



## Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation

### February 2023 Public Opinion Poll – English Excerpt

Released:

**February 21, 2023**

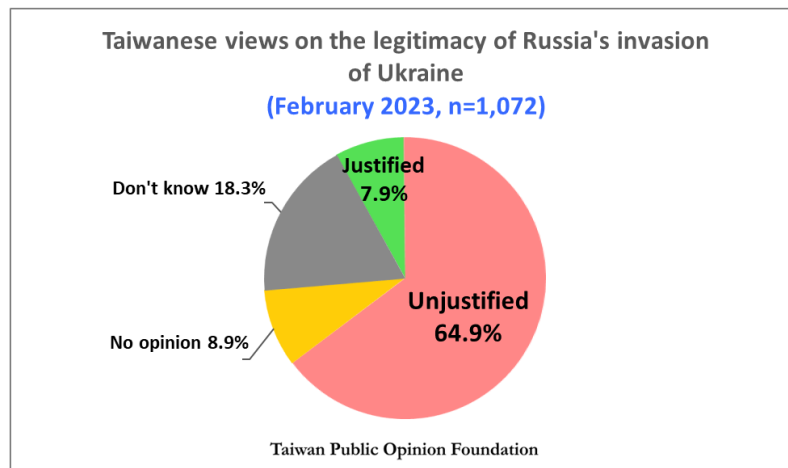
**Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation** (TPOF) today released the result of its February 2023 nation-wide poll. This marks the 79th monthly survey conducted by the TPOF aimed at tracking the development and changes in Taiwan’s public opinion. The full release in Chinese language is available on our [official website](#).

#### **How the Survey was Conducted**

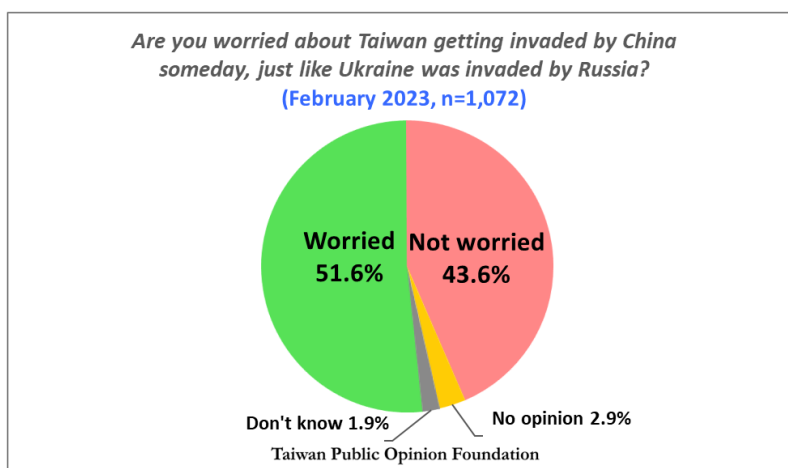
This survey was conducted on February 13-14, 2023, with a sample size of 1,072. Adults 20 years of age and older residing in Taiwan were interviewed by telephone using live interviewers. Landline numbers were drawn through random digit dialing system. The samples were demographically weighted to adjust for gender, age, education and the district of residency based on the latest statistics published by the Ministry of the Interior. Sampling error is around  $\pm 2.99$  percentage points with 95% level of confidence.

## Main Findings:

1. Regarding the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a strong majority of 64.9% thought Russia's invasion of Ukraine was unjustified, while only about 7.9% thought it was justified in some way. Almost one year into the war, Taiwan's public opinion on the legitimacy of Russia's invasion remains largely unchanged since last year's poll in March found 73% said it was unjustified versus 10% said it was justified, though slightly more people said they feel ambiguous about it.

