

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY****RRM CANADA - SUMMARY REPORT ON MONTHLY FINDINGS LEADING TO GE44****Purpose**

This report summarizes findings stemming from monthly research and monitoring conducted by RRM Canada in the lead up to GE44. The monthly reporting was designed to establish a baseline of online behaviour to facilitate the identification of anomalies linked to potential Foreign Interference (FI) in the Canadian digital information ecosystem and to alert decision-makers to any potential FI activity (see Annex for methodology).

**Key Findings:**

- Between December 2020 and June 2021 inclusive, RRM Canada did not observe any significant indicators of foreign interference in its monitoring of the broader Canadian digital information ecosystem.
- Most shared content on Twitter came from established Canadian sources and media. Most shared content coincided with coverage of on-going political issues (e.g., Bill C-10, residential schools, COVID-19, economy).
  - Monitoring accounts that belong to Chinese, Russian and Iranian government and state-linked sources did not appear to engage in FI activities against Canada during this period. However, Chinese state-run media have exploited the discovery of unmarked graves in residential schools in order to deflect criticism of abuses in Xinjiang (June report).
- Notwithstanding, Canada has been the target of various online campaigns elsewhere conducted by various advocacy campaigns led by foreign non-state actors.
  - Analysis of two such campaigns (the Indian students and Ethiopian diaspora activists) demonstrated that actors – even with limited resources – can impact the Canadian online information space.
- Malign information operations conducted by China, Russian and Iran continue to receive close attention by partner organizations and independent researchers; there is less scrutiny of similar activities conducted by other nations, such as India (December, February-May reports) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who have previously taken an interest in Canada.
  - Recent reporting indicates that Indian media affiliated with the current ruling Bharatiya Janata (BJP) Party has focused on Canadian politics following remarks on protests in India by PM Trudeau in November 2020. Partner reporting also indicates that a Canadian activist was targeted by actors aligned with pro-BJP media (February report).

**Topics / Issues of note for possible exploitation around GE44**

- Canada's record on human rights and indigenous relations domestically – China and possibly other foreign actors will likely continue exploiting related narratives in information campaigns aimed at deflecting criticisms of their own human rights records.
- Russian information operations targeting US politics, combined with US domestic advocacy campaigns may also impact the Canadian information environment due to geographic proximity and cultural-linguistic overlap between Canada and the US.

[APG]

## FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

**ANNEX: Methodology**

The RRM Canada monthly reports leveraged a combination of in-house and off-the-shelf tools to examine publicly available digital platforms and websites for indicators of FI, as well as partner reporting.<sup>1</sup>

The table below provides a snapshot of sources and approximate volume of monitored data:

Source	Dec'20	Jan '21	Feb '21	Mar '21	Apr '21	May '21	Jun '21	Totals
Twitter posts <sup>2</sup>	1 M	1.3 M	2.6 M	2 M	2.2 M	2 M	2 M	13.1 M
Reddit submissions <sup>3</sup>		6,100	5,100	3,630	6,600	6,916	7,500	35,846
Individual accounts <sup>4</sup>			462	462	462	462	462	462

In addition to the above, RRM Canada monitors aggregated data through the BuzzSumo platform<sup>5</sup> and partners' reporting on topics related to Canadian organizations and individuals.

RRM Canada's methodology builds on past experience, assessing a set of indicators associated with FI, including: circulation of false, misleading, and polarising narratives; alignment of narratives with the objectives of hostile state actors; or highly suspicious and abnormal shifts in volume and scope of engagement on a given topic accompanied by signs of coordination and inauthenticity. All RRM Canada

