agree more with the US

How countries divide on the US vs. Greenland/Denmark



In the conflict between the United States and Greenland/Denmark, which side do you agree with more?
The United States / Greenland/Denmark / Both equally / Don't know

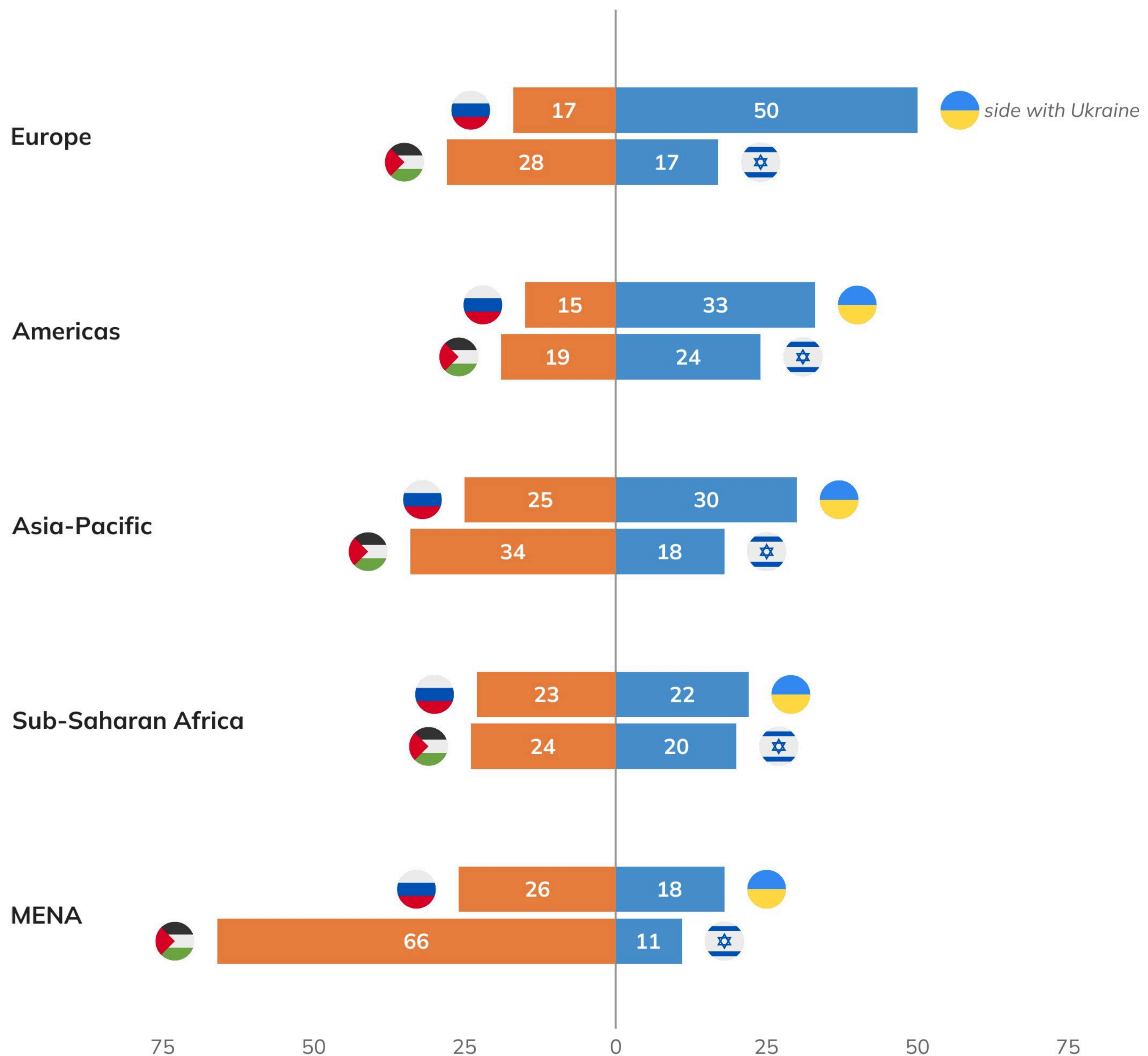
Methodology note:
Countries are classified as "evenly divided" when their net lean (% who agree more with one side minus % who agree more with the other) is within ±5 percentage points.

How regions align on Russia/Ukraine and Israel/Palestine

This page compares public opinion on the war between Russia and Ukraine with opinion on the conflict between Israel and Palestine, showing how perceptions of one conflict relate to the other across regions. The two conflicts do not produce a single alignment: most regions take different sides on the two wars. Europe agrees overwhelmingly with Ukraine and slightly more with Palestine than Israel. The Americas also lean toward Ukraine, but are the only region that leans, slightly, toward Israel. Asia-Pacific is roughly split on Russia and Ukraine but agrees more with Palestine. MENA leans slightly toward Russia and overwhelmingly toward Palestine. Sub-Saharan Africa is roughly evenly divided on both conflicts.

Which side of the Russia/Ukraine and Israel/Palestine wars does each region take?

Average share of respondents in each region who say they agree more with one country than another. Those who answered "Both equally" or "Don't know" are excluded.



In the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which side do you agree with more?
Russia / Ukraine / Both equally / Don't know

In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which side do you agree with more?
Israel / Palestine / Both equally / Don't know

Perception of Countries

This chapter examines how countries are perceived globally. Each country and international organisation in our sample is rated by the publics of up to 85 surveying countries, providing a measure of how each one's image is shaped across the world. The data highlights a broad spectrum of public opinion, with countries like Switzerland, Canada, Japan, Sweden, and Italy enjoying consistently positive reputations, while others face more critical views. We also explore notable shifts in perception over the past year, including a significant decline in the United States' global standing relative to China and Russia.

