

# **PUBLIC IS SPEAKING**

**TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS ON THE PRESENT  
AND THE FUTURE OF ARTSAKH CONFLICT**

**ANALYTICAL REPORT**

**Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia Foundation**

Yerevan  
2022

**“Public is Speaking: Telephone Survey Results on the Present and the Future of Artsakh Conflict”** research has been conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia Foundation, funded by the Civilitas Foundation. The contents of this report are based on original primary research, are the sole responsibility of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Civilitas Foundation.

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**Citation example.**

Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia Foundation. (2022). *Public is Speaking: Telephone Survey Results on the Present and the Future of Artsakh Conflict*. Yerevan: Civilitas Foundation.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report investigates the current perceptions of residents of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) conflict. Specifically, we aim to uncover the perceptions regarding three specific issues:

1. The role of domestic and international actors in the resolution of Artsakh conflict.
2. Possible developments/vision of the future.
3. The relationship between Artsakh and Armenia around the conflict.

To do so we used a telephone survey on a sample of 1502 respondents in Armenia and Artsakh. The survey is representative for populations in Armenia and Artsakh. This means that the collected data, with a certain margin of error, can be attributed to the present population of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh.

The results show that the views of Armenians and people from Artsakh are broadly in line with each other differing only on some issues. Respondents in Artsakh consistently gave higher or more positive scores to Russia than Armenian respondents. The results denote a strong opposition to any future scenario in which Artsakh is part of Azerbaijan, and respondents were generally skeptical of Azerbaijan.

The report is structured as follows. First, we outline the methodology chosen to address our research questions. This includes methodological decisions, fieldwork quality control, ethical considerations, and an evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the research design. Second, we present descriptive statistics of the results broken down between respondents located in Artsakh and Armenia.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This section reports, and eventually elaborates on, all relevant methodological decisions made in the analysis. As a survey was used to address the research questions outlined above, we report all elements which must be disclosed according to the American Association for Public Opinion Research.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1 Survey Method

To answer our research questions, we conducted computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) using the Survey CTO software package. This method was preferred to in-person interviews as some of the respondents' places of residence are difficult (and/or dangerous) to reach. The population surveyed are adult residents of the Republic of Armenia and of the Republic of Artsakh. To do so a sample of 1500 respondents was projected (1100 respondents from Armenia, and 400 from Artsakh). The sample achieved contained a minor oversampling of Artsakh residents (402 respondents) and the anticipated number of respondents from Armenia.

The questionnaire was developed by the research team of the CRRC-Armenia in cooperation with the Civitas Foundation and tailored to the specific research questions. The questionnaire was pre-tested on November 5 and 6, 2022. Minor modifications were implemented to improve the clarity of the questionnaire and the quality of answers.

The fieldwork was conducted between 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022. Respondents were randomly selected using the random digit dialing technique (RDD). This method allowed us, without using a sampling frame, to randomly generate phone numbers starting with the codes associated with the telecommunication providers in Armenia and Artsakh. Given that the deviation from the expected statistics is limited, no post-stratification weights were used in the following analysis. [Table 1](#) summarizes the relevant demographic information regarding the survey.

*Table 1: Demographic Statistics*

	Expected <sup>2</sup> (Armenia)	Achieved (Armenia)	Achieved (Artsakh)	Achieved (Overall)
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	52.8%	48%	54.7%	49.8%
Male	47.2%	52%	45.3%	50.2%
<b>Age</b>				
18-35	34%	31.9%	34.1%	32.5%
36-55	33.5%	37.5%	41.8%	38.7%
56+	32.4%	30.5%	24.1%	28.8%
<b>Settlement Type</b>				
Urban	64%	68.6%	85.8%	73.2%
Rural	36%	31.1%	14.2%	26.8%

<sup>1</sup> AAPOR, "Transparency Initiative Disclosure Elements," April 2021, [https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR\\_Main/media/TI-Updates-10-8.21/TI-Attachment-C.pdf](https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/TI-Updates-10-8.21/TI-Attachment-C.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "Household's Integrated Living Conditions Survey Anonymised Microdata Database (by Households)," 2020, <https://armstat.am/en/?nid=205>.

## 2.2 Quality control

To ensure the quality of the data we implemented a number of quality control checks. The database was monitored daily. For each interviewer twenty percent of the data was checked. Audio recordings of the interviews were used to check for interviewer bias (to neutralize or rectify leading or misread questions and/or answers, etc.). Back calls were also conducted for the same purpose. In addition, the following metrics were reviewed for each interviewer:

- Average duration and start/end time of interviews;
- Number and the proportion in total of “Don’t know”/” Refuse to answer” options;
- Frequency and quality of answers filled in “Other” option and open questions;
- Outliers;
- Skip logic;
- Number of interviews done per day.

## 2.3 Limitations

The research design does contain some problems regarding validity. However, issues are unlikely to affect the results significantly and/or are difficult to address within the constraints of this project.

The method used excludes from the sample potential respondents who do not have a mobile phone number. This likely excludes specific segments of the population (elderly, rural, imprisoned, etc.) from the theoretical population surveyed. We cannot check the accuracy of our sample on demographic statistics as no sampling frame is available for Artsakh residents. Hence post-stratification weights could not be applied. This also renders the calculation of a margin of error difficult.

In addition, one cannot derive if respondents are originally from Artsakh, Armenia, or even elsewhere as we only ask for the place of residence in the past six months. However, it should be considered that the origin of a respondent may bias their answers. Nevertheless, as the survey was conducted in Armenian, the risk of having respondents that are neither from Armenia nor Artsakh is extremely low. It is however possible that respondents originally from Artsakh are present in the Armenian sample. However, considering current political discourse, the research team decided not to ask respondents whether they have recently been displaced from Artsakh or not. Nonetheless, the validity of the survey remains high overall.

