

When disaster strikes abroad, Canadians are divided on who's responsible for getting them home safe

Most look to government in situations like Nepal earthquake; onus shifts to individuals in other scenarios

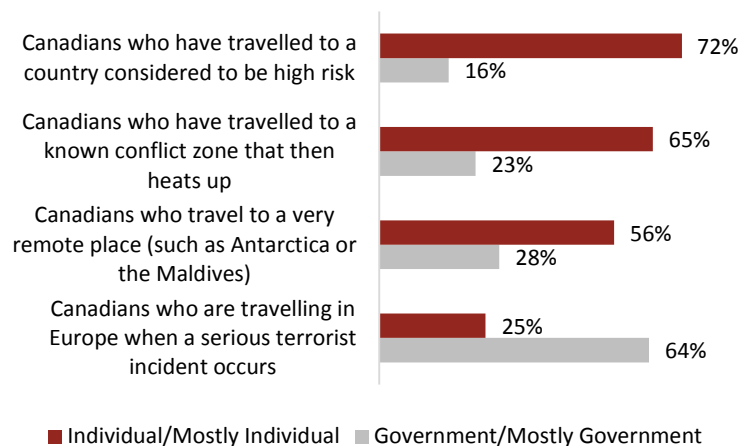
May 08, 2015 – When Canadians are stranded by some disaster abroad – such as the recent earthquake in Nepal – who should be responsible for getting them out?

Results of new public opinion polling from the Angus Reid Institute suggest a slim majority say government should be accountable in the case of the Nepal quake, but opinions change depending on the circumstances of other disasters, and on whether the stranded or afflicted live full time in Canada, or abroad.

Key Findings:

- A majority of Canadians (56%) say responsibility for evacuating Canadians from something like the Nepal earthquake should lie entirely (43%) or mostly (13%) with government.
- This changes markedly if the scenario involves Canadians stranded in a conflict zone or an area with a high risk advisory: only 23 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, consider evacuation in these scenarios to be the Canadian government's responsibility.
- When Canadians are evacuated from a disaster area, 38 per cent believe they should have to pay for a portion of their rescue. Those who've traveled abroad extensively are twice as likely as other respondents to say evacuees should pay the entire cost of their rescue.

Who would you say is responsible for evacuating Canadians in each of these scenarios?



METHODOLOGY:

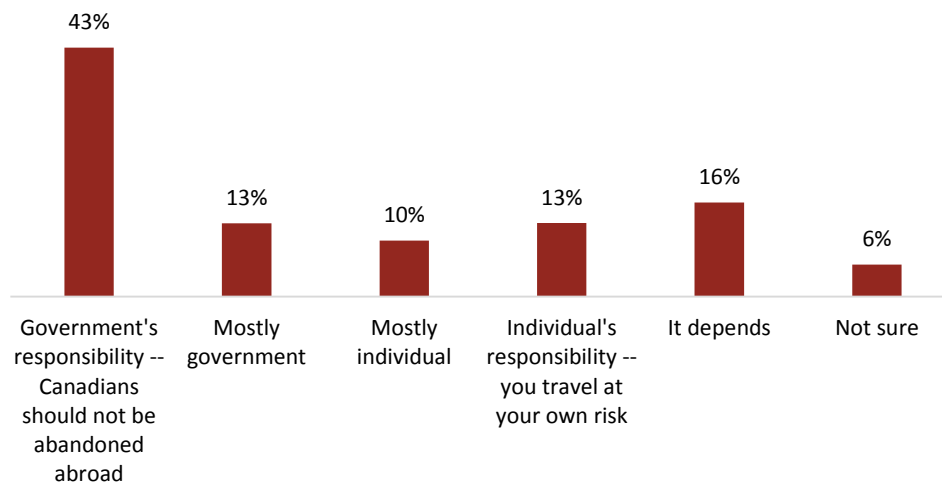
The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from April 30-May 3, 2015 among a representative randomized sample of 1504 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/-2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

Who's responsible for getting Canadians out?

