

Half of Canadians back sending lethal aid to Ukraine; most prefer humanitarian assistance, sanctions against Russia

Four-in-five say they support government plan to allow unlimited refugees to come to Canada

March 16, 2022 – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky pleaded for more than “deep concern” from Canada in a rare virtual address to Parliament Tuesday.

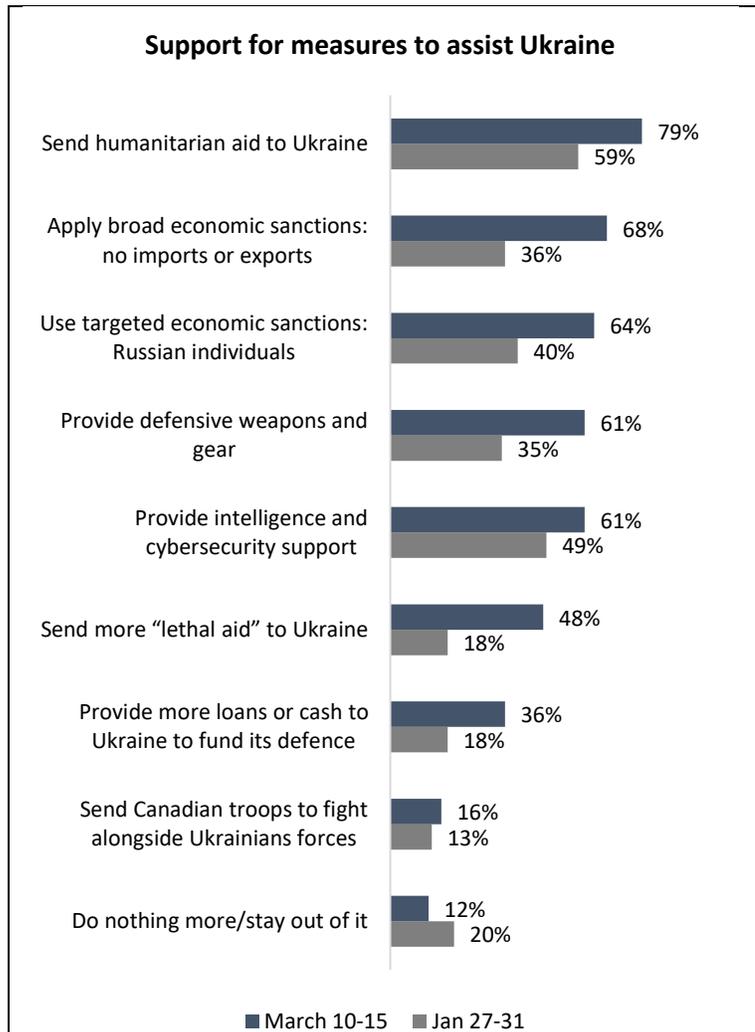
After three weeks of witnessing non-stop coverage of the Russian attack on Ukraine, it's unclear the extent to which Canadians were, in the days leading up to his speech, inclined to fulfill his requests related to direct confrontation.

A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid institute finds half (48%) of Canadians inclined to send more weaponry to the frontlines in Europe. This represents a near tripling of support for Canada supplying Ukraine with lethal aid in the last six weeks. The number of Canadians who say this country has no role to play in the conflict has almost halved to 12 per cent over the same period.

Still, sending lethal aid is far less palatable to people in this country than less confrontational actions – some of which are already being taken – such as humanitarian help (79%) and the imposition of broad (68%) and targeted (64%) economic sanctions.

Alongside the desire to send humanitarian aid, four-in-five Canadians say they support the Liberal government's plan to allow [unlimited Ukrainian refugees](#) into the country in the coming weeks and months. Canada is already home to 1.4 million Ukrainian Canadians, the second largest such population outside of Ukraine itself.

This connection may help to explain the considerably higher level of support for refugees from Ukraine in the wake of this conflict compared to the



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from March 10 – 15, 2022 among a representative randomized sample of 4,292 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.0 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.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

level offered to Syrian refugees in 2015. At that time, the government committed to settling 25,000 Syrians in Canada, which was supported by 39 per cent of Canadians. Support for that influx of refugees eventually rose to 52 per cent in February 2016 but remained far short of the enthusiasm seen for accepting Ukrainians fleeing war now.

