

Six in Ten (60%) Believe Omar Khadr Should Remain in U.S. Custody at Guantanamo Bay

*Four in Ten (40%) Say U.S. Government Has 'No Right' To Detain Him and
Canadian Government Should 'Ask for His Return' to Canada
Of The 52% of Canadians Who Have Seen the Video
of Khadr's Interrogation,
Only One Quarter (22%) Say Their Views Have Changed,
Most (78%) Have Not*

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Toronto, ON – Amid recent media coverage of video footage of an interrogation of Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen captured by U.S. troops and being held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for his alleged involvement in a firefight in Afghanistan, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global Television finds that six in ten (60%) Canadians believe 'Mr. Khadr should remain in U.S. custody because he is being tried by a U.S. military court, and that Canada needs to allow this legal process to finish before deciding whether or not to ask for his return' to Canada.

Adopting the opposite stance, four in ten (40%) Canadians are closer to the opinion that since 'Mr. Khadr is a Canadian citizen, the U.S. military has no right to detain and try him, and our government should be asking for his immediate return to Canada'.

It appears that the tape of Mr. Khadr's interrogation conducted three years ago at Guantanamo Bay, the U.S. military prison for suspected terrorists, is widespread with half (52%) of Canadians indicating that they recall seeing it recently.

Among those who have seen this footage, eight in ten (78%) say that the video did not alter their opinion of him – but for differing reasons:

- Fully one half (50%) say that the video has not changed their opinion of him, and that they ‘didn’t have any sympathy for him before they saw the video, and the video hasn’t changed that’.
- Three in ten (27%) indicate that the video has not changed their opinion of him because they ‘already had sympathy for him before they saw the video, and that hasn’t changed’.

On the other hand, among those who have seen the video footage in the news media, one quarter (22%) report that the video has in fact changed their point of view:

- Two in ten (18%) report being ‘more sympathetic to him in his situation now than before’ they saw the video.
- Only 4% say that they are ‘less sympathetic to him in his situation now than before’ they saw the video.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television from 07/17 to 07/21, 2008. This online survey of 1,021 adult Canadians was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The results are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. An unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Quebecers, Atlantic Canadians Want Government to Ask for Khadr's Immediate Return to Canada...

While six in ten (60%) Canadians across the country believe that Khadr should remain in American custody, and only four in ten (40%) believe the Canadian government should ask for his immediate return to Canada, residents of Quebec and Atlantic Canada are disproportionately supportive of the latter course of action:

- A majority of Atlantic Canadians (56%) and Quebecers (52%) believe that our government should be 'asking for his immediate return to Canada', while support for this type of intervention is much less pronounced in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (42%), British Columbia (38%), Alberta (36%) and Ontario (31%).

Support for Mr. Khadr's return also varies by key demographics:

- Nearly one half (46%) of women would like to see the Canadian government ask for his immediate return, while one in three (34%) men share this point of view.
- Younger Canadians (52%), aged 18 to 34, are disproportionately more likely than middle-aged (40%), aged 35 to 54, or older Canadians (30%), aged 55 and up, to believe that the Canadian government should be seeking the immediate return of Mr. Khadr.
- Those with a university education (49%) are more likely than those with only some postsecondary education (41%), a high-school education (36%) or no high-school diploma (34%) to think that the Canadian government should seek the immediate return of Mr. Khadr.



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For more information on this news release, please contact:

*John Wright
Senior Vice President
Ipsos Reid
Public Affairs
(416) 324-2002*

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