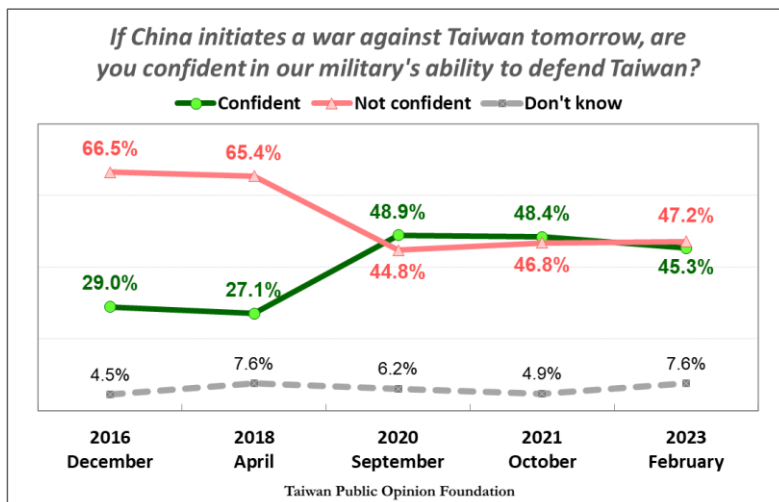
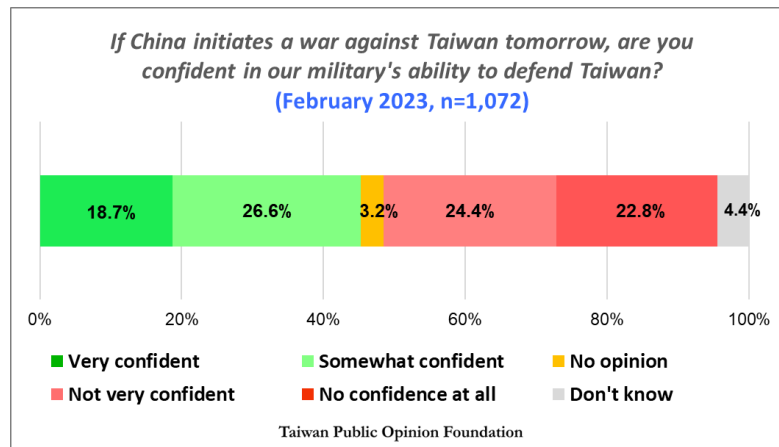
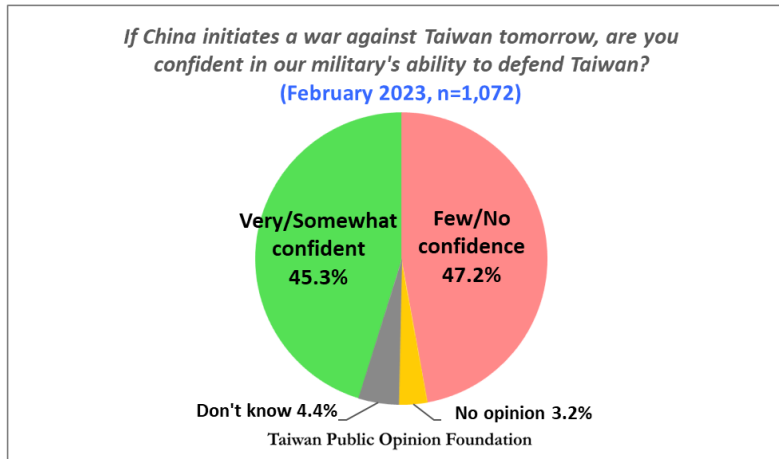


2. Are Taiwanese people worried about the possibility of China invading Taiwan, in light of how Russia invaded Ukraine? The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 51.6% said they are worried, while 43.6% said they are not worried.



