

Canadians evenly divided on release of Omar Khadr

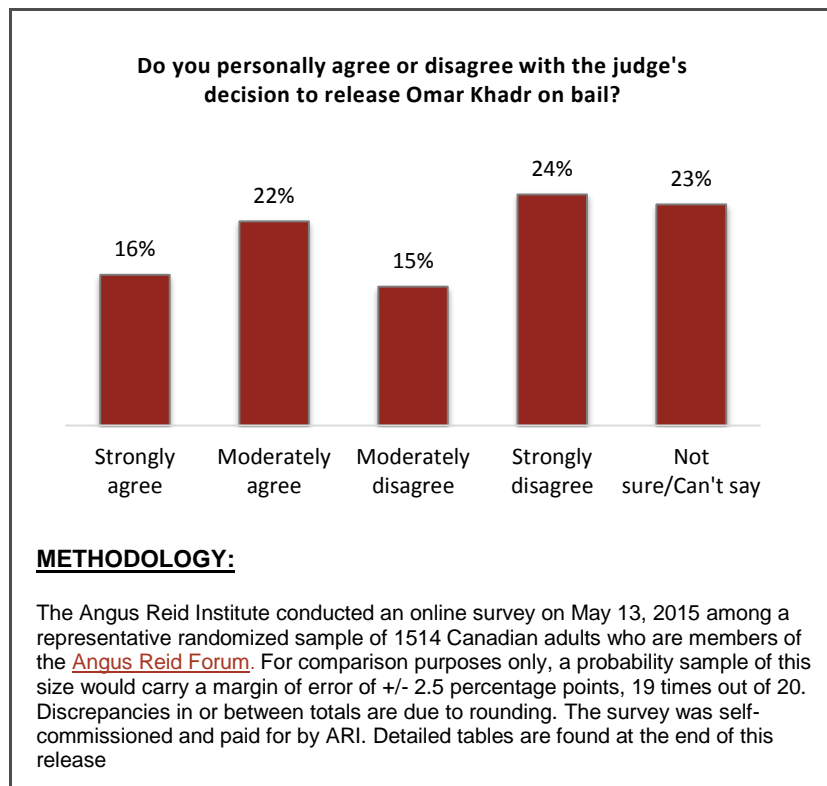
Lack of consensus also extends to whether Khadr has been “treated fairly”

May 25, 2015 – More than a dozen years after he allegedly [killed an American soldier](#) in Afghanistan, there is little consensus among Canadians in how they view Omar Khadr, or in what they think about an Alberta judge’s [decision to release him](#) on bail while he waits to appeal his U.S. military conviction.

A new public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds divergent opinions on Khadr – a Canadian citizen who was 15 years old at the time of the incident – and on his release.

Key Findings:

- Canadians are evenly divided on the judicial decision to release Khadr on bail: just over one-third each agree (38%) and disagree (39%), while one-quarter (23%) are unsure.
- Two-thirds (67% each) agree that Khadr “has every right to a proper trial” in Canada and that he was a “child soldier” who “should have been dealt with accordingly.” Views are quite split on whether he has “served his time -- 13 years is enough” (52% agree, 48% disagree).
- A slim majority of Canadians agree that Khadr “remains a potential radicalized threat” (55%).
- Khadr’s case is politically divisive. A full majority (59%) of those who voted for the Conservative Party in the last federal election disagree with the judge’s decision, including 42 per cent who say they “disagree strongly.” Conversely, roughly half of Liberal (52%) and New Democratic Party (49%) voters agree with the decision.



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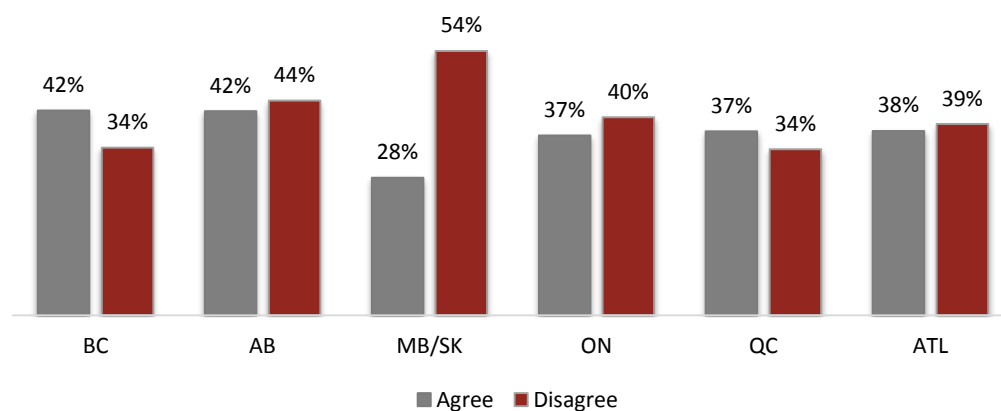
Even split on judge's decision

