

HATE, EXTREMISM, AND TERRORISM

In Alberta, Canada,
and Beyond

The Shift from 2019 to 2022

I. Introduction

II. Ideologically-Motivated Violent Extremism

III. Religiously-Motivated Violent Extremism

IV. Conspiracies + Hate Crimes

V. Conclusion

Michele St-Amant, David Jones,
Michael King, & John McCoy



organization for
the prevention
of violence

KEY TERMS

Ideologically Motivated Violence Extremism (IMVE)

The Government of Canada defines ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) as “a range of grievances and ideas from across the ideological spectrum”.¹ The definition is purposefully broad to incorporate various ideologies (i.e., gender and identity driven violence, xenophobia, and anti-authority extremism) in addition to a collection of more idiosyncratic and highly personalized grievances or conspiracies that can inspire an individual to mobilize to violence.

Examples of IMVE groups or beliefs include: National Socialist Order / Atomwaffen Division, the Base, violent involuntary celibates, and organized militias.

Religiously Motivated Violent Extremism (RMVE)

The Government of Canada defines religiously motivated violent extremism (RMVE) as a form of extremism which: “encourages violence as part of a spiritual struggle against perceived immorality. Adherents believe that salvation can only be achieved through violence.”²

Examples of RMVE groups or beliefs include: Al Qaeda, Daesh, the Aryan Nations and the Church of the Creator.

Politically Motivated Violence Extremism (PMVE)

The Government of Canada defines politically motivated violent extremism (PMVE) as the collection of ideologies that legitimize violence to establish new political systems, or new structures and norms within existing systems.³ While the 20th century saw a significant amount of violence linked to PMVE groups, there has been a marked decline in activity over the last 20 years.

Examples of PMVE groups include: the Provisional Irish Republic Army (PIRA), the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ), and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo (FARC).

Hate Crimes

Hate-motivated offences, or hate crimes, are recognized in several different ways in the *Criminal Code*. First, there are three speech related offences found under the Hate Propaganda section of the Criminal Code: 318 (1) – Advocating Genocide, 319 (1) – Public Incitement of Hatred, and 319 (2) – Willful Promotion of Hatred. There are two additional ways in which criminal offences motivated by hate are recognized: either via a mischief charge where the target of the offence is a religious or educational institution (Section 430 (4.3) of the Criminal Code) or through consideration of a possible hate motivation as an aggravating factor considered during sentencing, as provided for by Section 718 (2) of the Criminal Code.

Hate Incidents

A non-criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by an individual's hatred or bias towards an identifiable group. While non-criminal, these incidents can have a profound impact on victims and the broader community. These incidents may include online abuse, verbal taunting, or slurs.

Extremism

Extremism refers to the use of "religious, social, or political belief systems that exist substantially outside of belief systems more broadly accepted in society (I.e., "mainstream" beliefs)."⁴ While extremist beliefs in-and-of themselves do not necessarily prescribe violence, they do seek radical changes and exist outside mainstream societal beliefs.

Violent Extremism

Violent extremism is a term that refers to a subset of extremist ideologies that legitimize the use of violence; and the use of violence is usually a core tenet within these specific extremist ideologies.

DISCLAIMER

The information and findings in the document have been printed on the basis of publicly available information and research. It should not be interpreted to represent the opinions of the individuals or agencies who participated in interviews with the Organization for the Prevention of Violence.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There have been significant changes in the three years since the Organization for the Prevention of Violence (OPV) published its first report about hate-motivated violence, extremism and terrorism in Alberta, *Building Awareness, Seeking Solutions*. The Covid-19 pandemic, protests against public health measures, tense elections in the United States, and the backlash to racial justice movements, among other events, have had broad social repercussions. Some of which have changed the composition and scale of the threat of extremism and terrorism – which has become more diffuse and comprised of a broader set of grievances and ideologies.

This report is organized using the nomenclature developed by the Government of Canada to categorize different forms of extremist ideologies. As such, the findings related to ideologically motivated violent extremism and religiously motivated violent extremism are summarized first.ⁱ Next, we summarize our findings about conspiracy theories and hate incidents, including crimes, within Alberta and across Canada.

IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISM (IMVE)

- The structure and landscape of IMVE actors continues its shift from group-based tactics to lone-actor and small-cell activity, particularly within the realm of xenophobic extremism. A new emphasis on militant accelerationism coupled with eschewing organized activities to avoid detection makes these attackers less predictable.⁵
- After years of stagnation, or in some cases a decline in activity in Canada, the anti-authority movement has experienced a reinvigoration, partly as a reaction to public health measures enacted during the Covid-19 pandemic and the spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories.
- Extremists are increasingly picking and choosing elements of different violent ideologies to form their own idiosyncratic belief system. This ‘salad bar’ extremism, originally used to describe an emerging phenomenon in the U.S., is now present in Canada.⁶
- The Covid-19 pandemic and the 2020 U.S. Presidential election, among other events, has led to a re-energized pseudo-legal movement, which shares some common elements with the anti-authority movement and has become particularly active in North America, parts of Europe, and Australia. While the overwhelming majority of individuals within the pseudo-legal movement are non-violent, the surge in popularity and spread of ideas has the potential to incite individuals to mobilize to violence, particularly against public or authority figures.
- Militia and patriot groups have been in decline in Canada, particularly in Alberta. Groups such as the Soldiers of Odin and the Three Percenters have now largely dissolved or splintered.