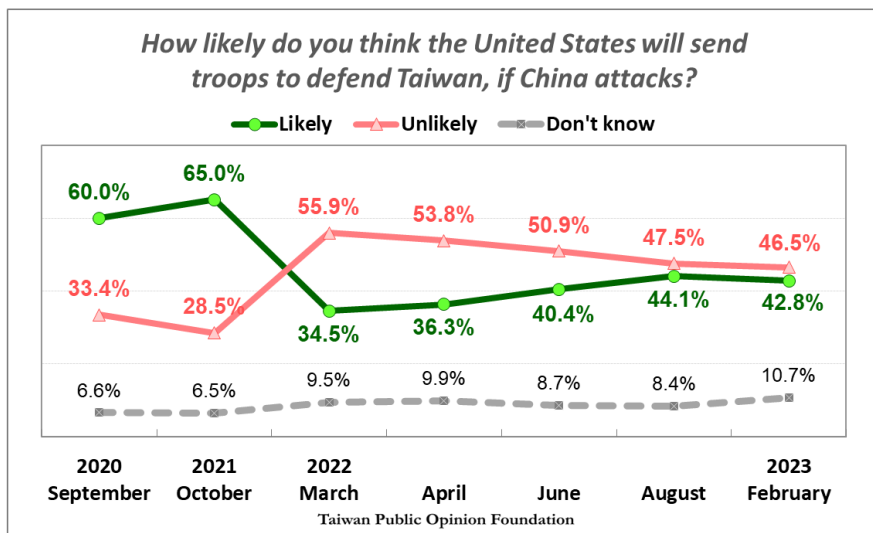
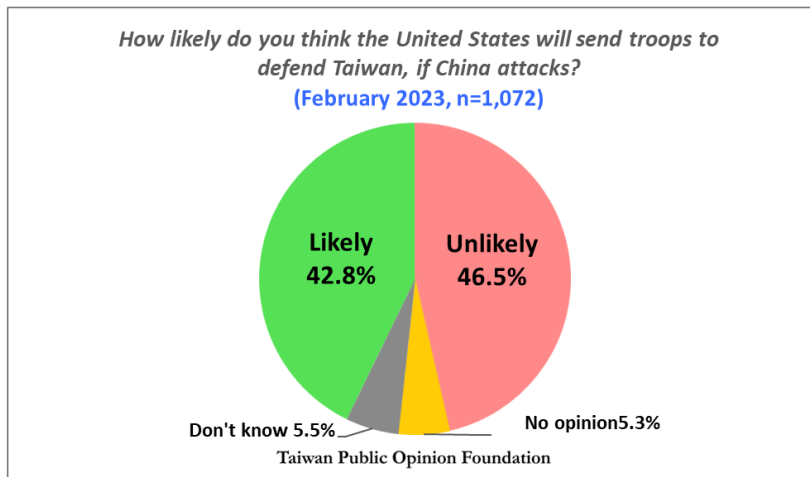
3. How confident are Taiwanese people in the ability of Taiwan's military to resist China in a war? The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 47% said they have few or no confidence at all, while a minority of

45% said they have some or very strong confidence. The slim majority that was confident in Taiwan’s military since 2020 is now again skeptical. Looking at past poll data, Taiwanese public’s confidence in its military in fighting a war with China never exceeded 50%, and potentially constitutes a question of public confidence in Taiwan’s defenses.

