

November 2025

After Choosing Sides

**Britain's changing views on
the Israel-Palestine conflict**



**More in
Common**

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About More in Common

More in Common is a think tank and research agency working to bridge the gap between policy makers and the public and helping people in Westminster to understand those voters who feel ignored or overlooked by those in power. Our British Seven segmentation provides a unique lens at understanding what the public think and why. We've published groundbreaking reports on a range of issues from climate and refugees to culture wars to crime. We are a full-service research agency offering polling and focus group research and are members of the British Polling Council.

This research was conducted in Autumn 2025. Full methodological information can be found at the end of the report.

We are thankful to the Pears Foundation for supporting this research. More in Common has retained full editorial control over its content, and the findings are our own.

About the British Seven segments

This polling uses More in Common's new segmentation of the British public. Based on extended research into Britons' core beliefs, their values and behaviours, this segmentation allows us to look upstream not just at what different groups think, but why they think it. Going beyond a simple left-right spectrum, it reflects deeper differences in how people relate to authority, change, community and the future, which help explain why traditional party loyalties have weakened and political volatility has increased.

Segmentation is a particularly powerful way of detecting and understanding differences and commonality in people's values and in their broader orientation towards society and the big issues facing the country.

The analysis produces seven segments within the British population:

Progressive Activists - 12 per cent of the population

A highly engaged and globally-minded group driven by concerns about social justice. Politically active but feeling increasingly alienated from mainstream party politics, they prioritise issues such as climate change and international affairs. Occasionally outliers on social issues, they maintain a strongly held and sometimes uncompromising approach to their beliefs.

Incrementalist Left - 21 per cent of the population

A civic-minded, community-oriented group holding views which are generally left-of-centre but with an aversion to the extreme; they prefer gradual reform over revolutionary

change. They trust experts and institutions yet are largely tuned out of day-to-day politics and can be conflict-averse, stepping away from issues they see as particularly fraught or complex.

Established Liberals - 9 per cent of the population

A prosperous, confident segment who believe the system broadly works as it is and who trust experts to deliver continued progress. They have a strong belief in individual agency which can make them less empathetic to those who are struggling. Institutionally trusting, they maintain faith in democratic processes and have a strong information-centric way of engaging with issues.

Sceptical Scrollers - 10 per cent of the population

A digitally-native group whose unhappiness with the social contract means they have lost faith in traditional institutions and seek alternative sources of truth online. Often shaped by their experience of the Covid pandemic, they prefer individual influencers over mainstream media and are increasingly drawn to conspiratorial thinking.

Rooted Patriots - 20 per cent of the population

A patriotic but politically untethered group which feels abandoned and overlooked by political elites and yearns for leaders with common sense, but does not want to overthrow the system as a whole. They are particularly concerned about community decline and the pressures of migration. Interventionist on economics but conservative on social issues, they have shaped much of Britain's politics over the past decade.

Traditional Conservatives - 8 per cent of the population

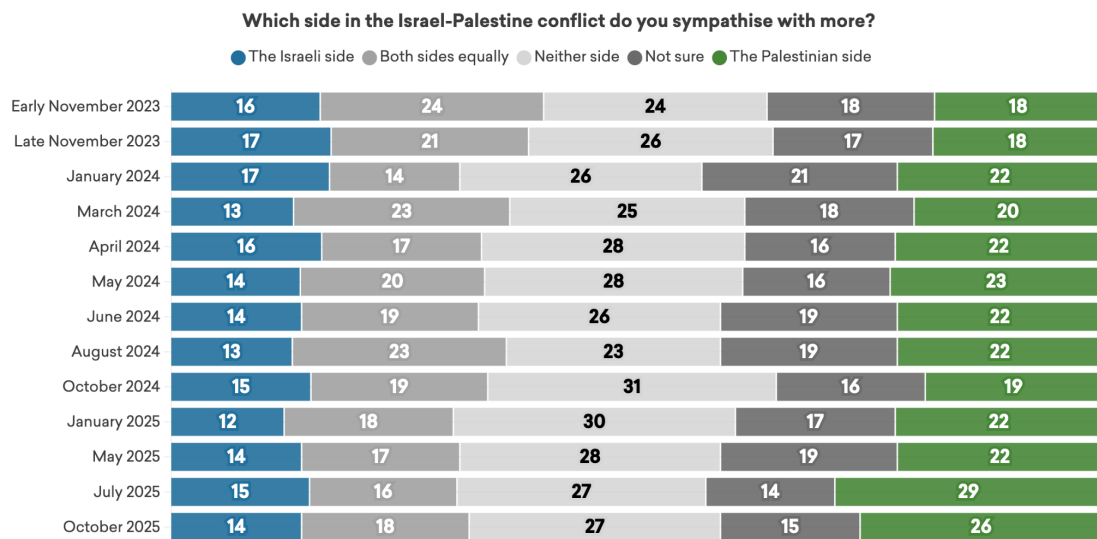
Respectful of authority and tradition, Traditional Conservatives believe in individual responsibility and established norms that have served them well. Nostalgic for the past but optimistic about the future, they are deeply sceptical of many forces of change such as immigration or the path to net-zero.

Dissenting Disruptors - 20 per cent of the population

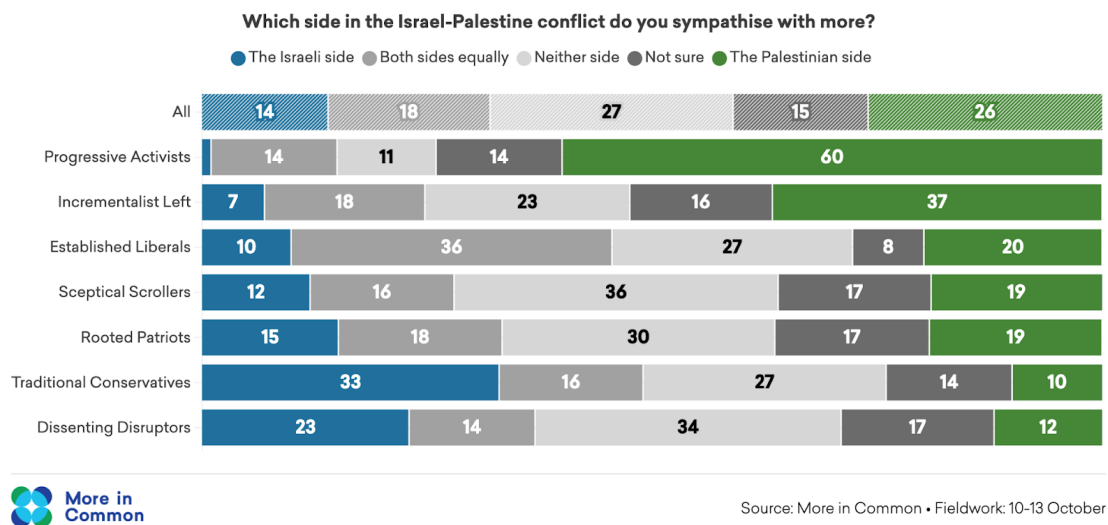
Frustrated with their circumstances with an appetite for radical solutions, Dissenting Disruptors crave dramatic change and strong leadership. Highly distrustful of institutions, opposed to multiculturalism and feeling disconnected from society, they are drawn to political movements that promise to overhaul the status quo and put people like them first.

Executive Summary

In the two years since October 2023, the proportion of people who say they sympathise more with a particular side in the Israel-Palestine conflict has remained relatively **unchanged**. The number saying they sympathise more with Israel has fallen slightly from 16 to 14 per cent, and the proportion saying they sympathise more with Palestine has risen slightly from 18 to 26 per cent.



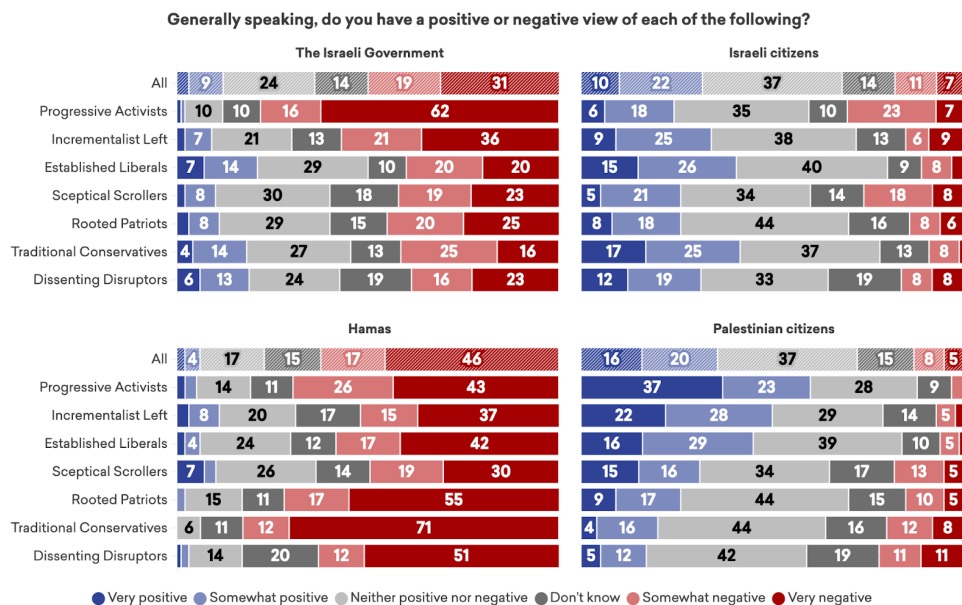
At the same time, certain groups have become more entrenched in their views - particularly **young people and Progressive Activists**. Progressive Activists - the segment who are highly politically engaged and more globally minded on social issues - are the only segment where a majority support one side. Progressive Activists are also much more likely to say that their support for the Palestinian side is an important part of their identity.



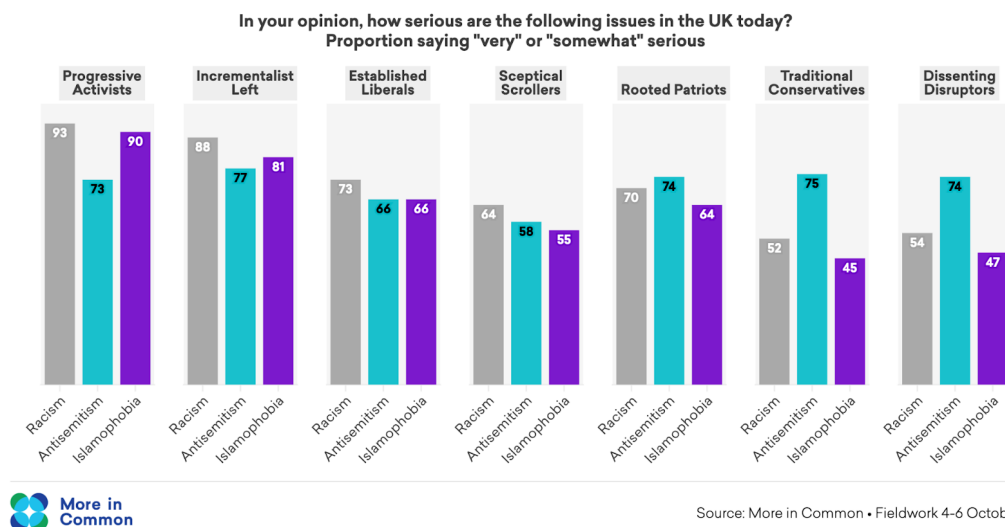
Despite some differences, most Britons share the same fundamental starting points regardless of which side of the conflict they may feel closer to. These are:

- **Horror at the impact of the conflict on civilians on both sides and a desire for the war to end.**
- **Support for the return of Israeli hostages, coupled with a belief that Israel has gone too far in their military activity in Gaza.** Britons across the spectrum wanted to see hostages released and returned safely to their families, but tend to think Israel's military response in Gaza has been disproportionate.
- **Extreme sympathy for citizens of Gaza:** both for the severe suffering they have endured during this war as a result of Israel's military activity, and for the fact that they have to be governed by Hamas. Few Britons have positive views of Hamas, and there is widespread recognition that Palestinian civilians are trapped under the rule of a group that does not represent their interests and has actively harmed prospects for peace.
- **Concern about the targeting of Jews in Britain,** particularly following the terror attack on Heaton Park synagogue in Manchester.
- **Worry about integration, extremism and rising tensions between different religious communities in Britain.** Regardless of their views on the conflict itself, most Britons are concerned that events in the Middle East are creating divisions at home and making it harder for people of different faiths to live together peacefully.

Britons tend to have negative views of the Israeli Government and extremely negative views of Hamas, and think that at different points both have acted as barriers to peace. Progressive Activists are notable for the fact that 30 per cent of them also have negative views of Israeli citizens themselves.

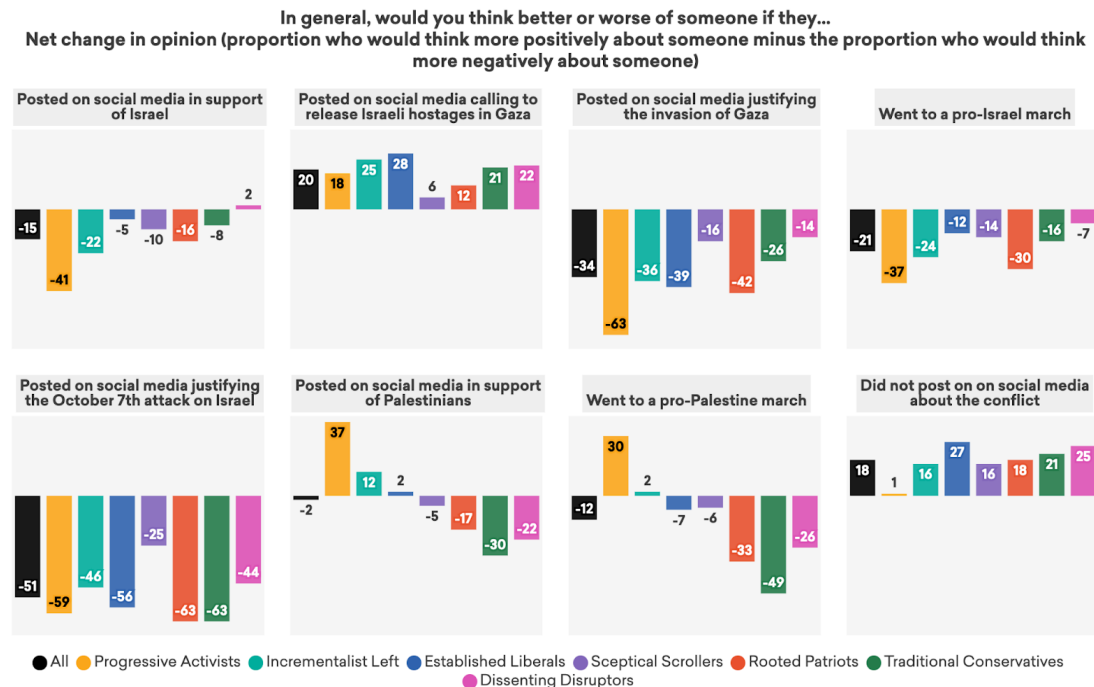


Britons are concerned about the rise of Antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate in the UK as a result of the conflict, but these views are becoming more polarised. Right-leaning segments of the population are much more likely to be concerned about antisemitism than islamophobia, whereas left-leaning segments are relatively more concerned about Islamophobia than antisemitism.



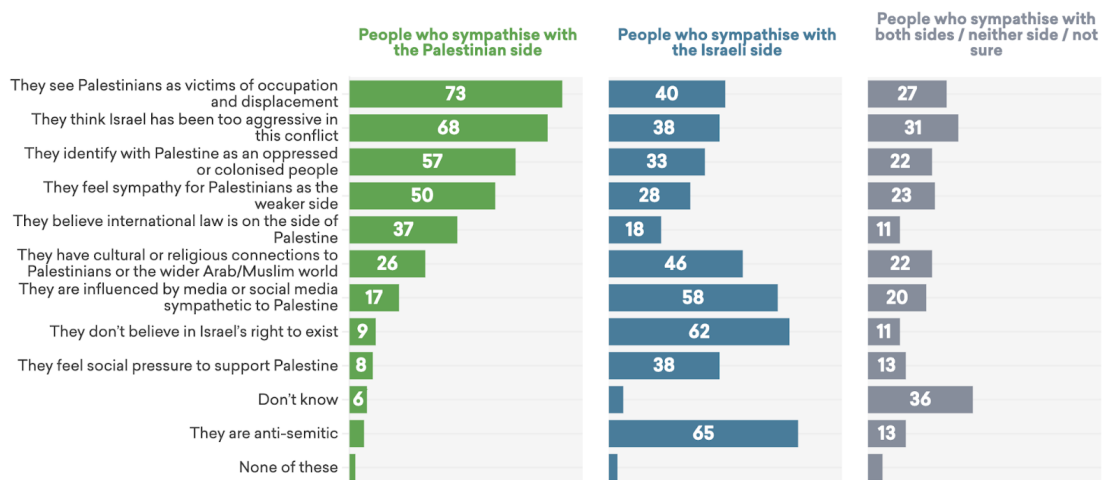
Antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate are often presented as opposing or mutually exclusive problems - with the suggestion that caring about one means ignoring or in some cases endorsing the other. But our research shows they tend to rise and fall together, driven by the same underlying dynamic: when people become more polarised, they're more likely to hold negative views of people in different groups. The same echo chambers and information bubbles that make people unable to have reasonable discussions about Gaza and then make people feel worse about 'the other side' also fuel prejudice against both Jewish and Muslim communities. When the majority of Britons who share concerns about civilian suffering get drowned out by extreme voices, and caring about different forms of prejudice is seen as mutually exclusive, that in turn facilitates conditions where all forms of prejudice can increase.

The conflict has shaped how some Britons see each other for the worse. More than a quarter of Britons (27 per cent) would think worse of someone for attending a pro-Palestine march, and 30 per cent would think worse of someone for attending a pro-Israel march. Among those with strong views on the conflict, this polarisation is even more stark: 43 per cent of those who sympathise with Palestine would consider ending a friendship with someone who posted on social media in support of Israel, and 46 per cent of those who sympathise with Israel would consider doing the same over a pro-Palestine post.

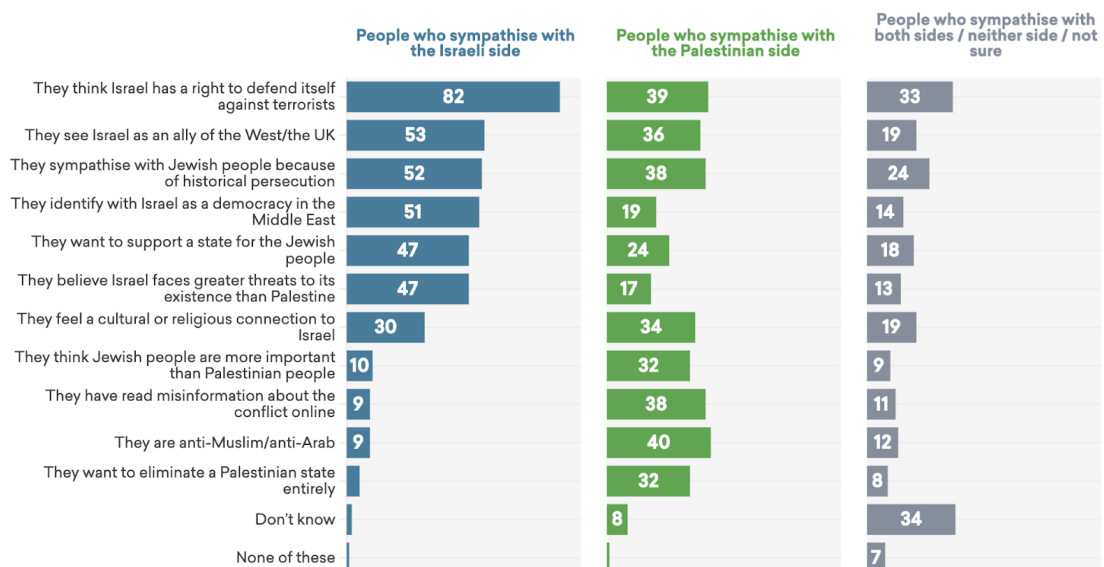


Those with strong views on the conflict are increasingly unable to discuss these issues in good-faith with each other. When asked why people hold opposing views, those with strong views on both sides attribute bad motives rather than genuine disagreement: people who sympathise more with Palestine say that others support Israel because "they are anti-Muslim/anti-Arab," while those who sympathise more with Israel are most likely say people back Palestine because they are antisemitic.

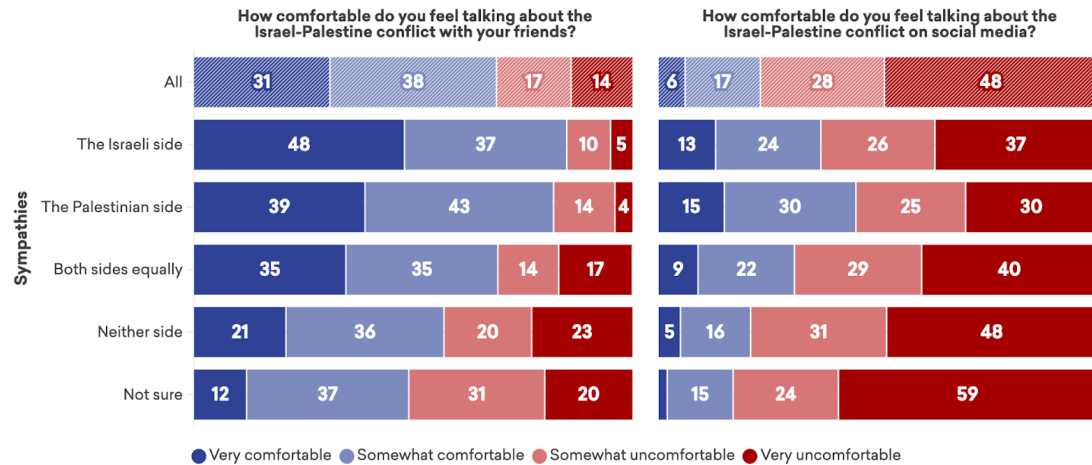
Thinking about people who say they support PALESTINE in the Israel-Palestine conflict, why do you think that is? Select all that apply.



Thinking about people who say they support ISRAEL in the Israel-Palestine conflict, why do you think that is? Select all that apply.

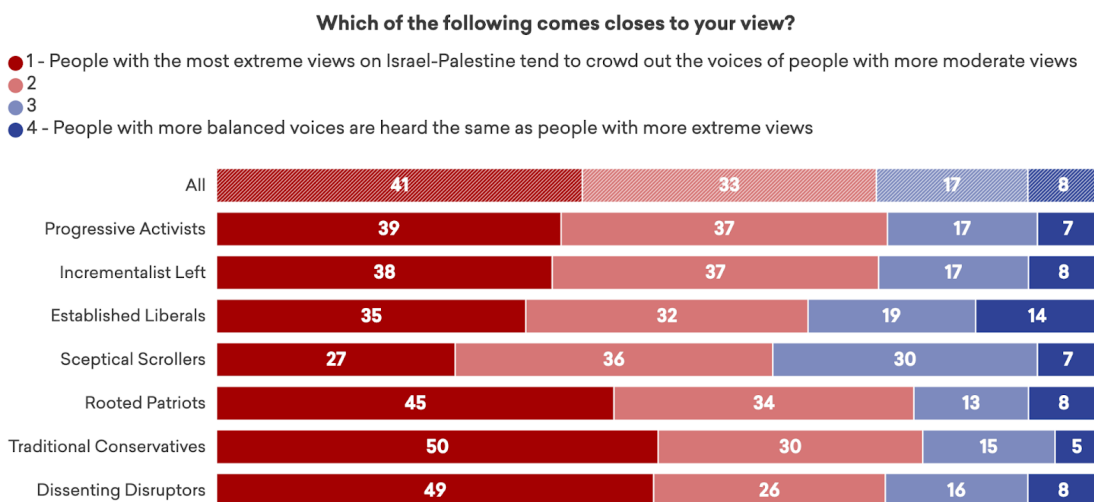


Those without strong views find it more uncomfortable to talk about the conflict. 83 per cent of those who take a side in the conflict say they feel comfortable talking about it with their family, whereas this is just 59 per cent for those who don't take a side.



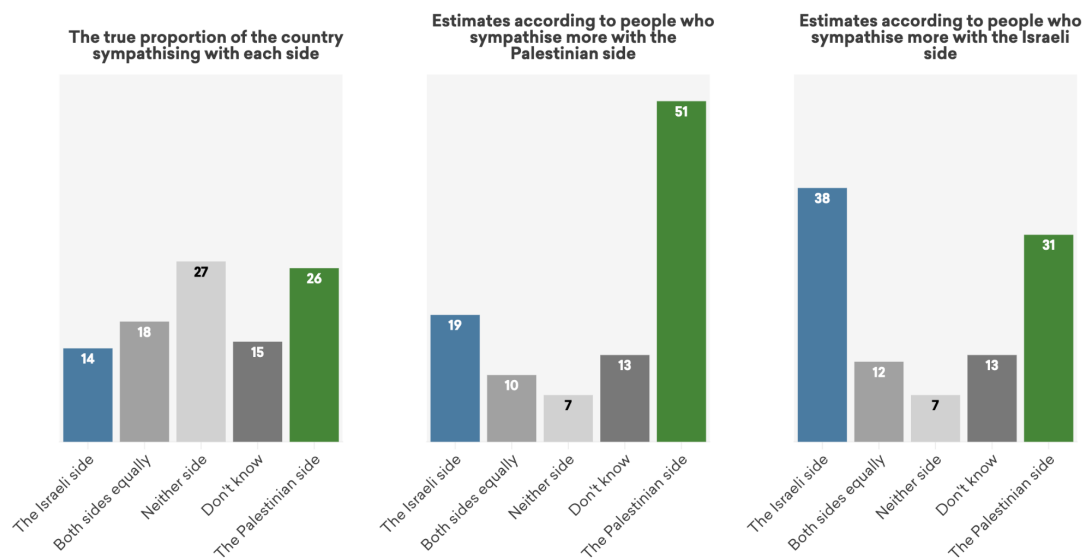
Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

This means that **those with the strongest views in favour of one side or another dominate conversations**. For example, despite only making up 40 per cent of the country, people who take a side in the conflict account for 71 per cent of people who have posted about the conflict on social media. 74 per cent of the country think those with the most extreme views on the conflict crowd out the voices of people with more moderate views.



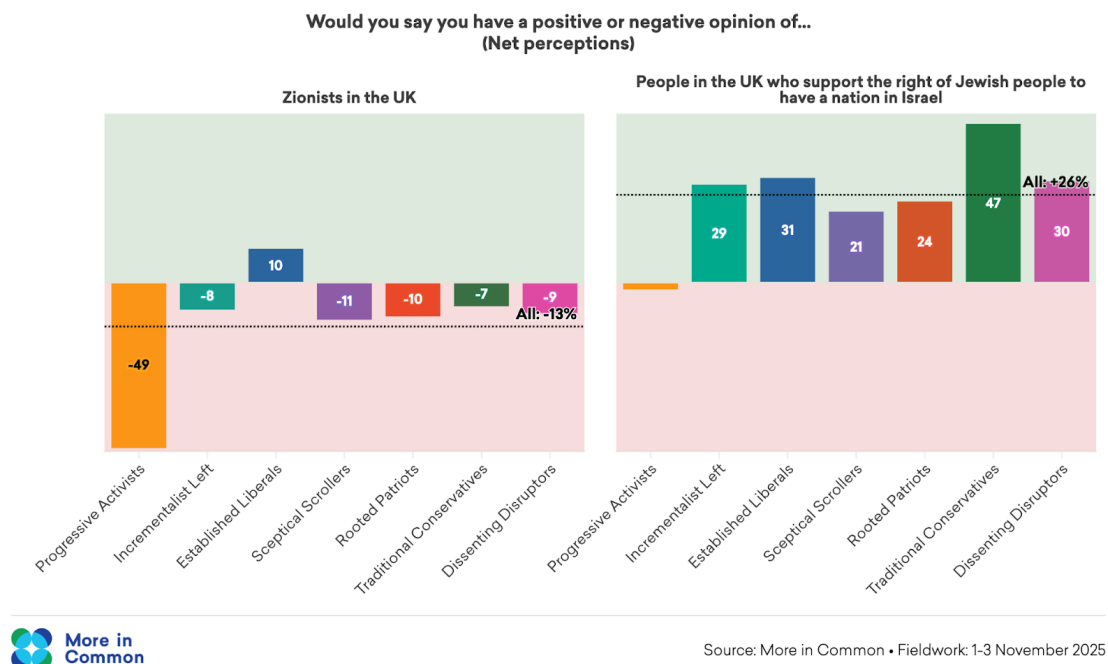
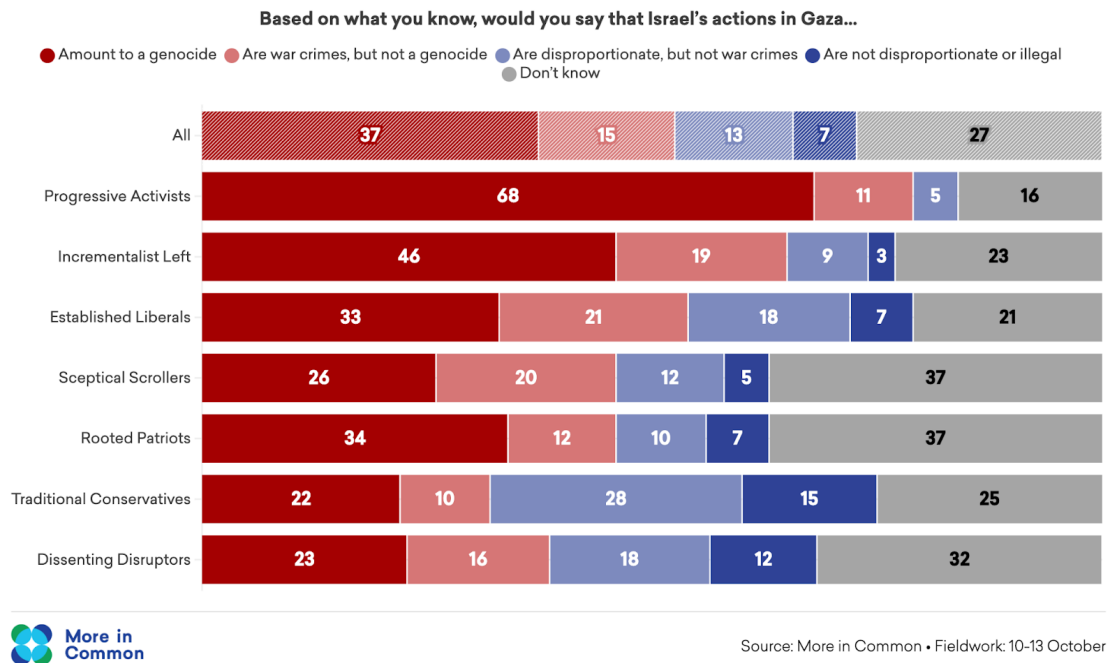
Source: More in Common • 10-13 October 2025

Loud discourse means people overestimate how engaged the public are in the conflict. While the majority do not sympathise with either side, on average Britons think that 29 per cent of the country puts themselves on the pro-Palestine side, and 18 per cent put themselves on the pro-Israel side. Among those who do take a view on the conflict, these numbers are even more pronounced: among those who sympathise with Palestine more, they think 51 per cent of the country do the same as them; among those who sympathise with Israel more, they think that 38 per cent of the country do the same, and think that there are more pro-Israel than pro-Palestine people in the country. That people overestimate how common their own viewpoints are is evidence that perhaps people are filtering into their own echo chambers on social media.



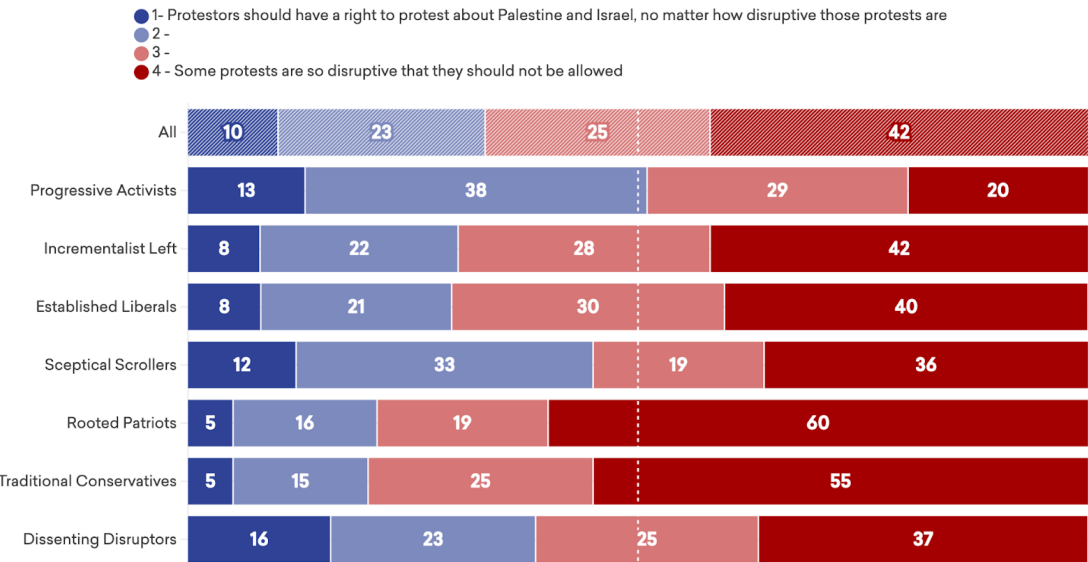
Language gaps in how people want to talk about the conflict make it harder to have constructive conversation. Just under four in ten Britons think Israel's actions in Gaza constitute genocide, but this rises to a majority of Progressive Activists.

