

# **No Double Standards: Canadians Expect Greater Impartiality vis-à-vis Israel**

Part 2 of a national opinion survey of Canadians  
conducted June 5-10, 2020

## **Issued by:**

**Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME)  
Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV)  
United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine-Israel (UNJPPI)**



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September 16, 2020

## Executive Summary

A recent survey conducted by EKOS Research Associates confirms that Canadians do not think Israel should be given special treatment when it comes to policy or international investigations. The survey sought to probe the opinions of Canadians on several issues, including a potential International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation of alleged Israeli war crimes, and the possibility of moving Canada's embassy to Jerusalem. The survey demonstrates that a strong majority of Canadians favour treating all countries the same, including Israel. In fact, a strong majority of Canadians would support an ICC investigation of alleged war crimes by Israeli officials. It further demonstrates that four out of five Canadians want Canada to maintain its current policy on Jerusalem, and do not want Canada to recognize Jerusalem as exclusively Israel's capital.

EKOS Research Associates (<https://www.ekos.com/>) conducted a **national online survey** of 1,009 Canadians, between June 5-10, 2020, on behalf of Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (<http://cjpme.org>), Independent Jewish Voices Canada (<http://www.ijvcanada.org/>) and the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine-Israel (<http://www.unjppi.org/>). The margin of error associated with the sample is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

This is the second release of survey results. Part One ([http://www.cjpme.org/survey2020\\_r1](http://www.cjpme.org/survey2020_r1)) of this survey was published on June 17, 2020, and addressed issues relating to a planned Israeli annexation and Canada's bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council.

The survey results presented here indicate that **Canadians do not want Israel to be treated differently than other countries** when it comes to consequences for alleged war crimes or human rights violations.

**A strong majority of Canadians want the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate alleged war crimes wherever they occur, including in Israel.** 84% of Canadians agreed that the ICC should investigate alleged war crimes committed by Israeli officials, while 95% of Canadians support an investigation of alleged war crimes *wherever they may occur*.

Canadians also support the independence of the ICC, and do not want Canada to intervene even if it is opposed to an investigation. **Only one-third (33%) of Canadians think Canada should consider stepping in if it is opposed to an ICC investigation**, and even fewer (29%) want Canada to step in if the investigation is about Israel. This is an important finding given that Canada sent a letter to the ICC in February 2020 trying to dissuade the Court from investigating the alleged war crimes of Israel.

The survey also found that **a strong majority of Canadians do not want to overlook any country's alleged human rights violations, including Israel's, no matter the circumstances.**

- 86% of Canadians disagreed with the statement that Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations since it is an ally.
- 83% of Canadians disagreed with the statement that Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations since it is a partner in the fight against terrorism.
- 85% of Canadians disagreed with the statement that Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations since many consider it to have shared values with Canada.
- 87% of Canadians disagreed with the statement that Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations even if it passes laws that discriminate against minority groups.
- 75% of Canadians disagreed with the statement that Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations if Israel is under threat.

While the Canadian government has often given Israel special treatment and hesitates to criticize its human rights violations, the overall survey results indicate that **Canada's frequent tendency of giving Israel a pass (a.k.a. "Israeli exceptionalism") is not popular with Canadians.** The exceptions to this trend are supporters of the Conservative Party, who tend to be far more willing to overlook Israel's human rights violations. But even among Conservative Party supporters, a majority are opposed to it.

The survey also found that **four out of five Canadians (82%) want Canada to maintain its current policy on Jerusalem** and continue to call for the city to be shared, compared to only one fifth (18%) who said that Canada should recognize Jerusalem exclusively as Israel's capital. **Even among supporters of the Conservative Party**, whose new leader has been a proponent of moving the embassy to Jerusalem, **a majority (54%) support maintaining Canada's current policy instead.**

## Survey Sponsors

*Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME, <http://cjpme.org>) is an organization whose mission is to promote justice, development and peace in the Middle East, and here at home in Canada. Through campaigns promoting and enabling political engagement, interaction with the media, and educational initiatives, CJPME seeks to stimulate understanding and action around human rights, especially vis-à-vis Canada and the Middle East. CJPME is a pan-Canadian organization with over 100,000 adherents and local groups in a dozen Canadian cities.*

*Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV, <http://www.ijvcanada.org/>) is a grassroots organization grounded in Jewish tradition that opposes all forms of racism and advocates for justice and peace for all in Israel-Palestine. Our strength comes from our members. IJV has active chapters in cities and on university campuses across the country.*

***United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine-Israel (UNJPPI, <http://www.unjppi.org/>)***  
*is a grassroots network of United Church members and adherents working toward the goal of a just peace in Palestine and Israel by calling for an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and equal rights for all who live in Palestine/Israel through education and advocacy. UNJPPI seeks to raise awareness of the conditions of Palestinians under the illegal Israeli occupation and encourages action to pressure the state of Israel to end the occupation of and building of Israeli only settlements in Palestinian land.*

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## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge and gratefully appreciate **Earl A. Washburn**, Senior Analyst at EKOS Research Associates for his skill, support, and patient guidance in designing and analyzing this survey. The authors would also like to thank Corey Balsam, MA (IJV), Debbie Hubbard (CJPME) and Jim Miles for their input and advice on the survey questions and resulting analysis.

## **1. Survey Introduction**

### **1.1. Scope of Part 2 of Survey Findings**

This report constitutes the second release of results from a June 2020 survey probing the attitudes of Canadians on foreign and domestic policy related to Israel-Palestine. The results presented in this report constitute about 50 percent of the complete survey's findings. Part 1 was released on June 17, 2020, as "Out of Touch: Canadian Foreign Policy Disconnected from Canadians' Views." [Add link]

### **1.2. Survey Methodology**

EKOS Research Associates (EKOS), an experienced public opinion research firm, was hired to conduct an online poll to seek answers to these questions. EKOS is a full-service consulting practice, founded in 1980, which has evolved to become one of the leading suppliers of evaluation and public opinion research for the Canadian government. EKOS specializes in market research, public opinion research, strategic communications advice, program evaluation and performance measurement, and human resources and organizational research.

Between June 5-10, 2020, a random sample of 1,009 Canadian adults from EKOS' online panel, *Probit*, aged 18 and over, completed the survey. The survey was made available to all respondents in either English or French. The margin of error associated with the sample is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided.

EKOS statistically weighted all the data by age, gender, education and region to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada, based on 2016 census data.

The survey results presented in this report are with residuals excluded. The full data for the survey findings released in this report, both with residuals ("don't know" and "no response" percentages included) and without residuals can be found at <http://cjpme.org/survey2020> or <http://ijvcanada.org/survey2020>.