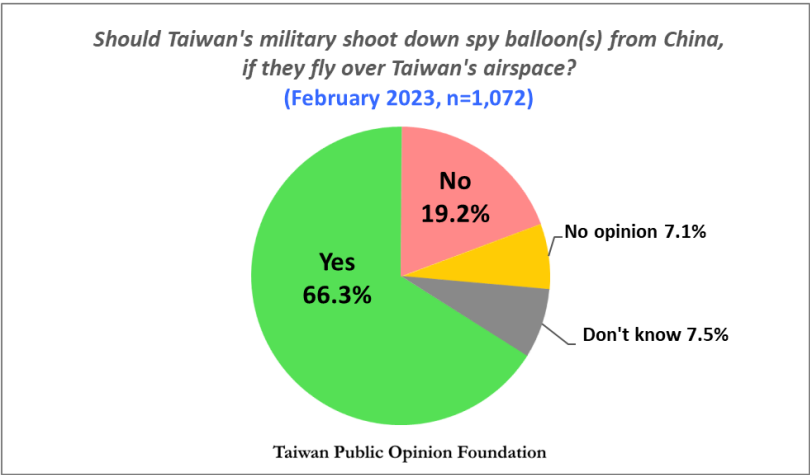


4. Do Taiwanese public believe the United States will send troops to defend Taiwan

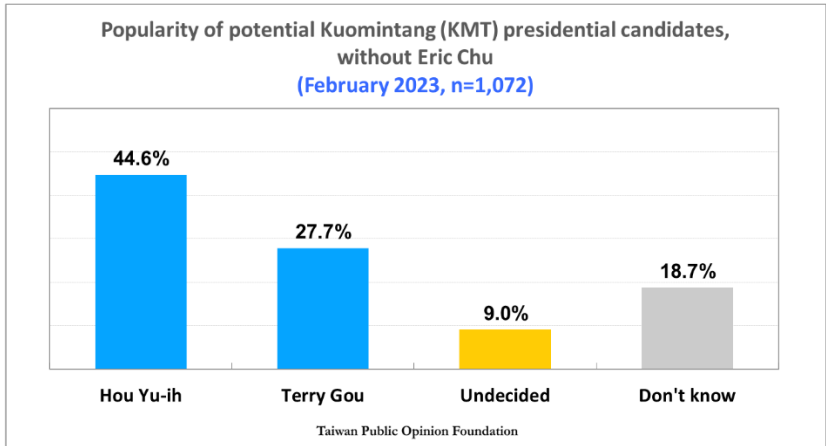
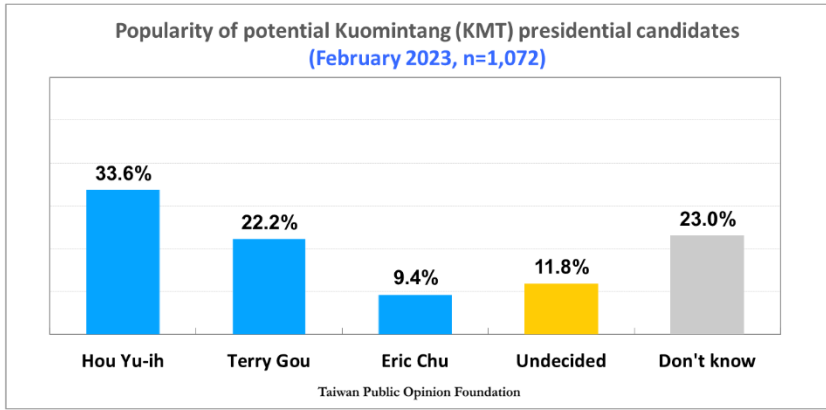
if China invades? The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 46.5% do not believe so while a minority of 42.8% do. As past polls shown, Taiwanese confidence in U.S. defense suffered a major blow after witnessing the outbreak of Ukraine War last February and the lack of a direct U.S. military intervention, in the months that followed “believers” of U.S. intervention gradually recovered but as of now are still way below pre-Ukraine war level and a majority of Taiwanese are still skeptical.



- In early February, a high-altitude intelligence-gathering balloon from China flew over continental United States and became the center of international controversy which [resulted](#) in U.S. military shooting it down. Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense has made claims alleging similar balloons flown over Taiwan before. We asked whether people think Taiwan’s military should shoot down future Chinese balloon incursion. The poll finds that among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 66.3% support shooting down while 19.2% oppose it.

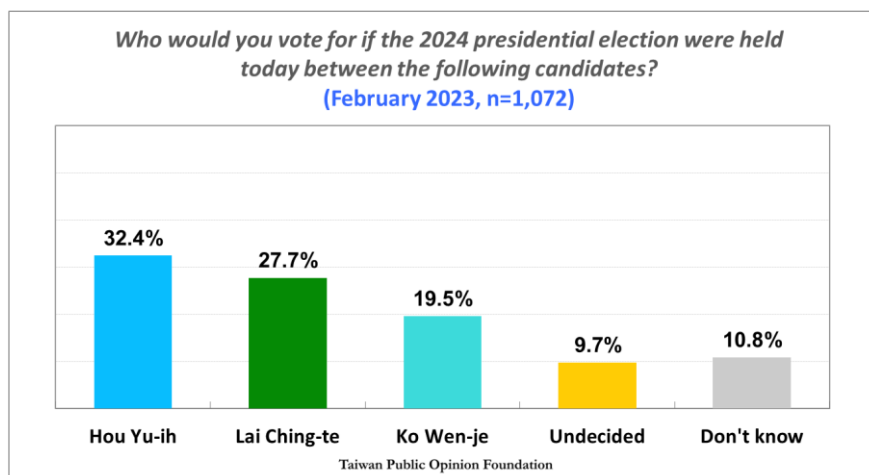


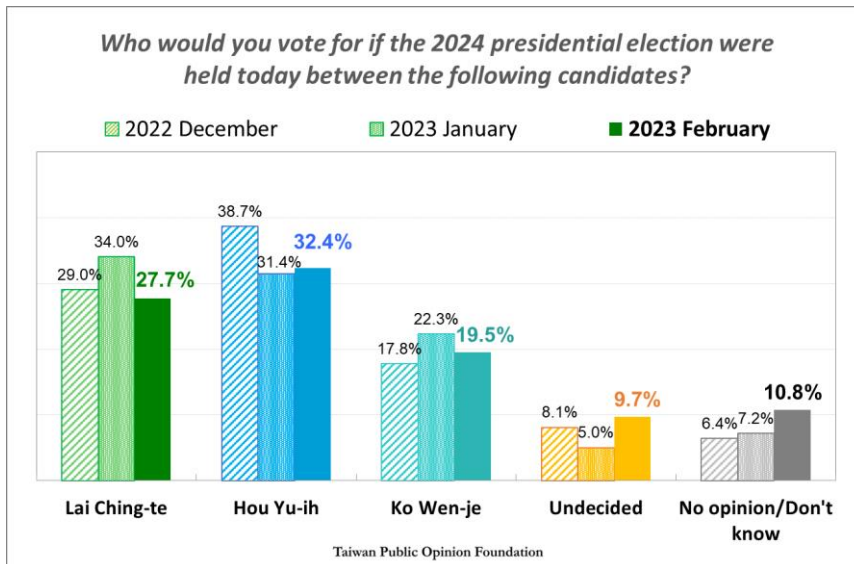
6. Taiwan's next presidential election is expected to be held on January 13, 2024. While no major candidate has yet to declare formally, we asked respondents whom they are inclined to support among the commonly speculated Kuomintang (KMT) candidates. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih leads the poll at 33.6%, Foxconn business tycoon Terry Guo came second, and incumbent KMT chairman Eric Chu came last at 9.4%. If Eric Chu is excluded from the choices, the poll finds Hou received a much bigger share of Chu's supporters at 44.6% while Terry Gou still came second at 27.7%.



