

# PEOPLE ON WAR

## SNAPSHOT

Between June and September 2016, over 17,000 people in 16 countries were asked about their views on a range of issues relating to war. The survey was carried out by WIN/Gallup International and their partners in the respective countries. Some of the exact questions as asked in the survey are reproduced in the following pages, alongside infographics showing the breakdown of the respondents' responses. A number of the same questions were also asked in the last People in War survey, which was conducted almost 20 years ago in 1999, enabling some comparisons over time to be made.

### KEY FINDINGS

- People living in countries affected by war believe the law matters. Over two thirds of all respondents think it still makes sense to impose limits on war. Almost half of those surveyed in conflict-affected countries still believe the Geneva Conventions prevent wars from getting worse.
- The survey results highlight that violence against health care is unacceptable. Over three quarters of those surveyed believe that attacking hospitals, ambulances and health-care workers is wrong.
- Compared to 1999, there is a higher degree of acceptance amongst people living in the P5 countries and Switzerland that the death of civilians in conflict zones is an inevitable part of war.
- Over the past two decades, there has been a shift in public attitudes towards torture. Two thirds of all those surveyed in 2016 say torture is wrong. But when asked specifically about whether an enemy combatant can be tortured, fewer people disagree than in 1999. In addition, there is a significant increase in the number of people who don't know or prefer not to answer.
- There is a disconnect between public opinion and the policies and actions of States and armed groups. Violations of the laws of war – including the targeting of civilians, humanitarian workers and hospitals – are continuing, yet the survey results clearly show that the majority of people understand that these practices are wrong and that civilians and health-care workers and facilities should be protected.

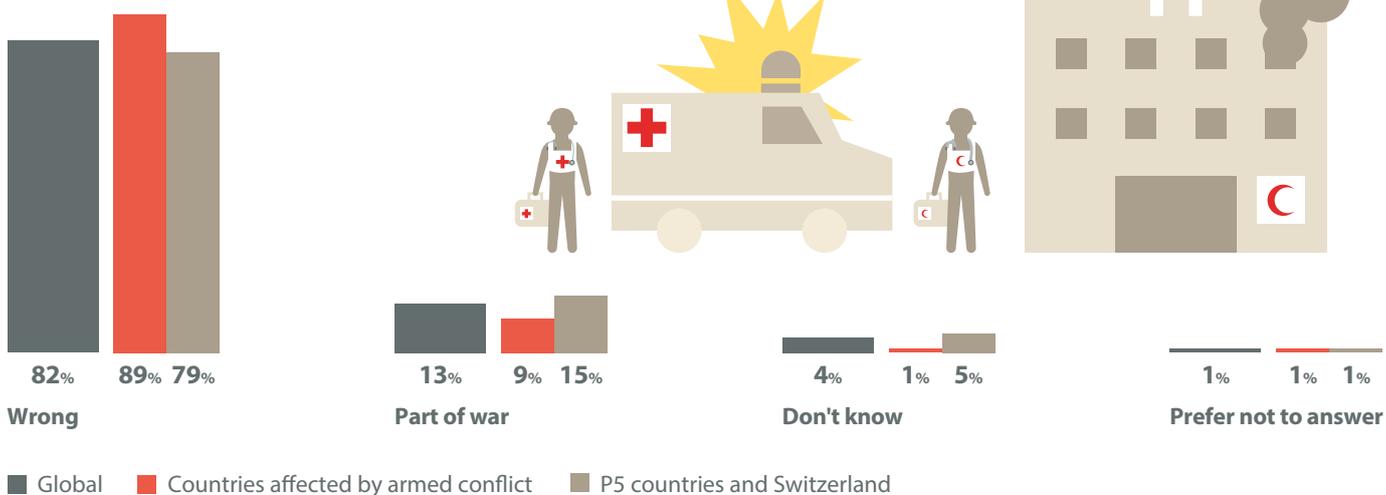
### CALLS TO ACTION

- All parties to a conflict, including non-State armed groups, are reminded of their obligations under international law to respect and ensure respect for human life and dignity. Support for parties to an armed conflict should depend on their compliance with the law.
- States and armed groups need to show greater political will to find ways to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law, including by holding those who violate the law to account.
- The denial of medical treatment to the wounded and sick in armed conflict is a violation of the laws of war. All parties to conflict should bear in mind that the way they behave or treat people, including wounded enemy fighters, matters and can impact the way in which communities recover once the fighting is over.
- Torture is illegal and unacceptable under any circumstances. All parties must respect the law. Torture is an affront to humanity and does not make our societies safer. Those who torture need to be prosecuted and punished.

