



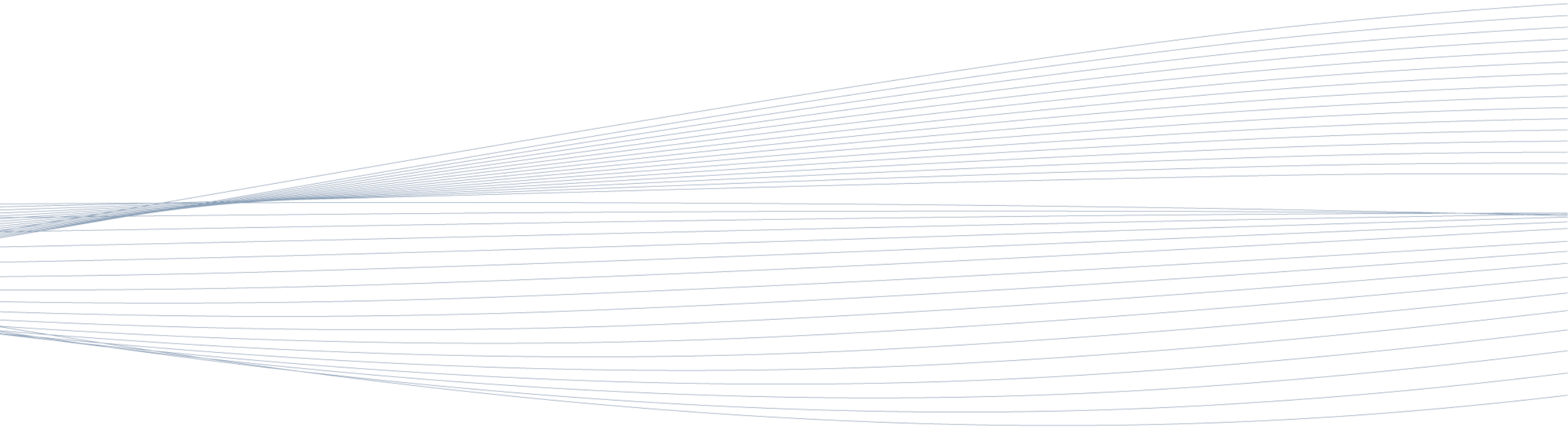
# **IOF Commission to establish a position on scientists and IOF societies operating in conflict zones**

Results from the survey to CNS Members





# Survey information



# Survey information

## Summary



Survey ongoing from September 8<sup>th</sup> to Jan 15<sup>th</sup>



51 respondents representing 46 societies



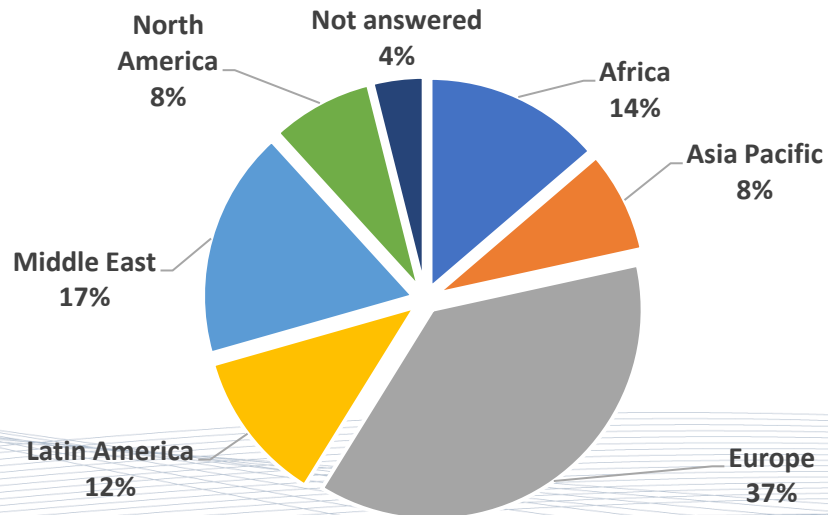
All questions answered but some did not provide narratives to support their answer

