

# 90s

Confrontation or Denial?

analysis of the research data on the attitudes of  
the citizens of Montenegro regarding the 1990s

Podgorica, 2025

# Nineties – Confrontation or Denial?

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The graphic features the text '90s' in a bold, sans-serif font. The '9' and 's' are black, while the '0' is red. A black banner with white text is positioned diagonally across the red '0'.

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# Introduction and Methodology

In the memories of our society, the 1990s were predominantly shaped by negative emotions. While on the international stage it was a period of reintegration, technological and scientific progress, for Montenegro, it was a difficult period of crisis during which it became part of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, even though there were no direct war actions on its territory. Collective memory was shaped by the consequences of the conflicts in the war-affected countries of the region, leaving scars in every household through mobilisations, rivers of refugees, economic uncertainty...

Additionally, those scars were deepened by war crimes committed on the territory of Montenegro from 1991 to 1999 - among which are the cases of *Morinj*, *Deportation*, *Klapuh*, *Bukovica*, and *Kaluđerski Laz* - as well as civilian casualties during the NATO bombings, and the killings of Montenegrin citizens outside its borders, such as those in the train hijacking in Štrpci or the Lora camp. The attack on Dubrovnik in October 1991 remains a black mark in the modern history of Montenegro.

A light point of that dark period was anti-war movements and individuals, which provided strong and brave resistance. Despite them, Montenegrin society still shows signs of collective amnesia, and institutional answers on confrontation with the past remain weak and superficial. The lack of wider political will, and the absence of comprehensive educational and memorial policies, as well as very limited progress in processing war crimes, contributed to that. Yes, neither more than three decades later, we do not have a consensus regarding issues of civilisational character.

With the aim of examining the attitudes of citizens regarding the 1990s, the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) conducted several studies in recent years, one of which was carried out in January 2025. With expert support from the DAMAR Institute, it was implemented within the project *Education for the Future – Transitional Justice for Reconciliation*. The findings of this research confirmed the presence of key weaknesses in our memory, the unwillingness to confront the past, and a chronic tendency to suppress it.

Data were collected from 21 to 29 January 2025, using the 2023 population census as the sampling frame. The target group consisted of adult citizens of Montenegro; the stratified sample included 1,000 respondents at a three-stage level (first by regions, then by the method of random household selection, and finally by the "nearest birthday" method for selecting the respondent within the household). The CAPI method was used, and interviews lasted an average of 10 minutes each. The sample consisted of 50.9% women and 49.1% men, with representation of all age groups: 18–24 years (15.9%), 25–34 (17.2%), 35–44 (18.6%), 45–54 (19.9%), 55–64 (14.3%), and 65+ (14.1%).

This was accompanied by a diverse educational structure, with citizens without education making up 0.5% of the total number of respondents, those with primary education 4.9%, those with secondary education 68.3%, those with higher education 13.1%, and those with university education 13.2%. The national structure consisted of Montenegrins at 46.7% of the sample, then Serbs with 32.2%, Bosniaks with 9.7%, Muslims with 5%, Albanians with 5.6%, and others with 0.8%.

The research outcomes offer valuable insight into dominant narratives, the level of awareness, readiness to confront the past, as well as the degree of public trust in domestic justice institutions and memory politics. They show that this issue remains very relevant, but that it is not being addressed seriously and systematically enough.

To enable tracking of trends and comparison of results related to specific topics, the author team sought to provide a comparative overview of the findings of this research with previous studies from 2020 and 2021, conducted on the general population, as well as with the 2024 study, which focused on youth aged 18 to 25.

# Associations with the 1990s

The 1990s often evoke negative thoughts, which is evident from the dominant responses related to the *first association* when this period is mentioned.

Namely, respondents predominantly mention war (44%) as their first association with the 1990s, followed by bombing (10.5%) and then inflation (8.7%). This period often awakens painful memories, is associated with the breakup of Yugoslavia (3.3%), poverty (3.1%), unrest (2.7%), difficult times (2.5%), and a general feeling of sadness and suffering (1.8%). For a certain number of respondents, the mention of the 1990s directly brings to mind Srebrenica (1.7%), fear (1.2%), sanctions (1.0%), SFRY (0.8%), and FRY (0.5%).

The only positive example that stands out is music, although only 3.9% of respondents mention it as their first association, while 8.1% have no specific association.

According to the study *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024)*<sup>1</sup>, the majority of young people have a negative attitude toward the 1990s: 44.2% gave ratings of 1 or 2 (negative feelings), while 37.4% have a neutral attitude, rating this period with a 3 on a scale from 1 to 5. A smaller number associate the 1990s with positive feelings: 18.4% rated this period with a 4 or 5. The average rating of 2.63 indicates a moderately negative feeling toward those years.

## How important is the 1990s period for our society today?

The dominant belief (60%) is that the 1990s are, in a certain sense, significant for today's society – about 27.3% of respondents consider this significance considerable, 19.4% partial, and 13.1% crucial. Around 30% have a neutral attitude, while slightly more than one-tenth (11%) believe the 1990s are not important.

In comparison with the study *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024)*<sup>2</sup>. On the same question, there is a noticeable decrease of nearly 20% regarding the assessment of the significance of the 1990s for today's society. The data from this research indicate that the majority of young people (79.6%) consider the 1990s important for our society, while assessing that significance differently, from crucial (3%), considerable (19%), and moderate (26.4%), to those who mark it as somewhat important (31.2%). It is important to note that this research involved exclusively young people aged 18 to 25, so it can be concluded that younger generations are more willing to acknowledge the importance of this period in shaping the present, although about one-fifth of them believe that those years have no significance today.

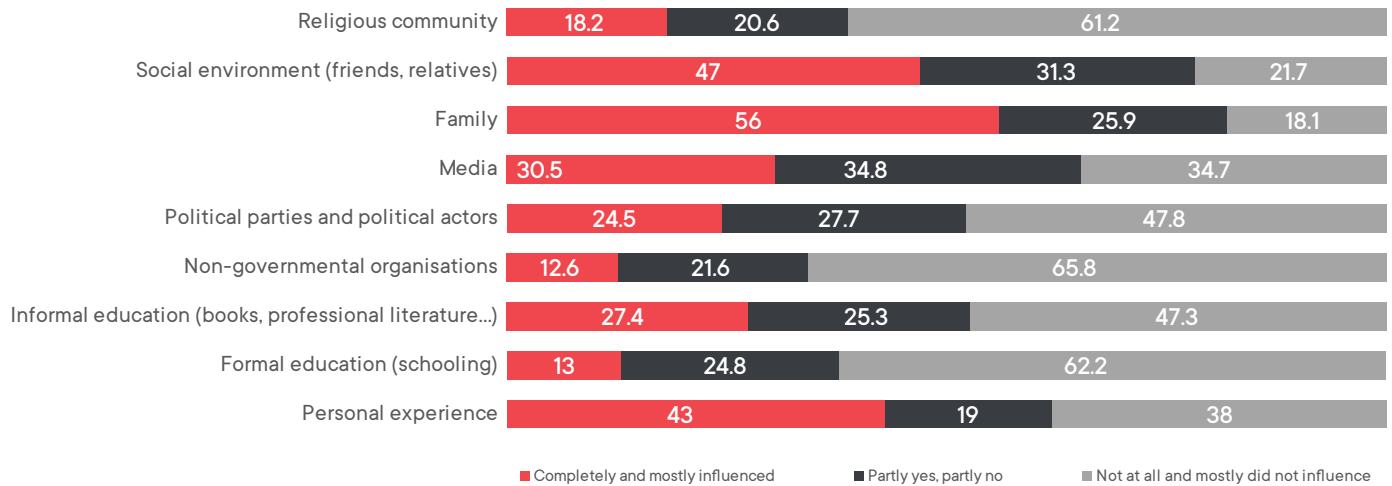
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1 *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024)*, available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istravanje.pdf>

2 *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024)*, available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istravanje.pdf>

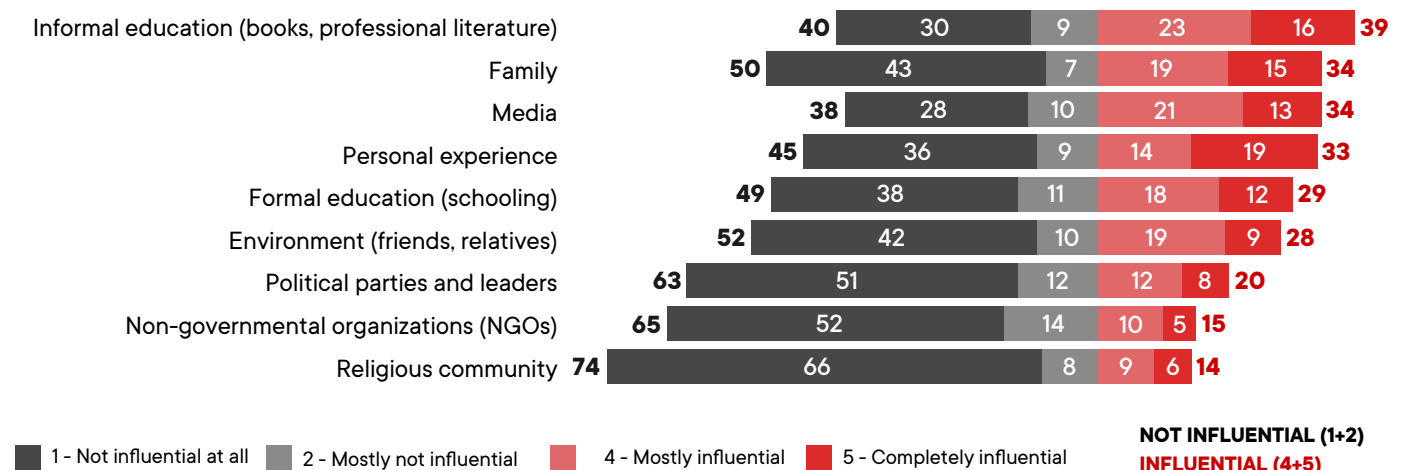
# What influenced the formation of your opinion about the events of the 1990s?

The attitudes of citizens toward the events of the 1990s were shaped by different factors. The greatest influence was had by family, environment, personal experience, and the media, while formal education, non-governmental organisations, and religious communities had significantly less impact. This indicates the dominant strength of personal contacts and immediate surroundings in the perception of the 1990s, compared to institutional or less direct sources.



Graph 1: To what extent have the following factors influenced the formation of your opinion about the events of the 1990s? (2025)

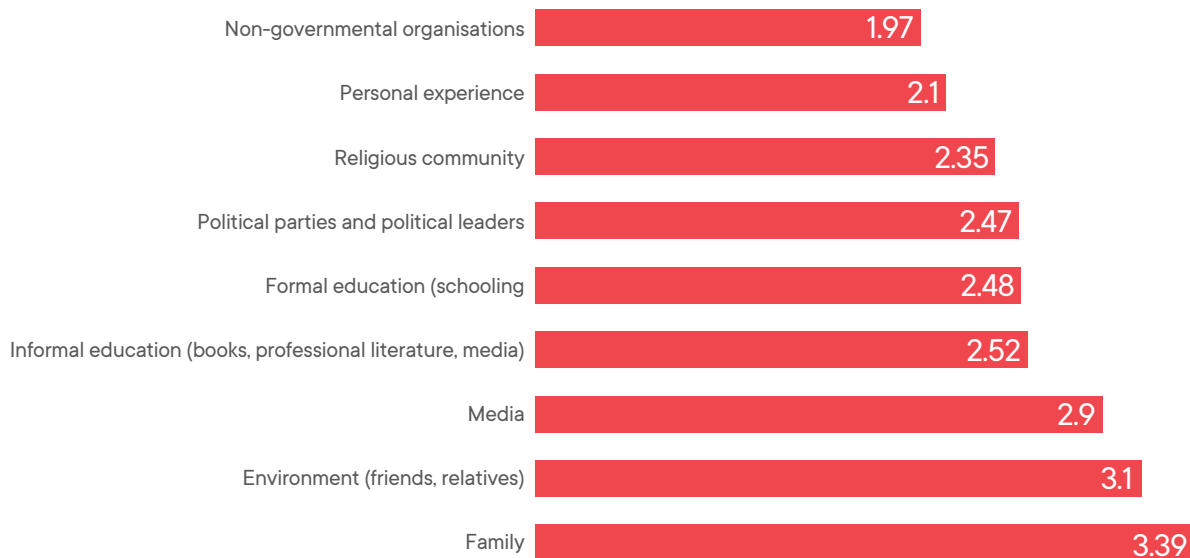
Data from 2021, from the study *Confronting the Past for the Future (2021)*<sup>3</sup>, indicate similarities.



Graph 2: How much are the next factors influenced by your thinking about the events of the 90s? (2021)

<sup>3</sup> Facing the Past for the Sake of the Future (2021), available at: [https://media.cgocce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranciciona-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgocce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranciciona-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

And data from the study *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia* are along the same lines:<sup>4</sup>



Graph 3: To what extent have the following factors influenced the formation of your opinion about the events of the 1990s? (2024)

By comparing data from these three studies, it can be concluded that family, media, personal experience, and environment (friends and relatives) are key factors in acquiring knowledge about the 1990s.

## Formal education and learning about the 1990s

Formal education should have a decisive role in learning history by enabling a systematic approach to studying past events, based on research methods and verifiable sources. In the context of the 1990s, it should be structured to allow young people to view events from different perspectives, understand their causes and consequences, and develop critical thinking. Otherwise, there is a risk that history will be interpreted through subjective filters and personal interpretations, which can lead to distorted or one-sided views of important events that have shaped today's society.

To the question "Should young people learn about the 1990s during formal education?", 63.8% gave a positive answer, 19.4% a negative one, and 16.8% had no opinion or refused to answer this question.

For comparison, according to the study *Confronting the Past for the Future* (2021)<sup>5</sup>, 77% of citizens believed that young people should learn about the 1990s during formal education, while 17% held the opposite opinion.

4 *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia* (2024), available at <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>

5 *Facing the Past for the Sake of the Future* (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Trancionapravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Trancionapravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

The findings of the study, *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia* (2024)<sup>6</sup> indicate that 50.8% of young people believe it is necessary to learn about the 1990s through formal education, 30.8% were against this view, and 18.4% had no opinion.

To the question "Did you learn about the events of the 1990s during your formal education?", only 27% of respondents answered affirmatively, while 62.6% gave a negative answer, with 10.4% having no opinion.

On the other hand, in 2021, through the study *Confronting the Past for the Future*<sup>7</sup>, four out of five citizens in Montenegro (80%) stated that they did not learn about the events of the 1990s during their formal education, while 17% said they did.

The study *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia* (2024)<sup>8</sup> indicated that the dominant majority (55.2%) did not have the opportunity to learn about the events of the 1990s during their formal education, while less than one-third (30.4%) stated that they learned about that period in school.

Opinions regarding satisfaction with the topics covered about the 1990s in schools are divided, with a slight majority of dissatisfied (43.4%) compared to satisfied (42.2%).

In 2021<sup>9</sup>, these opinions were also divided, with a majority of dissatisfied (55%) compared to satisfied (40%), while among young people in 2024,<sup>10</sup> those satisfied with the way the topic is covered prevailed (46.1%), whereas 38.2% were not satisfied.

## The anti-war movement in Montenegro

*"Like every modern society, Montenegrin society has fundamental values on which it is based. These are the values from which the ideas that underpin our modern state system are formed. Besides tolerance, proclaimed and built during the principality/kingdom of Montenegro, and antifascism on whose foundations Montenegrin statehood was restored in 1945, key values also include the anti-war movement, which arose as a response to the fascistization of Montenegrin society at the beginning of the 1990s and the war hysteria that led thousands of Montenegrin citizens into senseless war adventures. The beginning of the anti-war movement in Montenegro is linked both to the formulation of ideas resisting war-mongering nationalism and to the beginnings of post-communist democratisation of Montenegrin society. Thus, three decades after its inception, the ideas of the anti-war movement remain a key segment of a significant part of the political structures in our country. However, to understand the anti-war movement, it is necessary to understand the events that led to its formation,"*<sup>11</sup> assesses historian Miloš Vukanović.

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6 *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia* (2024), available at <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>

7 *Facing the Past for the Sake of the Future* (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

8 *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia* (2024), available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>

9 *Confronting the Past for the Sake of the Future* (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

10 *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia* (2024), available at <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>

11 Vukanović, M. (2024). *The Anti-War Movement in Montenegro*. Fokalizator, available at: <https://fokalizator.me/antiratni-pokret-u->

Almost half of the respondents (45.7%) have heard of the anti-war movement of the 1990s in Montenegro, while 43.2% state that they are not familiar with it. A further 11.1% either have no clear opinion or declined to answer.

According to the *Public Opinion Research on Transitional Justice (2020)*<sup>12</sup>, just over one-third of the population (37%) stated that anti-war movements and activists existed in Montenegro during the 1990s. A quarter of respondents (25%) held the opposite view, while 38% were undecided.

In the previously mentioned 2021 study<sup>13</sup>, in response to the question "Have you heard of the anti-war movement of the 1990s?" opinions were divided: 43% said they had heard of the movement, 53% said they had not, and 4% declined to answer.

Similarly, the same question was posed to young people in 2024.<sup>14</sup> Only 12.4% of them had heard of the anti-war movement of the 1990s in Montenegro, while an exceptionally high percentage – 68.8% – lacked that knowledge, and 18.8% were unable to give a clear answer on the matter.

## Do the ideologies and policies that led to armed conflicts and crimes during the 1990s still exist in Montenegro today?

