

## ***POTENTIAL TROUBLE BREWING FOR CONSERVATIVES AS CANADIANS ARE ACCEPTING THE COLVIN ACCOUNT***

*BROAD DISSATISFACTION WITH FEDERAL TRANSPARENCY*

[Ottawa – December 10, 2009] – The issue involving allegations of torture of prisoners handed off to Afghan authorities by the Canadian Forces is clearly a significant and possibly growing problem for the government.

A clear majority of Canadians believe that Canadian Forces handed off prisoners with the knowledge that they might be subject to torture (61% nationally and over 70% outside of CPC supporters). Of that, the vast majority (83%) believe that transferred prisoners were undoubtedly subjected to torture.

Turning to the question of satisfaction with the Government's level of transparency and disclosure on this issue, it is noteworthy that only about one in four (24%) Canadians expresses any degree of satisfaction. In the Conservatives' favour is that about one in three (35%) are sitting on the fence and awaiting the final verdict before drawing conclusions on this part of the issue. The clear plurality (41%), however, is dissatisfied with the government's handling of this issue.

The final question updates the public's attitudes to a request from the American administration to have Canada extend its military mission in Afghanistan. A clear majority (52%) continues to reject this proposition, but there is some

evidence of a modest increase in receptivity, suggesting that the refocused American plan may be increasing the perceived prospects for success. This would be consistent with our analysis that suggests that the prospects for success are the key factor underpinning support/opposition for the mission. This slight warming is harshly divided across party affiliation with CPC supporters leaning to acceptance and the rest of the spectrum staunchly opposed. The proposition is also decisively rejected in Quebec and is less popular amongst young Canadians.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

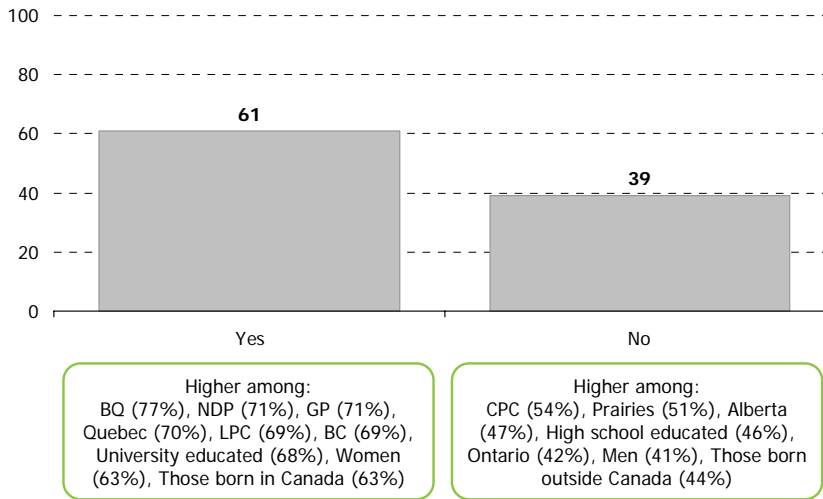
- **Perceived reliability of torture allegations:**
  - ▣ **61% believe Afghan prisoners were tortured**
  - ▣ **39% do not believe Afghan prisoners were tortured**
  
- **Perceived government awareness of prisoner abuse:**
  - ▣ **83% Canadian government knew there was a strong possibility of prisoner abuse**
  - ▣ **17% Canadian government did not know there was a strong possibility of prisoner abuse**
  
- **Satisfaction with government handling of torture allegations:**
  - ▣ **41% dissatisfied**
  - ▣ **24% satisfied**
  - ▣ **35% neither**
  
- **Support for extending mission in Afghanistan:**
  - ▣ **52% oppose**
  - ▣ **32% support**
  - ▣ **17% neither**

*Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.*

## Top Line Results:

### Perceived reliability of torture allegations

Q. Do you think that some prisoners that were handed off to Afghan authorities by Canadian Forces were subjected to torture?

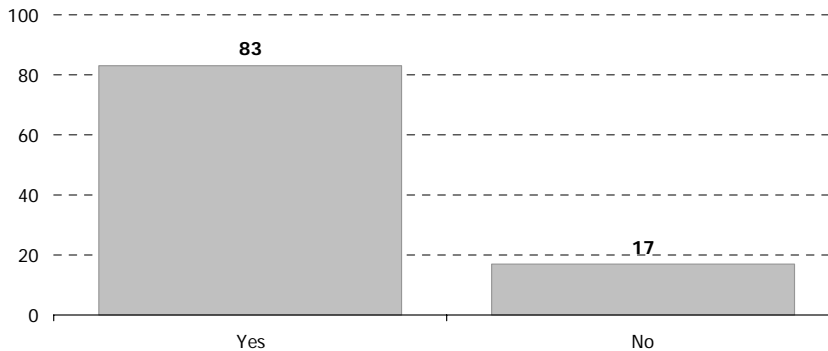


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BASE: Canadians; Dec. 2-8 (n=2388)

### Perceived government awareness of prisoner abuse

Q. [If the respondent believed that Afghan detainees were tortured] Do you think that the government of Canada was aware at the time that there was a strong possibility that some of the prisoners being handed off would be tortured?