# Respondents to the survey

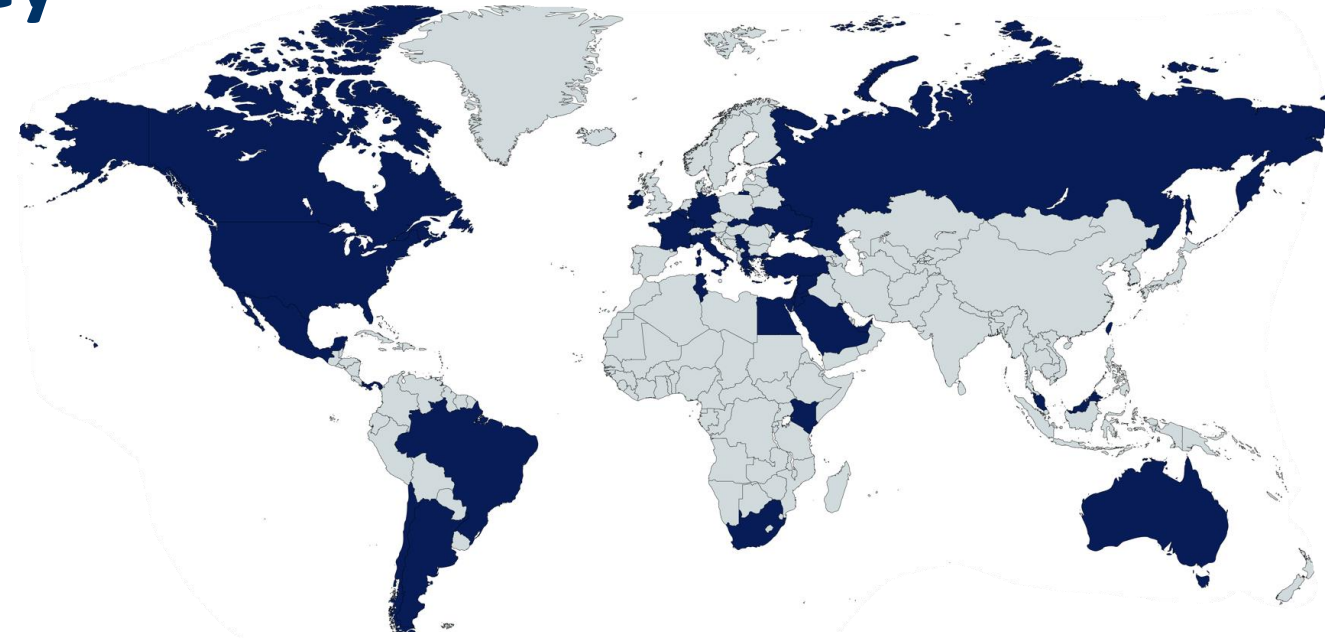
## Information

### Regional representation of respondents

- Africa – 7 respondents
- Asia Pacific – 4 respondents
- Europe – 19 respondents
- Latin America – 6 respondents
- Middle East – 9 respondents
- North America – 4 respondents
- Unknown – 2 respondents