The prevailing belief (54.7%) is that the ideologies and policies that led to the armed conflicts and crimes of the 1990s still exist in Montenegro. On the other hand, 22.5% of respondents think they are no longer present, while 22.8% have no opinion or declined to answer.

In the 2021 survey<sup>15</sup>, 63% of respondents agreed (either fully or moderately) with the statement that the ideologies and policies that led to the armed conflicts and crimes during the 1990s still exist in Montenegro today, while 19% held the opposite view.

Among young people in 2024<sup>16</sup>, the prevailing view was that the ideologies and policies that led to the armed conflicts and crimes during the 1990s still persist in Montenegro. On a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), the

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12 Public Opinion Research on Transitional Justice (2020), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2020/03/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2020/03/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda-FF.pdf)

13 Confronting the Past for the Sake of the Future (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

14 Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024), available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istravanje.pdf>

15 Confronting the Past for the Sake of the Future (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

16 Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024), available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istravanje.pdf>

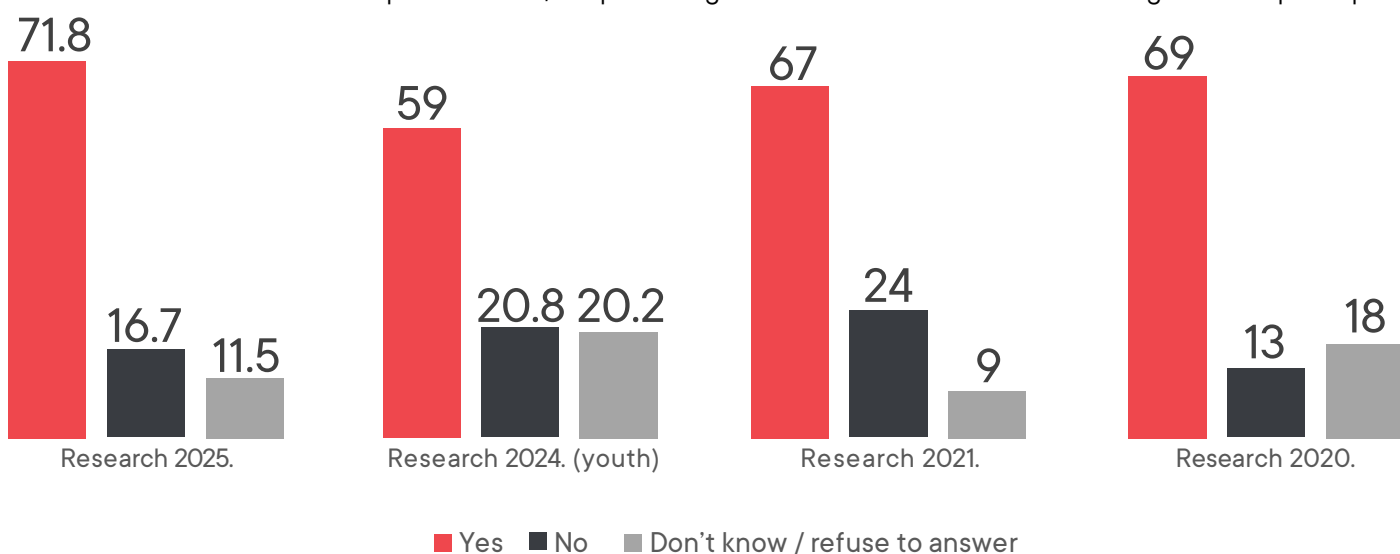
average rating of this belief among young people was 3.53.

## Did Montenegro participate in the wars of the 1990s on the territory of the former Yugoslavia?

In the chapter concerning war events and war crimes, a series of questions is raised about the conflicts of the 1990s and Montenegro's role during that period.

That Montenegro participated in the wars of the 1990s in the territory of the former Yugoslavia is believed by 71.8% of the respondents.

In comparison with research conducted over the previous five years, the highest number of those who gave an affirmative answer has been recorded. Compared to 2021, the percentage of those who believe that Montenegro did not participate



in the wars of the 1990s is lower by around 7% (16.7% in 2025, and 24% in 2021), while there is a slightly higher number (11.5%) of those who have no opinion on this issue or refuse to answer (compared to the previous 9%).

Chart 4: Did Montenegro participate in the wars of the 1990s in the territory of the former Yugoslavia?

When these findings are compared with previous research, they show that the number of those who answered affirmatively to this question increased by 2.9% compared to 2020, and by 4.8% compared to 2021. A curiosity is the relationship of answers to this question within research conducted on the general population in 2020 and 2021, and research conducted on the youth population at the end of 2024, when only 59% of young people between 18 and 25 years old gave an affirmative answer to the same question. Such data warn of a lack of knowledge about the 1990s among young people, or the consequences of the fact that formal education has not adequately addressed this topic.

## Attack on Dubrovnik

To the question related to the attack on Dubrovnik in October 1991, 76.9% of citizens state that they have heard about the attack, 14.9% that they have not, while 8.2% do not know or refuse to answer.

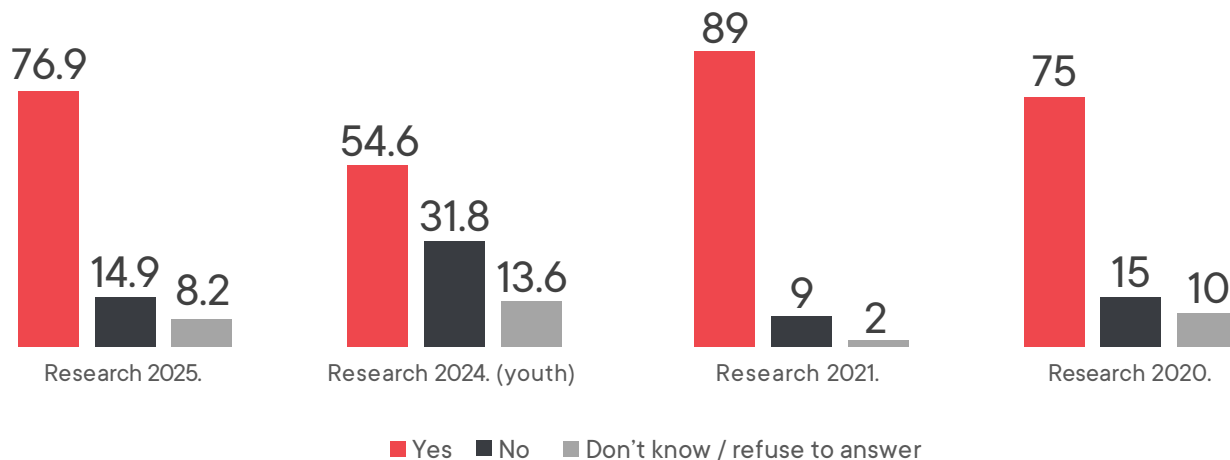


Chart 5: Have you heard about the attack on Dubrovnik in October 1991?

Almost three-fifths (57.7%) of respondents consider that the attack was not a justified military action, about one-fifth (19%) hold the position that it was a justified military action, while over one-fifth (23.3%) have no stance or refuse to answer that question. That means, the majority opinion is that it was an unjustified attack, with the note that among a part of the population, there is a strong opposite belief.

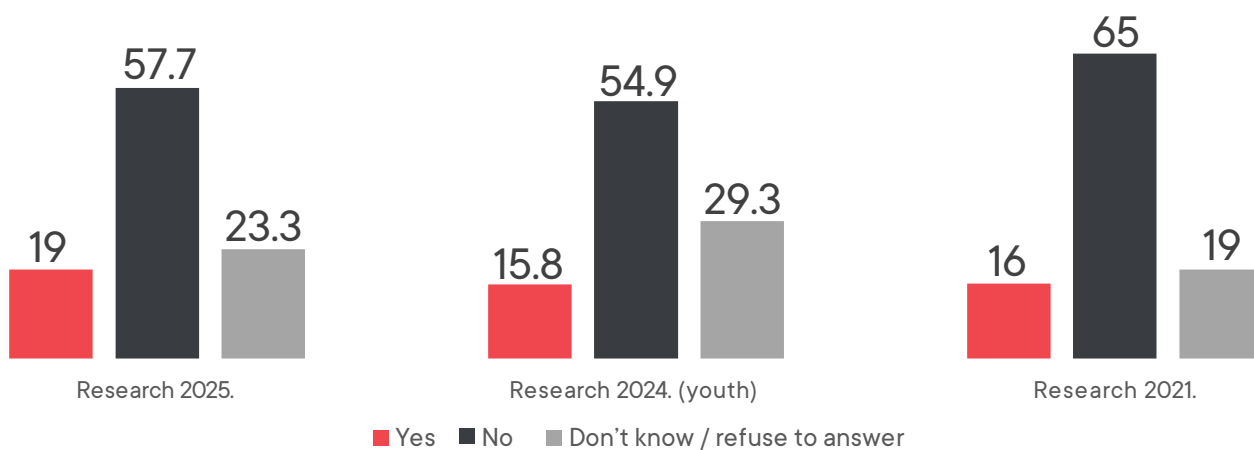


Chart 6: Was the attack on Dubrovnik a justified military action?

Compared to earlier research, the data indicate a decline in the level of awareness about this attack. Namely, in 2021, 89% of respondents stated that they had heard about the attack<sup>17</sup>, while in 2025 that percentage is lower by 13%. At the same time, the number of those who do not want to answer this question increased – from 2% in 2021 to 8.2% in 2025.

Attitudes on the attack on Dubrovnik were also measured through research from 2021, when 65% of citizens

<sup>17</sup> *Confronting the Past for the Future (2021)*, available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO-Tranziciona-pravda-izvjestaj-FF.pdf>

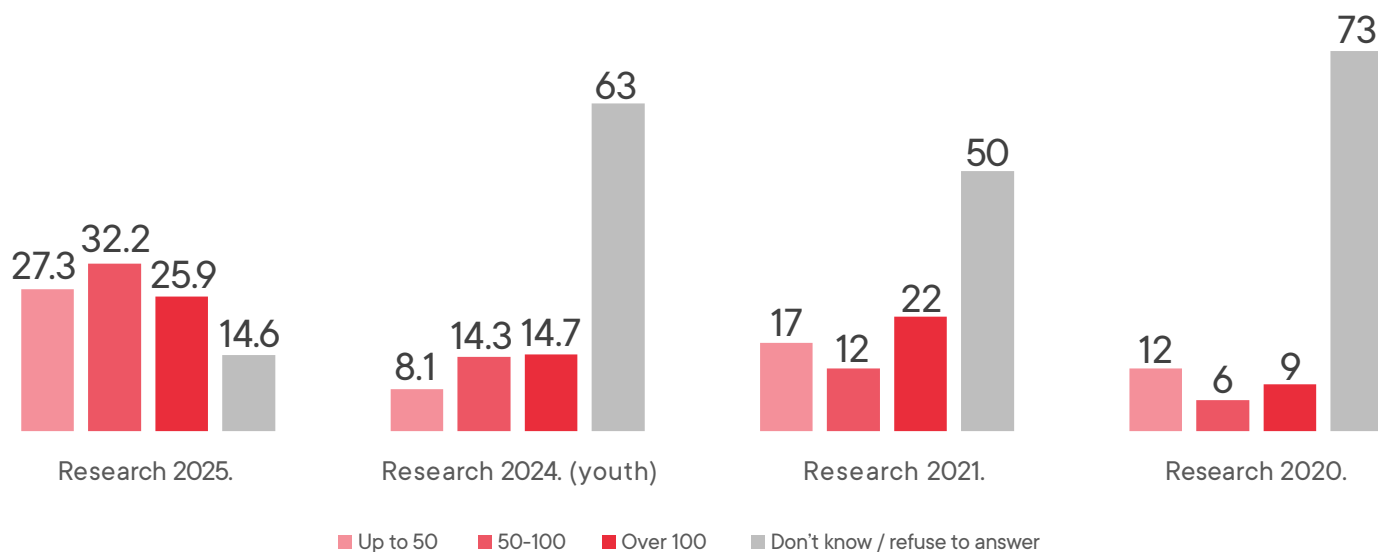
assessed it as unjustified, and 16% as justified.

Research conducted among youth<sup>18</sup> three years later, shows that 54.6% of this population have heard about the attack on Dubrovnik, 31.8% have not, while 13.6% are undecided on that question. Additionally, 55% of youth believe that this action was not justified.

To the question of how many Montenegrin citizens died in the attack on Dubrovnik, whose siege lasted from October 1, 1991, to May 31, 1992, 27.3% of respondents stated that up to 50 people died, 32.2% believed that between 50 and 100 died, while 25.9% said that over 100 died, and 14.6% of respondents had no answer.

Official data indicate that 165 citizens of Montenegro died, which means that approximately one quarter of citizens (25.9%) gave the approximately correct answer to this question.

However, it should be noted that in earlier research, the percentage of correct answers was even lower, namely only 9% in 2020 and 22% in 2021. Regarding youth, according to research from 2024, the correct answer was then given by 14.7% of



respondents.

Chart 7: How many Montenegrin citizens died in the attack on Dubrovnik?

Unlike previous research, the percentage of those who had an answer to this question is the highest so far, considering that in the 2020 survey, as many as 73% of citizens stated that they did not know the answer or refused to answer, and in 2021, 50% of citizens did so. In the 2024 research among youth, again 63% stated that they did not know the answer to this question or refused to answer.

<sup>18</sup> Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024), available at <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>

# War crimes in Montenegro

From 1991 to 1999, a series of war crimes occurred on the territory of Montenegro, indisputably established by final court decisions. However, despite these facts, less than half of the citizens believe that war crimes took place in Montenegro – 49.7%. At the same time, 23.4% believe that there were none, while 26.9% have no opinion or refuse to answer that question.

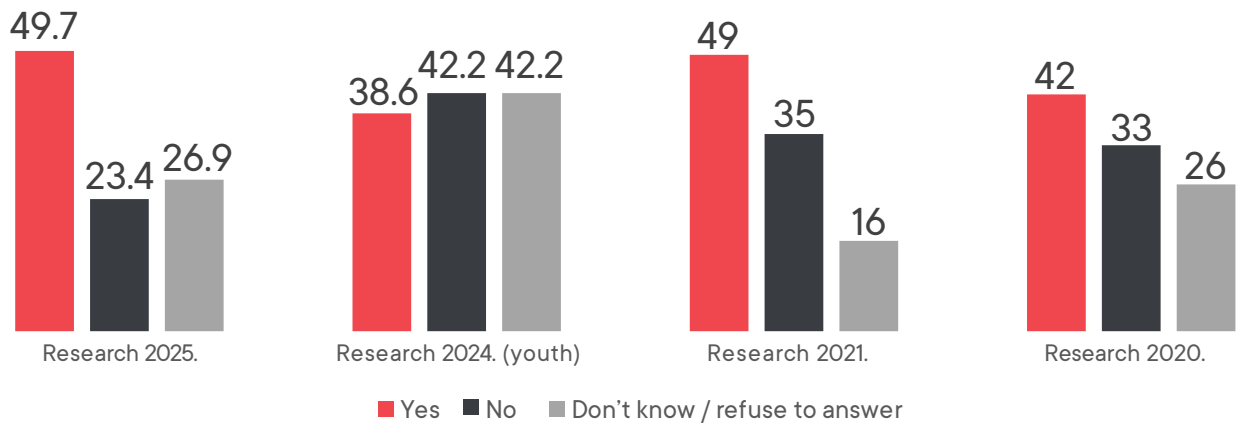


Chart 8: Did war crimes occur in Montenegro?

In an earlier survey from 2020<sup>19</sup>, 42% of respondents stated that war crimes had been committed on the territory of Montenegro, 33% said they had not, while 26% chose not to take a position on the question.

A similar survey from 2021<sup>20</sup> showed that 49% of citizens believed that war crimes had been committed on the territory of Montenegro, 35% believed they had not, while 16% did not know or refused to answer.

Among youth, according to the 2024 research<sup>21</sup>, the largest group are those who do not know or refuse to answer this question – 42.2%, while a somewhat smaller percentage – 38.6% believe that war crimes did occur, and 19.2% believe they did not.

Among those who stated that war crimes took place in Montenegro, the highest percentage in response to an open-ended question, said they had heard of the crime in Štrpci (22.9%) and the crime in Bukovica (22.5%), followed by those who mentioned the Morinj camp (18%). A smaller percentage had heard of the Deportation case (10.7%) and the Kaluđerski Laz case (10.1%), while the fewest had heard of the Klapuh family case (5.3%). One in ten respondents (10.4%) gave no answer, which indicates that only a small number of people have knowledge of these events from the 1990s in Montenegro.

