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Afghans by Canadians Have Been Tortured**  
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and Heads Should Roll*

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## **Six in Ten (61%) Believe Detainees Handed Over to Afghans by Canadians Have Been Tortured**

### ***If Torture Occurred, Majority Believes Knowledge Widespread and Heads Should Roll***

**Toronto, ON** – As negotiations between the governing Conservatives and opposition parties continue in an effort to determine how sensitive Afghan detainee issue documents can be shared with Parliament without jeopardizing national security, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Canwest News Service and Global Television reveals that a majority (61%) of Canadians believe that enemy combatants taken into custody by Canadian soldiers and then handed over to Afghanistan prison authorities have been tortured. Just one quarter (23%) believe that detainees transferred to Afghan authorities were not tortured, while 16% don't know whether torture occurred or not.

Further, among those that do believe torture occurred, six in ten (59%) believe the tactic was used routinely, compared to 34% who think it happened only on rare occasions. One in ten (8%) who believe torture occurred are unsure of how often it was used.

If prisoners who Canadians turned over to the Afghan authorities were being tortured, Canadians think that our government officials, politicians and Canadian Forces personnel knew what was happening. Most (75%) believe that senior Canadian military officials would have known that torture was taking place, while a majority also believe that officials in the departments of either Defence or Foreign Affairs (66%), the Minister of Defence (65%), the

Minister of Foreign Affairs (55%), individual Canadian soldiers (52%) and even the Prime Minister (52%) knew about what was going on.

Assuming that enemy Taliban combatants were handed over by Canadian troops to Afghanistan prison authorities who then inflicted torture, eight in ten (77%) believe that these actions are 'wrong, and once known should have stopped', while just two in ten (19%) think the torture was 'just fine because this is war and this sort of thing happens'. Four percent (4%) are unsure of what statement more closely reflects their position.

If it is determined that Canadian officials knew as far back as 2007 that torture was taking place but didn't do anything to stop it or denied that it was happening at all, a majority of Canadians (57%) believe that this is such a serious issue that the Minister of Defence should resign from his position in cabinet. A similar proportion (56%) also believes that if this is what's found, the current Chief of Defence Staff should also resign from his post. One in five (5%) don't know if either should be forced to resign if these allegations are proven true.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Canwest News Service and Global Television from May 4 to 6, 2010. 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  $\pm 3.1$  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. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

## *Quebecers Most Likely to Believe that Torture Occurred...*

Some Canadians are much more likely than others to believe that torture occurred and what should be done about it now:

- Quebecers (76%) are by far the most likely to believe that detainees transferred to Afghan authorities were tortured, while those living in Ontario (61%), British Columbia (56%), Atlantic Canada (52%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (50%) and Alberta (44%) are less likely to believe that torture occurred.
- If torture did in fact occur, while Quebecers are more likely than other Canadians to believe that Canadian military and government officials would have known about this, they are considerably more likely to believe the Minister of Defence (82% of Quebecers vs. 65% of all Canadians) and the Prime Minister (71% of Quebecers vs. 52% of all Canadians) knew about it.
- If the allegations are true, Quebecers (85%) and Atlantic Canadians (84%) are the most likely to say that this tactic is wrong and it should have stopped as soon as Canadians found out about it, followed by those living in British Columbia (76%), Ontario (74%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (70%) and Alberta (68%).
- If it is found out that Canadian officials have known as early as 2007 that detainees transferred to Afghan authorities were being tortured, Quebecers (75%) are the most inclined to believe that the Minister of Defence should resign, while a majority of those living in Atlantic Canada (57%), British Columbia (57%) and Ontario (53%) also believe he should resign, compared to a minority of those in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (40%) or Alberta (38%).



- Quebecers are also the most likely to believe that, if these allegations are true, the current Chief of Defence staff should resign (76%), followed by those living in British Columbia (57%), Atlantic Canada (55%), Ontario (50%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (40%) and Alberta (38%).

**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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