



## **MAJORITY OF CANADIANS SUPPORT MILITARY INTERVENTION TO STOP HUMANITARIAN CRISES**

***Humanitarian aid and economic sanctions are more popular means to stop serious humanitarian crises***

***General Rick Hillier, global activist Mia Farrow and other notables gather on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> to take part in the Munk Debate on humanitarian interventions***

**November 28, 2008** – According to a new Innovative Research Group national telephone survey commissioned by the Munk Debates, a significant number of Canadians support military intervention as a means to stop humanitarian crises. Fully 68% support the international community using military force to stop states engaged in ethnic cleansing. Canadians also support the international community intervening militarily in failed and failing states where the wide scale abuse of human rights is occurring (61% support), where civil wars are causing the large scale loss of civilian life (59% support) and where mass starvation is taking place (56% support).

Although most Canadians are more reluctant to use military force over economic sanctions or humanitarian aid, the survey found those less likely to feel “angered” by international events were equally supportive of military action and economic sanctions.

As a means of intervention economic sanctions were supported most when human rights were being abused (46% strongly support), when there is government or military led ethnic cleansing (44% strongly support) and when states are illegally developing weapons of mass destruction (43% strongly support).

In the case of humanitarian assistance, a majority of Canadians were opposed in cases when states were developing weapons of mass destruction (54% opposed) or providing refuge for insurgents or terrorists (48% opposed). On the other hand, 59% strongly supported humanitarian aid when mass starvation was occurring, 53% strongly supported it in cases of human rights abuses including rapes and half (50%) strongly supported it when basic democratic freedoms were denied. Note that in cases of ethnic cleansing, there were as many Canadians strongly supporting military intervention (46%) than there were strongly supporting humanitarian aid (48%).

The survey also explored overall levels of engagement with humanitarian crisis.

When it comes to international events, many Canadians indicated a high level of knowledge and interest. Nine in ten (87%) say they are likely to watch an international news story on television when they come across one and 93% say international events are interesting. About half of respondents (54%) also said they

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frequently discussed international events with family or friends and 51% felt “angry” at least a few times in the past month because of international events.

With four-in-five respondents (80%) saying they had read, seen or heard something recently about humanitarian crisis around the world, it appears Canadians are aware of the current slate of crisis (e.g. Darfur and Zimbabwe). Note that fully one third of all respondents (31%) said they had at least a general understanding of the R2P (e.g. the Responsibility to Protect) doctrine.

For the purposes of this release, respondents were segmented into three groups based on their responses to the poll’s knowledge and information questions. The largest of these groups is the fully engaged one: they show high levels of knowledge and high emotional engagement with humanitarian crises and account for 43% of all Canadians. The rationally engaged respondents are the second largest group (37% of Canadians): they show a high level of knowledge or interest for international events but no emotional engagement with humanitarian crises. Finally, the disengaged group (20% of all Canadians) demonstrated low levels of knowledge and low levels of emotional engagement towards humanitarian crises.

The survey was conducted by the Innovative Research Group. 1,015 Canadians were interviewed by telephone between November 10 and November 15, 2008. The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 3.1, nineteen times out of 20.

The survey was commissioned by the Munk Debates as part of its ongoing efforts to improve the quality of public debate in Canada on important issues facing the country and the world. Two Munk Debates are held in Toronto each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Presenters at the December 1<sup>st</sup> debate on humanitarian intervention include Rick Hillier, Mia Farrow, Gareth Evans and John Bolton.

The Munk Debates are a signature initiative of the Aurea Foundation, a charitable organization founded in 2006 by Peter and Melanie Munk to support Canadian institutions involved in the study and development of public policy.

The debate will be broadcast nation-wide in Cineplex theatres on Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. Tickets to the live Cineplex theatre broadcasts are \$14.95 + GST and can be purchased online at [www.cineplex.com](http://www.cineplex.com).

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