## **2. Survey Results**

### **2.1. Canada, the International Criminal Court and Israeli Exceptionalism**

#### ***Background***

The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established in 1998 for the purposes of investigating and trying “individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.”<sup>1</sup> Throughout the 1990s, Canada provided leadership which helped lead to the establishment of the ICC, and on December 18, 1998, Canada was the 14th country to sign the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. When it enacted the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act in June 2000, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt comprehensive legislation respecting the ICC.<sup>2</sup>

In December 2019, after a four-year preliminary investigation at the request of Palestine, the ICC announced that it was seeking to open an investigation into alleged Israeli and Palestinian war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The ICC’s chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda stated she was satisfied that there was sufficient evidence that war crimes had been committed, but asked for a legal opinion as to whether the court had jurisdiction to proceed with an investigation.<sup>3</sup>

To the surprise of many, media reports in February 2020 revealed that the Canadian government was seeking to deter the ICC investigation announced by Bensouda in December. The Canadian government had sent a formal letter to the ICC asserting that because Canada does not recognize Palestine as a full state, it did not recognize Palestine’s right to appeal to the court for an investigation.<sup>4</sup> Despite Canada’s failure to recognize a Palestinian state, 138 of 193 UN member states do recognize the state of Palestine, which willingly acceded to the authority of the ICC in 2015.<sup>5</sup> In the face of objections from Canada and a handful of other countries, the ICC chief prosecutor nevertheless issued an opinion on April 30 stating that Palestine is indeed a state, and that an investigation should proceed.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, Canada’s attempts to deter the ICC investigation into Israel come in the context of US sanctions imposed upon Bensouda and another ICC official.<sup>7</sup> These sanctions, which were coordinated with Israel,<sup>8</sup> are a clear attempt to shut down investigations into alleged US war crimes in Afghanistan, as well as alleged Israeli war crimes in the OPT. While Canada released a muted statement expressing disappointment with US sanctions as well as its support for the independence of the ICC, it has not called for US sanctions to be lifted.<sup>9</sup>

Canada’s opposition to a possible ICC investigation into Israel is consistent with a longtime pattern of diplomatic actions seeking to shield Israel from accountability over its violations of human rights and international law. Canada’s pro-Israel voting record at the United Nations is just one of the most obvious examples of this.<sup>10</sup> In another case, Canada has repeatedly

intervened to protect the import of goods from illegal settlements in the West Bank, first by overruling a decision by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to stop importing the goods due to their incorrect “Product of Israel” labels,<sup>11</sup> and later by going to court to appeal a decision by a federal judge who had ruled that such labels were “false, misleading and deceptive.”<sup>12</sup> Canada’s disapproval over Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank has also been particularly muted,<sup>13</sup> especially when compared to the full condemnation and multiple rounds of sanctions that Canada has imposed upon Russia over its annexation of Crimea since 2014.<sup>14</sup> Some consider this behaviour to be a type of “Israeli exceptionalism”: overlooking Israel’s human rights abuses under a variety of pretexts.

With two of the survey questions, the survey’s sponsors wanted to explore Canadians’ views on the ICC, especially as it relates to the Court’s potential investigation of Israeli officials. Notably, the sponsors sought to answer two high-level questions:

1. Do Canadians want the ICC to be entirely impartial in its application of international law around the world, even if that means that Israeli officials could be prosecuted by the Court?
2. Do Canadians want the Canadian government to respect the independence of the ICC, even if it means that the perceived interests of the Government of Canada could be threatened? And should this respect for the independence of the Court be maintained even if the Court decided to investigate Israeli officials?

Split samples were used in the survey inquiries, where one half of respondents were asked generally about the conduct of the ICC, and the other half were asked their view about an ICC investigation focused on Israeli officials. The splits were identical for each question, so half of the respondents received back-to-back questions relating to the ICC generally, while the other half received back-to-back questions relating to the ICC and the case of Israeli officials.

### **2.1.1. A Strong Majority of Canadians want the ICC to Investigate Alleged War Crimes Wherever They Occur, Including Israel**

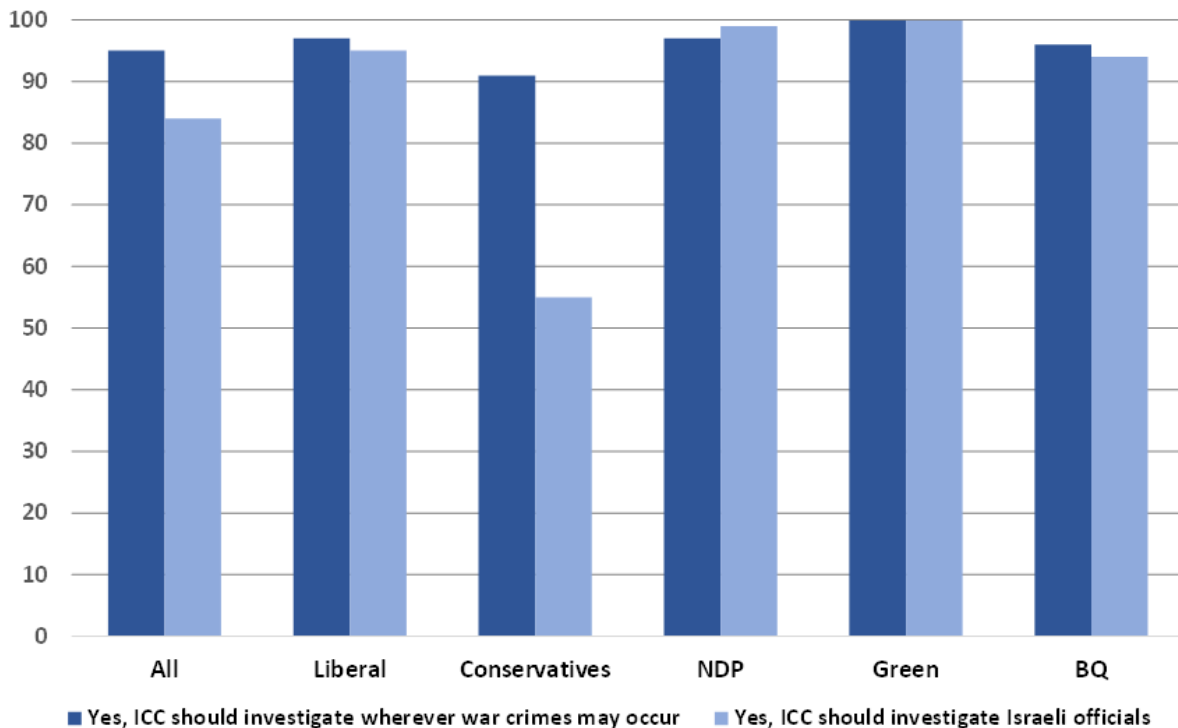
Canadians were asked the following question:

*The International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague investigates individuals accused of serious crimes, namely genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. Do you think that the International Criminal Court should investigate alleged war crimes [wherever they may occur / committed by Israeli officials]?*

As mentioned above, the question was asked as a split sample, so half of Canadians were asked about investigating alleged war crimes wherever they may occur, and the other half were asked about investigating alleged war crimes committed by Israeli officials.