Thanks to the experience acquired by our staff, the robust methodology, and the continuous quality control conducted, the research team did not reveal any reliability issues.

# 3. ANALYSIS

All analysis was conducted using Rstudio<sup>3</sup>.

## 3.1 Results: Descriptive statistics

This section briefly describes the results of our survey. Results are broken down into three parts summarizing views towards:

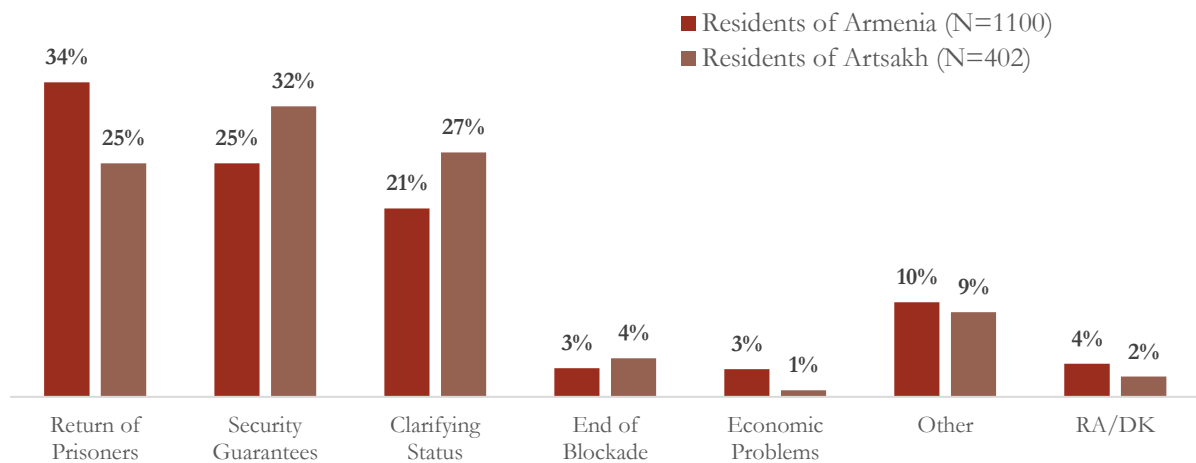
- The resolution of the conflict;
- The views on (potential) actors in the conflict and its resolution;
- The views of Artsakh people after the 44-day war (this last part was only asked to residents of Artsakh).

In this survey, the margin of error for the Armenian population is  $\pm 2.95$  (95% confidence). The margin of error for the Artsakh population is  $\pm 4.88$  (95% confidence).

## 3.2 Attitudes Towards Conflict Resolution

Residents in Armenia and Artsakh were asked *what should start the settlement of the Artsakh conflict?* The results are relatively similar in Armenia and Artsakh with some noteworthy differences (see Figure 1). While most Artsakhi people mentioned *security guarantees* as the necessary start of a settlement, Armenians favoured the *return of prisoners* as their primary concern<sup>4</sup>. In addition, *clarifying the status of Artsakh* was more important to people from Artsakh than Armenians, although over 20% of our respondents cited this item as the start of a settlement in both communities. The current blockade and economic problems ranked relatively low in both cases. However, note that this data was collected before the most recent blockade of the Lachin corridor (December 23rd) and the cut of gas supply to Artsakh<sup>5</sup>.

Figure 1: In your opinion, what should start the settlement of the Artsakh conflict?



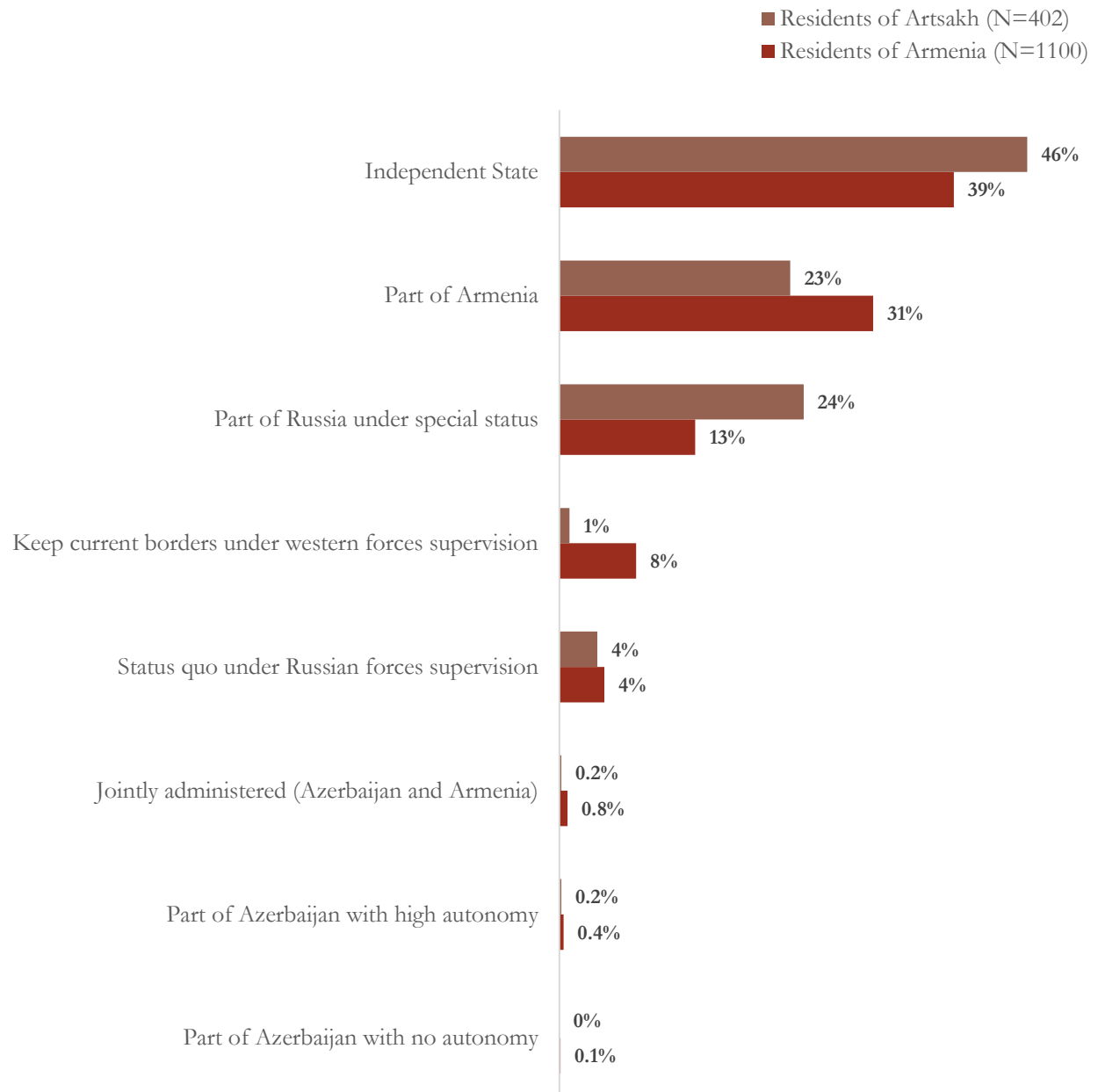
<sup>3</sup> R Core Team, "R: A Language and Environment for Statistical Computing" (Vienna, Austria, 2022), <https://www.R-project.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> By prisoner we mean both civilian and military prisoners. This does not refer specifically to prisoners of war (POW).