# HEALTH CARE IN DANGER

## What about attacking hospitals, ambulances and health-care workers in order to weaken the enemy – is that wrong or just part of war?

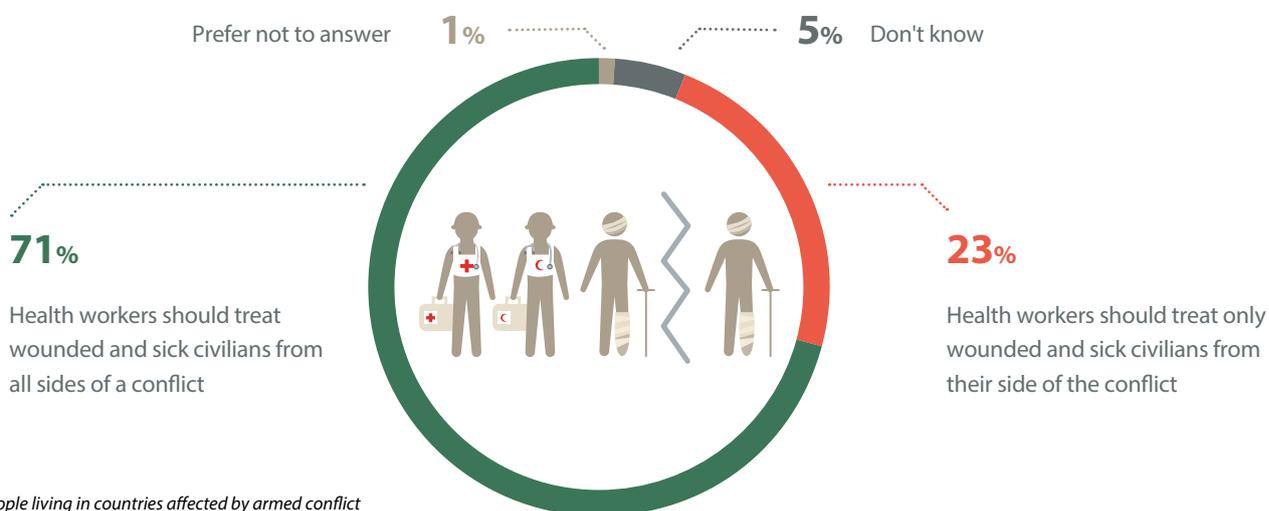
Over 8 out of 10 of all those surveyed, but especially those in conflict-affected countries, believe this is wrong.



## In the context of an armed conflict, what best describes your personal views?

- a. Health workers should treat only wounded and sick civilians from their side of the conflict.
- b. Health workers should treat wounded and sick civilians from all sides of a conflict.

Overall, 7 out of 10 people believe health workers should treat wounded and sick civilians from all sides of a conflict. Yet, at the same time, almost a quarter of those surveyed believe that health workers should only treat those from their own side. This is slightly more the case in conflict-affected countries.\*

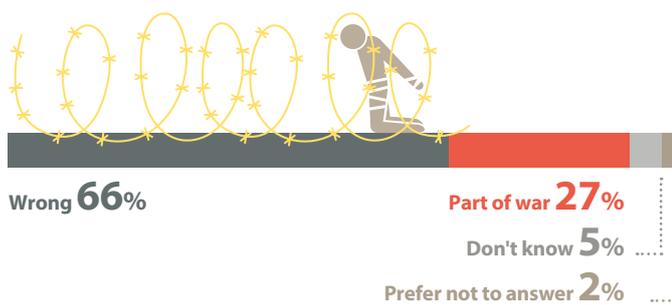


\* 25% of people living in countries affected by armed conflict responded that health-care workers should treat only those from their own side.