## A Strong Majority of Canadians want the ICC to Investigate Alleged War Crimes Wherever They Occur, Including Israel



### Survey Question Results

When asked if the International Criminal Court should investigate alleged war crimes *wherever they may occur*, 95% of Canadians agreed, and only 5% responded “no.”

When the question specifically asked if the ICC should investigate alleged war crimes *committed by Israeli officials*, 84% of Canadians agreed, and 16% responded “no.” While Liberal (95%), NDP (99%), Green (100%) and Bloc (94%) supporters still felt strongly that the Court should be impartial in its conduct, Conservative supporters differed significantly. 55% of Conservative supporters felt that the ICC should investigate, even if Israeli officials were at risk of being prosecuted, while 45% opposed any ICC investigation of Israeli officials.

Notably, the rate of residuals (don’t know/no response) was almost three times higher when the question was about Israeli officials (20%) rather than a country in general (7%).

Overall, the responses to the two versions of the question did not diverge dramatically: 95% of Canadians support an impartial ICC investigation in the general case, and 84% of Canadians support an investigation of Israeli officials. The exception to this is among Conservative Party

supporters: where 91% supported impartial ICC investigations in general, but only 55% felt this way if Israeli officials were targeted.

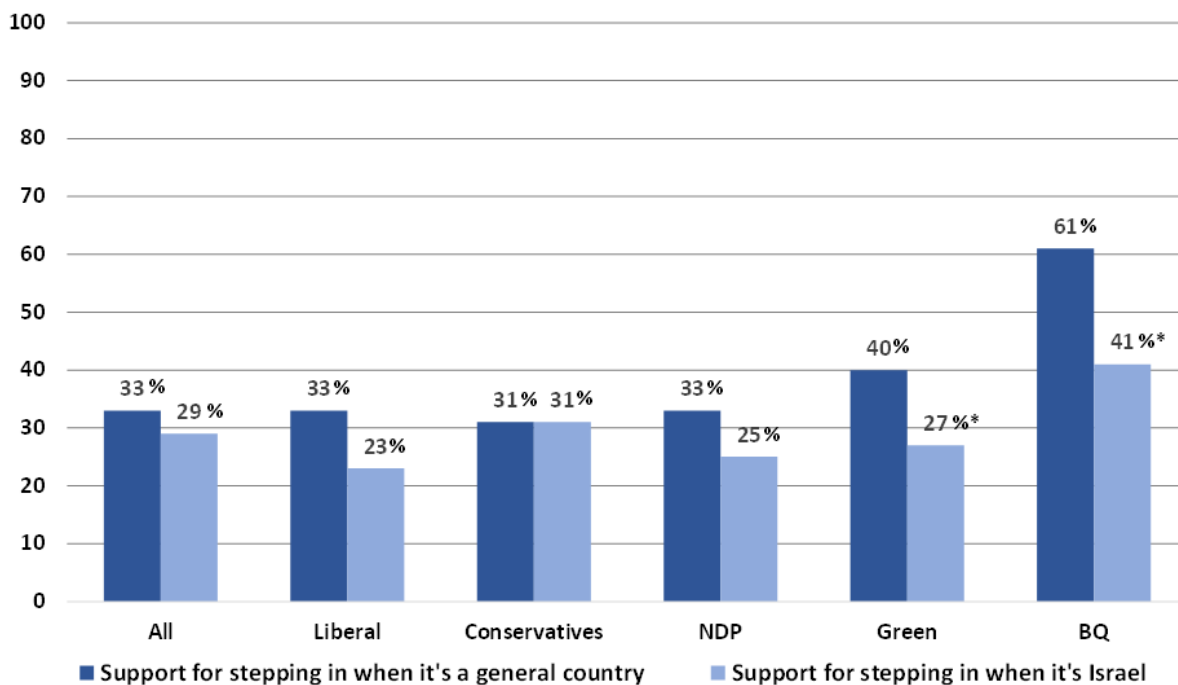
### 2.1.2. Only One-Third of Canadians Think Canada Should Consider Stepping in if it is Opposed to an ICC Investigation – Even Fewer When it’s Israel

Canadians were asked the following question:

*[When a country is accused of / Given that Israel has recently been accused of] serious human rights abuses, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague is asked to carry out an investigation, do you think the government of Canada should consider stepping in if it is opposed to the investigation?*

As mentioned above, the question was asked as a split sample, so half of Canadians were asked about the possibility of Canadian intervention with an ICC investigation in the abstract, while the other half were asked about the possibility of Canadian intervention with an ICC investigation of Israeli officials.

#### Only One-third of Canadians Think Canada Should Consider Stepping In if it is Opposed to an ICC Investigation - Even Fewer When it's Israel



\* Note that in subdividing the results by political party, the margin of error for the smaller parties is much bigger.

## **Survey Question Results**

With the split sample where respondents were asked if Canada should consider stepping in if it is opposed to the ICC investigating a generic country, 33% said that Canada should consider stepping in, and 67% said that Canada should not. Liberal, Conservative, and NDP supporters were virtually identical in their responses.

With the split sample where respondents were asked if Canada should step in if it is opposed to the ICC investigating Israel, even *fewer* felt that Canada should intervene: 29% said that Canada should consider stepping in, while 71% said that Canada should not.

Conservative supporters gave identical answers to both versions of the question (31% Yes to 69% No). Liberal and NDP supporters were actually about 10% *more likely* to oppose Canadian interference when the question was about Israel rather than a country in general.

Overall, the answers did not significantly vary depending on whether the question was about a country in the abstract or about Israel specifically, and in both versions at least two thirds of Canadians were opposed to Canadian interference in the court's investigations.

## **Discussion**

Taken together, these two survey answers show that Canadians do not support Israeli exceptionalism as it relates to the International Criminal Court. Although pro-Israel bias is clearly evident, it is largely isolated to Conservative Party supporters.

Canadian opinions about a potential ICC investigation of Israel are not very different from their opinion of ICC investigations in general. Canadians are only about 11% less likely to support an investigation into alleged Israeli war crimes, with support dropping from 95% to 84%. Further, about two thirds of Canadians do not want Canada to step in if it is opposed to an ICC investigation, regardless of whether the country under investigation is Israel. In other words, more than two-thirds of Canadians want Israel to be subject to the same ICC investigative process as any other country accused of war crimes.

