

The Socio-Political Instability Observer

Results from the Socio-Political Instability Survey

January 2024



Source (from left to right): Protests against Donald Trump's administration in Washington, D.C, U.S., [Conectas Human Rights](#). Soldiers from the Burkina Faso military, [Defense Visual Information Distribution Service](#). Damage in the Gaza Strip, [Pixabay](#). International Court of Justice, [Wikimedia Commons](#).

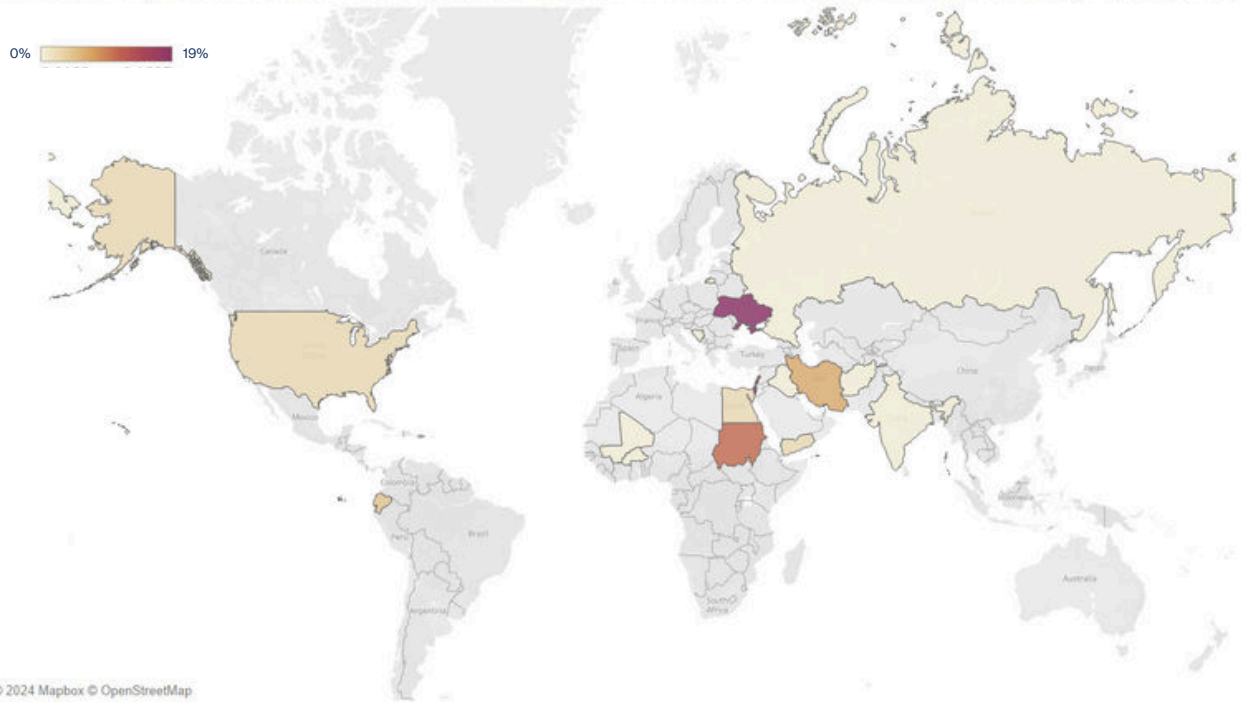
This 'Observer' factsheet outlines the results of the third Socio-Political Instability Survey. In this survey, socio-political instability encompasses various drivers of volatility such as economic, diplomatic, environmental, and demographic factors. In particular, extreme socio-political instability, includes the probability of conflict fatalities which result from armed conflict. To learn more about the Survey, please visit the [HCSS website](#).

The third edition of the 'Observer' series highlights the escalating Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war as the perceived main sources of global socio-political instability. With the Russo-Ukrainian war passing its two-year mark and increased involvement from state and non-state actors in the Middle East, the impact of different drivers which contribute to global instability should be accounted for. The 'Observer' finds that demographic changes are expected to have a greater impact on instability than environmental issues this quarter. This notable given the rise of right-wing parties and the sixty-four countries holding national elections this year, Interestingly, the survey results also show a divergence in terms of which state and region are predicted to experience the most socio-political instability in the next six months. Whereas Ukraine remains the top state, Western Asia as a region has drawn the most attention. Subsequent surveys could explore how concurrent conflicts impact evaluations of perceived impact on instability. Overall, this 'Observer' focuses on surveying the potential ripple effects of various events such as elections, coups, and conflict escalation for global and regional socio-political instability.