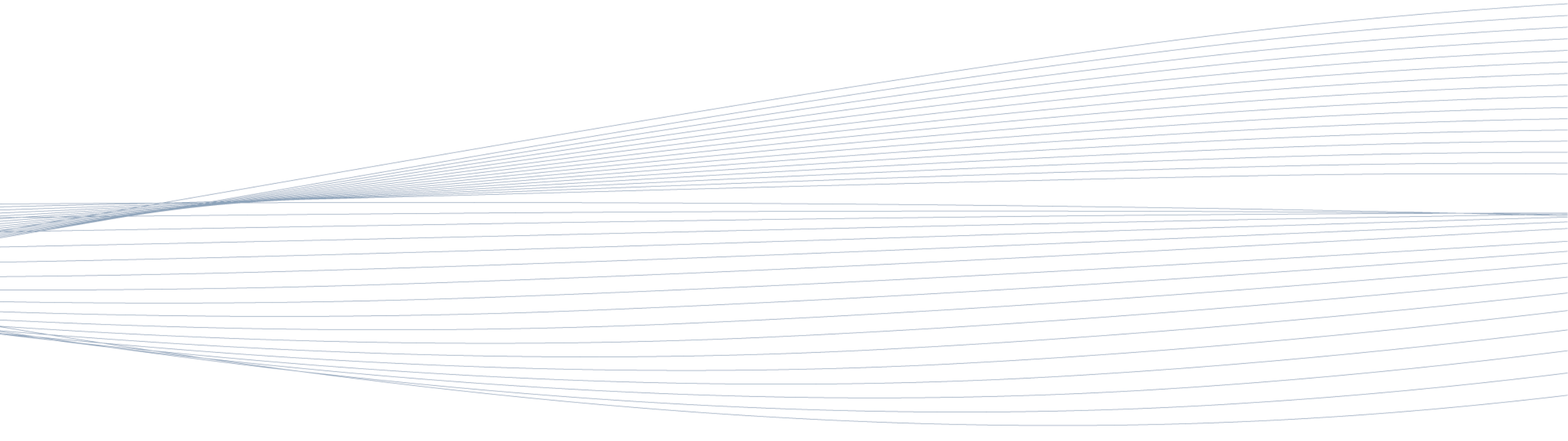
### Country repartition

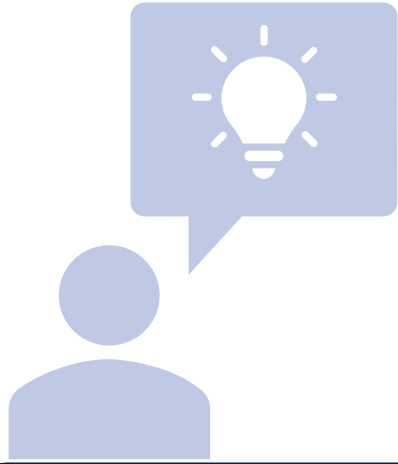


- Argentina (1)
- Australia (2)
- Belgium (1)
- Brazil (1)
- Canada (1)
- Chile (1)
- Cyprus (1)
- Egypt (4)
- France (1)
- Germany (1)
- Greece (1)
- Ireland (1)
- Israel (3)
- Italy (1)
- Jordan (3)
- Kenya (1)
- Kuwait (1)
- Lebanon (1)
- Mexico (2)
- Macedonia (1)
- Malaysia (1)
- Palestine (1)
- Panama (1)
- Russian Federation (2)
- Saudi Arabia (1)
- Serbia (1)
- Slovakia (1)
- South Africa (1)
- Syria (1)
- Taiwan (1)
- Tunisia (1)
- Turkey (3)
- United Arab Emirates (1)
- USA (3)
- Ukraine (1)
- Not provided (2)



# Summary of survey results





## General views

- IOF as a scientific **organisation should not get involved in politics and should remain neutral.**
- Involving IOF in political matters would **undermine its mission.**



## Scientists

- Should be able to **submit papers in IOF journals.**
- Should **keep their position in Editorial Boards.**
- Should **keep on reviewing papers for IOF Journals.**

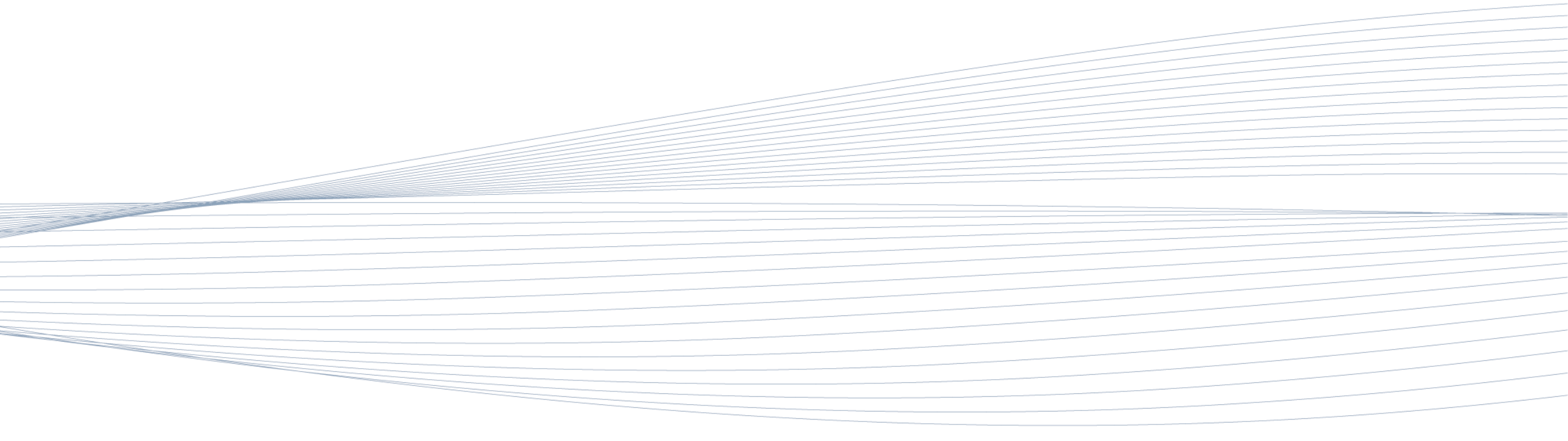


## National Societies

- Should **not be barred from the CNS.**
- Circumstances under which their membership could be revoked would be if they **directly violate human rights or international laws.**