<sup>1</sup> The scope of these reports is limited in terms of access to platforms and data. Currently, RRM Canada has some capabilities to collect and analyse data from Twitter, Reddit, and web domains and webpages, as well as some limited new capabilities on YouTube. Other platforms may limit us from obtaining data or lack commercial/out-of-the-box solutions. Search terms used to collect data can differ significantly between platforms and tools, as each site structures data access differently. RRM Canada also leverages manual, open source investigations and qualitative analysis.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of monthly reports, RRM Canada accessed the Twitter API to analyse sample tweets through the following query terms: {"general\_pol": "#cdnpoli OR #elxn44 OR #election44 OR #elx44 OR #polcan OR #election2021 OR #elxn2021", "parties": "(#PPC OR #NDP OR #NPD OR #PLC OR #LPC OR #CPC OR #GPC) AND (canada or canadian or canadians OR canadien OR canadiens OR #canada OR ottawa OR #CDNpoli OR #Polcan)", "parties\_2": "(#liberal OR #liberals OR #greens #green OR #conservative OR #conservatives\*) AND (canada or canadian or canadians OR canadien OR canadiens OR #canada OR ottawa OR #CDNpoli OR #Polcan)", "voting\_terms": "(vote OR votes OR voting OR ballot OR ballots OR election OR elections OR elxn OR #elxn OR #election OR scrutin OR scrutins) AND (canada OR canadian OR canadians OR #canada OR ottawa OR canadien OR canadiens) NOT \"elections canada\", \"libs\": \"(@justintrudeau OR Trudeau OR (Liberal Party Canada) OR @parti\_liberal OR @liberal\_party)\", \"cons\": \"(\"Erin O'Toole\" OR (Conservative Party Canada) OR (\"O'Toole\" AND (Erin OR Conservative OR #CPC OR #cdnpoli OR #polcan)) OR @erinotoole OR @CPC\_HQ OR @PCC\_HQ)\", \"greens\": \"(@AnnamiePaul OR Annamie OR (Paul AND Green AND Canada) OR (Green Party Canada) OR @CanadianGreens)\", \"NDP\": \"(@theJagmeetSingh OR (Singh AND (jagmeet OR NDP OR canada OR #cdnpoli OR #polcan)) OR \"New Democratic Party\" OR \"NDP\" OR @NDP OR @NPD\_QG)\", \"block\": \"(\"Bloc Québécois\" OR @yfbianchet OR (Blanchet AND (Yves OR Canada OR #BQ OR #cdnpoli OR #polcan) OR @BlocQuebecois)\", \"PPC\": \"(\"People's Party of Canada\" OR (Bernier AND (Maxime OR Canada OR Party OR #cdnpoli OR #polcan)) OR (Maxime Bernier) OR \"People's Party\" OR @ppopulaireca OR @peoplespca OR @MaximeBernier)}.

<sup>3</sup> RRM Canada accessed all submissions to three communities or subreddits which aggregate issues relating to Canada and Canadian politics. These communities were /r/Canada, /r/CanadaPolitics, and /r/OnGuardForThee.

<sup>4</sup> Accounts identified by the RRM Canada as belonging to Chinese, Russian and Iranian government sources.

<sup>5</sup> BuzzSumo platform is used to determine which news articles relating to Canadian politics on Facebook, Pinterest and Reddit receive the most engagement. Buzzsumo search terms included ("Canadian Election" OR "Canadian Federal Election" OR "44th General Election"), ("Bloc Québécois" OR "Yves Blanchet" OR "Yves-François Blanchet"), ("Erin O'Toole" OR "Conservative Party of Canada" OR "Parti conservateur du Canada"), ("Trudeau" OR "Justin Trudeau" OR "Liberal Party of Canada" OR "Parti libéral du Canada"), ("Annamie Paul" OR "Green Party of Canada" OR "Parti vert du canada"), ("Maxime bernier" OR "Parti poluaire" OR "people party"), (NDP OR NPD OR "jagmeet singh" OR "New Democratic Party" OR "Nouveau Parti démocratique"), and (Canada).

[APG]

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

reporting is subject to an ethical and methodological framework. Government and non-government partners also inform RRM Canada's reporting.

[APG]