

## Syrian Refugee Resettlement: tight timelines are key driver of opposition to Ottawa's New Year plan

Canadians polarized on issue in general, with just over half rejecting plan to accept 25,000 refugees by Jan. 1, 2016

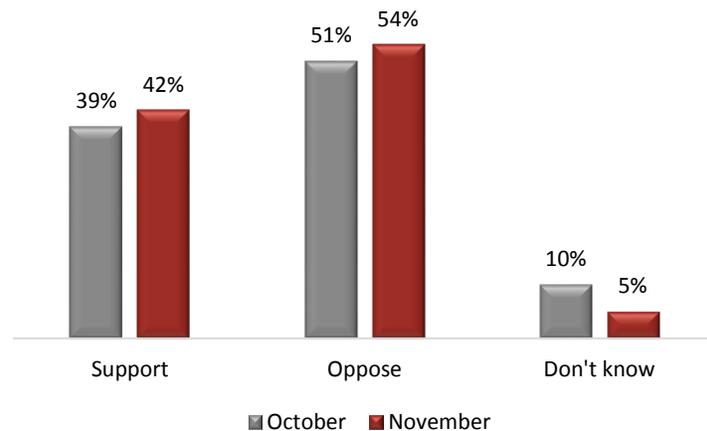
**November 18, 2015** – In the ongoing debate among Canadians regarding the Trudeau government's plan to re-settle 25,000 Syrian refugees by January 1, 2016, a clear concern over timelines is emerging – and driving opposition.

The latest public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute – conducted three days after the terrorist attacks that killed 129 in Paris – finds this country divided over the government's arrangement, as those against it point to a lack of time to properly conduct security checks as the main reason for their disapproval.

### Key Findings:

- Just over half (54%) of Canadians oppose the refugee resettlement plan, while 42 per cent support it
- Both support and opposition to the refugee resettlement plan have increased slightly since late October, [the last time the Angus Reid Institute asked](#) respondents about this issue
- Among those opposed, the majority (53%) cite too-short timelines to ensure necessary security checks as the main reason for their disagreement, while just under one-third (29%) don't think Canada should be taking in *any* Syrian refugees at all

Opinion on the government's plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by Jan. 1:



### METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey on November 16 among a representative randomized sample of 1,503 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.

### MEDIA CONTACT:

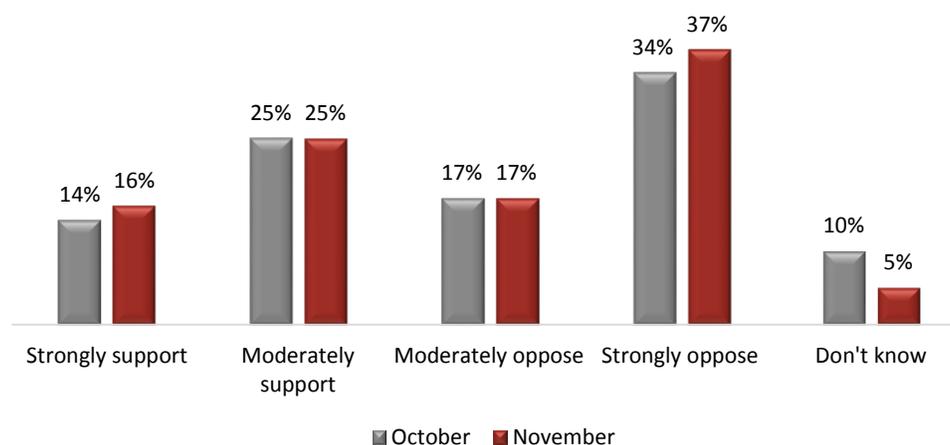
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## Half oppose the government's plan

Even before the [terrorist attacks in the French capital](#), fully half of the Canadian public [was against](#) the Liberal government's plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the first day of 2016. Indeed, it was also the second-most-opposed part of the Liberal agenda canvassed in that survey (after a promise to spend \$380 million on the arts).

While Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall has [written to the federal government](#) to urge it to suspend the refugee resettlement plan in light of the Paris attacks, and the governors of more than two dozen U.S. states [now say they don't want any Syrian refugees](#), it appears public opinion in Canada has not been particularly moved in the immediate aftermath of the violence in France:

**Opinion on the government's plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by Jan. 1:**



Larger – though statistically insignificant – numbers now say they either “strongly support” or “strongly oppose,” the plan. Of note – those choosing strong opposition do so two-to-one over those who profess strong support.

While opinion is largely unchanged, some interesting demographic shifts emerge:

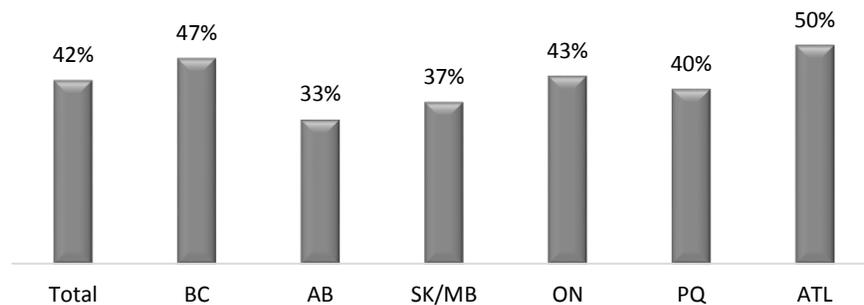
- Support for the government's plan now outpaces opposition in Atlantic Canada (50% support versus 46% oppose), a reversal from the October results (40% support versus 45% oppose)
- The opposite switch has occurred in British Columbia, where the resettlement agenda enjoyed 50 per cent support in October (compared to 37% opposed). It is now supported by fewer people (47%) than oppose it (49%)