ⁱ Although the Government of Canada includes Politically-Motivated Violent Extremism as a category, this report does not include a section on this form of extremism. While this form of extremism exists elsewhere in the world and has existed historically in Canada, it has not occurred in Canada within the specified time-frame of this report.

RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISM (RMVE)

- RMVE has continued its steady decline in Canada since the publication of the OPV's last report. With the significant territorial losses experienced by Daesh in Syria and Iraq over the last several years, there have been far fewer instances of Westerners traveling to join Daesh, as well as fewer attacks in Western countries inspired by Daesh.
- Attention has now turned to Canadian foreign fighters and their families, many of whom are currently held in detention camps and prisons in Syria. Of these, the Canadian government has repatriated one orphan, while the return of a woman from Alberta and her child was facilitated by a former U.S. diplomat.
- Although RMVE activity has declined, the threat remains, as shown by the 2019 arrest of a youth in Kingston with explosives, and a fatal hammer assault in Toronto in 2020.
- Networks of radicalizing influencers and facilitators of terrorist activity continue to operate in Canada, with the potential to play a role in future foreign fighter mobilization or domestic attacks.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

- While conspiracies have always been a cornerstone of extremism and hate-motivated ideologies, these have proliferated in recent years. Some individuals are now mobilizing around a set of conspiracies, such as QAnon, Covid-19 or 5G linked conspiracies unrelated to traditional extremist ideologies, but increasingly incorporated and utilized by anti-authority and xenophobic extremists.

- Several QAnon influencers have emerged across Canada since the OPV's last report. These include Romana Didulo, who has proclaimed herself Queen of Canada, "Amazing Polly," who is credited with starting the infamous Wayfair conspiracy of 2020, and Alexis Trudel-Cossette, a Quebec-based QAnon influencer who has become prolific across the French-speaking conspiracy world.

HATE INCIDENTS AND CRIMES

- Canada has seen a steady increase in the number of hate crimes since the publication of the OPV's last report. Underreporting continues to be a problem in understanding the number and prevalence of hate crimes across the country.
- Reporting of hate crimes committed against the Asian community since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic have risen.
- Racial justice protests, which have gained traction since 2020, have attracted counter-protests by hate-motivated groups across Alberta and Canada.
- Edmonton has seen a unique trend of hate-motivated attacks against Black Muslim women. Between 2020 and the publication of this report, seven Black Muslim women were targeted, threatened, or attacked in Alberta's capital.

INTRODUCTION

According to a recent poll, many Canadians have expressed concerns about the rise of hate and extremism, and in particular the rise of right-wing extremism and terrorism.⁷ This concern is well founded. In the last 10 years, Canada has experienced a significant rise in the ranks of the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Terrorism Index, a comprehensive study analyzing the amount and severity of terrorism across 163 countries.⁸

Canada ranked 90th globally in 2011. It increased to 67th in 2016 and further to 48th in 2021. This development is in part a result of several recent tragic attacks like the London, Ontario truck attack in 2021, which resulted in the deaths of four members of a Canadian-Pakistani family; and earlier events linked to lone actor terrorism, such as the Toronto van attack in 2018 and Quebec City Mosque attack of 2017.

In the last several years, and especially since the Organization for the Prevention of Violence (OPV) published its first report about Alberta in 2019, Building Awareness, Seeking Solutions, the landscape of hate-motivated violence, extremism, and terrorism has changed in Alberta, as it did across Canada. Some extremist and hate-motivated groups and ideologies – many of which are unique to Canada – have seen a surge in recent years, including xenophobic and anti-authority movements.

Using the Government of Canada's nomenclature, these forms of hate-motivated violence are classified under ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE). Others, including religiously motivated violent extremist (RMVE) groups, have continued to experience a marked decline in Canada and Alberta. This is largely due to territorial losses Daesh experienced in Syria and Iraq, despite maintaining a strong presence or gaining a foothold in other countries.

Concurrently, Canada has seen a steady increase in the number of hate crimes. Between 2016 and 2020, Statistics Canada reported an 89% increase in the number of police-reported hate crimes across the country.⁹ Reflecting those who were victimized in attacks in London and Quebec City in recent years, rising hate-motivated incidents have disproportionately impacted religious minority communities and people of colour, a trend which has also presented itself outside of Canada, such as in the United States.

These rising indicators point to pressures on Canada's social cohesion, and a persistent threat to public safety. Additionally, the increasingly online and transnational nature of extremism, terrorism, and hate activity means that Canada is not immune to these problems.

Consistent with the mission of the organization, our goal is to share evidence-based knowledge that can inform prevention efforts and to this end, the OPV has conducted in-depth research in Alberta. To date, for our previous and current reports, the OPV has interviewed nearly 200 members of the RCMP, municipal police agencies and community stakeholders across the province, including the province's urban and rural areas, northernmost, and southernmost regions.



In addition to these interviews with Alberta law enforcement, this report outlines the domestic historical foundations and the transnational roots of hate-motivated violence, extremism, and terrorism, which we hope will help the reader better understand the current trends and threats.