Nearly a quarter of Canadians (23%) aren't sure how they feel about Khadr's release. Those who have an opinion are evenly split, with roughly four-in-ten both agreeing with the judge's decision (38%) and disagreeing with it (39%).

Those opposed to releasing Khadr feel strongly about the decision. More respondents (24%) choose "strongly disagree" than any other option offered, and that quarter of respondents who strongly disagree substantially outnumber the 16 per cent who strongly agree.

Support for Khadr's release is strongest in B.C. where 42 per cent agree with the judge's decision versus 34 per cent disagree. Residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan are least supportive. Just 28 per cent in those provinces agree with the judge's decision, while 54 per cent disagree. In all other major regions, as observed nationally, public opinion is essentially evenly divided.

Do you personally agree or disagree with the judge's decision to release Omar Khadr on bail?



Uncertainty on 'fairness' of Khadr treatment

Asked whether Khadr has ultimately been treated fairly or unfairly, Canadians' largest single response was "unsure." Four-in-ten (40%) chose this option, while those with an opinion were slightly more likely to say he'd been treated fairly (33%) than unfairly (28%).

Perhaps predictably, those who believe Khadr has been treated fairly are more likely to disagree with his release. Three-quarters (75%) of those who believe Khadr has been treated fairly say they disagree with the judge's decision to release him, compared to 19 per cent who agree.

Similarly, more than eight-in-ten (85%) of those who believe Khadr has been treated unfairly say they agree with the judge's decision, compared to 9 per cent who disagree.

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A 'potential radicalized threat' or someone who 'has served his time'?

In October 2010, Khadr [pleaded guilty](#) to five war crimes charges before a U.S. military tribunal in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he had been held since his capture in 2002.

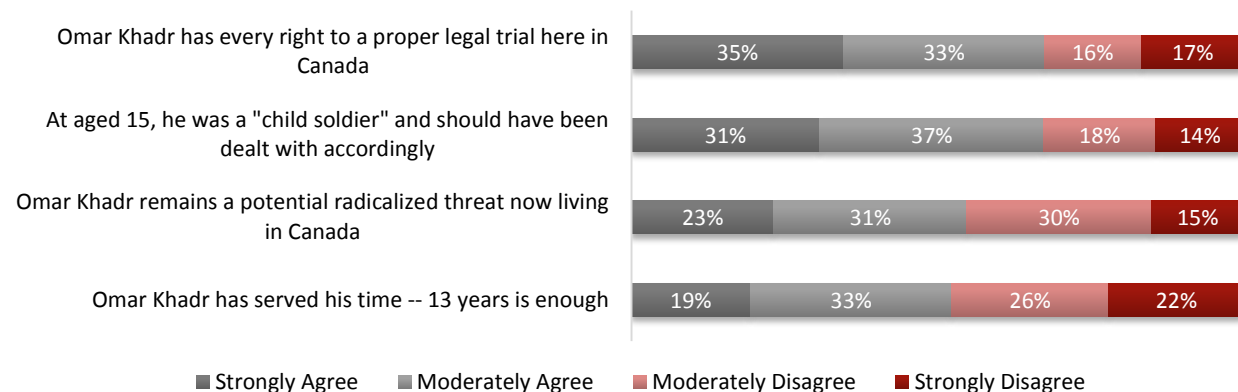
At the time of the plea, nearly half of Canadians (48%) said in [an Angus Reid poll](#) that they believed he had done so because it was in his best interest, regardless of whether he was actually guilty. Only about half as many (27%) said they believed Khadr pleaded guilty because he actually committed all of the crimes of which he was accused.

Khadr has been in Canada since 2012, when he was [transferred from a U.S. prison](#) to serve his sentence in the country of his birth. He was released on bail earlier this month.

