

New survey shows Trudeau struggling to retain support from faith groups

Amidst the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, an Angus Reid Institute survey reveals that the Liberals are lagging among members of all religious communities, including Muslims and Jews

By [Amarah Hasham-Steele](#) May 31, 2024



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau looks on as a child speaks while meeting with members of the Jewish community for Passover in Saskatoon, Sask., April 23, 2024. (Photograph by Heywood Yu/The Canadian Press)

percent, and Jewish respondents were most likely to support the Conservatives, at 42 percent.

Despite Muslims and Jews lowering their support for Trudeau, they were still more likely to support the Liberals than any other surveyed group. Thirty-one percent of Muslim respondents and 33 percent of Jewish respondents reported supporting the Liberals in the next election. Atheists and Mainline Protestants were the next most likely groups to support the Liberals, at 25 percent each.

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The Angus Reid Institute report highlighted the fact that Jewish and Muslim respondents seem to be increasingly disillusioned with the Liberals, particularly amidst the Hamas-Israel war and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Forty-nine percent of Jewish respondents and 51 percent of Muslim respondents reported a worsening opinion of Trudeau in the weeks leading up to the survey.

[Levin](#) said that Jewish and Muslim voters may feel that “the Liberal party has basically equivocated on the conflict.”

Levin said that he would expect the Liberals to “face criticism by Muslim Canadians for not holding Israel to account for the humanitarian crisis and for not doing enough to actually address the humanitarian crisis.”

In particular, Levin noted that the Trudeau government could face criticism for their [temporary funding cut](#) to the United Nations Relief and Works

Agency (UNRWA) in January. At the same time, he said that the governing Liberals initially [reinstated](#) funding to UNRWA in 2016 after the Stephen Harper administration cut the organization off.

In terms of Jewish voters, Levin said, "I think the concern is that there's been insufficient support, and in particular, a failure to call out anti-semitism in a very full throated fashion."

Levin also highlighted that the Hamas-Israel war and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza are likely not just key election issues for Jewish and Muslim voters but for diverse voters across Canada.

"Perhaps, given Canada's sort of privileged role in the post-[Second World War] era, [foreign policy] hasn't necessarily played a big role as a [key] issue in Canadian politics. But given changing demographics in the country and given the extreme events in the Middle East, I think that is not true today," Levin said.

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Despite Trudeau's trailing popularity in Jewish and Muslim communities, it seems that Muslim and Jewish voters have thus far been reluctant to completely jump ship. While the Conservatives have garnered support from over 50 percent of Sikhs, Hindus, Mainline Protestants and Evangelical Christians surveyed, Muslim and Jewish respondents are more evenly split between parties, along with atheists and those without religious identities.

Levin discussed potential "push factors" that could be preventing a large bump in Jewish support for the Conservatives.

"The question that [Conservative leader Pierre] Poilievre will face is his associations with extremist groups," Levin said, noting that this might push

away Jewish voters, as members of a religious minority.

Compared to the “uphill battle” ahead of the Conservatives, Levin speculated that the NDP might “have a much easier time attracting Muslim voters as we approach this election.” Here, Levin noted that the NDP has adopted more decisive views on the Hamas-Israel conflict, citing their move to introduce legislation to see Canada recognize the State of Palestine.

Still, Levin acknowledged that, much like the Conservatives and Jewish voters, the NDP has not seen a significant spike in Muslim voters. “It hasn’t happened yet,” Levin said.

Both Levin and Wilkins-Laflamme also highlighted the relevance of other factors and cautioned against reading this data as absolute.

Wilkins-Laflamme noted that support for the Liberals wanes across religious groups “because the Liberals have been in power for many years now, and there’s a lot of fatigue.” Levin highlighted the relevance of other key issues in the next election, such as inflation, taxation and housing policy.

“We have ethnic identities. We have regional identities. We have gender identities. We have class identities,” Levin said. “We have all these things, and they all figure into our voting preferences.”

Amarah Hasham-Steele is a Broadview summer intern, based in Toronto.

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