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*But Canadians Remain Split On The Continued Military Effort
In Afghanistan*



Ipsos Reid

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MOST CANADIANS SUPPORT TROOPS IN LIGHT OF RECENT INVESTIGATION INTO AFGHANISTAN ABUSES

But Canadians Remain Split On The Continued Military Effort In Afghanistan

Toronto, ON – In the light of the recent launch of an investigation into allegations that Canadian soldiers may have mistreated detainees in Afghanistan, a new Ipsos Reid poll reports that most Canadians (63%) are sceptical that the Canadian public will ever really find out what happened. Many (37%), though, believe that investigation will get to the bottom of the issue.

Whatever the investigation's finding might be, it appears as though Canadians' support for their troops' actions and behaviour in Afghanistan is unwavering:

- 73% agree that "whatever is reported back, it is probably an extremely isolated circumstance and not widespread among the Canadian forces";
- 63% agree with the statement "I don't believe that our Canadian troops are involved with torturing combatant prisoners"; and
- 86% agree that "our armed forces are doing a good job in Afghanistan".

In fact, a good proportion of Canadians (39%) say they "don't have a problem with our Canadian troops roughing up or manhandling combatant and Taliban prisoners because it's a war zone".

But while support for the actions and behaviour of Canada's troops in Afghanistan is high, support for the military effort in Afghanistan is middling. Approximately half of Canadians:

- Agree with the statement that "Canada should pull its military out of Afghanistan as soon as possible" (49%); and

- Disagree with the statement that “If NATO forces don’t send more international troops, the Canadian military should stick it out until it’s tour of duty ends in 2009 as Afghanistan is too important to abandon” (47%). **

***Previously Ipsos Reid polls which asked “Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of Canada’s troops for security and combat efforts against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan?” revealed a similar split in Canadian public opinion dating back to March 2006.*

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid survey fielded from February 15th to 19th, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians were interviewed via an on-line survey. With a sample of this size, the aggregate results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within each sub-grouping of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample’s regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

Most (63%) Don’t Believe Investigations Into Handling Of Detainees By Canadian Troops Will Find Out What Really Happened...

Question: As you may know, the Canadian authorities who are responsible for investigating how our troops behave in combat zones are looking into allegations that Canadian soldiers may have roughed up detainees in Afghanistan and that their misdeeds were ignored by the police. Do you believe that these investigations will get to the bottom of the allegations in the Canadian public will really find out what happened?

- **Yes 37%** -- most likely from Alberta [47%], followed by Atlantic Canada [43%], British Columbia [41%], Ontario [37%], Saskatchewan/Manitoba [36%] and Québec [30%]; men [42%] and women [32%], older [41%].
- **No 63%** -- most likely from Québec [70%], followed by Saskatchewan/Manitoba [64%] and Ontario [63%], British Columbia [59%], Atlantic Canada [57%] and Alberta [53%]; women [68%] and men [50%], younger [68%].

Agree/Disagree Statements

Question: I don't have a problem with our Canadian troops roughing up or manhandling combatant and Taliban prisoners because it's a war zone.

- **Agree 39%** -- [strongly 11%/somewhat 28%] -- most likely from Alberta [64%], followed by Ontario and British Columbia [44%], Atlantic Canada [35%], Saskatchewan/Manitoba [23%] and Québec [27%]; men [53%] and women [27%], middle-age [43%].
- **Disagree 61%** -- [strongly 36%/somewhat 24%] -- most likely from Québec [73%] followed by Saskatchewan/Manitoba [67%] and Atlantic Canada [65%], Ontario and British Columbia [56%] and Alberta [36%]; women [73%] and men [47%], younger [65%].

Question: I don't believe that our Canadian troops are involved with torturing combatant prisoners

- **Agree 63%** -- [strongly 19%/somewhat 44%] -- most likely from British Columbia [66%], Alberta [65%] and Ontario [64%], followed by Québec [61%], Atlantic Canada [60%] and Saskatchewan/Manitoba [59%]; men [65%] and women [60%], older [69%].
- **Disagree 37%** -- [strongly 6%/somewhat 32%] -- most likely from Atlantic Canada [40%], Saskatchewan/Manitoba [41%] and Québec [39%], followed by Ontario [36%], Alberta [35%] and British Columbia [34%]; women [40%] and Man [35%], younger [43%].

