

## **Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation**

January 2023 Public Opinion Poll – English Excerpt

Released:

**January 17, 2023** 

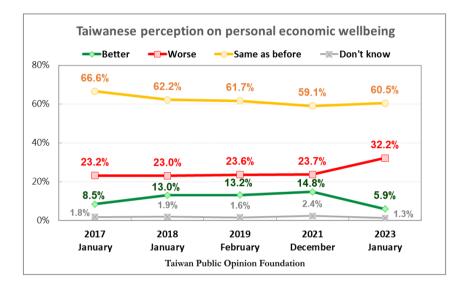
**Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation** (TPOF) today released the result of its January 2023 nation-wide poll. This marks the 78th monthly survey conducted by the TPOF aimed at tracking the development and changes in Taiwan's public opinion. The <u>full release</u> in Chinese language is available on our <u>official website</u>.

## How the Survey was Conducted

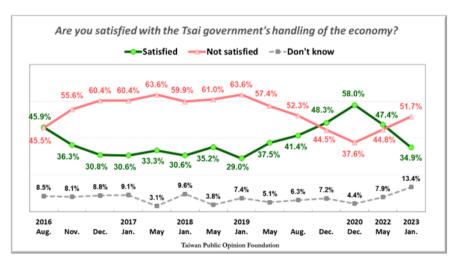
This survey was conducted on January 9-13, 2023, with a sample size of 1,085. Adults 20 years of age and older residing in Taiwan were interviewed by telephone using live interviewers. Landline numbers were drawn through random digit dialing system. The samples were demographically weighted to adjust 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  $\pm 2.98$  percentage points with 95% level of confidence.

## **Main Findings:**

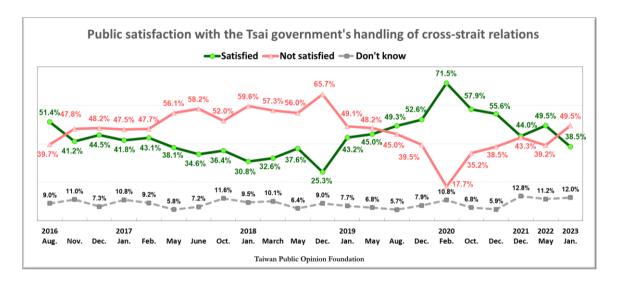
1. How did the Taiwanese public feel about their own economic wellbeing throughout 2022? The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 60.5% said they did not feel much has changed, while 32.2% said they felt it became worse, and 5.9% said it became better. In other words, very few Taiwanese felt improvement to their economic wellbeing in 2022, and a sizeable minority felt things have gotten worse. Compared to 2021, negative perceptions have noticeably increased while positive perceptions decreased further, a sign that year 2022 was economically challenging for many Taiwanese.



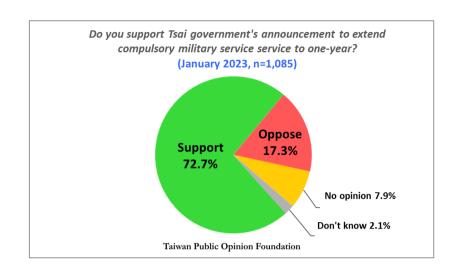
2. On Tsai government's handling of Taiwan's economy, among adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 51.7% are not satisfied while a minority of 34.9% are satisfied. Since the start of Tsai's first term economic performance has always been among the least satisfied part of her administration. Although it improved from 2019 coincided with a brief economy boom, the impacts from 2021-2022 COVID waves on the economy have rapidly dampened the public's satisfaction.