As such, this report provides a historically-grounded and contextual approach for readers who wish to understand the ways in which current forms of hate-motivated violence and extremism are inspired and influenced by the past.

It is our hope that the research presented in this report will help Albertans better understand, identify, and find solutions to the threats and challenges present in their communities.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2019* (April 2020), p. 13, <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/PubRep-2019-E.pdf>.
- 2 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2021* (March 2022), p. 25, https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/2021/public-report/2021_PublicReport_Digital-ENG.pdf.
- 3 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2021* (March 2022), https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/2021/public-report/2021_PublicReport_Digital-ENG.pdf.
- 4 Anti-Defamation League Staff, "Extremism," *Anti-Defamation League*, May 3, 2017, <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/extremism>.
- 5 Seth G. Jones, Catrina Doxsee, and Nicholas Harrington, *The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, June 17, 2020), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states>.
- 6 The Soufan Center, "IntelBrief: The Counterterrorism Challenge of 'Salad Bar' Ideologies," March 29, 2021, <https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2021-march-29/>.
- 7 Angelyn Francis, "Most Canadians are fed up with online hatred and discrimination and want to see Parliament act, new survey says," *Toronto Star*, November 30, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/11/30/most-canadians-are-fed-up-with-online-hatred-and-discrimination-and-want-to-see-parliament-act-new-survey-says.html>.
- 8 Visions of Humanity, "Global Terrorism Index 2021," 2021, <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/global-terrorism-index/#/>.
- 9 Statistics Canada, "Police-reported hate crimes, number of incidents and rate per 100,000 population, Census Metropolitan Areas," <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510019101>.

HATE, EXTREMISM, AND TERRORISM

In Alberta, Canada,
and Beyond

The Shift from 2019 to 2022

II. Ideologically-Motivated Violent Extremism

Michele St-Amant, David Jones,
Michael King, & John McCoy



organization for
the prevention
of violence

IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISM (IMVE) - A BACKGROUND

Ideological motivated violent extremism (IMVE) is the term used by the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) for various grievances and ideas that have traditionally been described as ranging from far-left extremism to far-right extremism.¹ The term encompasses four subcategories of beliefs that justify using violence to advance ideological goals.

The first is xenophobic violence, which is racially or ethno-nationalist motivated ideologies such as those found in white supremacism and neo-Nazism. It includes former groups like Atomwaffen Division or the Base.

The second is violence motivated by anti-authority or anti-government sentiments. This is characterized by the current pseudo-legal movement in Canada and can include groups like the Sovereign Citizens or the Freeman-of-the-Land (FOTL). The third is gender and identity-driven violence, which is violence fuelled by a hatred of those of a different gender or sexual orientation. This can include violent involuntary celibates (incels) and others within the so-called 'manosphere.'

Finally, CSIS includes a final category for other grievance-driven and ideologically motivated violence for those individuals who act without clear affiliation to an established group.

While the activity level of some IMVE categories appears to be rising since the OPV's 2019 report, such as xenophobic violent extremists, these have been counter-balanced by a decline or plateauing of other forms of extremism in the province.

This was echoed by law enforcement officials we interviewed for this report:

"Some of the symptoms that we see seem to have increased. We follow the federal government's definition.... [drawn from] the CSIS Act, like Political, Ideological, and Religious [violent extremism]. So, if we're looking at all those cumulatively, since 2017 there probably would have been an increase, but that would have to acknowledge that that's coming off a dip in religious extremism. So, I think there's been growth in some areas and recession in others."
– Law enforcement official

This section divides the discussion of these movements by their ideological subgrouping within the four categories described above. Each section will begin with a background, a description of the activity in Alberta and Canada, and will then provide information on specific groups, movements, and manifestations.

XENOPHOBIC VIOLENCE

The year 2015 marked the beginning of an increase in xenophobic violence demonstrated by a series of lone-actor attacks around the world, including in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and Germany. Since the early 2000s, most xenophobic violence has been carried out primarily by lone actors. However, we witnessed a series of largely unsuccessful attempts during the 2010s to build small networks or cells, exemplified by groups like Atomwaffen Division (recently rebranded as the National Socialist Order) and the Base.

After attracting attention from law enforcement, many of these groups suffered major blows to their organizational integrity, such as the arrest of the groups' leaders and infiltration by undercover law enforcement. As a result, many sympathizers have since refrained from organizing into 'named' groups, preferring to operate alone or in small, unconnected cells. This follows the legacy of two prominent white supremacist writers – Louis Beam's "Leaderless Resistance" and James Mason's "Siege."

It remains to be seen what effect the global pandemic and more regional events like the last two U.S. Presidential elections, civil rights movements, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine will have on xenophobic violence in the next several years. However, it does appear that the move away from group-based activities and toward lone-actor and small-cell activity has some momentum.

Individuals who identify as part of these movements are emboldened by the current global security climate, the growing power of populist politicians, movements, and social issues that generate contentious debates online.

