

## **Obama Rated Poorly on Mideast Conflict**

Barack Obama falls short of majority approval for his handling of two of the world's prime hotspots in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll, with an especially weak rating for his work on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Just 39 percent of Americans approve of Obama's handling of the situation in Israel and the Gaza Strip, while more than half, 52 percent, disapprove. The president does better for his response to the downed Malaysian Airlines jetliner in Ukraine; 46 percent approve – but virtually as many, 43 percent, disapprove.

The United States has realized some progress in Ukraine, where European nations this week agreed to join the U.S. in imposing sanctions on Russia. The administration continues to struggle in the Middle East, where U.S. efforts to broker a cease-fire thus far have failed.

Obama's approval rating for handling international affairs overall, at 46 percent, is up by 5 percentage points from his career low last month. But 50 percent still disapprove, unchanged. And the number who strongly approve of Obama's work on foreign affairs has hit an all-time low, 16 percent. Thirty-six percent strongly disapprove; that gap is the largest of his presidency.

There's a similar, 19-point gap in strong sentiment on Obama's handling of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians – 14 percent approve strongly, while 33 percent strongly disapprove. The division on the Ukraine incident is less sharp, but still 9 points net negative in strength of sentiment.

Partisanship is a key driver of these views: Among Democrats, 77, 72 and 65 percent approve, respectively, of Obama's handling of international affairs, the Ukraine situation and the conflict in Gaza and Israel. Among Republicans, those numbers plummet to 13, 20 and 18 percent.

As often is the case, this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that the balance is tilted by independents: Just 37 percent approve of Obama's work on international affairs overall, 41 percent on the Ukraine incident and 31 percent on the Israel-Gaza conflict.

Obama's rating for handling the situation involving Israel and the Palestinians is worse than four such measures for his predecessor, George W. Bush, ranging from a high of 59 percent approval in 2002 to a low of 46 percent in 2003, amid growing doubts about the war in Iraq.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone July 23-27, 2014, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,026 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y.

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ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling [ITEM]?  
Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

7/27/14 - Summary Table

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No op.
	NET	Strongly	Smwt	NET	Smwt	Strongly	
a. International affairs	46	16	29	50	15	36	4
b. The controversy over the shooting down of a Malaysian Airlines passenger plane over Ukraine	46	18	28	43	16	27	12
c. The situation between Israel and the Palestinians	39	14	25	52	19	33	9

Trend:

a. International affairs

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
7/27/14	46	16	29	50	15	36	4
6/1/14	41	19	21	50	13	36	10
3/2/14	47	25	22	45	15	30	8
9/15/13	47	25	22	44	11	33	9
12/16/12	54	32	22	39	11	28	7
9/29/12 RV	49	28	20	48	12	36	3
5/20/12	48	30	18	46	15	31	6
4/8/12	47	24	23	44	11	33	9
1/15/12	49	26	23	44	10	33	7
11/3/11	47	26	21	45	13	31	8
11/15/09	60	30	30	37	13	23	3
10/18/09	57	34	23	36	15	21	7
9/12/09	57	32	25	33	12	21	10
6/21/09	61	NA	NA	32	NA	NA	7
4/24/09	67			27			6
3/29/09	62	"	"	27	"	"	11

b. No trend.

c. The situation between Israel and the Palestinians

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
7/27/14	39	14	25	52	19	33	9

Compare to: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling the situation between Israel and the Palestinians?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
9/13/03	46	43	11
4/30/03	54	33	12
7/15/02	59	34	7
4/21/02	57	35	8

\*\*\* END \*\*\*