## **2.2. Canada, the Human Rights Abuses of Allies, and Israeli Exceptionalism**

Canadians were asked the following question:

*How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Canada's relationship [with its international allies / with Israel]?*

Canadians were asked to rank a series of five statements on a scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

A split sample was used, so that half of those surveyed were provided with statements about an unspecified allied country, and the other half were provided with statements that specifically mentioned Israel.

In the discussion below, “strongly agree” and “somewhat agree” are grouped together, while “strongly disagree” and “somewhat disagree” are grouped together, unless otherwise noted.

Residuals (“don’t know” and no response) were never above 10% and are excluded from the analysis. In every case, however, residuals were at least two times higher when the question was about Israel, compared to the alternate. When asked about a country in general, residuals were in the 3% to 5% range, and when asked about Israel the residuals were in the 8% to 10% range.

### ***Survey Question Results***

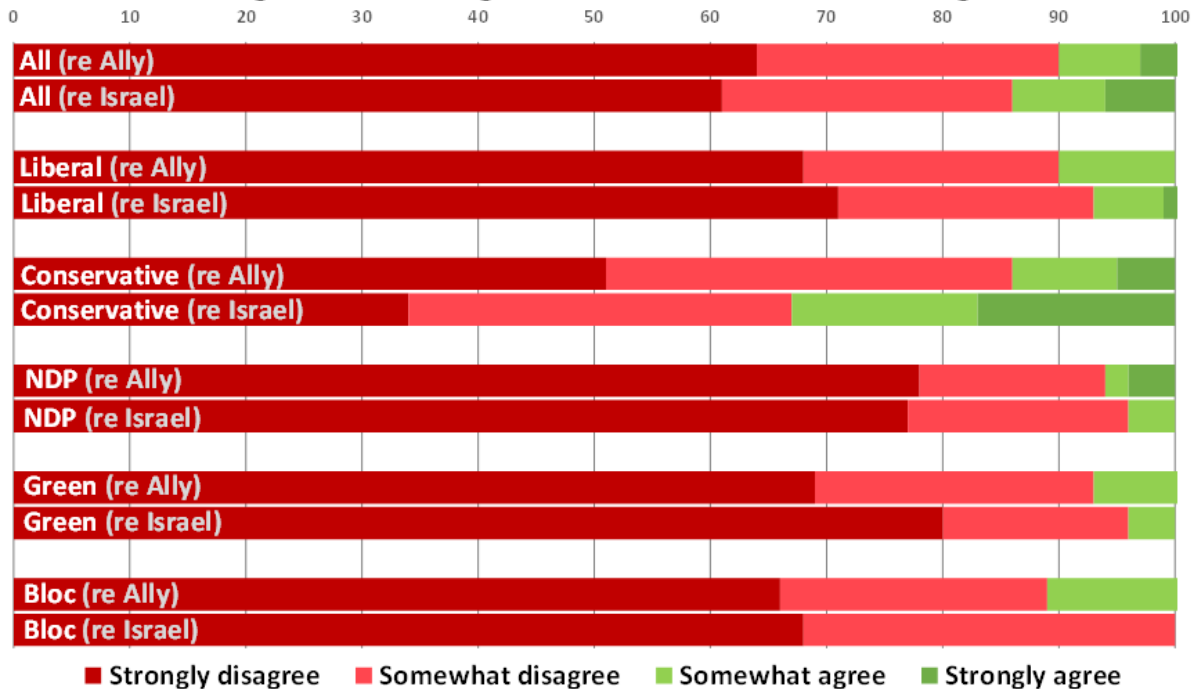
#### **2.2.1. The Vast Majority of Canadians Don’t Think Canada should Overlook the Human Rights Abuses of Allies, Including Israel**

In this question, Canadians were asked whether a country’s status as a Canadian ally should influence Canada’s response to that country’s alleged human rights violations. One half of the split sample referred to an ally in the abstract, while the other half of the split sample named Israel, as follows:

***Split 1:*** *Canada should overlook a country's alleged human rights violations if it is an ally.*

***Split 2:*** *Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations since it is an ally.*

### The Vast Majority of Canadians Don't Think Canada should Overlook the Alleged Human Rights Abuses of Allies, Including Israel



When asked if Canada should overlook *a country's* alleged human rights violations if it is an ally, 90% of Canadians disagreed, and only 10% agreed. Supporters of all political parties had similar responses on this issue: Liberal (90% disagree to 10% agree), Conservative (86 to 14), NDP (94 to 6), Green (92 to 8), BQ (88 to 12).

When asked if Canada should overlook *Israel's* alleged human rights violations since it is an ally, 86% of Canadians disagreed, and 14% agreed. Compared to the alternate question, the answers from most party supporters were similar: Liberal (93% disagree to 7% agree), NDP (96 to 4), Green (96 to 4), BQ (100 to 0). For supporters of the Conservative Party, however, agreement was much higher at one third of supporters (33%), which means that Conservative supporters are more than twice as likely to support overlooking alleged human rights violations committed by Israel compared to a country in the abstract.

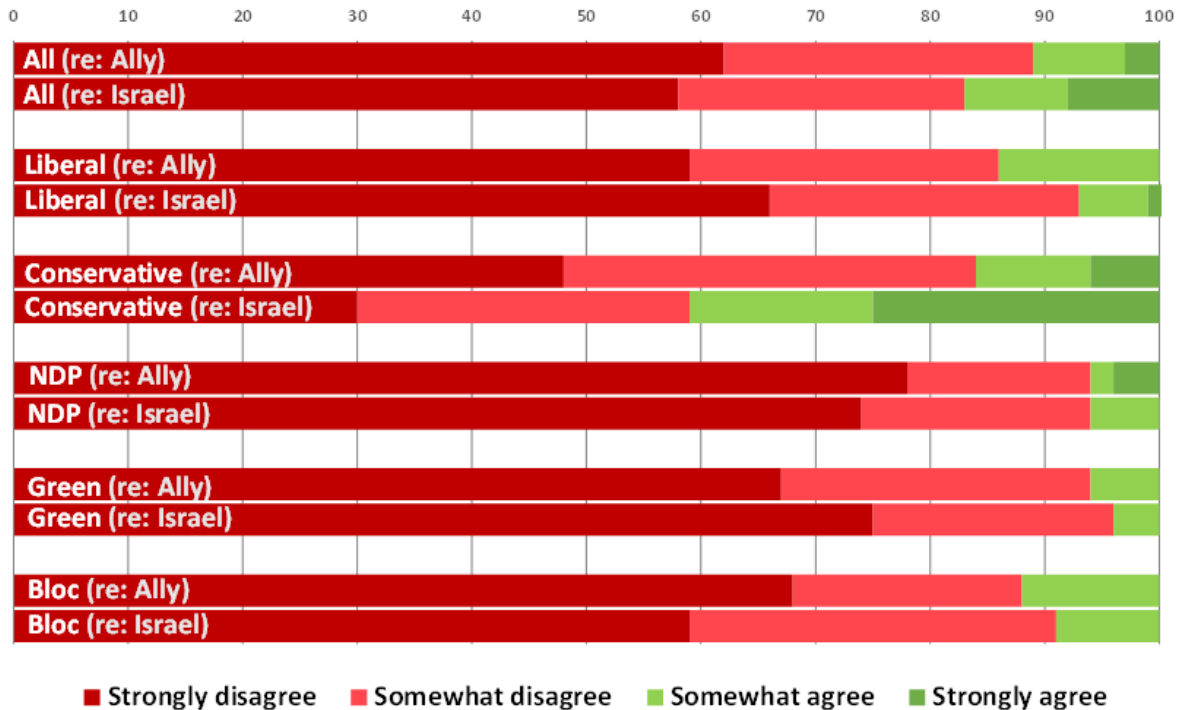
#### 2.2.2. A Strong Majority of Canadians Don't Think Canada Should Overlook the Human Rights Abuses of Partners in the Fight Against Terror, Including Israel