Similarly, while 9 per cent of Britons have negative views of those who support the right of Jewish people to have a nation in Israel, 22 per cent think negatively of those who identify as "Zionists". When the same words mean fundamentally different things to different people, or when terms that seem factual to one side are deeply offensive to the other, it becomes nearly impossible to have bridging discussions.



The public's patience for disruptive protest is wearing thin. People support the principle of the right to free speech, but draw a line at offensive language and particularly disruptive protest. 27 per cent of Britons would think worse of someone for going to a pro-Palestine march, and 30 per cent would think worse of someone for going to a pro-Israel march. The majority of the public think that some protests are so disruptive they should not be allowed.

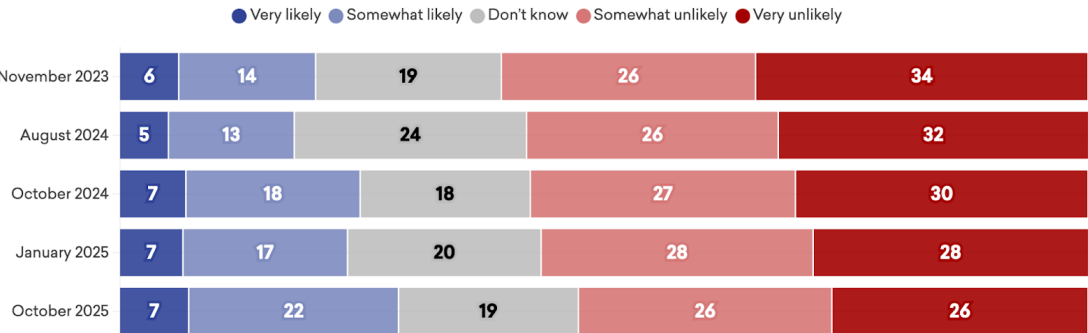
Please use the following scale to indicate which of the following comes closest to your view, where 1 means you fully agree with the first statement and 4 means you fully agree with the second statement.



More in Common • Fieldwork: 24 - 27 October 2025

Since the signing of the latest peace deal, the prospect of a more lasting peace in Gaza has become more realistic in the eyes of Britons, who are now more optimistic that the war will end within the next ten years. However even if the war were to end tomorrow, its impact on Britain - on how people view each other, on religious cohesion, on attitudes to free speech and protest - will be long lasting, and could continue for many years to come.

Based on what you have seen and read, how likely do you think it is that the conflict between Israel and Palestine will be resolved within the next ten years?



Source: More in Common • Latest fieldwork 10-13 October 2025

Introduction

In certain parts of Britain, and for certain communities, the conflict in Gaza has been top of mind in recent years. Ever since Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel on October 7th 2023 and throughout Israel's invasion of Gaza in the following years, the conflict has shaped social dynamics in Britain: rising antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate, regular protests in Britain's major cities, and a record number of independent MPs being elected in a General Election. For Britain's Jewish and Muslim communities in particular, the war has catapulted them to the centre of fraught debates over whether British politicians care about them, how they navigate relationships with friends and colleagues who may hold opposing views, and whether Britain remains a place where they can feel safe and welcome. Other Britons have also become very engaged in the conflict, and for those who take a particular 'side' either in support of Palestine or Israel this has become more central to their identity.

However, most Britons have simply been reluctant witnesses to these changes and growing divides. Over the last two years, the proportion of Britons taking a side in the conflict has remained consistent - most Britons do not sympathise with one side more than another. They have watched with horror and despair both at the atrocities of October 7th and as the war has unfolded in Gaza, but they do not instinctively sympathise with one side more than another - instead they often simply want the fighting to stop. At the same time, they have also watched as the temperature of debates about the conflict at home has risen: as the language used by some activists has become more extreme, as misinformation about the conflict has spread on social media, as musical artists have taken their, sometimes incendiary, views on the conflict to the stage, and as protests have filled the streets with increasingly disruptive tactics. Taken together this has had the effect of making many people withdraw further from discussions about the conflict, actively avoiding the news and worrying about saying the wrong thing, or ending up on the wrong end of a heated argument.

That many Britons have an emotional reaction to the conflict or feel passionately that something must be done to tackle prejudice or alleviate suffering is natural, understandable and reflects the desire among the British public for fairness and justice in the world. The events of October 7th, the plight of hostages and the suffering of Gazans over the past two years should elicit anger and demands for fighting to stop and few Britons would want to see campaigners silenced or stymied. Instead, the risk this report identifies is that those with the most strident views are no longer simply disagreeing with those with other points of view, but starting to question their motives or even demonise them. That has real and sometimes dangerous consequences for cohesion in the UK.

The situation in Gaza has been extremely volatile over the last two years, and this has remained the case in recent few months as a fragile peace agreement has come into force. However, the scars of the conflict on social cohesion here in the UK are likely to persist long after the fighting has hopefully stopped. This report seeks to explore those issues: how has

the war in Gaza changed what Britons think of each other? What is the future of religious and inter-faith cohesion in the UK after the war in Gaza? How has the war shaped Britons' views of our institutions, such as media organisations and cultural institutions? And how has two years of intense protests shaped Britons' attitudes to free speech and protest?

The research draws on a series of polls and focus groups conducted in October and November 2025. During that time a number of major news events shaped public opinions - most notably the signing of Donald Trump's peace agreement in Gaza on 9th October and the Heaton Park Synagogue attack in Manchester on 2nd October. The fieldwork dates for each poll are included in the footer of each graph to provide specific context.

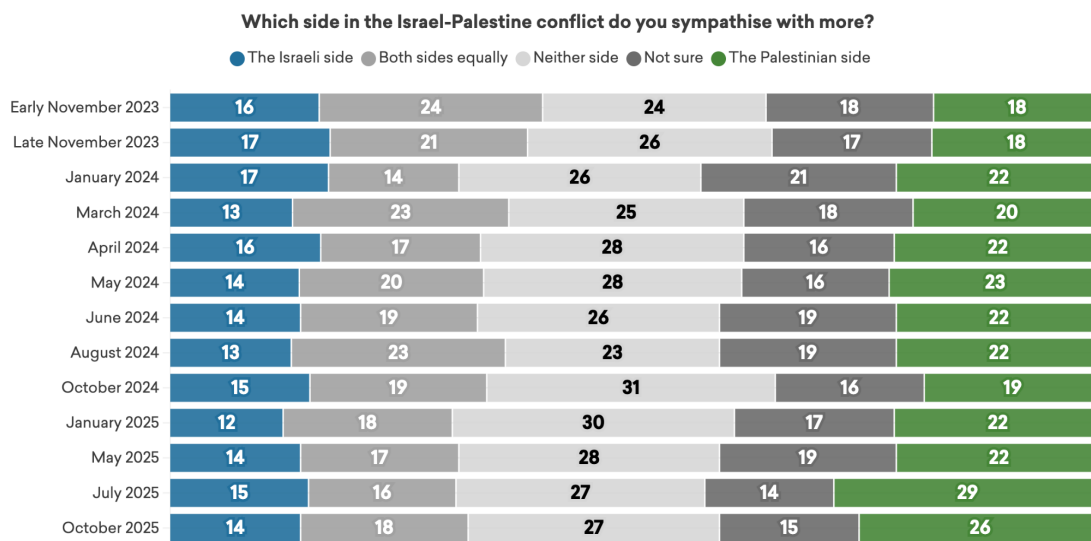
Chapter 1: Public attitudes to the conflict in Israel and Gaza

Two years of public opinion on Israel and Palestine

More in Common first conducted in-depth research into Britons' attitudes to the conflict between Israel and Palestine in November 2023. At that point, the conflict in Gaza had been dominating headlines for less than a month, and while most Britons had seen stories emerging from the conflict and were concerned about the impact on Israeli and Palestinian civilians, few Britons 'took a side' or held strong views either in support of the Israelis or the Palestinians.

At the time, we found the unwillingness of the majority of the public to pick a side was not simple "both-sidesism" or a lack of concern, but because people felt that they lacked adequate knowledge to come to an informed decision, because they sensed that neither side was perfect, because they worried about amplifying division and, crucially, because they were appalled by death and suffering across the board.

In the two years since that research, the conflict has rarely been out of the news, and Britons have had much more time to reflect on the war. However, this has not, for most Britons, led to a significant shift in opinion: the proportion of Britons saying they sympathise more with either the Palestinian side or the Israeli side in the conflict has hardly changed. It remains the case that most Britons do not take a side in the conflict.



Last fieldwork: 4-6 October 2025

As of October 2025, 14 per cent of Britons say they sympathise more with Israel (a slight fall from 16 per cent in November 2023); 26 per cent say they sympathise more with Palestine (an increase from 18 per cent in November 2023), and the majority say they sympathise with neither side, both sides, or they aren't sure. The proportion of people who say they sympathise with 'both sides equally' has fallen throughout the course of the conflict, as the public have become exasperated with key figures and, in its place, the proportion of people saying they sympathise with 'neither side' has emerged as the largest group (27 per cent).

As in 2023, this unwillingness to take a side in the conflict is not borne out of lack of compassion. In fact, many of the people who say they don't sympathise with one side over the other express deep concern for the humanitarian situation in Gaza and desperately want the war to end. Britons express a range of concerns about the conflict - both its impact on civilians and how it might affect the UK.

Asked why they do not take a side in the conflict, the top reason that Britons give is that 'there are good and bad people on both sides', that 'the conflict is too complex' and that 'both sides are as bad as each other'. Just 14 per cent say they do not take a side because they are not interested.

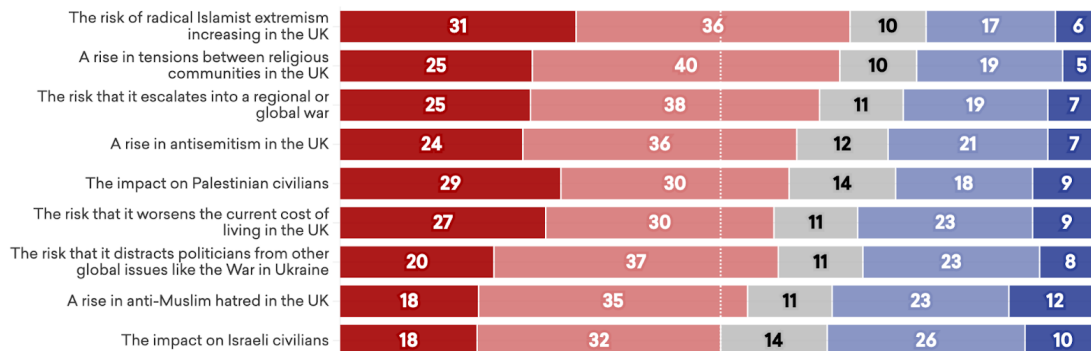
You said that you [sympathise with both sides equally / neither side / don't know which side you sympathise with more]. Why is that?



In the weeks following the terrorist attack in Heaton Park Synagogue, the impacts of the conflict on inter-faith relations in the UK have understandably become more concerning to Britons. Asked how much they worry about different impacts of the conflict on the UK, a rise in tensions between religious groups in Britain and a rise in Islamist extremism now top the list.

How much do you worry about the following impacts of the Israel-Palestine conflict?

● A great deal ● Quite a lot ● Don't know ● Not very much ● Not at all



The majority of Britons have not taken a side, but for some of those who have, their opinions have hardened to the extent that they now feel animosity towards those in opposition.

They remain a minority however, and there are a number of common starting points almost all Britons share regardless of which side of the conflict they may feel closer to. These are:

- **Horror at the impact of the conflict on civilians on both sides and a desire for the war to end.**
- **Support for the return of Israeli hostages, coupled with a belief that Israel has gone too far in their military activity in Gaza.** Britons across the spectrum wanted to see hostages released and returned safely to their families, but tend to think Israel's military response in Gaza has been disproportionate.
- **Extreme sympathy for citizens of Gaza:** both for the severe suffering they have endured during this war as a result of Israel's military activity, and for the fact that they have to be governed by Hamas. Few Britons have positive views of Hamas, and there is widespread recognition that Palestinian civilians are trapped under the rule of a group that does not represent their interests and has actively harmed prospects for peace.
- **Concern about the targeting of Jews in Britain,** particularly following the terror attack on Heaton Park synagogue in Manchester.
- **Worry about integration, extremism and rising tensions between different religious communities in Britain.** Regardless of their views on the conflict itself, most Britons are concerned that events in the Middle East are creating divisions at home and making it harder for people of different faiths to live together peacefully.

Most Britons do not approach the conflict through the lens of “sides” at all. For the average Briton, who will have seen horrific images of suffering both in Israel on October 7th, the plight of hostages and their families, and the extreme misery and suffering Gaza over the past two years, the immediate concern is that they want the war to stop, and for civilians who have been caught up in the war to be protected. For most Britons, holding these views does not require them to align with one side or another. Other Britons simply feel that they don't know enough about the conflict in order to take a properly informed opinion.

“I just feel really sad. They're civilians that are just getting hurt on both sides for no reason. They don't need to be fighting. I just find it, it's just really sad. It doesn't make sense to me why people that have nothing to do with the politics are getting hurt and there's children getting hurt and they're all starving. It's not their fault. I don't understand why that's affected them. It's nothing to do with them. It just makes me really sad” - Zoe, Hastings, Dissenting Disruptor

"The amount of destruction and the amount of people that are being killed every day. I mean women and children as well. It's an awful situation, but to be honest, as long as that's been going on, I haven't got a clue what they're fighting about ... I don't fully understand it or what either side is trying to achieve really, I don't know." - Walter, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

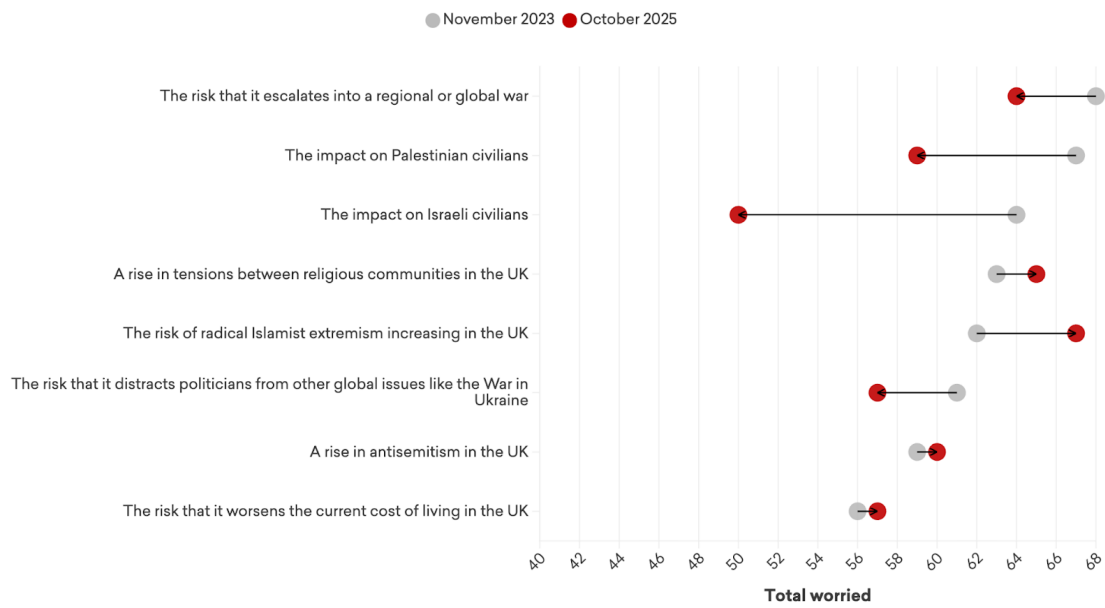
"I don't particularly like either side that's actually involved in the conflict and I come from a family which going back two generations is partly Jewish, but I don't particularly agree with Israel more so than Palestine. I don't think Britain should really be involving ourselves in it" - Tristan, Dissenting Disruptor, Cornwall

"Looking, just take a step back and look at the pictures. It's disgusting what's happened. Being a human being, I don't know how it's been let to get this bad to be honest." - Mark, Dissenting Disruptor, Leeds

"I've had mixed opinions, but overall war is war. I don't agree with what the Israeli government's doing in terms of their war and how they're directing it, but their aim or goal is supposedly to try and get Hamas, and Hamas is using its civilians, children and mothers and fathers, all of them as almost human shields, and they were hiding in Dubai at one point. So, I think I have anger directed more towards Hamas and then also the president of Israel. And I have more anger directed towards them and feel that the people and civilians caught in the middle are the ones that are getting a lot of bad things happening to them." - Jade, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

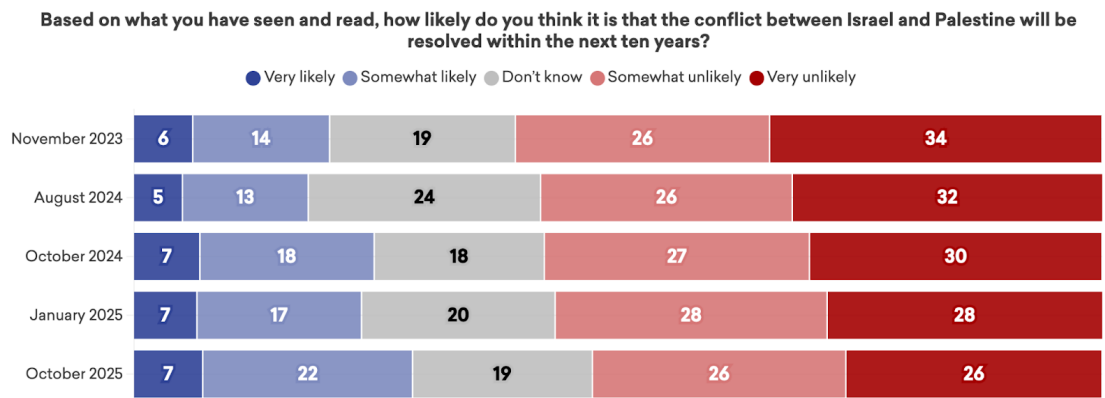
Since Hamas' terror attack on October 7, and throughout the resulting war in Gaza, Britons have often spoken about exhaustion with the conflict and a sense it is too depressing to watch, but nonetheless their concern remains high, with an increasing worry about what the conflict means for communities here in the UK.

For example, Britons are now much more worried about the rise in Islamist extremism and religious division - particularly after the fatal terror attack on a Manchester synagogue. At the same time, since the ceasefire has been implemented, concern about the impact on Israeli and Palestinian civilians has dropped down people's list of concerns.



Source: More in Common • Last fieldwork 4-6 October 2025

The implementation of the Autumn 2025 ceasefire in Gaza has made some Britons more optimistic about the prospects for peace - even if most Britons think it is unlikely that the war will be resolved in the next ten years, more Britons feel able to hope in the wake of the cease fire that there could be some resolution to the conflict.



Source: More in Common • Latest fieldwork 10-13 October 2025

"I mean neither side will agree on where the borderlines are, so I can't see the end of it. They might come to talks now, but it'll just rise up again in a few months, few years time because one will agree with another one will do this and one will do that. So there'll never be an ending to that one." Jason, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"I don't see where it ends either. I don't see an end. It's insane that it's continued for this long, but I don't pretend to know enough about it and I really don't. But I don't quite know why it started. No one seems to really know what's going on and it just doesn't seem to ever need to end. It's just a continuing cycle of devastation. Frightening,"
Scott, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

Switching off from the news?

In two years of intense fighting in Gaza, Britons have not switched off, but many explain how news from the conflict is taking an increased emotional toll on them or people they know. Many say they have actively tried to cut down on their consumption of news about the conflict because they find it too depressing.

"I tend to avoid watching it purposely because I just think I'm scared about my kids growing up in this world just absolutely messed up. So I try to avoid it.... I'd never leave the house if I watched the news and kept up to date of everything." Abby, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"You get up in the morning and you look at your phone and you look at the news and it's just the same thing over and over again and you get tired of it, it just depresses you. To be honest, I've often thought to myself, I'm just going to stop looking at it." Walter, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"And this sounds really probably a bit selfish to be fair. When obviously it all started happening, it was really bad. It was on the news and it was like every day, but I've become a little bit immune to it, to the point of where it is just everyday life now. doesn't affect me anymore. I'm just a bit probably just in my own little bubble with my own little family, but unless it hits close to home, I don't know. I've kind of stopped listening to it." Rachel, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"Sometimes you must turn off the news because it's so harrowing and that's not the best thing to do, I guess, because then you can never really form an opinion of your own." James, Established Liberal, St Albans

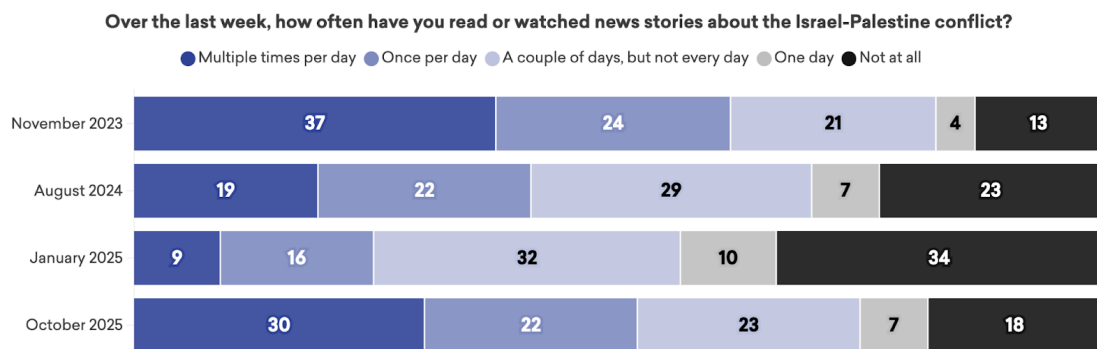
"I've got to be honest, I've stopped watching the news for the last six months. I don't watch it. I don't do social media as well because it's just too much going on that I don't need that impact in my life as well. Sorry." Michelle, Traditional Conservative, Crawley

"I've stopped watching any clips because for me it's very sad." Salim, South London

Behavioural data bears this out. Search traffic about the conflict peaked in the weeks following October 7th 2023, and has not returned to levels anywhere near that in the months since, only spiking occasionally in response to various escalations or potential peace deals in the region.



Polling data matches the trend in Google searches, between 2023 and 2025 the number of people reading and watching news stories about the Israel-Palestine conflict every day has decreased steadily - from a high of 61 per cent in November 2023 to a low of 25 per cent in January 2025. However, in the weeks following the latest ceasefire deal, attention to news about the conflict has returned to levels not seen since 2023. 52 per cent now say they have read or watched news about the war every day.

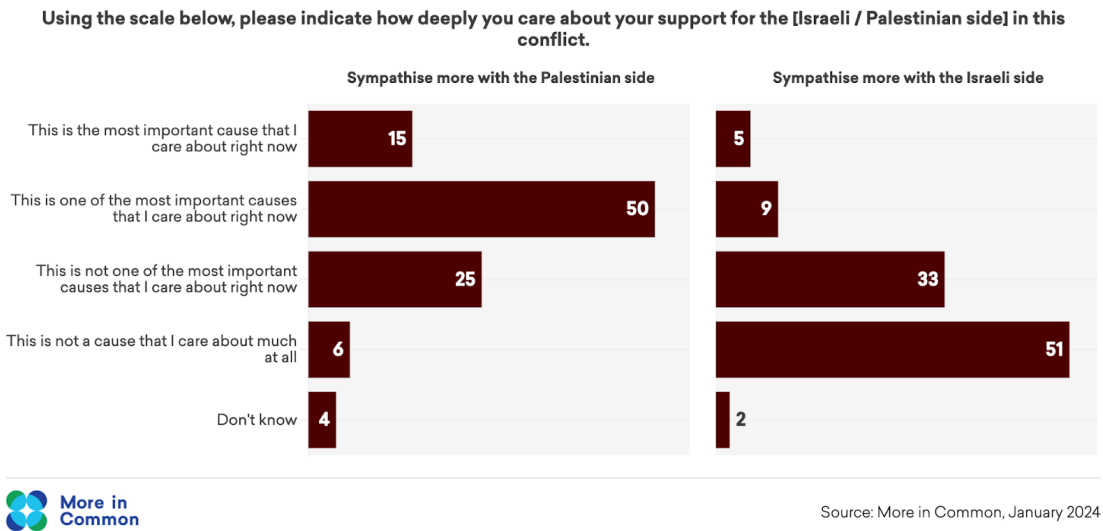


Source: More in Common • Last fieldwork 4-6 October 2025

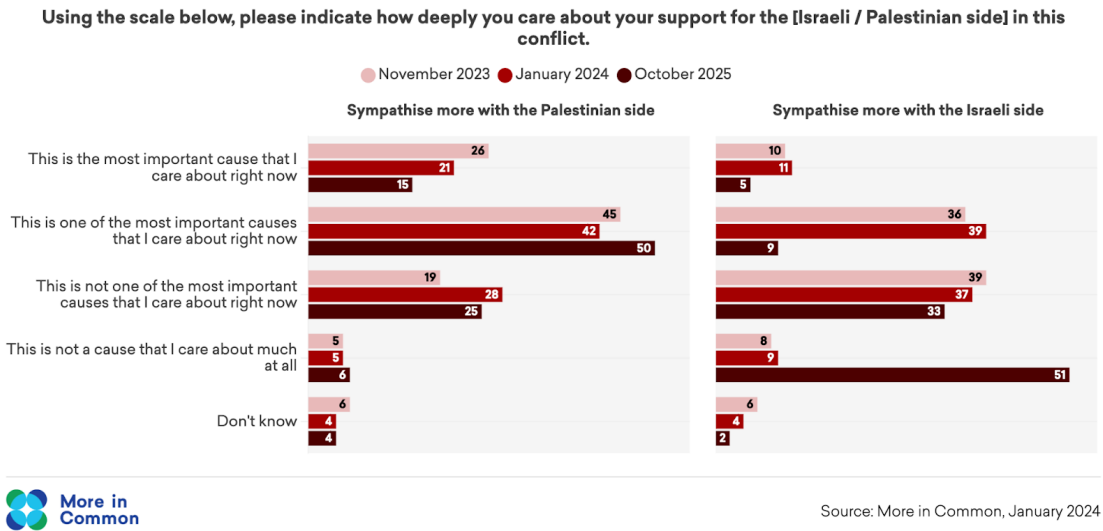
Other forms of engagement have also fallen in the last few years - with fewer people saying they have posted about the conflict on social media, signed petitions about the conflict, or attended protests about the conflict.

When people have taken action or spoken publicly about the conflict, they are much more likely to be people who sympathise with Palestinians. Of all the people who have posted on social media about the conflict, 53 per cent say they sympathise more with the Palestinian side and just 18 per cent say they sympathise more with the Israeli side. Similarly, of those who say they have signed a petition about the conflict, 60 per cent say they sympathise more with the Palestinian side, and 10 per cent say they sympathise more with the Israeli side.

Much of this can be explained by some degree of asymmetry in strength of feeling between those who sympathise more with Israel or Palestine and also tendency towards activism in the latter group. It has been the case, since at least 2023, that those who sympathise more with the Palestinian side of the conflict tend to feel that the cause is more important to them personally compared to those who sympathise more with the Israeli side of the conflict. Currently, almost two thirds (65 per cent) of those who sympathise more with the Palestinian side of the conflict say that this is one of the most important causes they care about right now, compared to just 14 per cent of those who sympathise more with the Israeli side. This helps to explain why campaigners on the Palestinian side of the conflict have been much more vocal than those who support Israel (coupled with the fact that the pro-Palestine group in Britain is larger in number than the pro-Israel group).



That said, on both sides of the conflict, the level of passionate support has fallen, particularly since the most recent ceasefire has come into effect. Whereas 65 per cent of Palestine supporters say this is one of their most important causes right now, this number was 71 per cent in November 2023. On the Israeli side, the fall off has been even more significant, reducing to 14 per cent from a high of 50 per cent in January 2024.

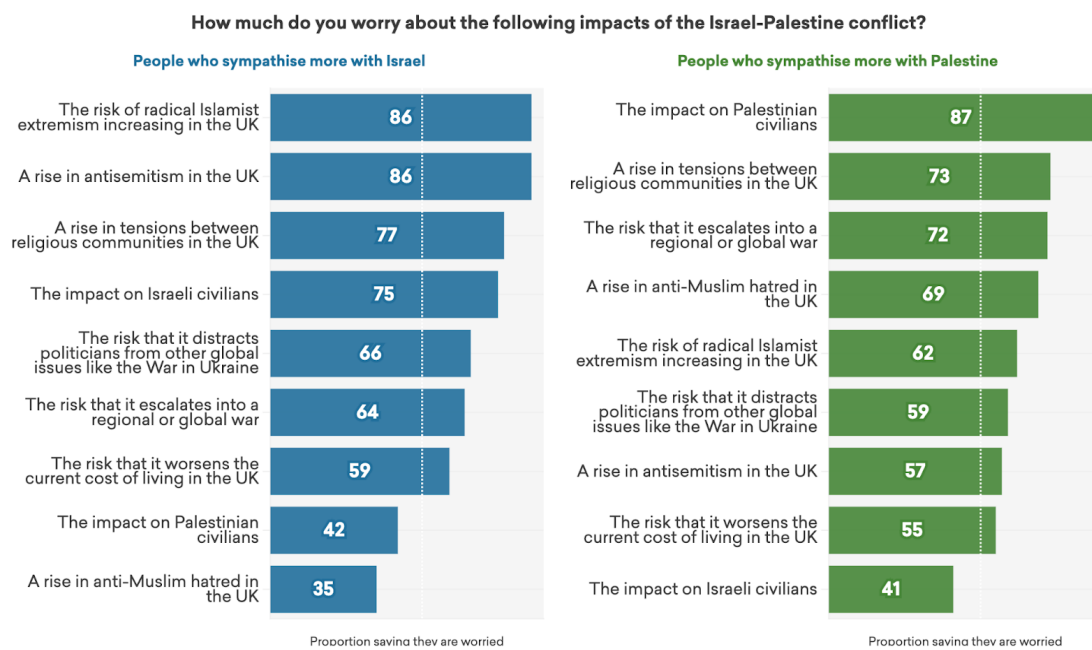


Diverging concerns

Beyond a divergence in intensity of feeling, there are also notable differences in what these two groups are most concerned about when thinking about the conflict. For those who sympathise more with Palestinian side, their top concern

by some margin is the impact on Palestinian civilians – 87 per cent say they worry about this. This falls to 42 per cent of those who sympathise more with the Israeli side.

On the other hand, the concerns of those who sympathise more with the Israeli side are more close to home, with the risk of increased Islamist extremism and a rise in antisemitism in the UK topping their list of concerns, while neither of these are in the top four worries of those who sympathise more with the Palestinian side. That said, both groups are very worried about a rise in tensions between religious communities in the UK.

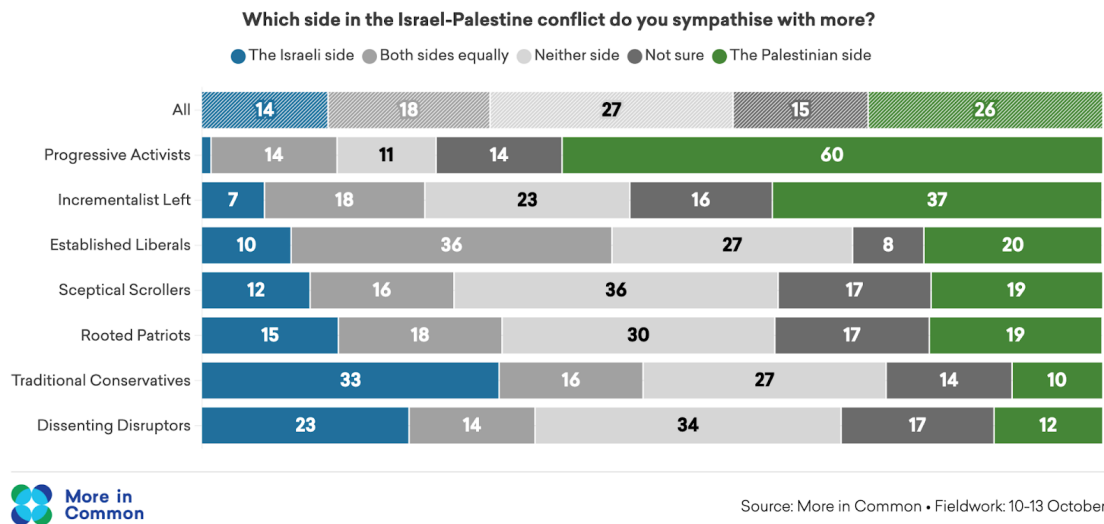


These diverging concerns help in part to explain why conversations between these two sides have become so fraught in recent years, a topic that is explained further in Chapters 2 and 3. The following sections explore exactly who is in these groups – their demographic makesups and their wider worldviews and values.