This chapter draws on data from the Global Country Perceptions dataset

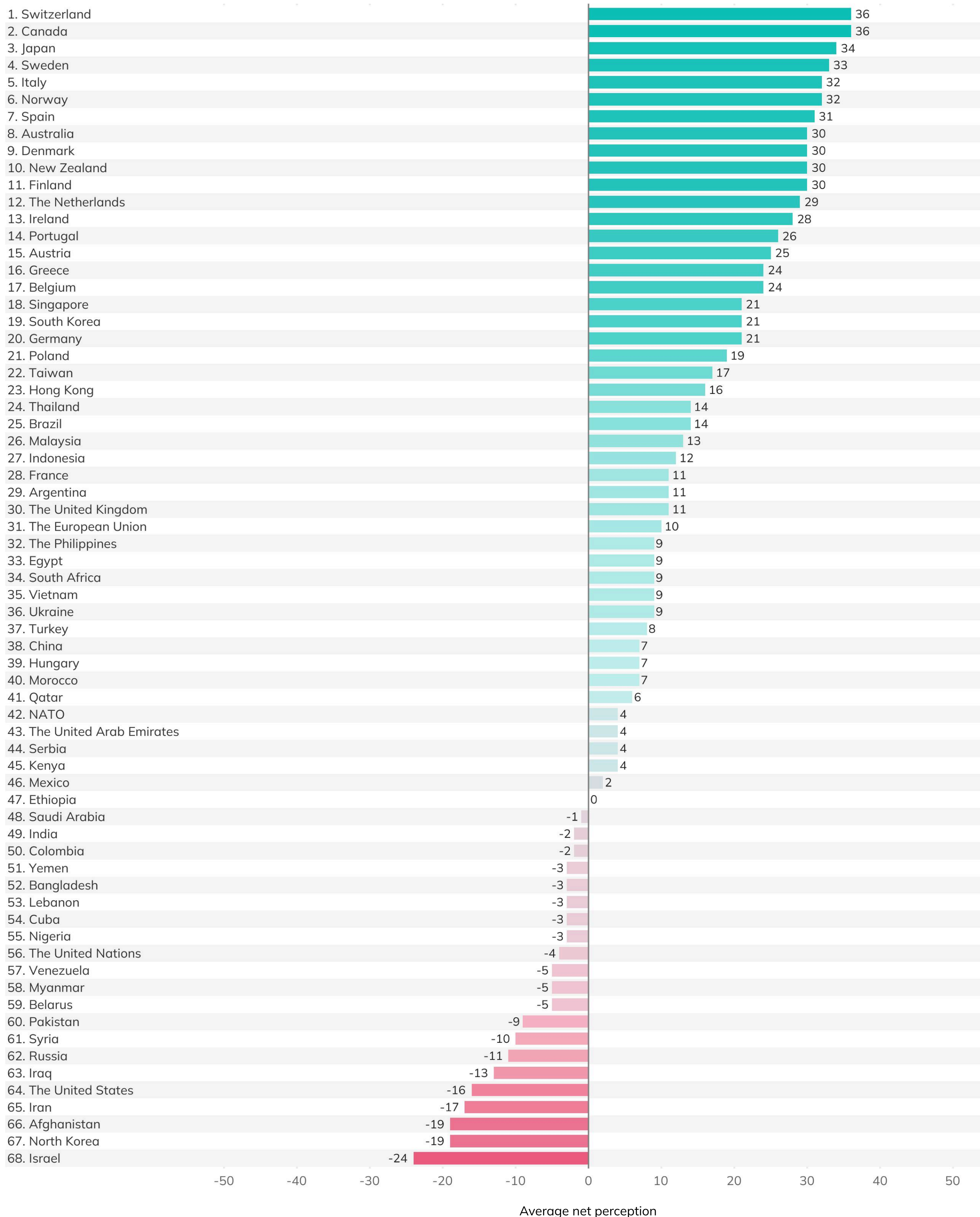
Please visit niradata.com/country-perception to access the full dataset

Global Perception Ranking

Respondents were asked what their overall perception is of each of 132 countries and international organisations. Switzerland has the most positive global perception, followed by Canada, Japan, Sweden, and Italy. European countries make up the majority of the top 20 highest-ranked countries. The country with the most negative global perception is Israel, followed by North Korea, Afghanistan, Iran, and the United States, which together make up the bottom five. This ranking includes only the 68 countries and organisations that were evaluated by all 85 surveyed countries; the rest are not shown.

Global perception scores

Country average (globally-rated countries only)



What is your overall perception of ... ?

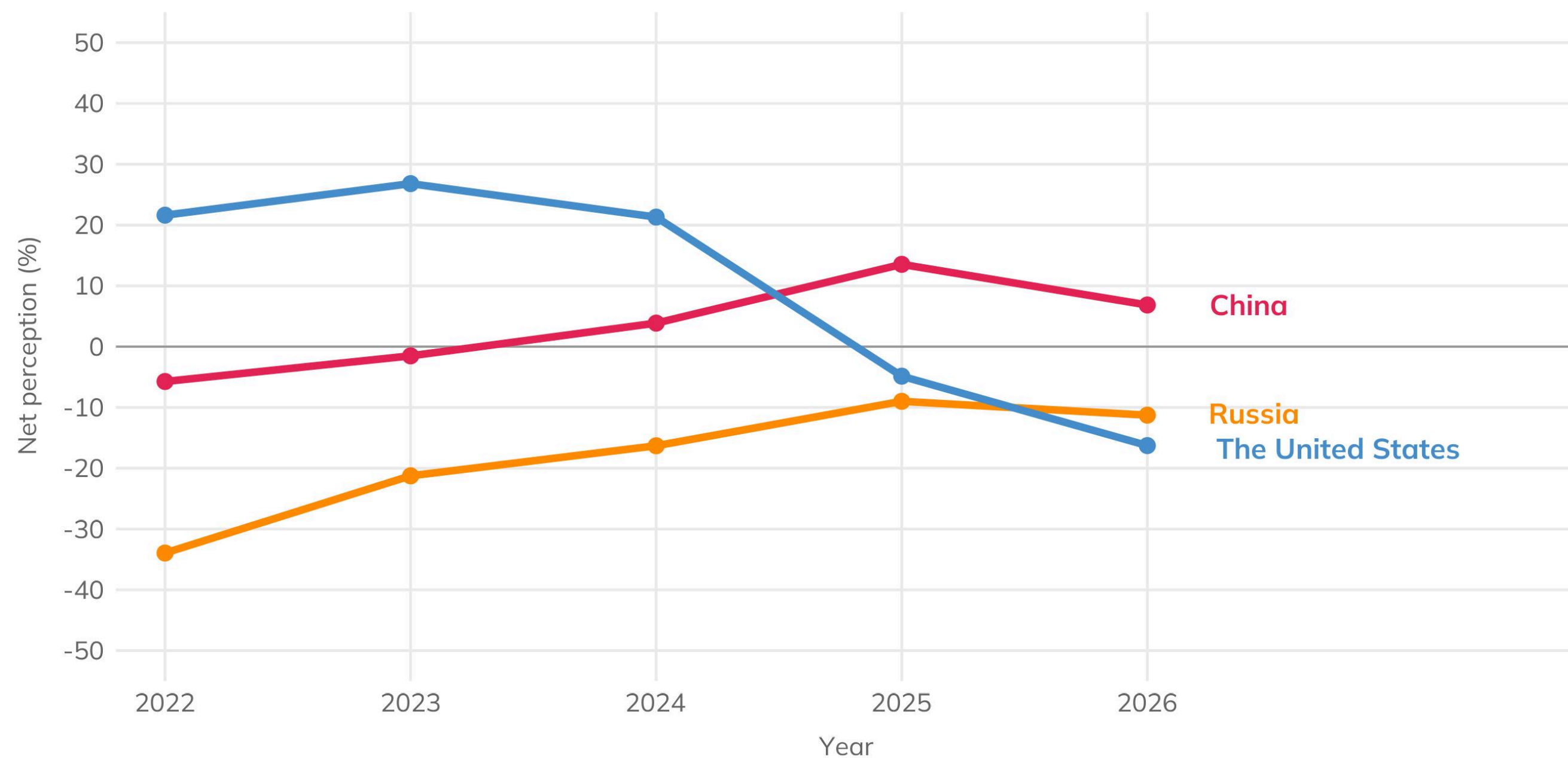
Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Perception of Global Powers — Trend

