MARCH 2023 SITE TF UPDATE TO DM ESCC	TOP SECRET, CANADIAN EYES ONL EYES ONLY
SITE STATUS UPDATE AND SUMMARY OF FOREIGN 2023	N INTERFERENCE THREATS TO CANADIAN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS —
Executive Summary of the Threat Environ	ment ¹
Canadian society (e.g., diaspora groups integral to liberal democracies, FI activi	ities target all levels of government and various facets of the general public, media entities). Since elections are ties often peak during election periods, as they represent a a decisive role in—or have a direct impact on—the final
Canadian politics by i) clandestinely su foreign state interests, and ii) opposing states. To accomplish their goals, HASA	vities by State Actors (HASA) employ FI to influence pporting individuals who are perceived to be receptive to g individuals who are perceived to be against these foreign A exploit loopholes in political party nomination processes; ions; mobilize and leverage community organizations; and,

(S//CEO) The PRC is the most active among state actors engaging in FI activities in Canada. India,
Russia,
Pakistan, Iran and are other state actors who actively
engage in FI activities in Canada to advance their interests. These states may leverage a narrower
range of tools and resources than the PRC, but their activities are nonetheless detrimental to
Canada's interests.

The Threat

(U) SITE TF defines Foreign Interference (FI) as: "activity conducted or supported by a foreign state/actor that is detrimental to Canadian national interests and is clandestine, deceptive or involves a threat to a person." In the context of Canadian electoral processes, the objective of FI is to affect electoral outcomes and/or undermine public confidence in Canadian democratic institutions. By contrast, foreign influence activity is overt and forms a part of routine global diplomatic engagement.²

(S//CEO) FI is not the same as diplomatic activity. Traditional diplomacy works through recognized channels to achieve specific policy outcomes or objectives (e.g., trade negotiations with the United States). In contrast, FI involves the use of clandestine, deceptive, or corruptive practices that are meant to influence Canadian policymaking, public narratives and civil society in a way that obfuscates the role

¹ CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

² SITE Task Force After Action Report (AAR), Threat to the Canadian Federal Election 2021, January 31, 2022.

TOP SECRET// CEO

March 2023

and interests of the foreign state. Diplomats from some states routinely engage in activities that cross the line from acceptable overt diplomatic engagement to covert malign interference. ³

(S//CEO) Hostile Activities by State Actors (HASA) target all levels of government—including federal, provincial, municipal and Indigenous—and various facets of Canadian civil society (e.g., diaspora groups, the general public, media entities). FI activities also transcend party lines, ideologies and ethnic backgrounds. ⁴

(S//CEO) As elections are integral to the proper functioning of liberal democratic societies, election periods are crucial for FI activities. They represent a 'window of opportunity' for certain foreign states for which FI could influence or sway electoral outcomes. Foreign states continue to develop important relationships in Canada year round in furtherance of their own political platforms, and will use these relationships to their advantage notably around election time, often through heightened FI activities. ⁵

Methodologies/Tools

(S//CEO) During elections, HASA employ FI and seek to influence Canadian politics by clandestinely supporting individuals perceived to be receptive to foreign state policies, narratives and geopolitical strategies. At the same time, these foreign states also actively oppose individuals who are perceived to be against their interests—through i) exploiting loopholes in political party nomination processes; ii) money and financing activities; iii) mobilizing/leveraging community organizations; and, iv) media manipulation (to include radio, Internet-based, and print media). ⁶

Nomination Processes

(S) Nomination processes for political parties in Canada are not directly regulated by federal or provincial government legislation or enforcement bodies (e.g., Elections Canada). Each political party sets and enforces its own rules, and party members can vote in nomination races, regardless of their legal status in Canada. For example, individuals who are not Canadian citizens—and therefore cannot vote in elections at any level of government in Canada—can still vote in a party nomination process as long as they are party members. The nomination process can be critical as many ridings in Canada are considered 'safe seats' that have long been held by a particular political party. In other words, gaining a party's nomination in a riding that has long supported that party is akin to winning the subsequent election. Therefore, FI activities during the nomination race could achieve the desired outcome without reliance upon FI activities during the election period. HASA exploit this loophole to engage in FI that target specific candidates and particular electoral ridings. ⁷

SIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

⁴ CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

ScSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.
CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