<sup>19</sup> Public Opinion Research on Transitional Justice (2020), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2020/03/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2020/03/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda-FF.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Confronting the Past for the Future (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda-izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda-izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Youth's Knowledge and Attitudes about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024), available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istravanje.pdf>

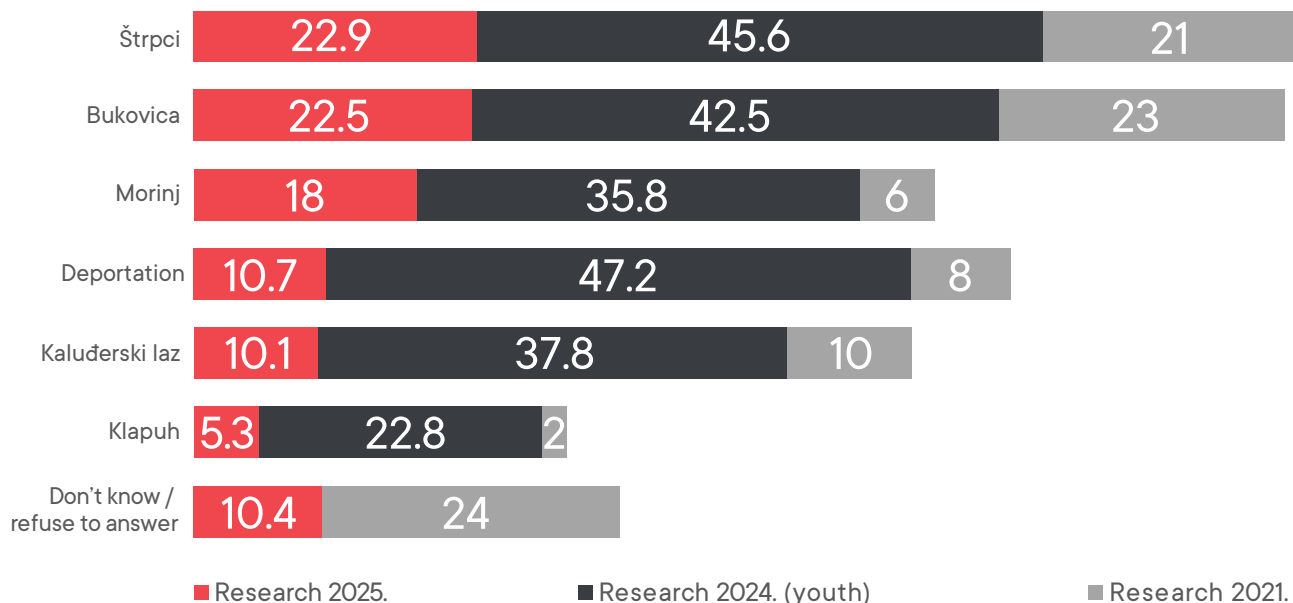
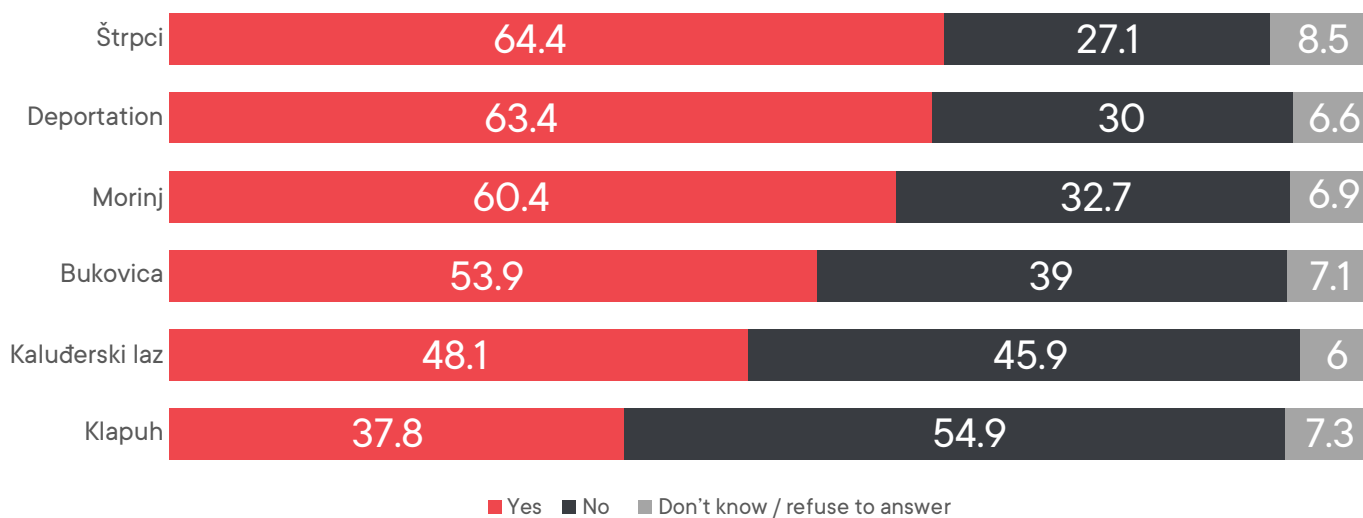


Chart 9: Which war crimes on the territory of Montenegro have you heard of? (spontaneous answers)

Comparative data analysis from previous studies indicates that the Bukovica case was the most well-known, followed by Štrpci, while the Deportation case was the least well-known. Among young people, in the 2024 survey, the Deportation and Štrpci cases were most frequently mentioned, with the Klapuh family case being the least cited. In some earlier studies of the general population, citizens also mentioned the NATO bombing as another example of war crimes.

Regarding closed-ended questions about war crimes in the form of "Have you heard of the case..." with further mention of individual cases, the highest affirmative responses were for the Štrpci case at 64.4%, followed by the Deportation case at 63.4%, and the Morinj camp case at 60.4%.



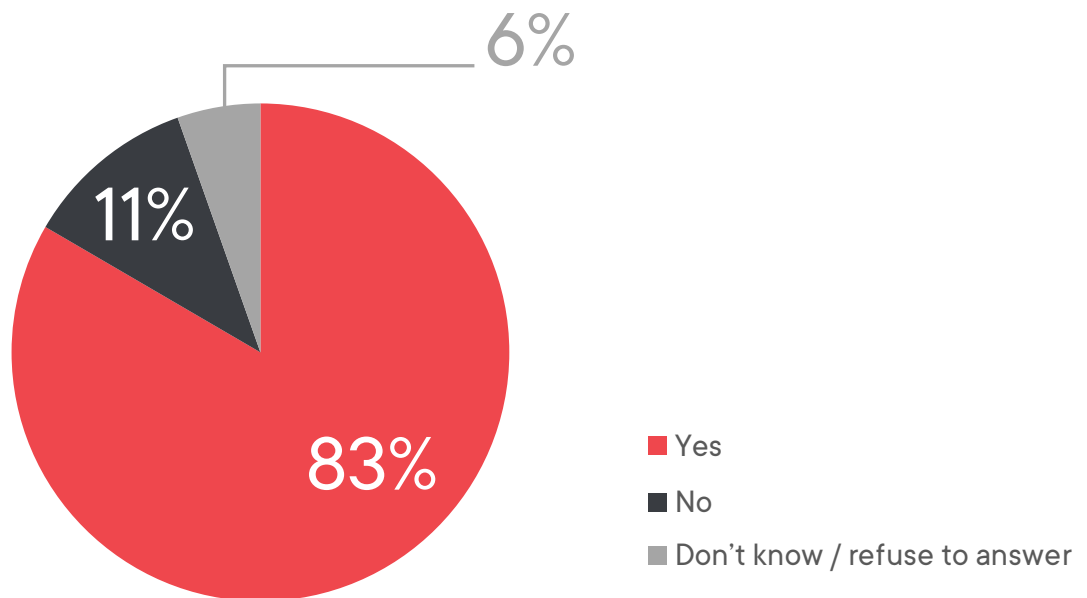
Graphic 10: Have you heard of the case...?

A somewhat smaller percentage of the public knows, when mentioned this way, about the Bukovica case (53.9%), Kaluđerski Laz (48.1%), and Klapuh (37.8%).

It is important to note that the kidnapping of civilians from the train at the Štrpci station did not occur on the territory of Montenegro, but in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, there is a strong connection of this case to Montenegro, considering that a large number of the civilian victims were from Montenegro – Bijelo Polje, Rožaje, Berane, Podgorica, and Bar. Additionally, the first sentence against a member of the group responsible for this crime, Nebojša Ranisavljević, was issued in Montenegro, before the Higher Court in Bijelo Polje<sup>22</sup>

## Srebrenica

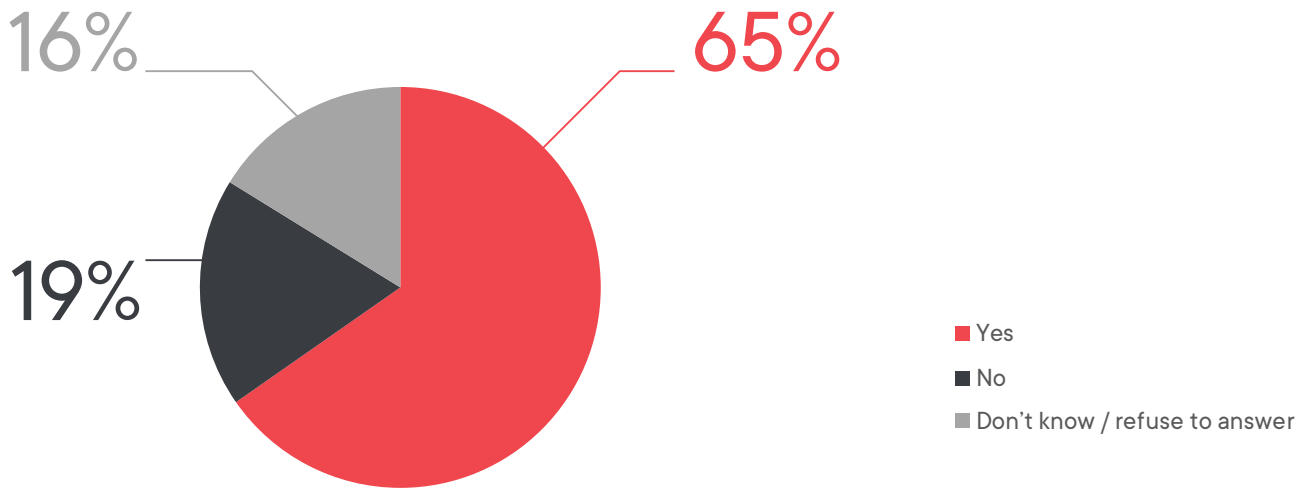
When asked if they knew what happened in Srebrenica in July 1995, a large majority of respondents said yes – 83.4%, while 11.2% said they do not know, and 5.4% did not answer.



Graph 11: Do you know what happened in Srebrenica in July 1995

Of those who claim to know what happened, 65% of respondents answered affirmatively to the question of whether genocide was committed in Srebrenica, while 18.5% held the opposite view, and 16.2% declined to answer.

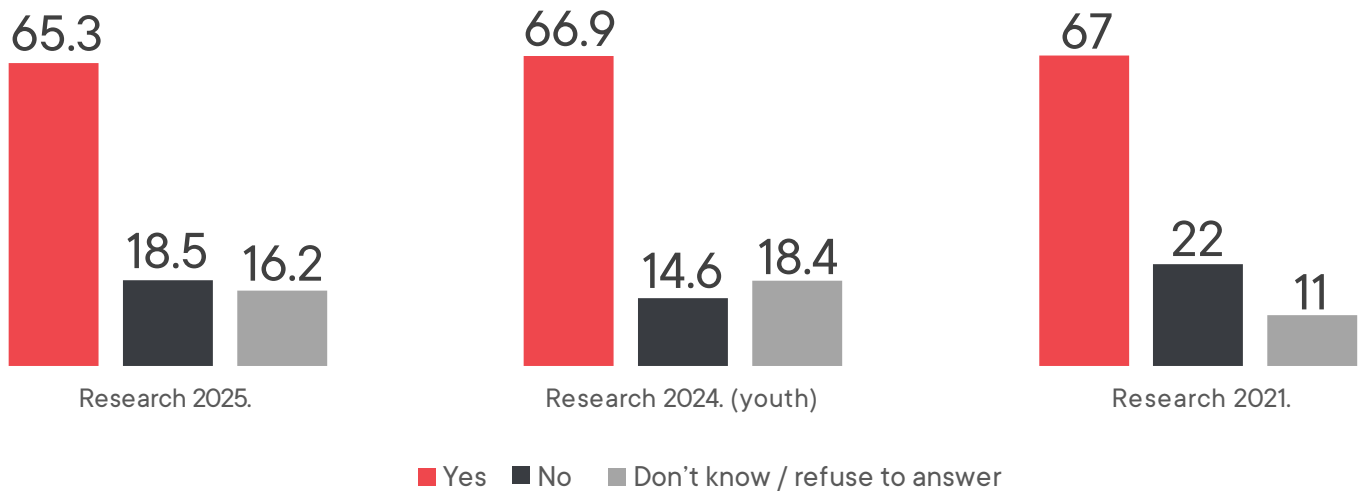
<sup>22</sup> Štrpci as a Synonym of the Brutality of War Crimes Committed in the 1990s, available at: <https://cgo-cce.org/2025/02/26/strpci-kao-sinonim-surovosti-ratnih-zlocina-pocinjenih-90-ih/> And The Process of Confronting the Past in Montenegro: The “Štrpci” Case, available at: <https://cgo-cce.org/2025/04/30/proces-suocavanje-s-prosloscu-u-crnoj-gori-slucuj-strpci/>



Graph 12: Was genocide committed in Srebrenica?

This is not a big surprise, especially considering the increasing denial of genocide despite final court rulings, and the strong campaign regarding this issue carried out in Montenegro and the region in recent years.

Among those who say they know what happened in Srebrenica in July 1995, in 2021, 67% believed that genocide was committed, 22% believed it was not, while 11% declined to answer. A 2024 survey conducted among young people shows similar results: 66.9% of youth believe genocide was committed in Srebrenica, 14.6% deny it, and 18.4% did not answer the question.



Graph 13: Was genocide committed in Srebrenica?

Among those who deny that genocide was committed in Srebrenica (18.5%) and who answered the question about what happened in Srebrenica (if not genocide), half (50%) believe a crime occurred, 29.9% see the events in Srebrenica as war and suffering, while 2.6% view it as persecution of the non-Serb population.

Identical answers, with very similar percentages, appear consistently throughout the surveys from 2020, 2021, and 2024. The 2021 survey showed that citizens who deny the genocide in Srebrenica most often describe those events as a crime/war crime/major crime, but not genocide – 38%, followed by war actions in which people on all sides suffered – 18%. A portion of them (14%) approach this issue from the perspective of conspiracy theories, claiming it was a setup, foreign interference, and/or a deceit against the Serbian people.

The question of Montenegro’s support for the United Nations Resolution on the International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Srebrenica Genocide became topical during 2024, after Germany and Rwanda submitted the proposal, co-sponsored by 32 other UN members, including numerous countries from the region. Although 111 NGOs and over 500 prominent individuals called on the Government to also co-sponsor this resolution, it did not happen<sup>23</sup>. Ahead of the vote in the United Nations Assembly on May 22, 2024, a protest was held in front of the Government regarding the announcement that Montenegro would support the resolution.<sup>24</sup>.

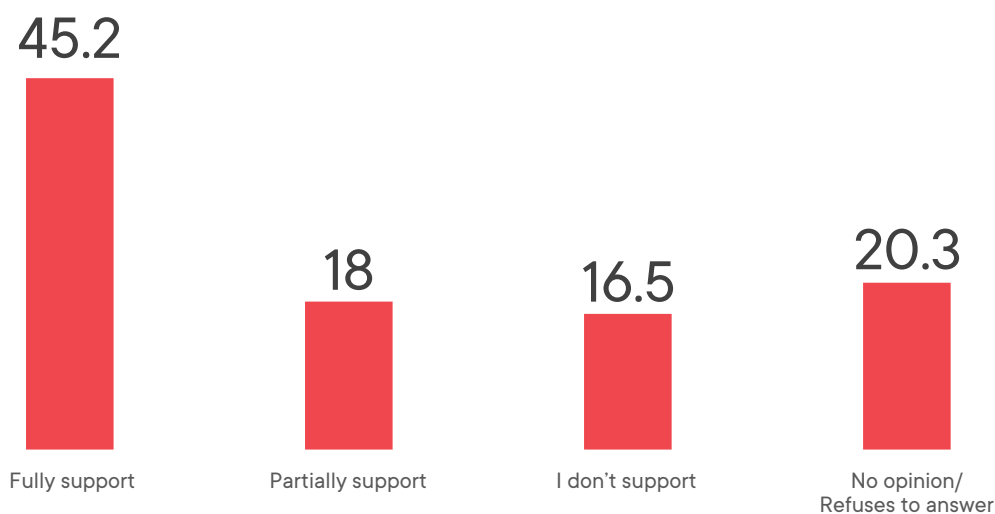


Chart 14: What is your stance on the Government of Montenegro’s support for the UN Resolution on the International Day of Remembrance of the Genocide Victims in Srebrenica?

In the context of these events, it was interesting to gauge the public opinion on whether and to what extent they support the decision of the Government of Montenegro to vote in favour of adopting the resolution. The findings indicate that 63.2% support this decision in some form - 45.2% fully and 18% partially. On the other hand, 16.5% stated that they do not support the Government’s decision, while 20.3% of respondents either have no opinion or refused to disclose it.

23 Coalition of NGOs: Spajić Should Clarify Whether the Government of Montenegro Is Proposing Amendments to the Resolution on Srebrenica?, available at <https://cgo-cce.org/2024/05/06/koalicija-nvo-spajic-da-se-izjasni-predlaze-li-vlada-crne-amandmane-na-rezoluciju-o-srebrenici/>, NGOs: UN on the Side of Genocide Victims – Montenegro’s Vote Was the Right One, available at <https://cgo-cce.org/2024/05/23/nvo-un-na-strani-zrtava-genocida-ispravan-glas-crne-gore/>

24 Opponents of the Srebrenica Resolution Protested in Front of the Government of Montenegro Building, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nbf63fwT9Rs>

# Operation "Storm"

Operation "Storm" was characterised in the Hague Tribunal's verdict as a joint criminal enterprise. However, the participants in this crime did not face consequences, as the prosecution in The Hague failed to prove their responsibility. Even today, this operation remains controversial, given that Croatia and Serbia perceive it completely differently – the former as a liberation, the latter as a crime.

