

Bystanders No More: Summary of Survey Results

"I realized my silence was part of the problem." - Survey respondent

Introduction

Bystanders No More (BNM) was founded after the events of 7 October 2023. BNM supports equal human rights and dignity for Palestinian, Israeli, and all people. To help gain an understanding of why people do or do not show public support for the protection of the human rights of Palestinians, an anonymous survey was distributed to members of BNM's trusted networks. This report provides an account of the results. Future in-depth research that builds on these initial findings is required.

Method

An informal anonymous survey consisting of Likert-scale questions and freeform responses was distributed to the trusted networks of BNM's founding members. The survey was open May-June 2024, and completed by 248 participants. The largest subset lives in the United Kingdom and United States (42.5% combined); is between 35-54 years old (49.3%); predominantly White/Caucasian (62.5%); and largely women (60.5%).

Results

Most survey participants support Palestinian human rights and had said so publicly by the time the case for plausible genocide had been established by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 26 January 2024. Reasons for delaying speaking up, and the proportion of the sample for whom that reason was relevant, are summarised below in order from highest to lowest. Future research with a non-skewed sample is required.

Reason for inaction	Relevance (% of respondents)
I could be accused of being anti-Semitic and/or supporting terrorism. This could create career risk / social risk / legal risk / physical safety risk.	53.5%
The history in the region is too complex for me to take a stance. Both sides have rights, and both sides have made mistakes.	49.6%
I don't use social media for political issues.	47.4%
There's no point in expressing my view because the real decisions are made by powerful vested interests at a much higher level.	45.6%
If I speak out about the human rights of Palestinians, I will need to also have views about related debates (arms exports, how to deal with extremists, self-determination and statehood for both parties, etc.).	43.9%
My main focus is on something else, and my relationships with clients, funders or stakeholders might be damaged if I comment about Palestinians' human rights.	37.7%
There are other countries where people don't have food and water and also where war crimes are happening. I can't take a stand on all of them.	32.9%
If I speak out about Palestinian human rights, it might encourage those who are anti-Semitic.	22.4%
Unfortunately speaking out for Palestinian human rights during this conflict benefits Hamas and may encourage Hamas not to release the hostages.	15.4%
Some commentators say that Palestinians' human rights (such as the right to food and water) are not being infringed and if they are then, Israel isn't the cause. How can I know who to trust?	13.2%
Given what Hamas did on October 7, 2023, Israel has the right to do anything it needs to defend itself.	9.6%

Responses to the open-ended questions showed that when the **enablers** of speaking up (moral outrage and gains in action-promoting knowledge) outweigh the **barriers** (feeling inadequately informed, potential risk, and feeling ineffectual), people find their public voice.



Conclusion

Overall, the results tend to validate observations from social media in terms of what holds people back from speaking up and what finally empowers them to do so. The survey also successfully prompted people within BNM's network to raise a voice they were previously struggling to find. The numeric data from this survey helps quantify the size and spread of trends, and the qualitative data (e.g. freeform text responses) capture some nuances that numbers cannot. These initial findings and feedback are being used by BNM to guide their selection of educational materials and future work in support of human rights that reaches the intended audience of BNM – bystanders. This may include, for example, collaborating with anti-Zionist Jewish groups and workers' unions. [To access the full survey report, click here.](#)