In this question, Canadians were asked whether a country's status as a partner in the fight against terrorism should influence Canada's response to that country's human rights violations. One half of the split sample referred to a partner in the abstract, while the other half of the split sample specifically named Israel, as follows:

**Split 1:** Canada should overlook a country's alleged human rights violations if it is a partner in the fight against terrorism.

**Split 2:** Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations since it is a partner in the fight against terrorism.

**A Strong Majority of Canadians Don't Think Canada should Overlook a Country's Alleged Human Rights Abuses, even if that Country is a Partner - Including Israel - in the Fight Against Terrorism**



When asked if Canada should overlook a country's alleged human rights violations if it is a partner in the fight against terrorism, 88% of Canadians disagreed, and 12% agreed. Supporters of all political parties had similar responses on this issue: Liberal (86% disagree to 14% agree), Conservative (84 to 16), NDP (94 to 6), Green (94 to 6), BQ (88 to 12). NDP supporters were most likely to strongly disagree with overlooking a country's alleged human rights violations (78%), whereas Liberal and Conservative supporters were split in their opinions between strongly disagree and somewhat disagree.

When asked if Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations since it is a partner in the fight against terrorism, 83% of Canadians disagreed, and 17% agreed. The answers from most party supporters were similar: Liberal (92% disagree to 8% agree), NDP (94 to 6), Green (96 to 4), BQ (91 to 9). Supporters of the Conservative Party were divided: a majority (59%) disagreed with overlooking Israel's alleged human rights violations but a strong minority (41%) agreed. Only one third (30%) of Conservative supporters 'strongly' disagreed,

compared to Liberal (66%), NDP (74%), Green (74%), and BQ (59%). Moreover, a quarter (24%) of Conservative supporters ‘strongly’ agreed, compared to only 2% of Liberal and 0% of the others.

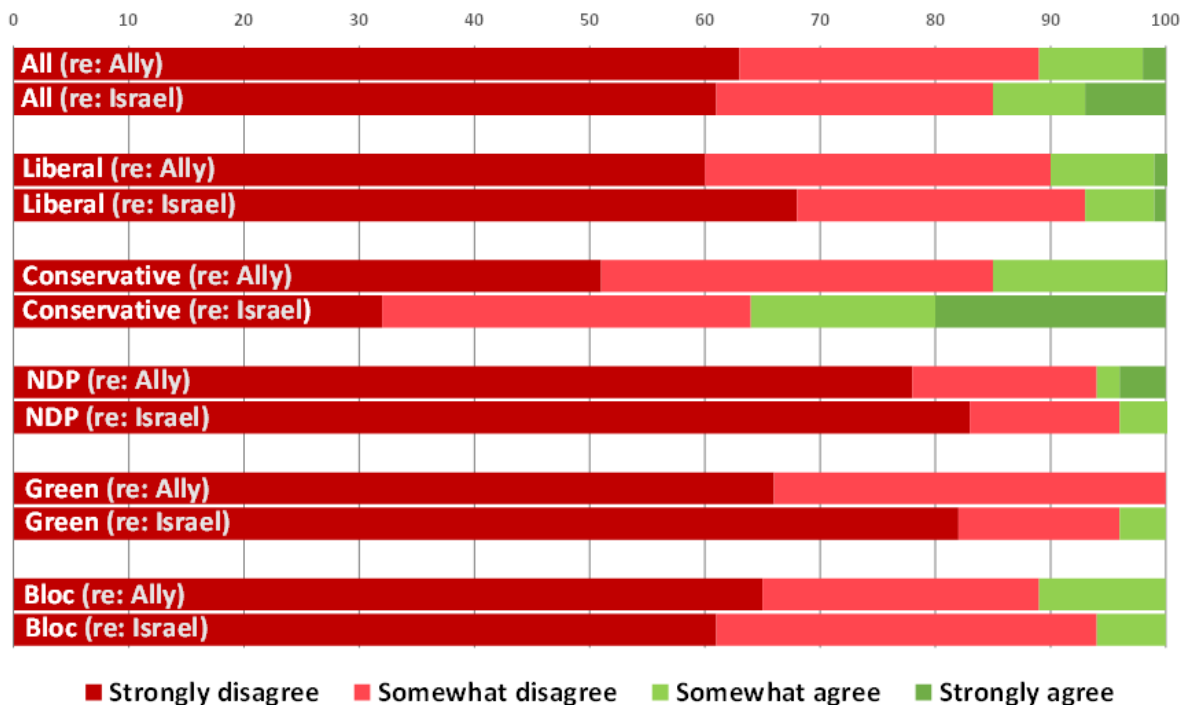
### 2.2.3. A Strong Majority of Canadians Don’t Think Canada Should Overlook the Human Rights Abuses of a Country, Including Israel, Even if Many Consider it to Have Shared Values

In this question, Canadians were asked whether the perceived shared values of a country should influence Canada’s response to that country’s alleged human rights violations. One half of the split sample referred to an ally in the abstract, while the other half of the split sample named Israel, as follows:

**Split 1:** Canada should overlook a country's alleged human rights violations if many consider it to have shared values with Canada.

**Split 2:** Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations since many consider it to have shared values with Canada.

#### A Strong Majority of Canadians Don’t Think Canada should Overlook the Alleged Human Rights Abuses a Country, Including Israel, even if many Consider that Country to have Shared Values



When asked if Canada should overlook a country's alleged human rights violations if many consider it to have shared values with Canada, 88% of Canadians disagreed, and 12% agreed.

