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Top Canadian News Story of 2011

Royal Visit (13%), Vancouver Hockey Riots (9%), Federal Election (8%) and Occupy Protests (7%) Round out the Top-Five Stories

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Toronto, ON – Given a list of 14 possible contenders, nearly four in ten (37%) Canadians say that the death of Jack Layton, leader of the NDP, was the biggest Canadian news story of 2011, with no other news story coming close. The tragic loss of the likeable Jack Layton to cancer came only months after he led the NDP to its best showing in electoral history, firmly securing its position as the Official Opposition. The “orange crush”, in Quebec, displaced the Bloc as the alternative to the Conservatives, and painted much of the province orange. The outpouring of grief and support from Canadians, culminating in a touching celebration of his life at Roy Thompson Hall, culminate to make this event the top news story of 2011 in Canada. In fact, Quebecers (50%) are the most likely to say that the death of Jack Layton was the biggest news story in Canada, followed by those living in Atlantic Canada (43%), Ontario (38%), Manitoba and Saskatchewan (37%), British Columbia (26%) and Alberta (16%).

In a distant second place is Prince William and Kate’s visit to Canada (13%). Following the hysteria that was the Royal Wedding in London, England, the newlyweds chose to come to Canada during the summer as their first official visit abroad, which only made the couple more loveable in the eyes of Canadians. Their trip across the country met with huge crowds, and the largest international media entourage ever to follow a royal visit in Canada. Women (18%) were more than twice as likely as men (8%) to say that this was the biggest story of the year.



In third place are the hockey riots in Vancouver (9%). The riots broke out in downtown Vancouver immediately following the conclusion of the Boston Bruins' win over the Vancouver Canucks in game seven of the Stanley Cup Finals. Over a hundred people were injured in the riots, including at least four stabbings, with over 100 arrests due to violence, lighting fires, rioting and looting among other infractions. Following the event, many pointed fingers at the Vancouver Police for failing to respond quicker and not having enough officers on patrol in the core. Three in ten (29%) British Columbians believe that this was the biggest news story of the year, placing it first on their list.

In fourth place is the Canadian Federal Election (8%). Following better-than-expected performances at the televised leader's debates, NDP leader Jack Layton suddenly became the most popular man in politics, particularly in Quebec, where many of his previously unknown and inexperienced candidates were swept into office. For the first time in history, the Liberal Party was relegated to third-party status, the Bloc Quebecois was nearly swept out of the house, and the NDP became the Official Opposition.

Rounding out the top-five new stories in Canada are the Occupy protests (7%). The peaceful protests and the messages they conveyed weren't exactly the biggest news in and of themselves, but rather the process of diffusing the protests through evictions and arrests, and the questionable behaviour occurring on many of the protests sites - including a drug overdose causing death on the Vancouver site.

Other events which many Canadians thought was the biggest news story in Canada in 2011 were: Canada's withdrawal from combat role in Afghanistan (6%), Canada pulling out of the Kyoto Accord (6%), the fire in Slave Lake, Alberta (3%), flooding in Manitoba (3%), the poverty in Attawapiskat (2%), the Shafia honour-killing trial in Kingston, Ontario (2%), the



delay of the Keystone XL Pipeline (1%), the Canada-U.S. border action plan (1%) and various provincial elections (1%).

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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