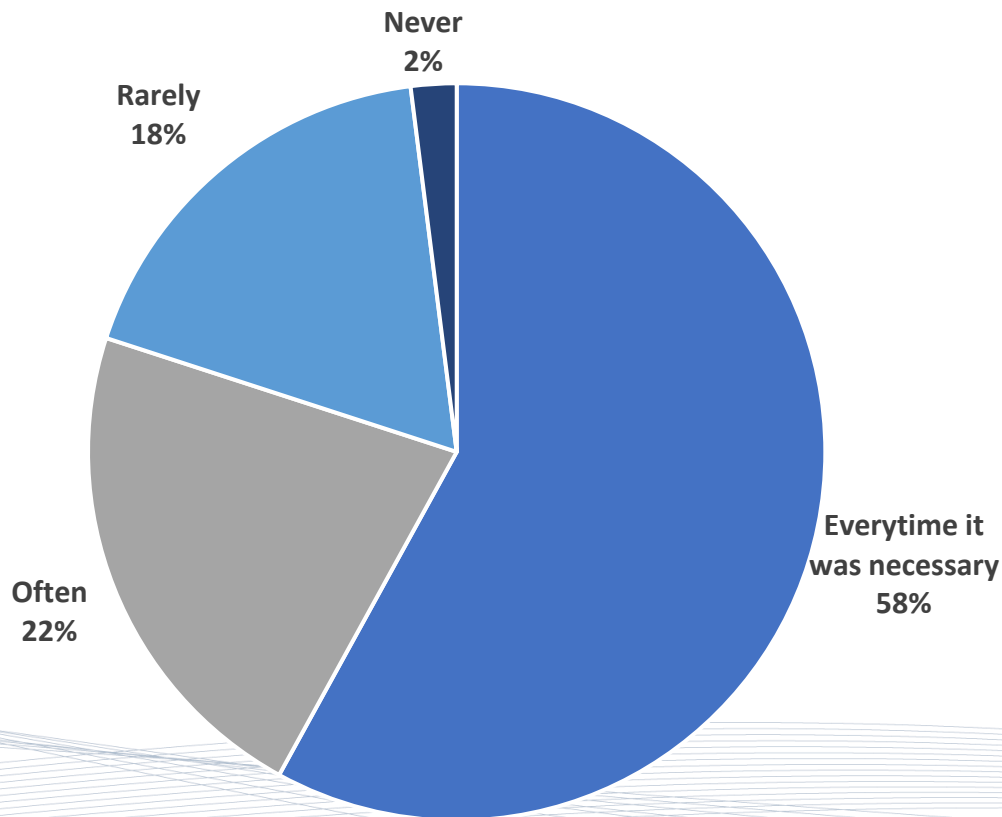


# Detailed results for each survey question



# To what extent have you been able to consult your membership?

Every time it was necessary	Often	Rarely	Never
29	11	9	1



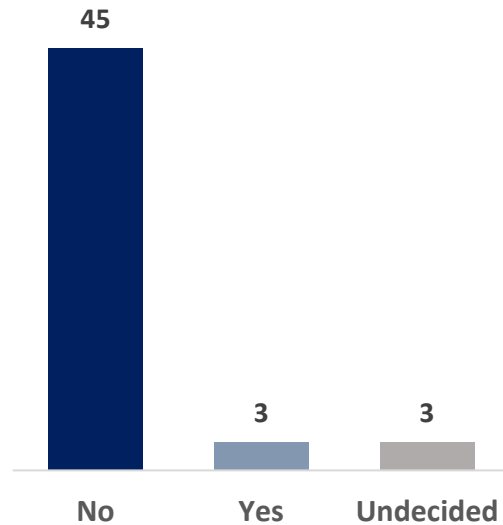
10 narratives were provided to support the answer to this question:

- The **Egyptian Society of OP** has **regular meetings** (monthly) and calls one when necessary
- The **Jordan OP Society Board of Directors** meets **regularly**, and the **JOS members** are, when necessary, **consulted through social media** group messages
- The **Malaysian OP Society ExCo** has gathered specifically to respond to this survey
- **OP Prevention and Age Concern (Kenya)** organisation policy provides for a **members' consultation** to be held **every two months**
- The **Palestinian OP Prevention Society** holds **Executive Board meetings every two months**, and General Board meetings twice a year. When necessary, the General Board is consulted through social media messages.
- The **ISCD** has brought the issue and survey to their **ExCo** to gather their views and answer to this survey
- The **Irish Osteoporosis Society** believes it is **not appropriate to bring up politics/war issues** to their Charity members.
- The **FEMECOT** in Mexico is in constant contact with its membership through different communications means.
- **RAOP & OSTEORUS** have consulted their Board (RAOP) and their members (OSTEORUS) before providing their answers to this survey.



# Should scientists working in a country currently engaged in armed conflict be barred from submitting papers to IOF journals?