Recent attackers associated with xenophobic extremist ideologies are also particularly engaged with popular conspiracy theories in IMVE, including white genocide and the great replacement. Both theories mobilize popular fears and tropes for xenophobic movements and actors by focusing on what is perceived as a demographic shift in Western states away from Caucasian majorities. Moreover, evidence of transnational networking and collaboration, particularly in some Eastern European countries – a historical trend within the xenophobic extremist movement which has recently received renewed attention – suggests activity and violence associated with xenophobia is likely to persist.

While the current trend in xenophobic activity takes the form of lone actors or small, disaggregated cells, this trend must be understood as having developed from the legacies of organized groups like Atomwaffen Division (AWD) and the Base. Equally influential were online hubs, such as Iron March, which, while being the birthplace for Atomwaffen and the Base, was also responsible for the re-popularizing ideologies that eschew group-based activities.

First, this section will begin by outlining the current trends in xenophobic violence in Alberta and will then review and describe the important historical developments which have influenced the current iteration of the movement.

Status of Xenophobic Violence in Alberta

Since 2019, the landscape of xenophobic violence has changed in Alberta. Today, like the trends elsewhere, the landscape is defined less by organized groups and more by loosely connected or lone individuals. One factor potentially influencing this shift was the Government of Canada's listing of Blood & Honour and Combat-18 as official terrorist entities in 2019. These two neo-Nazi groups originated in the United Kingdom.

Two years later, following the January 6th riots at the U.S. Capitol building, the Government of Canada added AWD, the Proud Boys, the Base, and the Russian Imperial Movement to the list of terrorist entities.

There has been a marked rise in IMVE violence and activity over the last five years in Canada. However, the extent to which this violence is linked to organized groups versus lone actors has led to some disagreement over the utility of the listing process.²

For example, listing a group will likely have little to no impact on individuals who are fully committed to an extremist ideology, as they may move to another non-listed group or operate alone. The fluidity of IMVE is also a key defining feature that distinguishes this form of violent extremism from Religiously Motivated Violent Extremism (RMVE).

In the latter, generally speaking, allegiance to a specific group can have major implications for an individual's role and approach to violence. In the former, individuals can act in ways that advance a perceived cause without ever affiliating themselves to a group. These differences have raised doubts about the effectiveness of the terrorist listing as a tool used to combat these groups and their followers.

Some law enforcement officials we interviewed, however, praised the positive impact that Canada's listing had on several of the groups which previously operated in the province:

"In the last few years, we've had a number of additional groups added to the terrorist entity list in Canada. So, that has affected the groups that we had – actually a few groups that we had – here in [locally]. Three of them specifically – Combat-18, Blood and Honour, they had a small group here. They don't [now], they've been wiped out. And they don't really exist here anymore.

Three Percenters – same thing, they had a group here, a leader, and a couple followed, and with their listing as a terrorist entity it's pretty much silenced them. Proud Boys – same thing, once they got listed as a terrorist entity, they've really been silenced. We haven't seen them. They weren't overly active to start with. They were kind of small groups... But they were here, they existed, but now they don't. I think the terrorist entity listing has really clobbered [them]."

– Law enforcement official

However, not all interviewees attributed as much credit to the terrorist entities listing, and instead noted that some of the groups were already largely defunct or in decline in the province, and the effects of listing on groups' activity were limited only to some groups:

"I think there's been essentially no change, because [those] groups were publicly defunct in the province before the [listing]. We hadn't really seen any organized in-person activity from the Three Percenters since late 2019, maybe early 2020, but that wasn't... actual organized activity, that was attempts to organize that failed.

So, their group had essentially fizzled out by then. I think it's very similar with Atomwaffen, [which] had been publicly dissolved before the listing. I'll say no impact on some groups... the Proud Boys are difficult because they were still technically active, they were present in the province, they stopped activity but the history of the Proud Boys in the province has been stop-start... So, it could have been part of that natural cycle. The timing was probably right, just to prevent them from reorganizing again."

– Law enforcement official

According to CSIS' 2020 Public Report, there has been a significant rise in IMVE activity in Canada. Much of this has been observed online, and the report notes that "threat narratives within the IMVE space have evolved with unprecedented multiplicity and fluidity."³

However, several offline incidents involving xenophobic extremism have also been observed. For example, in October 2020 propaganda clippings promoting the websites of white supremacy and the alt-right movement were littered in front of several schools in British Columbia;⁴ in Manitoba, propaganda and recruitment posters have appeared advertising groups like the Base;⁵ and members or supporters of various groups have conducted 'swattings' across the country, whereby false reports are called in causing emergency services to unnecessarily expend resources.⁶

Alberta has seen similar trends recently. For example, in Brooks in 2021, multiple stickers with phrases like "white lives matter" and "make white kids" were found around the city, including in mailboxes and in playgrounds.⁷ Like in other similar incidents around the country, the stickers contained a QR code that leads the user to a white supremacist website. Law enforcement officials we interviewed in the province echoed these trends, citing several recent instances of neo-Nazi propaganda:

"We've seen stickers around the [area], white pride, and those [include] links to get you down and connect folks to a neo-Nazi [web]site. So, you get into that. You'll see different posters and signs put up, we've had banners hung around the [area]. And, it's just to get people down that thought process. But again, we don't know if it's linked to any groups but when we do identify those individuals, we do take it very seriously. I'd call them recruiting sites... it's where you start to get into that world, you see the literature. From there you can get inside some of the chat rooms and have some conversations and all that."