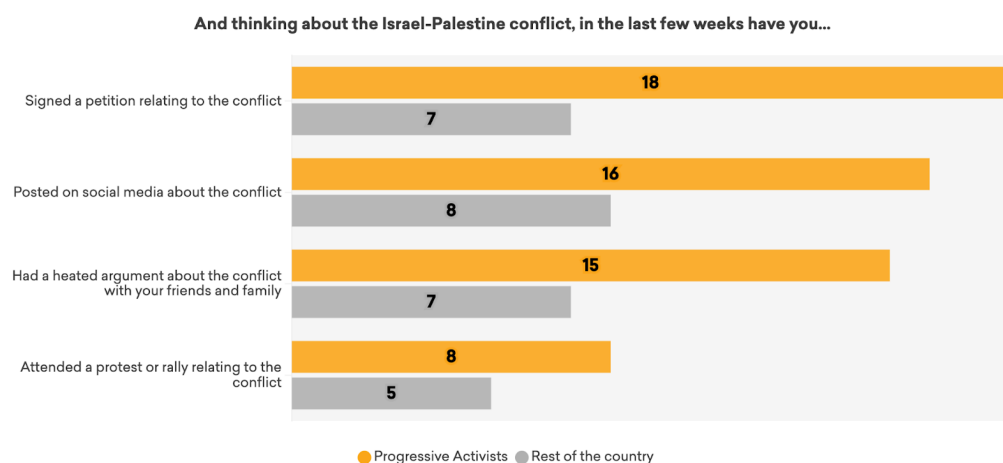
The seven segments on the conflict

In analyses such as this, demographic information can only go so far in explaining why certain groups hold differing starting points on the conflict. This report instead draws heavily on More in Common’s British Seven segments – a psychographic segmentation of the British public that analyses the country according to their

worldviews and beliefs rather than demographic or issue-specific attributes. More information can be found about the seven segments in the appendix.



- Of all the segments, **Progressive Activists (12% of the country)** are the most likely by far to say they sympathise more with the Palestinian side of the conflict, and the only segment where a majority of people take a side. Because they are outliers on some issues relating to the conflict, and because they are much more vocal about the conflict than any other segment (for example, they make up just a tenth of the country but a quarter of the people who have posted on social media about the conflict), they have played an outsized role in the debate in recent years.

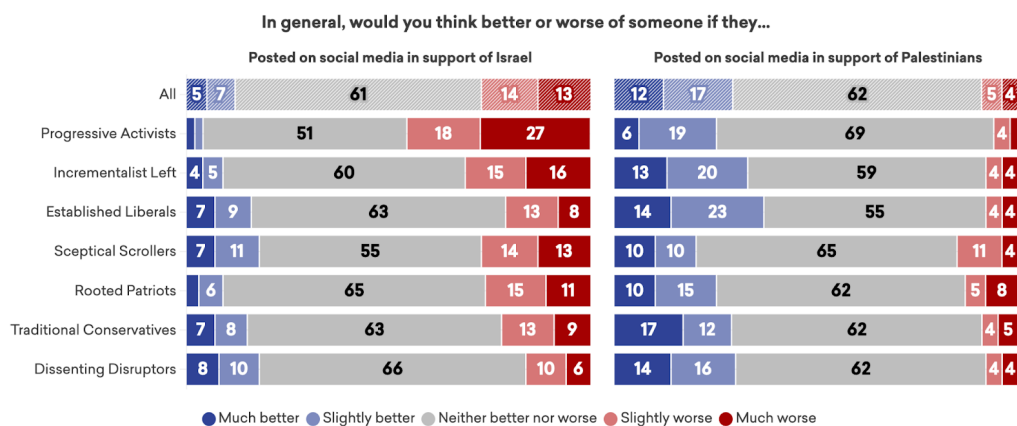


 Source: More in Common • Last fieldwork 10-13 October 2025

In some cases, Progressive Activists have become more uncompromising with regard to attitudes about the conflict than other segments and less sympathetic to

those with opposing views. This is in part because they are more likely to feel that their support for Palestine is an important part of their own personal identity.

Progressive Activists are also more likely than the rest of the country to think less of people because of their views on Israel. For example, 45 per cent of Progressive Activists would think worse of someone who posted on social media in support of Israel (compared to 27 per cent for the country as a whole), and more than a fifth (22 per cent) say they would definitely stop being friends with someone if they saw someone posting on social media supporting Israel. Asked why they think some people support Israel, Progressive Activists (unlike the other six segments) place 'They are anti-Muslim/anti-Arab' at the top of their list.

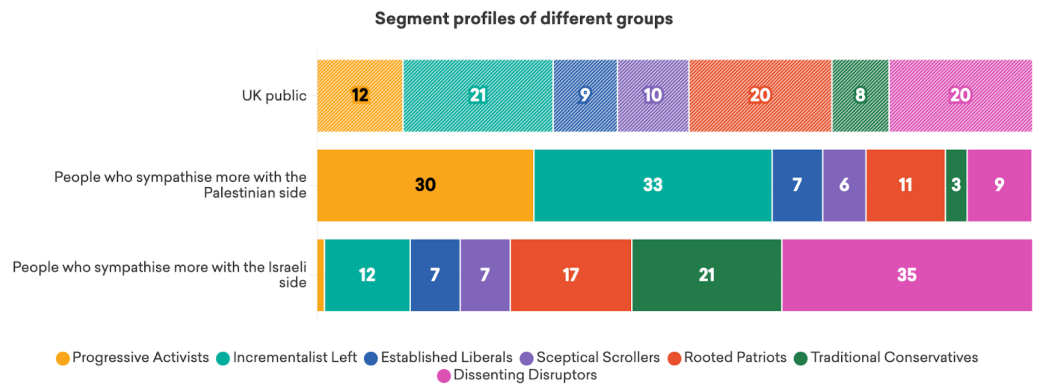


Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

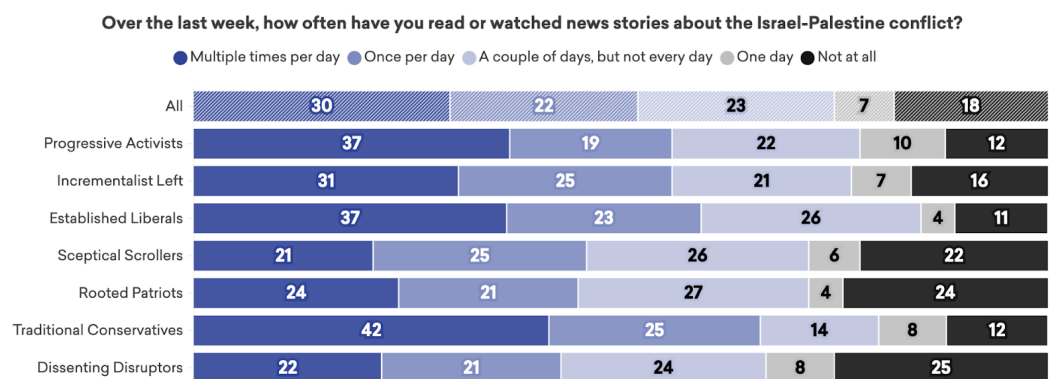
For a smaller subgroup of Progressive Activists, hostility towards those who support Israel can sometimes create a blindspot towards antisemitism - even though in general Progressive Activists are much more concerned about racism than the rest of the country. This is explored in detail in Chapter 2.

- The **Incrementalist Left (21% of the country)** are also more likely than the general public to sympathise with Palestine, although the majority of them do not take a side in the conflict, and they are much less likely than Progressive Activists to follow the news closely. Many members of the Incrementalist Left view the war as a humanitarian disaster but not one they feel they can or need to support either side in.

The incrementalist left are more likely than any other segment to worry about both the impact on Palestinian and Israeli citizens, but they are also the segment most likely to feel like they 'often' or 'always' have to hold back from saying what they think about the conflict because they worry about saying the wrong thing. Together, the Incrementalist Left and Progressive Activists make up 33 per cent of the country but 63 per cent of those who sympathise more with Palestine.



- Established Liberals (9% of the country)** are the least likely to take a side in the conflict and considerably more likely than any other segment to say they sympathise with “both sides equally”. This is not a product of lack of engagement in the conflict - in fact, Established Liberals read news about the conflict more than other segments. Instead, Established Liberals prefer to see themselves as impartial evidence based observers. They are more likely than other segments to say that the conflict is so complicated it is impossible to know who is in the right, and find it difficult to sympathise with either side given what they perceive as flaws in both of them.



- Sceptical Scrollers (10% of the country)** are the segment most likely to say they sympathise with neither side in the conflict. This is the youngest segment, and many engage with conflict online, however they are pessimistic about the prospects for peace. In focus groups, many also talk about how they are exhausted

by the many discussions with friends from school or college who may feel much more passionately about the conflict.

- **Rooted Patriots (20% of the country)** are less likely than average to be paying close attention to the conflict, however their response to the conflict is defined by their high threat perception. Compared to the rest of the country, they are more likely to say they are worried about the impacts of the conflict on Britain, such as rising antisemitism, or the risk that it escalates into a global or regional war.
- **Traditional Conservatives (8% of the country)** are the group most likely to have followed the news closely in recent weeks following the ceasefire, and, compared to other segments, they are less likely to have done this on social media. A third say they sympathise more with the Israeli side in the conflict - making them by far the most pro-Israel of the segments. They are also the most likely of all the segments to have a positive view of the Israeli Government or to say that the media has been biased against Israel.

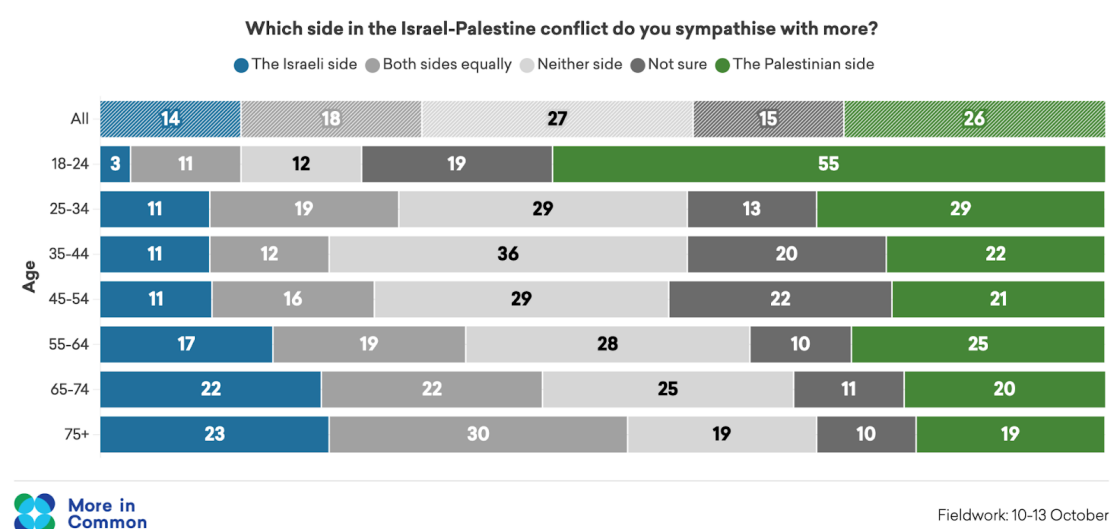
In some cases, Traditional Conservatives' views are the inverse of Progressive Activists. Whereas Progressive Activists can be very negative about pro-Israel supporters, Traditional Conservatives can be equally critical of pro-Palestine supporters. In some cases, these views are tied up in wider attitudes to multiculturalism in Britain and particularly their views on Islam and Islamic extremism, which are more negative than other segments. Of all the segments, they are the least likely to say that Islamophobia is a serious issue, for example.

- **Dissenting Disruptors (20% of the country)** are also more likely than the national average to say they sympathise more with the Israeli side, although the largest group say they sympathise with neither side. This group tends to be less interested in foreign policy than other right leaning groups and want politicians to focus on issues here in Britain first and foremost. Compared to Traditional Conservatives, they say they are much less comfortable talking about the conflict with friends and family, but are much more likely to say they are comfortable talking about the conflict on social media.

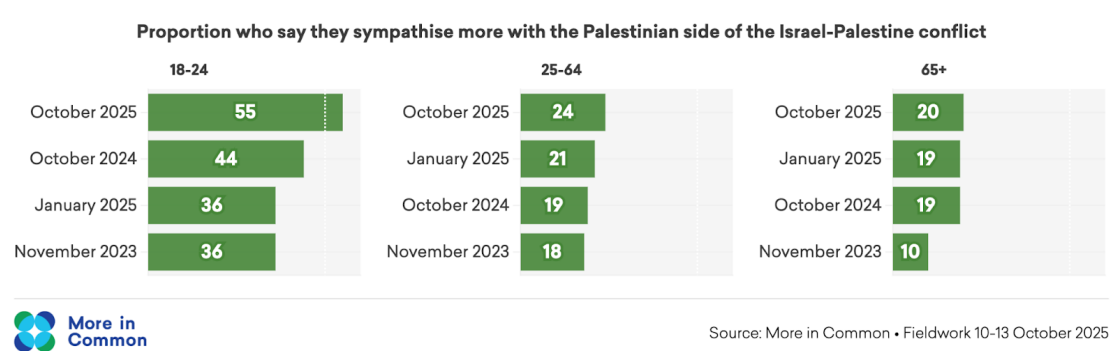
Which demographic groups have taken sides in the conflict?

While top line sympathies with each side of the conflict have not changed dramatically since November 2023, there have been some considerable changes in specific sub-groups of the British population.

Most notable of all of these is younger Britons - particularly 18-24 year olds - who have become considerably more likely to say they sympathise with the Palestinian side of the conflict. In November 2023, the majority in every age group did not take a side in the conflict, since then, the growth in the number of 18-24 year olds sympathising more with Palestine means this is no longer the case.

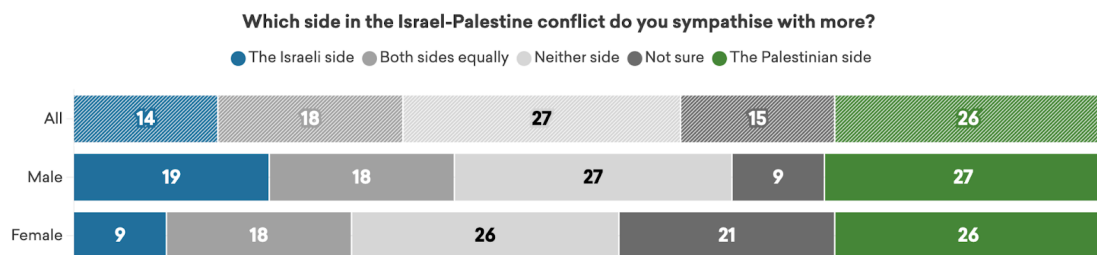


While in every other age group the majority do not take a side in the conflict, more than half of 18-24 year olds say they sympathise more with Palestine, up from just over a third (6 per cent) in November 2023.



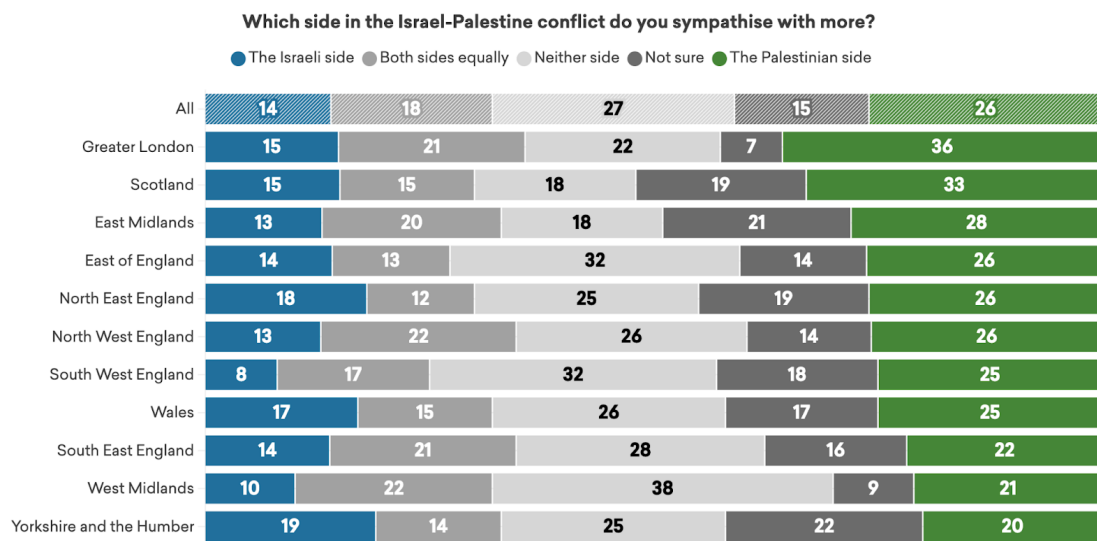
The oldest Britons have also become more likely to say they sympathise with Palestine, albeit from a lower base. Since 2023, the proportion of 65+ year olds who say they sympathise more with the Palestinian side of the conflict has doubled from ten to 20 per cent.

Age is the most stark divide in terms of support for the conflict, but there are some other notable demographic differences. One of these is between men and women - with men being much less likely to say they “don’t know” which side they support and more than twice as likely as women to say they sympathise more with Israel (it is common across polling that men are more likely to give an opinion than women who are more likely to select don’t know, but notable that men are more likely to say they side with Israel).



Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

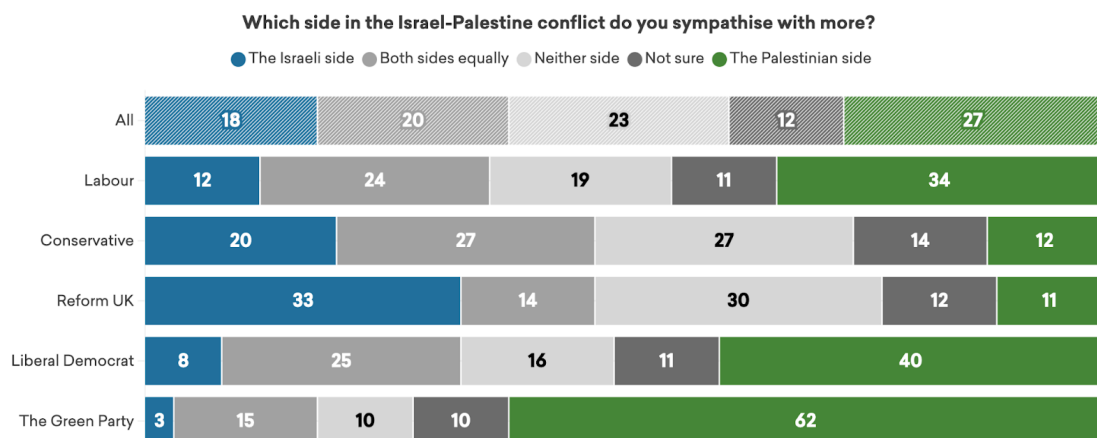
There is also some geographic variation in sympathies regarding the conflict. Londoners in particular are much more likely than the country as a whole to take a side in the conflict - being slightly more likely to support Israel and much more likely to support Palestine than the country as a whole. This is most likely due to the fact that London has a younger and more Muslim population, as well as Britain’s biggest Jewish population. In Scotland, sympathy with Palestine is also stronger than in the rest of Great Britain.



Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

There are also clear partisan differences in sympathies on the conflict. As has been the case throughout the conflict, Labour voters are much more likely to sympathise with the Palestinian side of the conflict, and Reform UK voters are much more likely to say they sympathise with Israel. Of the smaller parties, Liberal Democrat and particularly Green voters are much more likely to sympathise with Palestine.

This has had significant political implications - explored in more detail in Chapter 4. Labour in particular has lost the support from more of their voters who sympathise with the Palestinians side (who tend to say they would vote for the Greens) than those who sympathise more with the Israeli side (who tend to now say they would vote for Reform UK).



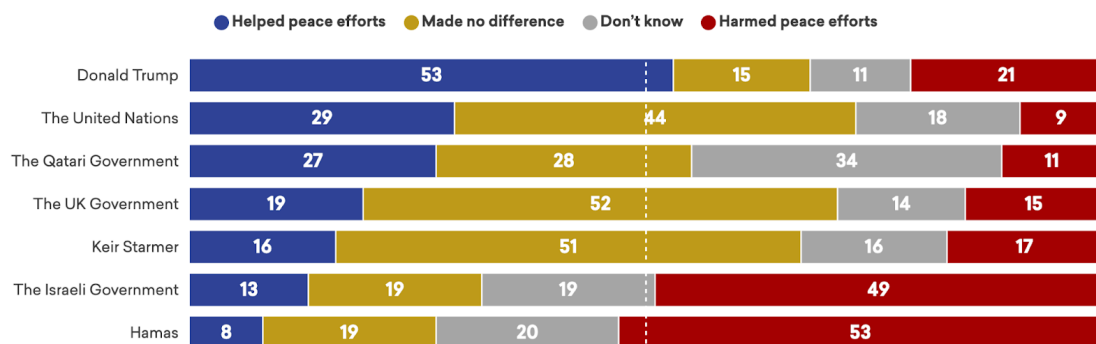
Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

Attitudes to actors in the conflict

The majority of this report focuses on the ways in which the conflict in Gaza has changed how Britons think about each other, however many of these attitudes are influenced by Britons' perceptions of the actors directly involved in the conflict.

Few Britons have much time for the Israeli Government and they are even more negative about Hamas - Britons tend to think they do not represent Israeli and Gazan citizens and have actively harmed the peace process in the Middle East. Asked to reflect on the recent ceasefire agreement, 49 per cent think the Israeli Government harmed the peace process in Gaza and just 13 per cent think they helped it. Similarly, 53 per cent think Hamas harmed the peace process and eight per cent think they helped it.

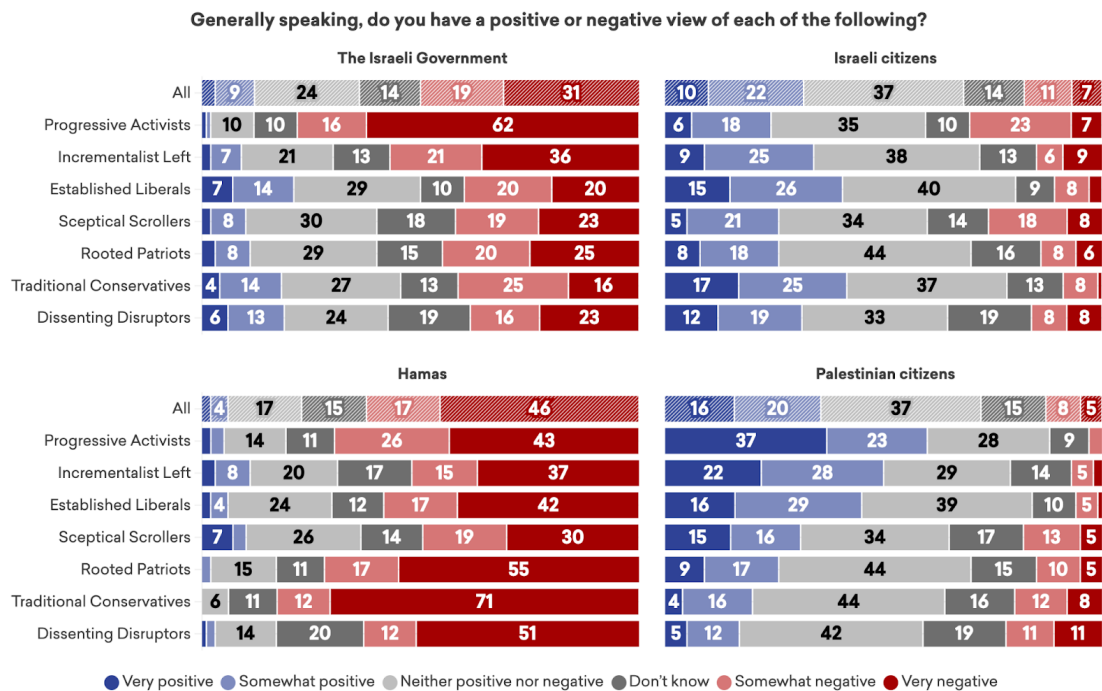
To the best of your knowledge, do you think each of the following helped or harmed peace efforts to date in Gaza?



Overall, just 12 per cent of Britons have a positive view of the Israeli Government and half have a negative view. Even among Traditional Conservatives who are generally much more positive about Israel, just 18 per cent have a positive view of the Israeli Government and 41 per cent have a negative view of them. Progressive Activists are far more negative in their view of the Israeli Government than any other segment, with 78 per cent saying they have a negative view.

For most Britons, disapproval of the Israeli Government does not extend to negativity about Israelis themselves - only 18 per cent of Britons have a negative view of Israeli citizens - although this is higher among Progressive Activists, of whom three in ten (30 per cent) say they have a negative view and Sceptical Scrollers (26 per cent).

Britons are even more critical of Hamas. 63 per cent have a negative view of the group and a virtually negligible proportion have a positive view of them.



Attitudes to Hamas

In focus groups, the British public often speak with horror and despair when talking about the actions they have seen from Hamas on the news, with people particularly saddened by the fact that civilians in Gaza don't have fair and proper representation.

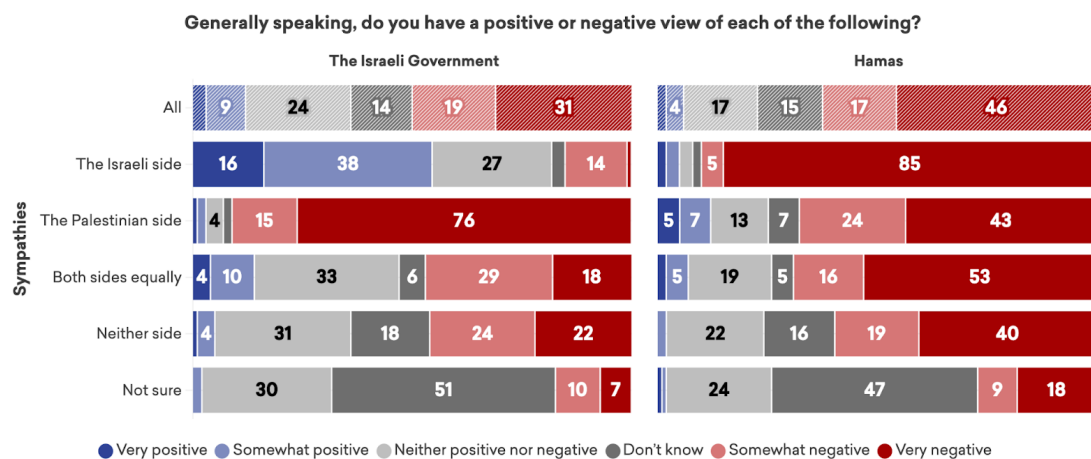
"I think [Hamas] are terrorists, and I think people keep saying 'free Palestine' and I think it's the Palestinian people that need freeing to live a life of freedom. - Katie, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"So yeah, I've had mixed opinions, but overall war is war. I don't agree with what the government, the Israeli government's doing in terms of their war and how they're directing it, but their so-called aim or goal is supposedly to try and get Hamas and that Hamas is using its civilians, children and mothers and fathers, all of them as almost human shields and they were hiding in Dubai at one point" Jade, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

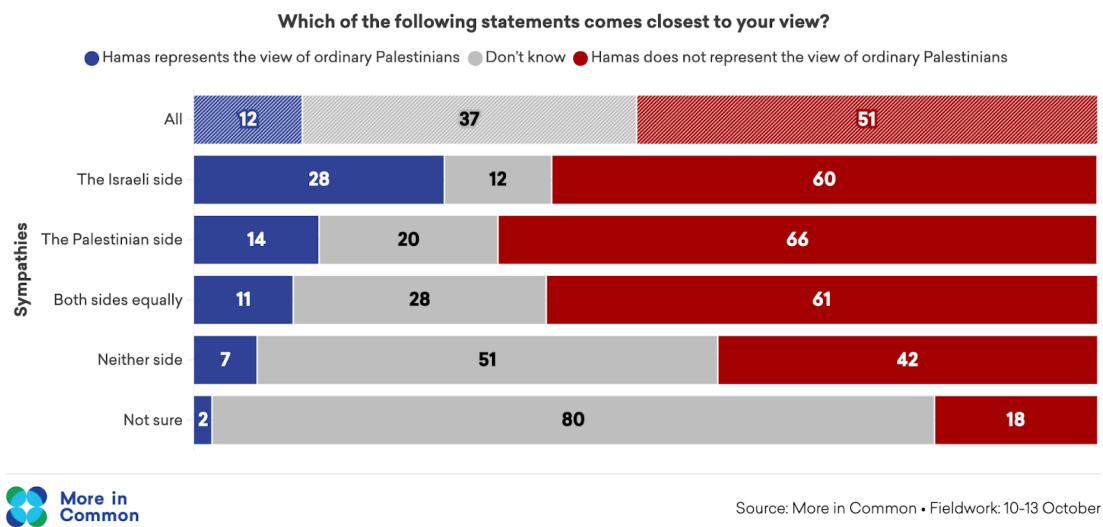
"I just dunno how you would've gone and carried out October the seventh without realising the retaliation you would get on your fellow country men and -women and just in any sane brain cannot understand why you would go and do that, because they must have known the retaliation, what the retaliation must have been. So it is just evil at its worst, isn't it?" Kirsty, Established Liberal, St Albans

"I think the Gazan people, they're not the terrorists, obviously the whole terrorist organisation who have created all the bad against Israel, they're awful. But the actual people, that's why I would slightly side with them. They're not rich, they haven't got much money, they've literally got nothing. Now Israel's a rich country with, I find myself feeling much more sorry for them, "Katie, Angmering, Traditional Conservative

While a majority of both those who sympathise with Israel and those who sympathise with Palestine have a negative view of Hamas, there is a slight difference: 90 per cent of those who support Israel have a negative view of Hamas, whereas 67 per cent of Palestine-supports say this. However just 11 per cent of those who are more sympathetic to the Palestinian side of the argument have a positive view about Hamas.

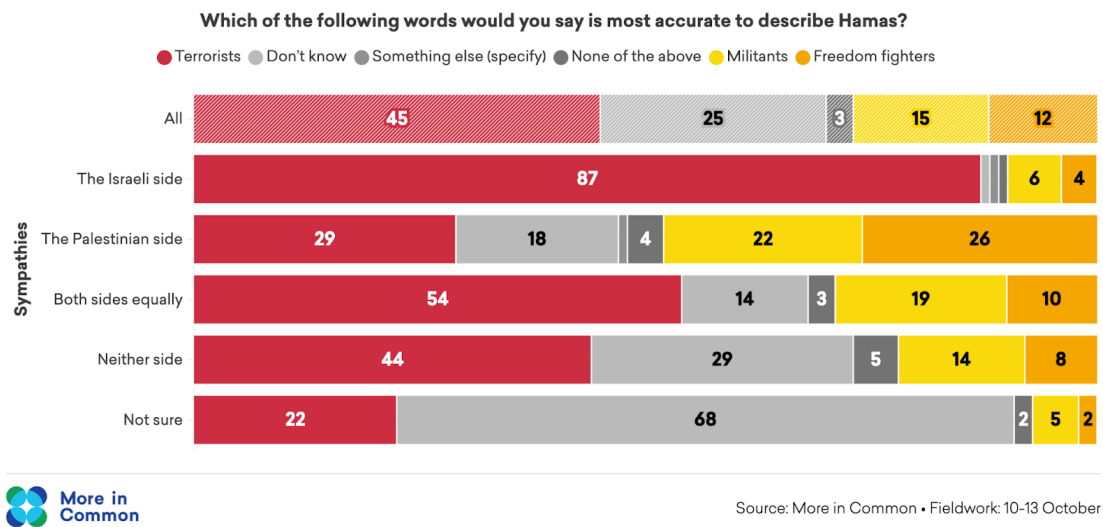


As with Israel and the Israeli Government, Britons distinguish sharply between Hamas and ordinary Palestinians. While 63 per cent have a negative view of Hamas just 13 per cent have a negative view of Palestinian citizens. In fact, only 12 per cent think that Hamas represents the views of ordinary Palestinians, and this view is shared both by those who sympathise more with Israel and Palestine.

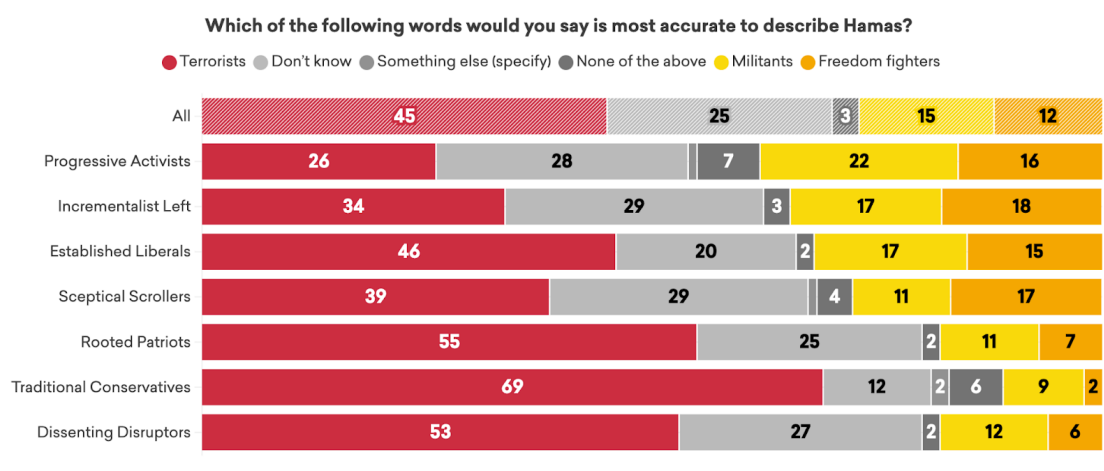


Britons are more likely to refer to Hamas as terrorists than any other word tested, although it is notable that fewer than half of Britons would use the word terrorist and more than a tenth (12 per cent) describe Hamas as freedom fighters. (These numbers are unchanged since November 2023).