No	Yes	Undecided
45	3	3

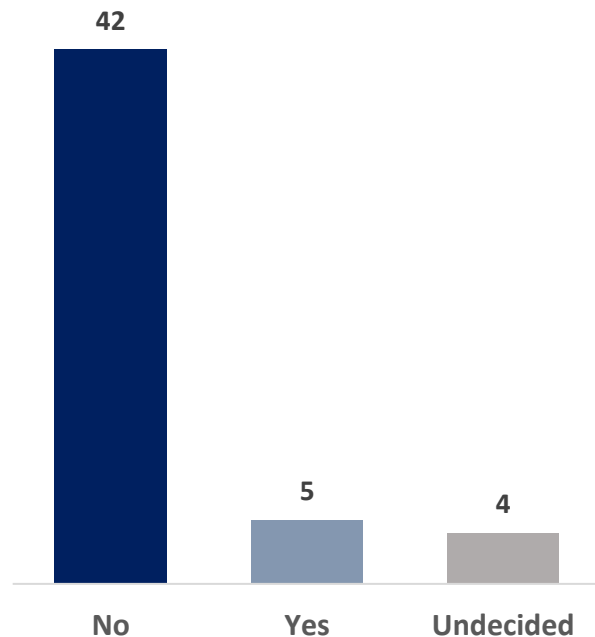


22 respondents provided narratives to support their answers, which could be summarised as follows:

- In the interest of **medicine which should be available for all**, irrespective of political situations, it is **not appropriate to exclude scientists and HCPs** from scientific journals. Furthermore, doing so, **would inevitably impact the patients' care**.
- **Scientific and health issues shouldn't be influenced by political/ armed conflicts**. Scientists and health care professionals are far away from political decisions made by the governments. Sick people all over the world have the right to receive the needed care regardless of their race, sex, age or attitude. As members of a very respected and well-distinguished organisation, we should be fair in our decisions. We refuse to be manipulated by any situation other than health issues.
- It is **necessary to publish research from any country in the world**. If the outcome of the investigations is unique, out of well-designed studies and innovative, we all in the scientific community need to know about it.
- We have the obvious example of Israel occupying Palestine for over 50 years. However, to keep scientific organizations such as IOF out of conflict between different countries and peoples, neither the Palestinian Osteoporosis Society nor its Arab peers have requested to exclude their Israeli colleagues from being active participants in these scientific organizations. **Involving scientific organizations like IOF in the different military and political conflicts will result in irreparable damage to their objectives and weaken their cohesion and structure**.
- This calls for a **separation of the scientific work and contributions of individuals from the geopolitical situations** in their respective countries. We note **that Scientists promote knowledge and development** that is important for human progress and thus should not be hindered by conflicts. Therefore, **barring scientists is tantamount to infringing on their academic freedoms**. And the best alternative is to engage scientists from conflict-affected regions to foster international cooperation and understanding.
- The **IFOB (Israeli National Society)** mentioned that they were shocked by this question, had they do not believe scientists from Israel should be barred from submitting papers in IOF journals in a context where the war was “forced” on their country due to aggression
- **Defining who is engaged in an armed conflict is difficult at best** and will result in the foundation taking sides or at least **being perceived as taking sides**. How does an organization determine when active support, providing weapons or intelligence, becomes engagement? When is there enough proof to establish a country is engaged, even if the country denies engagement? Tough questions to answer without making definitive statements. **Banning scientific submissions when those submitting are not submitting on behalf of a country seems unrelated to the conflict**.

# Should scientists working in a country currently engaged in armed conflict be banned from editorial boards of IOF journals?

No	Yes	Undecided
42	5	4



14 respondents provided a narrative to support their answer, most of them having the same justifications as the previous question.

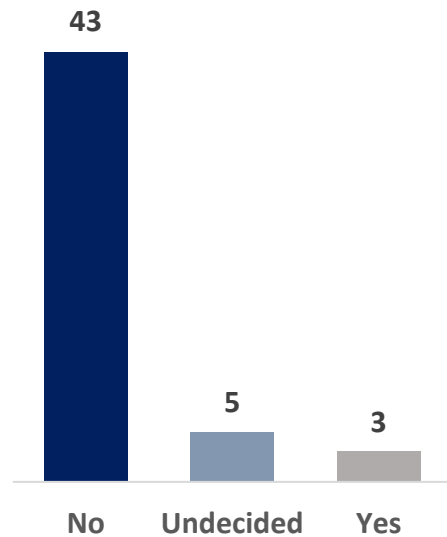
Below is a sample of the narratives provided:

- This is **up to the editorial board to decide which members are accepted** or not. It all depends on the person, who is usually a well-decorated scientist. *(This person responded "Undecided" to the question)*
- **Editorial Boards should be politically neutral** and not attract any possible adverse publicity due to the political views of their members.
- **Selection of scientists for Editorial Boards is based on their qualifications, experiences, and commitment to upholding the standards of scientific integrity regardless of their country of origin** or the challenges they may face due to armed conflicts.
- The position of IOF and its CNS members should be to **stay away from issues related to complicated global armed conflicts**. *(This person responded "Undecided" to the question)*
- Members of Editorial Boards from a specific country **are not responsible for the conflict and their work does not depend on their country's situation**.
- **The Ukrainian Osteoporosis Society** expressed that only scientists from the aggressor's countries should be banned from editorial boards.
- **If the scientists** of these countries themselves **do not participate in political conflicts and cannot influence the situation**, their **membership in public and scientific international organizations cannot and should not depend on the momentary political situation**.