– Law enforcement official

"One thing that we have noticed is that throughout the last couple of months there's been a propaganda campaign from the Folkish Resistance Movement/Volksfront. I know that they've been pushing out poster designs and stickers and stuff for their followers to put up, and encouraging accountability posts where the person puts it up, takes a picture, [and] sends it in. They repost it on their website and say "Hey, look at how great we are." So, there has been a small propaganda campaign in the province. I can't say if it's more than one person though, because the incidents are so few and far between that it could just be one person who's travelling to a bunch of different towns and doing it themselves."

– Law enforcement official

In addition to some sporadic propaganda campaigns, law enforcement officials we interviewed noted that there have been some, albeit unsuccessful, attempts by neo-Nazis in the province at organizing:

“I haven’t heard a lot of actual successful in-person organization. We have had some reports of attempts to organize in-person meetings. But... I can’t recall hearing... that [they] actually happened. So, it seems mostly online.”

– Law enforcement official

“No [organized neo-Nazi] groups, not that we’ve noticed. We’ve been trying to just look into a few people [whose] speech on Facebook [was problematic], just to see if they are forming a collective within the community, and we haven’t found any [evidence to suggest] there’s a group of people that are going out and doing these types of things or have that same ideology. All the stuff that we’ve looked into, even random people that have popped up in the last little bit with [that] kind of rhetoric... we haven’t found anybody that’s actually engaged in a group of people that meet or anything like that.”

– Law enforcement official

One law enforcement interviewee noted that, despite their lack of organization, neo-Nazi propaganda by a single individual appeared to encourage others who were previously unknown to law enforcement in the area:

“[One individual] was leaving pamphlets, putting up stickers, and being very evasive with police. And then there were a few other people that just came out of the woodwork... so, [he was] charged... and then a few others popped up as kind of neo-Nazi, lone-[actors], saying “this is my ideology [too].” [The individual of concern] never did connect with those people but it was interesting how these people we didn’t really know existed in the community just popped up and were like, “but what about me?” It basically made it okay for them to come out publicly.”

– Law enforcement official

Despite their lack of cohesiveness, this new wave of xenophobic extremists poses a potential threat in Canada and Alberta. For example, in the summer of 2021, a man deliberately targeted and rammed his vehicle into a Muslim family in London, Ontario, killing 4. Like other recent acts of violent xenophobic extremism, there is currently no evidence to link the perpetrator to any organized groups, and the attack can likely be attributed broadly as a grievance or ideologically-driven one. Additionally, federal prosecutors elevated the charges to include terrorism; the third time terrorism charges have been laid against an individual in Ontario since 2020.⁸

As the new wave of xenophobic extremists continues to embrace lone actor tactics, the difficulty in tracking and intercepting these individuals may also increase. According to at least one law enforcement official we interviewed, despite the trend toward a post-organizational movement, xenophobic violent extremism (amongst others) still poses a threat in the province.



“I think there’s been a slow growth in neo-Nazis. Especially in what I consider [to be] the modern accelerationist, nihilist, new-wave neo-Nazis that have been around since like 2011.”

– Law enforcement official

“I’ll start by saying that I don’t think any of the groups that I’m aware of – any of the subcategories of the IMVE categories – I don’t think any of them are a particularly high risk of violence right now in the province. And that’s violence against persons. The risk is, Canada’s rate of terrorist violence is so low... so many of the attacks are just individually-driven.

The individualized nature of the attacks that we’re seeing in Canada right now in our current context makes it so difficult to draw any kind of conclusions. [However], if I was going to say which ones are they most likely to come out of I’d probably say neo-Nazis. But, the probability in my opinion is equally close for jihadists [or] incels.”

– Law enforcement official

Others noted that, while the groups may have dissolved, the individuals acting alone remain a potential concern, echoing the trend within the larger xenophobic extremist movement:

“I think there’s always these individual people, like, there’s always going to be a white supremacist in the crowd somewhere. There’s always going to be somebody who espouses that ideology, But, in terms of an organized group like with Combat-18, Blood & Honour, [those] group[s] are dead here. And, the few [individuals] that were still remaining, their leader moved [away]. Nobody really picked it up and said, “Okay, I’m going to carry on, I’ll be the leader now.”

We haven’t heard a thing from them or about them. But hey, those [people] are still out there and every now and then we’ll see a report of an interaction that a uniformed [officer] has with somebody... And they might report back to us, “Hey, this [person] had a swastika on [their] arm,” or “[they] had Mein Kampf on [their] coffee table,” of whatever. But, there’s no evidence to support that those types of people are actively engaging in promoting hatred or trying to start a group, or targeting any individuals or groups.”

– Law enforcement official

Background and Ideological Trends

Groups and individuals who espouse xenophobic extremism, including white supremacists, white nationalists, and Neo-Nazis, share hatred and distrust of specific racial, ethnic, or religious groups. In the West, this includes, but is not limited to, visible minorities and non-Christian religious groups such as members of Jewish and Muslim communities.