1. The Russo-Ukrainian War Persists and Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Escalates

Country likely to experience the most socio-political instability in the next six months

Experts surveyed predict that Ukraine, Israel, and Lebanon will face the most socio-political instability in the short-term



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Top 3 May 2023:

1. Sudan 42%
2. Ukraine 33%
3. Russia 9%

Top 3 Sep 2023:

1. Ukraine 24%
2. Russia 15%
3. Niger 11%

Top 3 Jan 2024:

1. Ukraine 19%
1. Israel 19%
2. Lebanon 13%



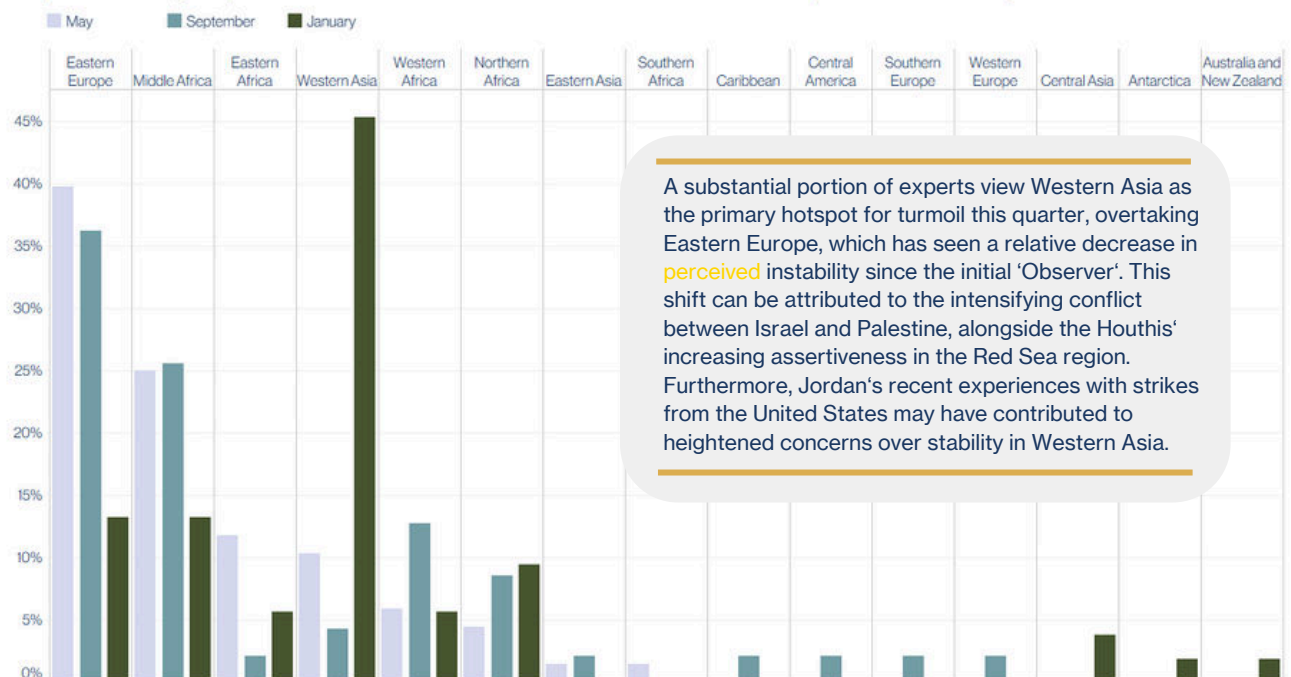
Drivers of socio-political instability

Experts surveyed ranked five drivers of socio-political instability in terms of impact globally, with 1 being the most impactful driver

- 1 Economic
- 2 Military
- 3 Demographic
- 4 Environmental
- 5 Diplomatic

Region likely to experience the most socio-political instability in the next six months