# Should scientists working in a country currently engaged in armed conflict be barred from reviewing papers for IOF journals?

12 persons provided a narrative to support their answer, most of them having the same justifications as the previous questions. Below is a sample of the narrative provided:

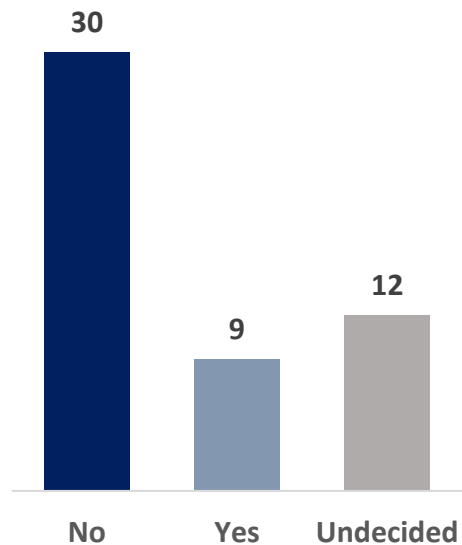
No	Yes	Undecided
43	5	3



- Scientists **should not be penalised for their politicians' actions**.
- Normally, the **selection of reviewers for scientific papers is primarily based on their expertise, knowledge and qualifications** in the relevant field of study. Barring scientists because of their geographical locations or geopolitical situations of their country can only be **discriminatory or counterproductive** which an organization like IOF cannot afford. Furthermore, scientific research is normally enriched by diverse perspectives and experiences. This diversity enhances the quality and robustness of peer review. Scientists in challenging situations and environments face extraordinary challenges in pursuit of their research goals. **Engaging them in the peer-review process can provide support and recognition for their efforts**. In Africa, where conflicts erupt unexpectedly in any country, we have witnessed scientists facing practical challenges like limited access to resources, and funds, internet disruption, and safety concerns for themselves and their families. An organization like IOF should be mindful of such challenges and support such scientists accordingly.
- Reviewers of countries engaged in armed conflict **are not responsible for the conflict** and their work does not depend on their country's situation.
- It was mentioned that to ensure it can work it would be wise **not to assign manuscripts submitted by scientists from a country involved in armed conflict for review by scientists from a country that is on the other side of that armed conflict**.
- The Ukrainian society re-iterated that this **can be done only for scientists from the aggressor's country**.
- There are always armed conflicts somewhere on Earth. **Professional medical associations should stay out of these conflicts**. IOF is not a political party or organization. And thus, **IOF should not be a platform for discussions other than professional ones**.

# If scientists working in a country currently engaged in armed conflict supported directly or indirectly the conflict, would this change your views on the previous questions?

No	Yes	Undecided
30	9	12



## Narrative from “Yes” respondents:

- If they **directly support** and thus agree with the conflict, it would be difficult to reconcile that to a doctor's mission to not harm. They then should not be able to submit or review papers for the journals.
- We believe in the **independence of thinking**, in case they support war instead of pacific solutions, it justifies for them not to be involved with journals.
- This requires **tangible proof of engagement**, not just suspicion.

## Narrative from “Undecided” respondents:

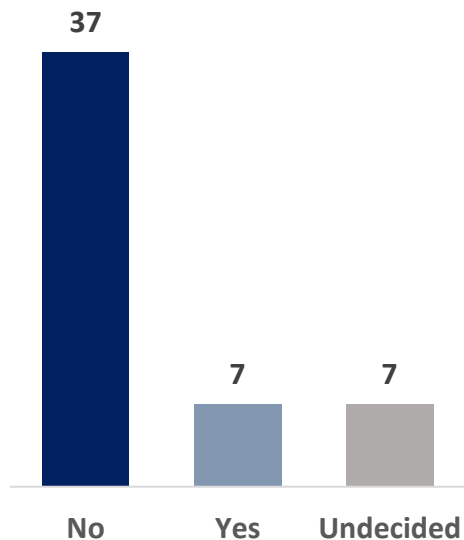
- **Depending on the definition of "supporting"**
- **Indirect support is difficult to estimate in countries engaged in armed conflict**, especially in circumstances of limited freedom for expressing different points of view. Support of the conflict is certainly a different situation.
- **Difficult to prove**, and to assess which side is in the wrong.