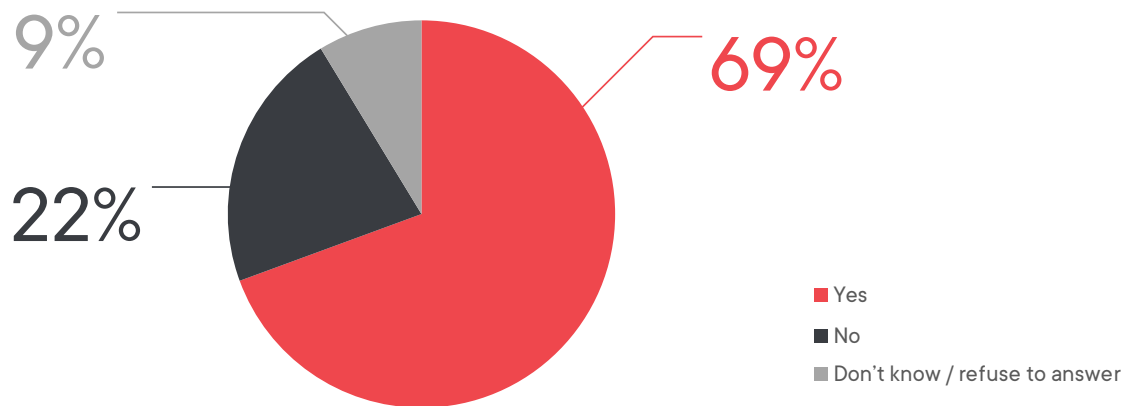


Chart 15: Have you heard of Operation "Storm" from 1995?

When asked if they had heard of Operation "Storm" from 1995, almost 70% of respondents answered yes, over one-fifth (21.9%) said they had not heard of it, while 8.7% did not provide an answer.

Compared to the 2020 survey<sup>25</sup>, the percentage of those who have heard about this event increased by about 8%, whereas compared to the 2021 survey, this number has decreased by about 16%.

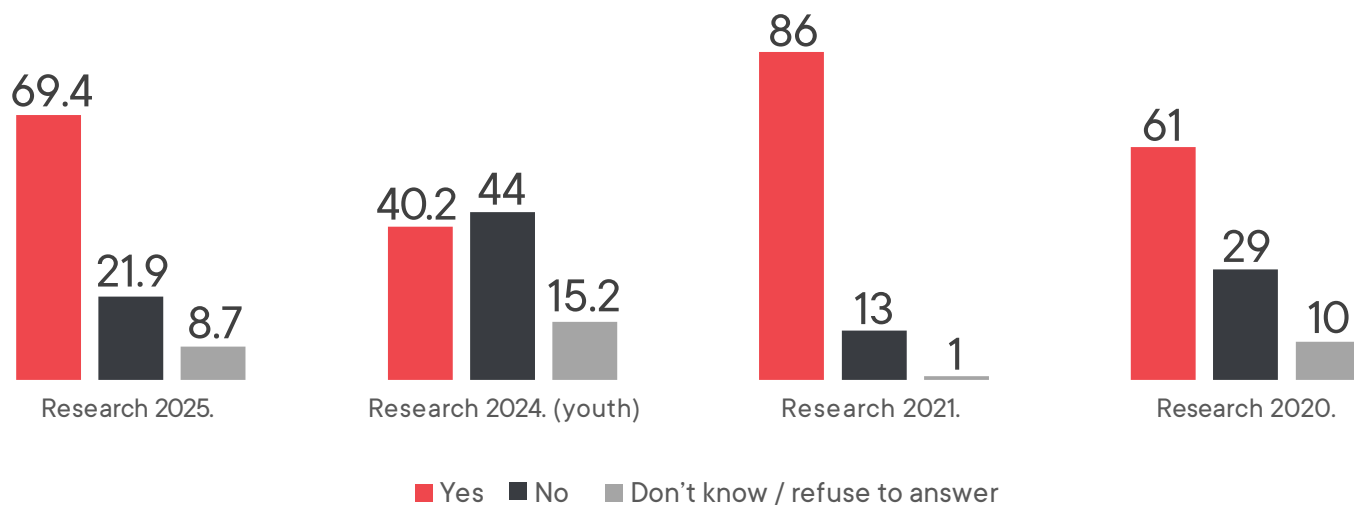


Chart 16: Have you heard of Operation "Storm"?

<sup>25</sup> Public Opinion Research on Transitional Justice (2020), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2020/03/CGO\\_Tranciciona-pravda-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2020/03/CGO_Tranciciona-pravda-FF.pdf)

Those who have heard of Operation “Storm” predominantly agree that it was a joint criminal enterprise, as stated in the Hague Tribunal’s verdict (79.5%), while 7.6% believe that the operation was a justified action by Croatian forces. A portion of respondents – 12.8% – do not know the answer or refuse to respond.

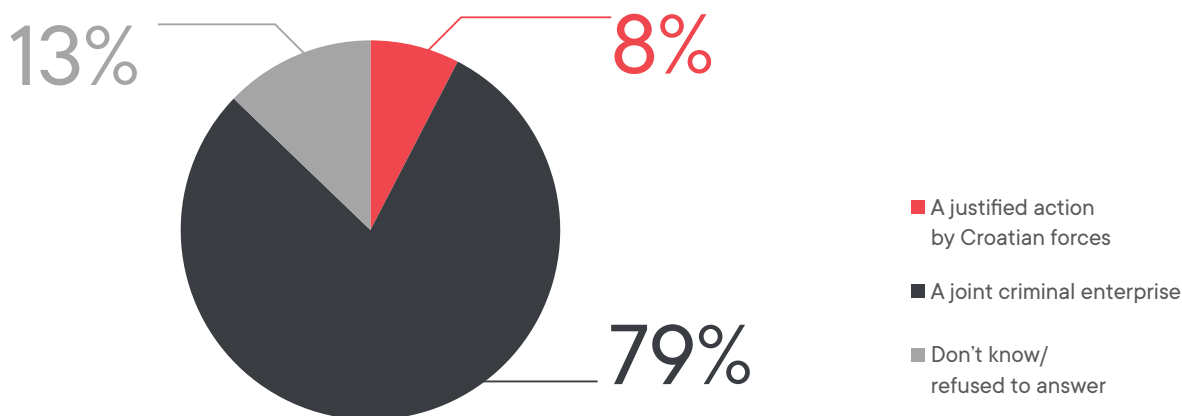


Chart 17: What is, in your opinion, Operation “Storm”?

Attitudes of citizens towards Operation Storm have been analysed through previous research.

Unlike the general population, young people are significantly less informed about Operation Storm<sup>26</sup>. Thus, only 40.2% of young respondents in the 2024 survey stated they had heard of the operation, 44% said they had not, while 15.8% were undecided. Among those who had heard of Operation Storm, almost one-third (32.8%) did not know or refused to answer the question about what the operation was, while 61.7% claimed it was a joint criminal enterprise, and 5.5% considered it a justified action by Croatian forces.

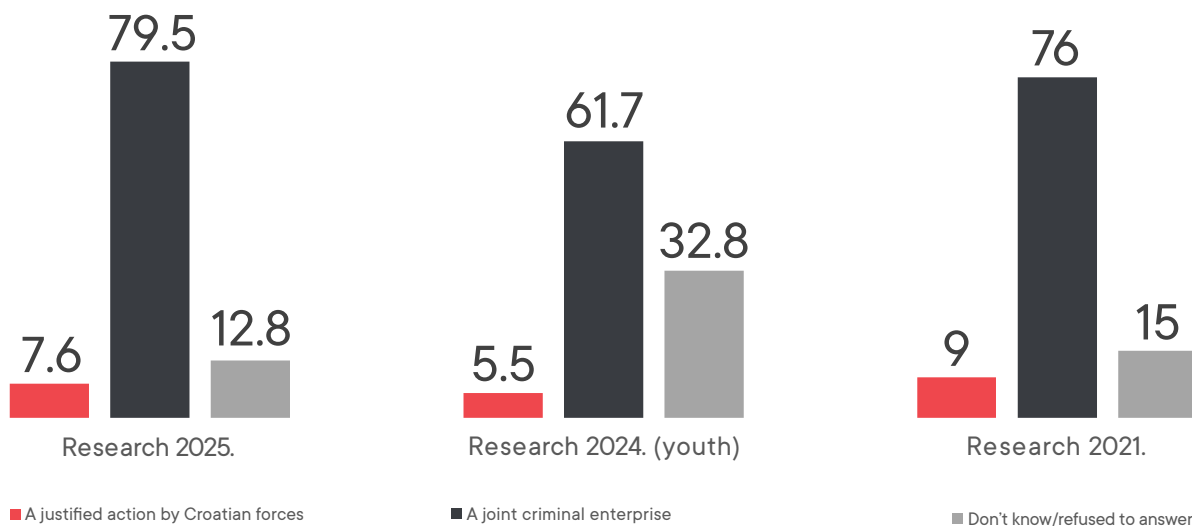


Chart 18: What do you think Operation “Storm” was?

<sup>26</sup> Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024), available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>

# Lora

Lora Camp functioned as a concentration camp in Split from 1992 to 1997. The victims were war prisoners and civilians, including Montenegrin nationals. The majority of reservists from the so-called Nikšić–Šavnik group perished in this camp, and it is estimated that around 1,100 people were held there during that period.<sup>27</sup>

When asked if they had heard of the “Lora” case, less than half of the citizens answered affirmatively (49%), two-fifths had not heard of it (40%), and 11% either did not know or refused to answer.

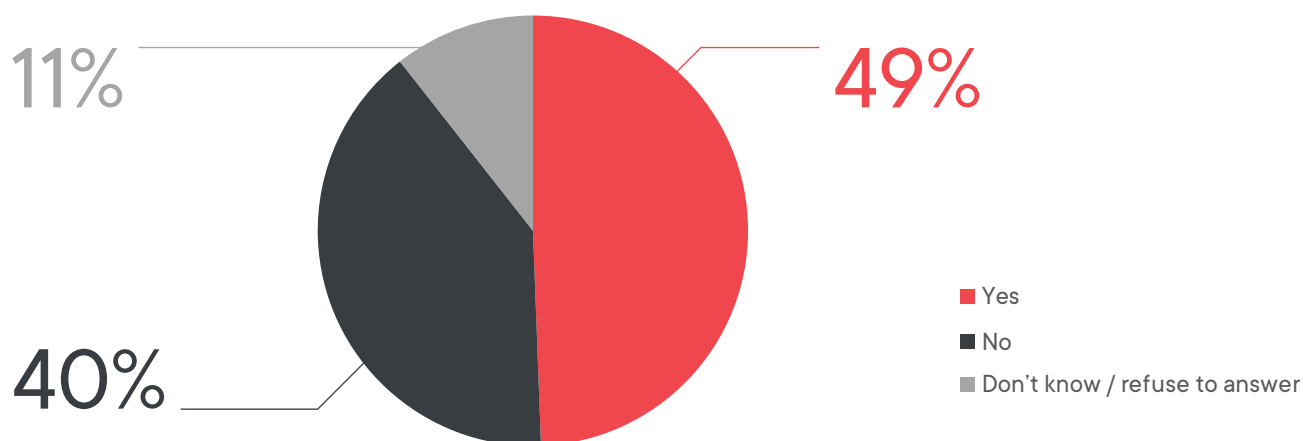
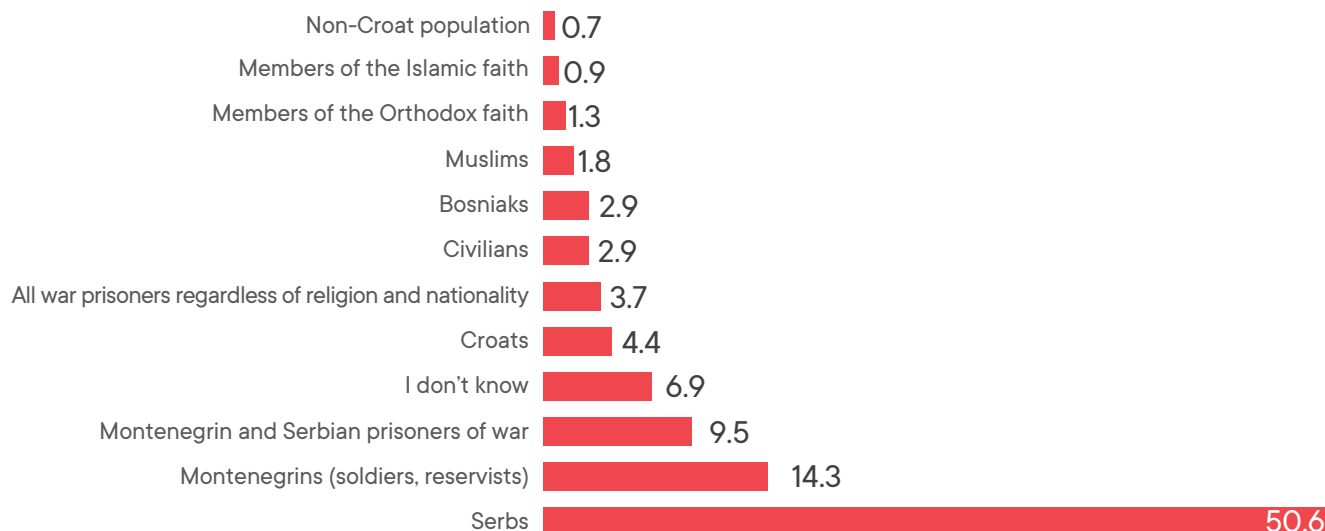


Chart 19: Have you heard of the “Lora” case?

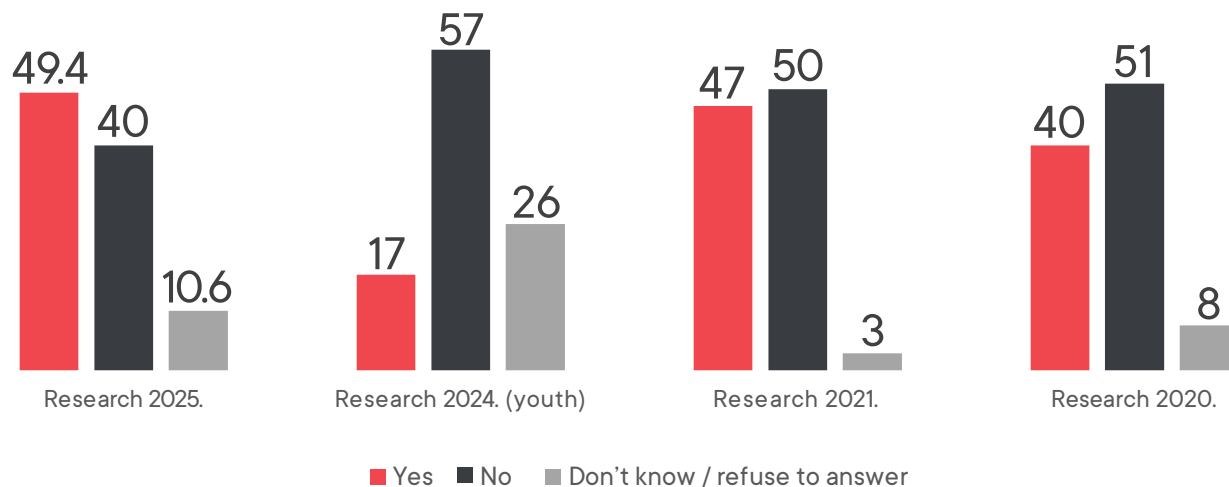
The question about the victims in the Lora camp was posed to those who said they had heard of the case.



Graph 20: Who were the victims in the “Lora” camp?

27 Military-Research Centre Lora, available at: <https://www.glaszrtava.org/vojno-istrasni-centar-lora/>

The most common answer was that the camp's victims were Serbs – 50.6%, while 14.3% stated they were Montenegrins, and 9.5% believed they were both Montenegrin and Serbian prisoners. A smaller number identified victims among other ethnic and religious communities (Croats, Bosniaks, Muslims, members of the Orthodox faith, members of the Islamic faith, non-Croat population, civilians), and 6.9% of citizens said they did not know the answer to this question.



Graph 21: Have you heard of the "Lora" case?

A 2020 study<sup>28</sup> showed that the majority of people in our public were unaware of the "Lora" case (51%), and an almost identical percentage of respondents (50%) was recorded in 2021<sup>29</sup>. Among youth, the lack of awareness is particularly noticeable<sup>30</sup>: according to a 2024 study, 57% had not heard of the case, only 17% had, while over a quarter gave no answer to the question.

## NATO intervention in the FRY

The NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1999 marked the end of the second millennium. The bombing lasted from 24 March to 10 June 1999, a total of 78 days. An official list of victims was never compiled; the only existing and widely accepted record is the one produced by the Humanitarian Law Centre<sup>31</sup>, which indicates that 10 people were killed in Montenegro.

When asked whether they were aware of the 1999 NATO intervention in the FRY, 86.8% of citizens responded affirmatively, while 7% said they did not know, and 6.2% gave no answer.