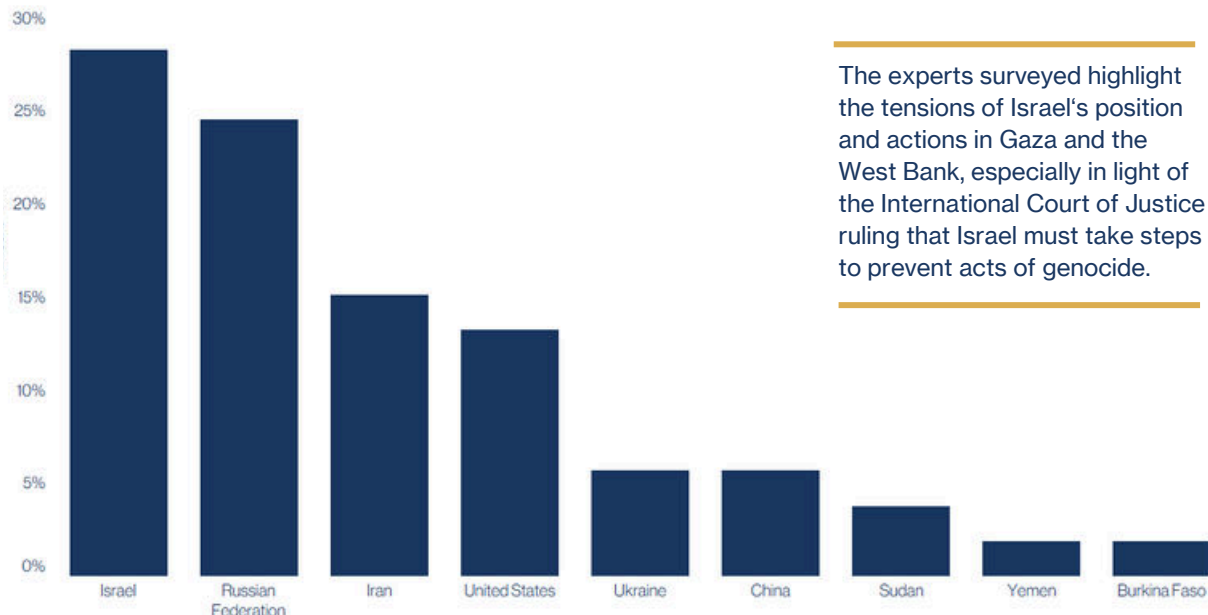
Experts surveyed predict that Western Asia will face the most socio-political instability in the short term



A substantial portion of experts view Western Asia as the primary hotspot for turmoil this quarter, overtaking Eastern Europe, which has seen a relative decrease in perceived instability since the initial 'Observer'. This shift can be attributed to the intensifying conflict between Israel and Palestine, alongside the Houthis' increasing assertiveness in the Red Sea region. Furthermore, Jordan's recent experiences with strikes from the United States may have contributed to heightened concerns over stability in Western Asia.

Country likely to exert the most influence on global socio-political instability in the short term

Experts surveyed predict that Israel will exert the greatest influence on global socio-political instability in the next six months

