

For Public Release



# SITE Task Force: Key Observations from GE44

*Review of Principal Threat Actors and Elections Security*

*Update to ADMs*

*1 November 2021*

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## Threat Actors - PRC



(TS//CEO) The People's Republic of China (PRC) remains the most significant FI threat to Canadian interests. The sophistication and intensity of its FI activities, as well as the broad spectrum of its targets and FI methods, outpaces other hostile state actors.

## Key Observations

- (TS//CEO) The People's Republic of China (PRC) sought to clandestinely and deceptively influence Canada's 2021 federal election. This foreign interference (FI) was pragmatic in nature and focussed primarily on supporting individuals viewed to be either 'pro-PRC' or 'neutral' on issues of interest to the PRC government and Chinese Communist party (CCP).
- (U//FOUO) SITE observed online/media activities aimed at discouraging Canadians from supporting the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC). These activities appear to have taken place across multiple platforms and mediums including WeChat, Douyin, Chinese-language news sites, and reportedly radio
- (S//CEO) SITE does not have clear evidence that the media activity was a PRC-directed Foreign Interference (FI) campaign, though we have observed indicators of potential coordination between various Canada-based Chinese language news outlets as well as PRC and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) news outlets.



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## Threat Actors - PRC



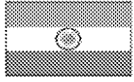
## Key Observations - Continued

- (S//CEO) The nature of 'united front' work encourages proxies and third-parties favorable to the PRC to conduct work generally in China's interest. Domestic actors within Canada may have endeavored to further narratives damaging to the CPC of their own accord without official direction or resources from PRC.
- (S//CEO) This demonstrates a grey area between FI and overt influence and illustrates the challenges of identifying FI with certainty in the digital information environment.

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## Threat Actors - India



(S//CEO) Indian officials — [redacted]  
 [redacted] — continue to conduct FI activities in Canada, both directly and through their Canadian proxies, primarily against Canadian politicians and Canadian democratic processes, and against the Indo-Canadian diaspora community.

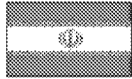
## Key Observations

- (TS//CEO) [redacted] generally aimed at [redacted] furthering a pro-India agenda and countering perceived pro-Khalistani elected officials.
- (TS// [redacted] //CEO) [redacted]

## Threat Actors – Other States



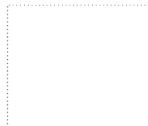
(S//CEO) Russia has the capability to engage in FI against Canada, [redacted]



(S//CEO) Canada is lower priority for Iran; [redacted]



(S//CEO) Pakistan has previously engaged in FI activities to promote its interests [redacted]




(S//CEO) [redacted]

## Threat Actors – Other States



### Key Observations

- (S//CEO) Other state actors (Russia, Iran, Pakistan, ) have not demonstrated a significant threat to Canada's election process.
- (S//CEO) Over the course of the writ period, SITE TF saw no evidence to indicate that foreign state actors were specifically targeting Elections Canada (EC) or Canadian electoral systems and networks.

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## Elections Security

### An Evolving Threat

- (U//FOUO) SITE TF focused on FI, but the issue of domestic threats to politicians and election events has been a key concern since the Capitol Hill riots.
- (U//FOUO) For GE44, SITE committed to reporting significant threats linked to the election up to the Panel and the broader ESCC community for their awareness.
- (S//CEO) There was no intelligence indicating that IMVE posed a threat to Canada's elections. However, there was an increased extreme IMVE narrative opposed to COVID-19 restrictions and a range of perceived grievances focused on Canadian politicians (at every level of governance) and other state representatives including law enforcement officials and judges.



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## Elections Security

### Key Observations

- (PB) Following the announcement of GE44, there was a significant increase in the number of direct and indirect threats made towards Protected Persons, with the Prime Minister (PM) being the primary focus. These threats were persistent throughout the election period.
- (PB) Anti-COVID restriction grievances drove both online discussions and in-person protests throughout the campaign period. Violent rhetoric and behaviour escalated throughout August and September, including a number of public order incidents
- (PB) A number of campaign events that were met by protest were either promoted by, or attended by, ideologically motivated linked individuals, with conspiracy theorists, anti-government and racially and ethno-nationalist motivated individuals being most prevalent
- (PB) There have been no main groups or apparent formal organization for protests detected and the escalation in violent behaviour at public events started to dissipate before the election was over. There were no major threats reported during Election Day.