28 Public opinion research on transitional justice (2020), available at: [https://media.cgocce.org/2020/03/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda-FF.pdf](https://media.cgocce.org/2020/03/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda-FF.pdf)

29 Confronting the Past for the Future (2021), available at: [https://media.cgocce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda-izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgocce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda-izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

30 Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024), available at <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>

31 Humanitarian Law Centre, available at <https://www.hlc-rdc.org/db/nato/index.html>, Kosovo Book of Remembrance, available at <https://www.hlc-rdc.org/ljudski-gubici/kosovska-knjiga-pamcenja/>

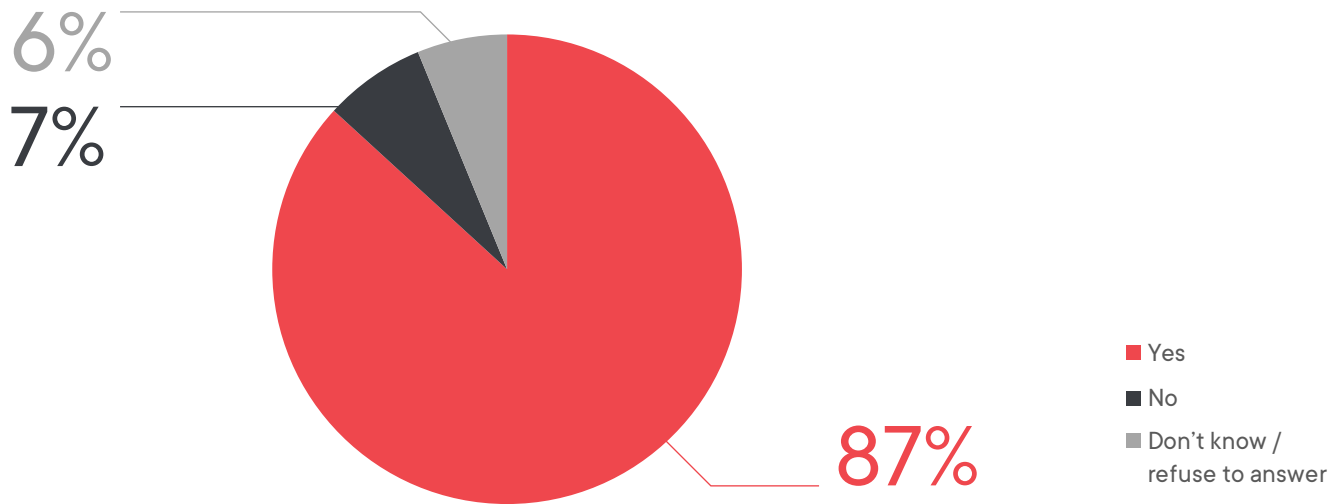
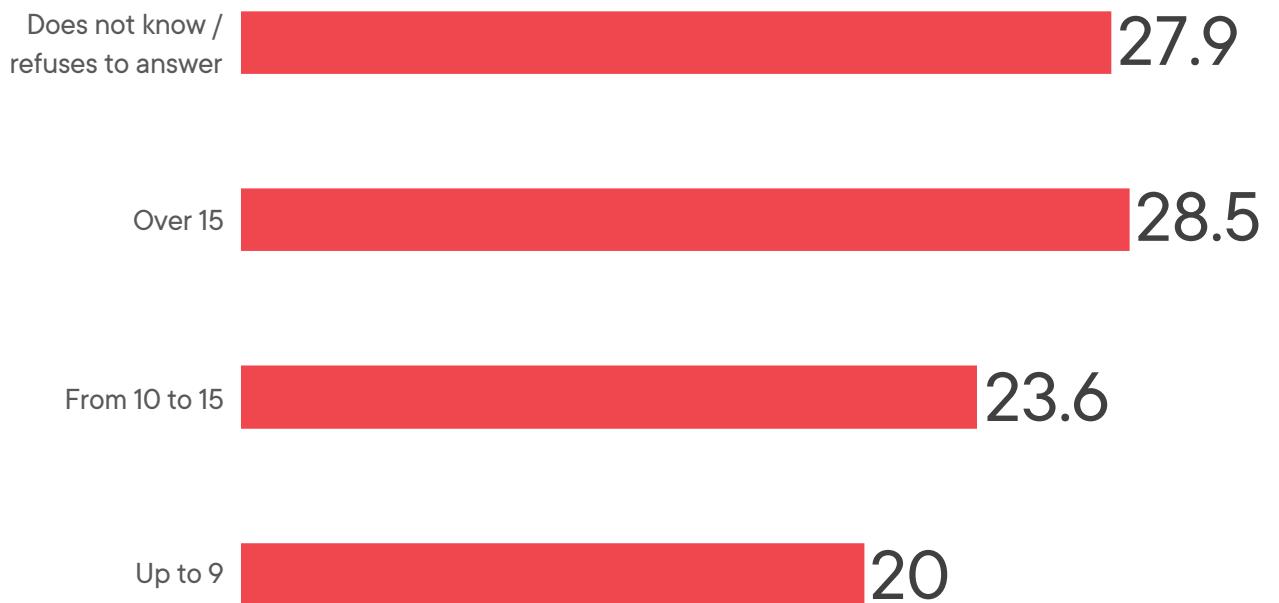


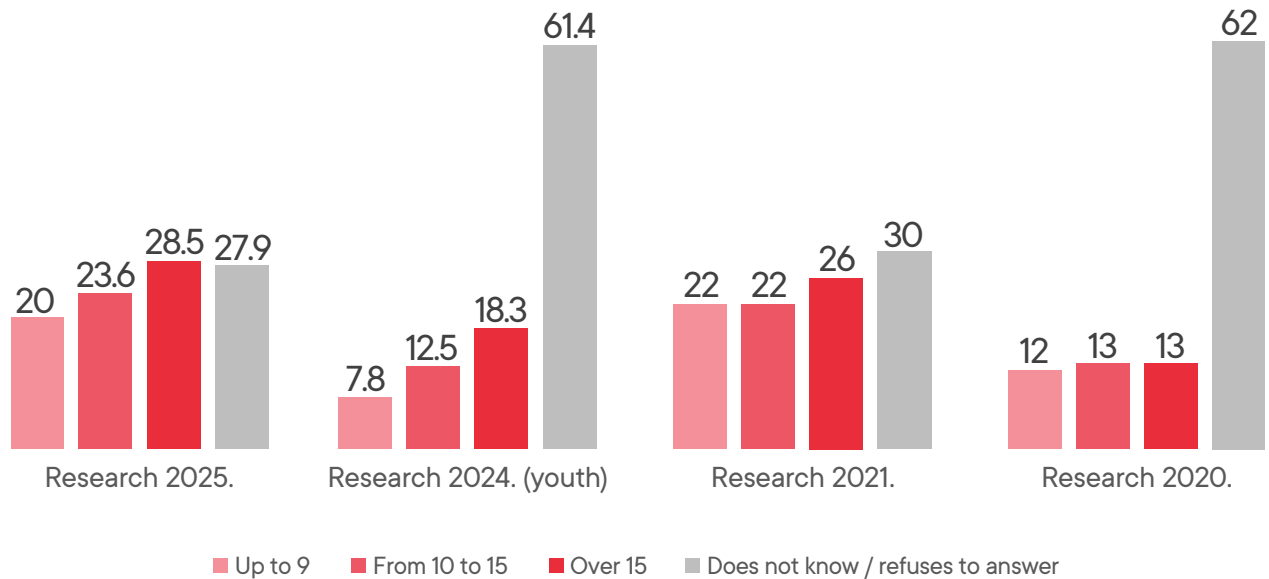
Chart 22: Are you aware of the NATO intervention against the FRY in 1999?



Graph 23: How many people died in Montenegro during the NATO bombing?

When asked how many people in Montenegro died during the NATO bombing, respondents who stated they were aware of the bombing answered as follows: 20% said up to 9 people died, 23.6% said between 10 and 15, while 28.5% believed that over 15 people died. Among the respondents, 27.9% did not answer this question.

Earlier studies show somewhat different data.



Graph 24: How many people died in Montenegro during the NATO bombing?

Namely, as many as 62% of respondents in the 2020 study<sup>32</sup> do not know or refuse to answer the question about the number of people killed in Montenegro during the bombing. Thirteen per cent of those surveyed believe that the number of deaths exceeded 15, the same percentage believes it was between 10 and 15, and 12% think that up to 9 people died.

According to the findings of the 2021 study<sup>33</sup>, about 94% of citizens had heard of the 1999 NATO intervention, while 30% either did not know the answer or refused to respond to the question about the number of casualties. Twenty-six per cent of respondents believe that more than 15 people died during the bombing, while 22% each think that up to 9 people, or between 10 and 15, were killed.

Regarding the 2024 study<sup>34</sup> conducted among youth in Montenegro, around 80% were informed about the NATO bombing, but the majority of those who answered affirmatively did not know or refused to answer the question about the number of casualties (61.4%). Interestingly, the young people in the same study emphasised that they learned most about the NATO bombing of the FRY during their schooling.

## Confronting the war past in Montenegro

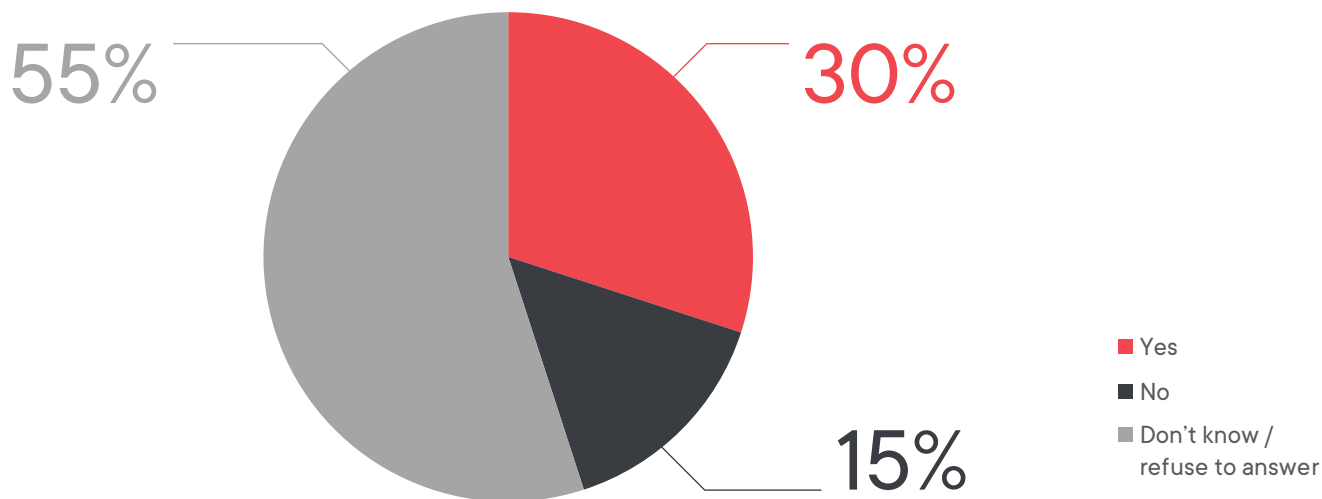
It is not surprising that the 1990s are predominantly perceived through a negative lens in the dominant narrative, primarily focusing on the breakup of Yugoslavia, poverty, and unrest that left a deep mark on the social fabric. This memory is not only a reflection of the past but also an important factor shaping today's social and political relations. The sense of insecurity and discomfort is heightened by the state's attitude, which has shown a lack of willingness to properly confront the past.

Citizens in Montenegro hold divided opinions on the process of coming to terms with the war past of the 1990s..

32 *Public Opinion Research on Transitional Justice (2020)*, available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2020/03/CGO-Tranziciona-pravda-FF.pdf>

33 *Coming to Terms with the Past for the Future (2021)*, available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO-Tranziciona-pravda-izvjestaj-FF.pdf>

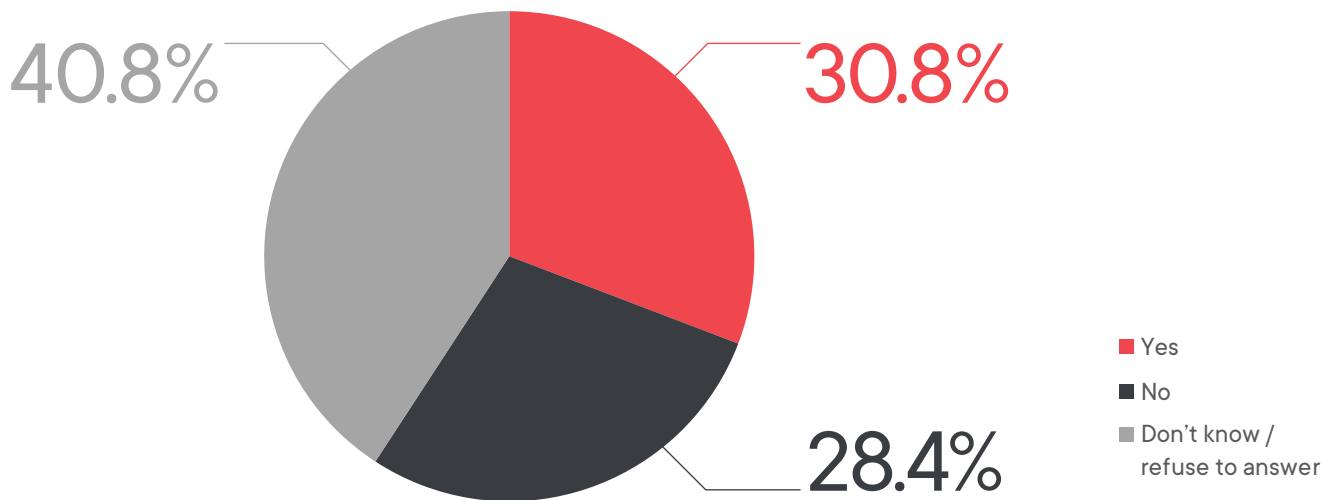
34 *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024)*, available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>



Graph 25: Has the state confronted its war past of the 1990s? (2021)

In 2021<sup>35</sup>, the view that Montenegro had not confronted its war past was more pronounced, with over 50% supporting this thesis, while nearly one-third believed it had. The opinion that the process of coming to terms with the past was inadequate was significantly more common among citizens of Montenegrin national affiliation (38%).

Among youth, according to data from the 2024 study<sup>36</sup>, almost 41% are uncertain or refuse to express an opinion on this issue, while among those who did respond, slightly more agree with the view that the state has confronted the past (30.8%) compared to those who believe it has not (28.4%). These results indicate a continuing division of opinion on this important matter, with differing views varying depending on the year and the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

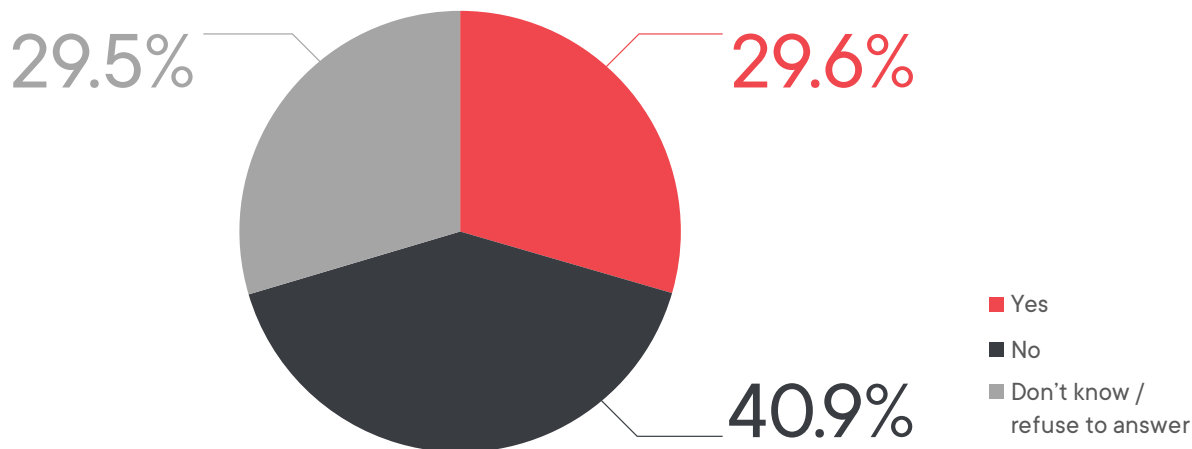


Graph 26: In your opinion, has the state of Montenegro confronted its war past from the 1990s? (2024)

35 *Coming to Terms with the Past for the Future (2021)*, available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda-izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda-izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

36 *Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024)*, available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>

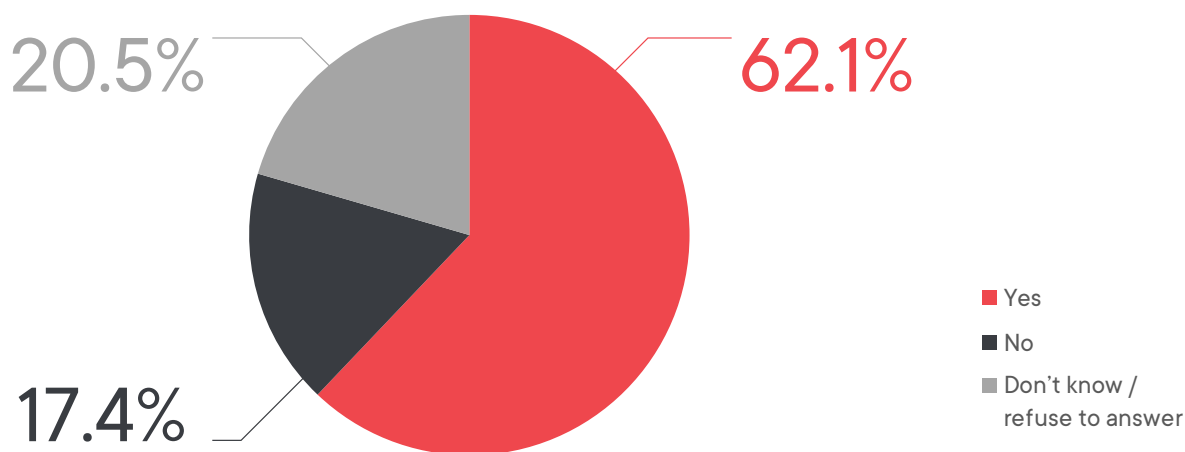
In 2025, less than half (40.9%) of citizens believe that Montenegro has not confronted its past, while 29.6% hold the view that it has, and almost the same proportion (29.5%) have no opinion.



