

For Public Release

SECRET//CANADIAN EYES ONLY

AUGUST 2023

SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE THREATS TO ELECTIONS TASK FORCE**THREATS TO THE CANADIAN FEDERAL BY-ELECTIONS – CALGARY HERITAGE AFTER ACTION REPORT**

On June 18, 2023, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities (now the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs), announced that the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force (SITE TF) was to provide enhanced monitoring and assessment of foreign interference (FI) threats directed at the Calgary Heritage electoral district by-election being held on July 24, 2023. (U)

This report covers the SITE TF activities and observations of foreign actors' intentions and activities relating to FI, and other threats including from violent extremism and the wider spectrum of ideologically motivated criminality directed at the by-election. (U)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SITE TF met weekly between June 18, 2023 and July 28, 2023 to review and discuss intelligence collection, assessment, and open-source analysis related to FI and other threats directed at the Calgary Heritage electoral district by-election. As noted in the June 18, 2023 announcement, the focus of the SITE TF during the by-election period was to assess FI threats; however, the SITE TF also committed to report any observations of threats of violent extremism relating to the by-election. The SITE TF provided weekly situation reports (SITREPS) on both FI and violent extremism threats to the by-election to the Deputy Minister Committee on Intelligence Response (DMCIR) from June 30 until July 28, 2023. (U)

Summary of Key Observations – Foreign Interference

- The SITE TF monitored for FI directed at the Calgary Heritage by-election from June 18 until July 26, 2023. The SITE TF did not observe, at that time, any indication of FI directed at the by-election. (U)
- The SITE TF monitored for cyber incidents targeting Elections Canada (EC) from June 18, 2023 until July 26, 2023. No cyber incidents were detected at that time to suggest that any foreign state actors were specifically targeting EC. (U)

Summary of Key Observations – Threats of Violent Extremism

- The SITE TF monitored for threats of violent extremism directed at the Calgary Heritage by-election from June 18, 2023 until July 26, 2023. The SITE TF did not observe, at that time, any threats of violent extremism directed at the by-election. (U)

DETAILS**Scope and Sources**

For Public Release

SECRET///CANADIAN EYES ONLY
AUGUST 2023

This report covers the SITE TF observations of foreign threat actors' intentions and activities relating to FI as well as any observations of threats of violent extremism with respect to the Calgary Heritage by-election with voting held on July 24, 2023. It is based on analysis, reporting and observations – from both classified and unclassified sources – reviewed from June 18, 2023 until July 26, 2023. (U)

SITE TF Members and Role

The SITE TF consists of representatives from the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). The SITE TF's role is to help safeguard Canadian federal elections from FI by: (U)

- Providing a clear point of engagement with the security and intelligence community for Government partners engaged in related work. (U)
- Reviewing and focusing intelligence collection, assessment, and open-source analysis related to FI in Canada's democratic process in a coordinated manner. (U)
- Providing situational awareness for Government partners, senior public servants, and other relevant partners. (U)
- Promoting the use of intelligence, assessment, and open-source information analysis in the protection of electoral processes through sharing with partners or, when respective mandates permit, take action to mitigate the threat. (U)

Cyber Security

As the Government of Canada's (GoC) technical authority for cyber security and information assurance and an integral member of the SITE TF, the CSE's Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (the Cyber Centre) supported the federal by-election by: (U)

- Providing the political parties with advice and guidance during a SITE briefing, which was held during the June 19, 2023 by-election, including an overview of common cyber threats and best practices for IT security. (U)
- Providing enhanced monitoring of cyber incidents for EC from June 18, 2023 until July 26, 2023. (U)
- Offering political parties a 24/7 Hotline Service to obtain centralized support if party or candidate communications, email, or social media accounts were compromised. The 24/7 Hotline Service will continue to be available to political parties for reporting of cyber incidents until one month after the election. Use of the Hotline triggers an immediate response to minimize damage and restore normal operations. (U)

Foreign Interference Defined

The SITE TF defines foreign interference 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. (U)