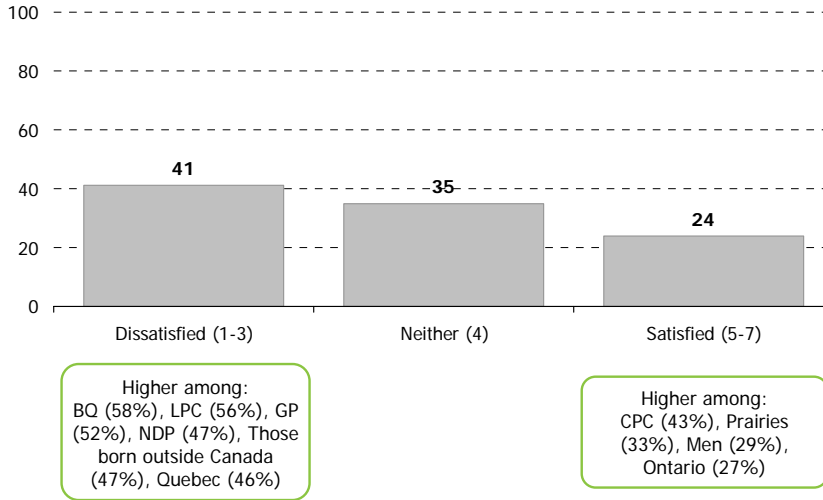


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BASE: Those who believe Afghan detainees were subjected to torture; Dec. 2-8 (n=1472)

## Satisfaction with government handling of torture allegations

Q. To date, how satisfied are you with the federal government's level of transparency and disclosure regarding the alleged torture of prisoners that were handed off to Afghan authorities by Canadian Forces?

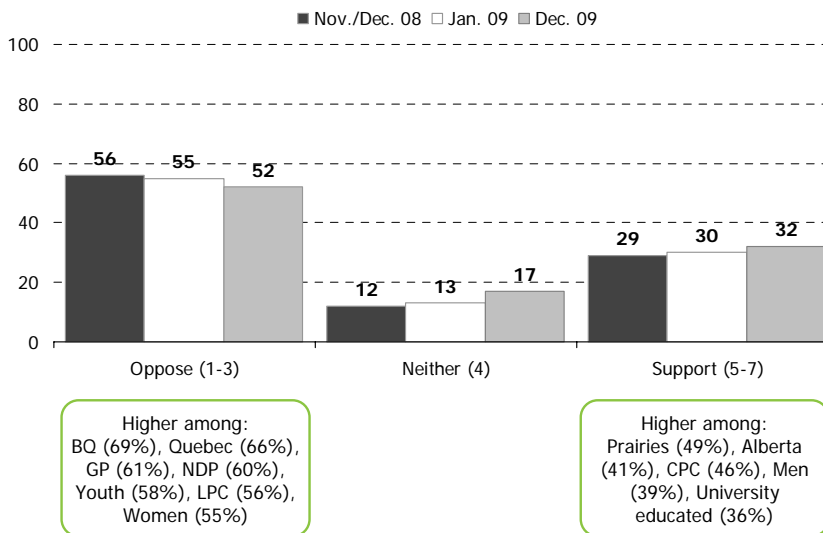


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BASE: Canadians; Dec. 2-8 (n=2388)

## Support for extending mission in Afghanistan

Q. Canada's military mission in Afghanistan is scheduled to last until July 2011. The U.S. President, Barack Obama, has talked about refocusing American military efforts to Afghanistan. If the Americans request our help, would you support or oppose Canada extending its mission in Afghanistan?