Graph 27: In your opinion, has the state of Montenegro confronted its war past from the 1990s? (2025)

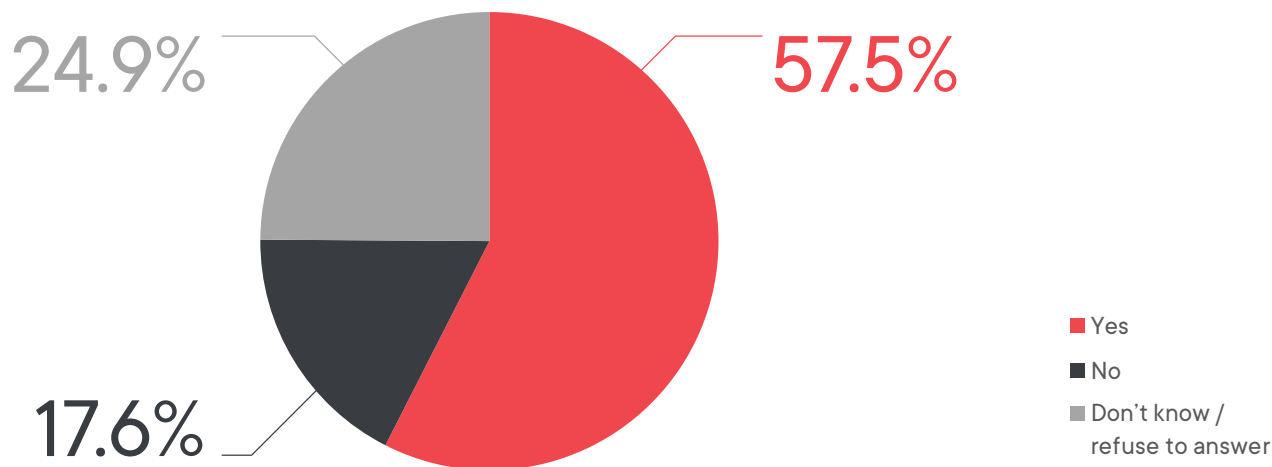
## Regional cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes

Questions of transitional justice, attitudes towards war crimes, and the political consequences of the 1990s remain present in Montenegrin society. Insufficient institutional engagement with the war past leaves room for division, relativisation, and differing interpretations, while unresolved issues related to war crimes continue to burden regional relations. In this context, initiatives such as the Regional Commission for Establishing the Facts about War Crimes and Other Serious Violations of Human Rights – RECOM – can play a key role in documenting the truth and building trust among the countries of the former Yugoslavia.



Graph 28: Do you support regional cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes from the 1990s? (2025)

The 2025 survey shows that the majority of citizens in Montenegro support regional cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes from the 1990s (62.1%), as well as the establishment of RECOM (57.5%). At the same time, a significant portion of the population remains undecided or provides no answer to these questions, reflecting a broader societal dilemma in Montenegro, where attitudes towards the past are often shaped by political divisions and selective interpretations of events.



Graph 29: Do you support the establishment of the Regional Commission for Establishing the Facts about War Crimes and Other Serious Violations of Human Rights committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia from 1 January 1991 to 31 December 2001 (RECOM)?

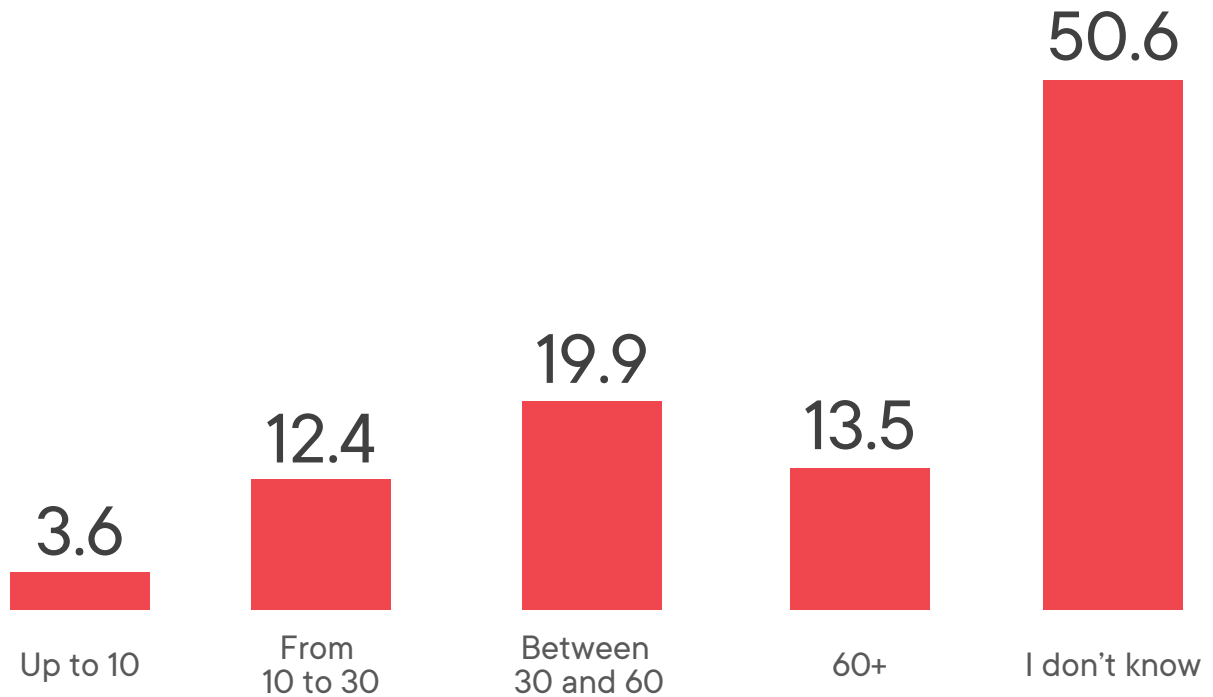
Data from 2021<sup>37</sup> further confirm this support, noting that it was significantly higher at that time, reaching as much as 81%. Additionally, the establishment of RECOM was supported by 84% of Montenegrin citizens, bearing in mind that the Coalition for RECOM was more visible with its activities at that time.

## Missing persons and the rights of war crime victims

The fate of missing persons during the wars of the 1990s remains one of the most tragic and sensitive aspects of the region's war past. Although Montenegro was not directly affected by the conflicts to the same extent as other former republics, disappearances, abductions, and killings also occurred there. Three decades later, families of the missing continue to seek answers, and this issue remains a serious moral and legal challenge. Properly addressing this matter is one of the prerequisites for genuine reconciliation with the past, halting unscientific historical revisionism, and combating the denial of war crimes and the relativisation of suffering.

However, research shows that more than half of respondents (50.6%) do not know how many Montenegrin citizens are still registered as missing from the 1990s wars. This figure highlights a concerning lack of awareness on the topic, which further complicates the processes of coming to terms with the past and securing the rights of families of the missing. Among those who do have an estimate, opinions are divided: about one-fifth believe the number of missing is between 30 and 60, while 13.5% think it exceeds 60.

<sup>37</sup> *Coming to Terms with the Past for the Future* (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)



Graph 30: Do you know how many Montenegrin citizens are still registered as missing from the 1990s wars?

The lack of official data and state initiatives to resolve the fate of the missing contributes to the marginalisation of this issue. Montenegro has assumed certain international obligations regarding clarifying the fate of missing persons, but concrete results have not materialised. Apart from sporadic initiatives by civil society and international organisations, there is no systematic institutional effort to adequately address this matter.

In this context, the *International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT)* can be of great importance in the remaining investigations and trials related to war crimes committed during the war in the former Yugoslavia. Although Montenegro was not directly involved in conflicts like neighbouring countries such as Croatia or Bosnia and Herzegovina, it participated in war events through alliances and military operations. Therefore, like other countries in the Balkans, Montenegro has the responsibility to cooperate with international legal institutions and provide support in the pursuit of justice. The challenges are common to the region's states, primarily relating to political will, which affects the legal framework and support for victims and survivors. There are also political and social resistances that sometimes hinder efforts in the process of reconciliation and truth.

Research conducted indicates a significant decline in awareness about the existence of monuments dedicated to the victims of the 1990s wars in Montenegro. While in 2021<sup>38</sup>, 52% of respondents were aware of such monuments; this figure dropped to 44.8% in 2025. This may be the result of several factors, including insufficient promotion and education on the importance of these monuments.

38 *Confronting the Past for the Future (2021)*, available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Trznicion-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Trznicion-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

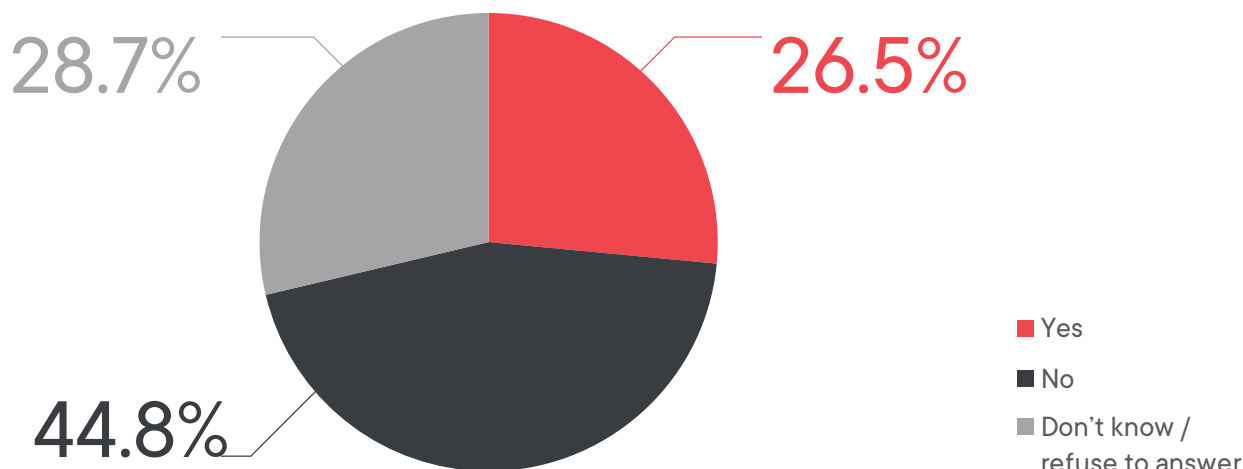


Chart 31: Have you heard of any monument being erected in Montenegro to the victims of the 1990s wars?

Research conducted among youth in 2024<sup>39</sup> reveals concerning results. Over two-fifths (42.6%) had not heard of any monuments dedicated to the victims of the 1990s wars in the region, while only 16.4% had information about such monuments. Additionally, 41% of youth either had no opinion or refused to answer this question. Among those who had heard of a monument, the most frequently mentioned were the monuments in Srebrenica, the monument at Pobrežje, the memorial plaque in Morinj, as well as monuments in Belgrade, particularly those related to the victims of the NATO bombing. However, many were unable to precisely name specific monuments, despite being aware of their existence, which highlights serious issues concerning education in this area.

The perception among citizens is similar regarding the state's role in financing projects that document war crimes and preserve the memory of the victims. The majority – 55.2% – of citizens expressed that this is important to them, while 17.3% hold the opposite view, and 27.5% have no opinion or refused to answer. Support for these projects is crucial for building a culture of remembrance and strengthening social cohesion in Montenegro, as it contributes to transparent confrontation with the past, justice, reconciliation, and the development of trust among communities. Additionally, such projects provide opportunities for youth to further inform and educate themselves.

## Political polarisation and its impact on justice for victims

A public opinion survey from 2025 also indicates that assessments of the commitment of various social actors to transitional justice and dealing with the past are divided, with particularly poor evaluations of institutions. The prosecution, judiciary, and police are perceived as the least dedicated to this process, while the stance of the Government, the President, and the Assembly is also viewed negatively.

39 Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Youth about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024), available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ih-istrazivanje.pdf>

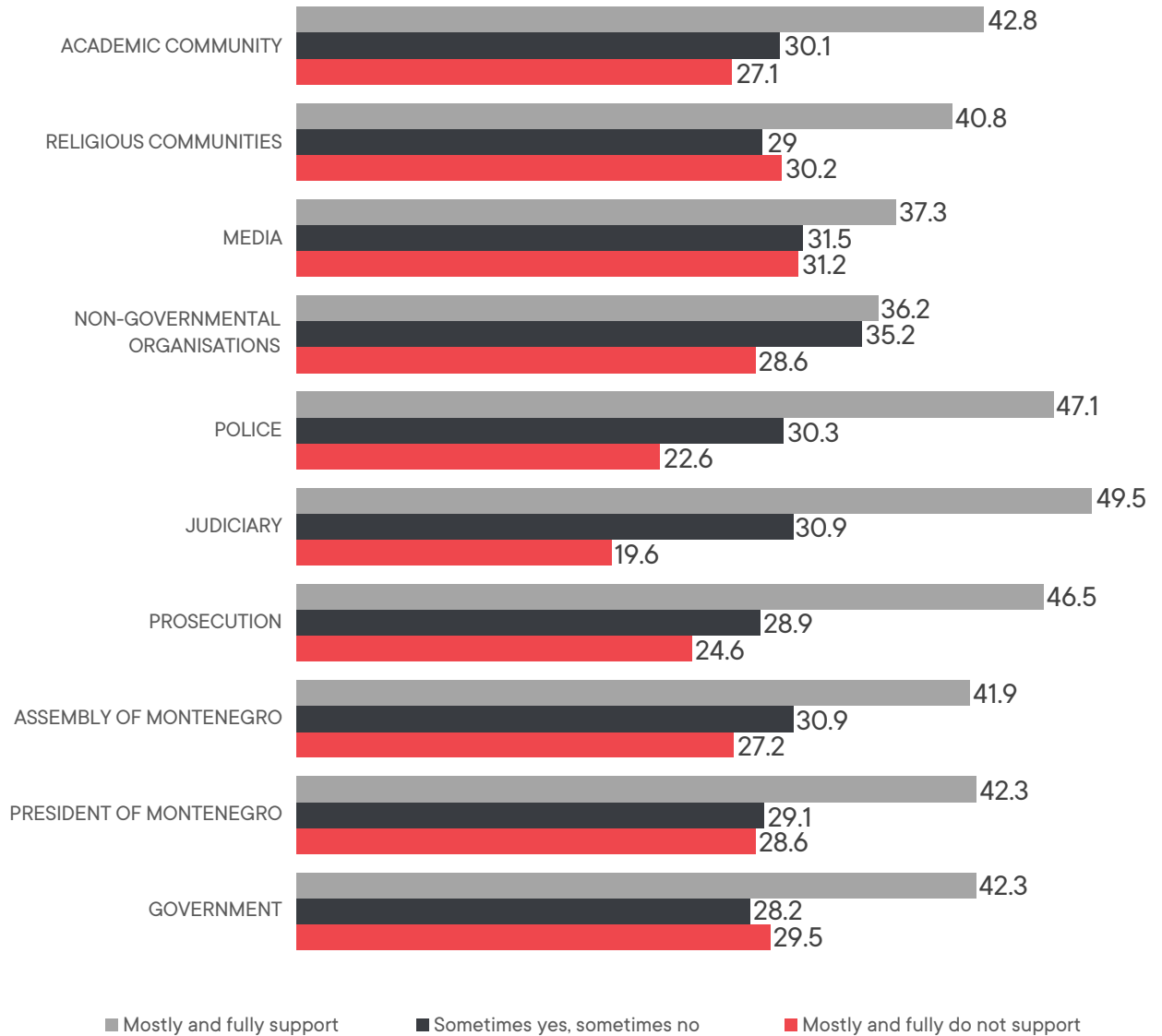
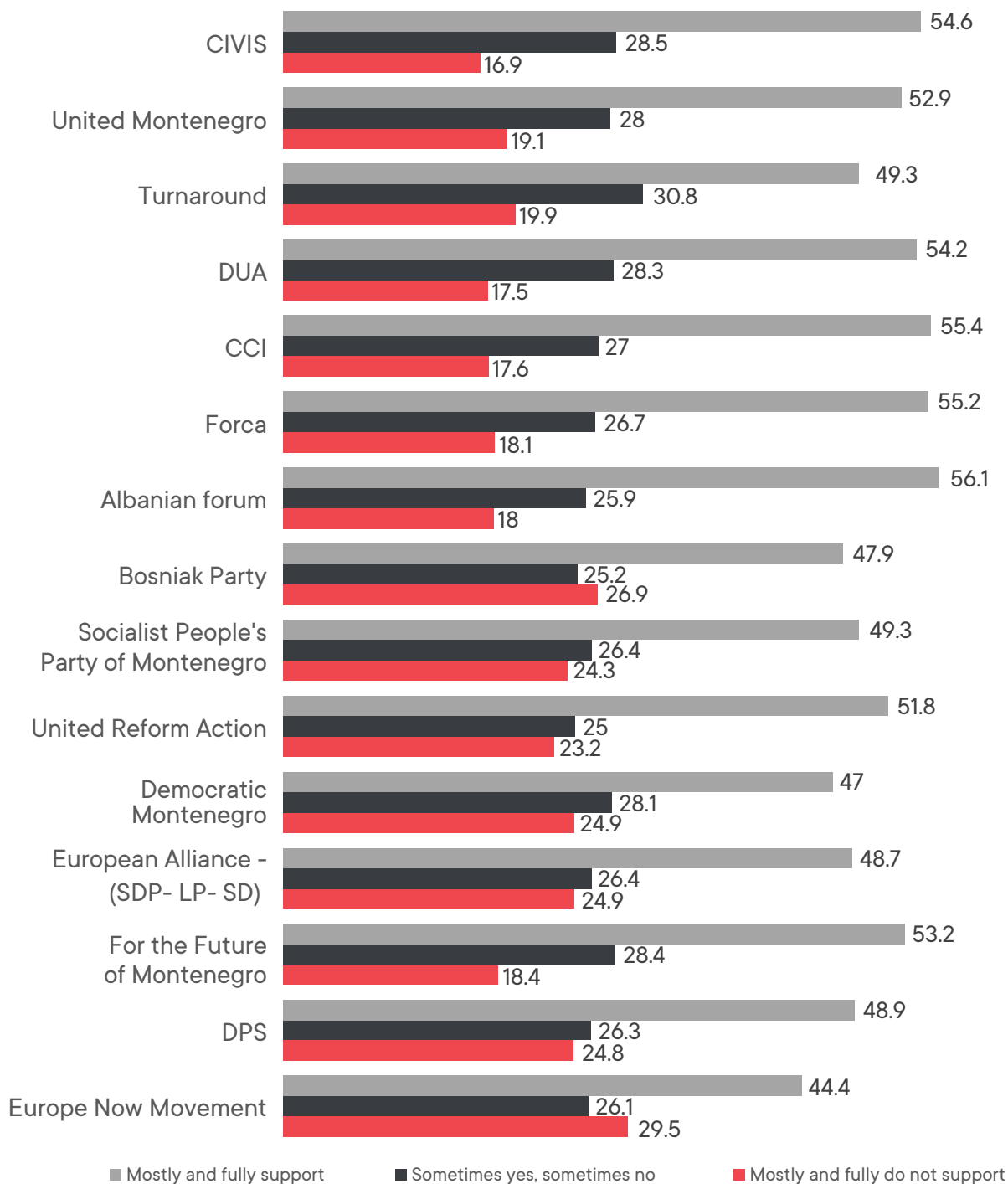


Chart 32: Do the listed social actors support transitional justice and dealing with the past?