⁷ CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

TOP SECRET/ /CEO

March 2023

Money

(S) HASA also channel monetary donations and other assistance to preferred candidates in elections, with the intent of fostering a bond of obligation to the foreign state and/or its proxies. This is usually done via trusted interlocutors such as proxy agents or co-opted community organizations. The sense of obligation can then be leveraged for future favours and policy positions that are in the national interests of the foreign state—and to the detriment of Canada. Furthermore, this bond serves to solidify foreign state proxies as gatekeepers for community support. If the preferred candidate pursues a course of action contrary to that of the foreign state, community support would likely be withdrawn and the candidate could potentially lose their next election. ⁸

Community Networks

(S) Local community networks are a key vector for facilitating FI activities. For example, PRC officials often conduct FI activities through local networks that are tied to—but not necessarily directed by—

PRC officials in Canada on a regular basis. Key components of these FI networks usually include i)

PRC officials in ii) leaders of local Chinese Canadian community groups; iii) staff of targeted candidates/elected officials; and, iv) political candidates/officials themselves. This network structure—used for interference at all levels of government—enables an adaptable, resilient approach to extending and enabling PRC covert influence. The role played by each component varies by location and campaign, and much of the assistance rendered is likely shielded intentionally from broad public scrutiny. 9

Media

(S) Traditional and online media outlets play an important role during election periods, offering a curated communications channel between political campaigns and the general public. As such, they are a target for foreign state FI activities that seek to manipulate and influence key media entities, control narratives, and disseminate disinformation. ¹⁰

Threat Actors

People's Republic of China:

(S//CEO) FI activities are part of their normal pattern of behaviour and are active at all times. PRC FI threat actors are largely pragmatic and tend to pursue paths of least resistance by supporting whichever party or individual is believed to be 'friendliest' to the PRC's interests. The PRC is the most active among state actors. The PRC continues to develop important relationships in Canada year round in furtherance of their own political platforms, and will use these relationships to their advantage notably around election time, often through heightened FI activities. ¹¹

CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

⁹ CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

¹⁰ CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

¹² CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

TOP SECRET// 'CEO

March 2023

(S//CEO) The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in particular uses Canada and Canadians to proactively support PRC interests; this includes rejecting and publicly criticizing US policies—specifically those harmful to the PRC, supporting international PRC initiatives (e.g., the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Security Initiative), positively portraying the PRC and the CCP, and a general 'deference' to the PRC's authority and interests. ¹²

(S) PRC officials often conduct FI activities through local networks that are tied to—but not necessarily directed by—PRC officials in Canada on a regular basis. Key components of these FI networks usually include i) PRC officials in Canada II) leaders of local Chinese Canadian community groups; iii) staff of targeted candidates/elected officials; and, iv) political candidates/officials themselves. This network structure—used for interference at all levels of government—enables an adaptable, resilient approach to extending and enabling PRC covert influence. The role played by each component varies by location and campaign, and much of the assistance rendered is likely shielded intentionally from broad public scrutiny. ¹³

(TS//CEO) The People's Republic of China (PRC) remains the most significant FI threat to Canadian interests. The sophistication and intensity of its FI activities — which are directed against all levels of government and civil society — as well as the broad spectrum of its targets and FI methods, outpaces other hostile state actors. ¹⁴

(S//CEO) The PRC continues its efforts to cultivate relationships with current MPs and influence their views on issues of strategic importance to the PRC. These efforts are primarily aimed at MPs who are ethnically Chinese and/or who represent ridings with a large Chinese diaspora community. PRC FI activities target all levels of government, often transcending political party lines and taking place over a period of several years. PRC FI threat actors are largely pragmatic and tend to pursue paths of least resistance. Generally, PRC FI targeting is motivated by a desire to support, in a clandestine and deceptive manner, as many candidates as possible who either seem to be receptive to or actively promote viewpoints beneficial to the PRC or the Communist Party of China (CPC). ¹⁵

(TS//CEO) The PRC's FI efforts cover a spectrum of activities ranging from overt, influence-based diplomatic practices, through to clandestine and deceptive activities grounded in foreign interference. The PRC works off its standard 'playbook' (i.e., the deployment of established tactics and methods), which in the aggregate represents a continuum of activities employed by the PRC and PRC officials in Canada to influence and interfere in Canada's democratic institutions and processes. ¹⁶

reporting examples - PRC17:

¹² CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

¹³ CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

¹⁴ SITE Status Update and Summary of Foreign Interference Threats to Canadian Democratic Institutions—2021, May 2021.

¹⁵ SITE Status Update and Summary of Foreign Interference Threats to Canadian Democratic Institutions—2021, May 2021.
¹⁶ SITE Status Update and Summary of Foreign Interference Threats to Canadian Democratic Institutions—2021, May 2021.

Email from CSIS March 7, 2023.

sification)			
TS//			
edacied lexi de	scribes the PRC conducting research on Ch	inese Canadian rederai members di	r parliament (MP's).
S//			
×			
)			
2			
S//			

	March 202
Y	
0	
Redacted text provides an example of potential PRC interference in a municipal democratic pro	ocess.
Redacted text provides an example of potential PRC interference in a municipal democratic pro	ocess.
Redacted text provides an example of potential PRC interference in a municipal democratic pro	
Redacted text provides an example of potential PRC interference in a municipal democratic pro-	
	cess

CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022 CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.
 CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

March 2023

²⁷ The "Five Poisons" is a termed used by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to refer to five groups that are viewed as a significant threat to the stability and legitimacy of the CCP to rule China: 1) Falun Gong members; 2) Uyghur independence activists; 3) Tibetan independence activists; 4) pro-Taiwan activists; and, 5) pro-democracy activists in the PRC (including Hong Kong).

²⁸ CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.
 CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

TOP SECRET/	/CEO March 20
dia	
5)	the Government of India (GoI) seeks to influence Canadian officials at all levels
overnment to take	e positions and decisions that are favourable to the Gol's interests. A priority for t
	by is countering all activities and narratives it considers 'anti-India'. Disinformation eving these objectives. (S) $^{\rm 33}$
S//CEO)	Indian disinformation tactics targeting Canada are evolving and
pportunistic.	
\ Indian officials	remain particularly concerned with India's image abroad, and perceived anti-Hindu
· posterior	remain particularly concerned with India's image abroad, and perceived anti-Hindu
· posterior	remain particularly concerned with India's image abroad, and perceived anti-Hindu
entiment.	remain particularly concerned with India's image abroad, and perceived anti-Hindu
S) Indian officials rentiment.	remain particularly concerned with India's image abroad, and perceived anti-Hindi
Classification)	oreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.
Classification) CSIS IA 2022-23/57, For CSIS IA 2022-23/57, For CAB 2022-23/47A, India	
Classification) CSIS IA 2022-23/57, For CSIS IA 2022-23/47A, India	oreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022. Oreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

		March 20
reporting e	xamples – India:	
		1_
activities relate	ed to the leadership race for a political p	erty in Canada. 38
0		
0		
0		
mail from CSIS	March 10, 2023.	

OP SECRET/ //CEO	March 2023
0	

Russia46

(S//CEO) Russia has focused its FI activities globally on discrediting democratic institutions and processes, with an ultimate goal of destabilising or delegitimising democratic states. Russia has the capability to engage in FI against Canada. However, it lacks the intent as Canada is not perceived as an

⁴² CSIS IA 2022-23/57, Foreign Interference and Elections: A National Security Assessment, October 31, 2022.

⁴³ Email from CSIS March 10, 2023.

The Referendum on independence for the Indian state of Punjab and the creation of a new Sikh nation called Khalistan is a non-binding plebiscite organized by the United States-based advocacy group Sikhs for Justice (SFJ). The vote was previously known as 'Referendum 2020.' Referendum voting has been held in a variety of locations around the world, including the United Kingdom and Switzerland, since October 31, 2021. Voting in Canada was held on September 18, 2022, in Brampton, ON, with a second round of voting set to take place in Mississauga, ON, on November 6, 2022. (U)

⁴⁵ CAB 2022-23/47A, India's Travel Advisory: FI in Canada through Disinformation, November 3, 2022.

⁴⁰ SITE Status Update and Summary of Foreign Interference Threats to Canadian Democratic Institutions- 2021, May 2021.

TOP SECRET/ CEO	
TOP SECRET! CEO	March 2023
particular Canadian politi	a in the same way as the US (its "main adversary"). Russia does not prefer a cal party or leader through which Russian FI could be directed. The Kremlin Canadian federal parties do not differ significantly in their stance toward
Iran	
Pakistan	
(S//CEO) Pakistan has pro influence in Canada.	viously engaged in FI activities to promote its interests and counter Indian
Outlook	
	future PRC foreign interference (FI) activities during elections in
Canada,	clandestine and deceptive elements
	ry of Foreign Interference Threats to Canadian Democratic Institutions—2021, May 2021. ry of Foreign Interference Threats to Canadian Democratic Institutions—2021, May 2021.
49 Email from CSIS March 7	, 2023.