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**The new federal Liberal government has made implementing a campaign promise to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by January 1, 2016 one of its first priorities.  
(Summary of Support for this plan)**



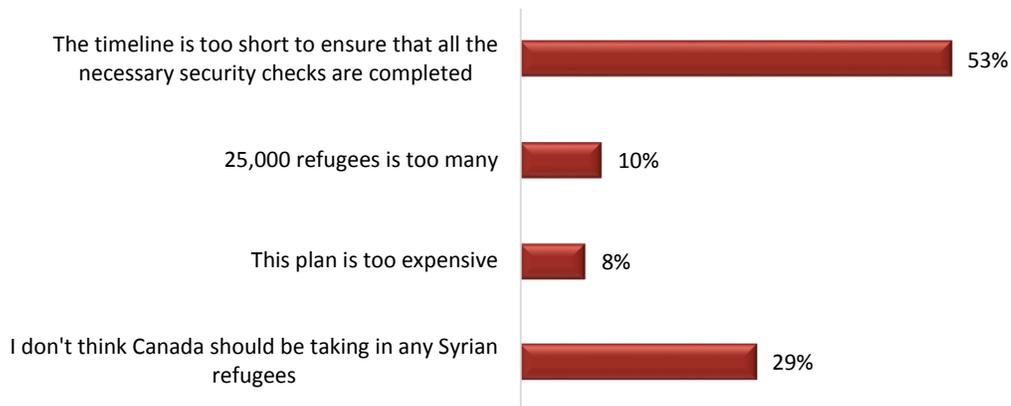
- Younger Canadians (those ages 18 – 34) are more supportive of the resettlement plan now (50% versus 45% in October). This age group is the only one in which support for the plan is greater than opposition (see detailed tables at the end of this release)

### Opposition driven by looming deadlines

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has maintained that his government [intends to stick to its Jan. 1, 2016 deadline](#) for implementing the resettlement plan, despite calls from Wall and others to slow it down.

This is a sticking point among opponents of the plan, more than half (53%) of whom cite the short timeline as the most important reason for their opposition, while others are concerned with actual numbers or costs. There also remains a significant core of Canadians who believe accepting refugees from Syria is the wrong thing to do:

**Which of the following is the most important reason you oppose the government's plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees?**



The timeline argument is most persuasive to opponents of the plan who are over age 55. Nearly two-thirds of this group (63%) say they feel this way, compared to fewer than half of those in the younger two age groups (48% of the 35 – 54, and 47% of the 18 – 35, respectively).

By contrast, these two age groups under 55 are considerably more likely to oppose Canada taking in any Syrian refugees at all. Roughly one-third of opponents to the government's plan in each under-55 age group choose this option (32% of the 35 – 54 and 35% of the 18-34, respectively), compared to roughly one-in-five (22%) of those over age 55.

Thus, while younger Canadians are more likely to support the plan overall, those in this age group who do oppose the plan are also the most likely to oppose any plan – large or small, short timeline or long – for bringing Syrian refugees to Canada.

*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.*

The new federal Liberal government has made implementing a campaign promise to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by January 1, 2016 one of its first priorities. Do you support or oppose this plan?

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (1503)	Region					
		BC (206)	AB (154)	SK/MB (104)	ON (565)	PQ (363)	ATL (111)
Strongly support	16%	22%	17%	13%	17%	12%	20%
Moderately support	25%	25%	15%	23%	26%	28%	29%
Moderately oppose	17%	21%	15%	22%	15%	16%	19%
Strongly oppose	37%	28%	47%	37%	38%	40%	27%
Don't know	5%	4%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%

The new federal Liberal government has made implementing a campaign promise to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by January 1, 2016 one of its first priorities. Do you support or oppose this plan?

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (1503)	Gender		Age		
		Men (734)	Women (769)	18 – 34 (429)	35 – 54 (563)	55+ (511)
Strongly support	16%	13%	19%	22%	12%	16%
Moderately support	25%	27%	24%	28%	25%	24%
Moderately oppose	17%	16%	17%	17%	18%	15%
Strongly oppose	37%	41%	33%	27%	39%	43%
Don't know	5%	3%	6%	5%	6%	2%

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The new federal Liberal government has made implementing a campaign promise to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by January 1, 2016 one of its first priorities. Do you support or oppose this plan?		
(weighted sample sizes)	October 29 2015 (1504)	November 16 2015 (1503)
Strongly support	14%	16%
Moderately support	25%	25%
Moderately oppose	17%	17%
Strongly oppose	34%	37%
Don't know	10%	5%

And, which of the following would you say is the most important reason you oppose the government's plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by January 1, 2016?							
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (810)	Region					
		BC (101)	AB (99)	SK/MB (56*)	ON (302)	PQ (203)	ATL (49*)
25,000 refugees is too many	10%	12%	5%	11%	10%	11%	5%
The timeline is too short to ensure that all the necessary security checks are completed	53%	53%	64%	57%	51%	48%	61%
This plan is too expensive	8%	11%	5%	5%	8%	10%	7%
I don't think Canada should be taking in any Syrian refugees	29%	24%	25%	28%	32%	31%	27%

*\*Small sample size*

**And, which of the following would you say is the most important reason you oppose the government's plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by January 1, 2016?**

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (807)	Gender		Age		
		Men (421)	Women (386)	18 – 34 (192)	35 – 54 (320)	55+ (296)
25,000 refugees is too many	10%	8%	11%	9%	11%	8%
The timeline is too short to ensure that all the necessary security checks are completed	53%	55%	50%	47%	48%	63%
This plan is too expensive	8%	7%	9%	9%	9%	8%
I don't think Canada should be taking in any Syrian refugees	29%	29%	29%	35%	32%	22%

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