This view is very different among those who sympathise more with Palestine. This group are more likely to call Hamas terrorists than anything else, although the difference is very small: 29 per cent of them describe Hamas as terrorists compared to 26 per cent who prefer to call them freedom fighters and 22 per cent who call them militants.



Progressive Activists are also significantly less likely to use the word ‘terrorist’ to describe Hamas since the start of the conflict. In November 2023, 40 per cent of Progressive Activists thought terrorists was the most appropriate word to describe the group – this has now fallen to just 26 per cent. This has not been driven by a rise in Progressive Activists calling Hamas freedom fighters or militants (a rise of 2 percentage points since November 2023), but instead most of this change is due to the fact that Progressive Activists are now much more likely to answer “don’t know” or “none of the above” to this question.



Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

Attitudes to Israel

While most Britons sympathise with the need for Israel to defend themselves, take on Hamas, free Israeli hostages, Britons are often highly critical with how the Israeli Government has behaved in this conflict. Just 12 per cent of Britons say they have a positive view of the Israeli Government and only 7 per cent say Israel’s military activity in Gaza has been completely proportionate.

“I think they’ve come to a stage now where, after the October [attack] they’ve come to a stage thinking, well this can happen again next week. So this is the time to sort it out, sort it out now, otherwise it’s going to go over and over and over again.” Jason, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

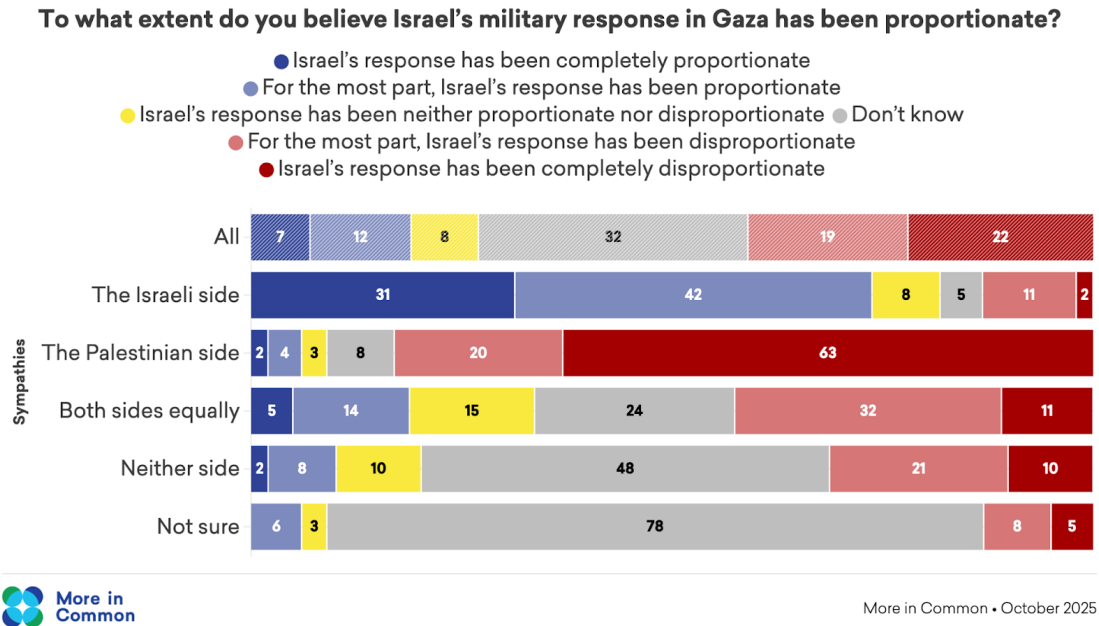
“I dunno what they’re getting out of it either. I mean I get their narrative is destroying this terrorist organisation, which I’m absolutely in support of, but what’s the end goal? Because you’re not going to kill every single last one of them unless you put a nuclear bomb on it. But then obviously you’re killing completely millions of innocent people.

So I don't know what their end goal is. It just seems bizarre." Mark, Dissenting Disruptor, Leeds

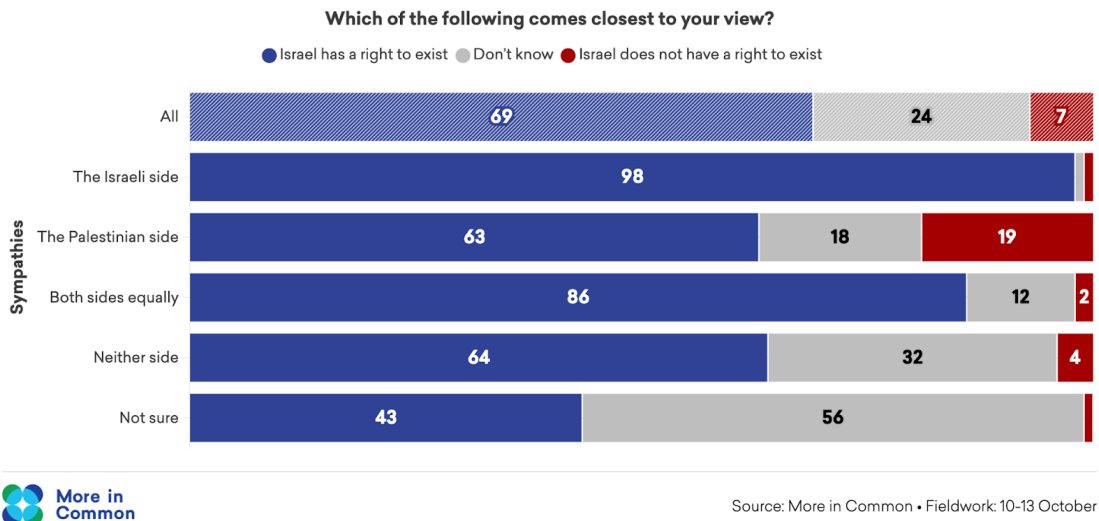
"So I take the view that every nation has a right to defend itself. You have to kind of think Israel was the victim of a terrorist attack In October 7th and they have a right to defend themselves. They also have a duty not to let their own citizens be victims of terrorist attacks. That's number one on their list of protecting their citizens. But collateral damage on the side of Gaza is well known that Hamas are hiding in hospitals, masks, schools and that's where they're making their base of operations. They're hiding amongst the people. Now what Israel could have done is just done nothing, just let them continue to maybe attack more Israelis and then kill their own citizens but they chose not to. They're going to protect their own citizens and put them first." Louis, Dissenting Disruptor, Brixton

"I know that many people, there are many people in Israel and many Jewish people who do disagree with what's going on right now. And I think a lot of them, I had some friends as well who faced a lot of criticism for being Jewish or Israeli or half Israeli because people tended to group them into the same group and pick sides when overall war is war, it's a bad thing." Jade, Established Liberal. St Albans

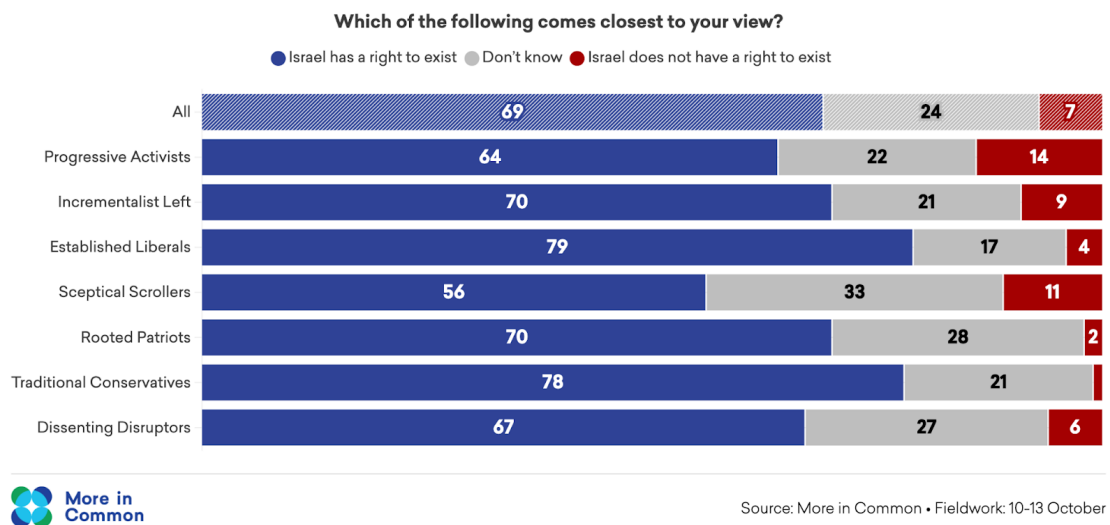
That said, Britons are more divided on this last point. 63 of Palestine supporters per cent think Israel has been completely disproportionate, and a further 20 per cent think they have been mostly disproportionate. In contrast, 31 per cent of Israel supporters think Israel has been completely proportionate, and a further 42 per cent think they have been mostly proportionate.



For most Britons, criticism of the Israeli Government does not extend to criticism of the founding philosophy or existence of the State of Israel. 69 per cent of Britons say Israel has a right to exist and just seven per cent say it does not – a majority hold this belief across all seven segments and across different groups regardless of their wider sympathies in the conflict.

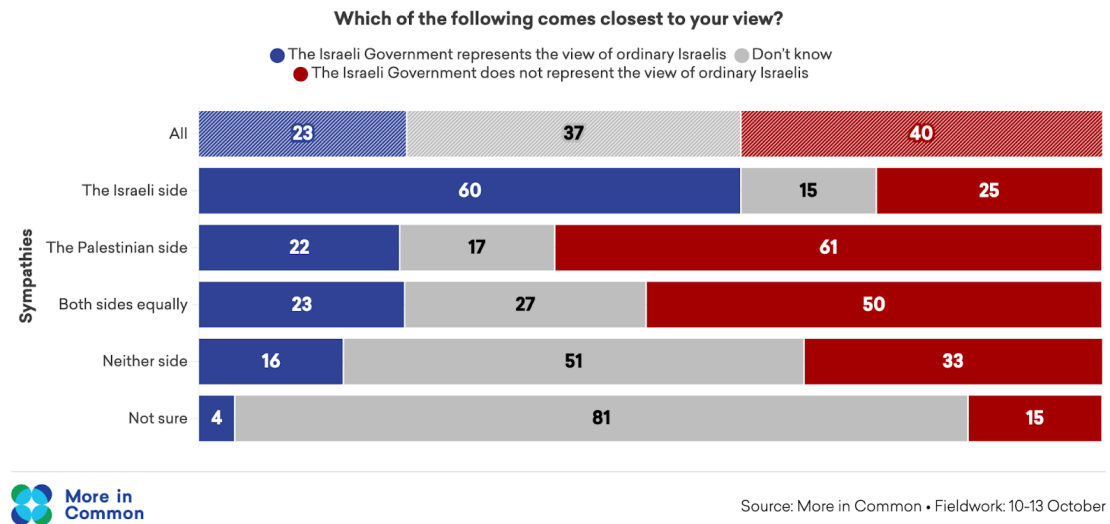


Only 19 per cent of those who sympathise more with the Palestinian side in the conflict say Israel does not have a right to exist, and 14 per cent of Progressive Activists say the same . In both cases they are much more likely to say that Israel does have a right to exist – at 63 per cent and 64 per cent respectively.



Despite their support for the state of Israel, Britons more engaged with the conflict tend to hold a negative view of Israel's current administration led by Benjamin Netanyahu - just 23 per cent of Britons think that the Israeli Government represents the view of ordinary Israelis, and 40 per cent think they do not. However those who describe themselves as pro-Israel are much more likely to sympathise with the current Israeli Government, with six in ten saying it does represent the views of ordinary Israelis.

"I mean, I do think personally that [Netanyahu] might have extended the war to more than what it should have been. I think the fact that they weren't allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza, though there was thought of a famine was quite awful. I think they probably should have allowed some sort of just aid for families' children, but I do understand that they obviously wanted the hostages back and it's difficult to manage, but it should have been solved earlier." Esther



In general, the British public are deeply concerned about the conflict and blame many of the actors involved for the loss of life and suffering in both Israel and Gaza. However, the war in Gaza has shaped British public opinion beyond just the attitudes to these actors in the Middle East. Many of the most pronounced changes in public opinion are about groups closer to home. Over the last two years of the conflict, the situation in the Middle East has changed how Britons feel about each other, and deepened some tensions between Britain's Jewish and Muslim communities. These dynamics are explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: How the conflict has changed what Britons think about each other

In the two years since Hamas' terrorist attack on October 7th, and over the course of Israel's invasion of Gaza, the conflict has shaped not just how Britons view the world but how they perceive one another.

It is wrong to say that Britain is a nation deeply divided into two camps - pro-Israel and pro-Palestine. As discussed, most Britons simply do not see the conflict in such a binary way. However, over the last two years, the views of smaller groups of Britons (particularly those who do place themselves into one of those two camps) have hardened. In some cases, those who sympathise most strongly with one side or another have changed their perception of others as a result, and at its most extreme, this has led to acts of hatred and prejudice.

The most notable form of this has been the rise in antisemitism in Britain over the last two years. Data from the Community Safety Trust has found reports of antisemitism at record levels, and this most visibly culminated in the deadly antisemitic terror attack at Heaton Park synagogue in Manchester in October. It is clear a small minority of those who sympathise with the Palestinian side of the conflict have chosen to blame people who have no control over the war, and made prejudiced assumptions about the Jewish community's responsibilities for the actions of the Israeli Government. As a result, Jews in the UK have been targeted, sometimes with deadly consequences and many more have felt less safe in their country as a result.

"I saw actually a synagogue near my house in Leeds. There was security guards outside on a Sunday, I can't remember what day it was, but there was security guards outside the grounds clearly from the Manchester attack. And it's just sad to see really. Obviously it's sad to see on both sides. These religions shouldn't feel attacked. They should be able to just go about the business in a safe manner. But the rising tensions in the UK, it just seems to be getting worse and worse." Mark, Dissenting Disruptor, Leeds

At the same time, police-recorded hate crime statistics show record increases in anti-Muslim hate across the UK. While much of this rise stems from broader anti-Muslim prejudice rather than Gaza directly, some figures on the far right such as Tommy Robinson have adopted pro-Israel messaging, drawing the Gaza conflict (about which many Britons hold no strong views) into more emotionally charged debates about migration, identity and multiculturalism. All of this has led to many

Muslims in the UK feeling less safe or welcome in the UK and made navigating debates around integration, extremism and identity even more fraught and difficult to navigate.

The impact of the war in Gaza on Britain's Jewish and Muslim communities is well documented, however the conflict has also done much to pull Britons apart in other ways. This chapter begins by exploring evidence that people with strong views on the conflict are starting to feel more negatively about the motives of people on the opposing side with polarisation making it harder to discuss the conflict in good faith.

A hardening of views

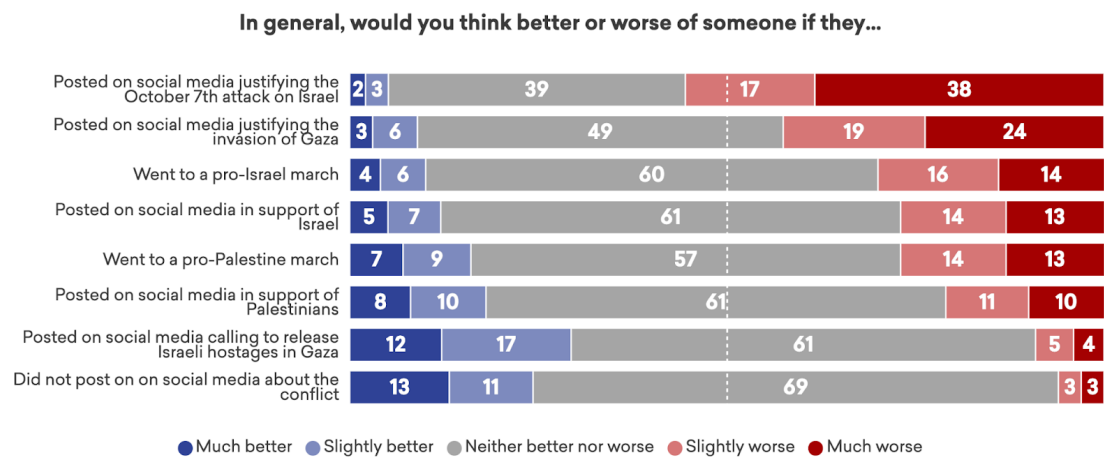
Over the course of the conflict, a small minority of Britons have become more negative in their attitudes to Jews and Muslims here in the UK. Debates about the conflict have also become more heated and hate crimes have become more common. In all of this, a terror attack at a synagogue has killed two Jews, mosques have been set on fire, and Jews and Muslims around the country have had to change their behaviours and security practices in response. As protest about the conflict has become more heated, the tactics and language has become more incendiary: a pro-Palestine group has been proscribed as a terrorist organisation after vandalising military equipment and hundreds of people have been arrested for supporting them, and an Israeli football team's fans have been blocked from visiting a match for fear of unrest. High profile discussions and debate about the conflict have become harder to navigate as they become more deeply polarised, and well-meaning attempts to try and talk about the conflict across divides can easily erupt into shouting matches.

The extent to which a minority has polarised not just in their views about the conflict, but in their feelings towards those with the opposite opinion is a clear example of affective polarisation: where people with opposing views don't just disagree, but then start to actively dislike and distrust one another. Affective polarisation leads to people viewing those on the other side with suspicion or contempt. It would be inaccurate to say that the general public have become extremely polarised on the Israel-Palestine conflict, but small groups of highly engaged people have, and there this polarisation at an elite or engaged level can have outsized consequences for social cohesion more broadly.

Affective polarisation manifests in several ways: a hardening of views on the conflict itself and an unwillingness to empathise with the other side of the argument, fragmentation into consuming different news sources (and therefore a lack of shared truth), and an unwillingness to engage in good-faith debate with those who hold opposing views.

One way to explore the extent of this polarisation is to ask people whether their views of others would change based on content they saw them post on social media about the

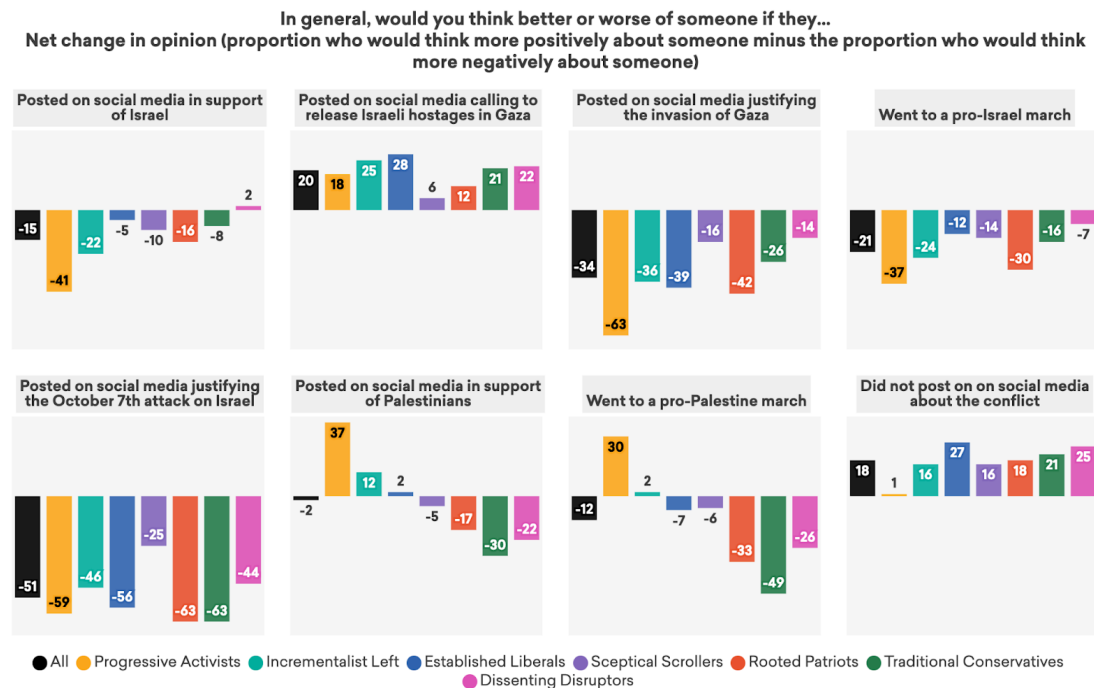
conflict. Across the seven segments, Britons tend to feel more positive about people who post on social media calling for the Israeli hostages in Gaza to be released and significantly more negative about people who posted on social media justifying the October 7th attack on Israel.



More in Common • September 2025

However, there are some issues where taking a public stance on the conflict particularly shifts how more engaged Britons' views about each other. For example, 61 per cent of Britons say they would think no differently about someone who posted on social media in support of Israel. However, this number falls to 50 per cent among Progressive Activists, 45 per cent of whom say they would think less of someone who posted on social media in support of Israel.

At the same time, 18 per cent of Britons would think better of someone who posted on social media in support of Palestine, but this rises to 41 per cent among Progressive Activists.



Source: More in Common • Fieldwork 4-6 October

Similar dynamics are repeated among conservative-leaning segments. Traditional Conservatives do not particularly feel more warmly towards people who post about Israel online, however they do say they would feel significantly more negative about people who post on social media in support of Palestine or who went to a pro-Palestine march. In fact, Progressive Activists are the only segment where people feel clearly more positive than negative about people who go to pro-Palestine marches.

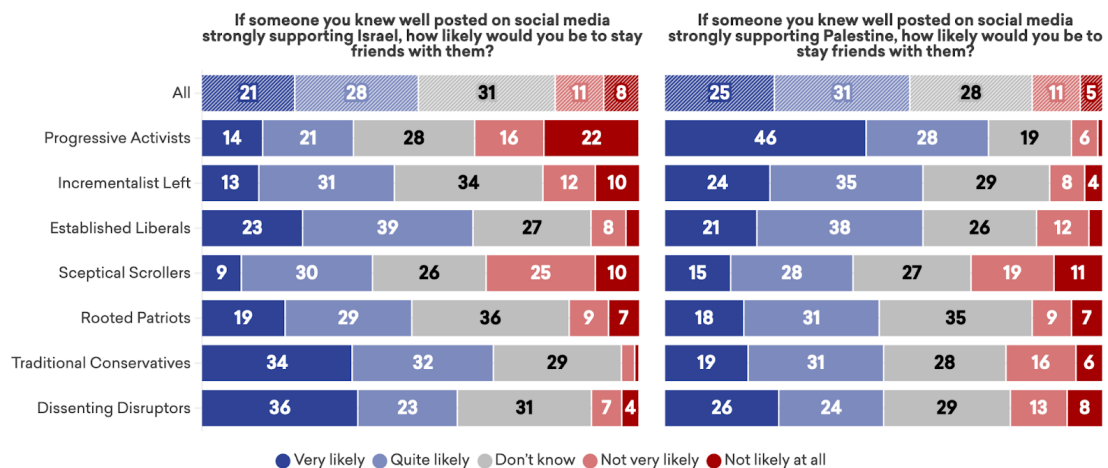
Importantly, for the majority of the public, a person taking any of these actions does not meaningfully affect their overall view of them. The majority of people say they would think no differently of someone who posted on social media on either side of the conflict or went to marches on either side of the conflict. So far, affective polarisation has been mostly constrained to a minority of Britons who have strong views on the conflict themselves. That said, this minority who do hold the strongest views on the conflict and are also most likely to engage with debates on the conflict. Their relatively outsized voice in discussions about the conflict, coupled with in some cases that dislike of people with the opposing view, makes it very hard for other segments with more balancing or bridging perspectives to express their views (see Chapter 3).

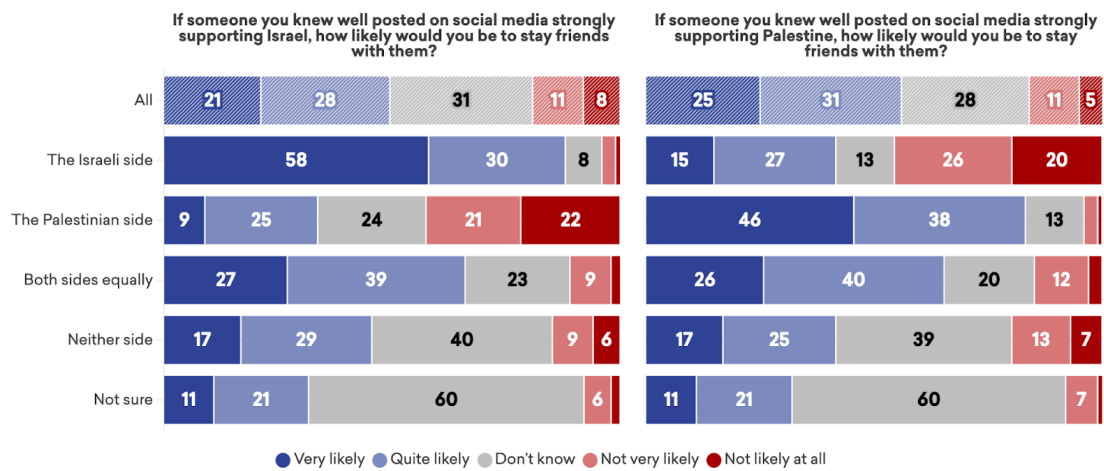
Even though it affects only a minority of Britons, this affective polarisation around the Israel-Palestine conflict matters for several reasons.

First, it is creating fractures in communities, workplaces, and friendship groups. In focus groups, participants across the political spectrum spoke about relationships that had been strained or even curtailed over disagreements about the conflict. When people begin to see those with different views on the conflict as somehow morally compromised or even complicit in atrocities, it becomes much harder to maintain relationships across these divides.

I've got my birthday coming up. My best friend's Jewish, we've been friends for 30 odd years. I have a friend who's said she's very pro Palestine. I said, can we just all go out for dinner and my Jewish friend doesn't want to be with my Palestine friend. You not just come out and not talk about it and just come out and be people. I have to disinvite both of them and they're both really close friends. It's just crazy that it's becoming like that. Katie, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

This is born out in the data. 19 per cent of Britons say they might consider stopping being friends with someone if they saw them posting on social media strongly supporting Israel – a number that rises to 38 per cent among Progressive Activists, who are more likely than not to say they would stop being friends with someone who posted on social media in support of Israel. In total, 43 per cent of those who sympathise more with Palestine say they would consider ending a friendship with someone who posted on social media in support of Israel, and 46 per cent of those who sympathise more with Israel would consider ending a friendship with someone who posted on social media in support of Palestine.





Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

Second, this polarisation is having a stifling effect on the opinions of the majority of Britons who do not strongly affiliate with either side. As discussed earlier, many Britons already feel uncomfortable discussing the conflict, worried about saying the wrong thing or being misunderstood. When they see more engaged individuals treating any expression of sympathy for one side as grounds for social opprobrium, this discomfort intensifies. The result is that nuanced, exploratory conversations where people have the space to develop their views or make mistakes without fear of backlash become rarer, and the public discourse is increasingly dominated by the most polarised and increasingly negative voices, creating a false impression that Britain is more divided on this issue than it actually is.

"I wouldn't feel comfortable with it, to be honest. I can't give an opinion on Garza because I don't know enough about it to be quite honest." Walter, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

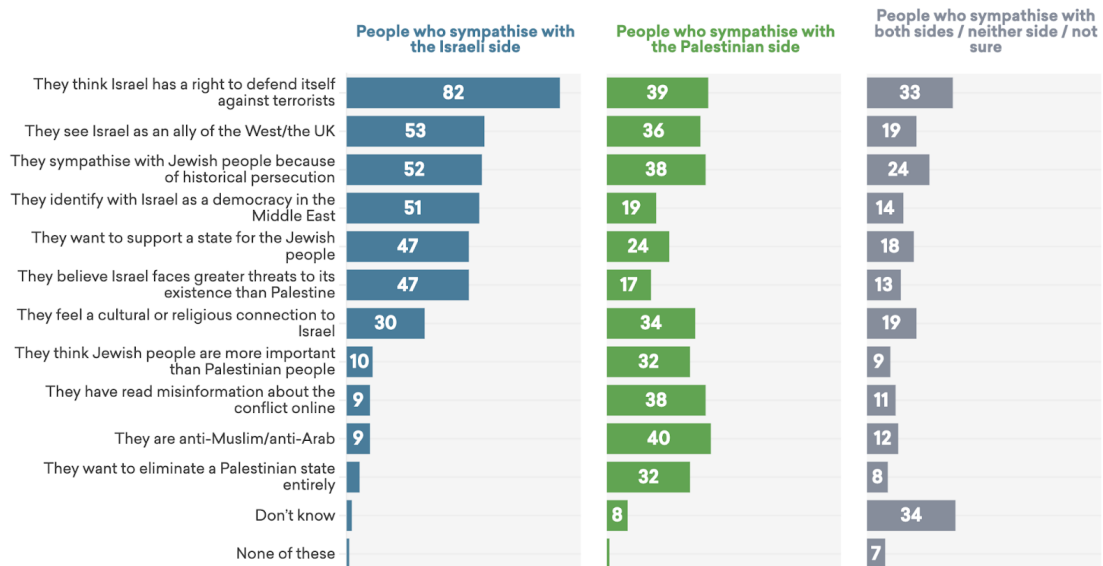
"I just feel out of my depth, so I don't talk about it" Katy, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

Third, the polarisation is making it harder to build coalitions around shared concerns. As we have seen, there are in fact many points of broad agreement across the British public: horror at civilian suffering, a desire for the war to end, concern about the safety of both Jewish and Muslim communities in Britain. But when people sort - or feel they are being sorted - into opposing camps based on the conflict, these shared concerns become harder to tackle together. Someone who is deeply worried about antisemitism may find themselves reluctant to speak out about anti-Muslim hatred if they associate that cause with people who hold pro-Palestine views they find objectionable, and vice versa.

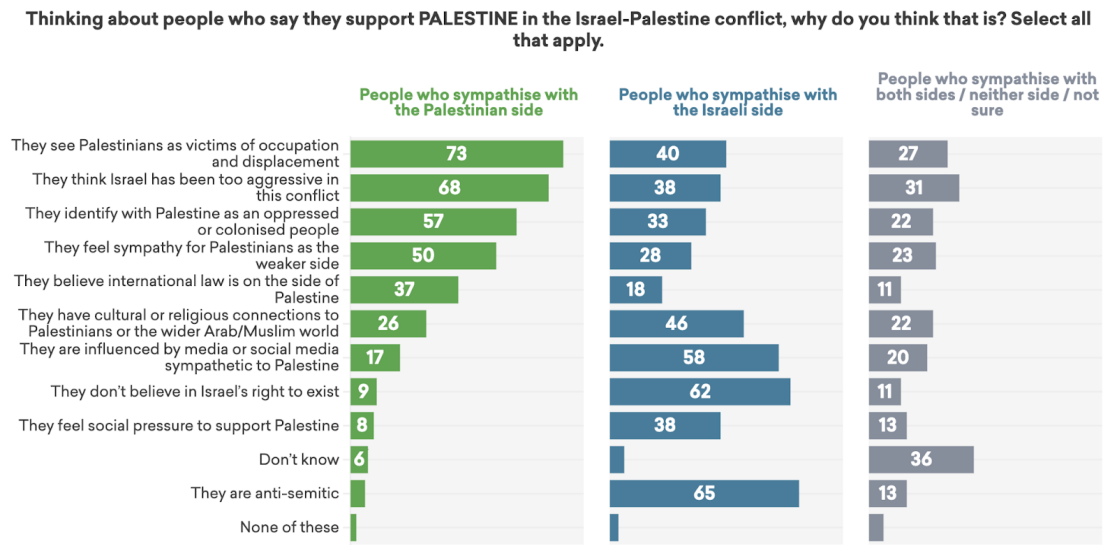
This dynamic is self-reinforcing as people with strong views on one side of the conflict cluster together in social circles, with their news consumption and their online communities exposed to an increasingly one-sided view in its portrayal of the character and motivations of those on the other side. Progressive Activists may come to believe that anyone who expresses sympathy for Israel is indifferent to Palestinian suffering or even racist, while Traditional Conservatives may assume that anyone at a pro-Palestine march is antisemitic or even a terrorist sympathiser. These caricatures bear little resemblance to the complex reality of most people's views, but once established they are difficult to dislodge.

In fact, those who explicitly identify with a particular side of the conflict often misunderstand the motives of those who take the opposing point of view. For example, those who sympathise more with Israel are most likely to do so because they think Israel has a right to defend itself against terrorism, they see Israel as an ally of the West, and because they sympathise with the historic persecution of Jewish people. In contrast, those on the pro-Palestine side are much more likely to believe that people support Israel because they are anti-Muslim or anti-Arab, or because they have read misinformation about the conflict online.

Thinking about people who say they support ISRAEL in the Israel-Palestine conflict, why do you think that is? Select all that apply.



These dynamics are equally pronounced in the other direction. People overwhelmingly say they sympathise with the Palestinian side because they see Palestinians as victims of occupation and think Israel has been too aggressive in the conflict. But those on the pro-Israel side are more likely to say it is because they are antisemitic, they don't believe in Israel's right to exist, or because they are influenced by social media.



Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 24-27 October

In both instances, when people with strong views on the conflict do not believe that people are arriving at opposing views in good faith, it makes it harder for them to discuss the conflict as equals with mutual respect.

