



Public Inquiry Into Foreign Interference in Federal  
Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions

Enquête publique sur l'ingérence étrangère dans les  
processus électoraux et les institutions démocratiques  
fédéraux

**Public Hearing**

**Audience publique**

**Commissioner / Commissaire  
The Honourable / L'honorable  
Marie-Josée Hogue**

**VOLUME 16  
ENGLISH INTERPRETATION**

**Held at :**

Library and Archives Canada  
Bambrick Room  
395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0N4

Friday, May 3, 2024

**Tenue à :**

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada  
Salle Bambrick  
395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0N4

Le vendredi 3 mai 2024

**INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.**

<https://www.transcription.tc/>

(800)899-0006

## II Appearances / Comparutions

Commission Lead Counsel / Procureure en chef de la commission	Shantona Chaudhury
Commission Counsel / Avocat(e)s de la commission	Gordon Cameron Erin Dann Matthew Ferguson Hubert Forget Howard Krongold Hannah Lazare Jean-Philippe Mackay Kate McGrann Lynda Morgan Siobhan Morris Annie-Claude Poirier Gabriel Poliquin Natalia Rodriguez Guillaume Rondeau Nicolas Saint-Amour Daniel Sheppard Maia Tsurumi Leila Ghahhary Emily McBain-Ashfield Hamza Mohamadhossen
Commission Research Council / Conseil de la recherche de la commission	Geneviève Cartier Nomi Claire Lazar Lori Turnbull Leah West
Commission Senior Policy Advisors / Conseillers principaux en politiques de la commission	Paul Cavalluzzo Danielle Côté

### III

## Appearances / Comparutions

Commission Staff / Personnel de la commission	Annie Desgagné Casper Donovan Michael Tansey
Ukrainian Canadian Congress	Donald Bayne Jon Doody
Government of Canada	Gregory Tzemenakis Barney Brucker
Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections	Christina Maheux Luc Boucher Nancy Miles
Human Rights Coalition	Hannah Taylor Sarah Teich
Russian Canadian Democratic Alliance	Mark Power Guillaume Sirois
Michael Chan	John Chapman Andy Chan
Han Dong	Mark Polley Emily Young Jeffrey Wang
Michael Chong	Gib van Ert Fraser Harland
Jenny Kwan	Sujit Choudhry Mani Kakkar

## IV Appearances / Comparutions

Churchill Society

Malliha Wilson

The Pillar Society

Daniel Stanton

Democracy Watch

Wade Poziomka  
Nick Papageorge

Canada's NDP

Lucy Watson

Conservative Party of Canada

Nando de Luca

Chinese Canadian Concern Group on  
The Chinese Communist Party's  
Human Rights Violations

Neil Chantler

Erin O'Toole

Thomas W. Jarmyn  
Preston Lim

Senator Yuen Pau Woo

Yuen Pau Woo

**V**  
**Table of Content / Table des matières**

	<b>PAGE</b>
Press conference by Commissioner Hogue/ Conférence de presse par la commissaire Hogue	1

1 Ottawa, Ontario

2 --- The press conference starts on Friday, May 3, 2024, at  
3 12:15 p.m.

4 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Hello, everyone. Thank  
5 you for your attendance today for this milestone in the  
6 Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference. Your presence  
7 speaks to your interest in our democracy and to the  
8 importance of the issues that this Commission is concerned  
9 with.

10 First of all, I'd like to remind everyone  
11 that we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin  
12 Anishinaabe people.

13 I am pleased to inform you, although you  
14 probably know this, that the Commission on Foreign  
15 Interference, over which I preside, submitted its initial  
16 report to the government today. This report examines how  
17 actors interfered or attempted to interfere in the 2019 and  
18 2021 federal elections and, if so, the impact of that  
19 interference.

20 It also discusses how information about  
21 foreign interference was circulated within the federal  
22 government and what measures were taken in response to this  
23 information.