Today, a slim majority of Canadians agree that Khadr “remains a potential radicalized threat” (55% agree versus 45% disagree). And views are quite divided with respect to the sentiment that Khadr “has served his time – 13 years is enough” (52% versus 48%).

Larger majorities (67% in each case) agree with the statements “Omar Khadr has every right to a proper legal trial here in Canada” and that, “at age 15, he was a ‘child soldier’ and should have been dealt with accordingly.”

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.



Opinions on Khadr: the regional picture

There are significant regional differences in opinion on the threat Khadr poses to Canada and the idea that he’s served his time, with higher agreement on one statement tending to correspond with higher disagreement on the other. And of course, views on these more specific angles vary predictably by people’s overall perspective on him being released on bail.

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Respondents from British Columbia are the only group to voice less than 50 per cent agreement with the statement about Khadr remaining a potential radicalized threat: 46 per cent do so. B.C. also has the highest rate of agreement (60%) with the statement about Khadr having served his time.

Prairie residents – those in Manitoba and Saskatchewan – have the opposite perspective. Two-thirds (65%) agree that Khadr remains a threat, and 37 per cent agree that he has served his time.

Divergence is also seen among 18-to-34-year-olds versus other age groups. Younger respondents are slightly less likely to agree that Khadr remains a threat (48% do so, compared to 59% of those ages 35-54 and 56% of those over the age of 55).

Younger respondents are also slightly more likely to agree that Khadr has served his time. Nearly three-in-five (59%) do so, compared to roughly half of respondents of other ages (48% of 35-to-54-year-olds and 51% of those over 55).

Political preferences colour opinions on Khadr case

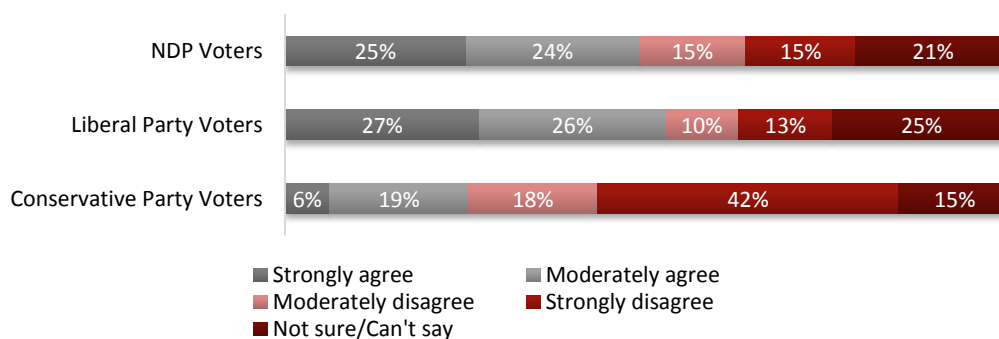
Opinions about Khadr are most hardened among Canadians who voted for the Conservative Party in the last federal election. Just one-quarter (25%) of past Conservative voters agree with the judge's decision to grant bail, while fully three-in-five (60%) disagree, including 42 per cent who do so strongly.

By contrast, roughly half of those who voted for the Liberal Party of Canada (52%) or the New Democratic Party (49%) in the last federal election agree with the judge's decision, while smaller minorities within each subset disagree (23% of past Liberal and 30% of past NDP voters).

Among the major parties, the Conservatives also have the lowest level of uncertainty regarding Khadr's release. Only 15 per cent are unsure, compared to 25 per cent of Liberal and 21 per cent of NDP voters.

On the issue of fairness, those who voted for the Conservative Party in the last federal election held a markedly different perspective than those who voted for other parties. More than half of Conservatives (56%) said Khadr had been treated fairly. Only 21 per cent of Liberals and 24 per cent of NDP voters said the same.

Do you personally agree or disagree with the judge's decision to release Omar Khadr on bail?



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Past Conservative voters are also far more likely to agree that Khadr remains a potential radicalized threat. Nearly three-quarters of Conservative voters (72%) agree with this statement, compared to 46 per cent or less among voters for all other political parties. (See detailed tables at the end of this release).

Large numbers of past CPC voters also disagree with more sympathetic statements about Khadr, including two-thirds (66%) who disagree that he “has served his time” and 45 per cent who disagree that he “was a ‘child soldier’ and should have been dealt with accordingly.”

*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.*

Very briefly, Omar Khadr, who is a Canadian citizen, was arrested in 2002 for allegedly killing an American soldier in Afghanistan when he was 15 years old [...] Now, the other day, a judge in Alberta has released Omar Khadr on bail, with conditions, while he waits to appeal his US military conviction.