<sup>5</sup> Civilnet, "Armenia Reports Shoot-Outs on Border with Azerbaijan, as UN Chief Urges de-Escalation in Karabakh," CIVILNET, December 15, 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/686257/armenia-reports-shoot-outs-on-border-with-azerbaijan-as-un-chief-urges-de-escalation-in-karabakh/>.

When asked *what status should Artsakh have in order for the Artsakh conflict to be finally settled*, the respondents in both communities mainly favoured an independent Artsakh republic. The second and third most chosen options were being part of Armenia and being part of Russia under a special status. Note here that the difference between the second and third most chosen responses is significant for respondents in Armenia. However, the difference between the aforementioned responses falls within the margin of error for Artsakh respondents. Hence, no ranking can be made between those answers. Finally, not a single respondent in Artsakh preferred the option of being part of Azerbaijan without autonomy. As for Armenia, only one person mentioned that option.

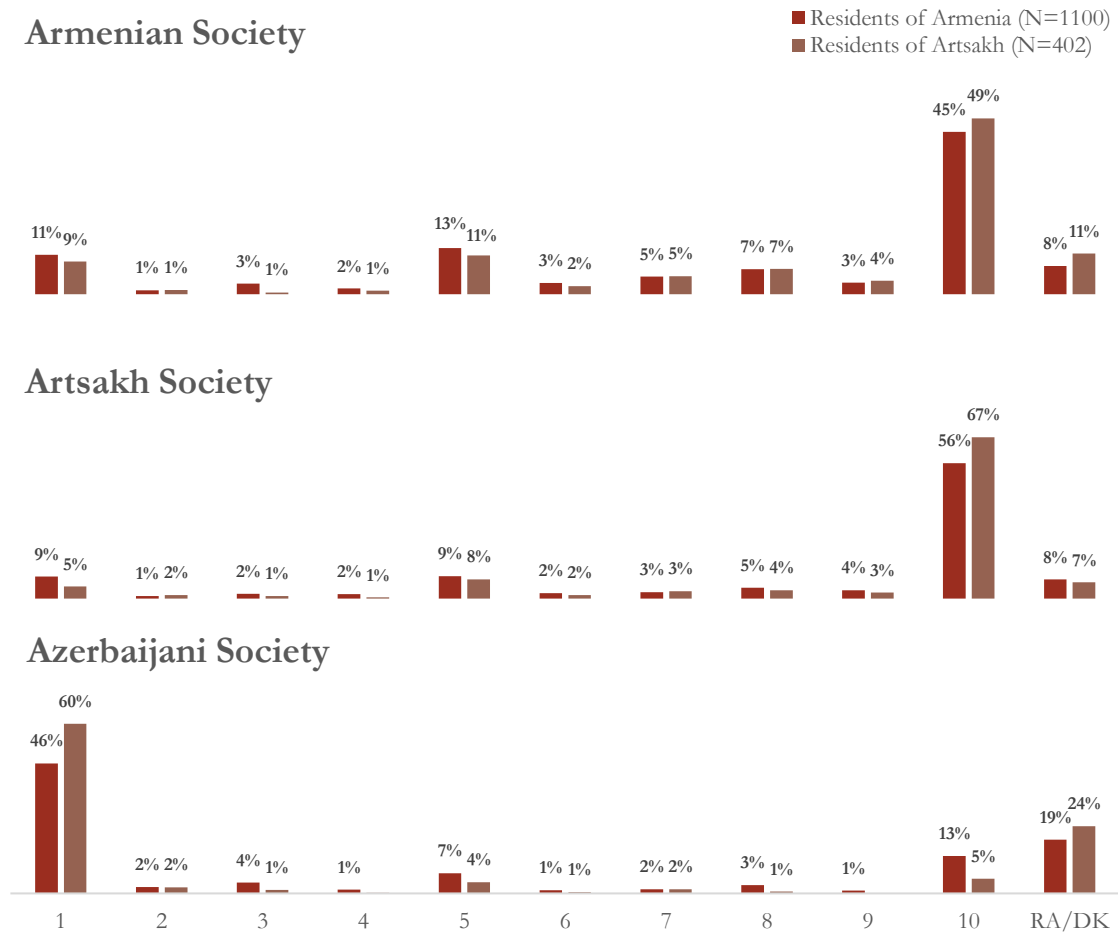
Figure 2: According to you, what status should Artsakh have in order for the Artsakh conflict to be finally settled?