More Key Findings:

- Nine-in-ten past Liberal (90%) and NDP voters (92%) support the plan to welcome Ukrainian refugees. Support among past CPC voters is lower (75%) but still at firm majority levels.
- Two-in-five Canadians (43%) would support Canada in actively campaigning for Ukraine to join NATO.
- Half of Canadians (49%) say that Canada's international reputation has worsened over the past decade, while 14 per cent say it has improved, and one-in-three (33%) do not think it has changed.

About ARI

*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 foundation 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.*

INDEX

Part One: Support for Ukraine rises as conflicts persists

Part Two: Ukrainian refugees welcomed by Canadians

- Syrian refugees faced far more opposition

Part Three: Three-in-five say Canada has a good international reputation

- Half say Canada's reputation has worsened in last decade

Part One: Support for Ukraine rises as conflicts persists

As Russia's invasion of Ukraine neared the three-week mark on Tuesday, Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Zelensky [spoke to Canada's parliament](#) via video link. He pleaded with Canadian lawmakers to do more to help embattled Ukrainians, calling on Canada to support a no-fly zone over Ukraine to stop Russian air strikes. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a defence organization which includes Canada and the United States as well as countries that border the Ukraine, has so far refused to support a no-fly zone, which it fears would [lead to war between NATO countries and Russia](#).

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

This country's assistance to Ukraine post-Russian invasion has included escalating sanctions against Russian exports, businesses and individuals, [\\$124 million of humanitarian aid](#), and [military aid including weapons, body armour and food](#).

Canadians are broadly supportive of many of the measures Canada has already taken. Four-in-five (79%) say they support sending humanitarian aid, seven-in-ten (68%) support broad economic sections and two-thirds (64%) support targeted sanctions. Majorities also say they support providing defensive weapons (61%) and intelligence and cybersecurity support (61%).

The appetite for more directly confrontational action is weaker, however. Half (48%) say they support Canada sending military hardware and weapons to Ukraine, while two-in-five (43%) say Canada should advocate for Ukraine to join NATO – a measure certain to aggravate Russia, [which wants guarantees that Ukraine will be forbidden from joining the alliance](#). One-third (36%) say they support sending money to directly fund Ukraine's defence. A similar number (36%) say they want to increase the size of Canada's training mission in Ukraine.

Far fewer support sending Canadian troops into the battle zone to fight alongside Ukrainian forces: 16 per cent say this should happen. On the other end of the action spectrum, just 12 per cent say Canada should stay out of it altogether.

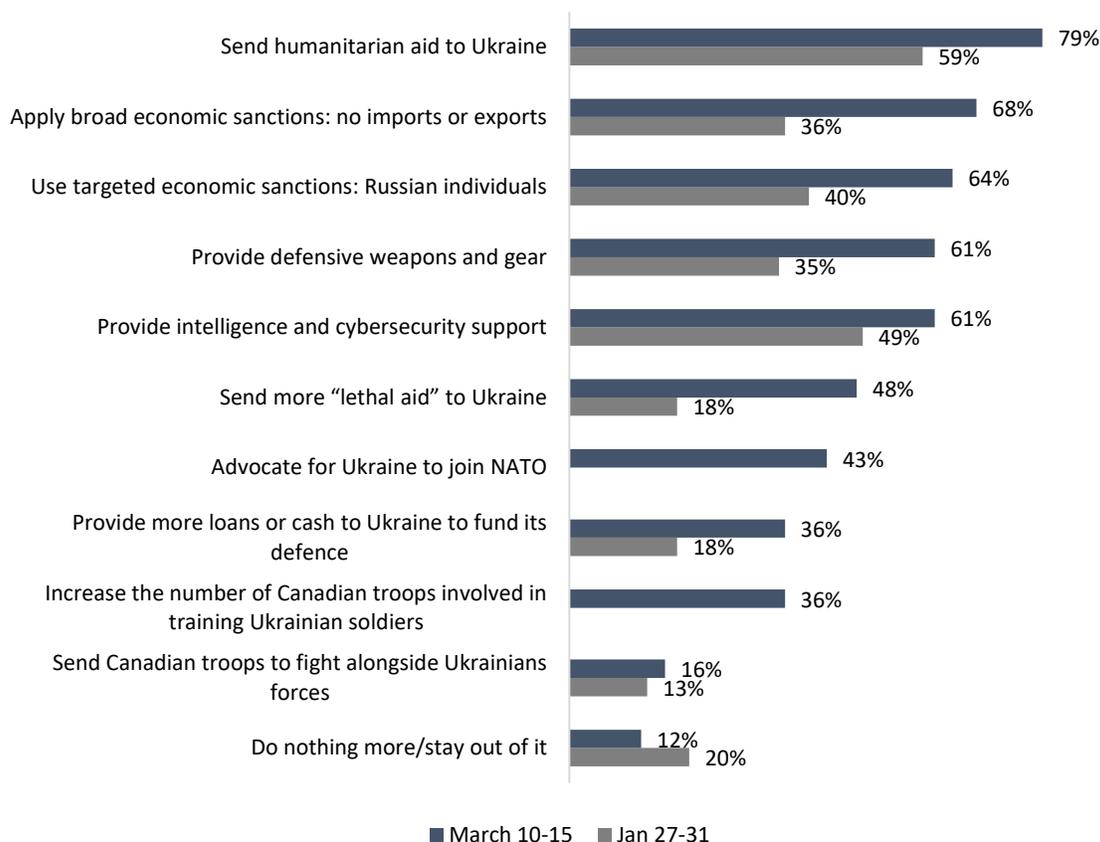
While not all measures receive broad support, these data represent a marked shift from the end of January, days before [Russian forces began attacking Ukraine](#). On all measures – with the exception of involving Canadian troops in direct action – support has significantly increased:

CONTACT:

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

Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Support for various measures to assist Ukraine



Part Two: Ukrainian refugees welcomed by Canadians

The war in the Ukraine has created a parallel refugee emergency. [More than two-and-a-half million Ukrainians](#) have fled the country, [mostly to neighbouring countries](#) to the west. Almost two million Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Poland, [which is unable to support the sheer volume of people long term](#).

Canada has promised to allow an ["unlimited" number of Ukrainians](#) fleeing war into its country through a new visa system which will permit them to be [granted](#) open-work permits and residence for two years, at which time they will be able to apply for permanent residence or return home.

This plan is different from past visa granting programs for those fleeing war-torn countries. In 2015, Canada initially said it would welcome a minimum of [25,000](#) Syrians fleeing civil war on a permanent basis. Those fleeing conflict in Vietnam [in the late 1970s and early 1980s](#) were also offered permanent residency.

Canada's population of 1.4 million Ukrainian-Canadians represents the largest such diaspora in the world outside of Ukraine and Russia. This country has a long history of encouraging Ukrainians to come to

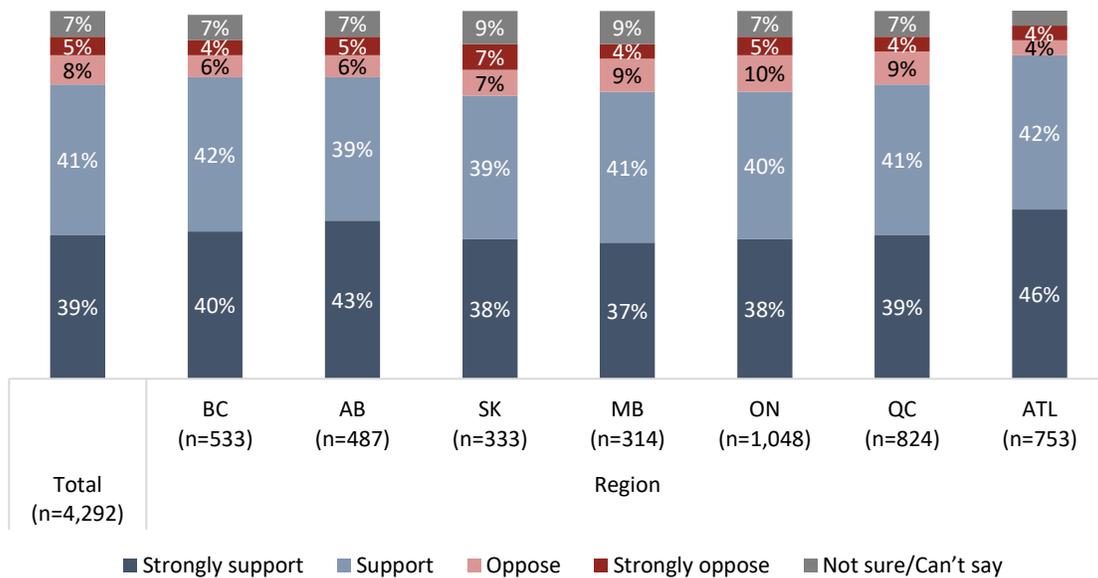
CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Canada, initially spearheaded in the [early 20th century](#) as an attempt to populate burgeoning prairie provinces.