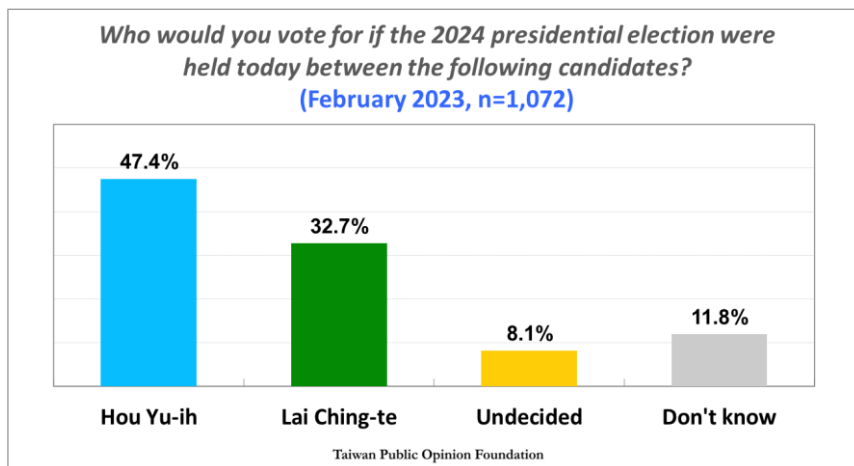
7. In terms of presidential election lineup, one commonly speculated lineup of prospective candidates consists of incumbent Vice President Lai Ching-te (DPP), incumbent New Taipei City Mayor Hou (KMT), and former Taipei City Mayor Ko Wen-je (TPP). In this three-way race, the poll finds that among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, Hou leads with 32.4%, Lai came second at 27.7%, and Ko came third at 19.5%. Compared to polls from past months, Hou and Lai continue to fight for that top spot, while Ko's support seems to have stabilized at third place. There are several observations:

- Among younger voters (20-34) Ko leads at 37%, Hou came second at 21%, while Lai came last at 19%. Among older voters (65 and above) though Lai received the most support at 41%, Hou at 34%, Ko came last at only 3.4. Hou leads among mid-age voters (35-64) at 37%.
- Among those who identify themselves as supporters of the ruling DPP Lai received 78%, among KMT supporters Hou received 74%, among Taiwan People's Party (TPP) supporters Ko received 80%. Among those who identify themselves as independents though, 21% support Hou, 14% support Ko, and 13% support Lai.
- Geographically Hou's popularity sweeps most of Taiwan's administrative areas including Taipei City, New Taipei City, Taoyuan City, and even Kaohsiung City. Lai only leads in Tainan City, Chiayi County, and Yunlin County.