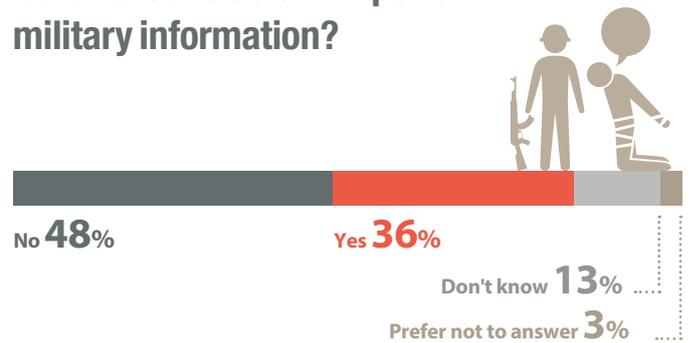
# TORTURE

Two thirds of all those asked say torture is wrong. But, compared to 1999, significantly more people in 2016 believe that an enemy combatant can be tortured for information. Meanwhile, the number of those who don't know or who prefer not to answer has also gone up significantly. In terms of attitudes to torture, the survey revealed a diverse range of views across the 16 countries, as illustrated in the tables below. A significantly higher proportion of people in conflict-affected countries agree that a captured enemy combatant can be tortured.

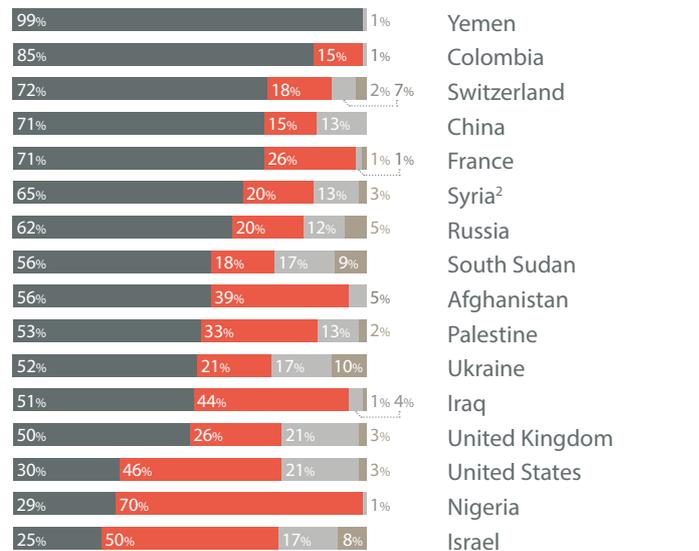
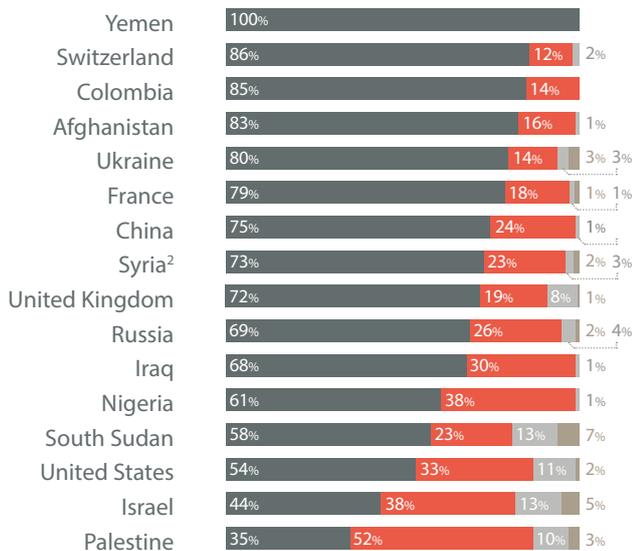
## What about torture – is that wrong or part of war?<sup>1</sup>



## Can a captured enemy combatant be tortured to obtain important military information?



<sup>1</sup> A comparison between 1999 and 2016 is not possible because this question was not asked in the original survey.



<sup>2</sup> Syrians in Lebanon

■ Wrong ■ Part of war ■ Don't know ■ Prefer not to answer

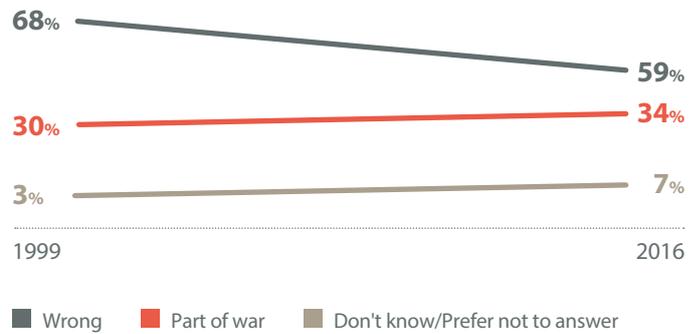
■ No ■ Yes ■ Don't know ■ Prefer not to answer

# BEHAVIOUR IN WAR

## What about attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many civilians would be killed – is that wrong or just part of war?