Global perceptions of the world's major powers are shifting. In 2022 and 2023, the average perception of the United States was more positive than negative, and significantly more positive than either Russia or China. By 2026, global opinion has flipped: China is now the only major power among the three with a net positive image, while the United States and Russia are both viewed more negatively than positively. The United States in particular has seen a sharp decline for a second consecutive year, and for the first time is now perceived more negatively than Russia. Perceptions of China and Russia have improved overall since 2022.

Net perception of global powers (2022-2026)

net perception: % say they have a positive perception - % say they have a negative perception



Methodology note:

Global and regional averages are means of country-level scores, with each country's rating of itself excluded. Due to this adjustment, earlier-year values may differ by 1–2 percentage points from headlines published at the time.

What is your overall perception of ... ?

The United States

China

Russia

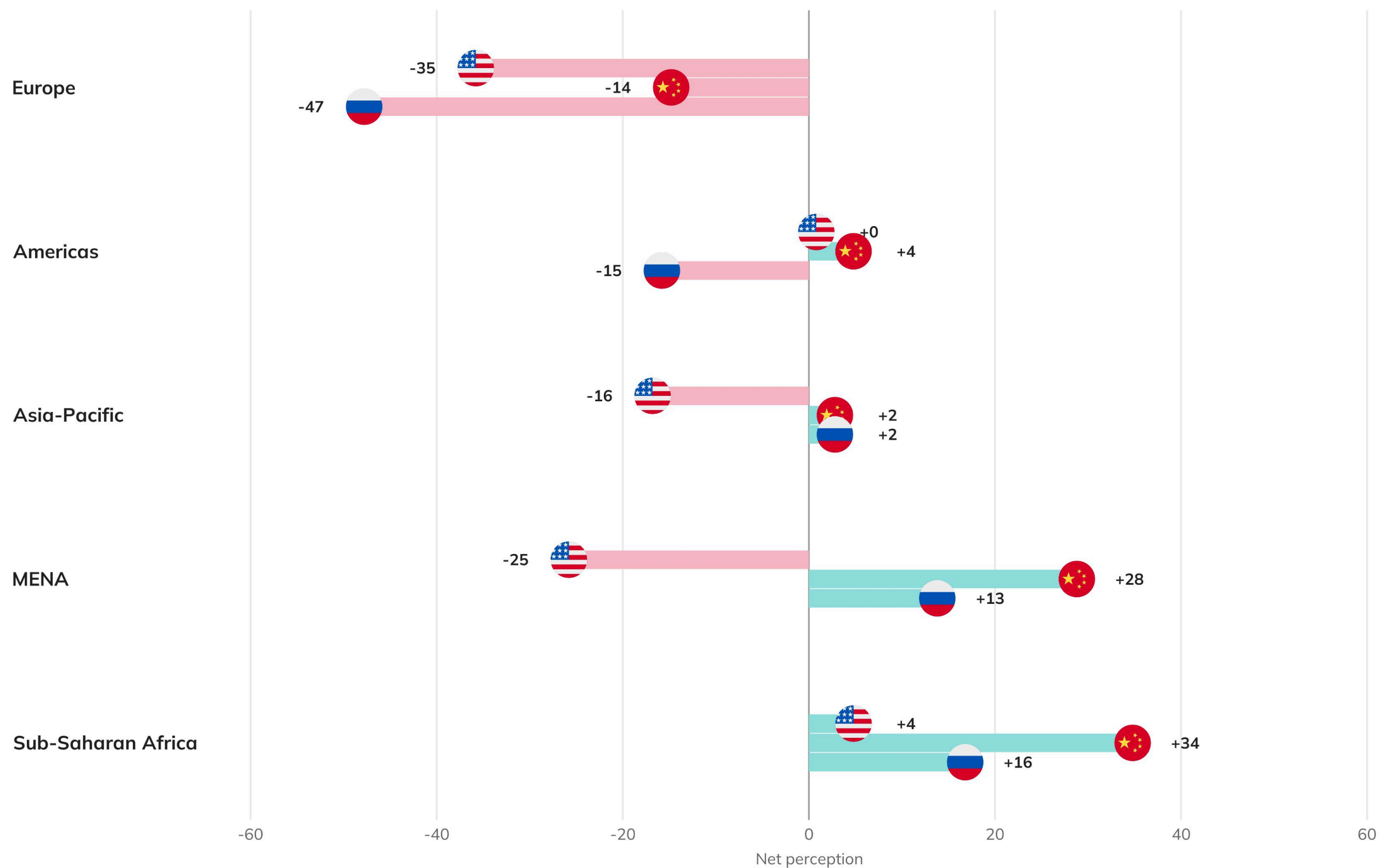
Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Perception of Global Powers — Regional Breakdown

