

Extremism and Domestic Terrorism

Perceptions of domestic support for violent extremism

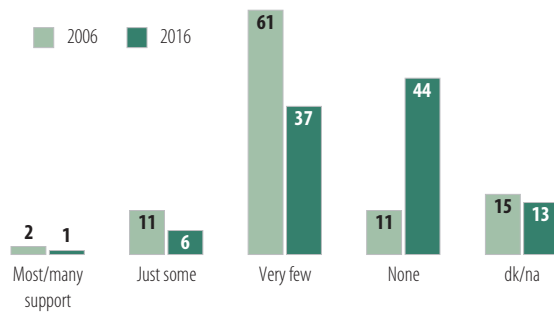
Very few Muslims believe there is much if any support within their community for violent extremist activities at home or abroad. At the same time, there is almost universal agreement on the importance of actively working with government agencies to address any potential threats.

Public concern about domestic terrorism stemming from the Muslim community stretches back to the September 11, 2001 attacks, and continues to this day. There have been no major terrorist events in Canada to date, but the two high profile shootings in Ottawa and Quebec in fall 2015 were carried out by individuals with apparent connections to Islamist extremism. Major incidents in western countries (most recently in Paris and Brussels) have kept terrorism on the front pages, along with the ongoing violent conflict in the Middle East and the recruitment of westerners (including some Canadians) to the struggle.

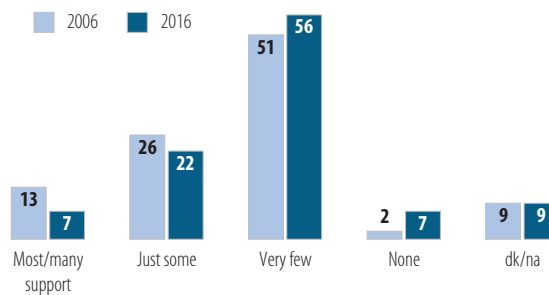
Very few Muslims believe more than a small handful of followers of their faith support violent extremists like Daesh, and this proportion has declined since 2006. Only one percent now believe that “many” or “most” Muslims in Canada support violent extremism, and the vast majority estimate that this sentiment is shared by “very few” or “none” in their community (with the “none” proportion jumping from 11% to 44% in the past decade). Opinions on this question are largely consistent across the Muslim population.

The non-Muslim population-at-large is more likely to believe there is domestic support for violent extremism abroad, although this perception has also declined over the past decade. Fewer than one in ten (7%) non-Muslim Canadians now believes that many or most Canadian Muslims support violent extremism, compared with more than six in ten (63%) who believe it is very few or none (up 10 points since 2006). The downward trend in perceptions of domestic support for violent extremism is evident across the country, and even among those groups most apt to believe such

Perceived domestic support for violent extremists abroad
Canadian Muslims



Perceived domestic support for violent extremists abroad
Canadian Non-Muslims



Q.33/FC Q.14

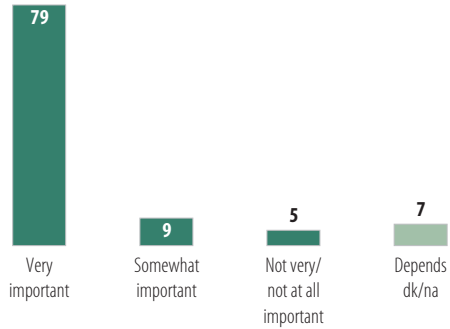
In your opinion, how many Muslims in Canada do you believe support violent activity of extremists abroad like ISIS? Would you say most, many, just some, very few, or none?

support is widespread, including Quebecers (13% now say most or many), individuals with the least education and income (12%), those with a poor impression of Islam (13%), and those who have had no personal contact with Muslims (12%).

There have been anecdotal reports of local mosques serving as recruiting grounds for extremist groups overseas. Only three percent of Muslims surveyed say they have ever witnessed or heard anything about violent extremism being promoted in a mosque in Canada. An affirmative response increases modestly by age cohort, from one percent among Muslims 18 to 34, to eight percent among those 60 and over.