The tragedy is that this polarisation is occurring over a conflict where most Britons do not hold extreme views. The majority simply want the suffering to end and for communities in Britain to live together peacefully. But as the most engaged voices pull further apart, they risk dragging the rest of the country with them. Mutual suspicion and an inability to have constructive conversations have the potential to spread further, on the one hand making it impossible to discuss an issue that clearly matters to many people, but on the other leading to real division and threatening the safety of minority communities in the UK.

Is Britain a safe place for Jews?

Over the last two years, many British Jews have felt targeted by other Britons for their beliefs about Israel, or for what other people assume are their beliefs, or simply for being Jewish. Official statistics show that reports of antisemitism have reached record highs, but the conflict has had an impact on the Jewish community far beyond these statistics alone.

For example, in focus groups with young British Jews, many talk about how they had changed their behaviour for fear of being victims of antisemitic attacks in public.

"At the minute it's a bit scary because right there was this terror attack in my city a few weeks ago ... Especially when I go to town, I can't wear my kippah, I just won't do it because it's just, there's so many antisemitic people in town...It does feel unsafe still."
Zac, Manchester

"I remember when the October 7th started I couldn't wear my leggings for my school uniform. I had my school logo up the leg and they sent emails out to my parents and everyone saying that they shouldn't wear stuff showing the logo of your school. And also when the Manchester attack happened when I was walking back from shul, I was walking back with my friends and they took their kippot and tzitzit off and we were walking really fast and really cautious of all our surroundings" Hannah

"I've got a magen david, but I'll never wear it out, not because I don't want to or I'm not proud of it, it's just to me it's just not worth someone coming up to you on the wrong day, on the wrong street." Chris

"I don't ever wear my chai necklace because I don't feel comfortable wearing it. I feel like it's not worth it in case I walk into the wrong person." Louis

It is clear from conversations with members of the Jewish community - particularly young Jews - that the impacts of the conflict go beyond concerns about personal safety. For many young Jews, there are concerns about the social implications of their friends knowing they are Jewish. Moreover, the public response to the conflict has changed how they feel about their own Jewish identity.

"Since the war started, I haven't told any of my friends that I've got an ethnic Jewish background. So in my A-Level chemistry class I'm sitting next to a girl who's a Muslim. I wouldn't ever tell her because I personally, I don't really want the backlash of it. I don't want her to immediately identify me with a war which isn't related to me." Esther

"I feel like I kind of get sort of a backlash for being Jewish, even though I'm not religious or anything. People, if I tell them now, people just automatically start saying like, oh, well you've done this and you've done that, and I'm just like, no. They just kind of blame me for it, but I've not done anything." Talya

Some Jews have not personally witnessed this antisemitism but have heard about it from friends in their community and witnessed alarming rises in antisemitism online, on social media in particular. The visibility that social media brings to antisemitism increases this feeling of threat and is more likely to lead Jews to feeling they need to change their behaviour in response.

While many Britons don't personally know any Jews closely, the rise in antisemitism has become a top concern for the British public more widely. Six in ten Britons now say they worry about a rise in antisemitism as a result of the conflict - a slight increase since November 2023 over a time when total worries about the conflict have fallen slightly.

Over the last two years, some Britons who are not Jewish have also heard more and more stories from Jewish friends, neighbours or colleagues about how much more difficult a normal life has become for them as a result of the conflict. Again, some of these are related to physical safety, but there are other impacts, particularly social isolation and the backlash that Jewish people face as a result of people blaming the conflict on them.

"One of my girlfriend's closest friends is Israeli and she's, she'll never tell anyone where she's from. She lies about where she's from. And I just think it's really sad that she should be able, even if I might disagree with her views, she should be able to express her opinion and at least be able to say to people where she's from.." Jack, Progressive Activist

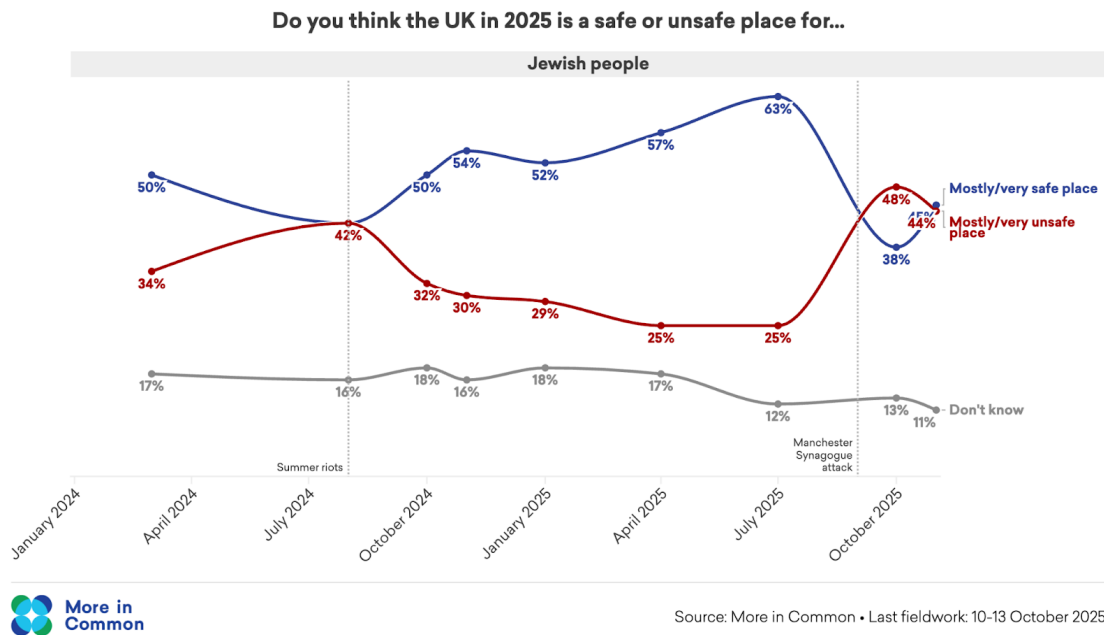
"I've got a Jewish friend. It's not quite related to, I mean it is ultimately related to the Gaza situation, but her husband and son go and do security duty at their local synagogue and she said that they've done it for a long time. Having security at synagogues isn't a new thing particularly, but her son and husband have done it for a long time. But she said she was actually really scared when they went to go and do the security duty after the attack in Manchester the other day." Tina, Established Liberal, St Albans

"And I know that many people, there are many people in Israel and many Jewish people who do disagree with what's going on right now. And I think a lot of them, I had some friends as well who face a lot of criticism for being Jewish or Israeli because people tend to group them into the same group and pick sides when overall war is war, it's a bad thing" Jade, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

This has become more visible for both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities in Britain following the attacks on Heaton Park synagogue in Manchester. In almost every focus group – talking to people with a range of views on the conflict itself in the weeks after the attack – this violence came up as among the most worrying consequences of the conflict to participants regardless of their views about the situation in Gaza.

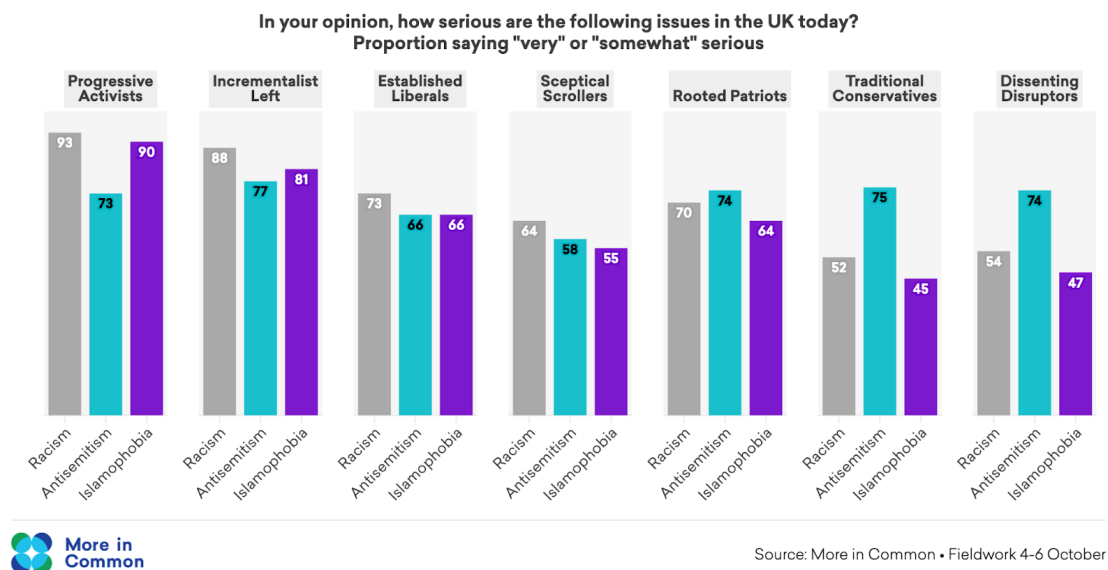
"It's sort of spilling over from what's happening in Gaza and all. It's sad. It's really, really sad. The Jews in living in Manchester, the Jewish community living in Manchester, they've been there for years and years and years and they're all good people They're peaceful people." Marcus, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

Indeed, in the weeks following the attacks, the proportion of people saying that Britain is an unsafe place for Jews rose to the highest levels we have recorded and, for the first time, more Britons said that Britain is an unsafe than safe place for Jewish people.



Similarly, previous More in Common research has found that antisemitic attitudes while a minority are held by significant numbers of people across the UK. 8 per cent of Britons, for example, admit to having a negative attitude towards Jews, rising among younger age groups. 19 per cent of Britons say it is “probably true” that “Jews have too much power in the media”; 28 per cent say “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to this country” and 22 per cent say “Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust”.

Despite this, concerns about antisemitism are not felt equally. Progressive Activists are much more concerned about all forms of discrimination than other segments, but they are notable for a big gap between how much they are concerned about antisemitism compared to Islamophobia - 90 per cent of Progressive Activists say Islamophobia is a serious issue, compared to 73 per cent who say antisemitism is a serious issue. In more right-leaning segments the pattern is reversed, with people significantly more concerned about antisemitism than Islamophobia.



In focus groups with Jewish participants - particularly those who felt closer to Israel - it was clear that some now felt that progressives were no longer their natural allies as a result of the conflict in Gaza. For some, this sense of political abandonment had pushed them to reconsider their broader political worldview, moving toward more right-wing politics not because of a fundamental shift in their other values, but because they felt these spaces were more welcoming to their concerns about antisemitism and were more likely to 'have their back' on these concerns.

This turn could in of itself drive further polarisation. First, it risks creating a self-fulfilling prophecy where the left becomes less engaged with Jewish concerns precisely because Jewish people are perceived as having "moved right," further entrenching the divide. Second, it can leave Jewish people who hold progressive views on other issues feeling politically homeless and unable to find solidarity on the left but uncomfortable with many right-wing positions.

In some cases, this political alienation of progressive Jews could have more extreme consequences - while most Jews in focus groups had no time for Tommy Robinson and thought he was an awful ally for the Jewish community, for a few participants Robinson's comments on Israel had made people who had little time for his broader world view, see him as one of the few people willing to stand up for the community when it was under attack. There is a risk that other figures with extreme, prejudice views, use the conflict and the threat of anti-semitism as a way to legitimise their views or to build greater support among a community that feels under attack.

"I think it puts us in a really hard position because I agree, I don't think he's a good ambassador, if you will. But there's not many people with a big following who support us. So it's that awkward middle ground of it's like, okay, someone's speaking up in support of us, but everything else he stands for really makes it look like, well, if he's

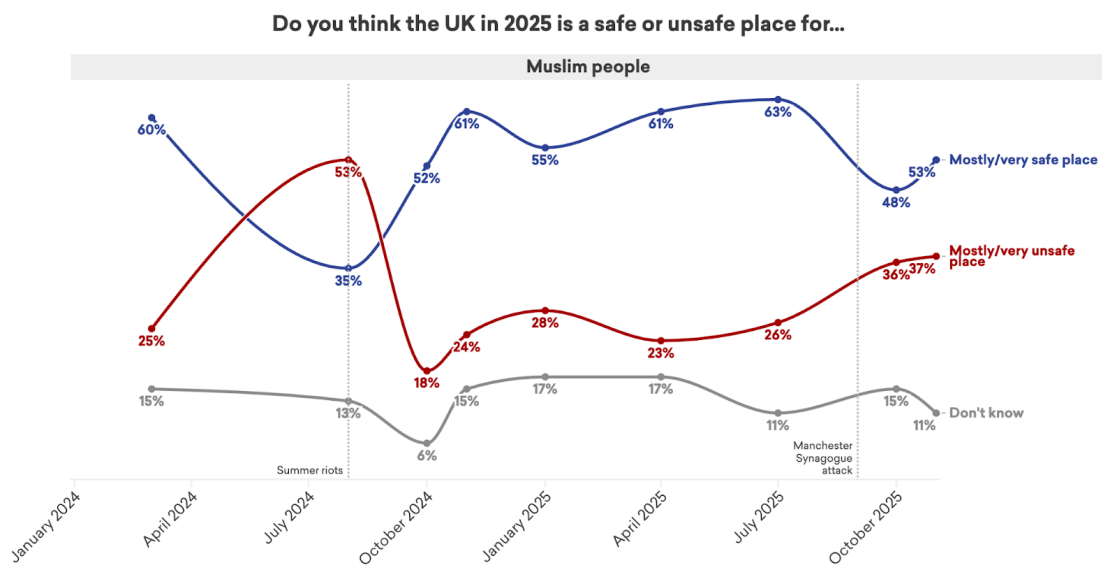
standing up for us, then surely we are as bad as some people think. So that thing where we don't want to slam him because not many people are supporting us, but it's a balancing act" Emily

"Yeah, I think he's great. He's representing the British non-Jewish people that actually do support Israel as a state, which I think is brilliant. He's got a platform and he's using it to voice as support for Israel, which I definitely stand for." Zac

To tackle this progressive movements will have to demonstrate that antisemitism is treated with the same urgency as other forms of discrimination. By engaging seriously with Jewish concerns and ensuring that Jewish people feel welcome and supported, progressives can help prevent antisemitism from becoming a partisan issue. The danger is that Jewish people feel forced into certain, and in a minority of cases extreme, political camps not by conviction, but by feeling that only one side of the political spectrum will protect them from hatred.

What can be done about anti-Muslim hate?

At the same time, the proportion saying that Britain is an unsafe place for Muslims has risen since the start of the conflict - spiking in August 2024 during the Summer riots at 53 per cent. As of Autumn 2025, 37 per cent of Britons say that the UK is unsafe Muslims.



Official statistics also show that anti-Muslim hate crime has also spiked, and in focus groups, Muslims talk about how they feel blamed whenever an Islamist terrorist attack happens and how anti-migrant protests in recent months have made them feel less safe in Britain.

"The discrimination against Muslim people has been around for a long time and some of the terrorist acts that have happened in the past have done Muslim people no favours in terms of perceptions about them and it doesn't seem to go away. If things [in Gaza] resolve, it might take the heat out of the argument. I dunno that we'll ever get rid of it. I dunno what the solution is to fully get rid of that level of discrimination." Tina, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

"Yeah, so for me, where I'm based in Southampton, it's an unfortunate position to be in, but the EDL are really prominent where I live. Tommy Robinson a couple of weeks ago made a video about how there was going to be a march in Southampton and literally streets away from where my house is. Not that I'm scared of the EDL or anything, but it's weird not being able to, having to consider that, oh there's a protest happening so should.... But in my area that's the most prominent thing because people, especially in, there's an area that's pretty diverse and obviously there are a lot of Uber drivers uber cars that are in that area. My dad's a taxi driver so the EDL went around and smashing those Uber cars. Now obviously the police can't prove that but with everybody knows it was an EDL and it's just really upsetting knowing that I'm pretty sure they're the only earners in the family, kids to feed, wife to feed whatever" Sonia, Southampton

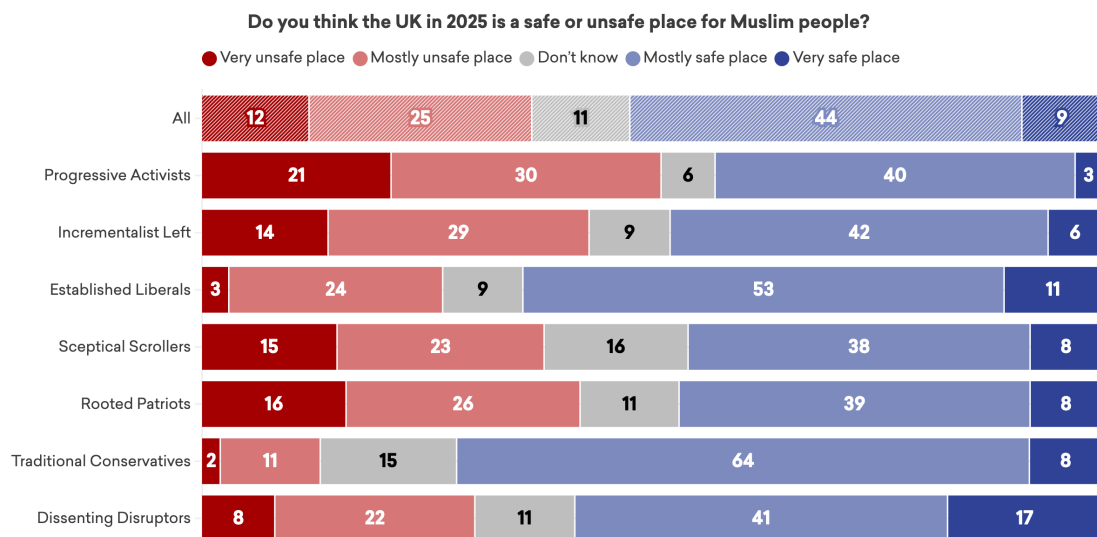
"If I drive slightly towards Essex, you were scared because you could see every lamp post there's a flag. Just before the protest we had about 50 flags. Now I drove there about two weeks ago. I think it's about 300 flags on every road now. And we as care providers it's hard for us to go and do visits at home places because of uncertainty what we expecting and mostly if you see a place where you see the flag there it could be just supporting England as a football, but we don't know now whether it's political or sports related" Salim, South London

"I feel that Muslims, wherever they are in the world, anything happens, they get blamed for everything. It's like that teenager who killed those children in [Southport]. I think last year or the year before because he had appeared or whatever, he was considered a Muslim and there were riots and everything. It turned out that he wasn't a Muslim" Talya, Birmingham

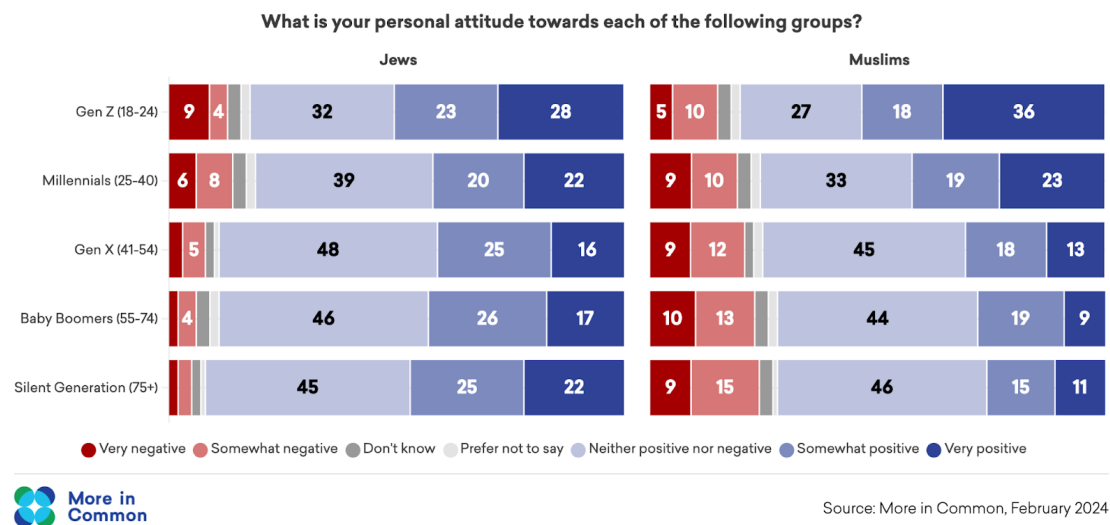
Gaza is clearly not the primary driver of a rise in anti-muslim hate in the UK - negative attitudes towards Muslims are also entangled with growing concern

about immigration in Britain and specific issues such as the grooming gangs made up largely of men of Pakistani heritage.

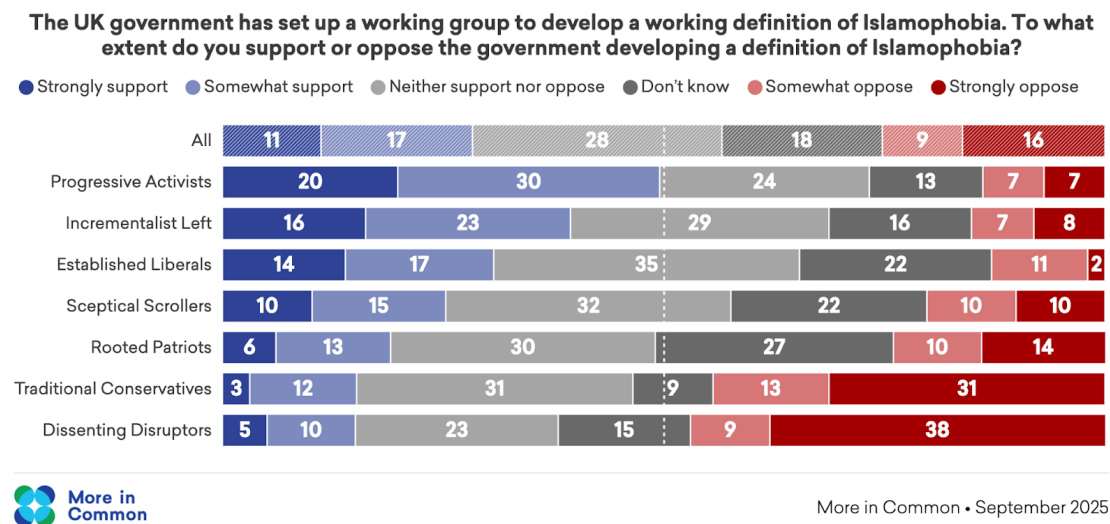
As with antisemitism, there are significant divides in terms of who considers anti-Muslim hate to be a serious problem. Whereas a majority of Progressive Activists, the Incrementalist Left, Established Liberals, Sceptical Scrollers and Rooted Patriots say that Islamophobia is a serious problem in Britain, that falls to 45 per cent of Traditional Conservatives and 47 per cent of Dissenting Disruptors. Similarly - in part because they have considerably lower threat perception than other segments - Established Liberals are much less likely to say that Britain is unsafe for Muslims compared to other segments.



At the same time, 21 per cent of Britons admit to having a negative view of Muslims. Unlike with Jewish people, where negative views are more common among younger people, it is older Britons who are the most negative about Muslims (although across every age group, people are more likely to say they have a negative view of Muslims than Jews). Other More in Common research has found that 11 per cent of Britons strongly believe that Islam is a religion of violence, 13 per cent strongly believe that Muslims can never be as British as other British people, 16 per cent believe British Muslims do not hold British values, and 21 per cent strongly believe that British Muslims are more loyal to other Muslim countries than to Britain.



In order to address rising anti-Muslim prejudice, the Government is currently creating a formal definition of Islamophobia. This is a proposal that a plurality of Britons (46 per cent) are indifferent to, with 28 per cent supporting and 25 per cent opposing.



Among Traditional Conservatives and Dissenting Disruptors, who together make up 28 per cent of the population, opposition to an Islamophobia definition is considerably stronger. Many in these segments believe that the Government already takes the concerns of Muslims too seriously, and fear that formalising a definition of Islamophobia would be weaponised to shut down legitimate debate about Islam, immigration, or integration.

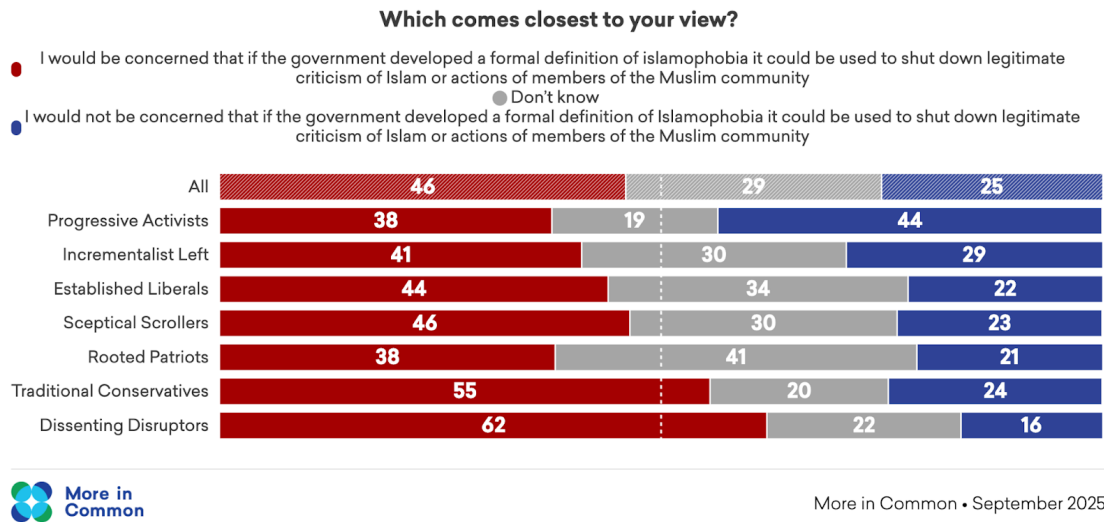
In focus groups, some participants from these two segments expressed concerns that an official definition would create a "chilling effect" on discussions about issues they consider important.

"There isn't freedom of speech anymore, is there? I think people lose their jobs and everything for having an opinion. People are scared of saying anything now, but freedom of speech has gone... Even if it's a balanced opinion that's not attacking anyone. It's still wrong." Katie, Traditional Conservative, Angmering

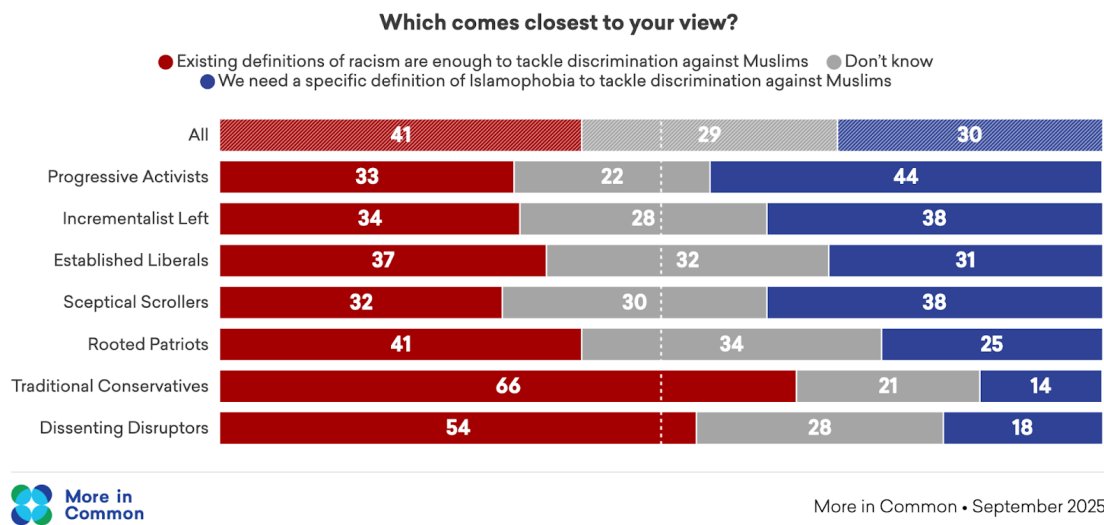
"Yeah, I said that earlier as well. People are afraid to put their opinion forward for fear of retribution, of being labelled a racist." Marcus, Dissenting Disruptor, Angmering

These concerns reflect genuine debates about where legitimate criticism ends and prejudice begins. Different proposed definitions of Islamophobia have included language that some worry could capture criticism of Islamic practices or beliefs, while others argue that without a clear definition, anti-Muslim hatred goes unrecognised and unaddressed.

This disagreement over definitions and boundaries has made it difficult to build consensus around basic protective measures. When some segments view any government action in this space as potential overreach or as privileging Muslim concerns, and others see inaction as a failure to protect vulnerable communities, finding common ground on practical steps becomes extremely challenging. A plurality of the public and a majority of Traditional Conservatives and Dissenting Disruptors say they worry a definition of Islamophobia would, for example, be used to shut down genuine criticism of Islam or actions of some members of the Muslim community making it harder for any government definition of anti-muslim hate to have backing across the political spectrum.



This creates a vicious cycle. Progressive Activists and the Incrementalist Left, who are most likely to see anti-Muslim hate as a serious problem requiring urgent action, become frustrated by what they see as the Government's failure to act decisively. Muslim communities, in particular, are more likely to grow sceptical about mainstream politicians and sense they do not represent their concerns (the most visible effect of this being the rise of 'Gaza independent' candidates at the last election). Meanwhile, Traditional Conservatives and Dissenting Disruptors interpret any government action in this space as confirmation of their belief that Muslim communities receive special treatment or are being used to restrict free expression. The majority of Traditional Conservatives and Dissenting Disruptors think that existing definitions of racism are enough to tackle discrimination against Muslims and that a new definition will prevent, for instance, tackling issues around the grooming gangs.



This polarisation means that individuals experiencing hatred and fear become secondary to the political battle being fought over them. There are good arguments for and against the creation of a formal definition of Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hate, but if these arguments become collateral damage in a broader conflicts about immigration, integration, and national identity: issues that, while related, are distinct from the fundamental question of how to best protect people from being targeted because of their political beliefs.

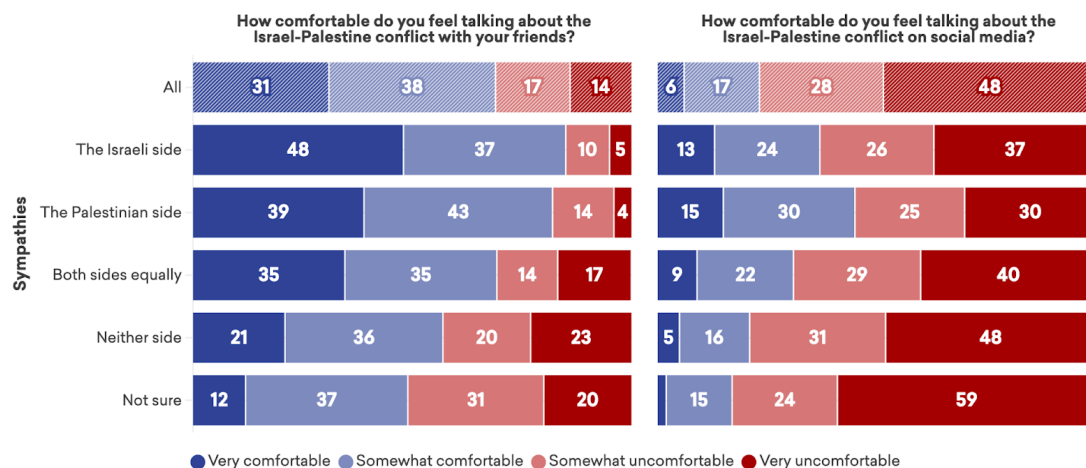
Building public consent and tackling polarisation on this issue will require finding ways to address anti-Muslim prejudice that make clear that criticism of religion and religious practice, however offensive that criticism might be, is not what is being targeted, but that prejudice and discrimination aimed at individuals because of their faith is. Similarly, it needs to be possible to hard truths that enable action to be taken to bring justice on issues such as the grooming gangs, and to prevent these crimes from being able to happen again - without instigating the deliberate targeting of individuals because of their faith. It may also require others concerned about anti-Muslim hate to engage more directly with the concerns about free speech and integration raised by those who are sceptical of their proposals, rather than dismissing these concerns as inherently bigoted.

Chapter 3: Talking (and shouting) about the conflict

Who feels comfortable talking about the conflict?

As those with strong views on the conflict have become more polarised in their positions, this has left a large group of the country who feel uncomfortable talking about the conflict. For example, 83 per cent of those who take a side say they feel comfortable talking about it with their family, but this is just 59 per cent for those who don't take a side.

The difference is even more stark on social media. Here, 42 per cent of those who take a side on the conflict feel comfortable talking about it, compared to just 23 per cent of those who do not take a side.



People feel uncomfortable talking about the conflict for a number of reasons - some worry about saying the wrong thing and causing offense, others worry about people with strong views on the conflict attacking or thinking worse of them, and many simply think they just don't know enough about the conflict to express an informed view.

The result of this is that people who do not hold strong views on the conflict often hold back, and are disproportionately not heard in discussions about the conflict. For example, despite only making up 40 per cent of the country, people who take

a side in the conflict account for 71 per cent of people who have posted about the conflict on social media.