In tandem with a belief in ethnic and cultural superiority, white supremacists and national socialists believe that white culture and heritage is threatened by people of colour migrating to Western countries. By contrast, neo-Nazis share many similar beliefs with white supremacists and national socialists. Still, they tend to place a heavier emphasis on hatred of the Jewish community specifically and focus more on contributing to an armed revolutionary struggle for a fascist political state.

Traditional and historically established white supremacy groups like the Ku Klux Klan or the online alt-right movement prevalent during the mid-late 2010s believe that existing political and power structures can be used to create a racially organized hierarchical society. However, an emerging doctrine known as accelerationism rejects this in favour of violent ethno-nationalism. While not all accelerationists are xenophobic extremists, nor is the doctrine new, xenophobic extremists are increasingly adopting accelerationism.

Accelerationists believe that modern liberal democracy and post-industrial society is irreparably flawed and riddled with contradictions, all of which must be destroyed to rebuild a different world in its place.⁹ To be successful, the seeds for society’s destruction must come from the inherent contradictions and instability within liberal democracy itself. As a result, the cumulative individual actions of accelerationists are critical for identifying these inconsistencies, sowing the seeds of discontent, and adding fuel to the fire.¹⁰

By distorting political discourse and focusing on polarizing subjects, exploiting confirmation biases, and dismantling widespread trust in political institutions, accelerationists hope to speed up what they consider to be the inevitable collapse of liberal society.



This can be accomplished through a variety of violent and non-violent means, like using firearms during attacks on minorities to provoke polarizing discussions of white supremacy and Second Amendment rights; or by pointing out inconsistencies in media reporting on controversial topics to suggest confirmation of their conspiracies.

Ultimately, the goal is the destruction of the current status quo and governing principles, after which the “true Aryans” will take governing control through the principles of “natural” order and traditional racial hierarchies.

In tandem with this ideological trend, xenophobic extremists today are increasingly likely to operate as lone actors or in small cells and less likely to organize as groups.

The lone-actor phenomenon within xenophobic extremism is not a new one. It has been a frequent tactic of xenophobic extremists for decades. However, during the mid-to-late 2010s, prominent groups like Atomwaffen Division and the Base attempted to organize their activities within small groups, which became a dominant form of neo-Nazi activity in North America for several years.

Today, however, xenophobic extremists – like other forms of extremism – view this model as being largely unsuccessful due to the relative ease by which these groups were infiltrated by law enforcement. Therefore, violence is once again more likely to come from individuals who have been radicalized by the wider ideology and who act alone. Contemporary manifestations of this tactic trace their origin to a phenomenon called ‘Siege Culture.’

Siege Culture is an appropriation of the writings by prominent neo-Nazi James Mason entitled *Siege*, a series of newsletters he wrote in the 80s and 90s which garnered a large following in the broader neo-Nazi community.¹¹ The newsletters-turned-book regained popularity over the last 10 years - partly due to Atomwaffen Division members who took an interest in repopularising its message - and became de rigueur in many online neo-Nazi and white nationalist communities like Iron March and Fascist Forge.

A 5th edition of the book was released in 2022. Mason’s primary message in *Siege* urged the modern-day neo-Nazi to take action independently to spark chaos leading to a race war, much in line with accelerationism. *Siege* encouraged lone-actor violence and argued that organized groups drew too much attention from law enforcement and should be avoided.

As noted by one of our interviewees,

“It’s interesting because that’s a reflection of a lot of the conversations I’ve seen in neo-Nazi groups. There’s [a] post-organizational move. There’s a lot of previously influential neo-Nazis who have said “stop giving yourself names. Groups like Atomwaffen or the Base are stupid, they’re fed traps. If you’re going to be a neo-Nazi, be a neo-Nazi, but do it on your own and get a couple friends together and buy a house in the woods and go do that.”

That was really the main thrust of Siege, where a lot of the groups were penetrated and shut down by law enforcement and so the leading [neo-] Nazis were all saying “stop being stupid. Go out and do this on your own. Wait for society to collapse or shoot people when you can, and help it move forward.” It exposed the lack of stability within their movement...”

– Law enforcement official

Siege Culture is also reminiscent of earlier writings by the prominent white supremacist Louis Beam Jr., who wrote an infamous essay titled “Leaderless Resistance.” He argues that extremist organizations were too vulnerable to law enforcement action and instead called upon lone actors to pick up arms.

It is no coincidence that Siege Culture has become popular alongside accelerationism. According to accelerationists, organized groups are not needed to be successful. They can be an obstacle to their perceived success. So instead, accelerationists tend to rely on small cells, lone-actors, and online engagement to spread their ideas. And, unlike older generations of xenophobic extremists, accelerationists believe efforts to engage in mass politics are a lost cause because the political system itself is corrupt.¹²

Where they do engage, many believe that voting for the most politically extreme candidate – no matter their ideological leaning – is a way to usher in the chaos that will eventually rip the system apart.¹³

Due to accelerationism’s focus on violence, groups and individuals who espouse this ideology may also be more likely to pursue violent tactics to achieve their objectives and reject peaceful attempts to influence existing political structures.