When the 7.8-magnitude earthquake [struck Nepal](#) on April 25, there were [462 Canadians](#) registered with the embassy in Nepal. The actual number of Canadians on the ground was likely greater, because registration is voluntary.

Asked about the overall responsibility for the evacuation of Canadians during a natural disaster, such as the Nepal earthquake, more than half of Canadians surveyed (56%) told the Angus Reid Institute Ottawa should take the lead on evacuation, with two-in-five respondents (43%) saying it should entirely fall to government and 13 per cent saying "mostly government".

What is your overall feeling about the responsibility for evacuation of Canadians who are in a disaster-struck region like Nepal?



Different scenarios yield different responses

The Canadian government [has no official policy](#) on whether it will evacuate its citizens from other countries during times of crisis. In 2006, it was criticized heavily [for spending \\$100 million](#) to evacuate Canadians from the conflict in Lebanon, many of whom went back as soon as violence there subsided. For context: Canadians stuck in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina a year earlier had received no such help.

Canadians are less likely to place responsibility for evacuating citizens on the government when presented with some other specific scenarios in the survey:

- Only (16%) pointed to government as responsible for "Canadians who have travelled to a country considered to be high risk."

MEDIA CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

- Not many more (23%) said government (13%) or "mostly government" (10%) should be responsible for evacuating "Canadians who have travelled to a known conflict zone that then heats up."
- Roughly one-quarter (28%) of Canadians feel it is government's responsibility to evacuate "Canadians who travel to a very remote place (such as Antarctica or the Maldives)."
- Notably, Canadians do feel government should be responsible for evacuating "Canadians travelling in Europe if a serious terrorist incident occurs". In this scenario, a total of two-in-three (64%) Canadians pointed to the government (40% government, 24% mostly government).

Regional and demographic differences in opinion arise. On the question regarding the Nepal earthquake specifically, Quebec residents (64%) were especially inclined to choose "government" or "mostly government" as responsible for rescue. By contrast, less than half of Albertans (49%) chose one of the two "government" options.

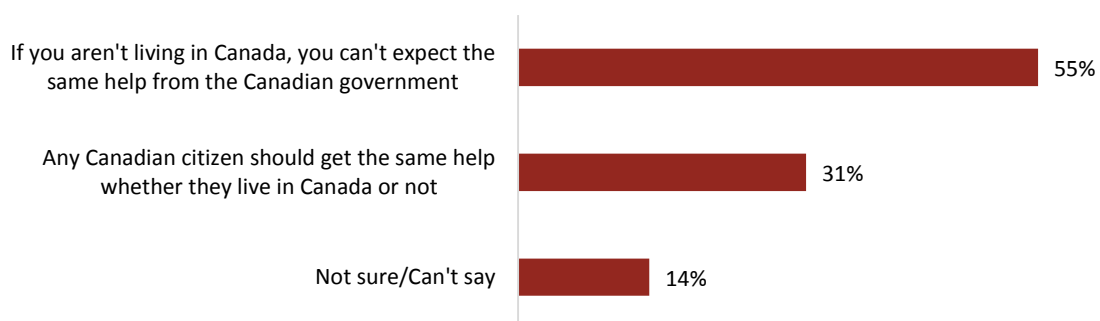
In all other evacuation scenarios, Atlantic Canadians were more often inclined to say it is the individual's responsibility. This was especially true in the case of a terrorist attack in Europe, where more than a third (36%) place the responsibility on the individual, compared to less than 30 per cent in all other jurisdictions except Alberta (31%).

Those living abroad viewed differently

Canadian opinion appears less convinced that government responsibility (where one is perceived) extends to citizens living long-term outside of Canada. [A 2011 report](#) by the Asia Pacific Foundation estimated that there are roughly 2.8 million Canadians living outside of Canada, more than a million of whom live in the U.S.

More than half (55%) of those surveyed agreed that "if you aren't living in Canada, you can't expect the same help from the Canadian government" during a disaster such as the earthquake in Nepal. One-third (31%) say "any Canadian citizen should receive the same help whether they live in Canada or not". The rest (14%) were unsure.