24 The report is available on the Commission's  
25 website where anyone who wishes to read it may do so. This  
26 report is the fruit of months of investigation and 21 days of  
27 hearings, 15 public and six held *in camera*, during which we  
28 heard from 66 people, including victims of foreign

1 interference, members of diaspora communities, the heads of  
2 our intelligence agencies, many civil servants, former and  
3 current politicians, Ministers, as well as the Prime  
4 Minister.

5 I would like to express my gratitude to all  
6 these people for their invaluable contributions and testimony  
7 as well as to the members of the Commission team for their  
8 massive efforts thus far.

9 Thanks also to the translation and  
10 interpreting team whose hard work enables the public to  
11 follow the Commission's work in either official language.

12 My team and I read and analyzed a large  
13 number of documents, many of them highly classified. The  
14 Commission had access to the documents it deemed relevant  
15 without any redaction for national security reasons. I can  
16 therefore say that our team was able to conduct our  
17 investigative work without limiting access to classified  
18 information.

19 The Commission had access to all documents it  
20 deemed relevant without any redactions for national security  
21 reasons. I can therefore say that our team was able to  
22 conduct our investigative work without limitation or access  
23 to...

24 As you will know, since I have said it many  
25 times before, the Commission had to face the immense  
26 challenge of balancing the protection of Canada's national  
27 security interests with the transparency of its work. I  
28 strongly believe we have been successful in striking this

1 balance.

2           Despite extreme time constraints, the  
3 Commission found ways to make a substantial amount of  
4 information and documents available to the public, enabling  
5 citizens to come to know and understand what happened during  
6 the last two elections. Nevertheless, certain facts cannot  
7 be publicly disclosed for national security reasons. The  
8 report, therefore, includes a classified supplement which, in  
9 accordance with the law and the Commission's Terms of  
10 Reference, is only available to those with the requisite  
11 security clearance and who also have a need to know stemming  
12 from the performance of their duties.

13           To maximize transparency, I have disclosed as  
14 much information as possible in the public report itself  
15 while limiting the information contained in the classified  
16 supplement only to what is strictly necessary. This  
17 classified information in no way alters the main finding of  
18 the report. On the contrary, it reinforces some of those  
19 findings.

20           It's important to highlight that the initial  
21 report's findings are not necessarily definitive. The  
22 Commission will soon begin the second stage of its work, and  
23 it is possible that this stage will shed further light or  
24 even a different light on some of the events investigated and  
25 reported in the first stage. Indeed, the manner in which  
26 information about foreign interference was circulated and  
27 what measures the government took in response are two issues  
28 central to the second stage of our work, which focuses on the



1 government's ability to detect, prevent and counter foreign  
2 interference.

3           It's important to highlight that the initial  
4 report's findings are not necessarily definitive. The  
5 Commission will soon begin the second stage of its work, and  
6 it is possible that this stage will shed further light or  
7 even a different light on some of the events investigated and  
8 reported in the first stage. Indeed, the manner in which  
9 information about foreign interference was circulated and  
10 what measures the government took in response are two issues  
11 central to the second stage of our work, which focuses on the  
12 government's ability to detect, prevent and counter foreign  
13 interference.

14           The findings in this initial report should,  
15 therefore, be understood for what they are; preliminary  
16 findings which may be subject to change upon the completion  
17 of the Commission's work. That said, I do not think it  
18 likely that the main conclusion in this report will change.

19           The -- however, I will now outline some of  
20 them for you here.

21           First, our electoral system is robust.  
22 Active foreign interference did occur during the last two  
23 general -- federal general elections, but they did not  
24 undermine the integrity of our electoral system. Our system  
25 remains sound. Voters were able to cast their ballots, their  
26 votes were duly registered and counted, and there is nothing  
27 to suggest that there was any interference whatsoever in this  
28 regard, nor did this foreign interference have any impact on

1       which Party formed the government in the last two most recent  
2       elections.

3                       Nonetheless, these acts of interference that  
4       occurred, some of these acts have been established, while  
5       others remain only suspected, are a stain on our electoral  
6       process and impacted the process leading up to the actual  
7       vote.