Supporters of all political parties had similar responses on this issue: Liberal (89% disagree to 11% agree), Conservative (84 to 16), NDP (95 to 5), Green (100 to 0), and BQ (89 to 11).

When asked if Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations since many consider it to have shared values with Canada, 85% of Canadians disagreed, and 15% agreed. While disagreement among supporters of most parties was in the mid-90s (with agreement at 7% or below), only 64% of Conservative supporters disagreed, while 36% agreed. 20% of Conservative supporters 'strongly' agreed, compared to only 1% of Liberal supporters and 0% of the others.

#### **2.2.4. The Vast Majority of Canadians Don't Think Canada should Overlook the Discriminatory Laws of Allies, Including Israel**

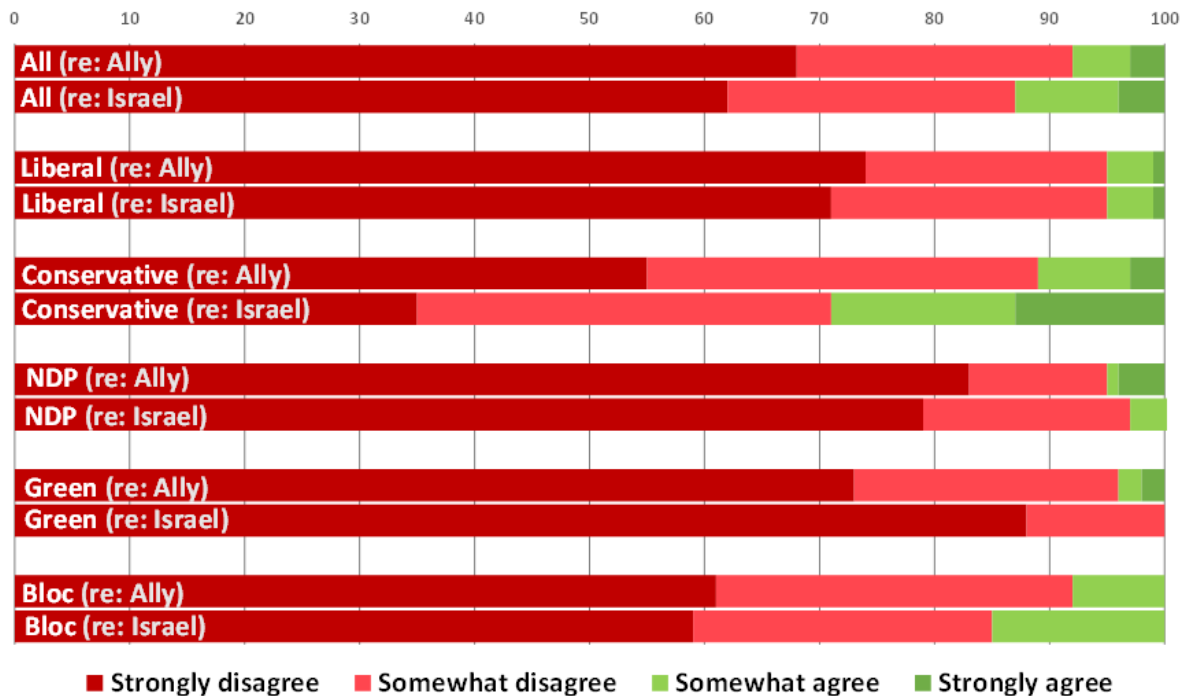
In this question, Canadians were asked whether a country's status as a Canadian ally should influence Canada's response to that country's discriminatory laws. One half of the split sample referred to an ally in the abstract, while the other half of the split sample named Israel, as follows:

***Split 1:*** *Canada should overlook an allied country's alleged human rights violations even if it passes laws that discriminate against minority groups.*

***Split 2:*** *Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations even if it passes laws that discriminate against minority groups.*



## The Vast Majority of Canadians Don't Think Canada should Overlook the Discriminatory Laws of Allies, Including Israel



When asked if Canada should overlook an allied country's alleged human rights violations even if that country passes laws that discriminate against minority groups, 92% of Canadians disagreed, and 8% agreed. Supporters of all political parties had similar responses on this issue: Liberal (94% disagree to 6% agree), Conservative (89 to 11), NDP (95 to 5), Green (96 to 4), and BQ (92 to 8). 92% of NDP supporters 'strongly' disagreed, whereas 54% of Conservative supporters strongly disagreed and 34% somewhat disagreed.

When asked if Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations even if it passes laws that discriminate against minority groups, 87% of Canadians disagreed, and 13% agreed. Overall, 62% 'strongly' disagreed, and only 4% 'strongly' agreed. Levels of disagreement were high among supporters of most parties: Liberal (96% disagree to 4% agree), NDP (96 to 4), Green (100 to 0), and BQ (85 to 15). Among supporters of the Conservative Party, however, only 70% disagreed, and a full 30% agreed.

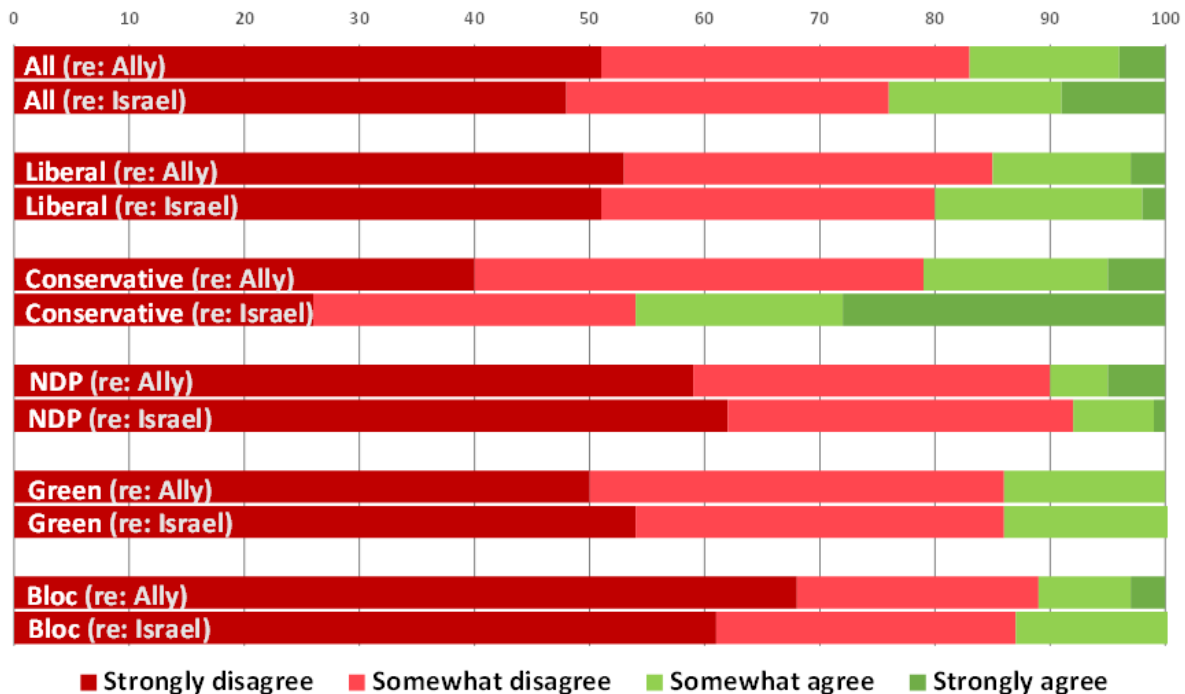
### 2.2.5. A Strong Majority of Canadians Don't Think Canada should Overlook the Human Rights Abuses of Countries Under Threat, Including Israel