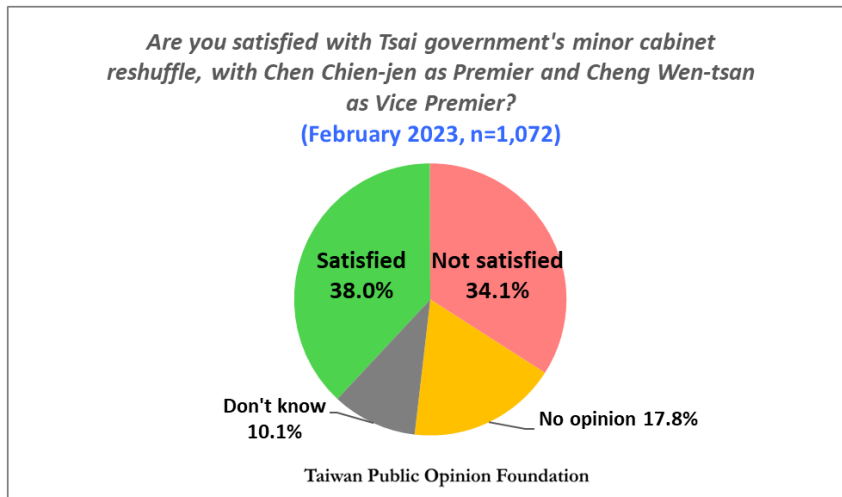




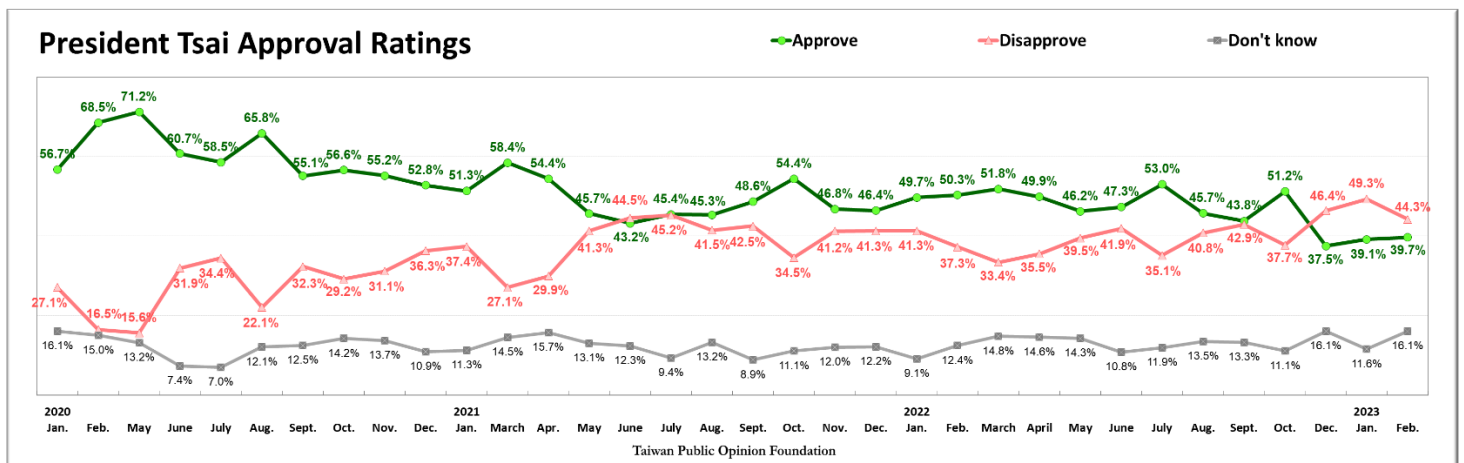
8. If Ko Wen-je is excluded from the lineup, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 47.4% support Hou while 32.7% support Lai. This means that Ko's exit from the race would benefit Hou overwhelmingly, since 69% of Ko's supporters would vote for Hou instead and only 19% would vote for Lai.



9. On January 31, President Tsai Ing-wen reshuffled her cabinet and replaced Premier Su Tseng-chang with Chen Chien-jen, the former Vice President during Tsai's first presidential term. Former Taoyuan City Mayor Cheng Wen-tsan was appointed Vice Premier. The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 38% were satisfied with this reshuffle while 34% were not satisfied. This is a remarkably low satisfaction level for a new Premier and is indicative of the challenges facing the Premier Cheng and the cabinet, of which most key ministerial members have not been replaced by President Tsai.



10. On the Presidential job approval rating, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 44.3% disapproved of the way Tsai Ing-wen is handling her job as the President, while a minority of 39.7% expressed approval. Comparing to result from January, President Tsai’s disapproval rate decreased slightly but still has not reached majority approval. It is clear that Taiwanese public reacted coldly to Tsai government’s minor cabinet reshuffle, which was only done after the DPP suffered a landslide defeat in the November 2022 local elections.