8                       Although it is impossible to determine  
9       whether they had an impact on the number of votes received by  
10      each candidate in any of the ridings affected, there is one  
11      riding where disinformation may have led to the election of  
12      one candidate over another, but I cannot say for sure.

13                      Whether or not this is the case, the mere  
14      possibility that disinformation carried out or encouraged by  
15      a foreign authority could have had a decisive impact on the  
16      result in a constituency is serious. Furthermore, this  
17      disinformation, even if it did not have a decisive impact on  
18      several constituencies, did diminish the ability of some  
19      voters to cast their ballots in an informed manner, that is  
20      to say, with the benefit of reliable information.

21                      First, our electoral system is robust. Acts  
22      of foreign interference did occur during the last two federal  
23      general elections, but they did not undermine the integrity  
24      of our electoral system. Our system remains sound. Voters  
25      were able to cast their ballots, their votes were duly  
26      registered and counted, and there is nothing to suggest that  
27      there was any interference whatsoever in this regard, nor did  
28      this foreign interference have any impact on which Party

1       formed the government in the two most recent elections.

2                   Nonetheless, the acts of interference that  
3       occurred, some of these acts have been established while  
4       others remain only suspected, are a stain on our electoral  
5       process and impacted the process leading up to the actual  
6       vote.

7                   Although it is impossible to determine  
8       whether they had an impact on the number of votes received by  
9       each candidate in any of the ridings affected, there is one  
10      riding where disinformation may have led to the election of  
11      one candidate over another, but I cannot say for sure.

12                  The ways in which information was  
13      communicated or failed to be communicated to some individuals  
14      or groups is also a reason to pause for thought. I have not  
15      found evidence of any actions taken in bad faith, but I have  
16      found that there were some communication problems and a  
17      certain lack of understanding of the role that everyone plays  
18      or should play in combating foreign interference.

19                  I have found no evidence of any actions taken  
20      in bad faith, but I have found that there were some  
21      communication problems and a certain lack of understanding of  
22      the role that everyone plays or should play in combating  
23      foreign interference.

24                  Foreign interference often specifically  
25      targets diaspora communities. Members of these communities  
26      have reported their distress when they found themselves beset  
27      by foreign powers and the impact this had on their lives. We  
28      cannot and must not remain indifferent to their distress.

1                   This brings me to a few general observations.

2                   Foreign interference is a real occurrence and  
3 a serious threat, and one that is probably impossible to  
4 completely eradicate, but we must do all that we can to  
5 detect, prevent and counter it. In the next phase of the  
6 Commission's work, we will need to deepen our understanding  
7 of the mechanisms that generate or facilitate foreign  
8 interference.

9                   We have already identified two such  
10 mechanisms, disinformation and financial support. We need to  
11 investigate further, including by examining the rules  
12 governing how candidates are chosen in nomination contests  
13 and those governing how the intelligence agencies can conduct  
14 their work. We also need to examine how communication  
15 problems within the government may be an obstacle to  
16 effectively combatting foreign interference.

17                  Foreign interference is a real occurrence and  
18 a serious threat, and one that is probably impossible to  
19 completely eradicate, but we must do all that we can to  
20 detect, prevent and counter it. In the next phase of the  
21 Commission's work, we will need to deepen our understanding  
22 of the mechanisms that generate or facilitate foreign  
23 interference.

24                  We have already identified two such  
25 mechanisms, disinformation and financial support. We need to  
26 investigate further, including by examining the rules  
27 governing how candidates are chosen in nomination contests  
28 and those governing how the intelligence agencies can conduct

1       their work. We also need to examine how communication  
2       problems within the government may be an obstacle to  
3       effectively combatting foreign interference.

4                 That said, solutions to counter  
5       disinformation, to improve how information about foreign  
6       interference is circulated or, more broadly, to respond to  
7       such interference remain elusive.