## Narrative from “No” respondents:

- Scientific organizations adhere to the official position of their governments in most countries. It is common knowledge that scientists and doctors from many countries actively serve in the military or as reservists. Therefore, **they certainly cannot refuse military orders to avoid being sanctioned by the authorities of their countries.**
- One could **reconsider if the scientist is charged with major accusations such as war crimes.** In that case, all the scientist's ethics could be questionable, as medicine is first about not harm.
- Whether a scientist should be suspended from International scientific boards for supporting war -especially a liberation uprising and war against neo-colonialism, is a **matter that involves legal, ethical and organizational considerations.** It is essential to **strike a balance between upholding the principles of free expression and adhering to the rules and values of the scientific community** and the specific organization in question. Decisions should be made with **careful consideration of individual circumstances** and following established procedures. This calls for all **scientific organizations to have an engagement policy when operating in countries engaged in war** or conflicts. For us, we have one in place and can be shared with other societies or assist in developing this kind of policy if called to do so.
- This requires the foundation to make **complex and difficult determinations of involvement and what level of opposition is sufficient to trigger disqualification or an exception.**

# If scientists working in a country currently engaged in armed conflict opposed directly or indirectly the conflict, would this change your views on the previous questions?

No	Yes	Undecided
37	7	7



Most narratives provided by respondents were the same as the ones of the previous question. Below are examples of other narratives provided by respondents to support their answer.

## Narrative from “Undecided” respondents:

- These issues are **political, complicated, and sensitive matters** in which scientific societies and organizations should **NOT** be involved.

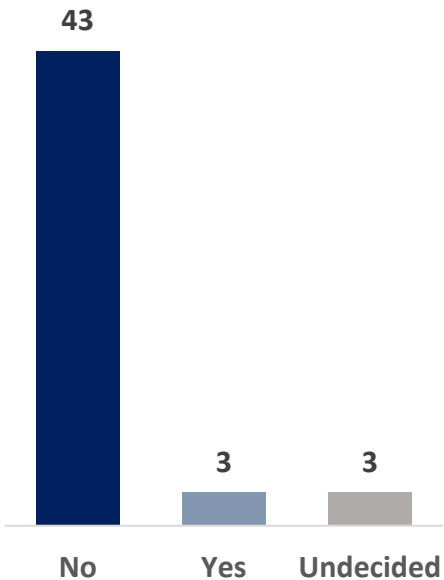
## Narrative from “No” respondents:

- All the **scientists opposing armed conflict and working towards peace align more closely with the ethical values of many international scientific organizations** which often prioritize peace cooperation and the advancement of knowledge. Those **scientists who work to mitigate the impact of conflict resolution can bring valuable insights and expertise to the scientific community**. International organizations like IOF values contributions to humanitarian efforts and those opposing conflict may be engaged in humanitarian work that aligns well with IOF.
- Scientific societies **must maintain issues unrelated to their mission out of their definition and activities**.

# Should IOF member societies in a country currently engaged in an armed conflict be barred from the CNS?

16 persons provided a narrative to support their answer, below is a sample of the narrative provided:

No	Yes	Undecided
43	3	3



- We believe that barring societies operating in a country currently engaged in armed conflict from the CNS will **disadvantage them in their quest for continuous knowledge in their speciality fields.**
- If doing so, IOF will have to bar a significant number of CNS members, according to the Global Conflict Tracker, as there are currently 27 ongoing conflicts worldwide.
- The membership in the CNS should be based on the organization's commitment to scientific excellence, ethical conduct and adherence to the principles and goals of IOF. Engaging organizations from armed conflict regions can foster collaboration, knowledge exchange and international partnerships which is critical for advancing research and addressing global challenges. Engaging with IOF, the CNS can benefit from valuable opportunities for collaboration, capacity building, access to resources, evacuation logistics, asylum and many more.
- These issues are **political, complicated, and sensitive matters** in which scientific societies and organizations **should NOT be involved..**
- **The war-torn population still needs healthcare,** although osteoporosis may not be a high-priority condition in these situations.

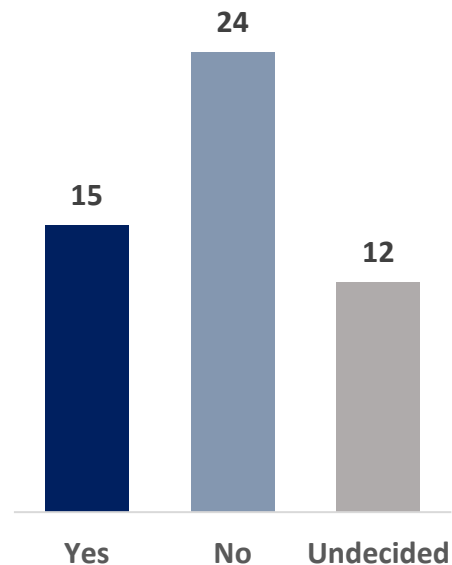
For the ones who answered "Yes" to this question, the following answers were provided regarding the **conditions for re-institution:**

- **Formal end of the conflict** and full resolution of **peace terms and conditions** that would be **accepted by the victim country and European Union.**
- **No more active engagement in war**



# If the society working in a country currently engaged in armed conflict supported directly or indirectly the conflict, would this change your views on the previous questions?

Yes	No	Undecided
15	24	12



## Narrative from “Yes” respondents:

- In such circumstances, it warrants a careful review of the CNS membership status. To arrive at a fair and transparent evaluation, the IOF should have clear ethical guidelines and policies in place that outline expectations for the behaviour of CNS. If a CNS action violates these standards or international law, it may be grounds for reconsidering the CNS membership.
- If the society is engaged in practices against human rights or international laws.
- **Independency of thinking**, in case they support war instead of pacific solutions, we think has to be removed

## Narrative from “Undecided” respondents:

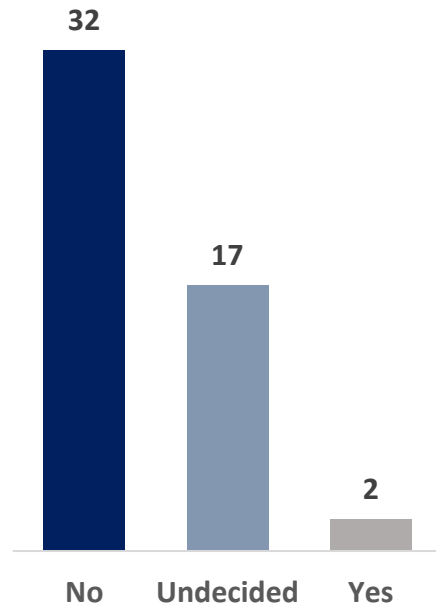
- Depending on the **definition of “supporting”**- if direct support, it could be reconsidered, if indirect, this is hard to assess.
- Sensitive topic as societies may be **punished by the regime for not supporting /engaging in the conflict.**

## Narrative from “No” respondents:

- It's **impossible to know and unlikely** that a medical scientific society supported the conflict.
- Scientific organizations **adhere to the official position of their governments** in most countries. It is common knowledge that scientists and doctors from many countries actively serve in the military or as reservists. Therefore, they **certainly cannot refuse military orders to avoid being sanctioned by the authorities** of their countries.
- If IOF uses the results of the survey to formalize a position with respect to the Ukrainian request, then we also request that similar steps be taken for all other ongoing global conflicts.

# Are there other special circumstances that would modulate your views?

No	Undecided	Yes
32	17	2



4 persons provided a narrative to support their answer, below is a sample of the narrative provided:

Narrative for the “Yes” respondent:

- If similar steps are taken for all other ongoing global conflicts – (this one mentioned in the previous question that if IOF uses the results of the survey to formalise a position regarding the request of the Ukrainian society, then they also request similar steps to be taken for all other ongoing global conflicts).

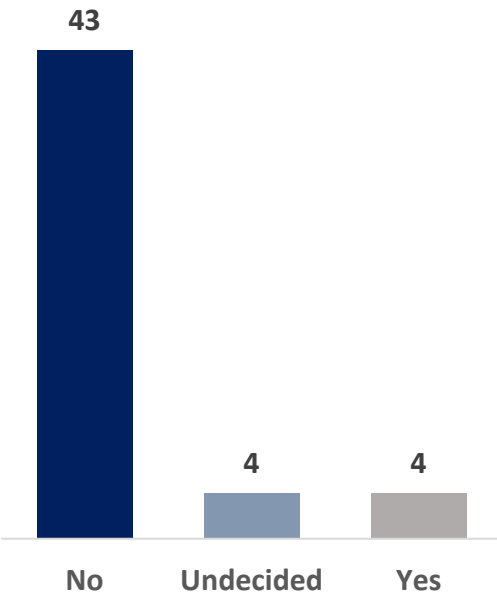
Narrative for the “No” respondents:

- Science should not be at any time part of a political conflict.
- We really think these issues must be maintained separately.



# Does your organisation have a policy regarding relationships with countries currently engaged in armed conflict? If so, please provide details

No	Yes	Undecided
43	4	4



12 respondents provided a narrative to support their answer, below is a sample of the narrative provided:

- Our mission is clearly defined in our statutes and does **not contemplate assuming national or international political positions.**
- Early this year the Osteoporosis Prevention and Age Concern (OPAC), in partnership with the Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel (IBSI), worked on a **collaborative population bone health development program for implementation in 13 Sub-Saharan African countries.** It was, therefore, imperative for the partnership to work on “**A comprehensive Bone Health Awareness Engagement Policy for Terrorism, War, or Conflict-affected regions in Sub-Saharan Africa,**” a working document that is available at your request. *(OPAC Kenya)*
- Being part of the Arab world any relation ( scientific, political, financial, sports ) with Israel is banned due to its occupation of Palestine. This is determined by the Kuwait government
- We have our Ethic Code, but it does not contain any issues about country in conflict



Our vision is a world without fragility fractures,  
in which healthy mobility is a reality for all.

Join us