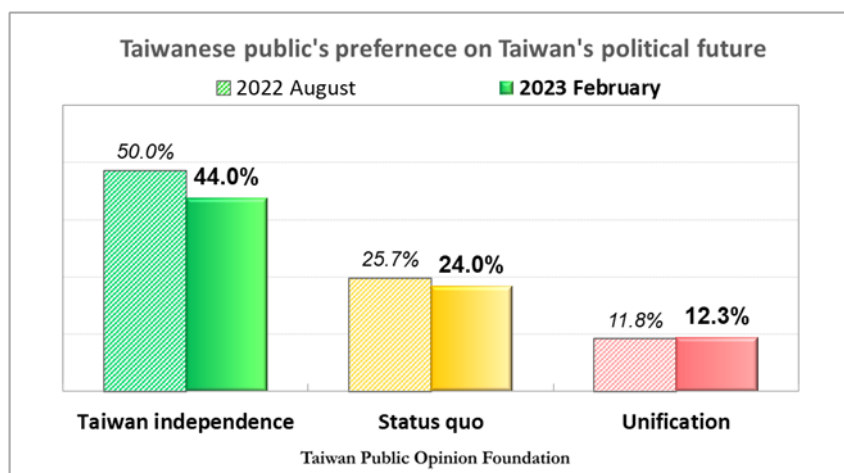
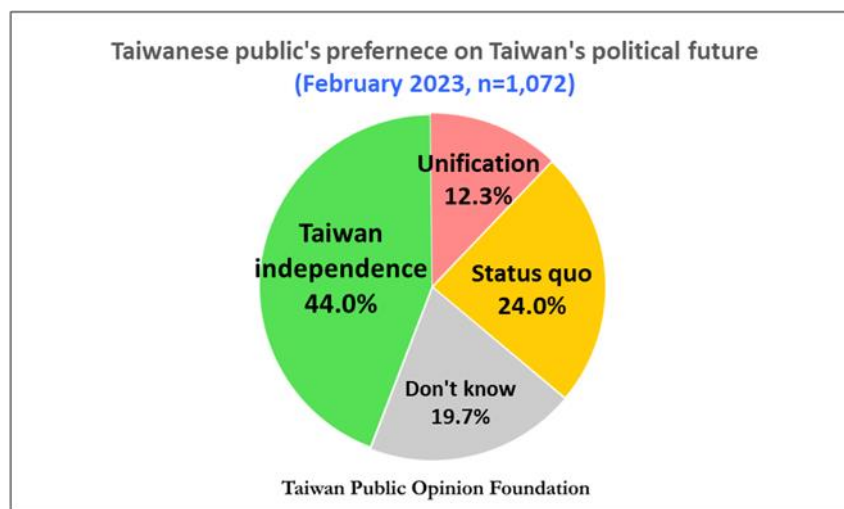


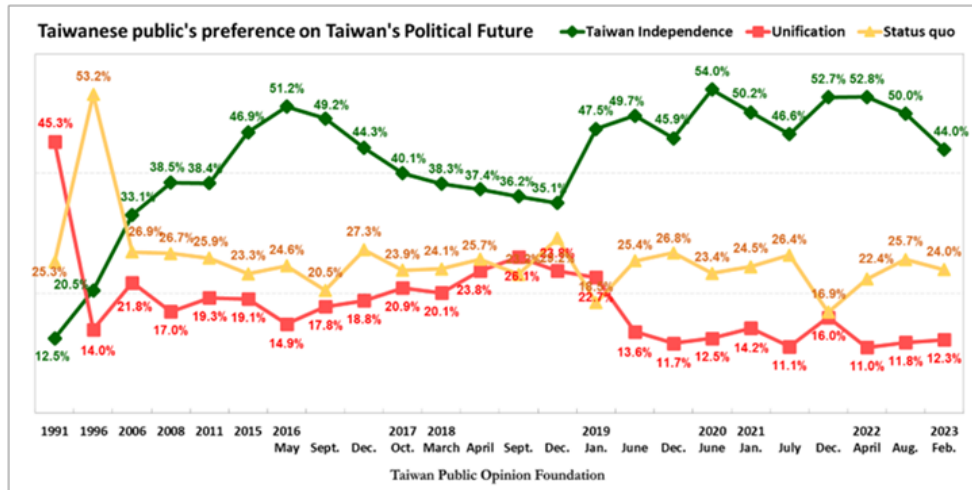
11. Concerning Taiwanese views on political future, we asked: “There are debates regarding the future of Taiwan. Some people argue Taiwan should pursue unification with the other side of the [Taiwan] Strait, while others argue Taiwan should pursue its own independence. Do you support Taiwan independence, or unification with the other side?” The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 44% said they support Taiwan independence, 12.3% for unification, 24% for maintaining status quo.