Many of the newer generation of xenophobic extremist groups espoused this type of ideology, including the former Atomwaffen Division (AWD) and the Base, which blended neo-Nazism with violent accelerationism and operated mostly via small and localized cells that focused on tactical training for the coming race war. However, due to their affiliation under a central name and leader, they were susceptible and eventually succumbed to law enforcement infiltration, as will be described below.

Xenophobic extremists acting alone have leveraged accelerationist ideas in several recent attacks around the world. Additionally, their attacks have utilized the internet in new ways. For example, their manifestos – often posted online before their attacks – have become a popular way to provide inspiration and ideological material for others. For example, the 2022 Buffalo, New York supermarket attacker posted his manifesto online, detailing his belief in the ‘great replacement’ conspiracy before the attack.¹⁴

Livestreaming the attack has also become a recent trend.¹⁵ For example, the 2019 Christchurch shooter livestreamed the attack via Facebook. He also wrote and published his manifesto online. In one section titled "Destabilization and Accelerationism," he wrote that his motivation for the attack was to "add momentum to the pendulum swings of history, further destabilizing and polarizing Western society in order to eventually destroy the current nihilistic, hedonistic, individualistic insanity that has taken control of Western thought... The change we need to enact only arises in the great crucible of crisis."¹⁶

Unfortunately, the ease with which manifestos can spread online has provided a way of inspiring others to mobilize to violence. A month after the Christchurch attack, a man entered a synagogue in Poway, California, and opened fire on worshippers. He left a manifesto detailing his admiration for the Christchurch shooter and promoting key accelerationist ideas.

In particular, he wrote that he "encouraged" others to use firearms to provoke "the US government to start confiscating guns. People will defend their right to own a firearm – civil war has started... Make the Jew play all of his cards to make it apparent to more people how their rights are being taken away right before their eyes."

09A/ONA

Order of the Nine Angles (O9A) is an occult group whose ideology is underpinned by a blend of supernatural beliefs, Satanism, and neo-Nazism. Founded in the U.K. in the 1970s, adherents believe that history can be divided into a series of Aeons which involve cycles of struggle, power, domination, societal collapse, and chaos. Each of these cycles is inevitable, but adherents believe that corrupt Judeo-Christian elites have sabotaged the current Aeon.

Adherents praise Nazi Germany and believe the Holocaust was a sham designed to delegitimize and erase their 'achievements' from the global collective consciousness. As a result, they believe the only way to rescue the current Aeon is to ignite a neo-Nazi revolution and violently overthrow the Judeo-Christian elites. One of the core features of initiation for new members, which makes this group of particular security concern, is the expectation they spend a minimum of 6 months in 'insight roles' by infiltrating established organizations such as religious groups, the police, or the army.¹⁷

O9A received a fresh wave of attention due to several recent high-profile incidents. In the U.S. over the summer of 2020, a soldier was arrested after allegedly passing on sensitive details about his unit to O9A, hoping that an attack would be carried out against it.¹⁸ In Toronto in 2020, police arrested and charged a man after the gruesome murder of a local Mosque volunteer, Mohamed-Aslim Zafis. New information since his arrest indicates the perpetrator likely adhered to O9A.¹⁹ The number of recent incidents related to O9A indicates that the group warrants continued monitoring and study.

Iron March Data Leak

Iron March – a now-defunct online messaging forum for neo-Nazis – was once one of the most important online hubs which facilitated the emergence of a new generation of xenophobic extremists. The site was founded by a Russian nationalist in March 2011 and stayed online until it was shut down abruptly in 2017.²⁰

Despite its short-lived existence, Iron March quickly became a bustling platform for militant neo-Nazi and white nationalist groups and sympathizers across the world, including the Nordic Resistance in several Nordic countries, National Action in the U.K., the Ukrainian Azov Battalion, the Atomwaffen Division (AWD), Combat-18 and the Base in the U.S. and Canada; and the Antipodean Resistance in Australia, to name a few.²¹ While some of these groups existed before Iron March, like the Nordic Resistance, others were formed due to online collaboration like National Action, the Base, and AWD.

Many of the site's users and groups embraced Siege Culture and accelerationism, seizing the opportunity for transnational collaboration. For example, due to communications through Iron March, groups like the Nordic Resistance and CasaPound – a neo-fascist political party in Italy – began collaborating with other, newer groups online.²²

Additionally, several site members went on to commit or attempt acts of violence around the world, including in Canada. For example, in 2015, the RCMP foiled a plot by three individuals – two men from Halifax and a woman from Illinois – to commit a mass shooting at the Halifax Shopping Centre.²³

The American woman and one of the Canadian men met online and formed an online romance over their shared admiration of the Columbine massacre. The pair routinely visited websites that glorified mass killings, and the American woman routinely posted on Iron March, where she also allegedly had a brief online relationship with the site's founder.²⁴

After several weeks, the two planned to meet in Canada in February 2015 and commit a mass shooting at the shopping centre. However, a tip to the police led the woman to be arrested at the airport. Her online romantic interest took his own life shortly after police surrounded his home. The third Canadian individual is serving a ten-year sentence for his role in the plot.