When asked on which society the resolution of the Artsakh conflict depends most Armenian and Artsakh societies received very positive scores from all respondents. In parallel the solution mostly did not depend on the Azerbaijani society according to all respondents. Respondents in Artsakh were the most skeptical of the resolution depending on Azerbaijani society.

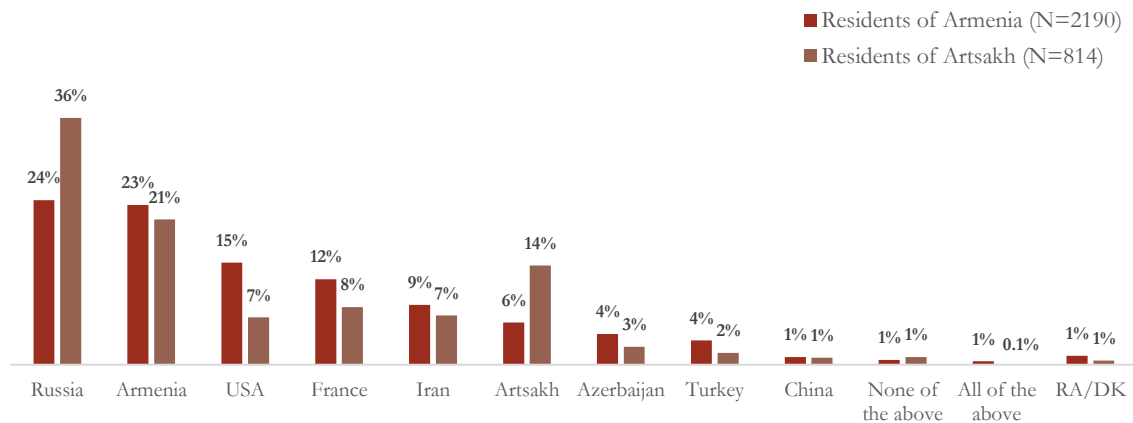


Figure 3: Please rate on a scale of 1-10 how much the further settlement of the Artsakh conflict depends on...



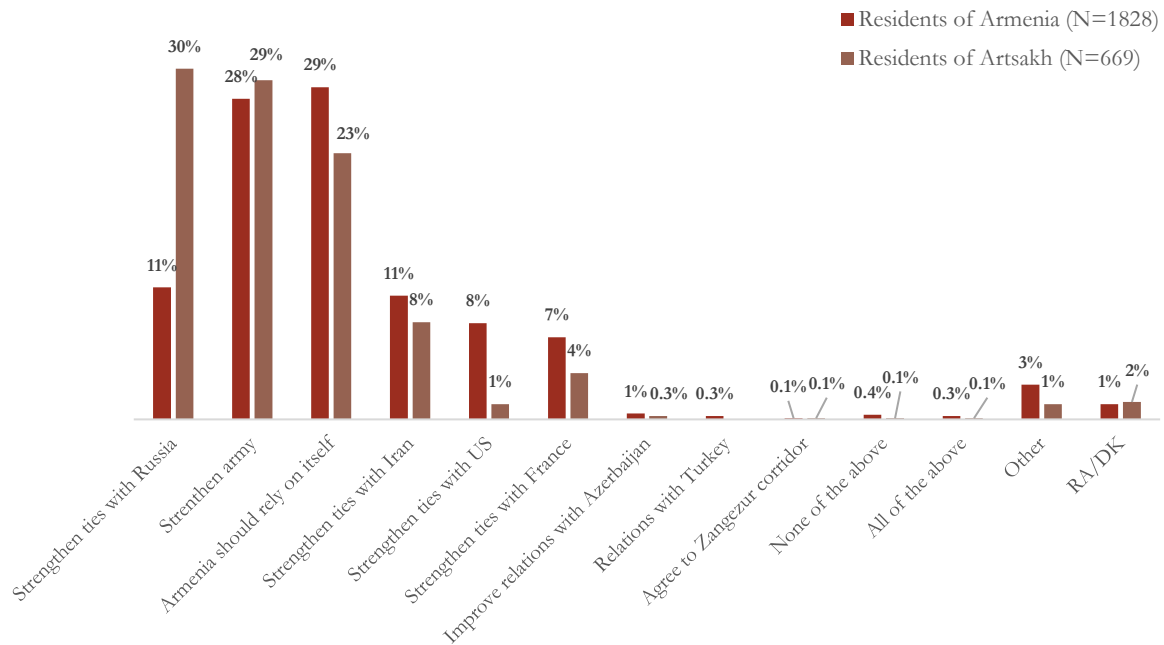
When asked which countries the settlement of the Artsakh conflict depends on, Armenia and Russia were the two most chosen answers (Figure 4). Respondents in Artsakh gave Russia a significantly higher score than Armenian respondents. Notable differences concern the score given to the US (higher in Armenia) and the Artsakh Republic (higher in Artsakh).

