



Thursday 19 October 2006

World Citizens Reject Torture, Global Poll Reveals

A majority of people around the world are opposed to torture even if its purpose is to elicit information that could save innocent lives from terrorism, according to a BBC World Service poll of more than 27,000 people in 25 different countries.

The poll shows 59 percent of the world's citizens are unwilling to compromise on the protection of human rights, however 29 percent think governments should be allowed to use some degree of torture in order to combat terrorism.

Most Americans (58%) are against any use of torture. But opposition to torture in the US is less robust than in Europe and the percentage of Americans favouring the practice in certain cases (36%) is one of the highest among the 25 countries polled.

The survey of 27,407 respondents across 25 countries was conducted for the BBC World Service by the international polling firm GlobeScan together with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland. GlobeScan coordinated fieldwork from May through July 2006.

Steven Kull, director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes, notes, "The dominant view around the world is that terrorism does not warrant bending the rules against torture."

GlobeScan President, Doug Miller, adds, "The poll reveals a public opinion climate in which human rights violations by governments are likely to cause outrage, especially in Western Europe."

There is however somewhat less support for outlawing torture in several countries that have suffered terrorism attacks or political violence including India, where slightly more respondents (32%) favour relaxing the rules against torture than not (23%).

The largest percentage endorsing torture was found in Israel. Forty-three percent say some degree of torture should be allowed, though slightly more, (48%) think the practice should be prohibited.

Italians are the most opposed to the use of torture with 81 percent against, followed by three-quarters of respondents in Australia and France, 74 percent in Canada, 72 percent in the UK, and 71 percent in Germany.

Countries polled were Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, and the US.

Participating Countries



Respondents were asked the following question:

Most countries have agreed to rules that prohibit torturing prisoners. Which position is closer to yours?

- Terrorists pose such an extreme threat that governments should now be allowed to use some degree of torture if it may gain information that saves innocent lives.
- Clear rules against torture should be maintained because any use of torture is immoral and will weaken international human rights standards against torture.

The poll found strong support for the latter position in favour of upholding the rule against torture with a majority in 19 countries endorsing it, plus another 5 with a plurality.

Positions on Torturing Prisoners

Average of 25 Countries



There is however somewhat less support for outlawing torture in several countries that have suffered terrorist attacks or political violence including India, where a slight plurality favours relaxing the rules against torture.

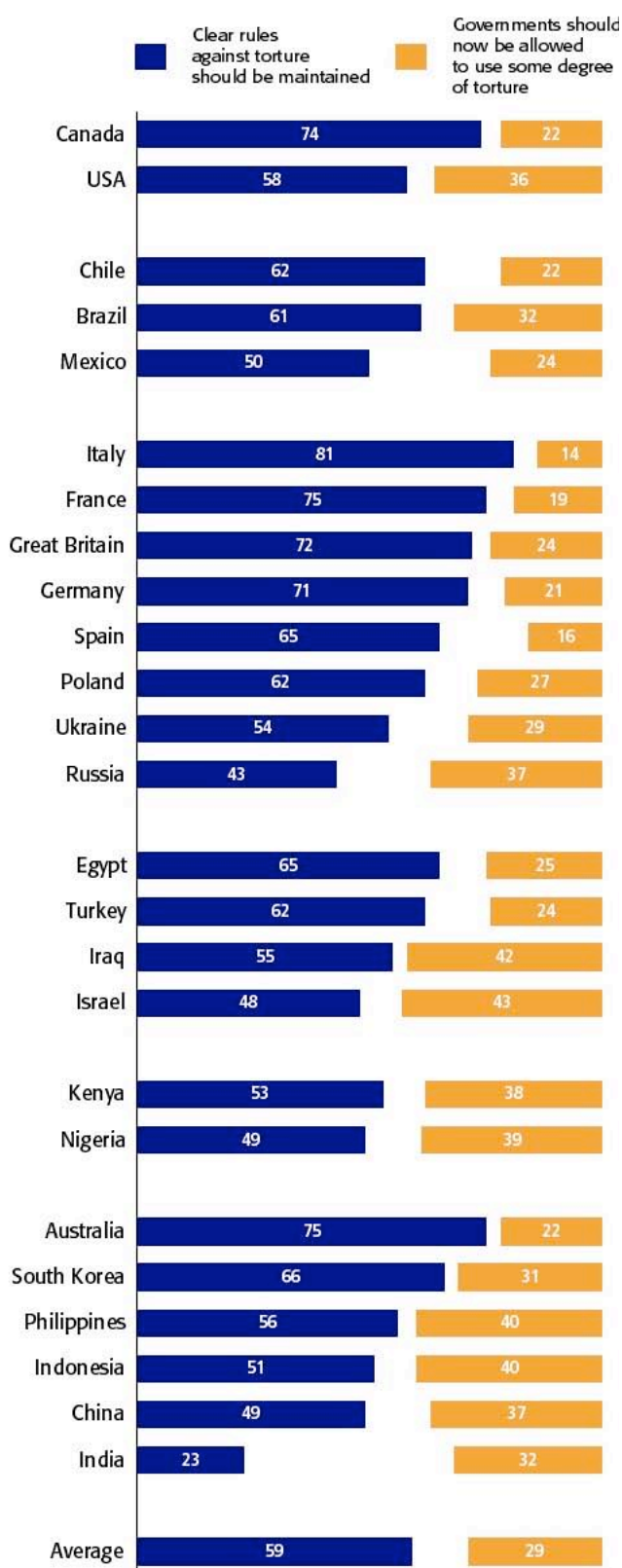
Base: Representative sample of 27,000 adults in 25 countries