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BASE: Canadians; Most recent data point, Dec. 2-8 (n=2388)

## Detailed Tables:

<b>Perceived Reliability of Torture Allegations</b>				
<i>Q. Do you think that some prisoners that were handed off to Afghan authorities by Canadian Forces were subjected to torture?</i>				
	Yes	No	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>2388</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>REGION</b>				
British Columbia	69%	31%	361	5.2
Alberta	53%	47%	258	6.1
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	49%	51%	160	7.8
Ontario	58%	42%	778	3.5
Quebec	70%	30%	640	3.9
Atlantic Canada	59%	41%	191	7.1
<b>GENDER</b>				
Male	59%	41%	1178	2.9
Female	63%	37%	1210	2.8
<b>AGE</b>				
<25	63%	37%	212	6.7
25-44	61%	39%	747	3.6
45-64	61%	39%	928	3.2
65+	60%	40%	501	4.4
<b>EDUCATION</b>				
High school or less	54%	46%	709	3.7
College or CEGEP	61%	39%	826	3.4
University or higher	68%	32%	853	3.4
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>				
Conservative Party of Canada	46%	54%	734	3.6
Liberal Party of Canada	69%	31%	518	4.3
NDP	71%	29%	318	5.5
Green Party	70%	30%	217	6.7
Bloc Quebecois	77%	23%	224	6.6
Undecided	57%	43%	297	5.7

### **Perceived Government Awareness of Prisoner Abuse**

*Q. [If believed that Afghan detainees were tortured] Do you think that the government of Canada was aware at the time that there was a strong possibility that some of the prisoners being handed off would be tortured?*

	Yes	No	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>1472</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>REGION</b>				
British Columbia	81%	19%	246	6.3
Alberta	79%	21%	137	8.4
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	79%	21%	79	11.0
Ontario	83%	17%	450	4.6
Quebec	87%	13%	448	4.6
Atlantic Canada	84%	16%	112	9.3
<b>GENDER</b>				
Male	83%	17%	698	3.7
Female	83%	17%	774	3.5
<b>AGE</b>				
<25	83%	17%	134	8.5
25-44	86%	14%	458	4.6
45-64	82%	18%	576	4.1
65+	78%	22%	304	5.6
<b>EDUCATION</b>				
High school or less	79%	21%	388	5.0
College or CEGEP	83%	17%	498	4.4
University or higher	86%	14%	586	4.1
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>				
Conservative Party of Canada	68%	32%	334	5.4
Liberal Party of Canada	87%	13%	366	5.1
NDP	88%	12%	228	6.5
Green Party	89%	11%	154	7.9
Bloc Quebecois	90%	10%	173	7.5
Undecided	84%	16%	172	7.5

### **Satisfaction with Government Handling of Torture Allegations**

*Q. To date, how satisfied are you with the federal government's level of transparency and disclosure regarding the alleged torture of prisoners that were handed off to Afghan authorities by Canadian Forces? Please respond using a 7-point scale where 1 means extremely dissatisfied, 7 means extremely satisfied, and the mid-point 4 means neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.*

	Dissatisfied (1-3)	Neither (4)	Satisfied (5-7)	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>2388</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
British Columbia	44%	32%	25%	361	5.2
Alberta	35%	38%	27%	258	6.1
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	29%	38%	33%	160	7.8
Ontario	41%	32%	27%	778	3.5
Quebec	46%	37%	18%	640	3.9
Atlantic Canada	41%	39%	19%	191	7.1
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	41%	29%	29%	1178	2.9
Female	41%	39%	19%	1210	2.8
<b>AGE</b>					
<25	41%	35%	25%	212	6.7
25-44	40%	36%	24%	747	3.6
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65+	42%	36%	22%	501	4.4
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
High school or less	36%	42%	22%	709	3.7
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<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>					
Conservative Party of Canada	21%	36%	43%	734	3.6
Liberal Party of Canada	56%	28%	16%	518	4.3
NDP	47%	36%	16%	318	5.5
Green Party	52%	28%	20%	217	6.7
Bloc Quebecois	58%	30%	11%	224	6.6
Undecided	39%	50%	12%	297	5.7

### **Support for Extending Mission in Afghanistan**

*Q. Canada's military mission in Afghanistan is scheduled to last until July 2011. The U.S. President, Barack Obama, has talked about refocusing American military efforts to Afghanistan. If the Americans request our help, would you support or oppose Canada extending its mission in Afghanistan? Please respond using a 7-point scale where 1 means strongly oppose, 7 means strongly support, and the mid-point 4 means neither oppose nor support.*

	Oppose (1-3)	Neither (4)	Support (5-7)	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>2388</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
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## METHODOLOGY:

EKOS' weekly tracking polls are conducted using Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual land-line/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with both a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys.

The field dates for this survey are December 2 - 8, 2009.<sup>1</sup> In total, a random sample of 2,388 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that these dates are not inclusive of the weekends, as we do not survey on Saturday or Sunday.