Figure 4: In your opinion, on which of the countries listed below depends the further settlement of the Artsakh conflict? (N=3004, up to three per 1502 respondent)



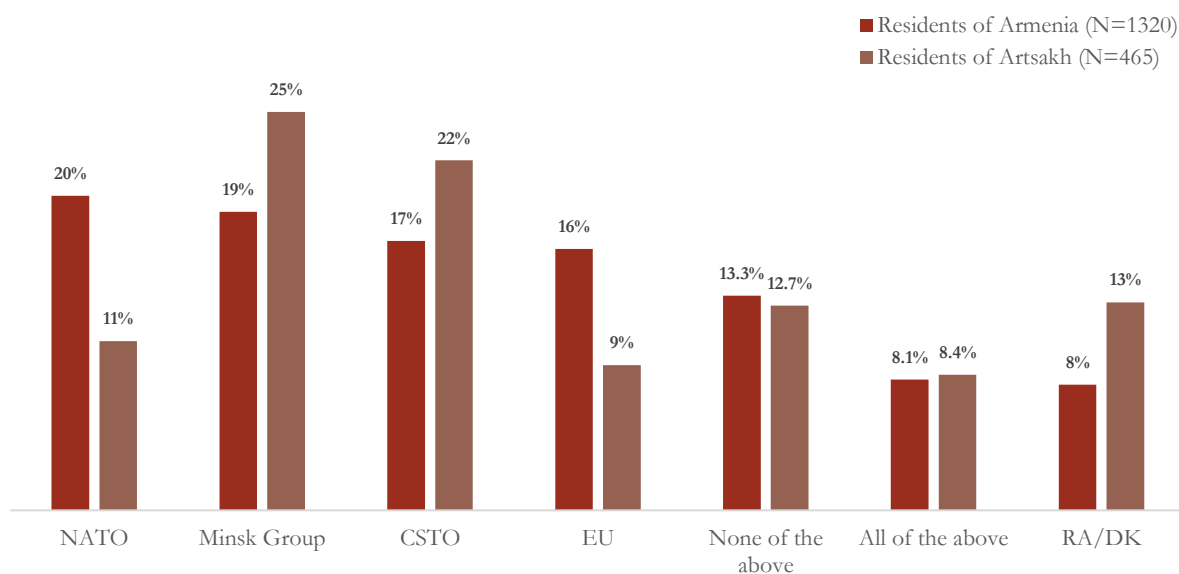
Diving deeper into the steps that Armenia should take to settle the Artsakh conflict. Two of the most chosen responses were *strengthening the army* and *Armenia should rely on itself*. The only marked difference between Armenians and Artsakhi people was regarding the *strengthening of ties with Russia* - an option that was chosen by 30.3% of Artsakhi respondents but only 11.4% of Armenian residents.

Figure 5: In your opinion, what steps should Armenia take to settle the Artsakh conflict? (N=2497, up to two answers per 1502 respondent)



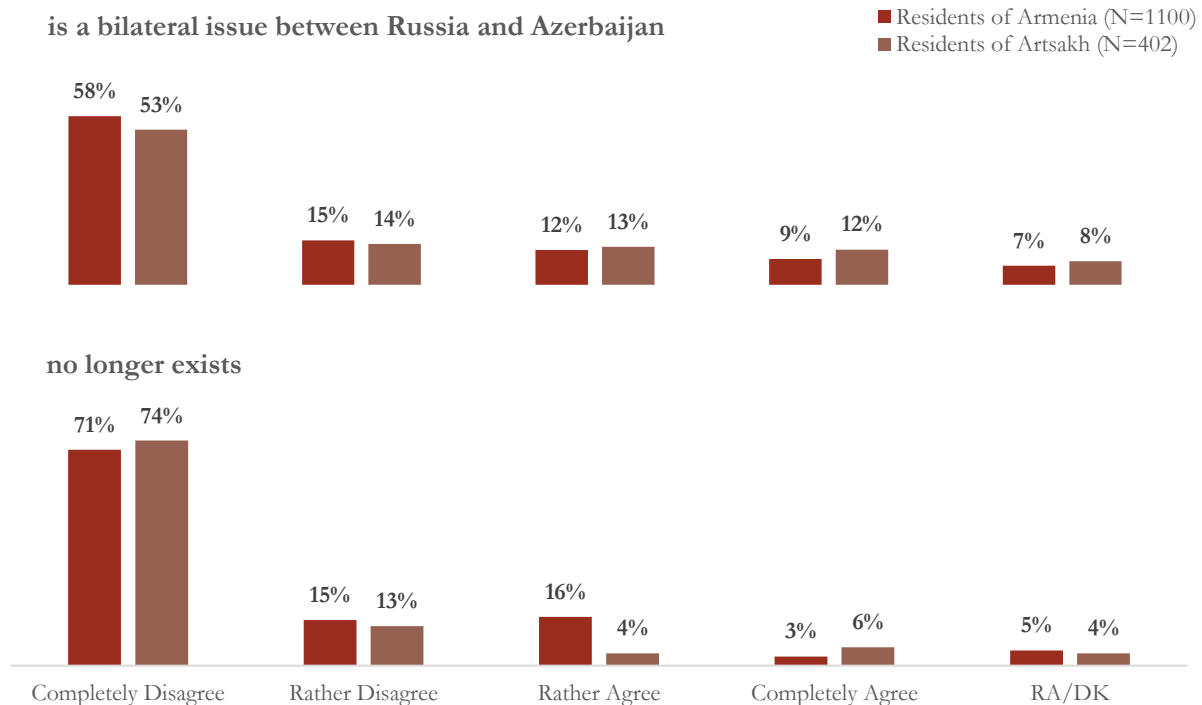
When it comes to international organizations, the results are relatively even across the board and within the margin of errors in most cases, rendering interpretation difficult.

