



Countering Foreign Interference

Canada is a country open to the world. We are an advanced trading economy and an open democracy with positive relations with a great number of nations. We also believe in collective security, and we have built durable security and military partnerships with like-minded states around the world.

Foreign partners regularly seek to influence the decisions we make as a country, just as Canada seeks to influence the decisions of others. Foreign partners generally use legitimate and transparent means to advocate their interests, such as lobbying, political dialogue, trade negotiations and diplomacy.

Some foreign states use covert, deceptive and sometimes threatening means to interfere in our political system and our economy. They do so to advance their own strategic objectives, to the detriment of Canada's national interests.

The threat of foreign interference is not new, but has increased in recent years as the world becomes more competitive, the digital world has created more ways for people and governments to have far reaching impact, and some states are willing to use all means available to them to challenge our democratic way of life. These interference activities are not acceptable and Canada will never tolerate them.

Foreign interference can affect all individuals in Canada: government officials, civil society, communities, businesses, academia, and the media. Examples of interference by foreign states, or those acting on their behalf, include:

- Threatening, harassing or intimidating people in Canada or their family and friends abroad because of their political opinions or to shape behaviour;
- Attempting to interfere in Canada's democratic institutions and processes, such as elections, to advance their interests;
- Stealing our intellectual property, know-how or imposing market conditions to gain an economic advantage against Canada;
- Targeting officials at all levels of government to influence public policy and decision-making in a way that is clandestine, deceptive or threatening, and to the detriment of Canadian interests.

Foreign interference poses one of the greatest threats to Canada's national security, our way of life, and our economic prosperity and sovereignty. We must shine a light on these threats, and come together as a country to defend our nation from those who attempt to harm us. These examples underscore the urgency needed to hold those who would threaten individuals in Canada and Canada's sovereignty accountable for their actions by strengthening the consequences of engaging in interference activities in Canada.

The Government of Canada has a number of resources to ensure that the public has the necessary knowledge and tools to be able to recognize foreign interference when encountered, including:

- [CSIS Public Report 2022](#)
- [Cyber threats to Canada's democratic process \(2021 Update\)](#)
- [National Cyber Threat Assessment 2023-2024](#)
- [Foreign Interference and You \(2021\)](#)
- [Foreign Interference Threats to Canada's Democratic Process](#)
- Canada.ca/disinformation

Why do states undertake foreign interference?

- To undermine the integrity of democratic institutions, and covertly influence the outcomes of elections;
- To sway government decision-making and policies to advance their interests, to sow distrust in society and to discredit those who threaten their interests;
- To limit freedom of speech on Canadian soil by intimidating those who have come to Canada;
- To obtain Canadian-made knowledge and innovation to support and advance their own military or economic objectives;
- To undermine the legitimacy of Canada's representatives abroad, or the goals of our international activities; and
- To insert themselves into our supply chains and critical infrastructure.

Why is Canada a target?

- Active promoter of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights around the world;
- Strong international partnerships and membership in multilateral organizations, including G7 and NATO;
- Home to diverse and multicultural communities.
- World leader in research and innovation; and,
- Robust and diverse economy.

What are some of the impacts of these attempts to interfere?

- Subverting the democratic rights and fundamental freedoms of persons in Canada;
- Undermining the public's ability to make free and informed decisions;
- Threatening Canada's sovereignty by operating on Canadian soil;
- Jeopardizing Canada's ability to innovate and compete, resulting in lost jobs and diminished economic growth; and,
- Weakening Canada's military defensive posture and critical infrastructure systems.

What are some measures used by the government to counter foreign interference?

- Investigating and laying criminal charges in accordance with Canadian laws;
- Conducting robust national security reviews of foreign investments that may threaten Canada's national security;
- Using a number of calibrated diplomatic options ranging from formal messaging to the reduction or suspension of engagement;
- Denying entry or status to individuals deemed inadmissible on national security grounds or removing individuals subsequently deemed inadmissible due to these threats;
- Coordinating diplomatic responses with like-minded states and allies where appropriate; and,
- Using threat reduction measures to reduce and mitigate harm.

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