[APG]

For Public Release

SECRET///CANADIAN EYES ONLY
AUGUST 2023**Detailed Observations on Foreign Interference Actors**

For certain foreign states, FI activities are part of their normal pattern of behaviour in Canada and often spike during election periods. The People's Republic of China (PRC), India, Russia, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Iran and Pakistan have engaged in FI activities in Canada in the past and therefore the SITE TF specifically looked at any FI activities from these foreign states from June 18, 2023 until July 26, 2023. [REDACTED] (S//CEO)

People's Republic of China (PRC)[REDACTED]***India***[REDACTED]***Russia***[REDACTED]***Iran***[REDACTED]***Pakistan***[REDACTED]**Cyber Security**

The SITE TF monitored for cyber incidents targeting Elections Canada (EC) from June 18, 2023 until July 26, 2023. No cyber incidents were detected at that time to suggest that any foreign state actors were specifically targeting EC. The Cyber Centre has not received any calls since the 24/7 Hotline Service was made available on May 30, 2023, at the start of the previous by-election, for political parties to report cyber incidents. (U)

Detailed Observations on Violent Extremism

While the SITE TF is focused on FI, both the RCMP and CSIS have mandates and authorities to look at threats of violent extremism. The SITE TF committed to reporting any threats of violent extremism directed at the by-election. (U)

[APG]

For Public Release

SECRET///CANADIAN EYES ONLY
AUGUST 2023

The SITE TF monitored for threats of violent extremism directed at the by-election from June 18, 2023 until July 26, 2023. The SITE TF did not observe, at that time, any threats of violent extremism directed at the by-election. The SITE TF did not identify any direct threats to the by-election in social media, message boards, chatrooms, online forums or news media relating to the by-elections. No direct threats to any of the candidates, nor to the administration of the election were identified. (U)

THIS INFORMATION IS SHARED WITH YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR INTELLIGENCE PURPOSES ONLY AND MAY NOT BE USED IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS. THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT BE RECLASSIFIED, DISSEMINATED OR DISCLOSED IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF CSIS. THIS DOCUMENT CONSTITUTES A RECORD WHICH MAY BE SUBJECT TO EXEMPTIONS UNDER THE FEDERAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT OR PRIVACY ACT OR UNDER APPLICABLE PROVINCIAL OR TERRITORIAL LEGISLATION. IF A REQUEST FOR ACCESS UNDER THESE ACTS IS MADE, THE RECEIVING AGENCY MUST CONSULT CSIS IN RELATION TO APPLYING THE AVAILABLE EXEMPTIONS. FURTHER, CSIS MAY TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS UNDER SECTION 38 OF THE CANADA EVIDENCE ACT OR OTHER LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THIS INFORMATION. IF YOU LEARN THAT THIS INFORMATION HAS OR MAY BE DISCLOSED, THAT THESE CAVEATS HAVE NOT BEEN RESPECTED OR IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ABIDE BY THESE CAVEATS, INFORM CSIS IMMEDIATELY.

WARNING: (U) THE INFORMATION IN THIS REPORT IS PROVIDED FOR INTELLIGENCE PURPOSES ONLY. IT MAY BE USED TO DEVELOP POTENTIAL INVESTIGATIVE LEADS, BUT RECIPIENTS MAY NOT TAKE ANY FURTHER ACTION ON OR SANITIZE ANY PORTION OF THIS REPORT OR ANY INFORMATION DERIVED FROM IT, WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT. ADDITIONALLY, THIS REPORT, OR ANY PART THEREOF, MAY NOT BE USED IN AFFIDAVITS, COURT PROCEEDINGS, SUBPOENAS, OR FOR OTHER LEGAL OR JUDICIAL PURPOSES WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT. ANY REPRODUCTION, DISSEMINATION, OR COMMUNICATION (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ORAL BRIEFINGS) OF THIS INFORMATION MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A STATEMENT OF THESE RESTRICTIONS.

[APG]