

UNCLASSIFIED  
September 30, 2019

### RRM Canada Summary of Findings (August 30 to September 25, 2019)

#### Key takeaways to date:

- RRM Canada identified no indication of significant foreign activity aimed at interfering in the Canadian election.
- Differentiating between foreign and domestic disinformation campaigns remains a challenge, partly because domestic actors are using disinformation tactics usually associated with foreign actors.
- RRM Canada notes that without an official body reporting on disinformation within the context of foreign interference, other information sources may fill the information void with inaccurate, incomplete or partisan information.

#### RRM research and analysis

RRM Canada analyzed the following cases for indicators of potential foreign activity:

Issue	Date	Conclusion of FI aspect of issue
Images of four non-residents in Nova Scotia receiving voter registration letters circulated online. News outlets reported on this issue.	Aug 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RRM Canada found no indication of foreign amplification or links.</li> <li>• RRM Canada assesses the issue as an ongoing potential target for foreign interference.</li> </ul>
Kremlin-affiliated site Sputnik France published articles in French on the Canadian election.	Sept 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RRM Canada found no indication of amplification and the articles do not appear part of a coordinated campaign.</li> </ul>
#TrudeauCorruption has been trending on Twitter since Sept 5, 2019.	Sept 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RRM Canada's investigation is ongoing.</li> </ul>
Jerusalem Post published an article that stated that Canada would accept 100,000 Palestinians.	Sept 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RRM Canada found no indication of foreign interference on this issue.</li> <li>• Jerusalem Post retracted its story after Government of Canada officials reached out to correct the record.</li> </ul>
An article from 2017 titled "Trudeau says Canada will take refugees banned by US" trended for a 24-hour period, starting on Sept 12.	Sept 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RRM Canada assesses the article and its amplification was related to the US Democratic debate, held at the same time as a leaders' debate in Canada.</li> </ul>
RRM Canada analysed open-source data from online activity concerning the Manitoba elections for indicators of foreign activity.	Sept 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RRM Canada assessed it very unlikely that significant foreign interference campaigns targeted the Manitoba elections in the online space.</li> </ul>
CTV published an article alleging that "US Alt-Right" Twitter accounts were amplifying the #TrudeauMustGo hashtag.	Sept 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RRM Canada reviewed the online activity and assesses with high confidence that the bulk of the activity was domestic in origin. It found no indication of foreign amplification or links.</li> </ul>

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RRM Canada analysed content related to the Black/Brownface scandal for potential foreign interference.	Sept 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RRM Canada assesses the spread of the story as organic with national and worldwide interest in the story driving dissemination.</li> </ul>
RRM Canada analysed content related to the Embassy of Canada's presence at a multi-faith Ukrainian memorial in Sambir, Ukraine, for foreign interference.	Sept 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RRM Canada found no indication of foreign amplification or links in the content that emphasised Canada. Domestic actors produced material relevant to the Canadian context that Canadians distributed further.</li> <li>Russian media propagated narratives of the rise of fascism in Ukraine.</li> </ul>
RRM Canada analysed content related to former PM Stephen Harper wearing indigenous dress and make-up.	Sept 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CBC and other sources published stories correcting the record. RRM Canada found no indication of foreign amplification or links.</li> </ul>

### **Inaccurate news coverage**

What is worth noting is the complex nature of the current information ecosystem, where various actors engage in debunking, fact-checking and reporting on disinformation. These actors present various perspectives, including in some cases strong partisanship. They are critical in the dissemination of information and can be useful in combatting malign foreign disinformation campaigns. However, they can also be targets of such campaigns and help spread disinformation.

**Inaccurate news coverage of foreign interference-related issues may contribute to the polarization of conversations online.** For example, on 6 September, [CBC News recast](#) an RRM Canada report claiming that RRM Canada's findings indicated that the Alberta Elections were "plagued by inauthentic activity." Several other news sources, including CTV News and the National Post, picked up this story. RRM Canada's report found the opposite and noted only minor automated activity. CBC subsequently edited their headline several times over the next 24 hours to better reflect the findings of the RRM report; however, RRM Canada monitoring showed that the online conversation surrounding this article took the tone of the original headline. RRM Canada notes that without an official body reporting on disinformation within the context of foreign interference, other informational sources may fill the information void with inaccurate, incomplete or partisan information. Publishing research proactively where appropriate can help inform the public as to ongoing foreign threats against our democracy.

RRM Canada is not aware of any non-governmental organisation dedicated solely to combatting disinformation or foreign interference in Canada.