Help for Canadians living abroad



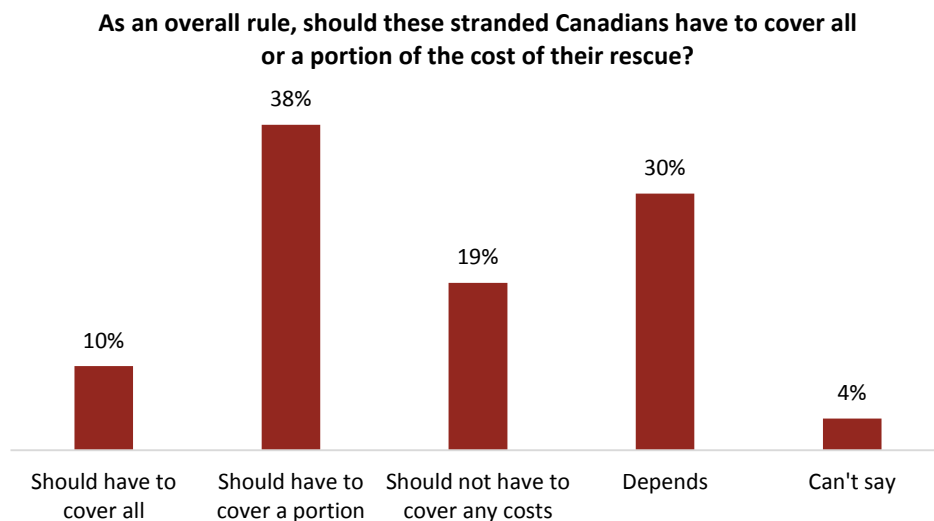
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Who should pay for evacuations?

As for who pays to lift stranded Canadians out of a disaster or danger zone, roughly two-in-five (38%) surveyed say the rescued should have to cover a portion of the costs, twice as many as those who say none at all (19%). One-in-ten (10%) told the Angus Reid Institute stranded Canadians should have to cover all costs.

A significant number – 30 per cent – say the answer to who should pay for the evacuation of Canadians "depends" on the specific situation from which they're being evacuated, or on other factors.



Canadians satisfied with international aid response in Nepal

The Canadian government [has pledged \\$5 million](#) to help with the relief effort in Nepal and agreed to match Canadians' donations to the Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund dollar-for-dollar until May 25.

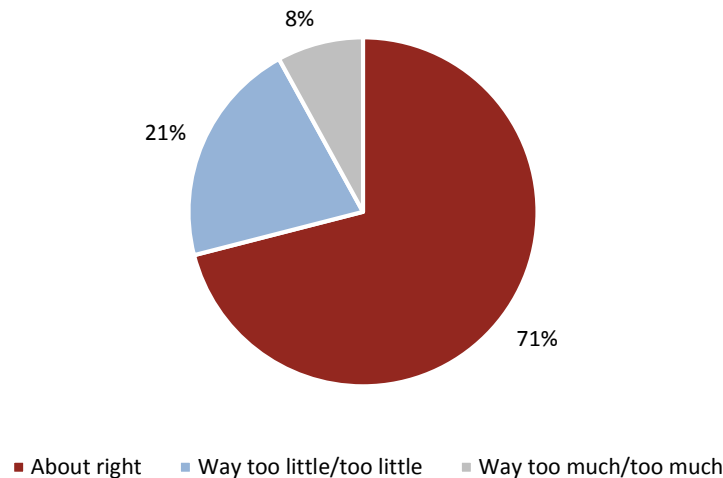
Canada also mobilized a [Disaster Assistance Response Team](#) (DART) and a [Medical Assistance Team](#) (CMAT) to Kathmandu.

Asked for their overall appraisal of their government's response in Nepal, a large majority of Canadians (71%) believe it's been "about right." Of those who felt otherwise, 21 per cent said "too little" has been done, leaving fewer than one-in-ten (8%) who said Canada has done "too much" responding to Nepal.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Would you say Canada's overall response to the Nepal earthquake has been too much, too little, or about right?



Nearly half of Canadians (47%) say Canada should always respond to natural disasters in other countries, regardless of the circumstances, and only a tiny minority (3%) say Canada should never help.

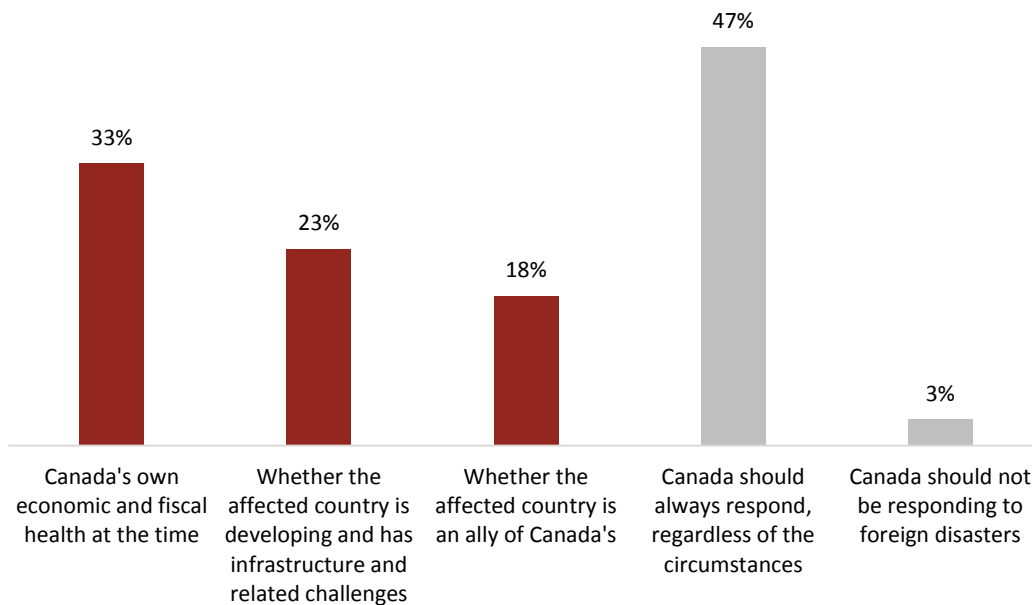
The rest see some potentially mitigating circumstances. Given the opportunity to choose up to three considerations Canada should weigh when deciding whether to respond to a natural disaster in another country:

- One-third (33%) say Canada's own economic health should influence the government's response to such disasters. Younger people (40% of those ages 18 to 34) and Saskatchewan residents (45%) were particularly inclined to say this.
- Roughly one-in-five (23%) said Canada should consider "whether the affected country is developing and has infrastructure and related challenges."
- Slightly fewer respondents (18%) chose "whether the affected country is an ally of Canada's" as a factor that should influence the government's response.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

When there is a natural disaster like this somewhere in the world, what kind of factors do you think should influence the Canadian government's response?



Overall, opinion is divided on what Canada's goal should be when responding to disasters abroad. Half (51%) say the government's priority should be contributing to general relief efforts, while a large number (41%) would instead put the priority on getting Canadians out of the affected region. Eight per cent of respondents chose "neither."

Little difference in opinion between travelers and non-travelers

The survey also asked about Canadians' travel outside of Canada and the United States. Interestingly, responses from Canadians who have travelled abroad or had family members travel abroad in the last five years did not differ significantly from those of Canadians who have stayed put in North America.

In general, those who had traveled abroad for an extended period of time (more than a month) in the last five years were slightly more likely than the general population to say evacuation was an individual's responsibility, though in most cases this difference was not statistically significant.

The one question on which this group had a notably different opinion than the rest of the population was that regarding who should pay for the rescue of Canadians stranded abroad by disasters. Perhaps surprisingly, 21 per cent of those who had traveled abroad for an extended period said evacuees should have to pay for the entire cost of their rescue, compared to just 10 per cent of the overall population who chose this response.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.

How would you describe the Canadian government's response so far to this earthquake disaster in Nepal? Would you say Canada's overall response has been too much, too little, or about right?

(unweighted bases)	Total (1504)	Region						
		BC (200)	AB (152)	SK (101)	MB (100)	ON (500)	QC (351)	ATL (100)
Way too much	2%	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%	2%	0%
Too much	6%	5%	6%	8%	2%	6%	6%	7%
About right	71%	70%	70%	73%	75%	73%	66%	73%
Too little	17%	18%	18%	12%	18%	17%	18%	13%
Way too little	4%	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%	8%	7%

How would you describe the Canadian government's response so far to this earthquake disaster in Nepal? Would you say Canada's overall response has been too much, too little, or about right?

(weighted sample size)	Total (1504)	Gender		Age		
		Men (735)	Women (769)	18 – 34 (430)	35 – 54 (563)	55+ (511)
Way too much	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	1%
Too much	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%
About right	71%	69%	72%	68%	74%	69%
Too little	17%	17%	17%	19%	13%	20%
Way too little	4%	6%	3%	5%	4%	5%

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When there is a natural disaster like this somewhere in the world, what kind of factors do you think should influence the Canadian government's response?

(unweighted bases)	Total (1504)	Region						
		BC (200)	AB (152)	SK (101)	MB (100)	ON (500)	QC (351)	ATL (100)
Canada's own economic and fiscal health at the time	33%	36%	35%	45%	28%	35%	27%	31%
Whether the affected country is an ally of Canada's	18%	15%	19%	19%	20%	19%	16%	16%
Whether the affected country is developing and has infrastructure and related challenges	23%	24%	25%	22%	18%	23%	25%	15%
Canada should always respond, regardless of the circumstances	47%	48%	47%	44%	49%	48%	44%	47%
Canada should not be responding to foreign disasters	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%

When there is a natural disaster like this somewhere in the world, what kind of factors do you think should influence the Canadian government's response?

(weighted sample size)	Total (1504)	Gender		Age		
		Men (735)	Women (769)	18 – 34 (430)	35 – 54 (563)	55+ (511)
Canada's own economic and fiscal health at the time	33%	30%	36%	40%	33%	28%
Whether the affected country is an ally of Canada's	18%	18%	18%	24%	17%	13%
Whether the affected country is developing and has infrastructure and related challenges	23%	23%	23%	28%	23%	20%
Canada should always respond, regardless of the circumstances	47%	46%	47%	39%	47%	54%
Canada should not be responding to foreign disasters	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%

MEDIA CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

When a major natural disaster strikes in another country, such as this earthquake in Nepal, what is your overall feeling about the responsibility for evacuation of Canadians who are in a disaster-struck region like this?

(unweighted bases)	Total (1504)	Region						
		BC (200)	AB (152)	SK (101)	MB (100)	ON (500)	QC (351)	ATL (100)
Government's responsibility -- Canadians should not be abandoned abroad	43%	43%	35%	44%	43%	40%	53%	40%
Mostly government	13%	12%	14%	8%	12%	13%	11%	14%
Mostly individual	10%	11%	14%	8%	11%	10%	9%	4%
Individual's responsibility -- you travel at your own risk	13%	11%	17%	19%	11%	12%	11%	17%
It depends	16%	19%	13%	17%	18%	19%	12%	17%
Not sure	6%	4%	7%	4%	5%	7%	4%	8%

When a major natural disaster strikes in another country, such as this earthquake in Nepal, what is your overall feeling about the responsibility for evacuation of Canadians who are in a disaster-struck region like this?

(weighted sample size)	Total (1504)	Gender		Age		
		Men (735)	Women (769)	18 – 34 (430)	35 – 54 (563)	55+ (511)
Government's responsibility -- Canadians should not be abandoned abroad	43%	39%	47%	39%	44%	45%
Mostly government	13%	14%	11%	19%	12%	9%
Mostly individual	10%	13%	7%	9%	10%	9%
Individual's responsibility -- you travel at your own risk	13%	13%	13%	10%	11%	17%
It depends	16%	17%	16%	15%	18%	15%
Not sure	6%	4%	7%	8%	5%	4%

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Who would you say is responsible for evacuating Canadians in each of these scenarios?				
(weighted sample size)	Travelled to a known conflict zone that then heats up	Travelled to a country considered to be high risk	Travelling in Europe when a serious terrorist incident occurs	Travel to a very remote place (such as Antarctica or the Maldives)
Government's responsibility -- Canadians should not be abandoned abroad	13%	9%	40%	16%
Mostly government	10%	7%	24%	12%
Mostly individual	26%	29%	13%	27%
Individual's responsibility -- you travel at your own risk	39%	43%	12%	29%
It depends	9%	8%	8%	12%
Not sure	4%	4%	3%	4%

Some Canadian citizens live in other countries for many years. In case of a disaster, should they be entitled to the same type of assistance from the Canadian government as Canadians who live in Canada?								
(unweighted bases)	Total (1504)	Region						
		BC (200)	AB (152)	SK (101)	MB (100)	ON (500)	QC (351)	ATL (100)
Any Canadian citizen should get the same help whether they live in Canada or not	31%	34%	33%	27%	36%	27%	33%	28%
If you aren't living in Canada, you can't expect the same help from the Canadian government	55%	52%	58%	58%	52%	58%	55%	45%
Not sure/Can't say	14%	14%	9%	15%	11%	15%	12%	26%

Some Canadian citizens live in other countries for many years. In case of a disaster, should they be entitled to the same type of assistance from the Canadian government as Canadians who live in Canada?

(weighted sample size)	Total (1504)	Gender		Age		
		Men (735)	Women (769)	18 – 34 (430)	35 – 54 (563)	55+ (511)
Any Canadian citizen should get the same help whether they live in Canada or not	31%	30%	31%	42%	28%	24%
If you aren't living in Canada, you can't expect the same help from the Canadian government	55%	59%	52%	42%	57%	65%
Not sure/Can't say	14%	11%	17%	16%	15%	11%

As an overall rule, should these stranded Canadians have to cover all or a portion of the cost of their rescue?

(unweighted bases)	Total (1504)	Region						
		BC (200)	AB (152)	SK (101)	MB (100)	ON (500)	QC (351)	ATL (100)
Should have to cover all	10%	8%	11%	8%	10%	9%	9%	15%
Should have to cover a portion	38%	40%	39%	40%	35%	39%	36%	29%
Should not have to cover any costs	19%	15%	22%	18%	20%	18%	23%	19%
Depends	30%	34%	25%	31%	31%	29%	29%	33%
Can't say	4%	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%	3%	5%

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		Men (735)	Women (769)	18 – 34 (430)	35 – 54 (563)	55+ (511)
Should have to cover all	10%	11%	9%	7%	9%	13%
Should have to cover a portion	38%	38%	37%	31%	35%	46%
Should not have to cover any costs	19%	22%	17%	25%	20%	14%
Depends	30%	27%	32%	31%	33%	25%
Can't say	4%	3%	5%	6%	4%	1%

Should stranded Canadians have to cover all or a portion of the cost of their rescue? (Answers by time spent outside Canada and the U.S. in the past five years)				
(weighted sample size)	Total (1504)	Traveled for an extended period of time (146)	Traveled for a shorter period of time (709)	Have not traveled (669)
Should have to cover all	10%	21%	9%	9%
Should have to cover a portion	38%	42%	37%	37%
Should not have to cover any costs	19%	13%	20%	20%
Depends	30%	24%	31%	30%
Can't say	4%	0%	3%	5%

Overall, thinking about these natural disasters and Canada's response to them -- what do you think should be the Canadian government's overall number one priority?

(unweighted bases)	Total (1504)	Region						
		BC (200)	AB (152)	SK (101)	MB (100)	ON (500)	QC (351)	ATL (100)
Getting Canadians out of the affected region	41%	40%	40%	40%	38%	39%	48%	31%
Contributing to overall relief efforts	51%	54%	54%	53%	51%	53%	44%	57%
Neither	8%	6%	6%	7%	11%	7%	8%	12%

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