China is seen more positively than the United States in every region of the world. It receives positive ratings everywhere except Europe. Europe views all three major powers negatively, but now sees the United States (–35) far more negatively than China (–14), and views Russia (–47) most negatively of all. Russia is also viewed positively in Asia-Pacific, MENA, and Sub-Saharan Africa, but is sharply negative in the Americas (–15). The United States is positive only in Sub-Saharan Africa (+4), roughly neutral in the Americas, and negative across Asia-Pacific, MENA, and Europe.

2026 perception of global powers, by region

Net perception: % positive - % negative. Flags identify the global power.



What is your overall perception of ... ?

The United States
China
Russia

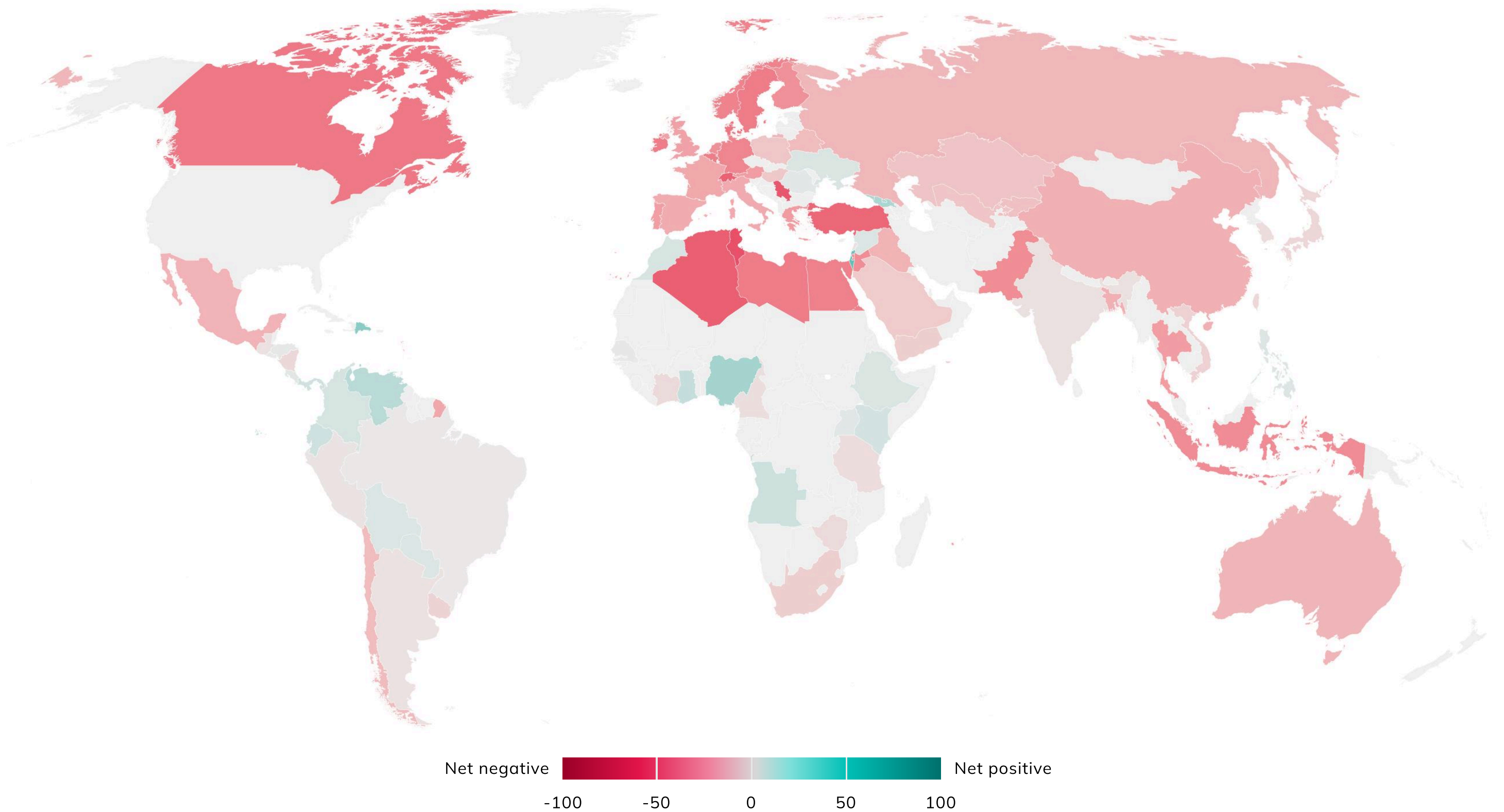
Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Deep Dive: Perception of the US

Global perception of the United States has dropped sharply in recent years, falling nearly 40 points from 2024 to 2026. The countries with the most positive perception of the US are Israel, the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Georgia, and Venezuela. The most negative views come from Tunisia, Serbia, Algeria, Switzerland, and Turkey. Regionally, the United States is viewed positively only in Sub-Saharan Africa, roughly neutral in the Americas, and negatively in Asia-Pacific (-16), MENA (-25), and Europe (-35).

