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Canada opposition Liberals slightly ahead in poll

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OTTAWA (Reuters) - Canada's opposition Liberals are still ahead in public opinion but their lead over the ruling Conservatives has shrunk since June, according to a poll released on Monday.

The Nanos Research survey put the Liberals on 33.8 percent, down from the 36.3 percent recorded by the same firm two months ago. The Conservatives were on 31.3 percent, down from 32.2 percent.

A string of polls in recent weeks show the Liberals and the Conservatives virtually tied, with neither able to reach the 36.5 percent mark needed to form a minority government.

"If an election took place in the near future, the outcome would be uncertain," said pollster Nik Nanos.

The Liberals are threatening to present a non-confidence motion in the minority Conservative government when the House of Commons reconvenes next month. The Liberals say Prime Minister Stephen Harper is not doing enough to help the jobless.

The Conservatives won a strengthened minority government in October 2008 but their support slid as the global economic crisis worsened.

Nanos said 29.5 percent of Canadians thought Harper would make the best prime minister, down from 32.2 percent recorded in a poll done by the same firm in April. Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff was in second place with 26.2 percent, down from 27.4 percent.

The Nanos poll of 1,002 adults was carried out from July 30 to August 2 and is considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

(Reporting by David Ljunggren)

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