Editor's Note:

All of the countries surveyed are parties to the Geneva Conventions that contain Article 3 forbidding torture as well as other forms of abuse. All countries surveyed are also parties to the more recent Convention Against Torture that goes further in how explicitly it prohibits torture, except India, which has signed but not yet ratified it.

Italians (81%) are the most opposed to the use of torture in all circumstances and the British are among the highest with 72 percent opposed and 24 percent in favor. Other countries with high numbers favouring a total ban are in Australia and France (75% in both) as well as Canada (74%) and Germany (71%).

Positions on Torturing Prisoners



Only in India do more respondents favour allowing “some degree of torture.” Thirty-two percent say using physical coercion is sometimes permissible—a bit more than the 23 percent who say existing rules should be maintained. Nearly half of Indian respondents (45%) favour neither position or did not answer. India has a long history with terrorism and political violence, including a 2001 attack on its Parliament. This survey was completed before July 11, 2006 when terrorists bombed seven crowded commuter trains in Mumbai. Interestingly, there is no difference in the views of Hindus and Muslims in India on this question.

The largest percentage endorsing torture is found in Israel where 43 percent say that some degree of torture should be allowed, though slightly more (48%) say the practice should be prohibited. Israeli responses vary significantly by religion. A majority of Jewish respondents (53%) favour allowing governments to use torture to obtain information while 39 percent want clear rules against it. In contrast, Muslims in Israel (who represented 16 percent of total responses in that country) are overwhelmingly (87%) against any use of torture. No other country polled has a majority of any major religious subgroup that favours allowing torture.

In addition to India and Israel, there were four other countries where those rejecting torture fell short of a majority: Russia (43% reject torture, 37% accept), Nigeria (49% reject, 39% accept), China (49% reject, 37% accept), and Mexico (50% reject, 24% accept).

In the United States, most Americans (58%) oppose any use of torture. But opposition to torture in the United States is less robust than in Europe and the percentage of Americans favouring the practice in certain cases (36%) is one of the highest among the 25 countries polled.

There is little variation in the worldwide averages by income or education. But support for a ban on torture increases slightly with age: 57 percent of those younger than 35 years old were against torture compared to 61 percent of those 35 and older. Men are five points more likely to accept some use of torture than are women. As for religion, Israel is the only country where statistically significant differences exist between major religious groups on this question.

In total 27,407 citizens in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States were interviewed between 26 May and 6 July 2006. Polling was conducted for the BBC World Service by the international polling firm GlobeScan and its research partners in each country. In 7 of the 25 countries, the sample was limited to major urban areas. The margin of error per country ranges from +/-2.5 to 4 percent. For more details, please see the Methodology section or visit www.globescan.com or www.pipa.org.