	March 2
Gol	its use of disinformation as a kev FI tactic
nst Canada.	

Email from CSIS March 7, 2023.
 CAB 2022-23/47A, India's Travel Advisory: FI in Canada through Disinformation, November 3, 2022.

TOP	SECRET	CEO
101	OLUNCIN	OLO

March 2023

SITE STATUS UPDATE AND SUMMARY OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE THREATS TO CANADIAN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS — 2023—ANNEX A

SITE TF Status Update

(S//CEO) SITE TF remains focused on Foreign Interference (FI) threats to Federal elections.

(U) SITE TF continues to meet (virtually) on a monthly basis, monitoring the threat landscape and engaging with key domestic stakeholders and allies, as it prepares for a state of readiness for an election (in line with Elections Canada).

(U) On 27 April, SITE TF and PCO DI had an unclassified meeting with US and Canadian representatives from TikTok, a growing social media/content platform with 8 million users in Canada (including 30 federal MPs). This was an opportunity to learn about TikTok's efforts to monitor content and disinformation on its platform, as well as to facilitate communication lines for potential take down operations. SITE was able to pose questions regarding content suppression, user data protection and company linkages to Beijing.

Include info about SITE TF meeting with Elections Canada? Need to mention anything about current FI situation?

	March 202
	ATUS UPDATE AND SUMMARY OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE THREATS TO CANADIAN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS ANNEX B
SITE TI	F Domestic Violent Extremism Landscape Update
RMVE	s companion assessment provides an overview of the current ideologically (IMVE), religiously E), and politically (PMVE) motivated violent extremist landscape in Canada and how the potential ian federal election will impact narratives domestically.
Key As	ssessments ⁵²
	(S//CEO) Conspiracy theories, disinformation, and misinformation have become accessible to larger audiences and will almost certainly play a significant role in shaping narratives around any future federal election.
•	(S//CEO) Extreme narratives and conspiracy theories do not usually manifest themselves as an act of serious violence, but have the potential to negatively affect the fabric of Canadian society, including our electoral processes.
he In	formation Environment ⁵³

⁵² CSIS CT - Election Security and the Domestic Violent Extremism Landscape, A Companion Threat Overview for SITE TF, March 2023 (not

yet published).

53 CSIS CT - Election Security and the Domestic Violent Extremism Landscape, A Companion Threat Overview for SITE TF, March 2023 (not yet published).

	March 2023
C) Grievances are amplified by conspiracy theories, disinformation sources and public for a first landscape saw an increase in the prolifer	gures. Through 2022 and 2023, the Canadian ation of conspiracy theories (including those
related to COVID-19 ¹ , the World Economic Forum ² , and "1 integrity of the state (anti-government and anti-law enforce colarization. conspiracy theories have exposing online users to a vast network of narratives that and traditional figures of authority.	cement rhetoric ⁴), and increased political e become accessible to larger audiences,
	Image 1
and often uses language to describe them as having committed treason or crimes against humanity, being part of a secretive world-ruling	(T)
elite, or as the perpetrators of various sexual or religious crimes against children (see Image 1) ⁷ . While the overwhelming majority of these posts are unlikely to manifest in real-world action,	ARREST WARRANT Issued against Prime Minister Austin Trudeau and Conserver General Mary Sanon FOR TYKANNY AND COMPLICITY IN CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY In assardance with their land conviction on January 19, 2022 (Case Booket oppsace Adap) Mering been found gaility by the Court of these primes and sentenced to the Imperiorment, Trudeau and Simon are subject to immediate ament and destinated by Court Sheriffit, department police, and the public. The bearer of this Warrant is authorized to assist in the selecting of Fredeau and Simon,
elite, or as the perpetrators of various sexual or religious crimes against children (see Image 1)7. While the overwhelming majority of these posts are unlikely to	Issued against Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Covernor Covered Mary Simon. FOR TYKANNY AND COMPLICITY IN CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY In accordance with their Iterfall conviction on January 9, 2011 (Case Booket opysics Adar) Maring been found guilty by the Gourt of these crimes and sentenced to this impostorment, Trudeau and Simon are subject to immediate ament and destroment by Court Sheriffs, department police, and the public.

⁵⁴ Disinformation: false or manipulated information, deliberately spread with the intent to mislead others by individuals who know it to be untrue.
55 Misinformation: false or manipulated information, spread without the intent to deceive or mislead.