"I think it's a very difficult subject to raise actually because people have such polarised views and we've lost the art of debate, haven't we? So it's really difficult to talk about something in a intelligent moderated having all sides of the argument given way. I think we've lost that as a nation." Kirsty, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

"Hand on heart. I don't fully know all the correct information to be able to do an educated post particularly. And there is fear that if you put an opinion out there and it's wrong or somebody comes, people go for everyone on social media, that's just how it's right. And I wouldn't want to put something out there and have be attacked and then have to justify that position because I don't know enough to be able to get into a very heated argument about it." Tina, Established Liberal, St Albans

"I've had to unfollow a couple of people from work that kept putting on social media, like videos of children that had been bombed and stuff like that. I had to completely unfollow them. I've not told them I've unfollowed them, but I just couldn't deal with watching, seeing that on my phone" Rachel, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"What's difficult as well with social media the is people who are looking to post, it's either all pro-Palestine or all pro-Israel and I've got Jewish friends that post that and I've got people pro-Palestine friends that post that way. But the posts are never about the people that are affected. It's like they're all taking sides, but none of the posts are about caring about trying to live in this situation. That's what I find hard about social media, I can't interact with those kind of post." Katie, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"I think it's quite dangerous actually, social media for things like this. People, they have an opinion on everything and if you don't conform with what they believe in, they become a hater and it's just really frightening" Tina, Traditional Conservative, Braintree

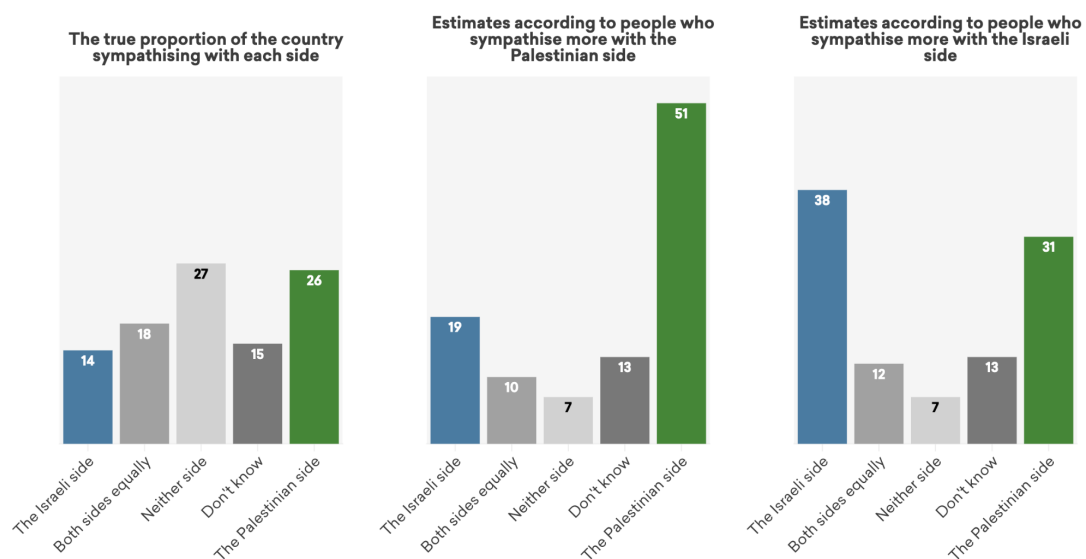
"I find it quite hard to form an opinion because my partner, his family are Jewish and they've actually got friends in Israel and he's very, very opinionated on it, so I don't really follow it as much. I don't want to say the wrong thing and put my foot in, because I know that he feels very strongly" Lucy, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"I know there is definitely fear for posting things on social media because I'd say that I try to keep quite balanced and try and view things from both sides as best as I can. But I know if I were to put out certain views that I would definitely, I can potentially lose some friends because of it and potentially be quite ostracised in my university" Jade, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

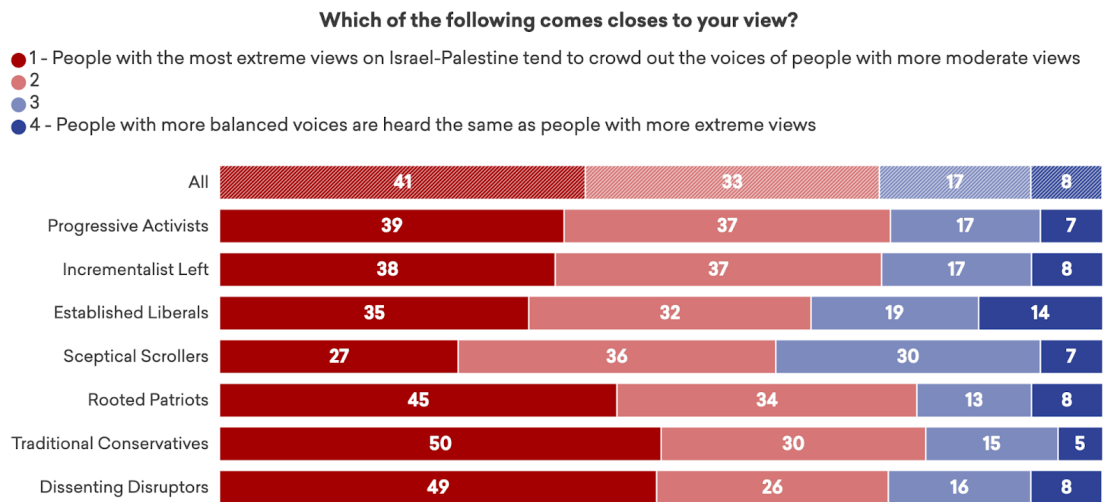
Those who sympathise more with the Palestinian side are even more overrepresented on social media: they make up 26 per cent of the country but 53 per cent of the people who have posted on social media about the conflict.

In fact, this has led to an over estimation in the public mind as to how many people take a side. While 38 per cent of the public take a side in the conflict, the average Briton think that almost half (47 per cent) do. They estimate that 18 per cent sympathise more with the Israeli side and 29 per cent with the Palestinian side.

Among those who do take a view on the conflict, these numbers are even more pronounced: those who sympathise with Palestine more think 51 per cent of the country do the same; those who sympathise with Israel more think that 38 per cent of the country do the same. That people overestimate how common their own viewpoints are is likely evidence that people are filtering into their own echo chambers on social media. In fact only 14 per cent of the country actively support Israel and 26 per cent Palestine.



As a result, it is not surprising that nearly three quarters of Britons think those with the most extreme views on the conflict crowd out the voices of people with more moderate views. These numbers have remained unchanged since we first tracked this question in November 2023.



Source: More in Common • 10-13 October 2025

"I think it's really worrying. I think social media is also worrying because you've got a lot of people that are giving their opinions without any facts on it. I've recently come off social media because it scared the life out of me. People that I thought were really close friends and they've got such very different views compared to me, so I try to avoid looking altogether, so I do just stay off social media and news wherever possible." Abby, Rooted Patriot. Stockport

I wouldn't know what to speak about. Does that make sense? It is a conversation that's a little bit out of my depth ... There's no right and there's no wrong as well" Rachel, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

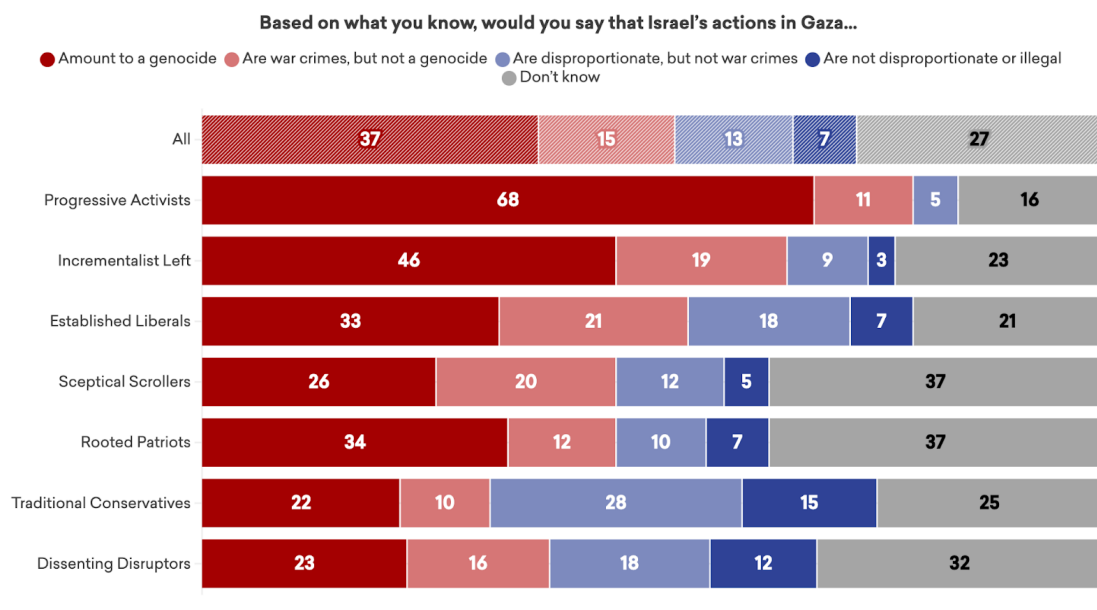
Talking over each other

As people with strong views of the conflict have become more entrenched in their positions, the language they use to describe the conflict has become more emotive, and in some cases words have taken on emotional connotations broader than the literal meaning. AS with many things associated with the conflict, those on either side of the debate have very different perspectives on what these words mean. Many words and phrases have become flashpoints for people more engaged in the conflict: words that are seen as neutral or factual for some people can be deeply offensive to others, and those using the words in some cases can't understand why people might be offended by them.

These issues of language do not affect most people in Britain who are not highly engaged in the conflict. However, for those with strong views there are real issues when a term used freely by one side is deeply value-laden or even offensive to the other. This often has the effect of completely shutting down conversation or any hope of constructive debate.

Genocide

A clear example of this is the word ‘genocide’. While many Britons think Israel has acted disproportionately in the conflict, just under four in ten think that this amounts to a genocide. Progressive Activists are much more likely than other segments to say this is the case, and the only segment where a majority say so. The Incrementalist Left are also more likely than average to think that Israel’s actions in Gaza amount to a genocide, although this view is held by less than half of this segment.



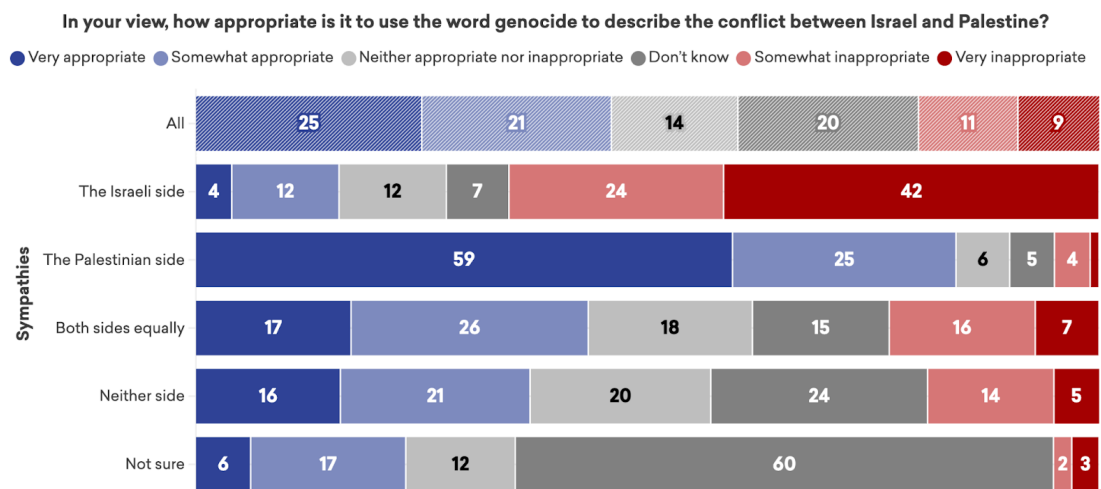
Asked why they think a genocide is occurring, the most common answers reference the high level of civilian casualties, the restriction or cut off of aid, and the rhetoric of some hard line Israeli ministers. Some Progressive Activists also bring up rulings and judgements from international organisations and academics.

"It's one hundred percent genocide. What's going on? There's no other word for it. I think it's beyond the point of war now because war suggests that the other country's fighting back, but it is not the same level. So at this point now it is a genocide. There is no other word for it" Sonia, Southampton

Despite this, for many others, the term genocide is inappropriate and for some offensive. Many of these people think that Israel's actions have been disproportionate in Gaza and are troubled by the impact of the war on civilians. However, they fear that the word 'genocide' has been used too freely, is overly emotive, and they see it as unhelpful in the path to finding practical solutions to the conflict. They fear in particular that the term evokes troubling symmetry with The Holocaust, and that accusing Jewish people of committing a genocide in Gaza in response to a terrorist attack that killed over a thousand of their own people is both offensive and makes it harder for both sides to approach discussions in good faith.

"I think it's important to see both sides. I think when it's a war you get very attached to one side. I think you need to kind of stay focused on the whole thing, so it's important to note October the seventh was the biggest attack against Jews since the Holocaust, but then people start throwing around the word genocide quite freely and whilst I don't agree that bombing for two years by Israel is the solution to that, I think still people throwing around terms that maybe they're not as educated on can kind of skew other people's view of that." Suzy

In total, 59 per cent of those who sympathise more with Palestinians think that it is 'very appropriate' to use the word to describe Israel's activity in Gaza, whereas 42 per cent of people who sympathise more with Israel think it is 'very inappropriate'. In this context, the word becomes a flashpoint, shutting down discussion when it is used and immediately making each side distrustful of the other. When people disagree about the term genocide they aren't necessarily disagreeing over the facts of the conflict, but in some cases they simply have different emotive interpretations of when the term genocide is appropriate to use.

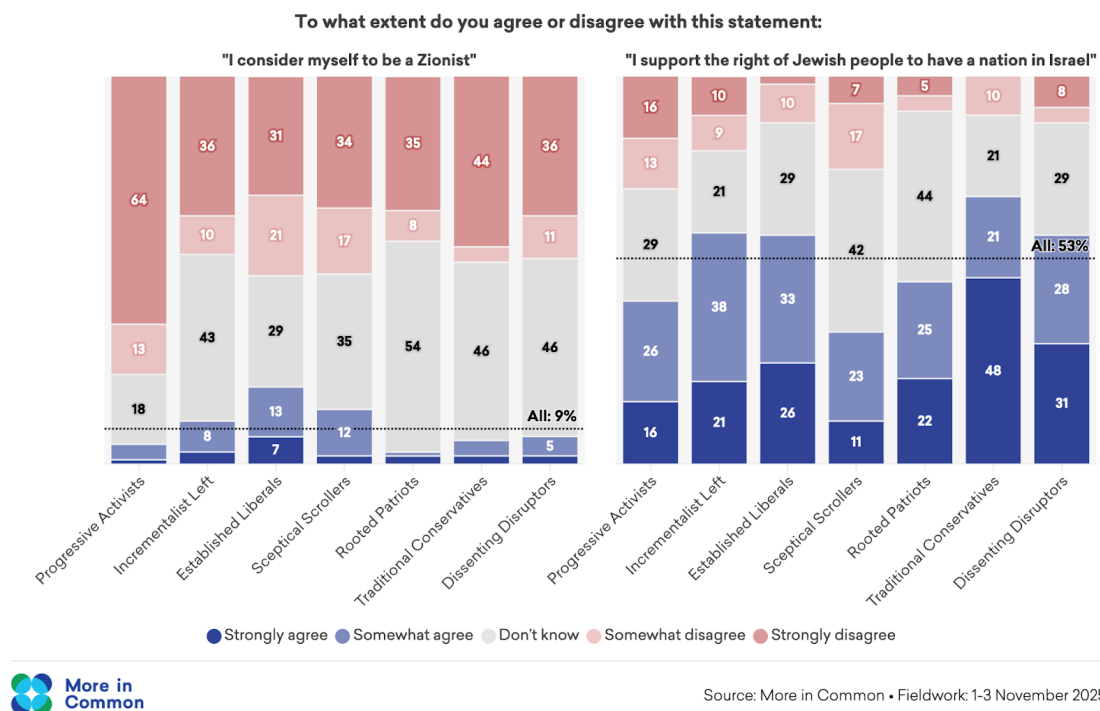


Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

Zionist

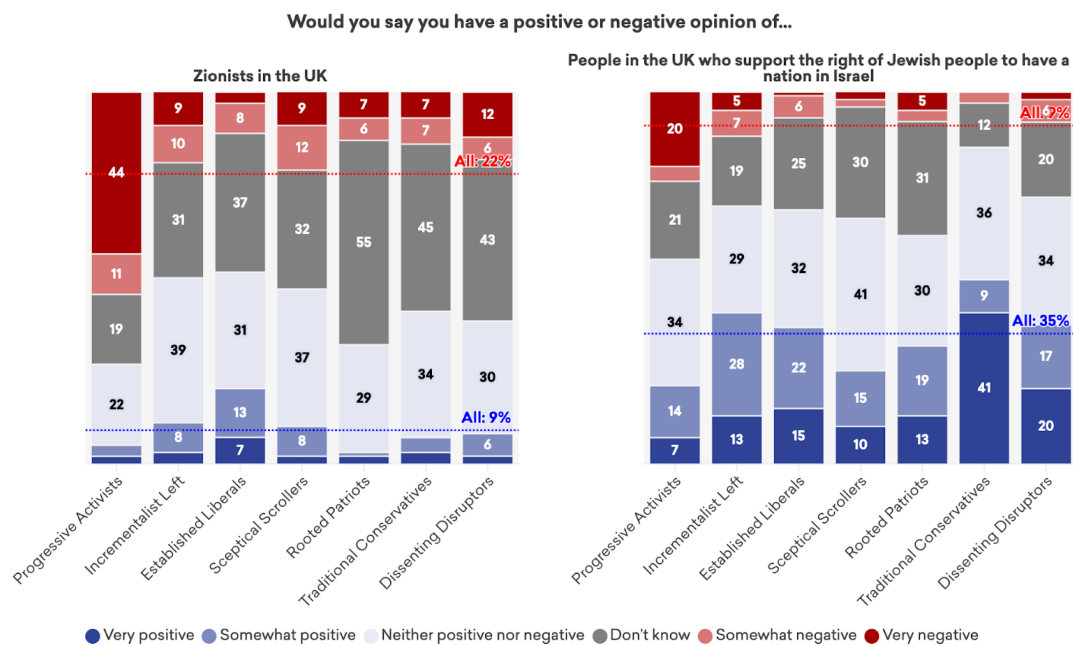
Another word that has become a flash point in conflict is 'zionist'. Britons' understanding of what the term means is limited, and for some people it has become a more value-laden term that means complete support for all actions of the Israeli Government, rather than support for the principle of Jewish self-determination.

This becomes clear when asking Britons whether they themselves identify as a Zionist. In Britain, just 9 per cent of people say that they are a Zionist, even though 53 per cent of the population say they support the right of Jewish people to the Israeli nation. Even though the technical distinction between the definitions of these two terms is minor, it is clear that something about the label 'Zionist' has feelings alienating to some people. For example, Traditional Conservatives are the segment most likely to say they support Jewish people's right to an Israeli State, at 69 per cent, but just 6 per cent of Traditional Conservatives say they are a Zionist. Even among Progressive Activists, of whom just five per cent say they are Zionists, just over four in ten (42 per cent) say they support the right of Jewish people to a nation in Israel, and only 28 per cent disagree.

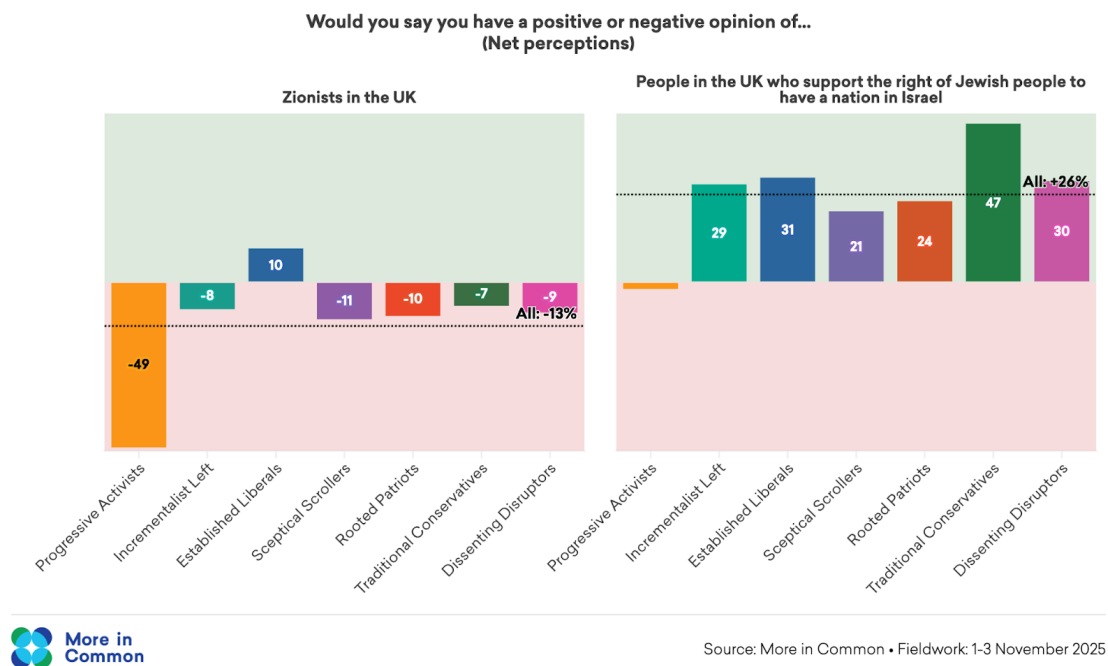


Negative associations with zionism are also clear when asking people what they think of other Britons who identify with that term. In total, 22 per cent of Britons have negative views of zionists in the UK, including 13 per cent who have 'very negative' views. But when asked what they think about people who support Jews' right to self determination, just 9 per cent have a negative view and most Britons (including a majority of every segment) are either positive or neutral about them.

This is even more pronounced for Progressive Activists - they have extremely negative views of zionists in the UK (44 per cent have a 'very negative' view and a further 11 per cent are 'somewhat negative'), however these numbers more than halve when asked about 'people in the UK who support the right of Jewish people to have a nation in Israel'.



All of this suggests that the public's perceptions of Zionism have become detached from its literal meaning. People who brand themselves as Zionists might mean to be communicating that they simply support the principle of Jewish self-determination, but this is far from what other people may hear when they say this. This disconnect makes it easy for conversations to become heated or accusatory very quickly, because people are often responding to what they think the label implies rather than to the person's actual position. As a result, the term itself can introduce misunderstanding and tension into discussions that might otherwise reveal more shared ground than disagreement.



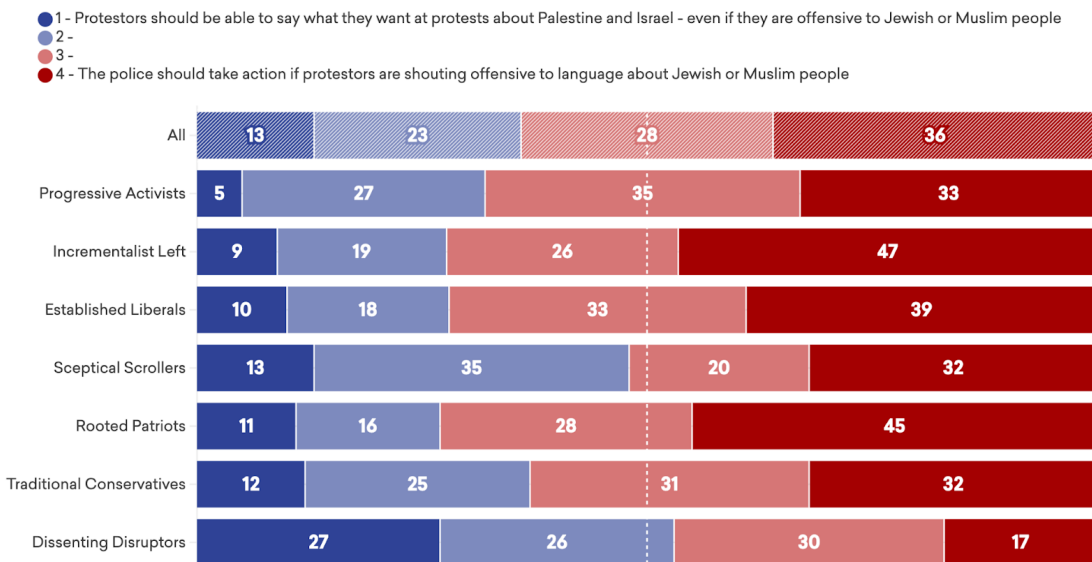
Who gets to protest and how?

One second-order consequence of the war in Gaza has been shifting attitudes to protestors in Britain. As protests about the conflict have been extremely visible throughout the war, many Britons have formed strong views about the appropriateness of both the protestors' actions and the police response. In some ways, this is the most tangible impact of the conflict for many Britons, as many people have either witnessed, sometimes been disrupted by or attended the protests themselves. It is also likely that increased scrutiny over the policing of protest will continue regardless of whether the conflict in Gaza is resolved. High-profile cases relating to pro-Palestine protestors (as well as Just Stop Oil and Unite the Kingdom protestors) have led to a rise in the salience of debates about free speech at protests and opened uneasy questions about who gets to protest and how in Britain today.

When Britons talk about "freedom of speech" in the abstract they tend to articulate opinions which are less absolutist than you might hear in the United States, whose First Amendment has no direct analogue in the UK. However, on the question of Israel and Palestine, and the subsequent protests and method of policing them, the debate in Britain has taken on a slightly higher tempo than normally surrounds free speech discussions in the UK.

The majority of Britons align more with the view that the police should intervene when protests involve offensive language about Muslim or Jewish people, as opposed to thinking all speech is acceptable regardless of how offensive it is. Overall, only one in three (36 per cent) of the public think that protestors should be able to say what they want about Palestine or Israel, regardless of the offence it could cause. This is slightly higher among those who identify as supporting Palestine, at 44 per cent. Similarly, Dissenting Disruptors, who are the most pro-free speech segment, are much more likely than the country as a whole to say that protestors should be able to say what they want even if they are offensive to Muslims and Jews.

Please use the following scale to indicate which of the following comes closest to your view, where 1 means you fully agree with the first statement and 4 means you fully agree with the second statement.

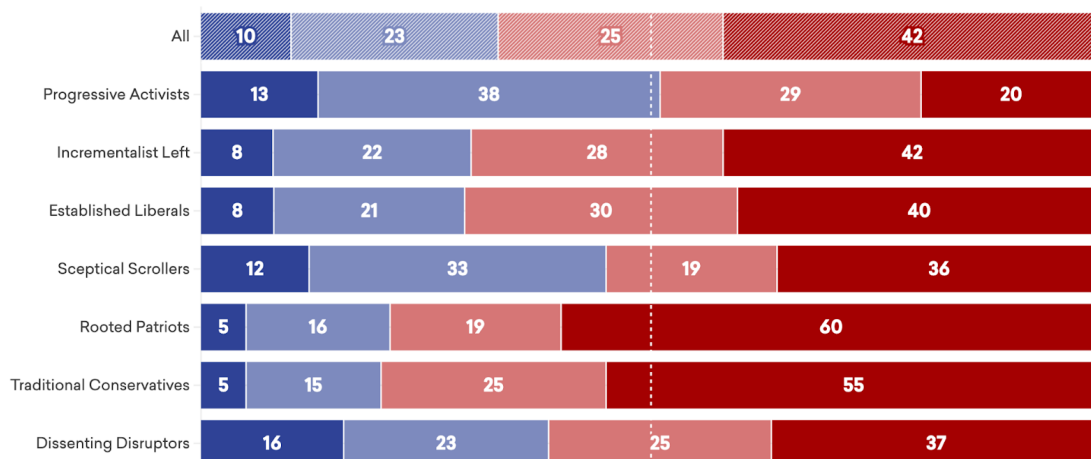


While Britons worry about offensive or hateful language, their main concern with pro-Palestine protests over the last few years has not been what people have been saying, but how disruptive they have been.

Just a third (33 per cent) of Britons think protests should be allowed to go ahead no matter how disruptive they are, whereas two thirds think that some protests are so disruptive they should not be allowed. Progressive Activists are the only segment where a majority think all forms of disruptive protest should be allowed, although notably Sceptical Scrollers and Dissenting Disruptors are also more permissive. The other segments are much less tolerant of disruptive protest - particularly Rooted Patriots and Traditional Conservatives.

Please use the following scale to indicate which of the following comes closest to your view, where 1 means you fully agree with the first statement and 4 means you fully agree with the second statement.

- 1- Protestors should have a right to protest about Palestine and Israel, no matter how disruptive those protests are
- 2 -
- 3 -
- 4 - Some protests are so disruptive that they should not be allowed



More in Common • Fieldwork: 24 - 27 October 2025

In focus groups, Rooted Patriots and Traditional Conservatives explain that their patience is wearing thin with pro-Palestine protestors. This was not necessarily because they did not sympathise with their cause, but simply thought the disruption they were causing was having no impact on the conflict and instead the biggest impact was making other people's lives more difficult in Britain.

"I've frequently experienced pro-Palestine supporters at the football - I'm a Man United season ticket holder. When me and my son are on the way to the games, walking down [there are always protestors]. For me, that's my time with my son where we're going to the game, we're doing a dad and lad thing. I don't want to be talking about that. Because that is going to put a damper on me spending time with my son, or my daughter if she comes to the games. And it's like it's the wrong place and the wrong time." Marcus, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"Yeah, I think they're just antagonising people and when I mean people, I mean the British public. Nobody wants to see these bloody marches in Manchester or London or Birmingham or wherever it may be. It just antagonises people." Walter, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

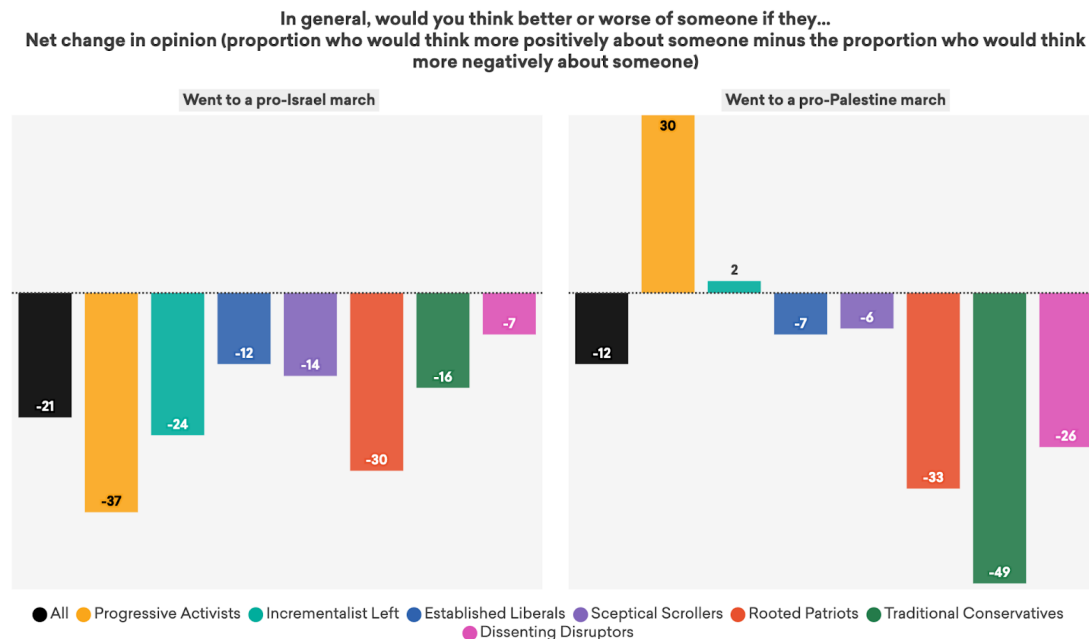
I got stuck on the bridge for an hour and a half because of Palestine marches on New Year's Eve, they'd blocked the entire bridge and we would just be penned in. There were loads of police resources taken away because they're having to monitor these things instead of out on the streets actually patrolling and then catching phone snatchers, stopping muggings because they're having to monitor these bloody marches that cause more problems than they solve." Louis, Dissenting Disruptor, Brixton

I kind of do agree with what's been said. I just think it's a waste of time, like get a job, contribute to society. You're not contributing to society by causing traffic and wasting people's time and chanting things you don't even believe in." Mark, Dissenting Disruptor, Leeds

While Britons support the right to protest about the conflict, that does not necessarily mean they feel warmly about those who protest. 27 per cent of Britons would think worse of someone for going to a pro-Palestine march, and 30 per cent would think worse of someone for going to a pro-Israel march. Given their impatience with disruptive protest, it is not surprising that Rooted Patriots and Traditional Conservatives are the most likely segments to think worse of someone for attending both pro-Israel or pro-Palestine protests, rather than either or.