In this question, Canadians were asked whether the fact that a country is under threat should influence Canada's response to that country's human rights violations. One half of the split sample referred to a country in the abstract, while the other half of the split sample named Israel, as follows:

**Split 1:** Canada should overlook a country's alleged human rights violations if the country is under threat.

**Split 2:** Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations if Israel is under threat.

### A Strong Majority of Canadians Don't Think Canada should Overlook the Alleged Human Rights Abuses of a Country Under Threat, Including Israel



When asked if Canada should overlook a country's alleged human rights violations if that country is under threat, 83% of Canadians disagreed, and 17% agreed. While there was not too much variation between party supporters, the number of those who 'agreed' was greater than in previous questions: Liberal (85% disagree to 15% agree), Conservative (79 to 21), NDP (90 to 10), Green (86 to 14), and BQ (89 to 11). Across the board, the number of Canadians who 'strongly' disagreed was lower than for other questions, as Canadians were more likely to 'somewhat' disagree or 'somewhat' agree.

When asked if Canada should overlook Israel's alleged human rights violations if Israel is under threat, 75% of Canadians disagreed, and 25% agreed. Three quarters of Canadians disagreed, including supporters of most political parties: Liberal (80% disagree to 20% agree), NDP (92 to 8), Green (85 to 15), and BQ (86 to 14). Supporters of the Conservative Party, on the other hand, were divided in this question: a slim majority (54%) disagreed, while 46% agreed. Out of these, 28% of Conservative supporters 'strongly' agreed, compared to only 2% of Liberal supporters, 1% of NDP, and 0% of the others.

## **Discussion**

As with the previous questions in relation to the International Criminal Court, these responses about Canada and its allies show that Canadians do not support Israeli exceptionalism. Although a certain amount of pro-Israel bias is clearly evident, like with the ICC questions, it is largely isolated to Conservative Party supporters. Simply put, Canadians do not want their government to overlook a country's human rights violations, regardless of context, and whether or not the country is Israel.

When asked whether Canada should overlook Israel's human rights violations, in every single case the majority of Canadians disagreed. Even on the one question that received the most support for overlooking Israel's violations – in the context of Israel being under threat – there was a total of only 25% support for this idea from Canadians overall. Even among Conservative supporters, who were far more likely to agree (and even 'strongly' agree) to overlook Israel's violations, on every single question the majority disagreed.

Nonetheless, there is a consistent discrepancy in how Canadians responded to these questions depending on whether the question was posed in the abstract or if it specifically mentioned Israel. For example, the number of Canadians who disagreed with the idea of overlooking a country's human rights violations dropped by 3-5% when the question was about Israel. On the specific variant about whether overlooking violations is appropriate because a country is under threat, the number of Canadians who disagreed dropped by 10% when the question was about Israel.

This bias against holding Israel to account is most significant among Conservative Party supporters. On the series of questions about whether Canada should overlook a country's human rights violations, the number of Conservative Party supporters who disagreed dropped by a considerable 20-25% when the question was about Israel. In a similar way, on the question of ICC investigations, 91% of Conservative Party supporters back ICC investigations in theory, but only 55% support the investigation if it is about Israel.

There is also some variation in the responses from supporters of other parties, such as the Liberals and NDP. In some cases, their disapproval about overlooking human rights violations softens when it is about Israel (i.e. they 'somewhat' disagree rather than 'strongly' disagree). In other cases, however, Liberal and NDP supporters are actually *less* likely to give a pass when the country under discussion is Israel: among Liberal supporters, disapproval rates about overlooking human rights violations *increased* slightly when asked about Israel (in 4 out of 5 questions). In a similar way, Liberal and NDP supporters were actually about 10% *more likely* to oppose Canadian interference with an ICC investigation when the question was about Israel rather than a country in general.

Overall, however, despite the tendency among some Conservative supporters to be partial to Israel, a very strong majority of Canadians oppose Israeli exceptionalism through all the permutations of this question.

## **2.3. Canadians' Position on Jerusalem**

### ***Background***

Resolution 181, the 1947 UN partition plan for historic Palestine stipulated that Jerusalem was to be a shared international city. Nevertheless, the fighting in 1948 left Jerusalem as a divided city, with Israel in control of West Jerusalem, and Jordan in control of East Jerusalem. For two decades the city remained a border zone, with Israel developing West Jerusalem, and a concentrated Palestinian population developing East Jerusalem. In 1967, Israel invaded and occupied Palestinian East Jerusalem along with the rest of the West Bank. Thirteen years later, Israel officially annexed the city in 1980, declaring that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel."<sup>15</sup> This action was condemned by United Nations Security Council Resolution 478 (1980), which mandated all UN member states withdraw their diplomatic missions from Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup> As a result, countries holding diplomatic relations with Israel have consistently maintained their embassies in Tel Aviv. Until this day, Canada "does not recognize Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem," and maintains that the "status of Jerusalem can be resolved only as part of a general settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute."<sup>17</sup>

In December 2017, US President Trump announced that the US would recognize greater Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and would move its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> The announcement was roundly condemned by the international community,<sup>19</sup> and to date only one other country (Guatemala) has followed the US in relocating its Embassy.<sup>20</sup>

While the official position of the Canadian government has not changed, political leaders have seemingly softened their opposition. In 2017, the Trudeau government abstained on a UN resolution condemning Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, claiming the resolution was one-sided in its language.<sup>21</sup> In the following years, the Conservative Party of Canada pledged to recognize Jerusalem as "the capital of Israel"<sup>22</sup> and to relocate the Canadian embassy to Jerusalem.<sup>23</sup> As of August 2020, Conservative leader Erin O'Toole has been very vocal about this promise to relocate the Embassy,<sup>24</sup> which would effectively acquiesce to Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem.