Figure 6: In your opinion, on which of the international organisations listed below depends the further settlement of the Artsakh conflict? (N=1785, up to three for all 1502 respondents)



The majority of respondents to this survey do not view the conflict as a bilateral issue between Russia and Azerbaijan, and an even larger share consider the conflict very much still exists (Figure 7). Here no significant differences between people from Armenia and people from Artsakh were noted.

Figure 7: After the 44-day war, the Artsakh conflict ...



### 3.3 Attitudes Towards Actors of the Conflict

In this section, the data describes the views of Armenians and people from Artsakh towards the (potential) actors of the conflict. One of the consistent results is that people from Artsakh views Russia more positively than Armenians.

Figure 8 shows that over 72% of Artsakhi people viewed the participation of the Russian Federation to the settlement of the Artsakh conflict as completely or rather positive on Artsakh's interests. On the other hand, when asking Armenians, only 38.2% believe that the participation of the Russian Federation to the settlement of the Artsakh conflict has completely or rather positive effect on Artsakh's interests.

A similar pattern can be observed regarding the effect of Russia's intervention on Armenia's interests. 56.7% of Artsakhi people viewed the participation of the Russian Federation to the settlement of the Artsakh conflict as completely or rather positive on Armenia's interests, while the figure drops to 24.5% when asking Armenian residents.

Figure 8: According to you, how does the participation of the Russian Federation in the settlement of the Artsakh conflict affect the interests of [...]

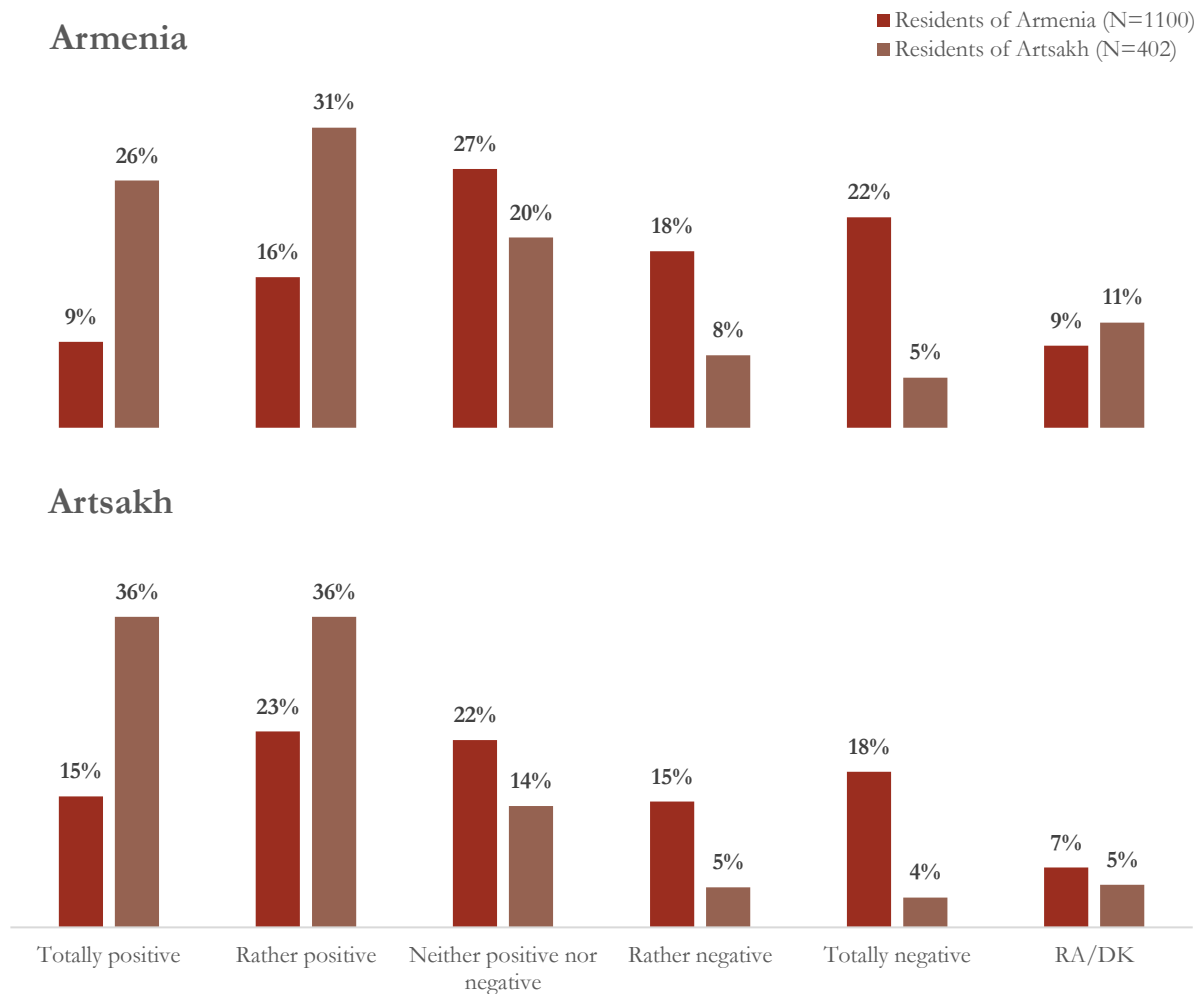
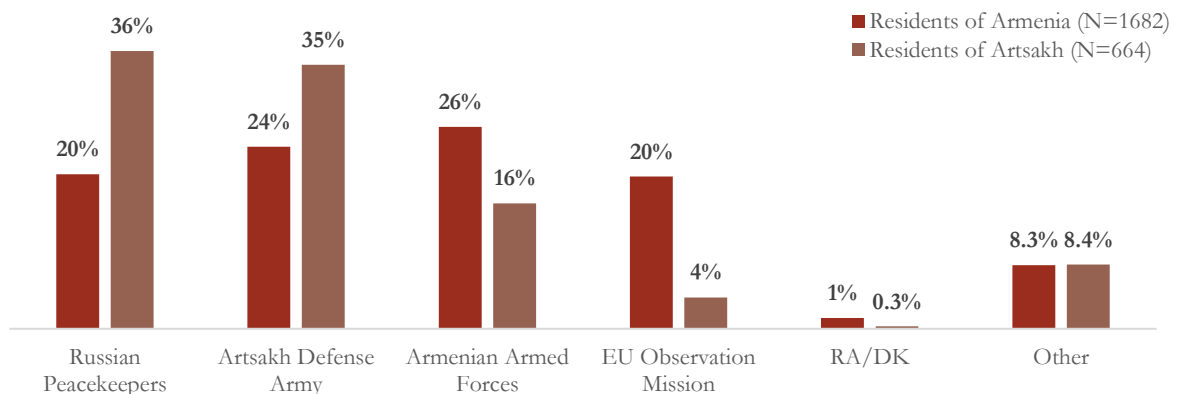