On the other hand, the NGO sector and the media receive the most positive assessments, although only a limited number of organisations are actively engaged with this issue, while religious and academic communities are rated similarly.

Public perception of institutions on this matter highlights a lack of trust in the judiciary and state authorities. At the same time, greater confidence in the NGO sector and the media suggests a need for stronger civic engagement and alternative mechanisms to compensate for institutional shortcomings. Should this trend persist, there is a risk that dealing with the past will be reduced to fragmented and informal initiatives, rather than being part of a coherent state policy. This could lead to further social polarisation, political instability, and a more difficult process of Europeanisation, in which transitional justice is a key component.

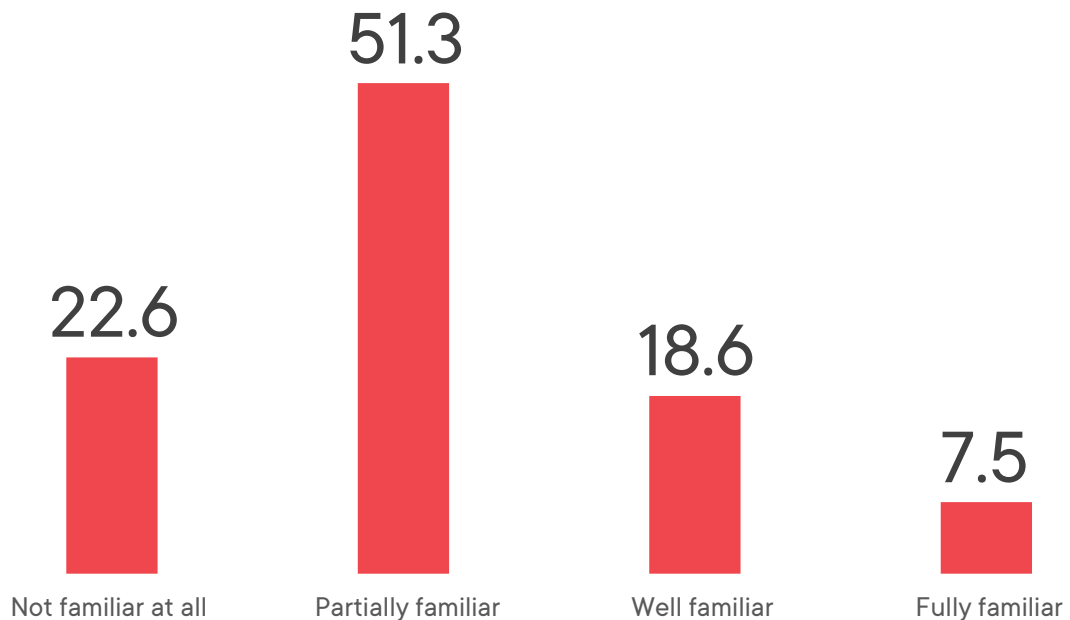


Graph 33: Do the listed political parties/coalitions support transitional justice and facing the past?

These data indicate that citizens do not perceive political parties in Montenegro as key actors in transitional justice, which may slow down the adoption of crucial laws and strategies for dealing with the past, and consequently hinder reconciliation and the stabilisation of society. Furthermore, Montenegro's European integration process could also be delayed, given that transitional justice is one of the important elements in meeting the criteria for EU membership.

# Transitional justice and judicial capacities

A large percentage of surveyed citizens – 77.4% – have some level of awareness regarding the verdicts of international courts for war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia. However, this knowledge is mostly superficial, as respondents stated they are only partially familiar with the rulings. A smaller proportion reported having more detailed information, while over one-fifth (22.6%) are not familiar with these verdicts at all. This highlights the need for more systematic educational approaches, as well as higher-quality media reporting, in order to ensure a better understanding of judicial processes and their importance for addressing the past.



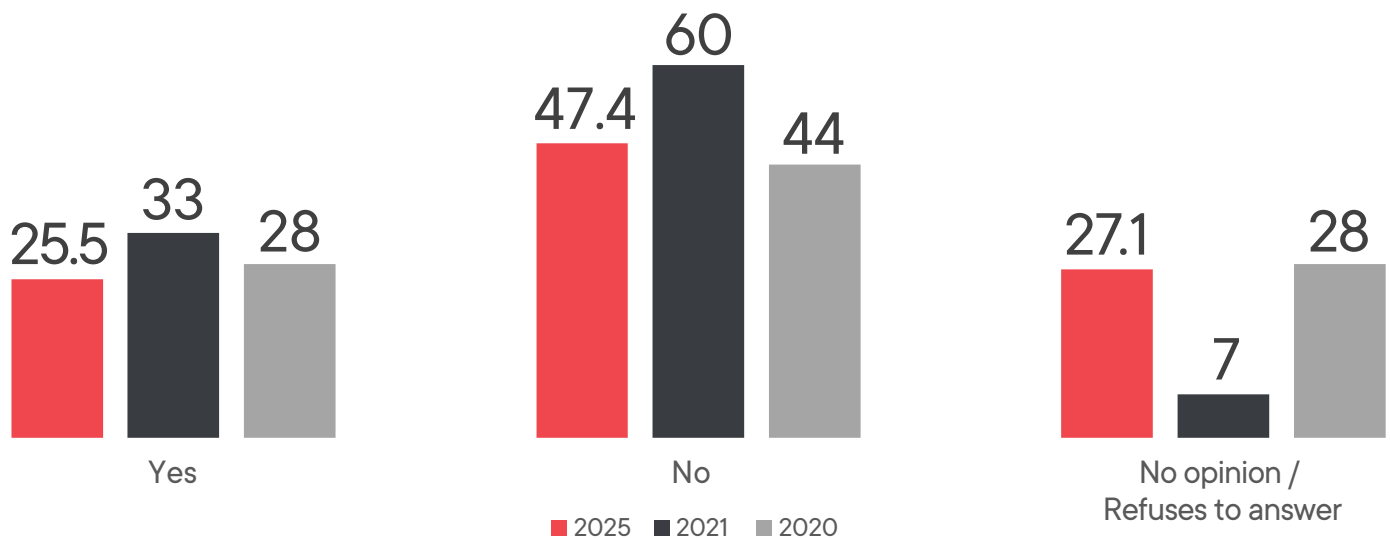
Graph 34: How familiar are you with the verdicts of international courts related to war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia?

Public perception of the capacity of the Montenegrin judiciary to prosecute war crimes is important due to its impact on trust in institutions and the rule of law.

In 2020<sup>40</sup>, 44% of respondents believed that the judicial system did not have sufficient capacity to prosecute war crimes. This percentage increased to 60% in 2021<sup>41</sup>, indicating growing distrust in the judiciary, while in 2025, almost half of the respondents still believed that the Montenegrin judiciary is not capable of prosecuting these crimes. These results point to a serious and chronic problem within the judicial system, which, according to citizens' perception, is not being adequately addressed.

40 *Public Opinion Survey on Transitional Justice (2020)*, available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2020/03/CGO-Tranziciona-pravda-FF.pdf>

41 *Dealing with the Past for the Future (2021)*, available at: <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO-Tranziciona-pravda-izvjestaj-FF.pdf>



Graph 35: Does the Montenegrin judiciary have the capacity to prosecute war crimes?

Research conducted during different periods indicates that the citizens of Montenegro are only partially informed about the prosecution of war crimes.

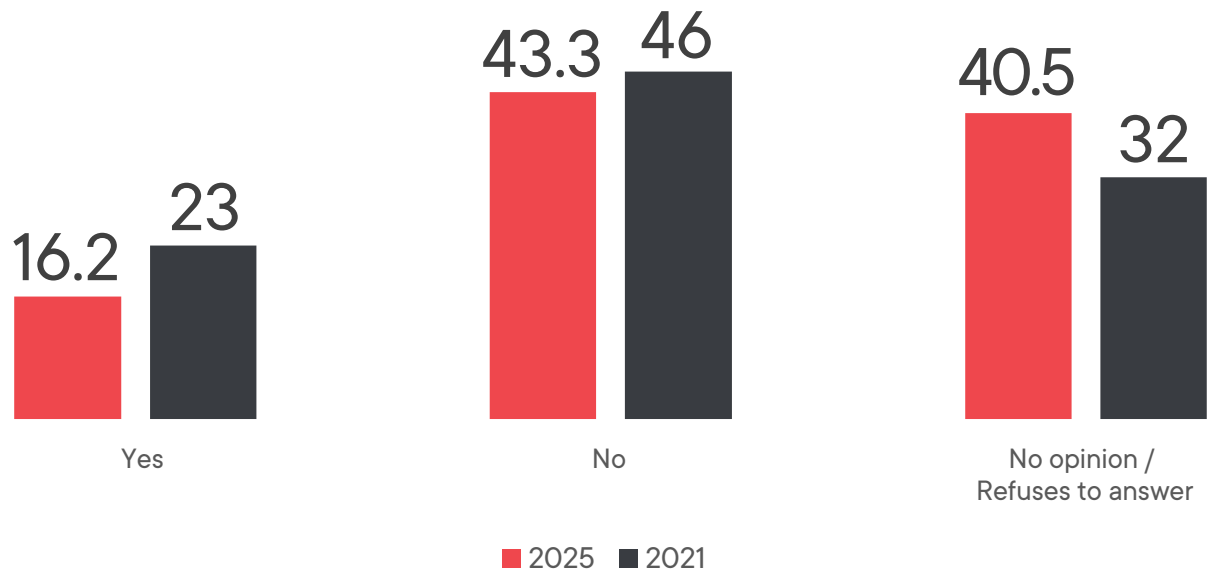
According to data from 2021<sup>42</sup>, 30% of respondents believe they are aware of cases in which citizens of Montenegro were accused of war crimes committed during the 1990s, while half have no knowledge of such cases. The 2025 survey shows a similar trend – nearly half (47%) of the population remains unaware that any Montenegrin citizen has been accused of war crimes, while just over a quarter (26.3%) know of such cases. An additional little over a quarter (26.7%) have no opinion or refuse to answer. These figures suggest that general awareness about the prosecution of war crimes has not significantly increased in recent years, which may be due to insufficient media coverage as well as a passive stance by institutions on this issue.

The data also indicate that public perception of the Montenegrin Prosecutor’s Office’s engagement in prosecuting war crimes is divided, and a large portion of the public remains uninformed about these processes. In 2021<sup>43</sup>, 54% of citizens did not know whether the Montenegrin Prosecutor’s Office had investigated war crimes, while only 25% believed it had. The situation has not significantly changed according to the 2025 findings. Opinions remain divided – 35.1% believe the Prosecutor’s Office did not investigate war crimes, 32.1% believe it did, and 32.8% have no opinion or refuse to answer. Additionally, 51% of respondents were unaware that war crimes trials had been conducted in Montenegro (which is even higher compared to 2021, when this figure was 46%), while only 24% reported knowledge of such trials. It is evident that a lack of communication about these proceedings, primarily by institutions, contributes to the general lack of awareness.

The 2025 research also reveals that 43.3% of respondents believe that no trials for war crimes have taken place in Montenegro, while only 16.2% believe that trials have been held. At the same time, over two-fifths (40.5%) of citizens have no opinion on this matter, highlighting the persistent issue of uninformed public opinion and lack of transparency in the judiciary’s work.

42 *Dealing with the Past for the Future* (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Trancionna-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Trancionna-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

43 *Dealing with the Past for the Future* (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Trancionna-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Trancionna-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)



Graph 36: Based on the information available to you, have there been trials for war crimes before Montenegrin courts?

Regarding specific cases, according to the 2025 research, the trial known as “Deportation” is the most recognised, with 31.1% of respondents having heard of it. However, a significant proportion (27.6%) could not recall any trial, which further illustrates the limited reach of the judicial institutions in communicating about these matters.

The issue of compensation payments to victims of war crimes represents an important aspect of transitional justice and the state’s responsibility in the process of dealing with the past. The attitudes of Montenegrin citizens on this topic have changed over the years, reflecting the broader social and institutional context.

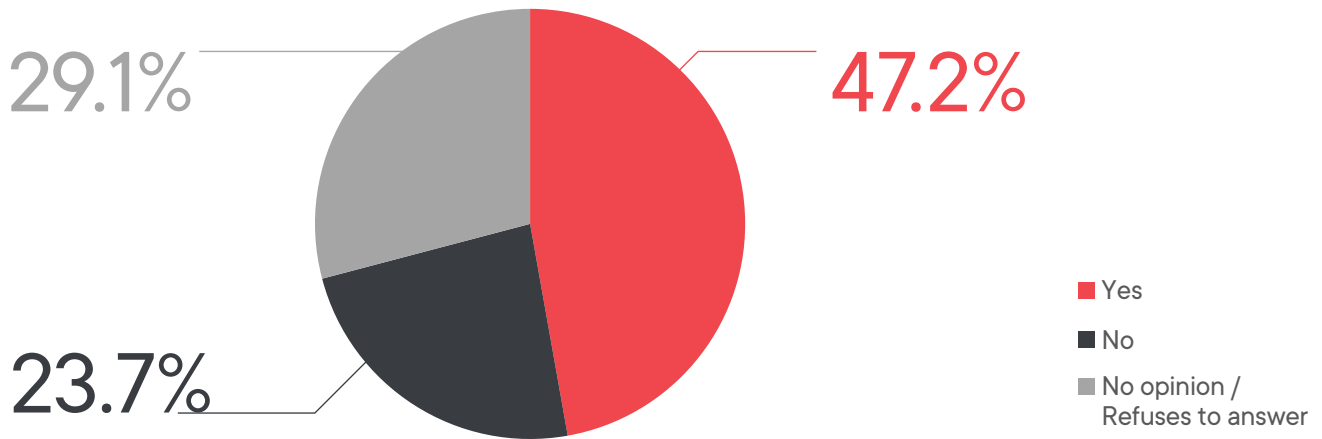
Research from 2021<sup>44</sup> showed that, if a court establishes responsibility, as many as 70% of the population would support compensation payments to victims of war crimes, while one-fifth disagreed. This high percentage indicated strong support for the principles of justice and reparation.

However, the 2025 research records a decline in this support – around 50.6% of citizens believe the state should pay compensation, while 23.9% do not support this, and 25.5% have no opinion or refuse to answer.

A clear reparations strategy, adequate prosecution of war crimes, and continuous dialogue with citizens can contribute to strengthening trust in the judicial system and achieving long-term justice for victims.

Additionally, according to the 2025 findings, support for introducing a special witness protection system in trials for war crimes from the 1990s is below half, which is concerning, considering that witnesses are often crucial in prosecuting war crimes, and their security directly affects their willingness to testify and contribute to establishing justice. Specifically, 47.2% of respondents consider a special witness protection system necessary, while 23.7% do not see the need, and as many as 30% have no opinion.