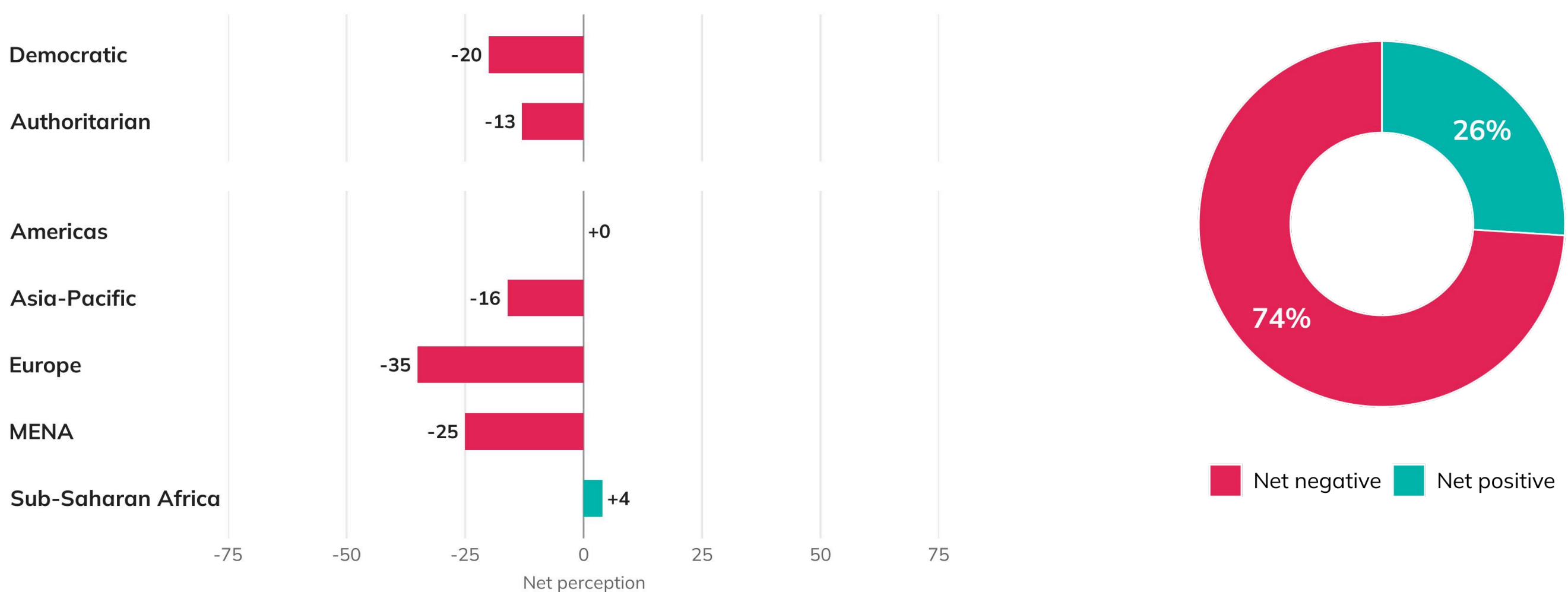
Perception of the US

net perception: % say they have a positive perception - % say they have a negative perception



Average net perception of the US by region

Net perception: % positive - % negative. Each country counts once within its group.



What is your overall perception of The United States?

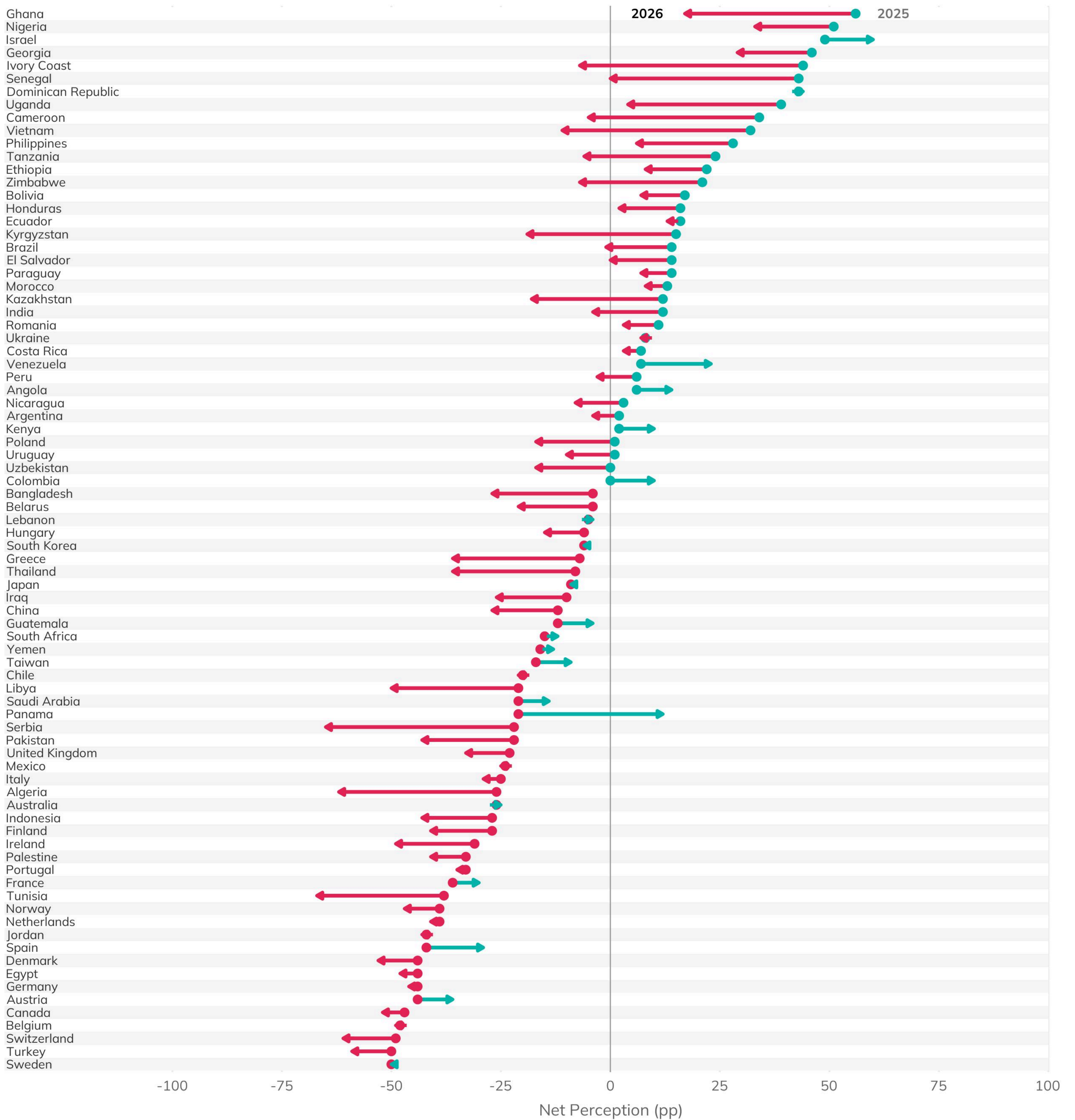
Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Deep Dive: Perception of the US — Trend

Global perception of the United States has dropped 11 points further in the past year alone, from -5 in 2025 to -16 in 2026. The largest declines are in countries that previously viewed the US favorably or neutrally, including Ivory Coast, Senegal, Serbia, Vietnam, Ghana, Cameroon, and Algeria. The largest gains are in Panama, Venezuela, Spain, Israel, and Colombia.

