

GAZA CONFLICT

Two-in-Five Canadians Criticize Israel's Military Actions in Gaza

But a majority agrees with Ottawa's official position that Hamas is greatly responsible for the conflict.

[VANCOUVER – Jan. 22, 2009] – Just days after the end of a violent confrontation between Israel and the militant Palestinian organization Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Canadians offer harsh criticism to both parties involved in the conflict, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

On Dec. 27, Israel launched a military operation in Gaza seeking to stop rocket fire coming into its southern border. The Israeli government holds Hamas—a military and political organization in charge of Gaza—responsible for the launching of rockets. The air-and-ground operation left more than 1,300 people dead on the Palestinian side, while the death toll for Israel was tabled at 13 people. Rocket attacks into Israel continued throughout the duration of the conflict. On Jan. 18, both Israel and Hamas announced separate ceasefires.

In the online survey of a national representative sample, 21 per cent of Canadians say they sympathize more with Israel, while 15 per cent say they sympathize more with the Palestinian people, and 16 per cent feel for both sides. However, a third of Canadians (32%) feel no sympathy for either party.

Canadians are divided on whether Israel was right to go into Gaza and operate the way it did.

While 36 per cent of respondents say Israel's actions were justified, 41 per cent disagree.

KEY FINDINGS

- **57% of Canadians agree with Peter Kent's statement that Hamas bares "a terrible responsibility" for the attack in Gaza**
- **21% sympathize with Israel; 15% with Palestinians; 32% have no sympathy for either side**
- **41% say Israeli actions in Gaza were unjustified; 36% say the were justified**
- **45% say Israel did not try to limit civilian casualties in Gaza**
- **Conservatives much more supportive of Israel's actions**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From January 20 to January 21, 2009 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among 1,001 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Moreover, 45 per cent of Canadians do not believe Israel's claims that its army tried to limit the number of civilian victims during the attack. A similar proportion of Canadians (43%) thinks Israel did not exhaust all diplomatic alternatives before launching Operation Cast Lead.

When asked about possible reasons for the military engagement, 29 per cent of respondents think the main objective of the operation was to topple the Hamas government, 28 per cent think Israel went into Gaza in order to stop the rocket attacks, and 12 per cent believe Israel sought to occupy Gaza. Very few respondents (6%) think this mission had anything to do with an upcoming legislative election in Israel.

Despite the evident criticism for Israel's operation, the majority of Canadians (57%) agree with a statement by Junior Foreign Minister Peter Kent, who said that "Hamas bears a terrible responsibility for [Israel's attack] and for the wider deepening humanitarian tragedy. The burden of responsibility is on Hamas to stop its terrorist rocketing of Israel."

Regional and Political Breakdowns

Respondents in Alberta (30%) are more sympathetic towards Israel than others. They are also most inclined to believe that Israel's actions in Gaza were justified (46%, compared to 42% in Ontario, and less than 37% in all other regions).

Again, Alberta holds the highest proportion of respondents who believe that Israel tried to limit the number of civilian casualties in this operation (44%, followed by Ontario at 37%), and that all diplomatic options were exhausted before the military mission was launched (also 44%, followed by Ontario at 32%). Most Albertans (74%) agree with Kent's remarks about Hamas.

Quebeckers, on the other hand, are much more inclined than others to express no sympathy for either Israel or the Palestinians (47%). They are also most prone to calling Israel's actions in Gaza unjustified (53%), doubting claims that the Israeli Defence Forces tried to limit the number of civilian victims (55%), and thinking that not all diplomatic options were utilized before the military drive in Gaza (51%).

Conservative voters are remarkably more sympathetic to Israel (43%) than Canadians who back other political parties (less than 23%). Tory supporters are also more likely to call Israel's actions justified (63% compared to less than 30% for others); believe the government tried to reduce the impact of the operation on Palestinian civilians (54% compared to less than 27% for others), and claim that all diplomatic options were exhausted before the operation began (52% compared to less than 34% for others.)

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

| Gaza Conflict | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Thinking about the Middle East, which side do you sympathize with more? | | | | | | | |
| | | Region | | | | | |
| | Total | BC | AB | MB/SK | ONT | PQ | ATL |
| Israel | 21% | 21% | 30% | 23% | 25% | 14% | 17% |
| The Palestinians | 15% | 18% | 14% | 16% | 15% | 13% | 18% |
| Both | 16% | 17% | 18% | 21% | 20% | 10% | 16% |
| Neither | 32% | 31% | 19% | 29% | 26% | 47% | 34% |
| Not sure | 15% | 13% | 19% | 11% | 14% | 16% | 15% |

| Gaza Conflict | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Thinking about the Middle East, which side do you sympathize with more? | | | | | | |
| | | Party support in the last federal election | | | | |
| | Total | Con | Lib | NDP | BQ | Grn |
| Israel | 21% | 43% | 16% | 11% | 9% | 23% |
| The Palestinians | 15% | 8% | 18% | 26% | 25% | 19% |
| Both | 16% | 17% | 22% | 13% | 8% | 21% |
| Neither | 32% | 21% | 30% | 35% | 51% | 23% |
| Not sure | 15% | 10% | 14% | 15% | 8% | 14% |

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
 Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

| Gaza Conflict | | | |
|--|---|--|---------------------|
| From what you have seen, read or heard about the recent conflict in the Middle East, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? | | | |
| | Strongly agree/ Moderately agree | Moderately disagree / Strongly disagree | Not sure |
| Israel's military actions in Gaza were justified | 36% | 41% | 23% |
| Israel tried to limit the number of civilian casualties in this conflict | 30% | 45% | 24% |
| Israel exhausted all diplomatic options before launching military action | 29% | 43% | 27% |

| Gaza Conflict | |
|--|------------|
| What do you think was the main objective behind Israel's military actions in Gaza? | |
| Topple the Hamas government | 29% |
| Stop rocket attacks from Gaza | 28% |
| Boost support for the governing parties before the legislative election | 6% |
| Occupy Gaza | 12% |
| Not sure | 25% |

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Gaza Conflict

Earlier this month, Canadian Junior Foreign Minister Peter Kent declared: " Hamas bears a terrible responsibility for [Israel's attack] and for the wider deepening humanitarian tragedy. The burden of responsibility is on Hamas to stop its terrorist rocketing of Israel." Do you agree or disagree with the junior minister's statement?

| | Region | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Total | BC | AB | MB/SK | ONT | PQ | ATL |
| Strongly agree / Moderately agree | 57% | 52% | 74% | 48% | 62% | 48% | 65% |
| Moderately disagree / Strongly disagree | 18% | 18% | 9% | 30% | 19% | 20% | 11% |
| Not sure | 24% | 30% | 16% | 22% | 20% | 32% | 24% |

Gaza Conflict

Earlier this month, Canadian Junior Foreign Minister Peter Kent declared: " Hamas bears a terrible responsibility for [Israel's attack] and for the wider deepening humanitarian tragedy. The burden of responsibility is on Hamas to stop its terrorist rocketing of Israel." Do you agree or disagree with the junior minister's statement?

| | Party support in the last federal election | | | | | |
|--|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Total | Con | Lib | NDP | BQ | Grn |
| Strongly agree/ Moderately agree | 57% | 79% | 60% | 43% | 35% | 63% |
| Moderately disagree / Strongly disagree | 18% | 7% | 24% | 32% | 32% | 20% |
| Not sure | 24% | 15% | 16% | 25% | 34% | 18% |

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Angus Reid Strategies, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.

<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=349>

Since 2006, Angus Reid Strategies has covered six provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com