

**Canadians Say Death of Osama Bin Laden (25%),
Fukushima Nuclear Disaster (22%) Top
International News Stories of 2011
*Royal Wedding (19%) and European Debt Crisis (19%)
Close Contenders***

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Toronto, ON – The year 2011 has been a newsworthy year. From celebration and triumph to death and disaster, this year has seen it all. Canadians were given a list of seven news stories and asked which one they believe was the biggest news story of 2011 outside of Canada. Interestingly, different demographic groups identified different top stories, but the aggregated results reveal the overall winner.

One quarter (25%) believe that the death of Osama Bin Laden, leader of Al Qaeda and the man ultimately responsible for orchestrating the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, was the biggest news story of 2011. This feeling was particularly strong among those aged 18 to 34 (30%) compared to those aged 35 to 54 (27%) or 55+ (19%), making it the top story for young Canadians.

In a close second place, nearly one quarter (22%) of Canadians believe that the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan was the biggest international news story of 2011. The disaster was a series of equipment failures, nuclear meltdowns and releases of radioactive materials at the Fukushima nuclear power plant following a large Tsunami in March. It is the largest nuclear disaster since the Chernobyl disaster of 1986. Men (26%) were more likely than women (18%) to believe that this was the number-one international story of 2011, and it tops on the list for men.

Tied for third place are the royal wedding (19%) and the European debt crisis (19%). The royal wedding between Prince William, Britain's 2nd in line to the throne and his wife Kate Middleton – now known as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge – drew the attention of the world, and the newlyweds' Canadian tour made the event even more special for Canadians. However, women (28%) were nearly three-times as likely as men (10%) to believe that it was the biggest news story of the year, and it is on top of the list for women.

Unlike many of the other top international stories of 2011, the European debt crisis (19%) is ongoing. Fluctuations in worldwide markets are pronounced, discussions among European leaders about how to avoid a deeper crisis are routine, and European leaders are falling victim to serious domestic fallout. It is likely that this issue will remain on the top-story list well into 2012. Older Canadians (27%) were much more likely than middle-aged (19%) and younger Canadians (11%) to believe that the European Debt crisis was the biggest international story, making it tops on their list.

Rounding out the top-five is another tie: The Arab Spring uprising (7%) and the Occupy protests around the world (7%). The Arab Spring is a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests occurring in the Arab world that began in late 2010 (following Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation) and resulted in revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, a civil war in Libya, and civil uprisings in Bahrain, Syria and Yemen, with smaller protests in other countries as well, not all Arab.

The Occupy protests (7%), which began in New York City, were primarily directed against economic and social inequality. It spread to 82 countries, and had a significant presence in many Canadian cities, most notably Toronto and Vancouver. However, without a clear mandate and organizations structure, the protests began to fade and many were evicted out of their gathering places by municipal authorities.



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Interestingly, few (0.5%) Canadians believe that the News of the World hacking and bribery scandal was the top international news story of 2011.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between December 14 and 19, 2011, on behalf of Postmedia News and Global Television. For this survey, a sample of 1,021 Canadians who season from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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