Change in perception of the US from 2025 to 2026

All 82 countries surveyed in both years. Ordered by 2025 score.



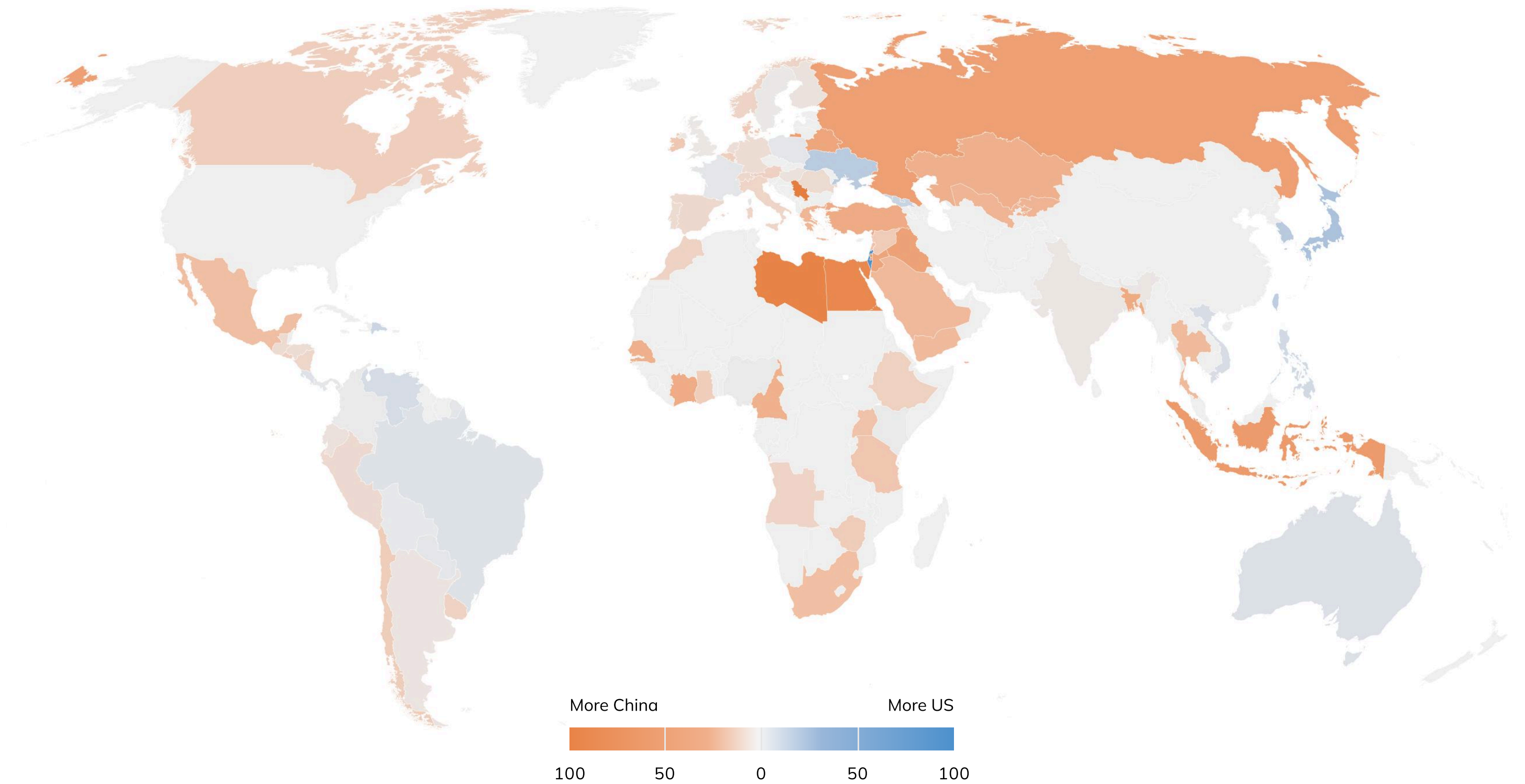
What is your overall perception of The United States?
 Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Perception of the US vs. China

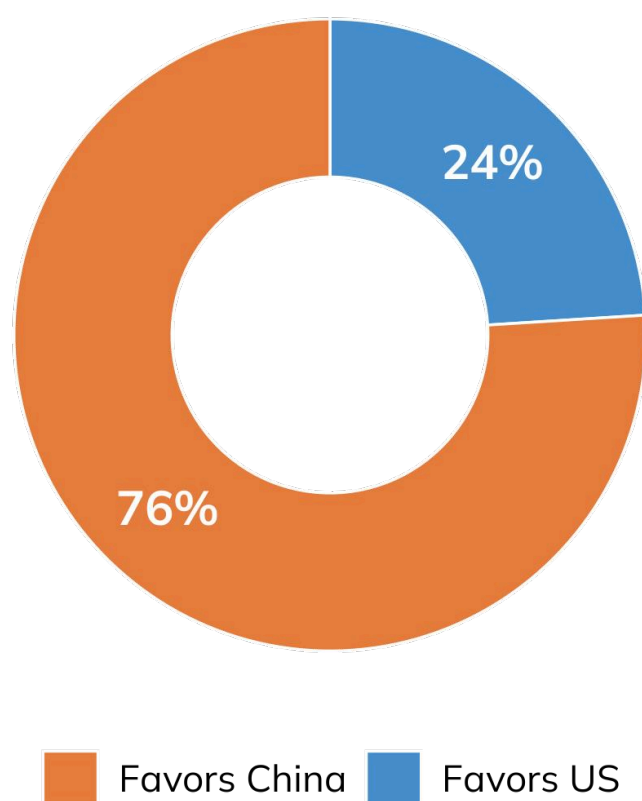
Most countries have a more favorable view of China than of the United States: 63 of the 83 surveying countries view China more positively. US allies such as Israel, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Ukraine strongly prefer the United States, but these are relative exceptions. In Europe, net perceptions of China are higher than those of the US in 20 of the 23 surveying countries (only France, Poland, and Ukraine prefer the US). The same is true across much of Asia-Pacific and Latin America. The gap is especially wide in the Middle East and North Africa, where countries like Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt view China far more positively than the US.