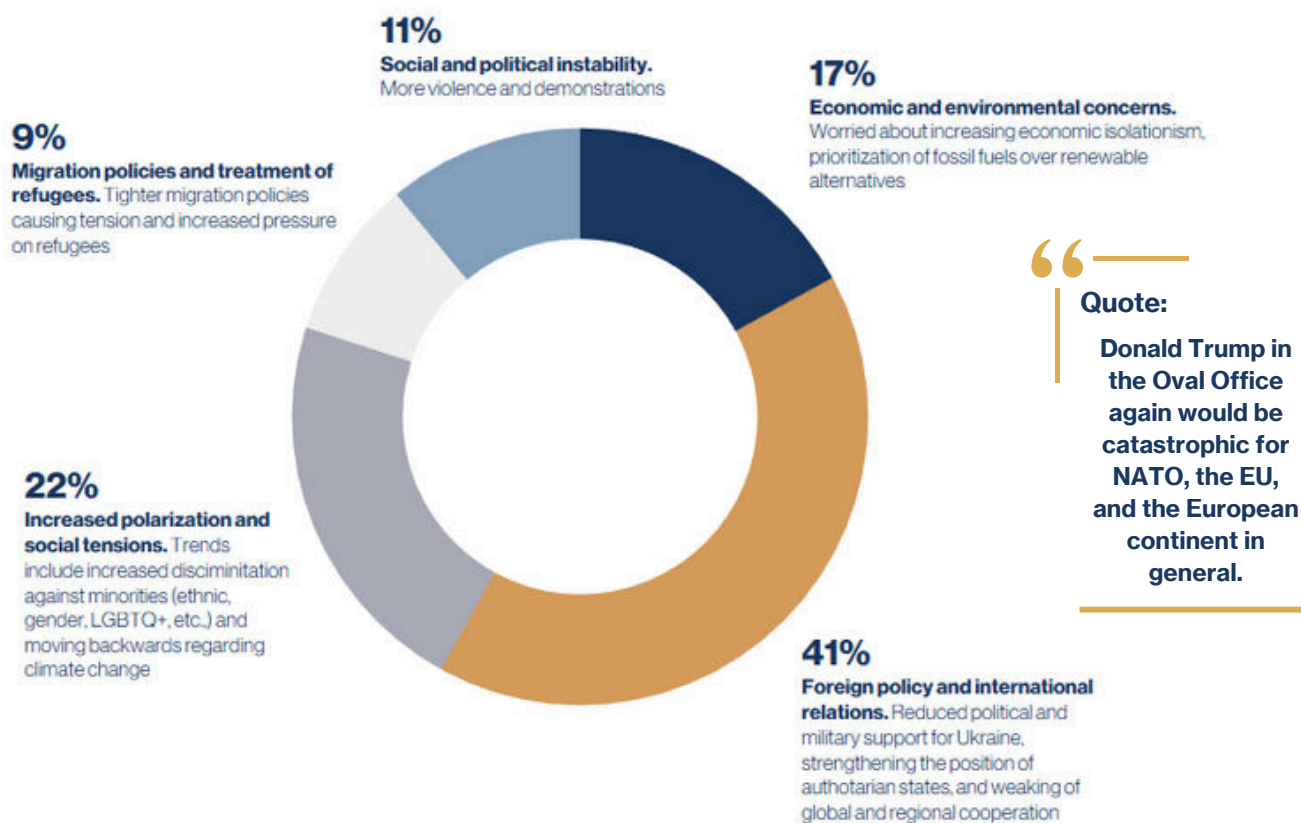


The experts surveyed highlight the tensions of Israel's position and actions in Gaza and the West Bank, especially in light of the International Court of Justice ruling that Israel must take steps to prevent acts of genocide.

2. Understanding the Ripple Effects: Global and Regional Consequences of Elections, Coups, and Conflict Escalation

Factors that could arise from a series of electoral successes by right-wing and far-right political parties around the world

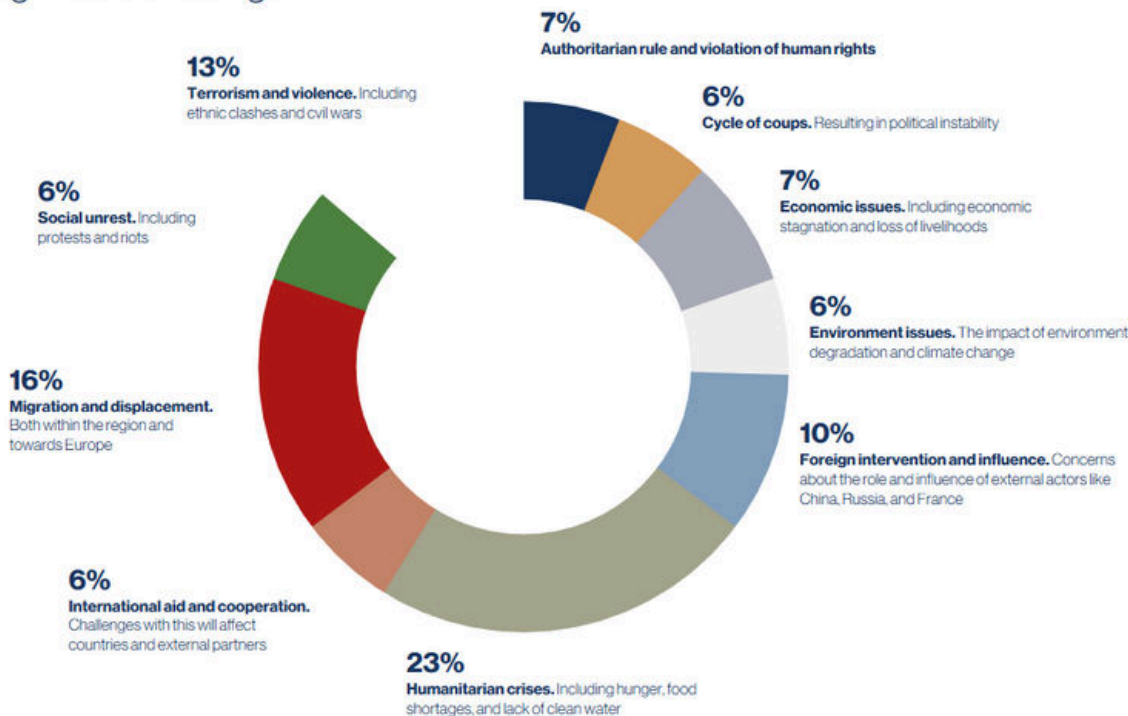
Those surveyed predict that foreign policy and international relations will be impacted the most