"You know what about 90% of the people that are on these marches, if you ask them why they're doing it and what actually is going on, they don't even know" Katie, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"I think the majority [of protestors] are virtue signalling and they actually really annoy me. My girlfriend lives near the River Thames, by the London Eye, and there's a Gaza free Palestine camp where there's always people there. They're just sat there drinking coffee, drinking tea, laughing, joking, and they've all got their tents there. They've been there for ages, all dressed up in green and just laughing and joking around. But it's just like, what is that doing? It's like a social gathering and they're piggybacking off quite horrible issues to look cool and to socialise. It's just like if you want to do something, go donate money. I don't see any of them with a thing with a charity pot asking for coins or change. I don't see anything like that, anything that's positive. They're just genuinely sat there drinking tea and coffee, doing nothing. The marches are the same thing. They're all just laughing, joking, having a lovely time... Do they care? No, they don't. The majority do not care. That's the problem. They just love joining the march. Look at me, look what I'm doing on my Saturday, aren't I good." Lewis, Dissenting Disruptor, Brixton



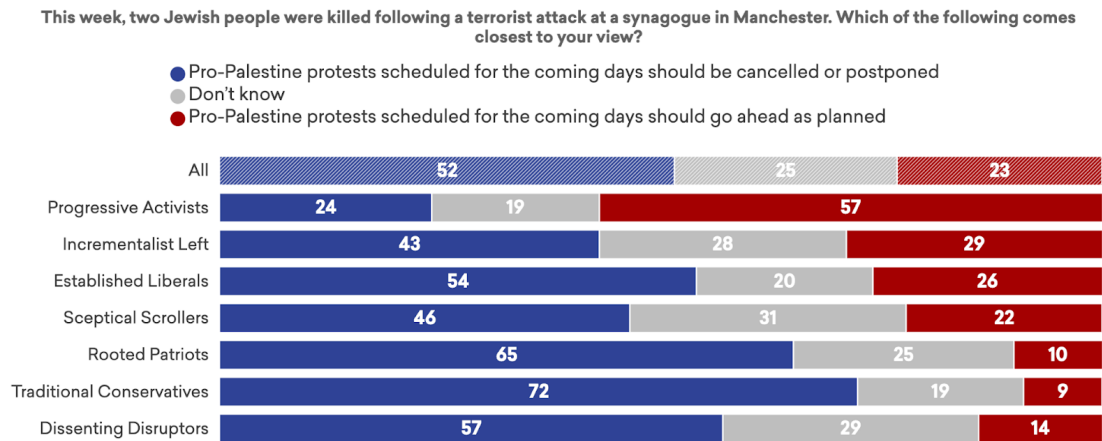
Source: More in Common • Fieldwork 4-6 October

The perceived disruptive nature of protests makes some Britons more supportive of more stringent measures to clamp down on them. In focus groups with Rooted Patriots, Traditional Conservatives, and Dissenting Disruptors, there was little pushback to the idea that protests should be banned or restricted if they are too disruptive.

"I think we should just ban them. If you said to every protestor, you've got to pay 25 50 quids to go on one of these marches, no one will go. You pay for what it's going to cost to actually attend this march, no will be there." Katie, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

"It's a waste of the taxpayer's money as well because you've got all the police resources. You've then got more of a strain on the NHS as well because people are subsequently going to be injured or taken from it unnecessarily" Marcus, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

This debate on protests came to a head following the antisemitic terror attack on Heaton Park Synagogue in Manchester. The protests planned for the following week were a test-case for how willing the British public were to tolerate protests that were seen by many to be offensive, tasteless or disruptive in the light of the attack. In this case, the majority (52 per cent) thought that the protest should be cancelled or postponed, and just 23 per cent thought they should go ahead. This was a view held across the British public, with the exception of Progressive Activists, 57 per cent of whom felt the protests should go ahead.



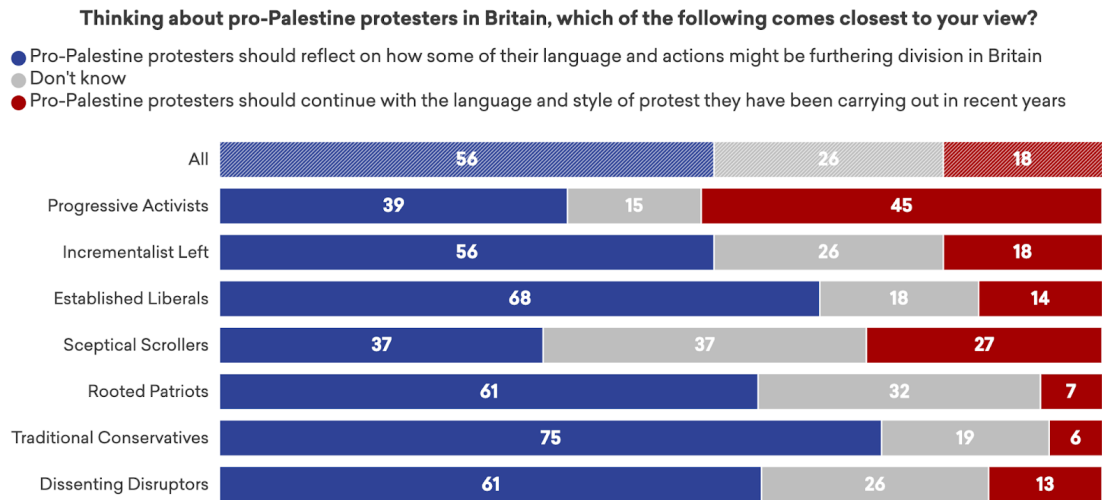
Source: More in Common • Fieldwork 4-6 October 2025

Of course, the majority of people planning to go to these protests would have been Progressive Activists who are much more permissive themselves of disruptive protest. By protesting at such a sensitive time, which was seen by others as being disrespectful to the victims of the attack, it risks entrenching opposition rather than building support for their cause. This gulf between Progressive Activists' attitudes and those of the broader public alienates potential sympathizers who might otherwise be persuaded by more sensitive timing or less confrontational tactics.

"What does that tell you about the individuals that are on the protest?... It's been a time of crisis after the attack. What does that tell you about them? Individuals going on the march?" Marcus, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

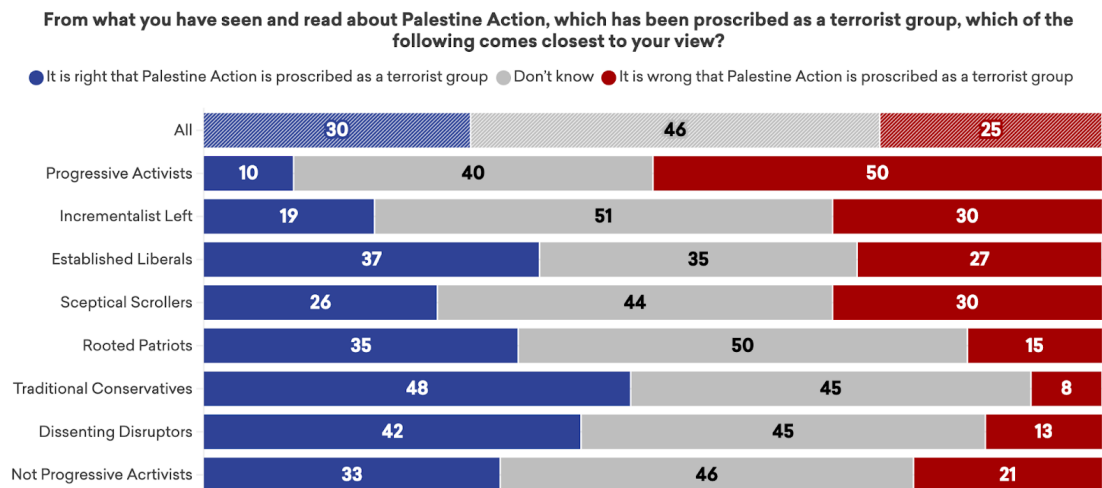
"It would've been insensitive to do it [Protest] on October the seventh on that day when 1200 people were killed completely unprovoked. Yeah, it would've been insensitive to do it on that day, I think." Joanna, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

Indeed, the majority of the public think that pro-Palestine protestors should reflect on how some of their language and actions might be furthering division in Britain: just 18 per cent think that they should carry on with their current approach. Even among those who sympathise more with the Palestinian side of the conflict, less than half (46 per cent) think the protestors should carry on with the language and style of their protests.



Source: More in Common • 4-6 October 2025

Debates about free speech on the Israel-Palestine conflict have attracted greater attention since Palestine Action was declared a terrorist group after some of their members vandalised an RAF facility. However, this is not a debate that has cut through to a large swathe of the public: 46 per cent say they do not know whether it was the right or wrong decision to proscribe Palestine Action.



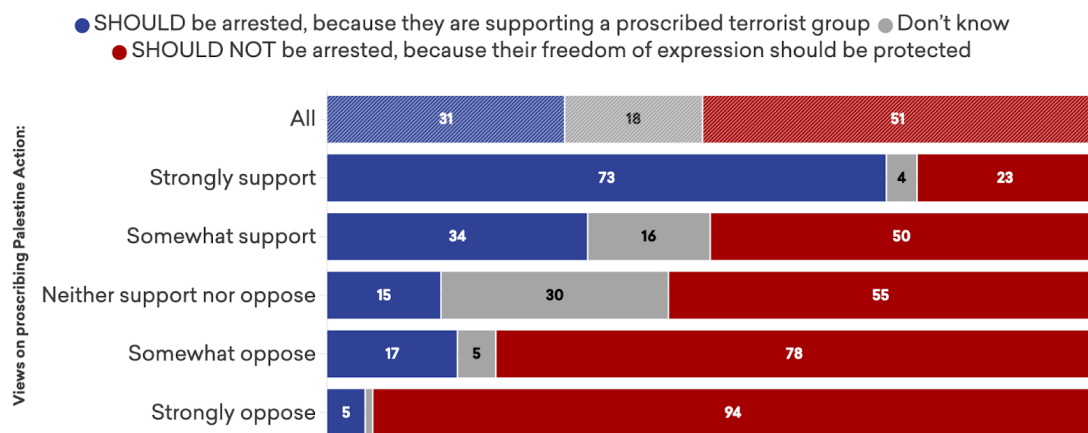
Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

Given more context about the events leading up to the proscription, the public are much more likely to support the ban with 41 per cent supporting the proscription and 29 per cent opposing it. Progressive Activists are the only segment where

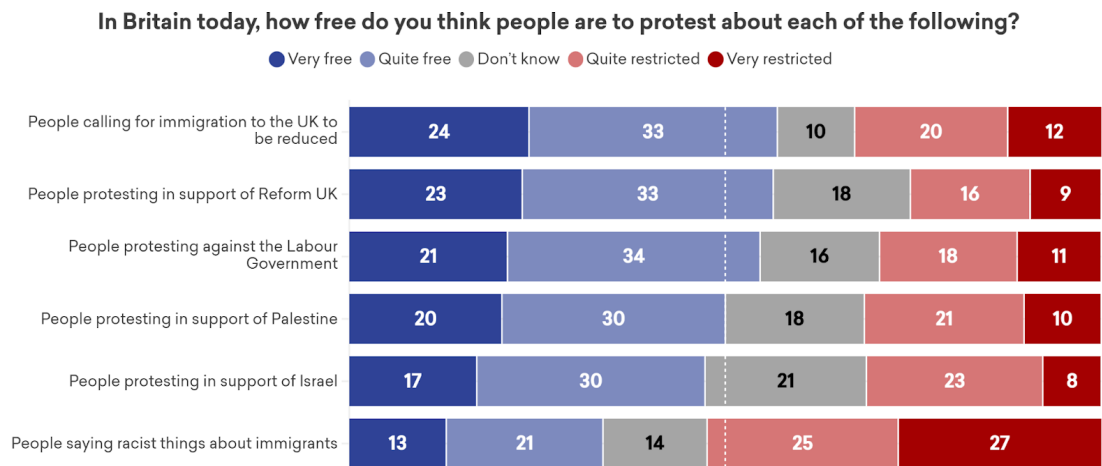
most think the proscription was wrong, and Traditional Conservatives and Rooted Patriots are most supportive of the proscription.

That said, the public tends to think that blanket arrests of Palestine Action supporters have gone too far, with most saying that peaceful protestors' freedom of expression should be protected, even though they are supporting a proscribed terrorist group.

Do you think that peaceful protesters who express support for Palestine Action for example by holding signs...



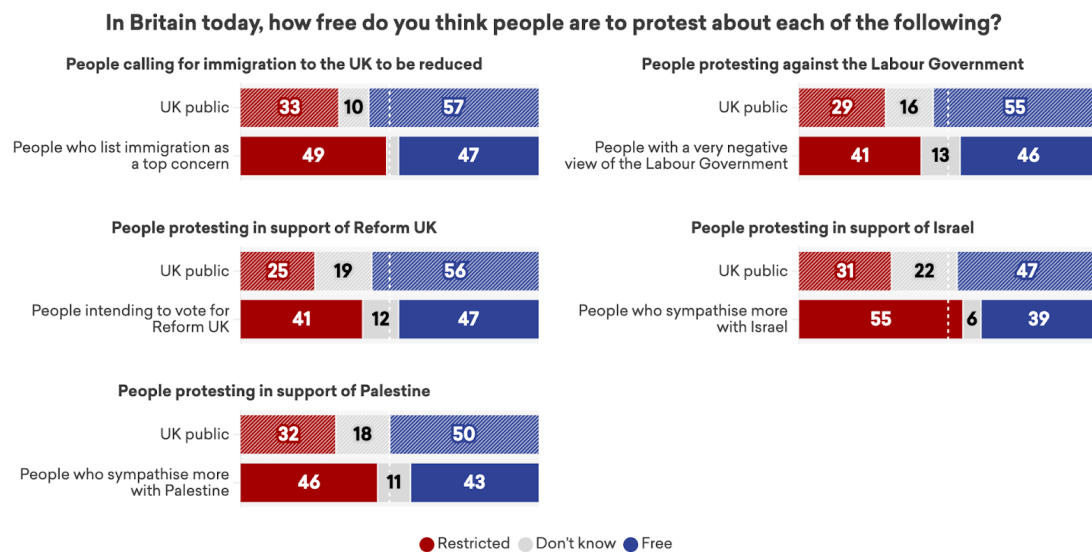
In spite of all this, people feel that Britons are largely free to protest a range of issues in Britain today, even if the numbers saying that these forms of protest are 'very free' are quite low. For example just 24 per cent of the public think Britons are 'very free' to form a protest march calling for immigration to be reduced, just 21 per cent think Britons are 'very free' to protest against the Labour Government, 20 per cent think Britons are 'very free' to protest in support of Palestine and 17 per cent in support of Israel.



More in Common • Fieldwork: 24 - 27 October 2025

However, a potentially larger challenge is that people are much more likely to think that protests on their own views are restricted. For example, a third (33 per cent) of the public think that anti-immigration protests are restricted in the UK, but this rises to 49 per cent among people who list immigration among their top concerns. Similarly, while a quarter of the public think pro-Reform UK protests are restricted, 41 per cent of Reform UK supporters feel that their protests are restricted.

These dynamics are particularly pronounced in the Israel Palestine conflict. 31 per cent of the public think that pro-Israel protests are restricted in Britain, but this rises to 55 per cent among people who sympathise more with Israel. Similarly, 32 per cent of the public think pro-Palestine protests are restricted, but 46 per cent of people who support Palestine feel this.



More in Common • Fieldwork: 24 - 27 October 2025

The Israel-Gaza conflict has left a lasting mark on British attitudes toward protest that extends far beyond the war itself. The sustained visibility and disruption of pro-Palestine demonstrations have tested the patience of the public regarding disruptive protest tactics, with two-thirds of Britons believing some protests are too disruptive to be allowed. This shift has not happened in a vacuum: Just Stop Oil's road blockages and demonstrations at high-profile sporting events and art galleries, along with contentious protests over immigration and episodes such as the St George's cross being graffitied on people's homes or public utilities, have already tested public patience with activist tactics. The Gaza protests have been another flashpoint in an ongoing trend of growing scepticism toward disruptive demonstrations.

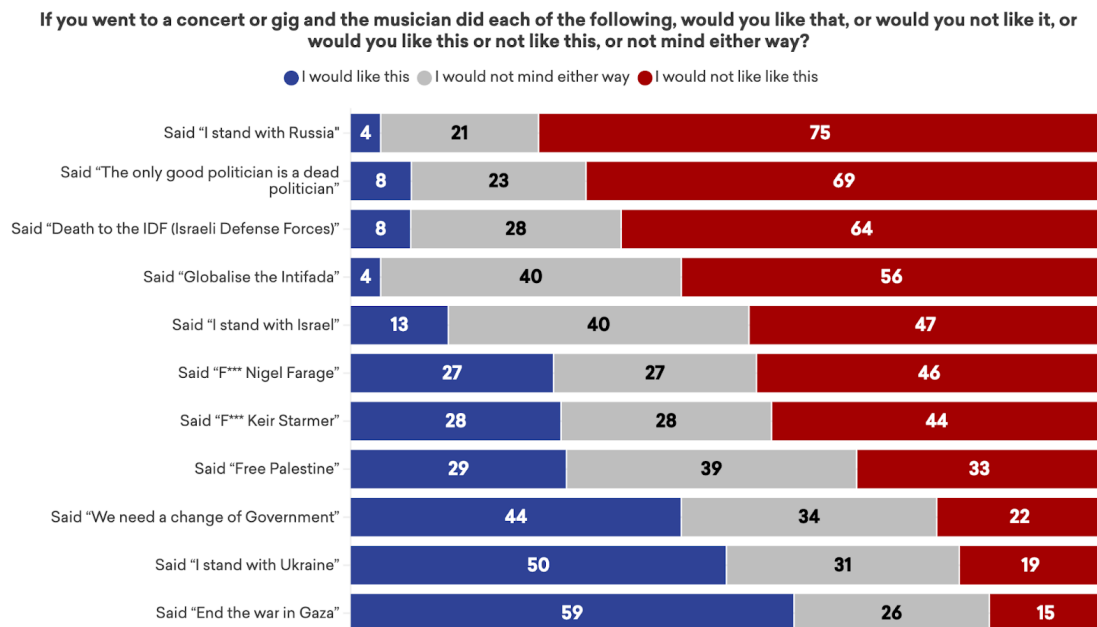
At the same time, the conflict has exposed divisions in how different groups perceive freedom of speech and the right to protest, with those involved in protests increasingly convinced their views are being suppressed while the broader public grows more sceptical of protesters' methods and motivations. Even if the fighting in Gaza were to end tomorrow, these debates about who gets to protest, what they can say, and how much disruption the public should tolerate are likely to shape British political discourse for years to come.

Speaking out about the conflict

The conflict has also seen numerous artists speaking out about Israel and Palestine, often in ways that have sparked considerable controversy. Perhaps the

most notable example came at Glastonbury 2025, when punk duo Bob Vylan shouted "death to the IDF" from the Pyramid Stage, prompting widespread debate about the boundaries of acceptable political expression in cultural spaces.

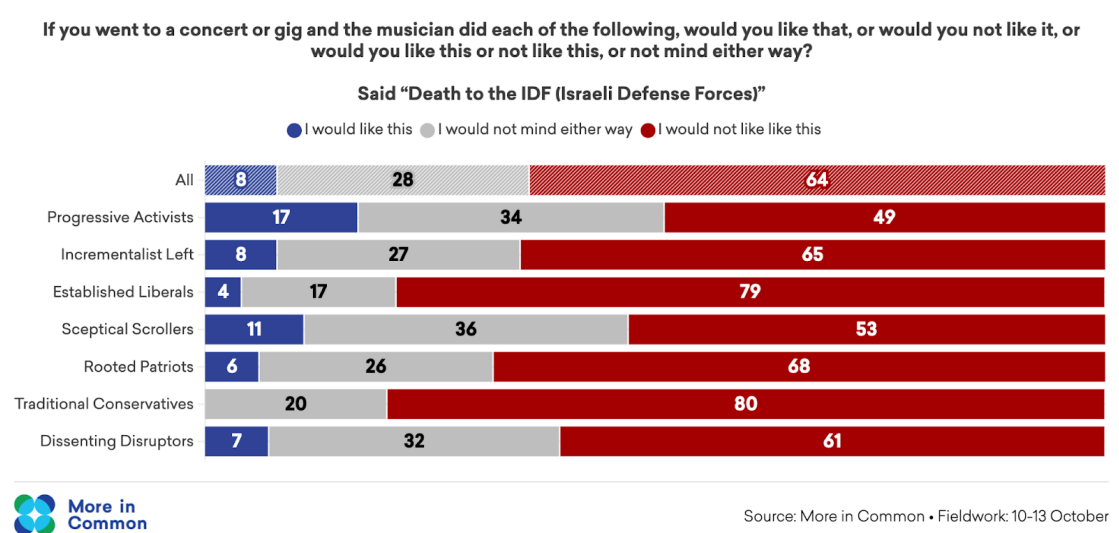
Most Britons are uncomfortable with musical artists inciting political violence at concerts or festivals. Just eight per cent say they would like it if a musical artist said "death to the IDF" at a concert, with similarly low levels of support for phrases like "the only good politician is a dead politician" or "globalise the intifada". The opposition to these statements crosses party lines and segments, suggesting a broad consensus that calls for violence have no place in entertainment venues, or indeed British society more widely.



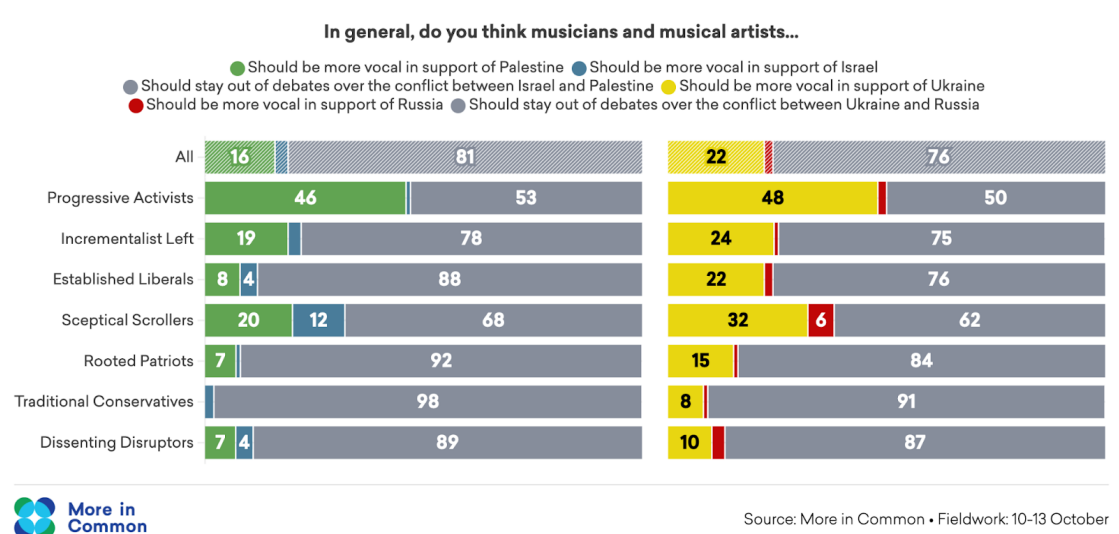
More broadly, most Britons want artists to keep politics out of music altogether. Fewer than three in ten Britons would like it if a musician said "free Palestine" at a concert, while a similar proportion would welcome an artist saying "fuck Keir Starmer" on stage. This scepticism extends even to less inflammatory political statements, suggesting the public's resistance is about mixing politics with entertainment rather than opposition to specific political messages.

Even among Progressive Activists, who are generally most supportive of pro-Palestine activism, there is considerable discomfort with violent rhetoric from artists. Whilst they are more supportive than other segments, 49 per cent of

Progressive Activists still say they would not like it if a musician said "death to the IDF" at a concert and just 17 per cent of Progressive Activists do say they would welcome such a statement, though this is twice the national average.



There is a clear divide between the politically engaged and disengaged on this issue. When asked whether musical artists should be more vocal in support of Israel or Palestine, just three per cent say Israel and 16 per cent say Palestine. The overwhelming majority (81 per cent) say that musicians should not be involved in the conflict at all. For comparison, 22 per cent say musicians should be more vocal in support of Ukraine, but even here, 76 per cent say they should not get involved.



This preference for keeping politics out of music does not stem from a lack of concern about these conflicts. Rather, people would prefer entertainment to remain spaces that are distinct from political debate. In focus groups, participants explained that they go to concerts and festivals to escape from the constant stream of depressing news, to feel optimistic and uplifted, and to enjoy experiences with friends and strangers regardless of their political views. When artists make political statements, particularly contentious ones, it can make some audience members feel unwelcome or uncomfortable, undermining the inclusive and joyful atmosphere that many people seek in these spaces.

"I mean, he's [Garry Linneker] already rich enough, but he can just... he is a footballer, or ex-footballer, sorry. Stay in your lane. Unless you really are a politician and running things, maybe stay out of it. All he's doing is seeing a video and going, 'Oh that's bad,' and reposting it, but not knowing any context behind it or whether it's even real or not. I don't know what due diligence he is doing, or even if it's him or if he's got a social media team. I don't know. So it's quite dangerous. But then on the flip side, you could say he's probably highlighting the problems potentially. He's got this platform, so he should use it. I kind of put it this way: I don't follow him for his political views. I follow him because I liked him as a pundit and stuff. And actually now he's just posting too much about it. I might unfollow him." Louis, Dissenting Disruptor, Brixton

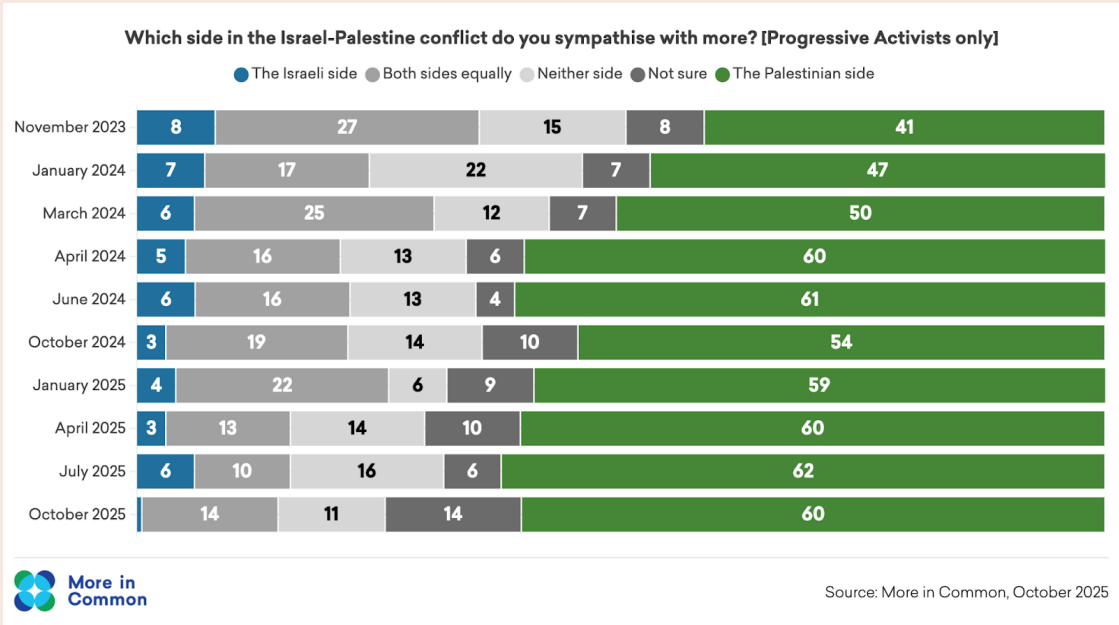
Progressive Activists, however, take a very different view. They are much more likely to want artists to speak out, with 46 per cent saying musicians should be more vocal in support of Palestine and 48 per cent saying they should speak out in support of Ukraine. Some Progressive Activists in focus groups suggested that artists who remain silent on major humanitarian crises are complicit or simply don't care enough. For this segment, political engagement is not separate from culture, it is an essential part of it.

This perspective ties into other research More in Common has conducted on Progressive Activists, who are also more likely to want their workplaces to speak out in support of Palestine even when this is unrelated to the business and may not resonate with all employees or customers. For Progressive Activists, silence on issues they consider moral imperatives can feel like a betrayal or an abdication of responsibility. They view public figures, including artists, as having platforms that come with obligations to speak out against injustice.

Progressive Activists in Detail

Throughout the conflict, Progressive Activists have stood out as the group with both the most distinct views on Israel and Gaza, and the group that is most engaged with and more vocal about the conflict.

In the first few months of the current conflict, the proportion of Progressive Activists saying they identify more with the Palestinian side increased rapidly, stabilising at around 60 per cent. This makes them the only segment where a majority of people take a view either way. In addition, their support for Palestine is much stronger than in other groups: they are more likely to see their support for Palestine as an important part of their identity and more likely to have taken action such as posting on social media about the conflict or attending a protest.



In many cases, the views of Progressive Activists are outliers even from other groups who tend to sympathise with Palestine in the conflict. They are the only segment where a majority think Israel's actions constitute a genocide, and over the course of the conflict they have become much less likely to refer to Hamas as 'terrorists', falling from 40 per cent in 2023 to 26 per cent today.

Because Progressive Activists tend to see the conflict as a clear battle between right and wrong, and because their views on the conflict are so close to their own personal identity- more so than for any other group - the conflict in Gaza has changed Progressive Activists' perceptions of other Britons.

In particular, Progressive Activists are much more negative about people on the opposing side of the conflict than other segments. Nearly half (45 per cent) would

think worse of someone who posted on social media in support of Israel, and more than a fifth (22 per cent) say they would definitely stop being friends with someone if they saw them posting in support of Israel.

When asked why they think some people support Israel, Progressive Activists place "they are anti-Muslim/anti-Arab" at the top of their list, unlike the other six segments who are more likely to attribute pro-Israel views to concerns about terrorism or historical sympathy for Jewish persecution. Progressive Activists also have extremely negative views of Zionists in the UK, with 44 per cent saying they have a very negative view of them. Unlike most Britons, whose criticism of Israel focuses primarily on the Israeli Government, three in ten (30 per cent) of Progressive Activists say they have a negative view of Israeli citizens themselves.

Progressive Activists are extremely concerned about all forms of discrimination and, for example, share the horror of the rest of the public at the Heaton Park Synagogue attack. However, there is evidence to suggest that for some Progressive Activists their concerns about antisemitism are not as central as their feelings about other forms of discrimination. While 90 per cent of Progressive Activists say Islamophobia is a serious issue in Britain, this falls to 73 per cent who say the same about antisemitism.

In addition to holding outlier views, Progressive Activists are much more tolerant of disruptive and offensive protest than any other segment. They are the only segment where a majority think all forms of disruptive protest should be allowed, regardless of the inconvenience caused to others. This tolerance extends even to highly controversial protests: 57 per cent of Progressive Activists thought pro-Palestine protests should have gone ahead in the week following the terror attack on Heaton Park synagogue in Manchester, compared to just 23 per cent of the general public who felt the same. Progressive Activists are also much more likely than other segments to want musicians and other public figures to use their platforms to speak out on Palestine, with 46 per cent saying artists should be more vocal in support of the Palestinian cause, compared to just 16 per cent of the British public overall.

The Israel-Palestine conflict is a case study of where Progressive Activists' views and their different approach to driving change compared to the rest of the country can sometimes make it harder to convince people on the causes they seek to progress. In this case, their desire to turn up the temperature on the debate with ever more extreme language or disruptive protest can actively deter people who

might otherwise be sympathetic to their cause. More in Common has explored these dynamics in more detail in our 2025 [Progressive Activists](#) report.

Chapter 4: Trust and truth

What do people trust for an unbiased source of news on the conflict?

Concerns about bias in the mainstream media's coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict have not cut through to the majority of the public. For the BBC (where Britons are most likely to get their news), only 15 per cent say that it has been biased towards the Palestinian side, and 12 per cent say it has been biased towards the Israeli side, while more than a third say it has been neutral, and another third don't know.

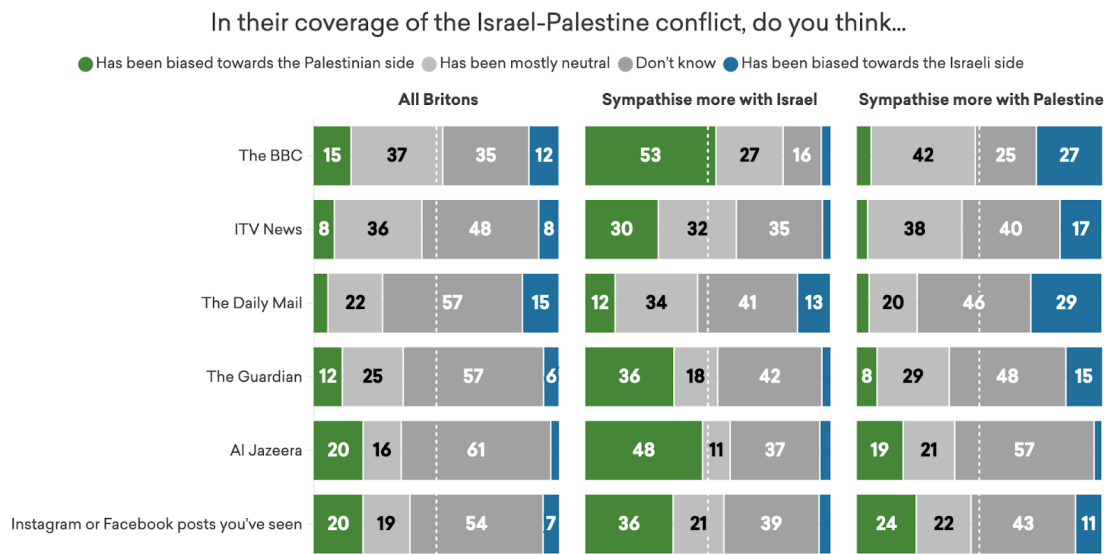
"[to find out the truth] I'd probably watch the TV news like BBC news or something like that. If we really wanted to watch, if I wanted true information, I wouldn't look on Facebook. I'd probably just put the news on." Rachel, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

There's so many places you can get different opinions and different news. You have to follow one course, trust one course and follow that. And like these guys here have said the BBC does a reasonable job of reporting the facts. I think like Joanna said, it'd not be a little biased, but I think that booby verifies it's something you can trust. I think that's important I think" James, Established Liberal, St Albans

People who take a side in the conflict are considerably more likely to perceive bias in media organisations. While 19 per cent of those who don't take a side in the conflict accuse the BBC of bias, this doubles to 41 per cent for those who do take a side. Perceptions of bias are clearly closely related to what the viewers *want* to see, and as those demands drift further apart in two directions, it becomes harder for any single media source to meet both of their demands. That said, high-profile failures to maintain impartiality have accelerated this trend.