For detailed country results please see page 6

For media interviews with the participating pollsters, please contact:

Doug Miller, President
GlobeScan Incorporated, London
+44 20 7958 1735
(Mobile: +44 78 999 77 000)
Doug.Miller@GlobeScan.com

Steven Kull, Director
Program on International Policy Attitudes, Washington
+1 202 232 7500
(Mobile: +1 301 254 7500)
Skull@pipa.org

GlobeScan Incorporated is a global public opinion and stakeholder research firm with offices in Toronto, London, and Washington. GlobeScan conducts custom research and annual tracking studies on global issues. With a research network spanning 50+ countries, GlobeScan works with global companies, multilateral agencies, national governments, and non-government organizations to deliver research-based insights for successful strategies.

The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) is a joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland. PIPA undertakes research on attitudes in publics around the world on a variety of international issues and publishes the website/webzine WorldPublicOpinion.org.

The BBC exists to enrich people's lives with great programmes and services on television, radio and online that inform, educate and entertain. Its vision is to be the most creative, trusted organization in the world. BBC reporters and correspondents at home and abroad can be called on for expert coverage across a huge range of subject areas. With over sixty foreign bureaux, the BBC has the largest newsgathering operation in the world. BBC World Service provides international news, analysis and information in English and 32 other languages.

Detailed Results

Positions on Torturing Prisoners

By Country

	Clear rules against torture should be maintained	Governments should now be allowed to use some degree of torture	Neither/depends	Don't know
Australia	75	22	2	1
Brazil	61	32	4	4
Canada	74	22	3	1
Chile	62	22	6	10
China	49	37	8	5
Egypt	65	25	6	3
France	75	19	4	2
Germany	71	21	6	1
Great Britain	72	24	2	2
India	23	32	28	17
Indonesia	51	40	4	4
Iraq	55	42	-	1
Israel	48	43	1	8
Italy	81	14	5	1
Kenya	53	38	3	6
Mexico	50	24	10	17
Nigeria	49	39	5	7
Philippines	56	40	2	3
Poland	62	27	5	7
Russia	43	37	10	9
South Korea	66	31	2	1
Spain	65	16	8	11
Turkey	62	24	7	7
Ukraine	54	29	11	7
United States	58	36	4	3

Questionnaire

WS8. Most countries have agreed to rules that prohibit torturing prisoners. Which position is closer to yours?

- a) Terrorists pose such an extreme threat that governments should now be allowed to use some degree of torture if it may gain information that saves innocent lives.
- b) Clear rules against torture should be maintained because any use of torture is immoral and will weaken international human rights standards against torture.

Research Partners

Country	Research Institute	Location	Contact
Australia	Market Focus International	Crows Nest	Paul Korbel pkorbel@marketfocus.com.au +612 9966 9107
Brazil	Market Analysis Brazil	Florianópolis	Fabián Echegaray fabian@marketanalysis.com.br +55 48 3234 58 53
Canada	GlobeScan / ComQUEST Research	Toronto	Oliver Martin oliver.martin@globescan.com +1 416 969 3072
Chile	MORI Chile	Santiago	Marta Lagos mlagos@morichile.cl +5623344544
Egypt	Attitude Market Research	Cairo	Mohamed Al Gendy mgendy@attitude-eg.com +202 270 2438
France	Efficienc 3	Paris and Reims	Christian de Thieulloy christian.t@efficienc3.com +33 1 43 16 54 42
Germany	Ri*QUESTA GmbH	Teningen	Bernhard Rieder riquesta.rieder@t-online.de +49 (0)7641 934336
Great Britain	GlobeScan / ICM Direct	London	Doug Miller doug.miller@globescan.com +44 20 7958 1735
India	YRD Media Network Pvt. Ltd	New Delhi	Yashwant Deshmukh yashwant@teamcvoter.com +9811101179
Indonesia	Deka Marketing Research	Jakarta	Irma Malibari irma.putranto@deka-research.co.id +62 21 723 6901
Iraq	KA EUROPE SPRL / D3 Systems, Inc.	Vienna	Matthew Warshaw mattwarshaw@aol.com +1 703-255-0884 (USA)
Israel	TNS Teleseker	Ramat Gan	Stacey Kohalny stacey.kohalny@tns-teleseker.com +972 3 610 2211
Italy	GfK Eurisko s.r.l.	Milan and Rome	Paolo Anselmi paolo.anselmi@eurisko.it +39 02 4380 9206
Kenya	Research Path Associates	Nairobi	Francis Kimani Francis.Kimani@rpa.co.ke +254 20 2734 770