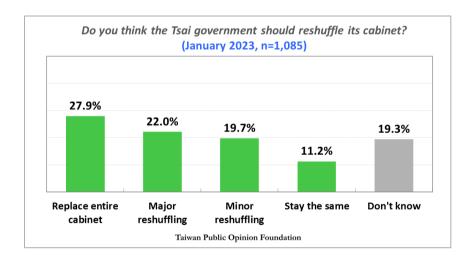
3. On the ruling Tsai government's handling of the cross-strait relations with China, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 49.5% said they are not satisfied, while 38.5% said they are satisfied. This shows that for the first time since 2019, a majority of Taiwanese public are not content with the government's handling of relations with China. The importance of this decline cannot be overstated since at one point in 2020, during the early period of COVID pandemic, Tsai government had 71.5% approval in its handling of cross-strait relations. The decline could also be one of the main causes for DPP's landslide defeats in the November 2022 local elections as Tsai government's campaign focus and propaganda line "抗中保台" (oppose China, protect Taiwan) used in this local elections failed to attract support from majority voters.



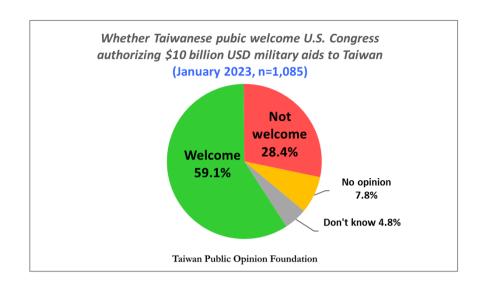
4. On December 27, 2022, the Tsai government <u>announced</u> it will extend compulsory military service from four months to one year starting 2024. Coincidentally, the move came just a week after TPOF released its <u>December monthly poll</u> showing 73% Taiwanese public supported extension of military service at that time. This month we asked respondents their views on Tsai government's decision and found that among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 72.7% support extending military service and only 17.3% oppose it. The level of support is consistent with the result from our December poll and confirmed that the extension of military service is supported by strong consensus among the Taiwanese public.



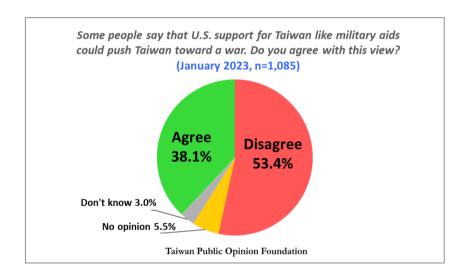
5. Following its <u>landslide defeats</u> in the 2022 November local elections, the ruling Tsai government is expected to reshuffle Premier Su Tseng-cheng cabinet. The poll finds that among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 27.9% said the entire cabinet should be replaced which would include replacing Premier Su, while 22% said a major reshuffling is needed, and 19.7% only saw the need for minor reshuffling, while 11.2% said no change is needed. This means that a majority of Taiwanese public desire to see major or complete change to Tsai government's cabinet members.



6. In December 2022, the U.S. Congress passed its annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which included provisions that would allocate US\$10 billion in military aids to Taiwan over five years' time. The poll found that among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 59.1% said they welcome the military aids from the United States, while a minority of 28.4% said they do not welcome such support.



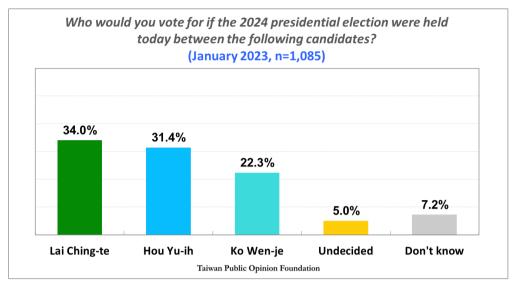
7. We asked respondents whether Taiwanese public share the view that U.S. support for Taiwan such as military aids could push Taiwan toward a war. The poll found that among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 53.4% disagree with this view, while a significant minority of 38.1% agree with it