How closely have you been following this issue? Would you say you:

(unweighted bases)	Total (1514)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (158)	SK/MB (100)	ON (564)	PQ (374)	ATL (126)
Are following it in the news, and discussing it with friends	18%	19%	21%	19%	20%	14%	18%
Seeing some media coverage, and having the odd conversation	32%	35%	46%	31%	31%	25%	33%
Just scanning the headlines	35%	28%	20%	37%	36%	45%	34%
Haven't seen or heard anything about it	15%	17%	14%	13%	13%	17%	15%

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Very briefly, Omar Khadr, who is a Canadian citizen, was arrested in 2002 for allegedly killing an American soldier in Afghanistan when he was 15 years old [...] Now, the other day, a judge in Alberta has released Omar Khadr on bail, with conditions, while he waits to appeal his US military conviction.

How closely have you been following this issue? Would you say you:

(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Gender		Age		
		Men (740)	Women (744)	18 – 34 (433)	35 – 54 (567)	55+ (514)
Are following it in the news, and discussing it with friends	18%	24%	13%	12%	16%	27%
Seeing some media coverage, and having the odd conversation	32%	34%	29%	23%	30%	41%
Just scanning the headlines	35%	31%	39%	41%	38%	27%
Haven't seen or heard anything about it	15%	10%	19%	24%	17%	5%

All things considered, do you personally agree or disagree with the judge's decision to release Omar Khadr on bail?

(unweighted bases)	Total (1514)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (158)	SK/MB (100)	ON (564)	PQ (374)	ATL (126)
Strongly agree	16%	21%	15%	9%	15%	17%	18%
Moderately agree	22%	21%	27%	19%	22%	20%	20%
Moderately disagree	15%	12%	12%	22%	15%	15%	14%
Strongly disagree	24%	22%	32%	32%	25%	19%	25%
Not sure/Can't say	23%	24%	15%	18%	23%	29%	23%

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All things considered, do you personally agree or disagree with the judge's decision to release Omar Khadr on bail?

(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Gender		Age		
		Men (740)	Women (744)	18 – 34 (433)	35 – 54 (567)	55+ (514)
Strongly agree	16%	18%	14%	16%	13%	20%
Moderately agree	22%	20%	23%	26%	18%	22%
Moderately disagree	15%	13%	16%	15%	17%	12%
Strongly disagree	24%	30%	19%	16%	26%	31%
Not sure/Can't say	23%	18%	28%	28%	27%	16%

All things considered, do you personally agree or disagree with the judge's decision to release Omar Khadr on bail?

(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC (544)	Liberal Party (238)	NDP (361)
Strongly agree	16%	6%	27%	25%
Moderately agree	22%	19%	26%	24%
Moderately disagree	15%	18%	10%	15%
Strongly disagree	24%	42%	13%	15%
Not sure/Can't say	23%	15%	25%	21%

Omar Khadr remains a potential radicalized threat now living in Canada

(unweighted bases)	Total (1514)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (158)	SK/MB (100)	ON (564)	PQ (374)	ATL (126)
Strongly agree	23%	21%	24%	36%	23%	23%	19%
Moderately agree	31%	26%	35%	29%	34%	30%	32%
Moderately disagree	30%	35%	28%	23%	28%	31%	37%
Strongly disagree	15%	19%	13%	12%	15%	15%	12%

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(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Gender		Age		
		Men (740)	Women (744)	18 – 34 (433)	35 – 54 (567)	55+ (514)
Strongly agree	23%	28%	19%	15%	25%	28%
Moderately agree	31%	29%	34%	33%	34%	27%
Moderately disagree	30%	28%	32%	35%	29%	27%
Strongly disagree	15%	15%	15%	17%	12%	18%

Omar Khadr remains a potential radicalized threat now living in Canada				
(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC (544)	Liberal Party (238)	NDP (361)
Strongly agree	23%	39%	12%	15%
Moderately agree	31%	34%	27%	29%
Moderately disagree	30%	22%	40%	31%
Strongly disagree	15%	6%	21%	24%

