

From: Boris Nikolic <[REDACTED]>

To: "Jeffrey Epstein (jeevacation@gmail.com)" <jeevacation@gmail.com>

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Philanthropy – Full text articles

[Revealed: the world's most admired people](#)

Stephan Shakespeare – Times

Bill Gates is the most admired person in the world, according to a global survey for The Times by YouGov. The man who many see as responsible for the democratisation of computing and who is the biggest activist philanthropist across the globe is **highly regarded everywhere**.

In his home, America, he ranks only 5th, behind Pope Francis, President Obama, Billy Graham, and George W. Bush. Mr Obama and the Pope have a strong lead in Western nations but Mr Gates is highly regarded in every country polled, from Brazil to Egypt, Nigeria to Indonesia, Britain to Russia to Australia. **He tops the poll in China** — as respondents there said: "He got into a good university, but gave up studying to start his business. He has become a rich man despite dropping out of school . . . He has a successful career and a caring heart — he is ordinary, but great."

The Queen came highest in Britain and second in Australia, but didn't make the Indian top ten. Nevertheless she is the most admired woman in the world, in 17th place, closely followed by Angelina Jolie and Oprah Winfrey.

Half of the top ten admired in Russia are women, including the pop singer Alla Pugacheva and the Queen. That is the highest figure in all countries surveyed — women are strikingly under-represented.

Some light is shed on this by comparing our results with a recent Gallup poll in America, which asked for most admired man and woman in separate questions. In that poll, Bill Clinton scored 2 per cent and Hillary Clinton 15. YouGov asked a single question, not differentiating men and women, and the two Clintons rated about the same. The two polls also show the power of the media to direct public attention: Gallup polled early in December, and Pope Francis was "most admired" by only 4 per cent. By the time of the YouGov survey, Time magazine had made him its Person of the Year, and he shot up to 21 per cent.

Business leaders did well in general. YouGov puts Sir Richard Branson 4th in Britain, the Hong Kong billionaire Sir Li Kashing was sixth in China; the Nigerian industrialist Aliko Dangote was third in his home country; Silvio Santos, a media billionaire, was 4th in Brazil; Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the tycoon recently freed by Vladimir Putin, was 8th in Russia; while Warren Buffett, who is admired in India, Pakistan and China, was 8th in the world.

Actors and musicians do less well. With the exception of the Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan, Ms Jolie and Stephen Fry, who confirms his enormous Twitter following by making 7th in Britain, just below Desmond Tutu. Johnny Depp and Brad Pitt get close to the top in a couple of countries and Justin Bieber did well in Indonesia, but the rock star and anti-poverty campaigner Bono is notable by his absence.

Sportsmen were more highly regarded, with the Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar 5th in the world — but only because he is so adored in the world's second-most populous country. The footballer Lionel Messi had broader support, reaching 15th in the world. In Britain, David Beckham squeaked into 10th place.

In only two countries of the 13 surveyed did no local politician make it into the top ten — Australia and the UK. The omission was most striking in Britain where Nigel Farage, the top politician, was in 16th place. David Cameron received the "most admired" accolade from only two people in a thousand. In Germany, Angela Merkel scored 65 times higher at 13 per cent, second only to the Pope. Vladimir Putin topped the Russian poll with a whopping 24 per cent, Nicolas Sarkozy was third in France and Goodluck Jonathan 8th in Nigeria. Edward Snowden, responsible for leaking classified documents that revealed the extent of surveillance by America's National Security Agency, was 10th most admired in the country that granted him asylum, Russia. He also showed strongly in Germany. We also asked who was the most famous person in the world. The overwhelming choice was Mr Obama, with 26 per cent, and Mr Gates behind on 12.

YouGov polled in Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, the US, Australia, Pakistan, Indonesia, India, China, Egypt, Nigeria and Brazil, representing over half of the world's population and the most populated country on each continent, and spoke to total of 13,895 people around the world. We used a mix of internet and mobile phone surveys. In most countries we achieved representative samples but in some we were unable to achieve good representation of rural communities. Our survey asked two open-ended questions, seeking write-in answers: who do you think is the most famous person in the world, and who do you personally most admire?

Although we specified that only living people should be considered, many wanted to choose Nelson Mandela anyway, and had we conducted the survey a month earlier he would have come top. In China there was significant support for Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, with 14 per cent between them, and had those respondents considered only the living, Xi Jinping would have scored even more highly.

Who's Who

- Narendra Modi, an Indian politician, is the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP, the main opposition party.
- Amitabh Bachchan is a Bollywood superstar, who was the "angry young man" of Hindi cinema.
- Abdul Kalam is an Indian scientist and was president of his country 2002-07.
- Anna Hazare held a series of hunger strikes in India in a successful campaign for anti-corruption laws.
- Arvind Kejriwal is the Chief Minister of Delhi, and worked alongside Hazare.
- Peng Liyuan, a Chinese folk singer, is the wife of President Xi Jinping.
- The philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi founded the Edhi Foundation, the largest welfare organisation in Pakistan.
- Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo, the governor of Jakarta, is a populist leader who may run in the 2014 Indonesian presidential election.

Stephan Shakespeare is CEO of YouGov.