Difference in perception: United States vs. China

Difference: (net perception of US - net perception of China)

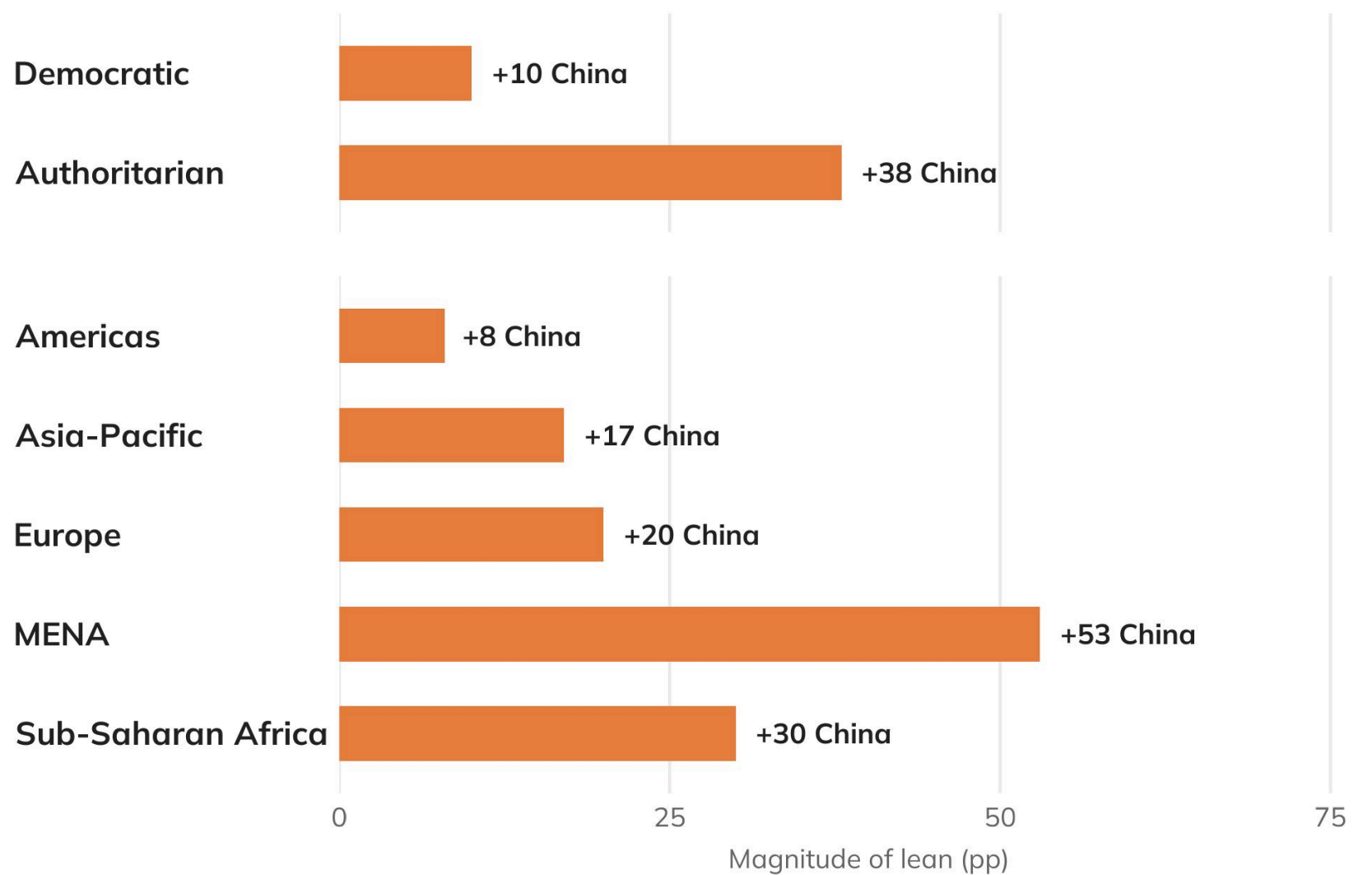


63 of 83 countries favor China; 20 favor the US



Average US vs. China lean, by group

Blue = leans US, orange = leans China. Each country counts once within its group.



What is your overall perception of China / The United States?

Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Methodology

Overview

This report presents an overview of a study conducted by Nira Data and the Alliance of Democracies in the spring of 2026, between March 19th and April 21st. The sample of n=94,146 online-connected respondents was drawn across 98 countries, with an average sample size of around 960 respondents per country. Nationally representative results were calculated based on the official distribution of age, gender, and education for each country's adult population (aged 18+). Population targets were sourced from the United Nations World Population Prospects 2024 (age × gender) and the World Bank's UNESCO-derived indicator on the share of the adult population with at least a Bachelor's degree (ISCED 6+). The average margin of error (95% confidence) across all countries reported is approximately ±4.7 percentage points.

How the DPI Categorizes Democracies

In order to compare public opinion results between more democratic countries and less democratic countries, the DPI uses the 2025 categories from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) to create two groups:

"Democratic" - labeled as "Full Democracies" and "Flawed Democracies" by the EIU.

"Authoritarian" - countries labeled as "Hybrid Regimes" or "Authoritarian" by the EIU.