At aged 15, he was a "child soldier" and should have been dealt with accordingly							
(unweighted bases)	Total (1514)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (158)	SK/MB (100)	ON (564)	PQ (374)	ATL (126)
Strongly agree	31%	34%	27%	23%	32%	31%	28%
Moderately agree	37%	39%	37%	40%	34%	37%	41%
Moderately disagree	18%	16%	16%	14%	19%	19%	21%
Strongly disagree	14%	11%	20%	23%	14%	13%	11%

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At aged 15, he was a "child soldier" and should have been dealt with accordingly

(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Gender		Age		
		Men (740)	Women (744)	18 – 34 (433)	35 – 54 (567)	55+ (514)
Strongly agree	31%	31%	31%	30%	28%	35%
Moderately agree	37%	34%	39%	43%	37%	30%
Moderately disagree	18%	19%	18%	20%	20%	15%
Strongly disagree	14%	17%	12%	7%	15%	20%

At aged 15, he was a "child soldier" and should have been dealt with accordingly

(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC (544)	Liberal Party (238)	NDP (361)
Strongly agree	31%	24%	37%	39%
Moderately agree	37%	32%	39%	36%
Moderately disagree	18%	20%	18%	16%
Strongly disagree	14%	25%	6%	9%

Omar Khadr has served his time -- 13 years is enough

(unweighted bases)	Total (1514)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (158)	SK/MB (100)	ON (564)	PQ (374)	ATL (126)
Strongly agree	19%	25%	17%	12%	19%	21%	17%
Moderately agree	33%	35%	29%	25%	32%	36%	36%
Moderately disagree	26%	25%	27%	27%	26%	23%	30%
Strongly disagree	22%	15%	27%	36%	23%	20%	16%

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		Men (740)	Women (744)	18 – 34 (433)	35 – 54 (567)	55+ (514)
Strongly agree	19%	20%	19%	21%	15%	23%
Moderately agree	33%	30%	36%	39%	33%	27%
Moderately disagree	26%	24%	27%	27%	28%	22%
Strongly disagree	22%	26%	19%	14%	23%	28%

Omar Khadr has served his time -- 13 years is enough				
(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC (544)	Liberal Party (238)	NDP (361)
Strongly agree	19%	10%	29%	26%
Moderately agree	33%	25%	38%	38%
Moderately disagree	26%	30%	23%	21%
Strongly disagree	22%	36%	10%	15%

Omar Khadr has every right to a proper legal trial here in Canada							
(unweighted bases)	Total (1514)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (158)	SK/MB (100)	ON (564)	PQ (374)	ATL (126)
Strongly agree	35%	43%	29%	26%	34%	37%	32%
Moderately agree	33%	28%	27%	32%	33%	34%	42%
Moderately disagree	16%	14%	23%	16%	15%	15%	14%
Strongly disagree	17%	15%	21%	26%	18%	14%	12%

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Strongly agree	35%	37%	32%	41%	29%	35%
Moderately agree	33%	27%	38%	37%	33%	28%
Moderately disagree	16%	16%	15%	15%	19%	13%
Strongly disagree	17%	19%	14%	7%	18%	24%

Omar Khadr has every right to a proper legal trial here in Canada				
(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC (544)	Liberal Party (238)	NDP (361)
Strongly agree	35%	22%	45%	47%
Moderately agree	33%	35%	28%	28%
Moderately disagree	16%	16%	18%	13%
Strongly disagree	17%	27%	9%	12%

Would you say Omar Khadr has ultimately been treated fairly or unfairly?							
(unweighted bases)	Total (1514)	Region					
		BC (192)	AB (158)	SK/MB (100)	ON (564)	PQ (374)	ATL (126)
Fairly	33%	32%	43%	44%	33%	25%	30%
Unfairly	28%	26%	25%	20%	29%	29%	29%
Not sure/Can't say	40%	42%	32%	36%	37%	46%	41%

Would you say Omar Khadr has ultimately been treated fairly or unfairly?						
(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Gender		Age		
		Men (740)	Women (744)	18 – 34 (433)	35 – 54 (567)	55+ (514)
Fairly	33%	40%	25%	22%	33%	41%
Unfairly	28%	31%	25%	31%	23%	30%
Not sure/Can't say	40%	29%	50%	47%	44%	29%

Would you say Omar Khadr has ultimately been treated fairly or unfairly?				
(weighted sample size)	Total (1514)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC (544)	Liberal Party (238)	NDP (361)
Fairly	33%	56%	21%	24%
Unfairly	28%	13%	41%	39%
Not sure/Can't say	40%	31%	38%	37%

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