8                 These are, of course, complex issues in  
9       themselves, but the number of considerations make the task  
10      particularly challenging in the Canadian context. Protecting  
11      national security and the neutrality of our senior civil  
12      servants are important principles, but they also pose  
13      challenges.

14                More fundamentally, Canada is a multicultural  
15      and democratic society that recognizes and protects  
16      individual rights and the rule of law. The rights to  
17      reputation and privacy, the right to vote, freedom of  
18      expression and freedom of opinion are at the heart of who we  
19      are. We must also avoid taking measures that would  
20      stigmatize some of our fellow citizens, particularly those  
21      from diasporas, but all that makes it much more difficult to  
22      fight foreign interference, which is generally, but not  
23      exclusively, the work of authoritarian regimes.

24                To a certain extent, it is an uneven battle.  
25      This is not to say that we should abandon the values  
26      foundational to our society. That would be a trap, one that  
27      some would be only too happy to see us fall into. Rather, it  
28      means that finding ways to identify and respond to foreign

1 interference and formulating useful recommendations for doing  
2 so is no small task.

3 More fundamentally, Canada is a multicultural  
4 and democratic society that recognizes and protects  
5 individual rights and the rule of law. The rights to  
6 reputation and privacy, the right to vote, freedom of  
7 expression and freedom of opinion are at the heart of who we  
8 are. We must also avoid taking measures that will stigmatize  
9 some of our fellow citizens, particularly those from  
10 diasporas, but all that makes it that much more difficult to  
11 fight foreign interference, which is generally, but not  
12 exclusively, the work of authoritarian regimes.

13 To a certain extent, it is an uneven battle.  
14 This is not to say, though, that we should abandon the values  
15 foundational to our society. That would be a trap, one that  
16 some will be only too happy to see us fall into. Rather, it  
17 means that finding ways to identify and respond to foreign  
18 interference and formulating useful recommendations for doing  
19 so is no small task.

20 We are continuing our work, and this fall we  
21 will be holding more public hearings during which we'll hear  
22 further crucial testimony, including from experts who will  
23 help us identify concrete, effective measures. We will  
24 tackle the major challenge of identifying potential solutions  
25 and then formulate recommendations to best protect our  
26 country from foreign interference.

27 My final report will be submitted by December  
28 31st, 2024. In the meantime, I encourage you to read my

1 initial report. You will find in it a 15-page summary  
2 entitled "Report Highlights", followed by eight substantive  
3 chapters.

4 I hope that this report adds publicly to the  
5 understanding of foreign interference and its impact in the  
6 last two general elections.

7 In addition, I also urge anyone who has  
8 relevant information to provide it to the Commission through  
9 the forthcoming public outreach initiative, which will be  
10 accessible on our website.

11 So in addition, I also urge anyone who has  
12 relevant information to provide it to the Commission through  
13 the forthcoming public outreach initiative, which will be  
14 accessible on our website.

15 Thank you again for being here.

16 Thank you again for being here and have a  
17 great weekend.

18 As it was mentioned, I won't answer any  
19 questions for the time being. It's an interim report.  
20 There's some work that still needs to be conducted.

21 --- Upon concluding at 12:35 p.m.

22

23 --- The press conference concluded at 12:35 p.m.

24

25

26

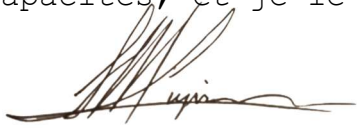
27

28

## C E R T I F I C A T I O N

1  
2  
3 I, Sandrine Marineau-Lupien, a certified court reporter,  
4 hereby certify the foregoing pages to be an accurate  
5 transcription of my notes/records to the best of my skill and  
6 ability, and I so swear.

7  
8 Je, Sandrine Marineau-Lupien, une sténographe officielle,  
9 certifie que les pages ci-hautes sont une transcription  
10 conforme de mes notes/enregistrements au meilleur de mes  
11 capacités, et je le jure.

12  
13 

14 Sandrine Marineau-Lupien  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28