Quote:
 Donald Trump in the Oval Office again would be catastrophic for NATO, the EU, and the European continent in general.

The intersecting challenges that arise from military coups, terrorist activities, and economic stagnation in West African states such as Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger

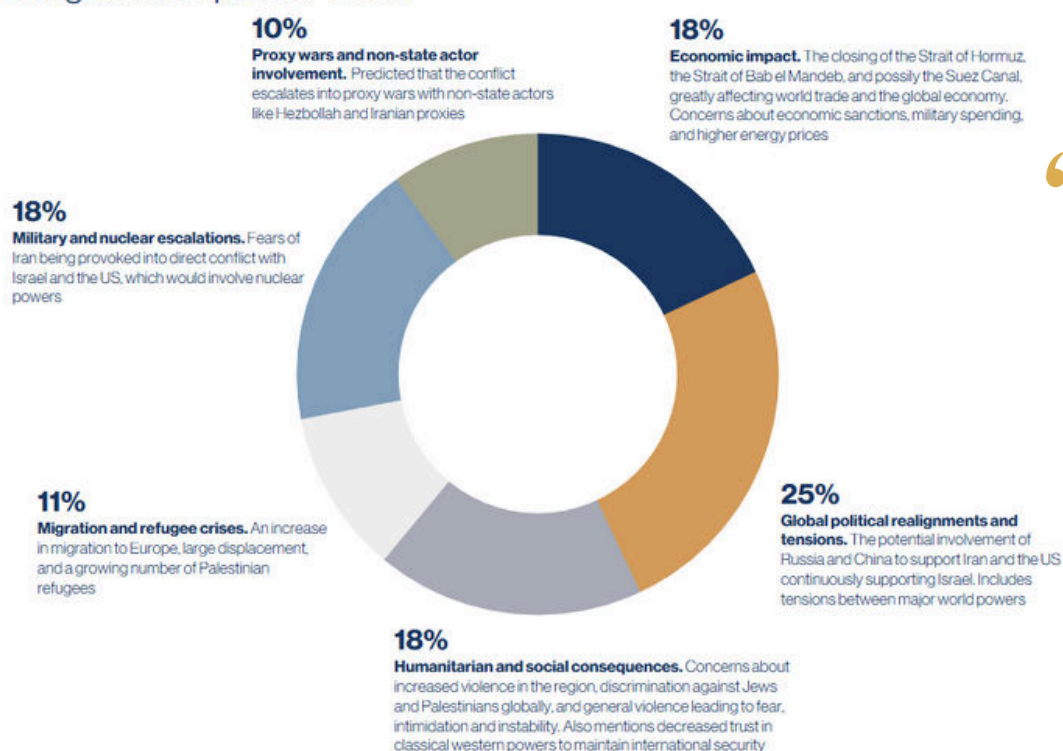
Those surveyed expect that the humanitarian crisis will be the most significant challenge



Quote:
The poor will be subjected to the most violent atrocities.

The regional or global spillover effects that could be expected in the next 2-5 years if the Israel-Gaza war escalates further?

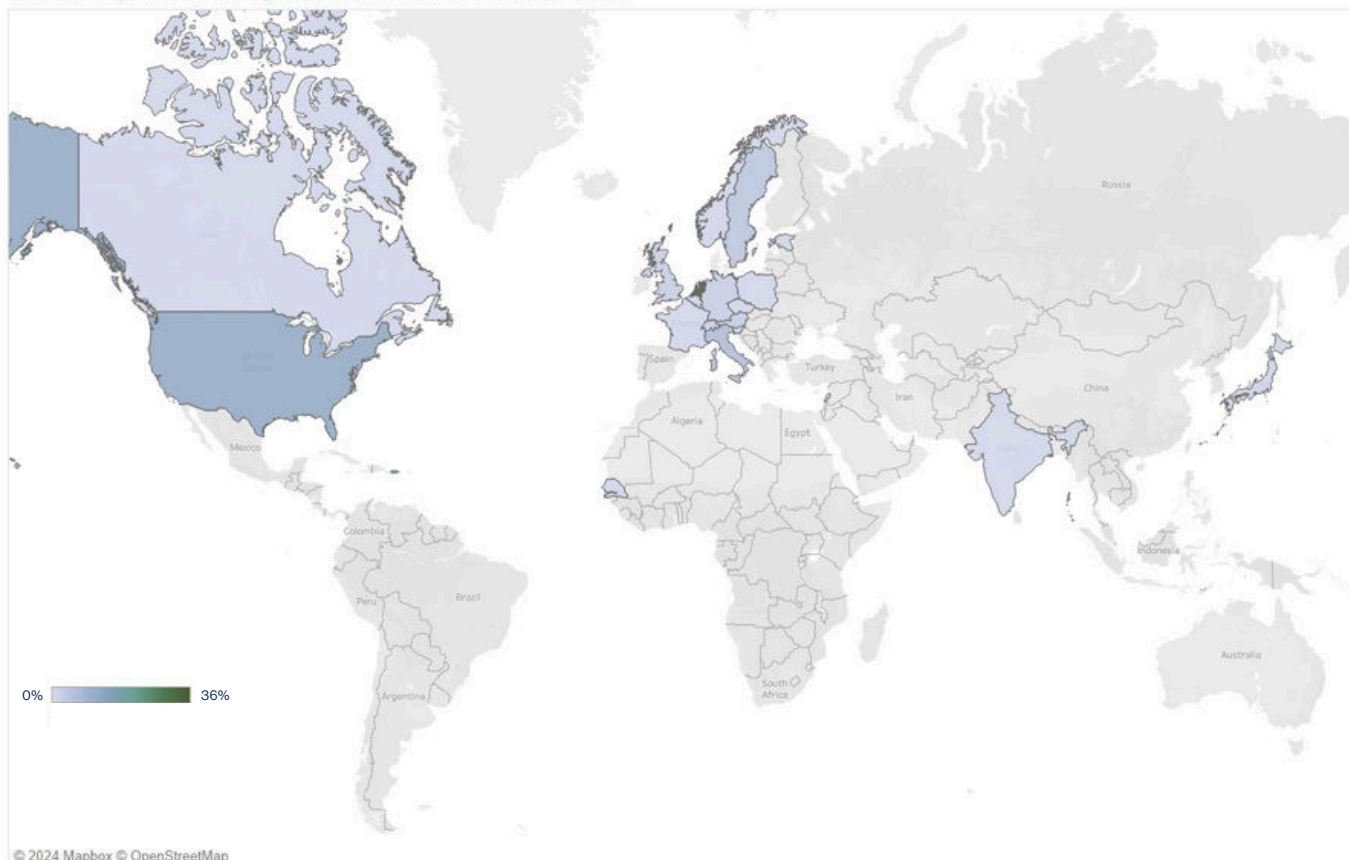
Those surveyed predict that global political realignments and tensions will be the most significant spillover effect



Quote:
[Escalation may lead to] decreased trust in the ability of "classical powers" to handle international security and be a diplomatic guarantee of stability.

Experts' place of residence by country

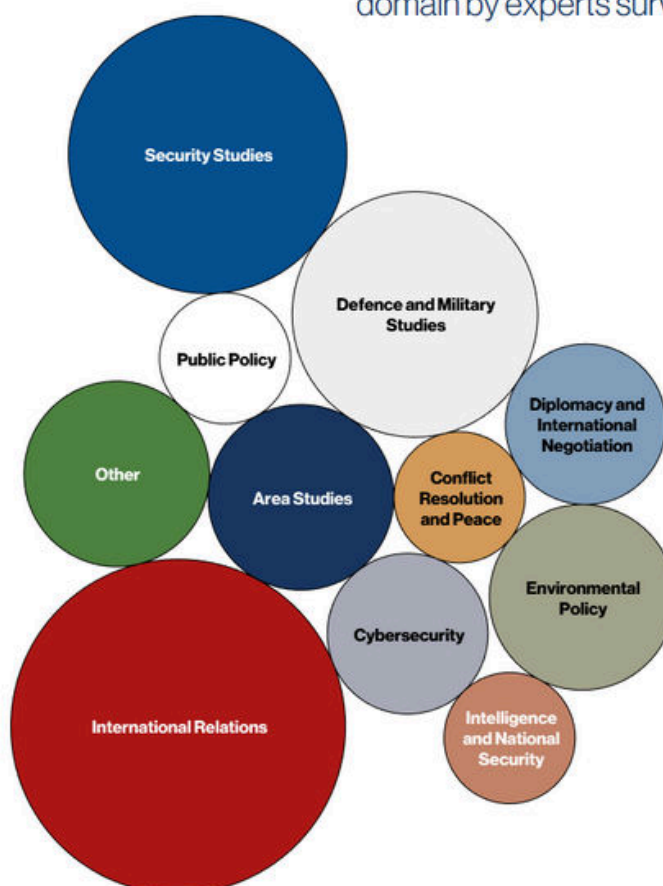
Most experts surveyed reside in the Netherlands



Experts' domain of expertise

Indicated fields of expertise or professional domain by experts surveyed

- 53 experts from universities, think tanks and research institutes completed this version of the survey.
- Our expert respondents reside in 19 different countries across 9 different regions.
- Half of the experts live in Western Europe, with 36% of experts based in the Netherlands.
- 14% of respondents reside in the United States.
- International Relations (25%), Security Studies (17%), and Defence and Military Studies (13%) were the domains of expertise most represented among those surveyed.
- We endeavour to expand participation in future surveys.



In May last year, HCSS launched The Socio-Political Instability Survey, inviting over 500 think tankers from around the world to give their views on the short term likelihood and geography of volatility globally using both multiple-choice and open questions. The results of the open-ended questions were gained through a process of quantitative and qualitative discourse analysis. With specified themes or coding categories determined by the authors. The most popular categories are those included in the most responses, but each response usually includes multiple categories. The survey was completed throughout the month of January 2024 and is the third of a series of surveys that were completed throughout 2023. The survey results will contribute to the HCSS Socio-Political Instability Monitor dashboard. Each survey will produce an 'Observer', like this document, highlighting key findings which will be available on the HCSS website.

Take part in the next Socio-Political Instability Survey!

Are you a geopolitics, economics, security, climate, area or international affairs expert affiliated with a think tank, university or research institute? Interested in taking part in the next Socio-Political Instability Survey? Sign up via the [Socio-Political Instability Survey page](#)

Selected References

1. Socio-political instability definition: <https://hcss.nl/the-socio-political-instability-survey/>
2. <https://hcss.nl/report/pathways-to-disaster-russias-war-against-ukraine-and-the-risks-of-inadvertent-nuclear-escalation/>
3. <https://hcss.nl/report/gas-supply-security-in-europe-and-asia-beyond-2030/>
4. <https://hcss.nl/report/what-indo-pacific-means-to-europe-trade-value-chokepoints-security-risks/>
5. <https://hcss.nl/report/behavioural-influence-interventions-in-the-information-environment-underlying-mechanisms-and-techniques/>
6. <https://hcss.nl/report/great-power-competition-and-social-stability-in-the-netherlands/>
7. <https://hcss.nl/report/smart-tactics-or-risky-behaviour-the-lawfulness-of-encouraging-civilians-to-participate-in-targeting-in-an-age-of-digital-warfare/>
8. <https://hcss.nl/report/good-fear-bad-fear-how-european-defence-investments-could-be-leveraged-to-restart-arms-control-negotiations-with-russia/>
9. <https://hcss.nl/report/arms-control-and-deterrence-the-euomissiles-then-and-now/>

Previous 'Observers'

1. <https://hcss.nl/report/the-socio-political-instability-observer-may-2023/>
2. <https://hcss.nl/report/the-socio-political-instability-observer-september-2023/>

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