Figure 9 shows that when asked which forces can best ensure the security of the current borders and population of Artsakh, respondents in Armenia did not have any marked preferences among the four options given. On the other hand, Artsakh respondents were far more likely to favour Russian peacekeepers or the Artsakh Defence Army.

Figure 9: In your opinion, which forces can best ensure the security of the current borders and population of Artsakh? (N=2346, up to three answers per 1502 respondents)

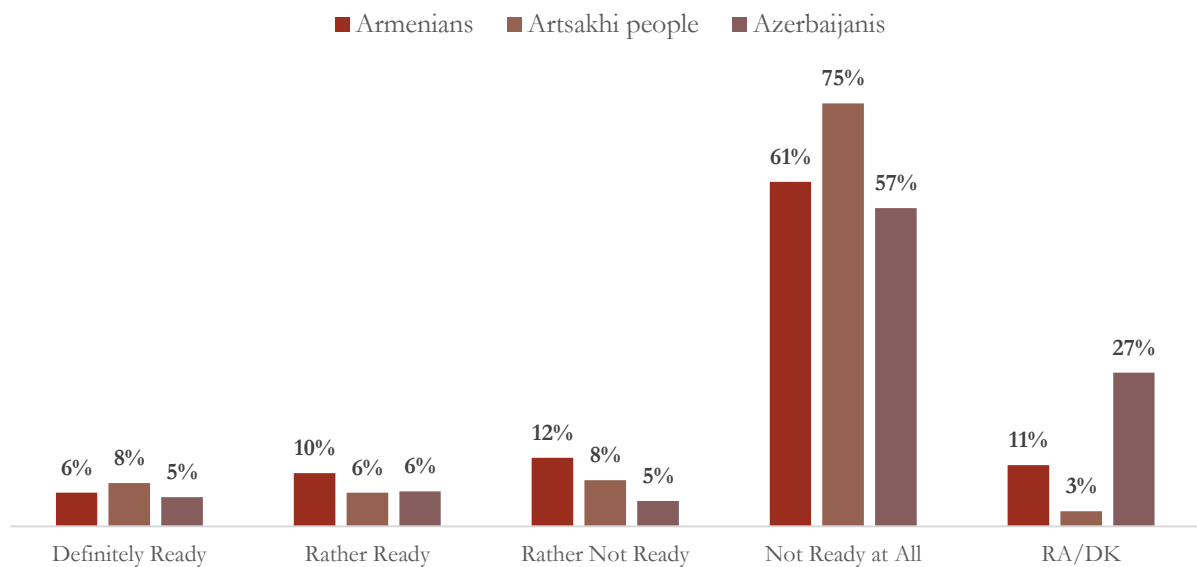


### 3.4 Artsakh people’s views after the 44-day war

Please note that all remaining questions were only asked to the residents of Artsakh.

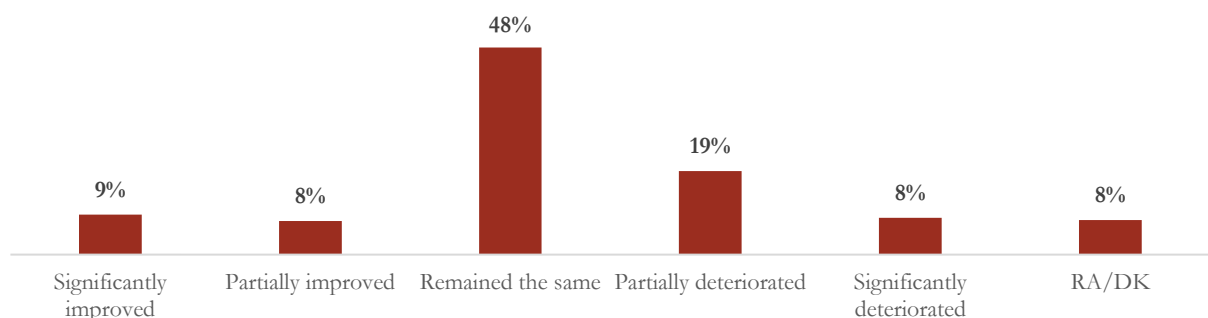
When asked how ready people in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Artsakh are for peaceful coexistence, respondents overwhelmingly stated that none of the three societies are ready at all (Figure 10). The most noteworthy result may be found in the share of respondents who refused to answer or didn’t know how to respond regarding the Azerbaijani society. Indeed, 27.4 percent of respondents in Artsakh fall in this category.