Mexico	Mund Américas	Mexico City	Daniel M. Lund dlund@mundamericas.com +5255 5584 3020
Nigeria	Market Trends Research International, Nigeria	Lagos	J.O. Ebhomenye J.Ebhomenye@research-intng.com +234 1 5550266 / 7917987
Philippines	M&S-Sigma Dos Philippines, Inc.	Makati City	Teodora M. Marasigan tmmarasigan@ms-sigmados.com +632 8172780 / +63917 5108602
Poland	CBOS Public Opinion Research Center	Warsaw	Krzysztof Zagorski k.zagorski@cbos.pl +4822 6934722
Russia	CESSI Institute for Comparative Social Research	Moscow	Vladimir Andreenkov vladimir.andreenkov@cessi.ru +7495 629 15 06
South Korea	Dongseo Research	Seoul	Jason Jung usjung@dsrgroup.co.kr +82 2 538 4743
Spain	SIGMA DOS S.A.	Madrid	Ginés Garrido madrid@sigmados-internacional.com +34 91 360 0474
Turkey	Yontem Research & Consultancy	Istanbul	Bülent Gündoğmu info@yontemresearch.com +90 212 278 12 19
Ukraine	CESSI Institute for Comparative Social Research	Moscow	Vladimir Andreenkov vladimir.andreenkov@cessi.ru +7495 629 15 06
USA	GlobeScan / ComQUEST Research	Toronto	Oliver Martin oliver.martin@globescan.com +1 416 969 3072

Methodology

Country	Sample size (unweighted)	Field dates	Sample	Survey methodology	Type of sample
Australia	1007	June 23 - July 02, 2006	18+	Telephone	National
Brazil	800	June 06-23, 2006	18-69	Face-to-face	Urban ¹
Canada	1007	June 08-26, 2006	18+	Telephone	National
Chile	1000	June 01-13, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	National
China	1800	June 07-19, 2006	18-65	Telephone	Urban ²
Egypt	1000	June 02-19, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	Urban ³
France	1000	June 12-17, 2006	15+	Telephone	National
Germany	1002	June 06-25, 2006	16-70	Telephone	National
Great Britain	1004	June 13-25, 2006	18+	Telephone	National
India	1639	June 19-25, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	National
Indonesia	1000	June 22 - July 06, 2006	17+	Face-to-face	Major cities ⁴
Iraq	2000	June 13-17, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	National
Israel	1008	June 18-22, 2006	18+	Telephone	National
Italy	1004	May 29 - June 06, 2006	18+	Telephone	National
Kenya	1002	May 26 - June 14, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	National
Mexico	1000	June 14-25, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	National
Nigeria	1000	June 07-24, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	National
Philippines	1000	June 01-18, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	Urban ⁵
Poland	1041	June 01-06, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	National
Russia	1045	June 11-23, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	National
South Korea	1000	June 01-14, 2006	20-59	Telephone	Major cities ⁶
Spain	1028	June 20-30, 2006	18+	Telephone	National
Turkey	1000	June 05 - July 03, 2006	15+	Face-to-face	Urban ⁷
Ukraine	1018	June 17-26, 2006	18+	Face-to-face	National
USA	1002	June 08-27, 2006	18+	Telephone	National

¹In Brazil the survey was conducted in Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Curitiba, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and São Paulo, representing 17.8% of the total population.

²In China the survey was conducted in Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Shanghai, Shenyang, Wuhan, Xi'an, and Zhengzhou, representing 36% of the total urban population.

³In Egypt the survey was conducted in urban areas of Alexandria, Cairo, Gizeh, and Shubra-El-Khema, representing 21% of the total population.

⁴In Indonesia the survey was conducted in Bandung, Jakarta, Medan, Semarang, and Surabaya, representing 7% of the total population.

⁵In the Philippines the survey was conducted in the National Capital Region, representing 27% of the total urban population.

⁶In South Korea the survey was conducted in Busan, Daegu, Daejeon, Gwangju, Incheon, Seoul, and Ulsan, representing 52% of the total population.

⁷In Turkey the survey was conducted in Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Istanbul, Izmir, Konya, Samsun, and Zonguldak, representing 30% of the total population.