Question: Whatever is reported back, it is probably an extremely isolated circumstance and not widespread among the Canadian forces

- **Agree 73%** -- [strongly 30%/somewhat 43%] -- most likely from Atlantic Canada [82%] and British Columbia [81%], followed by Ontario [75%] and Alberta [74%], Saskatchewan/Manitoba [69%] and Québec [65%]; men [77%] and women [69%], older [77%].
- **Disagree 27%** -- [strongly 4%/somewhat 23%] -- most likely from Québec [35%], followed by Saskatchewan/Manitoba [31%], Alberta [26%] and Ontario [25%], British Columbia [19%] and Atlantic Canada [18%]; women [31%] and Man [23%], younger [30%] and middle-age [28%].

Question: Regardless of whether I agree or disagree with the political decision to send our troops to Afghanistan, I support our Canadian troops in the job that they are doing

- **Agree 88%** -- [strongly 58%/somewhat 30%] -- most likely from Alberta [95%] and Atlantic Canada [95%], followed by Ontario [89%], British Columbia [86%] and Saskatchewan/Manitoba and Québec [85%]; men [89%] and women [88%], older [92%].
- **Disagree 12%** -- [strongly 5%/somewhat 7%] -- most likely from Québec and Saskatchewan/Manitoba [15%], followed by British Columbia [14%], Ontario [11%] and Atlantic Canada and Alberta [5%]; women [12%] and men [11%], younger [15%].

Question: Our armed forces are doing a good job in Afghanistan

- **Agree 86%** -- [strongly 40%/somewhat 46%] -- most likely from Alberta [93%], followed by Atlantic Canada [80%], Québec [86%] and British Columbia/Saskatchewan/Manitoba/Ontario [84%]; women [87%] and men [84%], older [92%].
- **Disagree 14%** -- [strongly 4%/somewhat 10%] -- most likely from Ontario/Saskatchewan/Manitoba/British Columbia [16%], followed by Québec [14%] and Alberta [7%]; men [16%] and women [13%], younger [21%].

Question: Canada should pull its military out of Afghanistan as soon as possible and abandon this mission

- **Agree 49%** -- [strongly 22%/somewhat 27%] -- most likely from Québec [60%], followed by Atlantic Canada [55%], Ontario [45%], British Columbia and Saskatchewan/Manitoba [44%], and Alberta [35%]; women [61%] and men [36%], no age difference.
- **Disagree 51%** -- [strongly 24%/somewhat 27%] -- most likely from Alberta [65%] followed by British Columbia and Saskatchewan/Manitoba [56%], Ontario [55%], Atlantic Canada [45%] and Québec [40%]; men [64%] and women [39%], no age difference.



Question: If NATO allied forces don't send more international troops, the Canadian military should stick it out until it's tour of duty ends in 2009 as Afghanistan is too important to abandon

- **Agree 53%** -- [strongly 17%/somewhat 36%] -- mostly from Alberta [62%], followed by British Columbia/Saskatchewan Manitoba [56%] and Ontario [55%], Atlantic Canada [49%] and Québec [46%]; men [62%] and women [45%], older [59%].
- **Disagree 47%** -- [strongly 17%/somewhat 31%] -- mostly from Québec [54%], followed by Atlantic Canada [51%], Ontario [45%] and British Columbia/Saskatchewan/Manitoba [44%] and Alberta [38%]; women [55%] and men [30%], younger and a middle age [50%].

Question: Canada should commit to only having a peacekeeping military, not combat ready military

- **Agree 58%** -- [strongly 33%/somewhat 26%] -- most likely from Québec [71%], followed by British Columbia and Saskatchewan/Manitoba [56%], Ontario [54%], Atlantic Canada [53%] and Alberta [42%]; women [70%] and men [46%], no age difference.
- **Disagree 42%** -- [strongly 19%/somewhat 22%] -- most likely from Alberta [58%], followed by Atlantic Canada [47%] and Ontario [46%], Saskatchewan/Manitoba and British Columbia [44%] and Québec [29%]; men [54%] and women [30%], no age difference.

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