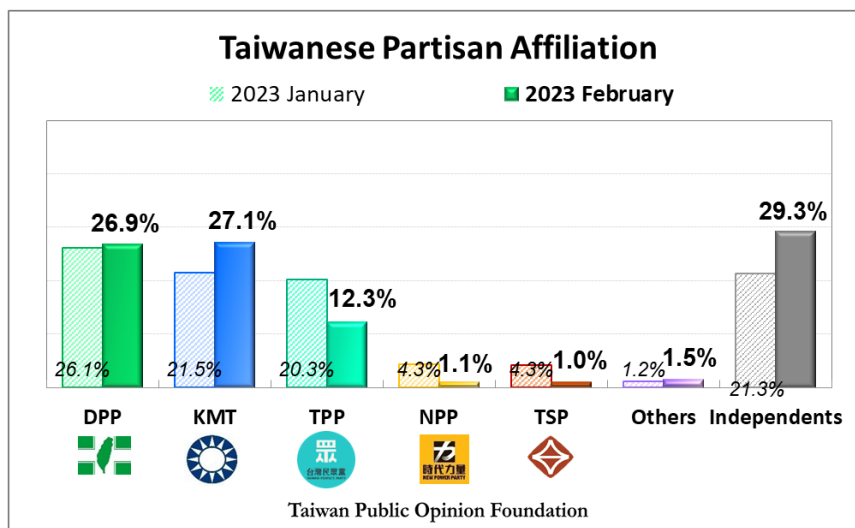
Above all, this is yet another data point to support our long observation that the majority of the Taiwanese public, when offered the options, prefer Taiwan independence over all other options including “status quo”. The common narrative that “most Taiwanese want to maintain status quo” that is often repeated by government officials and the current leadership of major political parties (DPP and KMT) is simply not supported by polling data.

Compared to our past poll in August 2022, however, it is clear that those who support independence have decreased slightly, but so were those who support status quo. What increased were those who are uncertain of their preferences. What caused this small but noticeable change? That remains to be seen.



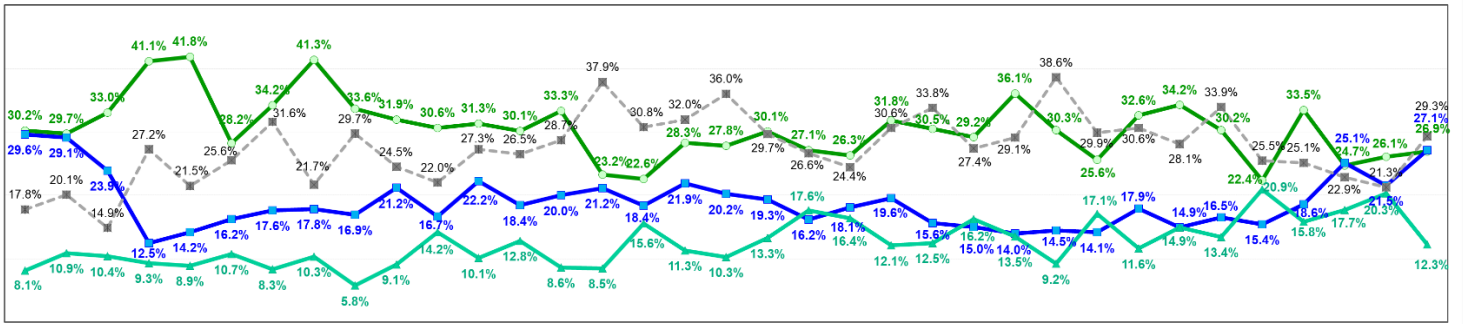


12. On political party affiliation, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 27.1% said they support the Kuomintang (KMT), 26.9% support the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), 12.3% support the Taiwan People's Party (TPP), 1.1% support the New Power Party (NPP), 1% support the Taiwan State-building Party (TSP), and 29% respondents identified themselves as independents. Compared to our January poll, KMT saw a major rally again and regained the most popular political party status after briefly holding it last December, while third parties suffered major losses. Both NPP and TPP are now reduced to just 1%, almost at the brink of becoming irrelevant electorally.



### Taiwanese Partisan Affiliation 2019 - 2023

—○— DPP
 —□— KMT
 —△— TPP
 —■— Independents



2019 Aug. Oct. Nov. Feb. May June July Aug. Oct. Nov. Dec. 2021 Jan. March April May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec. 2022 Jan. Feb. March April May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Dec. 2023 Jan. Feb.

Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation