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Public Interest Research

Three-quarters of Canadians back inquiry on murdered and missing aboriginal women

81 per cent say it is the most important aboriginal-related issue facing Canada today

October 23, 2014 – Nearly three-quarters (73%) say they are in favour of a national inquiry into the issue of violence against aboriginal women.

That is the finding of an Angus Reid Institute (ARI) online survey asking Canadian adults how they feel about aboriginal-related issues in Canada.

When asked how Canadians feel about a national inquiry investigating the root sociological causes of missing and murdered aboriginal women, 26 per cent of respondents say they are "strongly in favour", and 47 per cent say they are "in favour".
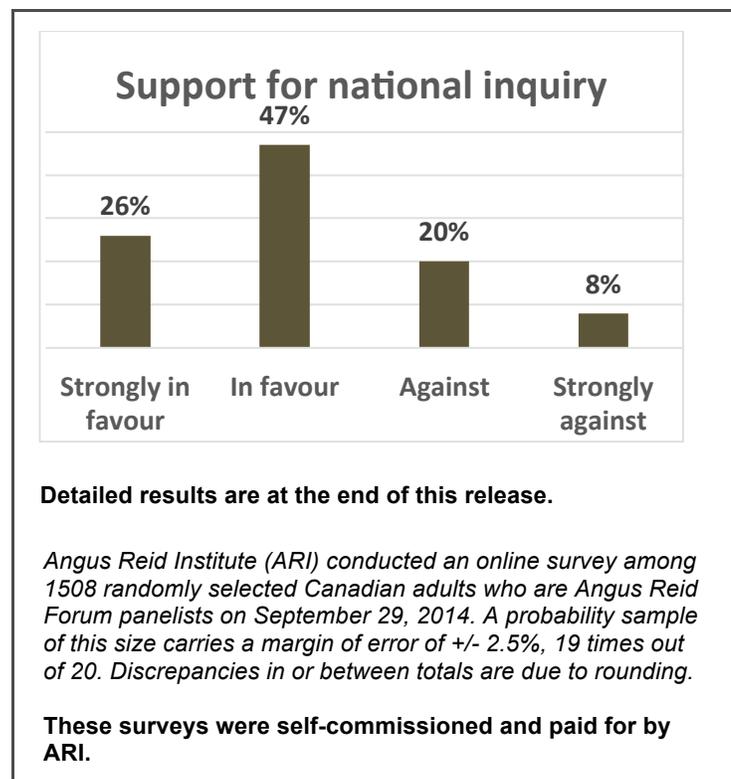
Twenty-eight per cent are opposed, with eight per cent being "strongly against" and twenty per cent being "against" an inquiry, saying it's a matter of law enforcement and concrete action.

Four-in-five (81%) respondents identified the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women as the most important aboriginal-related issue to them today.

Support for national inquiry

26%	47%	20%	8%
Strongly in favour	In favour	Against	Strongly against

Detailed results are at the end of this release.

Angus Reid Institute (ARI) conducted an online survey among 1508 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists on September 29, 2014. A probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

These surveys were self-commissioned and paid for by ARI.

Over the last three decades, nearly 1200 aboriginal women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said that these are crimes that should be investigated by the RCMP, as opposed to being the result of a sociological phenomenon that would need a formal inquiry.

While there is significant overall support for an inquiry, this sentiment is particularly strong among women (78%) and respondents aged 18 – 34 (80%).

Further Angus Reid Institute findings reveal that nearly three-quarters (73%) of Canadians say "there would be more outcry and attention if these missing and murdered aboriginal women were white".

MEDIA CONTACT:
Shachi Kurl, Vice President, Angus Reid Institute: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Conversely, 87% of Canadians also agree that "it's time for the aboriginal community itself to assume more responsibility for their people's well-being".

Priority issues:

As noted above, the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women is viewed as the most important aboriginal-related issue facing Canada today. There are, however, others: more than three-quarters (77%) of respondents say school drop-out rates for aboriginal youth is a high priority, while seven-in-ten (68%) say the same about living conditions on First Nations reserves.

Performance of Canadian institutions:

Respondents were asked how certain Canadian groups and institutions are performing with respect to aboriginal women's issues. The national news media and the RCMP were most favourably ranked, with 39 and 38 per cent of respondents, respectively, saying they are doing a good job. This is particularly true among respondents aged 55 and over where nearly half (47%) view the news media favourably and 43 per cent view the RCMP favourably.

In contrast, over half of Canadians (55%) rated the federal government's performance as poor when it comes to aboriginal women's issues, which is most strongly felt by Liberal and NDP supporters (72 and 63%, respectively).

Comparatively, forty-five per cent of CPC supporters rate government's performance as poor. This finding is similar to results from a 2013 Angus Reid Global poll that showed 54 per cent of Canadians rated the federal government's performance as poor with regards to aboriginal affairs.

Half of respondents (51%) also believe that both their own provincial government, as well as local chiefs on individual First Nations reserves are doing a poor job.

Over half of Canadians (53%) agree that Canada spends "way too much money on aboriginal affairs" and two-thirds (66%) agree "we have made no progress on aboriginal issues in the past many years".

Views by Party Support

Support for an inquiry also falls out along political lines, with Liberal Party of Canada and New Democratic Party (NDP) supporters being the most supportive of an inquiry at 85 and 80 per cent, respectively, compared to those who support Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) supporters (56%).

Media Contact: Shachi Kurl: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Detailed tables are on the following pages.

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Visit the website: http://www.angus-reid.org

ARI was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. It has the status of a registered charity in Canada. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to enhance and encourage better understanding of issues and trends affecting economic, social, governance, philanthropy, public administration, domestic, and foreign policy in Canada and its world.

For each of the following issues, please indicate how much of a priority, if any, you yourself consider it to be: (a priority + a high priority)

	Total (1508)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (156)	MB/SK (101)	ON (562)	PQ (377)	ATL (119)
The issue of murdered and aboriginal women	81%	83%	79%	65%	82%	81%	85%
School drop-out rates for aboriginal youth	77%	80%	74%	60%	79%	78%	74%
The living conditions on First Nations reserves	68%	64%	61%	58%	74%	64%	71%
Poverty rates for aboriginal Canadians	67%	68%	62%	54%	72%	65%	70%
The numbers of aboriginal Canadians in the courts and jails	63%	66%	60%	58%	67%	55%	67%
The overall situation of aboriginal people in Canada	58%	58%	49%	54%	66%	49%	62%

For each of the following issues, please indicate how much of a priority, if any, you yourself consider it to be: (a priority + a high priority)

	Total (1508)	Gender		Age		
		Men	Women	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
The issue of murdered and aboriginal women	81%	77%	84%	77%	80%	84%
School drop-out rates for aboriginal youth	77%	73%	81%	77%	73%	80%
The living conditions on First Nations reserves	68%	64%	71%	67%	63%	73%
Poverty rates for aboriginal Canadians	67%	63%	72%	68%	65%	70%
The numbers of aboriginal Canadians in the courts and jails	63%	60%	65%	62%	60%	66%
The overall situation of aboriginal people in Canada	58%	53%	63%	58%	53%	63%

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For each of the following issues, please indicate how much of a priority, if any, you yourself consider it to be: (a priority + a high priority)	Total (1508)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC	Liberal Party	NDP
The issue of murdered and aboriginal women	81%	75%	89%	86%
School drop-out rates for aboriginal youth	77%	73%	82%	80%
The living conditions on First Nations reserves	68%	61%	77%	71%
Poverty rates for aboriginal Canadians	67%	59%	76%	70%
The numbers of aboriginal Canadians in the courts and jails	63%	58%	76%	65%
The overall situation of aboriginal people in Canada	58%	51%	64%	64%

Generally speaking, what is your view of how much focus and attention is being given to aboriginal issues in Canada in recent years?	Total (1508)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (156)	MB/SK (101)	ON (562)	PQ (377)	ATL (119)
There's been way too much attention	12%	17%	14%	27%	9%	8%	12%
Too much attention	17%	23%	26%	27%	13%	14%	18%
About the right amount of attention	31%	26%	30%	23%	32%	37%	24%
Not enough attention	30%	29%	24%	16%	34%	30%	30%
Not nearly enough attention	10%	5%	6%	6%	12%	11%	16%

Are you in favour or against a national inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada?

	Total (1508)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (156)	MB/SK (101)	ON (562)	PQ (377)	ATL (119)
Strongly in favour of a national inquiry	26%	22%	14%	15%	27%	33%	36%
In favour of a national inquiry	47%	45%	40%	39%	49%	53%	43%
Against a national inquiry	20%	25%	38%	28%	17%	14%	14%
Strongly against a national inquiry	8%	10%	12%	14%	8%	5%	7%

Are you in favour or against a national inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada?

	Total (1508)	Gender		Age		
		Men	Women	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Strongly in favour of a national inquiry	26%	26%	25%	26%	24%	28%
In favour of a national inquiry	47%	42%	52%	54%	46%	43%
Against a national inquiry	20%	23%	17%	16%	22%	20%
Strongly against a national inquiry	8%	10%	7%	6%	8%	12%

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Are you in favour or against a national inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada?	Total (1508)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC	Liberal Party	NDP
Strongly in favour of a national inquiry	26%	18%	34%	32%
In favour of a national inquiry	47%	39%	51%	49%
Against a national inquiry	20%	29%	13%	16%
Strongly against a national inquiry	8%	15%	3%	4%

How would you rate the job each of the following are doing when it comes to aboriginal women's issues? (good job + very good job)	Total (1508)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (156)	MB/SK (101)	ON (562)	PQ (377)	ATL (119)
The national news media	39%	39%	47%	43%	36%	40%	43%
The RCMP	38%	34%	41%	56%	34%	40%	43%
Canada's major urban police services	31%	27%	37%	47%	26%	35	27%
National native organizations such as the AFN (Assembly of First Nations)	30%	31%	28%	19%	28%	35%	27%
The Canadian federal government	27%	26%	28%	42%	25%	27%	21%
Your provincial government	26%	26%	31%	43%	21%	25%	23%
Local chiefs on the First Nations reserves	22%	21%	17%	13%	22%	29%	21%

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Please indicate whether you agree or disagree, strongly or moderately, with each of the following statements: (moderately agree + strongly agree)	Total (1508)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (156)	MB/SK (101)	ON (562)	PQ (377)	ATL (119)
There would be more outcry and attention if these missing and murdered women were white and not aboriginal	73%	66%	68%	62%	74%	79%	76%
It's time for the aboriginal community itself to assume more responsibility for their people's well-being	87%	89%	93%	93%	85%	85%	87%
Canada spends way too much money on aboriginal affairs	53%	57%	71%	76%	48%	43%	51%
We have made no progress on aboriginal issues in the past many years	66%	58%	53%	62%	68%	76%	58%