### **2.3.1. A Strong Majority of Canadians Oppose Recognizing Jerusalem as Exclusively Israel's Capital**

The Trump administration's decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem in 2017 re-opened the controversy over Canada's position on the status of Jerusalem. The survey sought respondents' opinions on whether they felt Canada should follow Trump's example in

legitimizing Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem, supporting proposals to change Canadian policy on the status of Jerusalem.

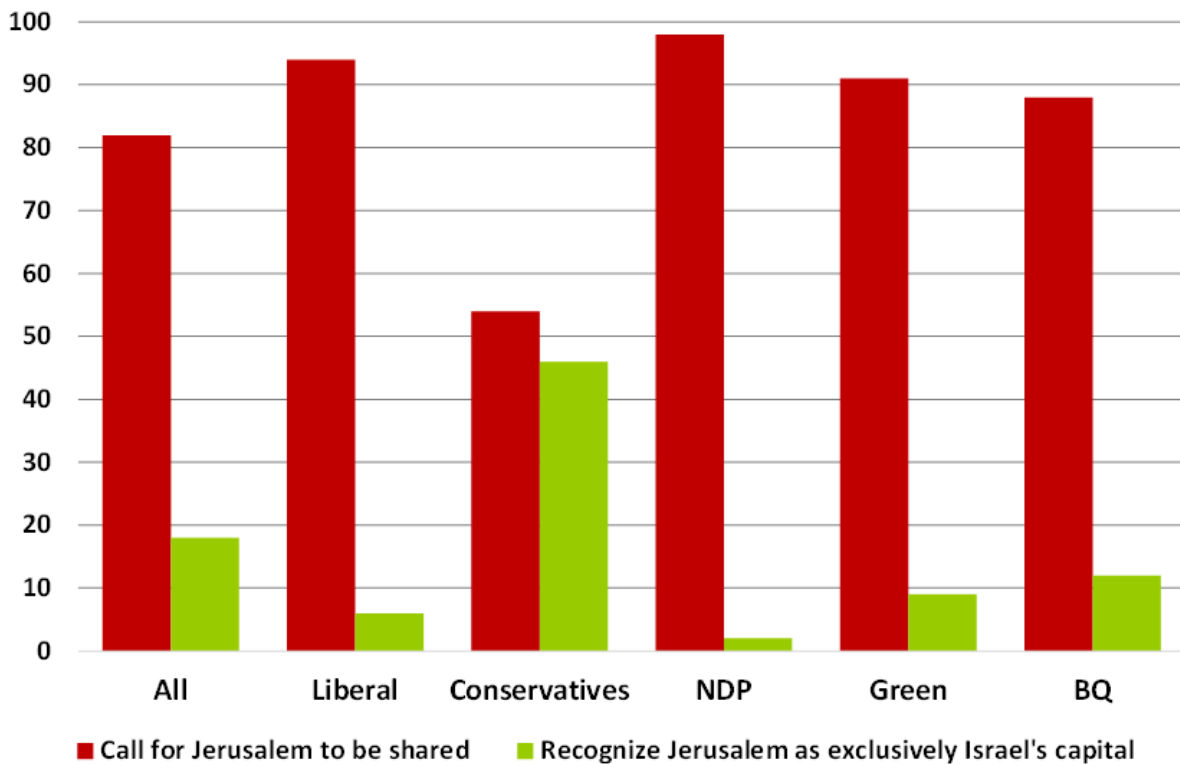
The survey asked the following question:

*Since the 1940s, the international community - including Canada - has envisioned Jerusalem as a city to be shared between Israel and the Palestinians. Whereas the US has recently recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Canada's current policy does not. Which of the following statements most closely matches your own opinion?*

- *Canada should maintain its current policy, and continue to call for Jerusalem to be shared; or*
- *Canada should change its current policy and recognize Jerusalem as exclusively Israel's capital.*

To avoid favouring either response, the order of the response bullets was randomized for each respondent.

### A Strong Majority of Canadians Oppose Recognizing Jerusalem as Exclusively Israel's Capital



## Survey Question Results and Discussion

Four out of five Canadians (82%) responded that Canada should maintain its current policy, and continue to call for Jerusalem to be shared. Only one fifth (18%) said that Canada should recognize Jerusalem as exclusively Israel's capital.

Among all but Conservative supporters, there was almost unanimous support for maintaining the current policy in favour of a shared capital: Liberal (94% maintain to 6% change), NDP (98 to 2), Green (91 to 9), BQ (88 to 12). Conservative Party supporters are split almost down the middle, with a slim majority of Conservative supporters supporting a shared capital (54% maintain vs 46% change).

This demonstrates that Canadians overwhelmingly reject proposals to recognize Jerusalem as exclusively Israel's capital. This includes a majority of Conservative Party supporters, who disagree with the party leader's position.

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<sup>1</sup> About the ICC <https://www.icc-cpi.int/about>

<sup>2</sup> "Canada and the International Criminal Court," Global Affairs Canada, accessed Sept. 1, 2020 [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international\\_relations-reactions\\_internationales/icc-cpi/index.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-reactions_internationales/icc-cpi/index.aspx?lang=eng)

<sup>3</sup> Peter Beaumont, "ICC to investigate alleged Israeli and Palestinian war crimes," *The Guardian*, December 20, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2019/dec/20/icc-to-investigate-alleged-israeli-and-palestinian-war-crimes>

<sup>4</sup> Ron Csillag, "Canada Backs Israel in ICC Challenge," *Canadian Jewish News*, February 26, 2020, <https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/canada-backs-israel-in-icc-challenge>

<sup>5</sup> "Palestine," International Criminal Court, accessed July 27 2020, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/palestine>

<sup>6</sup> Yonah Jeremy Bob, "ICC Prosecutor doubles down that Palestine is a state," *Jerusalem Post*, April 30, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/icc-prosecutor-doubles-down-that-palestine-is-a-state-626439>

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Hansler, "Trump authorizes sanctions against International Criminal Court officials," *CNN*, June 14, 2020; "International Criminal Court officials sanctioned by US," *BBC News*, September 2, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-54003527>

<sup>8</sup> Zachary Keyser, "Israel coordinated US sanctions against ICC with Trump administration – report," *Jerusalem Post*, June 12, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/israel-coordinated-us-sanctions-against-icc-with-trump-administration-report-631248>

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<sup>11</sup> Brennan Doherty, "Canadian Food Inspection Agency reverses decision on labelling West Bank wines," *Toronto Star*, July 14, 2017, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/07/14/canadian-food-inspection-agency-reverses-decision-on-labelling-west-bank-wines.html>

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