

Survey Questions: U.S. Public Opinion on Accountable Security Institutions

To better understand the American public's perspectives on the questions of security accountability at home and abroad, [Center for Civilians in Conflict](#) (CIVIC) and the [Stimson Center](#) commissioned [YouGov](#) to conduct a nationally representative survey based on a sample of 1,000 Americans. The survey questions were as follows.

You can find the survey methods and results, raw survey data, and the accompanying report, “(Un)Accountable: Rethinking US Security Sector Accountability Across the Domestic-International Divide,” on CIVIC’s website or by emailing Annie Shiel, CIVIC’s U.S. Advocacy Director, at ashiel@civiliansinconflict.org.

Introduction

We would like to include you as a participant in a study on the topic of accountability, law enforcement, and national security. This survey should take approximately 5 minutes. As a thank you we will award you 500 points when you complete this survey.

Pre-Questions

Overall, my impression of law enforcement in the United States is (very unfavorable, unfavorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, favorable, highly favorable)

Overall, my impression of the U.S. military is (very unfavorable, unfavorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, favorable, highly favorable)

Section 1: What Does Accountability Mean, What Makes it Valuable?

1. *Accountability can mean different things to different people. Please rate how strongly you associate the following terms with accountability from 1 (not strongly) to 10 (very strongly)*

Punishment
Transparency
Explanation
Apology
Behavior change
Repair/Restore

2. *Accountability can include different elements. Please rate the following possible elements of accountability in terms of importance from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important).*

Punishment of those who broke a rule or law
Transparency around actions taken or not taken
Public explanations for an act or failure to act
Compensation to those harmed by an act or failure to act
Public apology or expressions of regret
Changes to policy or procedure that prevent a similar act or failure to act

3. *Accountability is meant to deliver different kinds of benefits. Please rate the following potential benefits of accountability for police and military institutions, from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important)*

Accountability leads to better performance
Accountability leads to positive public perceptions and attitudes about the police or the military
Accountability leads to improved trust in local or federal government
Accountability provides justice for those harmed by an act or failure to act
Accountability helps to prevent similar acts or failures to act in the future

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

4. The government should always hold members of the US military accountable when people are harmed (injured, killed) as a result of illegal conduct that occurs in the course of official duties.
5. Government accountability is important when people are harmed (injured, killed) as a result of US military conduct that occurs in the course of official duties, even when no laws are broken.
6. The government should always hold members of the police (local or federal law enforcement) accountable when people are harmed (injured, killed) as a result of illegal conduct that occurs in the course of official duties.
7. Government accountability is important when people are harmed (injured, killed) as a result of police (local or federal law enforcement) conduct that occurs in the course of official duties, even when no laws are broken.

Section 2: Accountability for Civilian Casualties

Civilians (non-combatants who are not themselves fighters) are sometimes injured or killed as a result of U.S. military operations in armed conflict. Please indicate the level with which you agree or disagree with the following statements (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree):

8. All things being equal, the U.S. military should/should not avoid killing or injuring civilians during military operations.
9. The U.S. government should/should not allow civilians who are injured, or the surviving family members of those who are killed as a result of U.S. operations like airstrikes or ground raids to directly report harm to the U.S. government and to request a response.
10. The U.S. government should/should not provide support (in the form of monetary payments, medical support, or rebuilding a home) to civilians who are incidentally harmed or to the surviving family members of those who are killed as a result of U.S. military operations like airstrikes or ground raids.
11. The U.S. government should/should not express regret and apologize to civilians who are incidentally harmed as a result of U.S. operations like airstrikes or ground raids.
12. According to the casualty monitor [Airwars](#), between 8,000 and 13,000 civilians were killed in Iraq and Syria as a result of US-led coalition operations against ISIS between 2014 and 2017. Do you agree or disagree that President Biden should/should not [randomized] express regret to the people of Iraq and Syria for the death of civilians caused by US operations?

Section 3: US Legitimacy Abroad

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

13. For the United States to play a credible leadership role in the world now and in the future, it must own up to the harms it has caused in the recent past.
14. The United States can be a strong leader and still admit mistakes when it makes them.
15. Public expressions of regret or apology by U.S. leaders only makes the country's adversaries stronger.
16. Accountability for law enforcement officers in the U.S. makes the U.S. a more credible leader on human rights and democracy abroad.
17. The US should be judged for its actions based on its intentions, rather than the effects of its actions.

Section 4: Accountability at Home and Democracy

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

18. The strength of American democracy depends on holding law enforcement officers, including local police and federal law enforcement agents, accountable for their actions.

19. More often than not, police in America are held accountable for their actions.