Almost 6 out of 10 of all respondents think this practice is wrong. This is a decrease of almost 10% since 1999. There is a stark contrast between the views of those in conflict-affected countries, where nearly 8 out of 10 of people believe this is wrong, and those in the P5 countries and Switzerland, where only half of respondents share this view.<sup>1</sup>



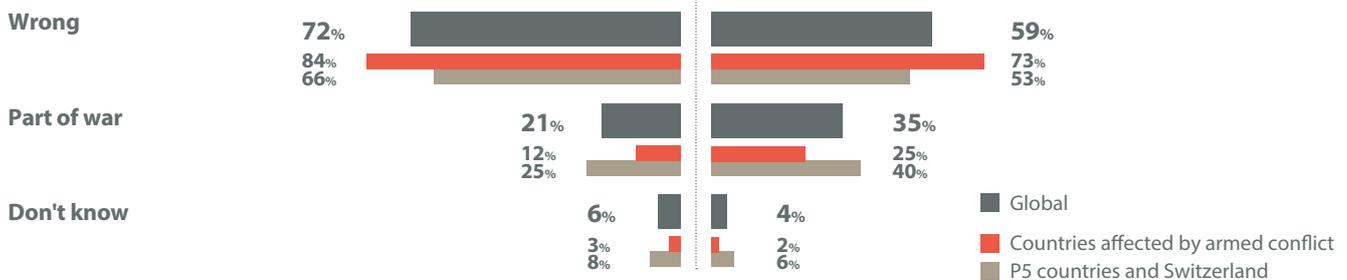
<sup>1</sup> In the 2016 survey, 78% of people living in countries affected by armed conflict and 50% of people living in the P5 countries and Switzerland responded that it was wrong.

## What about attacking religious and historical monuments in order to weaken the enemy – is that wrong or just part of war?

Overall, the majority of respondents believe it is wrong, particularly those in countries affected by conflict.

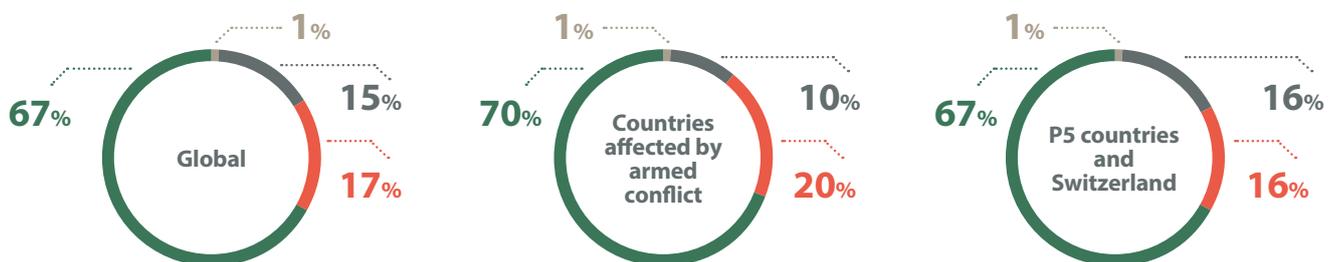
## Humanitarian workers are sometimes injured or killed as they are delivering aid in conflict zones – is that wrong or just part of war?

Overall, only 59% of people believe it is wrong. In the P5 countries and Switzerland, just over half of people surveyed believe it is wrong, while 40% think it is part of war.



## The 1949 Geneva Conventions were adopted just after World War II, nearly 70 years ago. Warfare today is very different, does it still make sense to impose limits on war?<sup>2</sup>

Overall, over two thirds of respondents think it still makes sense to impose limits on war. The number is slightly higher in conflict-affected countries.



<sup>2</sup> This question was asked only to the 67% of people who said they were aware of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.