

Finland should stay to help in Afghanistan

Two-thirds or 67% believe that Finland should not stay away from Afghanistan (67% in 2009), whereas 29% were of the opposite opinion (27% in 2009).

Support to civilian crisis management and development co-operation

The percentages in brackets represent the results in 2009.

What should Finland do in Afghanistan? 77% of the respondents believe that Finland should contribute to the building of civic society and equally many, 77%, think that Finland should assist in the building of a democratic administration (82%). 74% believe that Finland should support economic and social development and contribute to organizing education and training through development co-operation (81%). Furthermore, Finland should take part in training the Afghan police force, 67% (65%), contribute to stabilizing the conditions in the country through military crisis management, 56% (55%) and participate in training the Afghan armed forces, 53% (43%).

Negative response to suppressing extreme groups with military force

A total of 77% of respondents take a negative view on suppressing extreme groups with military force (72% in 2009); 81% of women (72%) and 74% of men (72%) took this view. 16% of the respondents gave a positive response (20%); 21% of men (23%) and 12% of women (17%) were of this opinion. (*Figure 1*).

Finland's military presence in Afghanistan divides opinions

For the first time respondents were asked whether Finland should continue having a military presence in Afghanistan or should it be ended.

The opinions were almost equally divided: 48% think that Finland should end its military presence in Afghanistan whereas 46% think that it should continue.

As far as men are concerned, 50% are in favour of Finland ending its military presence whereas 47% of women are of this opinion. Older age groups are more often in favour of this: among the 50 to 79-year-olds, 55% took this view whereas in other age groups 42 to 45% of the respondents were of this opinion. Among the supporters of the Leftist Union 73% are in favour of ending military presence in Afghanistan; the corresponding figure for the supporters of the True Finns Party is 56%, the Social Democratic Party 50%, the Centre Party 43%, the Greens 42% and the Coalition Party 29%.

As for continuing Finland's military presence in Afghanistan, 67% of the supporters of the Coalition Party are in favour of it. The corresponding figure for the Centre Party is 53%, for both the Social Democratic Party and the Greens 49%, for the True Finns Party 37% and for the Leftist Union 25%. (*Figure 2*)

How was the survey conducted?

The survey was done by the market research company Taloustutkimus Oy on commission by the Advisory Board of Defence Information, and it was conducted in interviews as part of an omnibus survey. A total of 1017 persons were interviewed. The target group is the 15 to 79-year-old Finns except for the province of Åland. Age, sex, region and type of municipality represented the quotas in the sample. Interviews were conducted in 90 places, of which 48 were cities/towns and 42 were other municipalities. The sample was weighed in view of the target group.

The interviews were made between 24 September and 11 October 2010.

When looking at the political views as the background variable it must be taken into account that the error margin is smaller for large parties. As a result, more reliable data can be collected on them than on the small parties who have fewer supporters in the survey. Both the graphics and the text provide data on the True Finns; earlier the data on them was included in the group "Others".

The respondents were asked, "If the general elections were held now, which party would get your vote?" 66% (688 people) revealed their political views and 34% (349 people) chose not to reveal it.

The error margin of the survey is 3.2% each way. The questions were drawn up by the Research Branch and the Work Branch. The figures were prepared by Taloustutkimus.

A total of 26 questions were asked about the foreign policy, security and defence policy and national defence of Finland. The entire report will be published at the beginning of December.

The results of the survey can be accessed on www.defmin.fi/mts in Finnish, Swedish and English.

Permission is needed to use the Advisory Board of Defence Information (MTS) questions. In such a case the user is requested to mention the source.

For further information, please refer to

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