This may contribute to explaining why a significant majority of four-in-five Canadians (80%) support the Canadian government plan to welcome an unlimited number of Ukrainian refugees. Slightly more than one-in-ten (13%) are opposed:

Support vs. oppose for government plan to allow 'unlimited' Ukrainian refugees



Syrian refugees faced more opposition

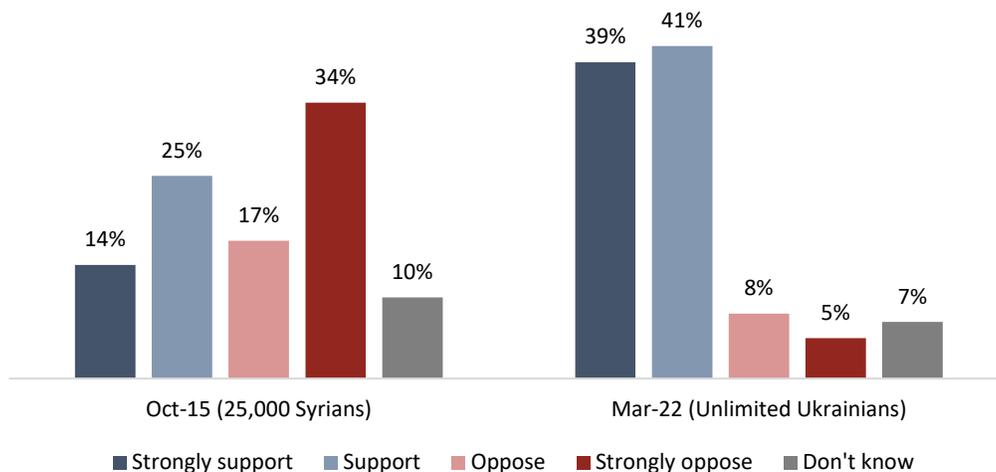
There is significant difference in the way Canadians approach the issue of refugees from Ukraine relative to the national stance taken regarding the migrant crisis of 2015, triggered by the still-ongoing Syrian civil war. Canada had a direct combat role in that conflict, [sending Canadian jets on airstrike missions](#) in Syria as part of a coalition against the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant. In the 2015 election, then Liberal leader Justin Trudeau [campaigning on bringing 25,000 Syrian refugees](#) to Canada by 2016. Eventually [more than 73,000 Syrian refugees](#) resettled in Canada.

In October of 2015, shortly after Trudeau and the Liberals won a majority government, Canadians were more opposed than in support of the Liberals' plan. Half (51%) said they opposed bringing 25,000 Syrians refugees into the country, while two-in-five (39%) were in support. Support then for welcoming in a limited number of Syrians was approximately half of the support now for bringing in an unlimited number of Ukrainians:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

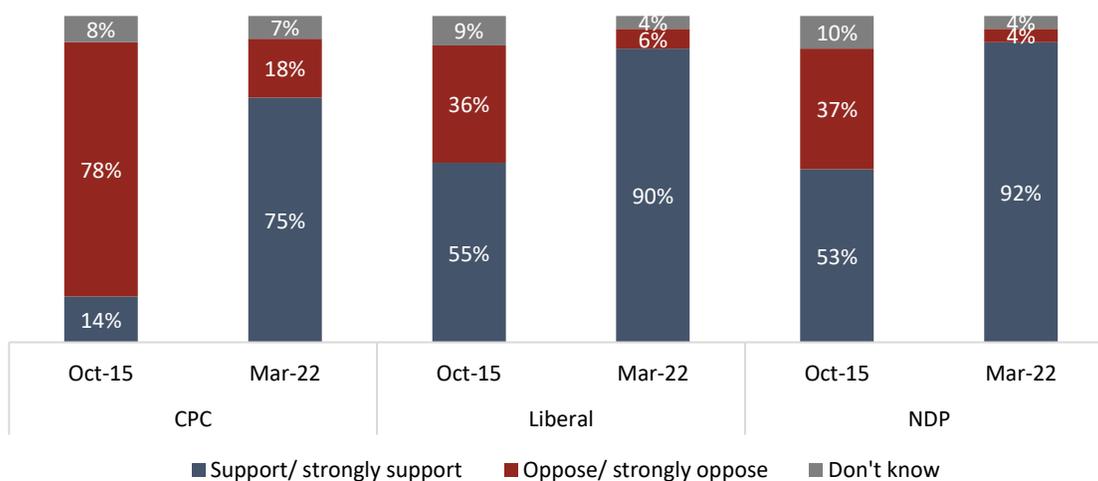
**Support for resettlement of refugees from
Syria 2015 and Ukraine 2022**



In 2015, almost all CPC supporters were against the plan to settle the Syrian refugees. Four-in-five (78%) opposed the plan. More than half of past Liberal (55%) and NDP (53%) voters were in favour of resettling them.