While most Muslims believe there is little if any domestic support within their community for violent extremist causes abroad, few are complacent about the seriousness of such activity. Almost nine in ten say it is very (79%) or somewhat (9%) important for Canadian Muslim communities to work actively with government agencies to address radicalization activities that may lead to violent extremism either in Canada or abroad. This sentiment is shared across the population. Strong importance is voiced most widely by Muslims in the top income bracket (88%) and those born in Canada (87%), but this view is shared by at least seven in ten from every group.

Importance of Muslim communities working with gov't agencies to address radicalization



Q.35

How important do you believe it is for Canadian Muslim communities to work actively with government agencies to address radicalization activities that may lead to violent extremism either in Canada or abroad?

Government policy

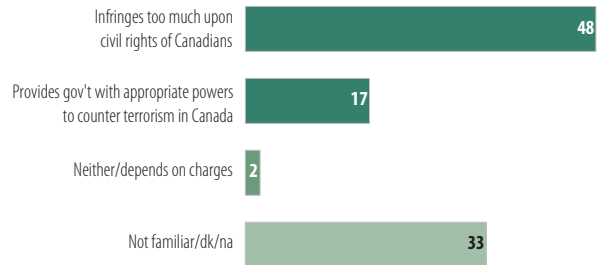
Muslims are more likely than not to oppose Bill C-51 because it infringes on the civil rights of citizens. At the same time, most are comfortable with the powers currently held by the agencies like the RCMP and CSIS to protect Canadians from security threats.

In 2015, the previous Conservative government passed new anti-terrorism legislation known as Bill C-51, which generated considerable controversy because of the expanded powers it grants to government agencies to counter terrorist activities in Canada. The legislation is currently awaiting amendments under the new Liberal government. There is no consensus among Muslims on the merits of this law, but opposition clearly outweighs support. Close to half (48%) say Bill C-51 infringes too much upon the civil liberties of Canadian citizens, compared with 17 percent who believe it provides the government with the appropriate level of power and authority to counter domestic terrorist threats. Another third do not express a clear opinion because they are not sufficiently familiar with the legislation or otherwise do not have an opinion of its merits.

Views about Bill C-51 are largely consistent across the Muslim community. A majority or plurality in every group opposes the legislation, with this most evident among men, Muslims 18 to 34, those with more education and income, and especially among those born in Canada (67%). Opposition is least evident in Quebec (32%) and among immigrants in the country less than 10 years (29%). No more than one-quarter in any group agrees that Bill C-51 provides government with an appropriate level of power to fight terrorism.

Opposition to Bill C-51 notwithstanding, it does not reflect widespread discomfort with the powers currently held by government security agencies such as the RCMP and CSIS. A majority (57%) of Muslims believe these agencies have about the right amount of power to carry out their responsibilities to protect Canadians from potential threats. One in six (17%) says these agencies have too much power, while very few (4%) maintain they have too little power. Another one in five (21%) does not feel he or she knows enough to express a position on this question.

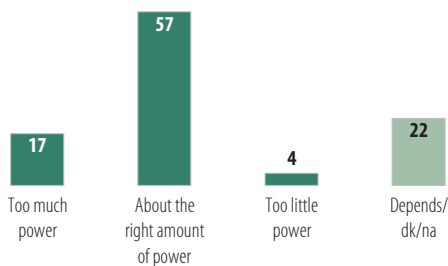
Opinion of Bill C-51



Q.36

As you may know, the previous federal government passed new anti-terrorism legislation that known as Bill C-51. Some say [ROTATE] Bill C-51 provides the government with the appropriate level of power and authority to counter terrorist activities in Canada. Others say [ROTATE] Bill C-51 infringes too much upon the civil rights of ordinary Canadians. From what you know or have heard, which view is closer to your own?

Current government powers to protect Canadians from terrorist threats



Q.36.1

Generally speaking, do you believe that the country's national security agencies like the RCMP and CSIS have too much power, about the right amount of power, or too little power, to carry out their responsibilities to protect Canadians from potential threats?

Satisfaction with the current powers of Canada's security agencies is the majority view across the population, even among those who express concerns about Bill C-51. A positive view about the balance of government security powers is most prevalent in western Canada, among men, individuals with higher incomes, and those born in Canada or Pakistan. Concerns about the government having too much power are most likely to be voiced by Muslims 60 plus (28%).