Free Speech

In some countries surveyed, the government plays an active role in shaping public opinion and/or has policies in place that restrict freedom of speech around certain topics. This can have a strong influence on the survey results.

Data Collection

Nira Data's surveys are conducted online through internet-connected devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. Nira Data follows an open recruitment approach that leverages the reach of over 40,000 third-party apps and mobile websites. To ensure coverage across different demographic groups and geographical regions, Nira Data targets a highly diverse set of apps and websites – from news to shopping, to sports and games. As a result, Nira Data generates up to 21 million answers every month from respondents living in as many as 100 different countries.

Data Privacy and Anonymity

Once a user opts in to complete a survey, Nira Data informs the respondent about the nature of the questionnaire and explains that all answers – including the generic demographics that are part of the targeting and quality assurance process – are recorded anonymously. To ensure respondent privacy and high-quality response data, Nira Data does not collect any personally identifiable information (PII) on users. In contrast to surveys conducted face-to-face or by telephone, the anonymity offered by Nira Data's methodology may help reduce response bias, interviewer bias, and respondent self-censorship.

For more information, please contact:

Frederick DeVeaux

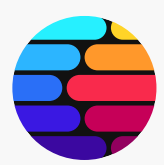
Senior Researcher at Nira Data

frederick.deveaux@niradata.com

Nira Data

Our vision is to give researchers, policymakers, democracy advocates — and anyone who cares about the world — direct access to the voices of billions.

Nira Data was founded in 2025 to create an institutional home for the Democracy Perception Index (DPI) and to expand its reach. Our broader mission is to build a platform that makes global public opinion more accessible—empowering researchers, policymakers, journalists, and democracy advocates with reliable, high-quality data on how people around the world see their societies and the world



Nira Data

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The Alliance of Democracies Foundation

Alliance of Democracies' vision is to become the world's leading “megaphone” for the cause of democracy.

The Alliance of Democracies Foundation

The Alliance of Democracies Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 2017 by Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The Foundation is dedicated to the advancement of democracy and free markets across the globe and runs three core programs: the Copenhagen Democracy Summit, the Expeditionary Economics Program, and the Campaign for Democracy.

The Copenhagen Democracy Summit

The Copenhagen Democracy Summit is an annual conference bringing together political and business leaders, including current and former heads of government, from the world's democracies. The goal of the Summit is to be the top international forum for analysis of the security and economic challenges facing the democratic world as well as a forum for analysis of the interplay between technology and democratic norms.



Alliance of Democracies



Copenhagen Democracy Summit

Contact Us

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Press Inquiries: media@allianceofdemocracies.org

www.allianceofdemocracies.org



Questionnaire

Perception of Democracy

Q1

In your opinion, how important is it for your country to be a democracy?

Extremely important

Very important

Moderately important

Slightly important

Not important

Q2

Which of the following would you say is the most important purpose of democracy?

Enabling people to freely choose their government

Protecting individual rights and freedoms

Improving the living standards and well-being of everyone

Promoting a fair and peaceful society

Q3-Q10

DPI Score (Q3–Q10): a composite of 8 democracy dimensions. Each dimension is asked on a 5-point scale and the DPI Score is the mean of net agreement scores across the 8 questions:

Q3

How much impact do you think elections can have on your country's political direction?

Very big impact

Big impact

Moderate impact

Small impact

No impact

Q4

How likely do you think it is that courts in your country will stop the government if it violates the law?

Very likely

Somewhat likely

Neutral / Uncertain

Somewhat unlikely

Very unlikely

Q5

How often do you think that courts in your country make fair and impartial decisions?

Always

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Q6

How likely do you think it is that journalists or civil society organizations in your country face negative consequences when criticizing the government?

Very unlikely

Somewhat unlikely

Neutral / Uncertain

Somewhat likely

Very likely

Q7

To what extent do you think different political beliefs are represented in your country's political system?

To a very large extent

To a large extent

To some extent

To a small extent

Not at all

Q8

How well would you say that you understand your country's political system and how it functions?

Very well

Fairly well

Somewhat well

Not very well

Not well at all

Q9

How often do you think the government withholds important information from the public?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

Q10

How likely do you think it is that a future change of government in your country will cause violence?

Very unlikely

Somewhat unlikely

Neutral / Uncertain

Somewhat likely

Very likely

Q11

Think about your country in general. Would you say that things are currently moving in the right direction?

Yes

Not sure

No

Security and Defense

Q12

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“Countries should follow international laws and agreements, even if it limits their freedom of action.”

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Q13

How concerned are you about the possibility of your country being attacked by another country in the near future?

Not at all concerned

Slightly concerned

Moderately concerned

Very concerned

Extremely concerned

Q14

If you had to choose, which of the following options should have the highest priority for your country to protect itself against potential threats from other countries?

Strengthening alliances and international partnerships

Maintaining or developing nuclear weapons as a deterrent

Implementing or expanding mandatory military service

Increasing investment in national defense and military capabilities

Q15

If your country is attacked by a foreign power, would you be personally willing to fight to defend it?

Yes

Not sure

No

Q16

Would you support an increase in your country’s defense spending even if that means higher taxes or reduced spending in other areas?

Yes

Not sure

No

Q17

In your opinion, should the United States have military bases in your country?

Yes

No

Don't know

Global Conflicts

Q18

In the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which side do you agree with more?

Russia

Ukraine

Both equally

Don't know

Q19

In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which side do you agree with more?

Israel

Palestine

Both equally

Don't know

Q20

In a potential conflict between China and Taiwan, which side would you agree with more?

China

Taiwan

Both equally

Don't know

Q21

In the conflict between the United States and Iran, which side do you agree with more?

The United States

Iran

Both equally

Don't know

Q22

In the conflict between the United States and Greenland/Denmark, which side do you agree with more?

The United States

Greenland/Denmark

Both equally

Don't know

Q23

If you had to choose one country or organization to set global rules, which would you prefer?

The United States

China

The European Union

The United Nations

Don't know

Perceptions of Countries

Q24+

Each respondent was shown a subset of countries and international organizations and asked:

"What is your overall perception of [X]?"

Very positive

Somewhat positive

Neither positive nor negeative

Somewhat negative

Very negative

Net = % positive – % negative.