Today, super majorities across the political spectrum say they support a plan to allow an unlimited number of Ukrainians to take refuge in Canada for at least two years.

**Support for resettlement of refugees from Syria 2015 and Ukraine 2022
By respective past federal vote**



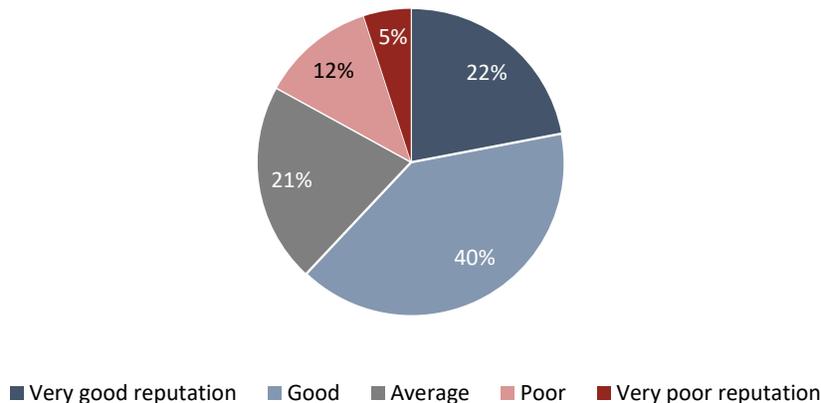
Part Three: Three-in-five say Canada has a good international reputation

When it comes to Canada’s role in international affairs, the preceding data suggests Canadians are most likely to support their country engaging more in humanitarian aid where possible. That said, Canada has been criticized in recent years by some as a laggard on defence spending – not meeting the NATO recommended mark spending two per cent of GDP on that file in order to maintain military preparedness in partnership with other member states.

In 2020, the country, and perhaps more accurately the Liberal government, took what many perceive as a huge blow in failing to acquire a seat on the United Nation’s Security Council. Thus, the international socio-political consequences of various actions are always of interest to observers. For their part, Canadians are less bullish about how their country is viewed on the global stage than they used to be.

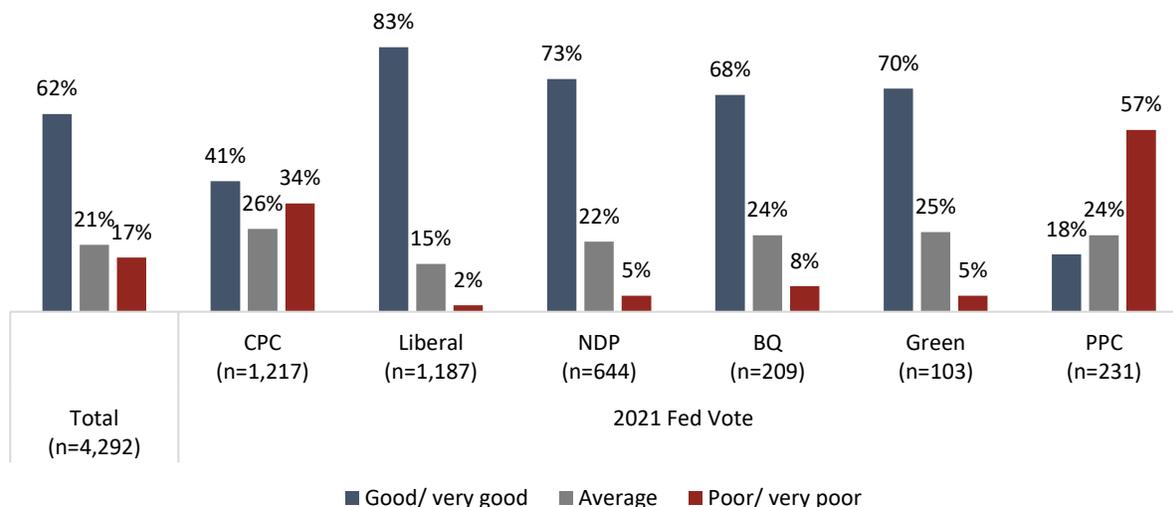
Three-in-five (62%) say the country has a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ reputation. This represents a 22-point drop compared to 2018. Nearly one-in-five (17%) say Canada’s reputation is poor:

