

# BRITISH COLUMBIANS ON AIR INDIA VERDICT

*Among British Columbians Following the Trial:*

*Two-Thirds (68%) Disagree with Verdict*

*Nearly Half (46%) Hold Worsened Impression of Justice System*

*Six-in-Ten (61%) Want a Public Inquiry*



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**Vancouver, BC** – A new Ipsos-Reid poll shows that British Columbians are generally critical of the verdicts at the end of the long running Air India trial. Among British Columbians following the trial or with an opinion on the verdicts (79% of all adults), two-thirds (68%) disagree with the court finding the defendants not guilty on all charges. Further, nearly half (46%) of those following the trial say they now have a worsened impression of the justice system as a result of the verdicts and six-in-ten (61%) think there should be a public inquiry into the handling of the case.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid telephone poll conducted March 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 with a randomly selected sample of 800 adult British Columbia residents. A total of 629 respondents answered the full set of questions about the Air India verdict. The results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.9$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire BC adult population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual BC population according to the 2001 Census.*

## ***Two-Thirds (68%) Disagree with Verdict***

Eight-in-ten (79%) British Columbians say they followed the trial or have an opinion on the Air India verdicts. Among these British Columbians, opinion is more than two-to-one against the court's decision to find the defendants not guilty on all charges. Two-thirds (68%, 47% strongly) disagree with the court's decision, while one-third (32%, 8% strongly) agrees with the court's decision.

- Disagreement with the court's decision is above the majority level across all regional and demographic groups. Among those following the trial or with an opinion, disagreement with the court's verdict is highest among women (71% vs. 64% men), older residents (72% 55+ years vs. 64% 18-34 years, 67% 35-54 years) and residents with high school or less education (73% vs. 69% some post-secondary, 62% university graduates).

## ***Nearly Half (46%) Hold Worsened Impression of Justice System***

Nearly half (46%) of those following the trial or with an opinion on the verdict say their opinion of the justice system has worsened (29% a lot, 16% a little) as a result of the verdicts. Only 3% (1% a lot, 2% a little) say their opinion of the justice system has improved. Half (51%) say their impression of the justice system has stayed the same as a result of the verdicts.

- Among those following the trial or with an opinion, worsened impressions of the justice system are most prevalent among women (50% vs. 41% men) and older residents (53% 55+ years vs. 36% 18-34 years, 46% 35-54 years).

## ***Six-in-Ten (61%) Want a Public Inquiry***

Six-in-ten (61%) British Columbians following the trial or with an opinion think there should be a public inquiry into the handling of the case. Thirty-seven percent do not think a public inquiry is necessary, while 2% are undecided.

- Among those following the trial or with an opinion, interest in a public inquiry is highest among women (68% vs. 53% men), younger residents (70% 18-34 years vs. 56% 35-54 years, 59% 55+ years) and residents with high school or less education (67% vs. 62% some post-secondary, 56% university graduates).

- 30 -

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