TOP SECRET/ /CEO	March 2023
	many across the IMVE milieu are sufficiently
disenfranchised with the democratic political process to engage in the electoral process are highly likely only see discredit political parties and candidates ¹¹ . While some	dismiss elections wholesale, and those who eking to "troll" the system and disrupt and of this "trolling" may manifest as acts of
violence, the Service currently holds no information to	suggest it will reach our investigative threshold.
The Domestic Landscape ⁵⁶	
(S) the domestic violent extre	mist landscape of an upcoming election will be
most impacted by ideologically-motivated violent extre	mism (IMVE). However, it is acknowledged that
extremist narratives may also be impacted by those wh sections below on RMVE and PMVE).	o are religiously or politically motivated (see
sections below on kinve and Pivive).	
Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremists (IMVE)	
(U) IMVE threat actors in Canada continue to be driven	by a diverse range of grievances from across
the traditional left and right ideological spectrum. The r	esulting worldview often consists of a
personalized narrative, centering on the willingness to i	ncite, enable, or mobilize to violence.
(S) Although groups with more structured leadership st	II .
exist, loosely networked movements are currently the r	nost
common form of IMVE, focusing on concepts rather tha	n a
centralized organization 12. Individuals and cells often ac	t
without clear external guidance or affiliation to an orga	nized
group, but continue to be shaped by hateful voices and	
messages online that normalize and advocate for mobil	ization
to violence. Adherents draw inspiration from a variety of	of
discourse, including books, images, lectures, music, onli	ne
discussions, videos and conversations with like-minded	
ndividuals. Since 2014, Canadians motivated in whole o	or in
part by their IMVE views have killed 26 and wounded 4	5 on
Canadian soil ¹³	
(S) Ideologues, narratives, groups, and networks remain	
ooted online and are not bound by a country's borders	,
which poses a unique challenge for law enforcement an	d
ntelligence agencies. Many factors contribute to the fa	st
6 CSIS CT - Election Security and the Domestic Violent Extremism Landsca	pe, A Comp
vet published).	

TOP SECRET/ CEO	March 2023	
changing landscape, including local, national, and international events that affect personal and economic well-being, safety and security.		
(S//CEO)		
An increasing percentage of these i	ndividuals are	
motivated by anti-government, anti-public health measures and anti-authority		
core, centre on the inevitability of a coming civil war over societal and political		
number of potentially violent adherents and cells/groups continue to organize		
Religiously Motivated Violent Extremists (RMVE)		
(S//CEO) RMVE influencers and adherents with Salafi-jihadist Islamist ideologie	s frequently express	
hatred and threats towards prominent public figures and government officials.11	. Their grievances	
include perceived unresponsiveness of the current government to Islamophobi	a as well as objections	
towards Canada's pro-LGBTQ government policies ¹⁶ . RMVE groups are attracting	g individuals with a	
history of violent behaviours and have increasingly exhibited violent rhetoric to	wards political figures ¹⁷ .	
At this time,		
Politically Motivated Violent Extremists (PMVE)		
(S//CEO) PMVE narratives call for the use of violence to establish new political s	systems or new	
structures and norms within existing systems. Adherents focus on elements of		
political representation rather than concepts of racial or ethnic supremacy.		
	At this time, fringe	
political parties and PMVE in general are not assessed to have a significant important	act on the security of	
the next election.		
 PNAS - Pandemic fatigue fueled political discontent during the COVID-19 pandemic 2022 01 29 (U) CBC - Conspiracy theories thrive online as World Economic Forum opens 2023 01 06 (U) AP - FACT FOCUS: Conspiracies misconstrue '15 minute city' idea 2023 03 02 (U) Report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security The Rise of Idealogically Motivated Violent 	Extremism in Canada June 2022	
(U) ⁵ Report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security The Rise of Ideologically Motivated Violent (U)	Extremism in Canada June 2022	
⁶ The Guardian - Freeland ambush highlights growing threats to women in Canadian public life 2022 08 31 (U) CREST - Introductory Guide to Understanding Misogyny and the Far-Right 2023 (U)		
⁵⁷ CAB 2021-22/38 Election Security and the Domestic Landscape: A Companion Three 2021 07 06 (S//CEO)	at Overview for SITE TF	

16

March 2023
e Poilievre's wife 2022 09 26 (U)
the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol 2022 12 23 (U) 12 (U)
lievre's hand 2022 08 23 (U)
(SI/CEO)
FORMATION, of false information, and how to spot them online 2021 01 15 (U) FORMATION, of false information, and how to spot them online 2021 01 15 (U)