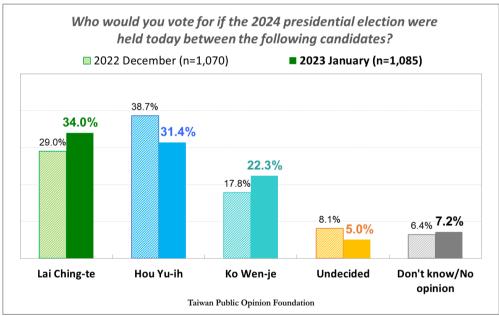


8. Taiwan's next presidential election is expected to be held on January 13, 2024. While no major candidate has yet to declare formally, one commonly speculated lineup of prospective candidates consists of incumbent New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih (KMT), incumbent Vice President Lai Ching-te (DPP), and former Taipei City Mayor Ko Wen-je (TPP). In this three-way race, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, Vice President Lai leads by 34%, Mayor Hou came close second at 31.4%, while Ko came third at 22.3%.

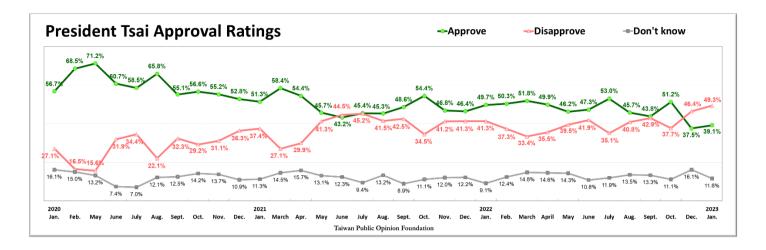
Compared to our December 2022 poll, Lai had a dramatic increase of 5% while Hou decreased by 7.3%. This result means that although the DPP under President Tsai just suffered a landslide defeat in the local elections, it could still remain

competitive and even winning the 2024 presidential election, provided a popular candidate is eventually nominated by the party which in the case of our poll is the Vice President Lai.



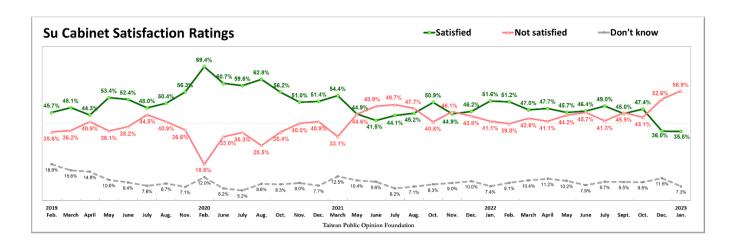


9. On the Presidential job approval rating, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 49.3% disapproved of the way Tsai Ing-wen is handling her job as the President, while a minority of 39.2% expressed approval. Comparing to result from December, President Tsai's approval continues to slide following DPP's massive defeats in the November 2022 local elections.



Several factors could explain President Tsai's current unpopularity:

- Tsai's style of leadership and governance means she usually procrastinates on decisions concerning changes or removal of high officials who are demonstrably incompetent or no longer suited for positions. Her hesitance with replacing Premier Su's cabinet following massive local election defeats being one example.
- Taiwanese public's dissatisfaction over government's economic performance.
   As the global economy outlook seems increasingly fragile if not recessionary in 2023, Tsai government would face an even more uphill battle of satisfying Taiwanese public's desire for economic growth.
- Taiwanese public's dissatisfaction over government's handling of cross-strait relations. This issue is often linked to economic performance since trade with China amounts to a massive part of Taiwan's export and economic activities.
- 10. On the performance of Premier Su Tseng-chang cabinet, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 57% were not satisfied of the way Su cabinet is handling the government, while a minority of 35.8% were satisfied. Compared to December, the level of dissatisfaction continues to grow despite Su's <u>public relations move</u> to hand out government budget surplus as cash stipend to the people.



11. On political party affiliation, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 26.1% support the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), 21.5% said they support the Kuomintang (KMT), 20.3% support the Taiwan People's Party (TPP), 4.3% support the New Power Party (NPP), 4.3% support the Taiwan State-building Party (TSP), and 21.3% respondents identified themselves as independents. Compared to our December poll, KMT lost its most popular political party status after securing it for only one month after the November 2022 local elections, while DPP and TPP saw modest gains.