Attitudes are different between supporters of the Israeli and Palestinian sides, however. For those who sympathise more with Israel, 53 per cent think that the BBC is biased towards Palestinians - more than those who said the same for the Guardian (36 per cent), ITV News (30 per cent) or even Al Jazeera (48 per cent).

Those sympathetic to Palestine similarly feel that some major outlets (the BBC and Daily Mail in particular) are biased in favour of Israel.



Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

More engaged people from both sides feel that their side is being misrepresented, and undue coverage is being given to the other.

"I think the BBC and Sky have both particularly been biased towards the whole situation, but I also don't think that's a news thing. I think they just look not to offend anyone, like saying X amount of people have been killed, or X amount of prisoners have been taken. When they're 'hostages' or 'people', and they're not saying 'Jews', I don't see why they're just not saying that word. It's not going to offend anyone, it's just the truth. But I think it's also interesting because I think if you were to ask people from a pro-Palestinian perspective, I think they'd say the same thing, that is biased towards the other way. I see that, but I know that's an opinion as well." Chris, Progressive Activists

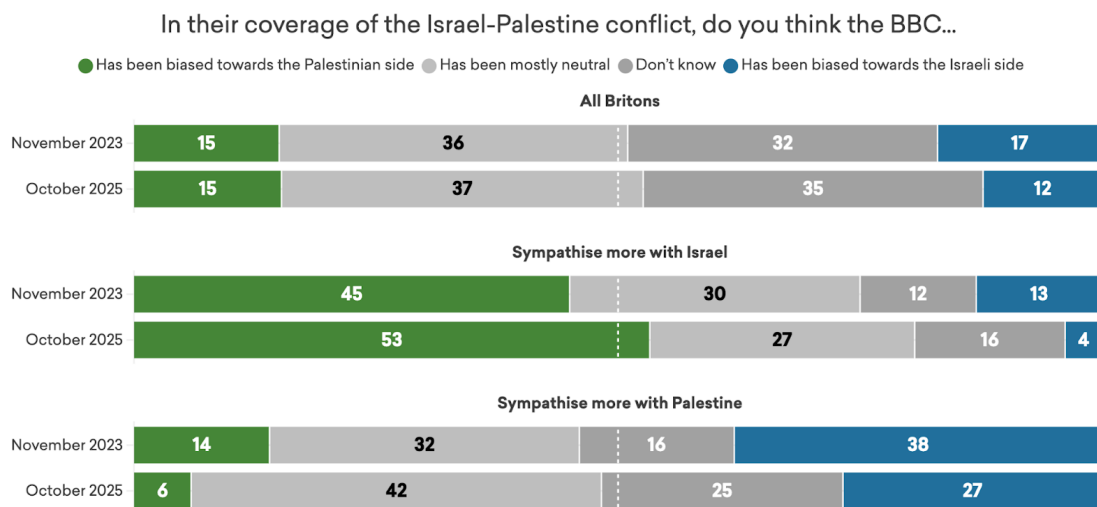
"They call one side prisoners on the other side, hostages killed, died. It's very obvious, biased journalism. And even recently, look at, I'm not a big fan of Trump, but look at what they did with Trump as well. They spliced his video to make it out that he's saying that inciting violence for the Capitol Hill. So yeah, B, B, C have got a lot of answer to that as well." Kareem, Birmingham

In focus groups, some Britons expressed a feeling that a certain agenda was being pushed on them by the mainstream media.

"I felt like there's been an increase in coverage of late on the whole Israel situation, but I felt the media were quite slow to react to it - unlike the Ukraine-Russia war, we couldn't get enough of that. So sometimes I think there's hidden agendas behind

who's pushing what narratives, or who's in control of what media stations, et cetera.”
Chris, Progressive Activist, Oxford

Notably, perceptions of BBC bias have changed over the course of the conflict. While the general public are slightly less likely to think the BBC has a pro-Israel bias, it remains the case that the overwhelming majority of Britons either think the BBC has been neutral or don't take a view.



Source: More in Common • Fieldwork: 10-13 October

Predictably views have changed more significantly among those with stronger views about the conflict. People who sympathise with Israel are now significantly more likely to say that the BBC has a pro-Palestine bias than they did two years ago. In focus groups, participants often say that this is due to what is sometimes seen as hyperbolised coverage of Israeli actions in Gaza compared to other conflicts, and high-profile editorial errors by the BBC such as the commissioning of a documentary narrated by the son of a Hamas official.

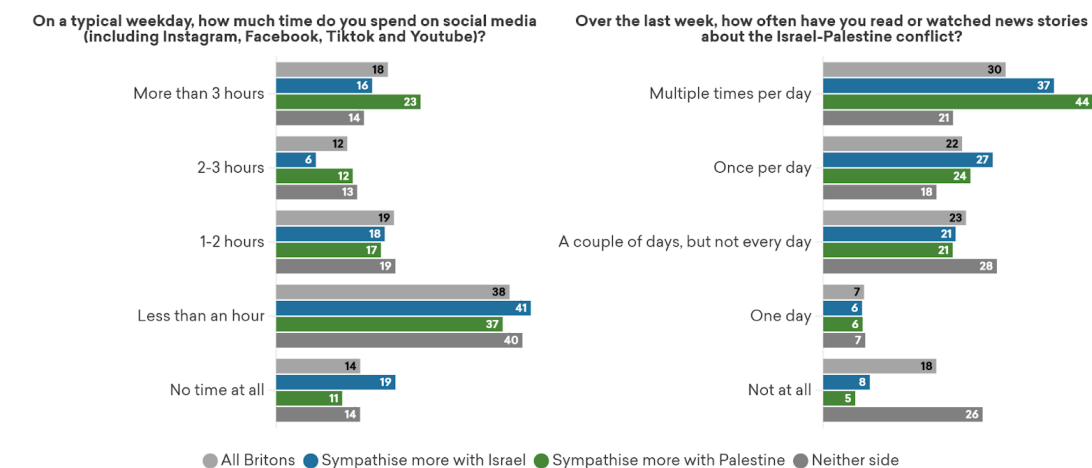
That said, those who sympathise more with Palestine have fewer complaints with the BBC than they did two years ago. They think the BBC has become less biased in favour of Israel and are now more likely to say they have been mostly neutral. All this is to reflect that the BBC's editorial decisions over the conflict seem to have been received slightly better by those who sympathise more with the Palestinian side of the conflict than those who sympathise more with the Israeli side.

However the lingering perception on both sides that the BBC and other mainstream outlets are biased against them, has prompted supporters of both Israel and Palestine to seek out alternative sources that they feel better reflect the reality of the conflict.

I don't really trust the news or the newspapers because like Lewis said, they've got their own agendas. They're pushing a certain narrative, so I just kind of do my own research by going on all different social medias and getting bits of the real information. So there are some people on TikTok that are in Gaza and things like that, and so I'm sort of viewing what they're saying. But I'm also viewing what other people are saying that are seeing it and I'm just trying to make my own views from other people's views, not the news and not the newspapers, if that makes sense - Zoe, Dissenting Disruptor, Hastings

Finding my own truth

People who have chosen a side in the Israel-Palestine conflict are much more likely to regularly watch or read about the conflict, and pro-Palestinian Britons in particular are more likely to spend time on social media - in part a product of their younger age profile.



Overall, Britons tend to say that social media has been unhelpful in helping them understand the facts of the Israel-Palestine conflict - only 26 per cent say it has been helpful, while 46 per cent say it was unhelpful. In focus groups, participants regularly explain that they find it impossible to know the truth about what is going on in Gaza, which in turn is leading many of them to withdraw from following or forming an opinion on the conflict altogether.

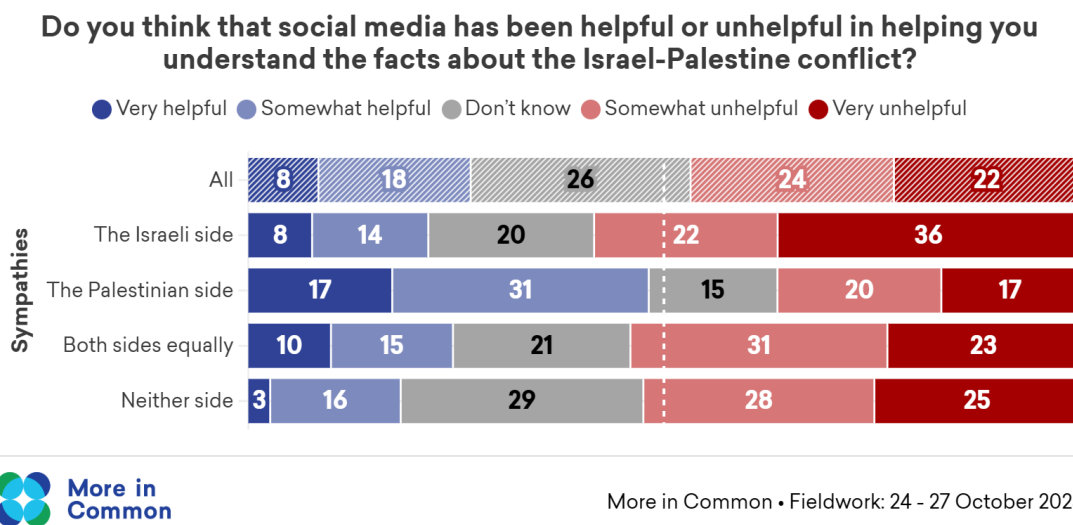
"Christ, there's so much misinformation on both sides. One minute we are getting told that aid isn't actually getting through to Gaza and the Israelis are evil. The next time I look at an interview with an American soldier or a UK soldier that's saying, no, the aid is here and they're taking videos of huge crates and boxes for stuff. There's just so much misinformation on both sides. I've seen child actors in multiple videos acting like they're Gaza children that have just been bombed and they're in multiple different videos or in different outfits. It's all just pushing propaganda and there's just so much on both sides." Louis, Dissenting Disruptor, Brixton

"I don't really watch news. The only thing I see is on social media and I only probably flick through the headlines and like I say earlier, I don't really understand any of 'em, so I can't pick a side I know about, I dunno, but I dunno which one is the bad guy and which one is not." Sean, Dissenting Disruptor, Norwich

"I don't watch the news. I'm a self-confessed social media addict and I will scroll for hours and I will see videos that are on there and once you've seen one, the algorithm picks it up and then you are on that side and I don't, apart from those who are behind the closed doors making the big decisions, I don't think you can trust anyone. Everyone's got an agenda as much as they try and deny it and I think a lot of what's going on in the world is a small minority group of people pushing their own agenda." Laura, Dissenting Disruptor, Cambridge

"To be honest, I dunno enough to give it an informed opinion, I'm afraid. But obviously we talked about you almost can't get away from the images or the news and it's very tough I find to make an informed opinion on it because there's so many news outlets, so many social media outlets that are showing what's going on. I find it almost impossible to get an opinion." James, Established Liberal, St Albans

Those who sympathise more with Palestinians, however, are much more likely to think that social media has been helpful for them (48 per cent).



A similar trend can be seen among those who sympathise with Israel. Some supporters feel that they are also being increasingly drawn to right-leaning news outlets, because they felt they better represented Israel and its conduct in the war in Gaza.

"I think GB News has been good for Israel. I think they're very pro-Israel, but I wouldn't say that they necessarily hide if they don't agree with something that the Israeli government has done, then they've said it. But I think that they report both sides, which is important and a lot of news sources don't do that." Amy

As supporters of either side seek out these alternative sources of information, they find themselves further isolated both from the opposing view, as well as the majority of the public who continue to watch and read the BBC, Times and Sky News. Social media is particularly seen by Israel's supporters to be extremely biased in favour of Palestine.

"Well, I mostly get the news off social media just because naturally on my phone, so Instagram and other places like that, and for every one post you see in support of Israel, there's must be 20 either attacking it or supporting Palestine. So I do get funnelled onto lots of pro-Palestine posts a lot of the time. If you go onto the for you section or the activity section, who would recommended and it's like pro-Palestine stuff, even though I haven't really showed an interest in wanting to watch that." Rory

In the final analysis, this means that supporters of Israel and Palestine are no longer engaging with one another's views, nor with what is being presented to the

majority of Britons. More of those who are pro-Palestine increasingly get their news (on the conflict and on other issues) from social media, while some Israel supporters are turning away from the traditional mainstream.

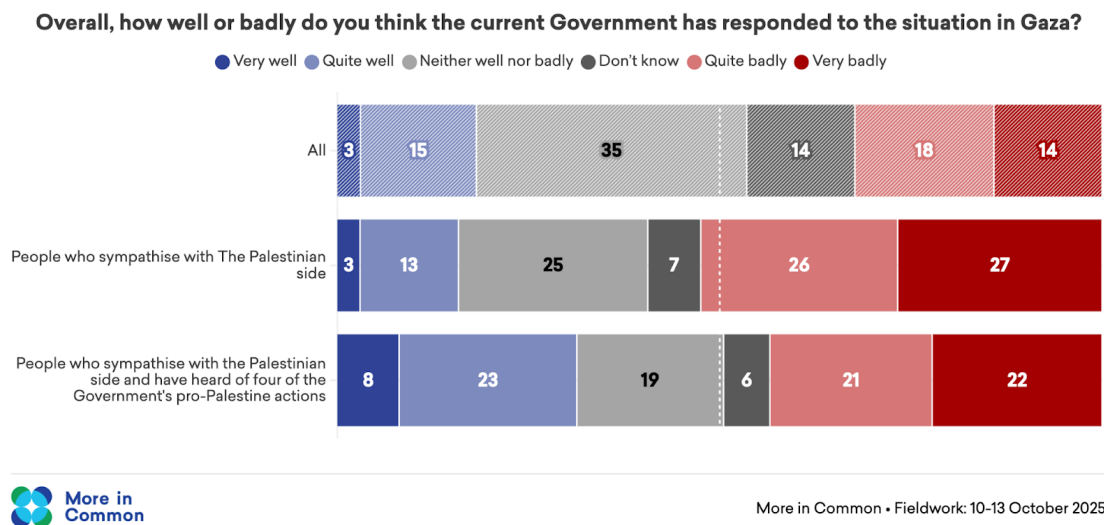
"I found what's difficult as well with social media is people are looking to post, it's either all pro-Palestine or all pro-Israel and I've got Jewish friends that post that and I've got people that thought Palestine that way, but never. The posts are never about the people that are affected. It's like they're all taking sides, but none of the posts are about caring about trying to live in this situation. What I find hard about social media, I can't interact with those kind of posts." Katie, Rooted Patriot, Stockport

The fragmentation of trust in mainstream news sources matters because it makes it harder for people with opposing views to speak about a shared reality. In particular, those with strong pre-existing views are increasingly drawn into distinct tightly curated media environments where their beliefs are more likely to be reinforced and opposing arguments are rarely encountered. In some cases, these media environments increase feelings of hostility towards those on the opposing side.

At the same time, those who feel unsure or overwhelmed by conflicting claims often disengage from the news altogether, concluding that it is impossible to know what is true or that the reality is too depressing. When these people disengage from the conversation, it becomes dominated by those with just the most extreme views.

Do politicians care?

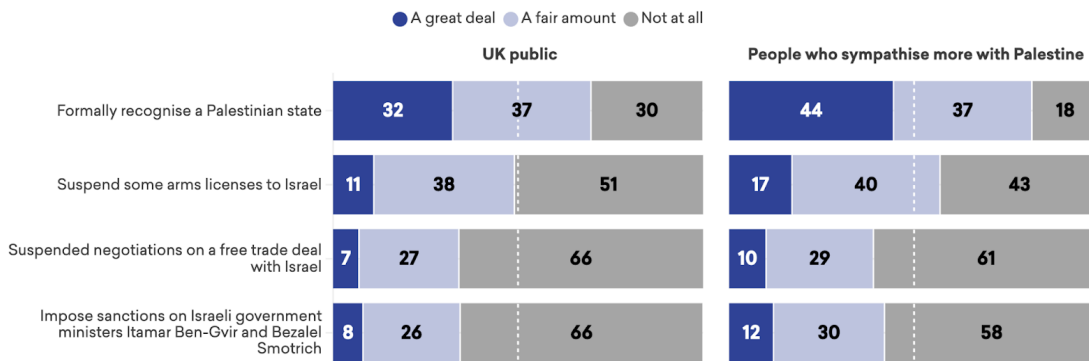
The conflict in Gaza has had real political consequences in the UK, particularly in areas with large Muslim populations. A third (32 per cent) of Britons think the current Government has responded badly to the situation in Gaza, but this rises to a majority of those who sympathise more with the Palestinian side in the conflict. For some of these people, the Labour Party's response to the conflict was a significant motivating factor for leaving the Labour Party to vote for other candidates (either the Green Party or so-called 'Gaza Independents') in the 2024 election, in places that have been safely held by Labour for decades.



From focus groups with people living in many of these seats, it is clear that dissatisfaction with Labour runs deep. In Autumn 2025, in focus groups with voters who had backed independents or the Greens, participants would typically list a dozen issues with the Labour Government before turning to Gaza. Many people in areas that voted for independents last year feel overlooked, with rising antisocial behaviour and crime, empty high streets, and a lack of opportunity the hallmarks of their communities. That in turn has led a group of Muslim voters to feel that the Labour Party takes their votes for granted, and that Keir Starmer's Government is out of touch with their concerns. In this context, the escalation of the war in Gaza acted as a tipping point that crystallised their concerns and pushed these voters towards other candidates, even if the underlying issues are much bigger than Gaza itself.

Government action that has been received well among those on the Palestinian side of the conflict have had little cut through with the wider public and in focus groups those sympathetic with Palestine tend to say that they haven't gone far enough.

In response to the war in Gaza, the current Government has done the following. Before today, how much had you heard about each of these:



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In fact, in focus groups with Muslims in areas that have traditionally voted Labour, it was clear that most felt the Government had not been listening to their concerns about the war at all. When they had seen the Government take action – they felt that this was simply a cynical ploy to get votes, or that the Government had said something with no substance and will not deliver on it.

“Billions and billions of pounds of taxpayer money, money, it's being funded into supporting Israel. So the government, our government is claiming that they are like an ally and how they should protect the only democracy in the Middle East, while also the country has no money for public services and has no money for, but they will always find money to send weapons for Israel”. Bushra, South London

“I was just thinking this could be a tactic to get supporters on their side as well, because this is what they always do”. Zain, Wolverhampton

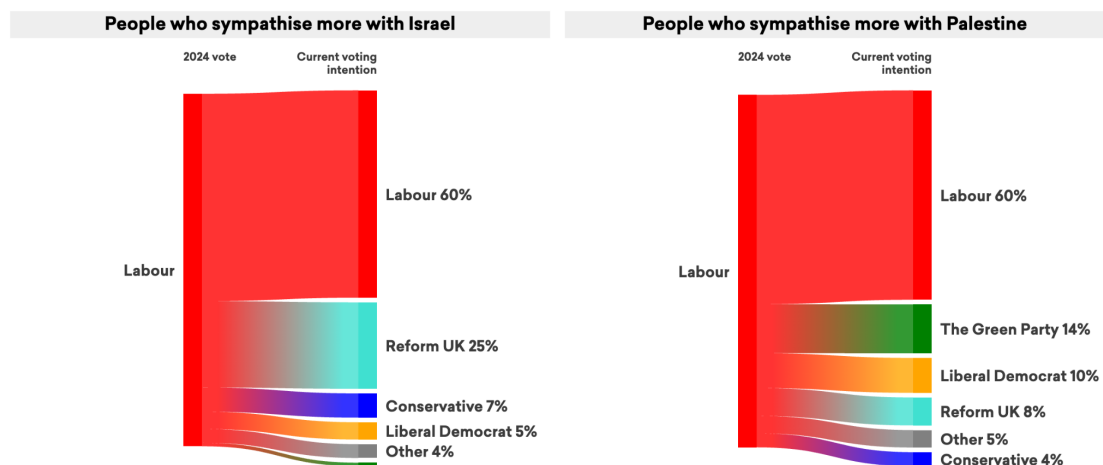
“You can sense he [Keir Starmer] has no passion really for the Palestinian cause. I don't even think he cares. Cares about it. It's not really a grey issue. It's very black and white, like people getting killed. Yes, people were killed on 7th of October, but people are getting killed on a daily basis for absolutely nothing. For him to not have anything to say for other party leaders, to have nothing to say on it, it says everything really,” Sophie – Leeds

“[Recognising Palestine] That's a glimmer of hope for the Palestinians, but again, he's saying it and the number of times they've done U-turn on the policies or their statements that they've done so far. So I wouldn't hold my breath.” Talya, Birmingham

Rebuilding trust with these voters will require more than just taking the right position on the conflict in the Middle East. While the war in Gaza has exposed a serious rift between the Labour Party and many Muslim voters, the underlying disconnect runs deeper. The party needs to demonstrate that it genuinely cares about their concerns across the board, whether that means restoring pride in local communities, tackling crime, improving public services, or addressing the many other issues that matter to them in their daily lives.

Satisfaction with the Labour Government has across their voter base, regardless of their views on the Israel-Palestine conflict. However, when voters have left Labour to consider other parties, it is notable how neatly they have self-sorted into groups according to attitudes to the conflict. Labour has lost 40 per cent of their voters who support Israel, and 40 per cent of their voters who support Palestine since the General Election. However, those who support Israel have switched their likely votes to Reform UK and the Conservatives, whereas Palestine supporters are more likely to have switched for the Greens or Liberal Democrats.

These voters are most likely leaving the Labour Party over more salient issues than Israel-Palestine, such as the cost of living and immigration. However as voter groups realign in a more fragmented politics, it is worth noting that voter blocs themselves could also solidify divides between those who sympathise more with Palestine and those who sympathise more with Israel.



The attitudes of British Jews towards politicians' response to the conflict have been less widely reported, in part because the small size of Britain's Jewish population means an electoral backlash from Jewish voters would not have the same impact on any political party's performance in a General Election. However,

it is clear from our focus groups that many British Jews also feel overlooked by politicians, and in some cases feel that politicians do not take the concerns of British Jews seriously at all.

Many of the Jews we spoke to in focus groups felt that the Labour Party in particular saw it as more important to keep Muslim voters on board, and this often came at the expense of British Jews. They were unsure what Keir Starmer's actual thoughts were on the conflict, and felt that his statements often seem insincere or overly scripted.

"I love that we have a man who has an openly Jewish wife, an openly Jewish family who will publicly say that he will take Friday evenings off to celebrate Shabbat. That makes me so happy to see myself represented in government. And that's about it. I don't think his actions have aligned with Jewish people" Sophie

"I don't have trust in any politician in the UK right now. I think if anyone does have a stance on Israel, it's for their own political gain, especially that between labour and reform at the moment. Just trying to appeal to different voters. I just think it's deep down they both, they want to retain the next election and they want to get in power. I don't think they care about Israel that much. I don't really think they care about Jews that much. I don't have much trust in any of them, to be honest at the moment." Chris

"I think they are trying to appease the majority in the UK a lot of the time because that is going to benefit them in terms of elections and keeping them in. And we obviously see it so important to us, but to them, to the government, we are a minority and I don't think they are that bothered with ensuring the safety of us [Jews]. If they came out and said we're completely in support [of Israel], I think it would cause outrage from a majority of the UK wrongly, but it would and that would then cause a lot more problems for them. So I think they're just trying to make it easier for themselves." Emily

Asked about other parties, the Jewish Britons we spoke to were equally sceptical. Many felt, for example, that Reform UK had been more pro-Israel in their statements more out of opportunism to position themselves against Labour and Labour's pro-Gaza voters.

"I think reform has been pretty outspoken pro-Israel. I don't know, but I think there's for sure, if I had to wager a bet, there's a movement of Jews who are sort of gradually trickling towards reform. I wouldn't say I trust them though. I don't know if they actually care about the issue or if they're just being sort of contrarian. It's hard to say" Leo

Many felt that the attack on the synagogue in Manchester was at least in some part a product of the Government not taking the issue of antisemitism seriously

enough, and not investing sufficiently in resources to protect the security of British Jews.

Conclusion

This research documents the emergence of a pernicious cycle taking hold among a minority of Britons in their views on the conflict in Gaza. Most people do not take a side in the conflict and care primarily about putting an end to suffering. But many of those who do take a side or sympathise more with one side than another are being pulled toward more firm and unmovable views. These two 'sides' trust different news sources, so they no longer share a common understanding of what is happening in Gaza. They use different language to describe the conflict, so they talk past each other even when they try to engage. And they increasingly think worse of people on the opposing side, not just disagreeing with their arguments but questioning their motives and character. This makes it harder for them to speak to each other in good faith, and the temperature of the debate rises.

For most Britons, the debate has not become more polarised in the last two years. The majority continue to hold views that are neither entirely pro-Israel nor pro-Palestine, and they remain horrified by the suffering on both sides. But as the minority with strong views pull away from each other, they make the whole debate more fraught and difficult to navigate for everyone else. Those without strong views increasingly feel uncomfortable speaking up, worried about being misunderstood or attacked by people with more hard line positions. The result is that public discourse becomes dominated by the most polarised voices, creating a false impression that Britain is more divided on this issue than it actually is.

The consequences of this dynamic extend beyond debates about Israel and Palestine. The conflict has changed attitudes toward protest in Britain, continuing an ongoing trend of public patience wearying on disruptive protest after sustained disruption from pro-Palestine demonstrations, Just Stop Oil activists, and anti-immigration protesters. It has strained relationships between religious communities, with British Jews and Muslims both feeling less safe and more isolated. It has undermined trust in mainstream institutions, from the media to political parties, as people on different sides of the conflict accuse them of bias. And it has made it harder to have constructive conversations about a range of difficult topics, from free speech to integration to the boundaries of acceptable political expression.

None of this was inevitable. Britons still share considerable common ground regardless of which 'side' they place themselves on in the conflict: concern for civilian suffering, a desire for the war to end, and a worry about the safety of Jewish

and Muslim communities in Britain. But finding ways to build on this shared ground has become more difficult as the most engaged voices pull further apart.

The patterns of polarisation around Gaza mirror how polarisation has emerged on other issues, from immigration to gender identity. When two groups grow ever distant, and those with the most entrenched views insist on absolutist purity tests for their support, it becomes harder to reconcile the shared concerns of those with different perspectives, instead facilitating all too familiar ‘culture war’ dynamics. That in turn crowds out the voices of both the less engaged and in-group moderates in both camps, ceding conversation to those with the most hardline of views. Issues that should be the common concern of everyone in society become associated with only one side or another.

One of the most concerning impacts of this recorded in this report is the growing polarisation in attitudes towards antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate, something which extreme polarisation has aided and abetted. It is incumbent on leaders across the divides to look at ways to allow people to express strongly held views, while at the same time avoiding demonisation or attacks on those who take a different but legitimate perspective.

To be clear, most Britons think there is nothing wrong about holding strong views on the conflict. The events of October 7th, the plight of hostages or the suffering and death of Gazan civilians in the months since, inevitably and rightly evoke strong emotional responses.

However, the evidence of this report is that those with the strongest views not only have differing opinions about the conflict, but also are starting to question, distrust and in some cases actively dislike those who sympathise more with the other side of the conflict.

The challenge for Britain is to prevent this affective polarisation among a minority from spreading to the rest of the country, and to rebuild spaces where people with different views can speak to each other with mutual respect. The alternative, a society where every contentious issue splits us into warring camps unable to find common ground, is one that serves no-one's interests, least of all those who care most about peace and justice in Israel and Palestine.

Those with strong views on the conflict might say that seeking to turn down the temperature of debates around Israel and Palestine is a call to ignore suffering, prejudice or hate: they feel passionately that their side is being mistreated and to tone down the rhetoric would be a betrayal to their cause or underplay the severity

of the situation. Again campaigning for peace, against discrimination, and to tackle injustice, is something most Britons can empathise with, but an approach which sees those with an alternative or less formed point of view as uncaring, callous or even evil is unlikely to achieve these goals.

Our research suggests there are a few ways that those who are most engaged with the conflict or who are advocates for different points of view, could make their case as passionately, but also avoid creating further division in the UK.

- **Make space for people to have a conversation.** Many Britons hold back from discussing the conflict because they worry about saying the wrong thing or causing offense. If the conversation is to be open to more people, it is necessary to create environments where people can explore their views without fear of immediate condemnation. Additionally, it is important to remember that if people do not speak up, that is not out of lack of care, it is often because they care deeply but feel unsure how to contribute constructively.
- **Remember how protests are perceived by a weary public.** Activists may feel passionately about their cause, but sustained disruption risks alienating the people they hope to persuade. Two-thirds of Britons now believe some protests are so disruptive they shouldn't be allowed to go ahead, and this backlash extends beyond Gaza to affect how the public views activism more broadly. Protesters should consider whether the frequency, timing or tactics of marches are building support or simply entrenching opposition - and how to call out the minority who use those marches to spread hatred.
- **Do not assume people with opposing views hold them in bad faith.** When people believe the other side is motivated by racism, ignorance, or malice rather than genuine moral conviction, productive conversation becomes impossible. This assumption makes it hard to win over even people who are open to finding common ground and actively entrenches opposing camps.
- **Take antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate seriously, and don't let them become politically polarised issues.** Both forms of hatred have risen sharply during the conflict, but there is a risk that they become partisan concerns only. Progressive movements must show that antisemitism is treated with the same urgency as other forms of discrimination, while those concerned about antisemitism should not dismiss the rise of anti-Muslim hatred. Clear

distinctions should be made between legitimate criticisms of the actions of the Israeli Government and anti-semitism, or criticism of certain religious practices and anti-Muslim hate. When these issues become weapons in a culture war, the communities experiencing hatred are left less protected and it becomes harder to implement basic protections.

- **Schools should be places where debate can be facilitated and set an example for young people throughout their lives.** Rather than avoiding difficult conversations about the conflict, schools should equip students with the skills to engage respectfully across lines of disagreement. This means exposing young people to a wide range of balanced perspectives rather than allowing echo chambers to form, and teaching them that it is possible to hold strong views while still listening to and learning from others. Where debates spill over into prejudice or bullying these should be taken more seriously. Schools, particularly those with intakes largely of one faith or another, should make a particular effort to engage in inter-faith activity and ensure opportunities for engagement between Muslim and Jewish pupils in major cities such as London and Manchester.

The new Citizenship curriculum should have an explicit focus on disagreeing well about contentious issues and the Government should consider commissioning expert unbiased resources that schools can use to help them talk about conflicts such as the war in Gaza.

- **Social media platforms have a responsibility to ensure people aren't pulled further into echo chambers.** When algorithms consistently show users content that reinforces their existing views, it becomes harder for people to understand why others might see the conflict differently. Platforms should do more to expose users to a broader range of perspectives rather than narrowing their feed based on engagement. When people with different views on the conflict inhabit entirely separate information environments, they lose any shared basis for conversation.

At the same time, misinformation about the conflict has spread rapidly on social media, making it harder for everyone to know what is actually happening in Gaza. While some degree of misinformation during a conflict may be inevitable, platforms could do far more to minimise its spread.

- **The BBC should double down on efforts to report the conflict impartially.** The appointment of a new Director General is an opportunity for the BBC to reflect on its coverage of the conflict. Most Britons do not think that the broadcaster has favoured one side or another in the conflict - though those who sympathise more with one side or the other do. In particular those who sympathise more with Israel seem to have lost confidence following the review of the documentary *Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone*. Given the fraught nature of views on the conflict, but also the importance of providing British viewers with an honest and objective assessment of what is happening, the BBC should introduce additional scrutiny, and potentially outside challenge to its coverage of Gaza.
- **Cultural institutions should respect artists' freedom of expression, but challenge it when it turns into hatred or incitement.** While the cultural world is dominated by Progressive Activists, organisers should remember that most people don't always want their entertainment to be political. The overwhelming majority of Britons would prefer that concerts, festivals, and other cultural spaces remain distinct from political debate. While artists have every right to speak their minds, institutions should seek just as much to make non-political spaces and events part of their programming.

Methodology

Focus groups

Focus groups were conducted with the following groups on these dates:

- Rooted Patriots, in Stockport - 8 October 2025
- Established Liberals and Incrementalist Left, in St Albans - 8 October 2025
- Jews, from around the country - 23 October 2025
- Jews, from around the country - 27 October 2025
- Traditional Conservatives and Dissenting Disruptors, from around the country - 28 October 2025
- Progressive Activists, in South London - 28 October 2025
- Progressive Activists, from around the country - 11 November 2025
- Muslims, mostly in South London - 11 November 2025
- Muslims, mostly in Leeds and Birmingham - 11 November 2025

Every focus group had 7-9 participants and were conducted online.

Pseudonyms have been used for some participants to protect their identity.

Polling

Most of the polling conducted in this report was conducted on the following dates:

- 10-13 October 2025 - N = 2,004
- 24-27 October 2025 - N = 2,231
- 1-3 October 2025 - N = 2,031

The polling is weighted to be representative of GB adults by age/sex, region, ethnicity, education level and past vote. More in Common is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by their rules.

Full data tables are available on our website.



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