Figure 10: Recently, politicians regularly talk about ‘preparing the societies of Armenia, Artsakh, and Azerbaijan for peace’. In your opinion, how ready are they for peaceful coexistence? (N=402, per question)



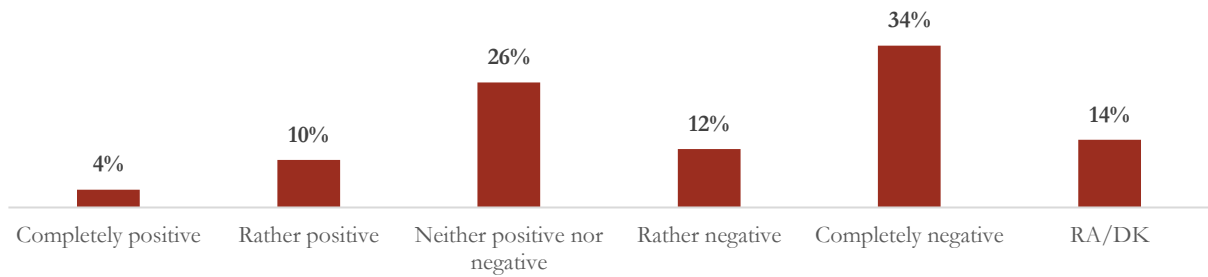
Interestingly, the view of Artsakh people towards Armenia largely remained the same after the 44-day war (47.5%, Figure 11). However, the second most chosen answer was partially deteriorated (19.2%). Finally, the three remaining options received similar scores.

Figure 11: In your opinion, after the 44-day war, the attitude of the Artsakh people towards the Republic of Armenia ... (N=402)



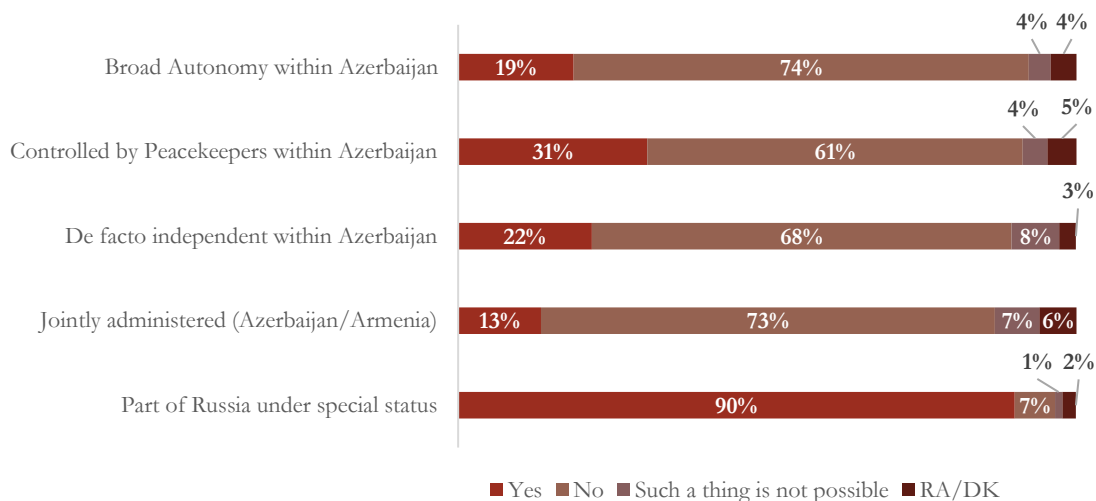
When asked how they feel about interactions between Artsakh and Azerbaijani officials (Figure 12), the most chosen answer was “Completely Negative” (33.8%) while the least was chosen answer was “Completely positive” (3.7%). Noteworthy is that the share of neutral answer (neither positive nor negative) and the share of don’t knows is relatively high (26.1% and 14.2% respectively).

Figure 12: How do you feel about interactions between Artsakh officials with Azerbaijani officials? (n=402)



Finally, we asked if they would continue living in Artsakh in five given scenarios (Figure 13). In all scenarios but one, Artsakh would be fully or partly under Azerbaijan’s control. According to the collected data, most these scenarios were all heavily disfavoured by respondents. The only scenario in which the majority of respondents expressed willingness to remain in Artsakh was if the region was part of Russia under a special status. Importantly here, none of the proposed scenarios included being part of Armenia or independence.

Figure 13: Recently, a number of scenarios related to the status of Artsakh are being discussed. Would you continue to live in Artsakh in the following scenarios: (n=402, per question)



## 4. CONCLUSION

To capture the perceptions of residents in Armenia and Artsakh regarding the Artsakh conflict, CRRCArmenia conducted a survey from November 15<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. Specifically, the study addressed perceptions towards the role of domestic and international actors and the future of the conflict.

The results show that the views of residents in Armenia and Artsakh are broadly in line with each other differing only on some issues. The main outcomes of the study are as follows:

- The results denote a strong opposition to any future scenario in which Artsakh is part of Azerbaijan. Respondents were generally skeptical of Azerbaijan.
- Respondents in both communities mainly favoured an independent Artsakh Republic. The second and third most chosen options were being part of Armenia and being part of Russia under a special status.
- When asked which countries the settlement of the Artsakh conflict depends on, Armenia and Russia were the two most chosen answers.
- Respondents in Artsakh consistently gave higher or more positive scores to Russia than respondents in Armenia.
- Respondents in Artsakh expressed that, generally speaking, there is no change in the perceptions of residents of Artsakh towards Armenia after the 44-day war in 2020.