**Overall, what kind of reputation would you say Canada has internationally?
(All respondents, n=4,292)**



Nearly all those who supported the Liberal party in 2021, and majorities of past NDP, Bloc and Green voters, believe Canada is well regarded internationally. Those who voted Conservative in September are more split: one-third (34%) say other countries have a negative perception of Canada, slightly less than those who say it’s instead positive (41%). Meanwhile, approaching three-in-five (57%) of those who voted PPC say Canada’s reputation is poor:

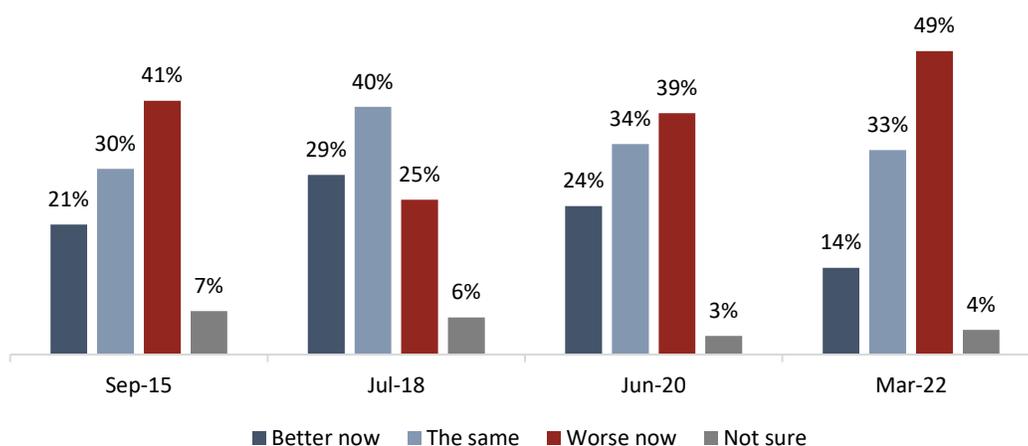
Overall, what kind of reputation would you say Canada has internationally?



Half say Canada's reputation has worsened in last decade

In 2015, while most (four-in-five) Canadians said the country's reputation was good or very good internationally, two-in-five (41%) said that Canada's standing had decreased in the last decade. In 2022, that number has increased to half (49%) who say the international perception of Canada has worsened in the last 10 years:

All things considered, do you think Canada's reputation around the world is better or worse now than it was ten years ago?



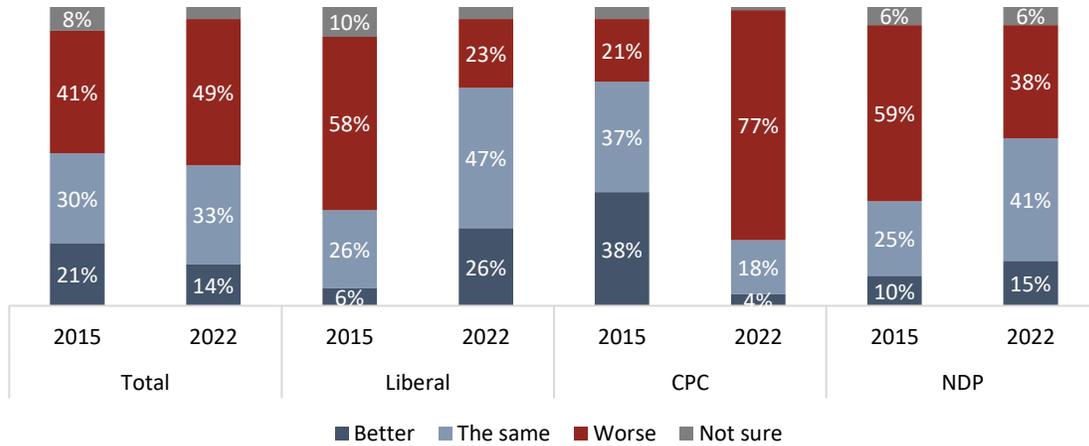
There are evident partisan elements to this issue. Consider that in 2015, after nearly a decade of the Harper government, two-in-five Liberal and NDP voters were of the view that Canada's place in the world

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

had diminished, while CPC voters were largely positive or neutral. Past Liberal voters now occupy that place, with positivity or neutrality their narrative, while CPC supporters are overwhelmingly negative:

All things considered, do you think Canada's reputation around the world is better or worse now than it was ten years ago?



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).