

The Gaza Strip Conflict: Taking Sides not Easy

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13% with Palestinians and Hamas, Half (51%) Neither*

*Country Split on Israeli Response, But Most (43%) Blame
Palestinians for Current Conflict*

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Toronto, ON – In the midst of a bloody conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and Hamas, a new Ipsos Reid poll has revealed that taking sides in the Gaza Strip conflict is not an easy decision for Canadians.

Among the 85% of Canadians who have actually been following the events to some degree, one in three (36%) believe that Canada should take sides with Israel, while 13% believe that Canada should side with the Palestinians and Hamas. A majority (51%), however, either doesn't know or believes that Canada should not take sides in this conflict at all.

Israeli forces have conducted air and ground military responses to rockets that have been continuously fired into Israeli territory by members of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas for many months. Hamas is also the elected political party for the Palestinian region and does not accept the existence of the State of Israel.

Thinking about the Israeli response, Canadians following the events are split: while four in ten (39%) believe it has been 'appropriate', one half (49%) thinks it has been 'excessive'. One in ten (13%) doesn't know.



But a plurality of those following the events blame the Palestinians and Hamas (43%) for the current conflict in the region compared with only two in ten (18%) who think Israel is to blame. Still, four in ten (39%) believe neither side is to blame, or don't know who is at fault.

Focusing on the creation of a Palestinian State, Canadians are split on whether Canada 'should favour' (43%) or 'should not favour' (35%) this course of action. One quarter (22%) of Canadians are undecided on the matter.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted January 6 to 8, 2009, for the Ipsos Trend Report Canada, an online premier client intelligence and opinion database. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the 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 population of Canada been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

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