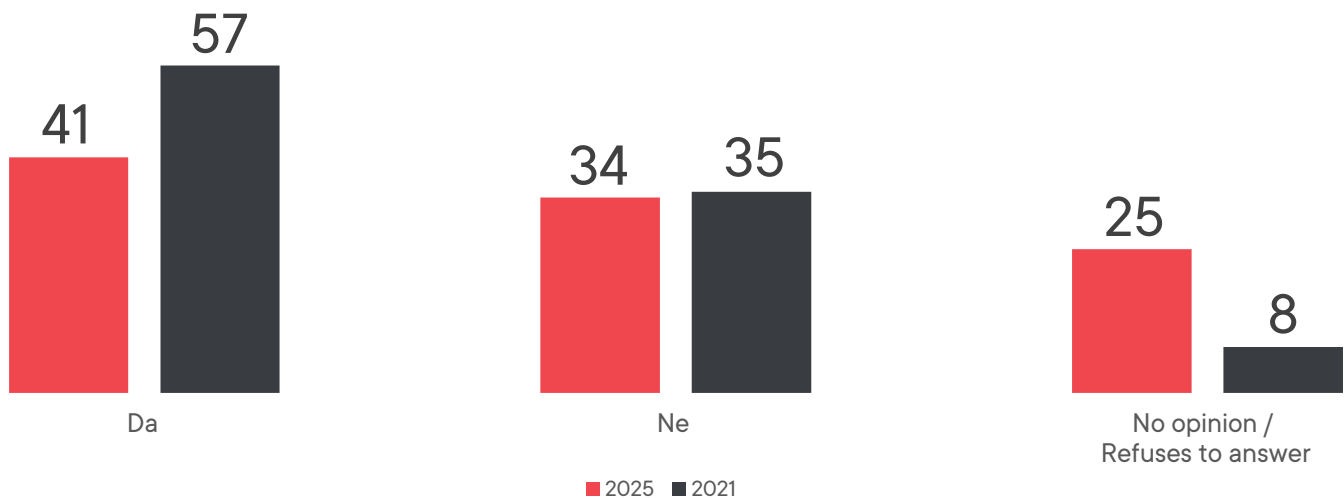
44 *Dealing with the Past for the Future* (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)



Graph 37: Do you believe a special witness protection system is necessary in trials for war crimes from the 1990s?

These data indicate the need to raise awareness about the importance of witness protection, to ensure their active participation in court proceedings and to provide an effective legal response to war crimes.

At the same time, support for the extradition of Montenegrin citizens to other countries for trials related to war crimes from the 1990s has declined from nearly 60% in 2021<sup>45</sup> to just over 40% in 2025. This trend is accompanied by a growing share of citizens without a formed opinion, which may suggest deepening divisions in the public, increasing uncertainty regarding the capacity of institutions to impartially and effectively prosecute war crimes, as well as the influence of misinformation about the events of the 1990s.

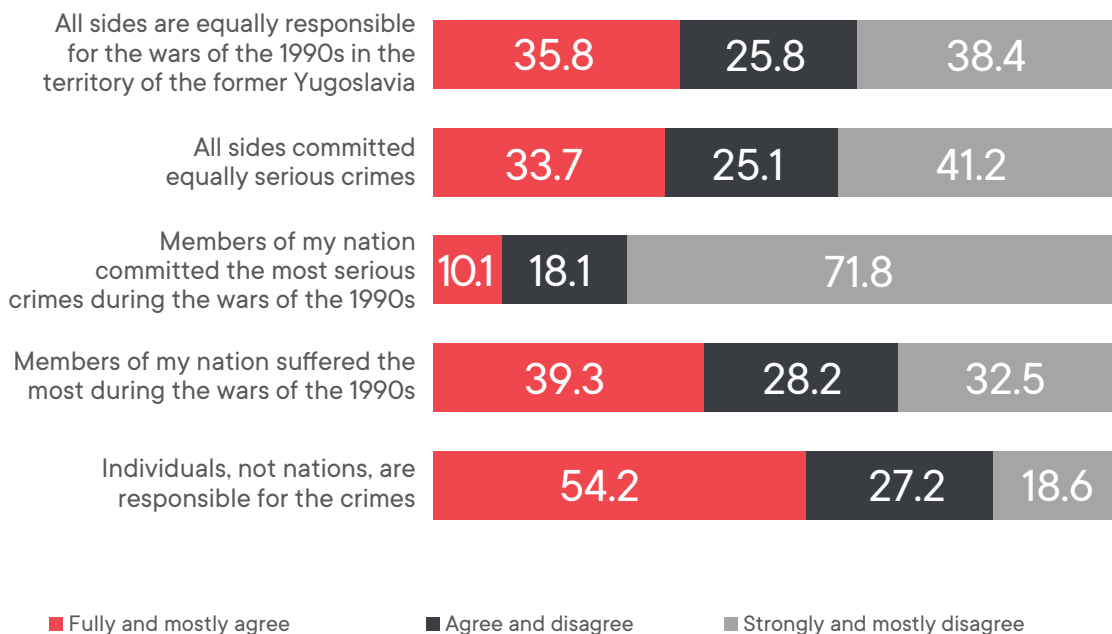


Graph 38: Do you support the extradition of Montenegrin citizens to other countries for trials related to war crimes from the 1990s?

45 Dealing with the Past for the Future (2021), available at: [https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO\\_Tranziciona-pravda\\_izvjestaj-FF.pdf](https://media.cgo-cce.org/2021/05/CGO_Tranziciona-pravda_izvjestaj-FF.pdf)

# A past without consensus

Most respondents hold differing views on responsibility for the wars of the 1990s, the Hague Tribunal, and NATO’s role in the intervention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Their answers can be grouped into two main categories: positive (“mostly agree” and “fully agree”) and negative (“strongly disagree” and “mostly disagree”) attitudes.



Graph 39: Agreement with the statements...

The view that all sides are equally responsible for the wars of the 1990s has divided citizens – 35.8% agree with this statement, 38.4% disagree, and 25.8% hold a neutral stance. It should be noted that in 2021, 58% of respondents agreed with this claim, while 29% disagreed.

The statement that all sides committed equally serious crimes is supported by 33.7% of respondents, while 41.2% oppose this view, indicating a prevailing opinion that responsibility was not evenly distributed. In 2021, a total of 49% agreed with this statement, while 36% were opposed.

The idea that members of one’s own nation committed the most serious crimes is rejected by a significant majority – 71.8%, while 10.1% agree with this statement, which reflects significant resistance to this perception. Findings from 2021 show that 7% of respondents agreed with this statement, and 79% did not.

The attitude that members of one’s own nation suffered the most during the wars is supported by nearly two-fifths (39.3%), while less than a third (32.5%) disagree, indicating divided opinions on the suffering of different nations during the conflict. In 2021, 44% of respondents agreed with this statement, while 38% disagreed.

The highest agreement is with the statement that individuals, not nations, are responsible for the crimes – 54.2%, although this is significantly lower than in 2021, when 85% of respondents shared this attitude.

Between 2021 and 2025, there have been significant changes in attitudes regarding responsibility for the wars of the 1990s, moving towards relativisation, selective memory, and collective defence through the prism of national affiliation.

Thus, the attitude that members of one's own nation committed the gravest crimes still meets with resistance. In 2025, the majority reject this idea, and average views among young people, according to research carried out in 2024<sup>46</sup>, show a moderate distancing from questions of responsibility.

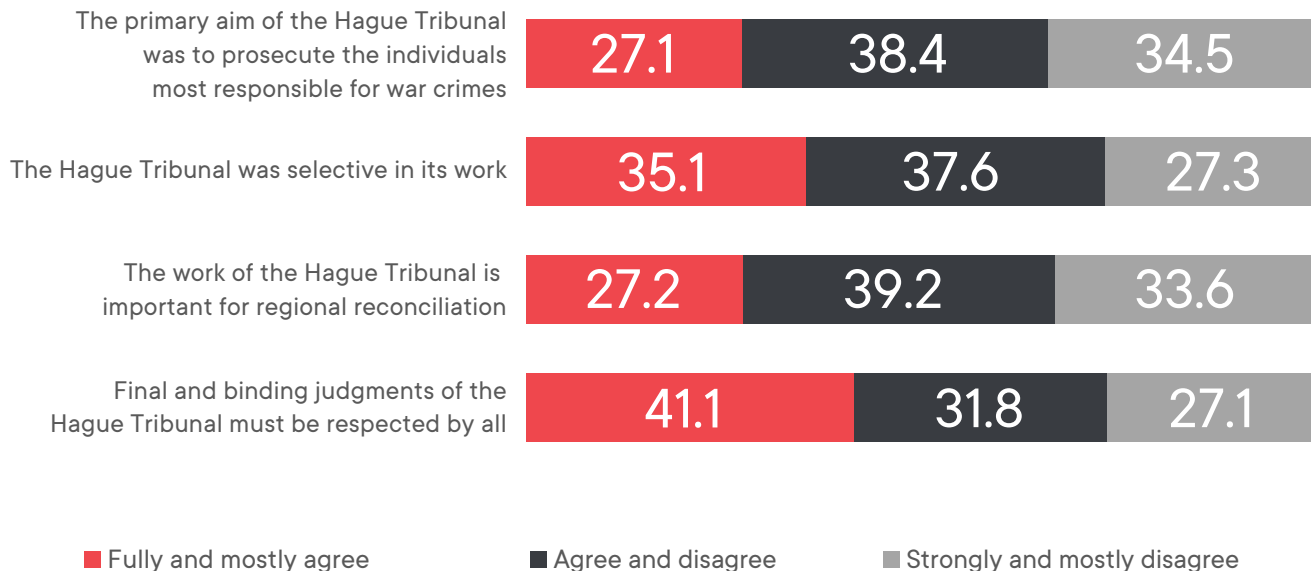


Chart 40: Attitudes towards the Hague Tribunal

The claim that the ICTY fulfilled its main goal – prosecuting those most responsible for war crimes – was supported by only 27.1% of respondents, while 34.5% did not support it, which indicates the prevalence of sceptical attitudes towards the work of this court. Also, 38.4% of citizens have a neutral stance on this issue. According to the findings of the 2021 research, 25% of respondents agreed with this claim, and 57% did not.

There is a pronounced perception that the ICTY was selective in its work – 35.1% hold this view, while 27.3% are on the other side, and 37.6% of respondents take a neutral position. For comparison, in 2021, 50% of respondents agreed with this claim, while 31% did not.

Opinions are divided on whether the work of the ICTY was significant for regional reconciliation – 27.2% of respondents see its work as positive for reconciliation, while 33.6% think the opposite, and 39.2% have a neutral stance, which is striking. In 2021, 29% of respondents agreed with this statement, while 53% did not.

The highest level of support was recorded for the claim that all final judgments of the ICTY must be respected – 41.1%, although more than a quarter (27.1%) disagree. On the other side, in 2021, 59% of respondents agreed with this statement, and 28% did not.

The data indicate that the public in Montenegro remains deeply divided when it comes to the ICTY, with pronounced

46 Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes of Young People about the 1990s in Yugoslavia (2024), available at <https://media.cgo-cce.org/2024/09/Muzej-90-ihistrazivanje.pdf>

scepticism and a lack of trust in the performance of this international court in the processes of justice and reconciliation. Despite slight improvements, overall trends point to low levels of information, a high percentage of neutral responses, and a continued perception of selectivity and injustice. Positive evaluations among young people (above the average value), according to research conducted in 2024, suggest potential for a different attitude towards the court’s role in the future. However, overall, international justice is not perceived as a tool for social transformation, but remains politicised and disputed in the public sphere.

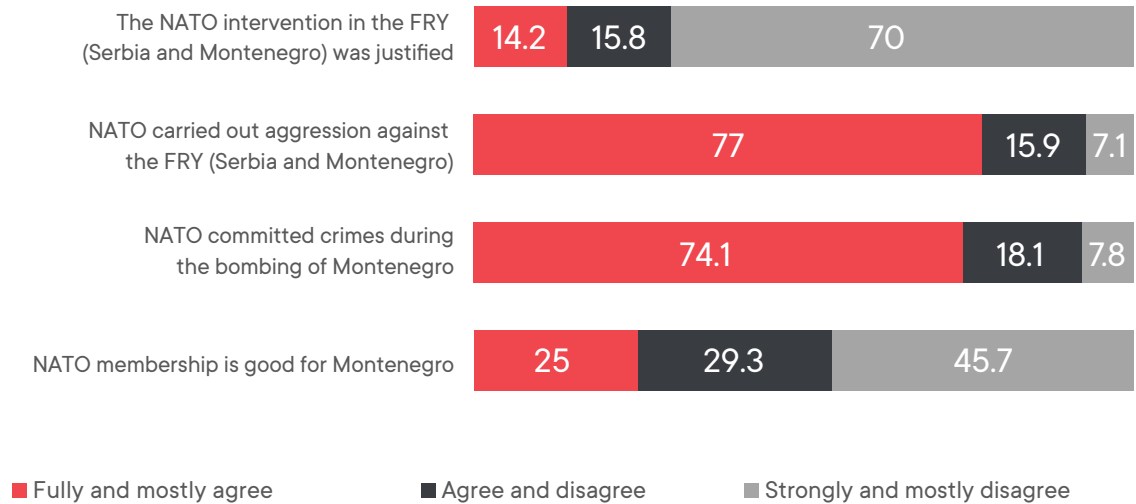


Chart 41: Attitudes towards the NATO alliance

As many as 70% of respondents believe that the NATO intervention in 1999 was not justified, while only 14.2% hold the opposite view, and 15.8% are undecided. On the other hand, in 2021, 15% considered it a justified action, while 75% did not.

The perception that NATO carried out aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) dominates, with 77% holding this view, only 7.1% disputing it, and 15.9% neutral, which all indicates a widely spread view of the NATO intervention as aggression.

Also, 74.1% believe that NATO committed crimes during the bombing of Montenegro, 7.8% dispute this claim, and 18.1% of respondents have no clear stance on this issue. Similar percentages were recorded on this question in 2021.

As expected, in relation to previous opinions, views on Montenegro’s membership in the NATO alliance are divided – 30.2% of respondents support it, while 45.7% oppose it, with a high percentage of neutral answers (29.3%). On the other hand, the number of those who supported Montenegro’s NATO membership was significantly higher in 2021 – 46%, while 34% disagreed.

Attitudes about the justification of the NATO intervention have shown change since 2021, with the majority of respondents continuously considering the bombing unjustified. Political circumstances have evidently influenced a different constellation of attitudes toward NATO membership, which significantly declined in 2025 compared to 2021.

# Media and reporting on war crimes from the 1990s in Montenegro

Media reporting on war crimes from the 1990s in Montenegro was often coloured by political and ideological interests that shaped how events were portrayed. State television and the press, with few exceptions, fuelled the war atmosphere by spreading disinformation, inciting rhetoric, and constructing narratives about the defensive or liberating character of the conflict. By doing so, they contributed to the dehumanisation of other people, the justification of violence, and the creation of deep social divisions that are still felt today.

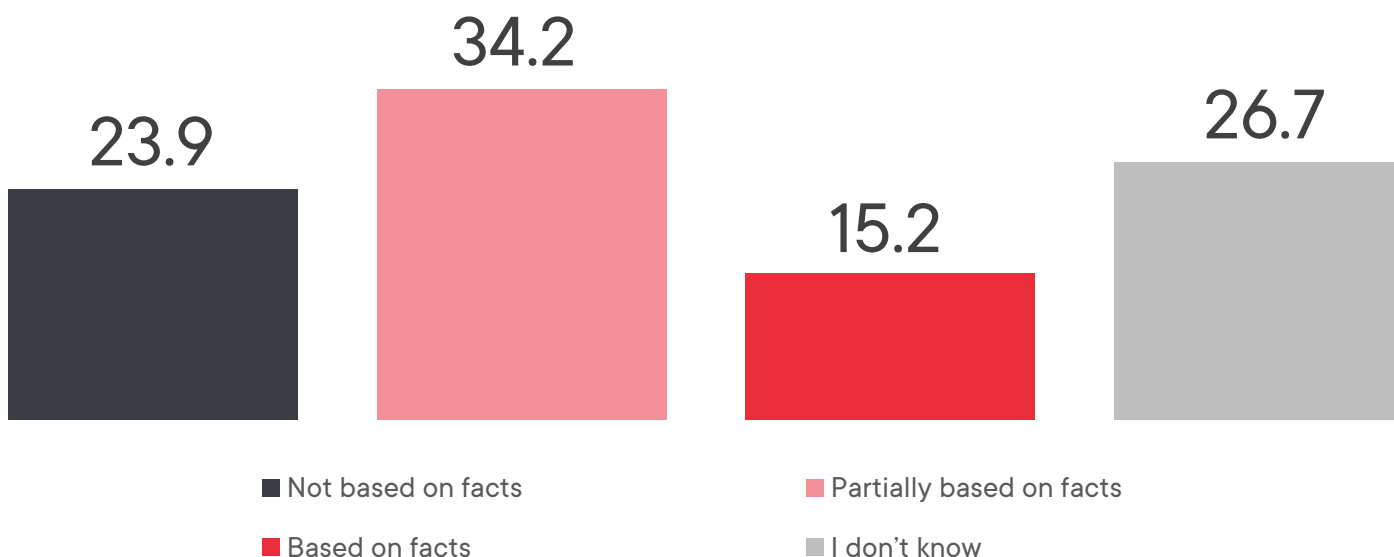


Chart 42: How do you evaluate media reporting in Montenegro on war crimes from the 1990s – is it based on facts?

The research findings indicate that a majority of citizens express skepticism regarding the objectivity of media reporting on war crimes from the 1990s.

Specifically, 23.9% (the total of negative responses) believe that the reports are not based on facts, while only 15.2% (the total of positive responses) believe that they are. Interestingly, the largest number of respondents (34.2%) hold a neutral stance, judging that the reporting contains partially accurate information, while 26.7% have no clear opinion or refuse to answer.

These data confirm that trust in the media is extremely low. The fact that nearly a quarter of respondents directly deny the accuracy of the report's points to a serious crisis of credibility that the media face when it comes to sensitive topics from the past. The high percentage of undecided respondents, who have no stance or refuse to answer, indicates a lack of knowledge and information on the topic, as well as a loss of trust not only in the media but also in institutions.