In 2019, many of Iron March's records were leaked and posted online by an anonymous anti-fascist activist, which included private messages and posts between members, IP, and email addresses, and in some cases, names. The data leak revealed the identity of many Iron March users, including several Canadians who attempted to foster connections with individuals across the United States and Europe.²⁵

According to a CBC News report, at least 88 users were based in Canadian cities.²⁶ Analysis by Bellingcat – an investigative journalism group based in the Netherlands, specializing in online investigations and fact-checking using open-source materials – revealed that many groups on Iron March sought to recruit current and former military members to destroy and overthrow the government through a fascist paramilitary insurgency.²⁷ Atomwaffen Division (described next) set up funding networks and actively tried to infiltrate the U.S. military to recruit and learn combat and tactical skills.²⁸

THE NEW GENERATION OF VIOLENT WHITE SUPREMACISTS AND NEO-NAZIS

The Legacies of Atomwaffen Division/ National Socialist Order

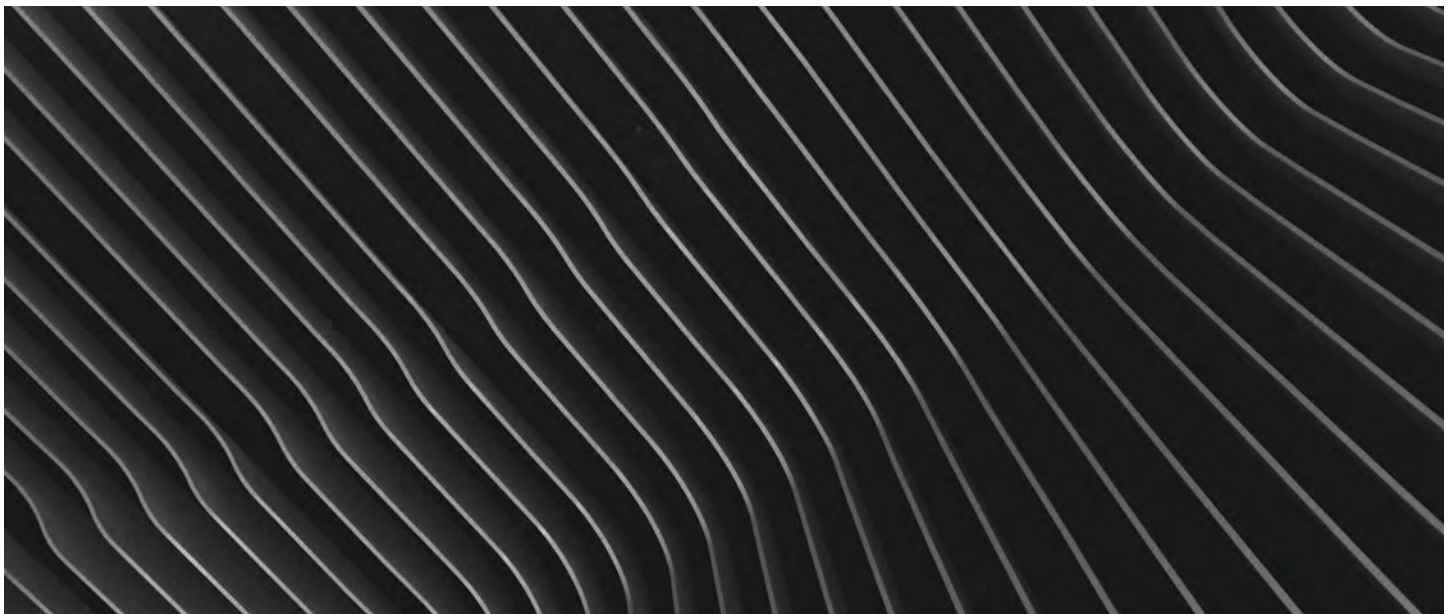
Atomwaffen (AWD), recently rebranded as the National Socialist Order, was one of the higher-profile accelerationist neo-Nazi groups to emerge in the last decade. It is also one of the most recent additions to Canada's official list of terrorist entities, added in February 2021.²⁹ It began as many similar groups did on the now defunct online hub for neo-Nazis, Iron March.³⁰ Iron March and associated websites like Fascist Forge – the now-defunct heir-apparent to Iron March – played an important role in facilitating the emergence of a new generation of white nationalist and neo-Nazi groups who blended accelerationism with their pre-existing ideas on race and ethnicity.

During the height of the group's activities during the mid-to-late 2010s, AWD members and supporters were found across the U.S., Canada, Europe, Ukraine, and Russia.

AWD supporters have also been involved in several high-profile criminal and terrorist offenses in the U.S. and Canada.

For example, in 2019, the FBI stopped two individuals from Washington traveling in northern Texas with assault rifles and nearly 2,000 rounds of ammunition.³¹

In the same year, Kaleb James Cole – a 24-year-old leader of AWD's Washington State Cell – was deported and banned for life from Canada.³² Cole made frequent trips across the border into British Columbia, eventually attracting the attention of the Canadian Border Services Agency after press reports linked him to AWD and identified that he had travelled overseas to Ukraine. He was subsequently held by Canadian authorities and deported and barred for life due to his involvement in "an organization that may engage in terrorism," as per Section 34 [1][F] of the Canadian Immigration Code.



More recently, a Texas leader of AWD was sentenced in the spring of 2021 for what the Assistant U.S. Attorney on the case called “the most widespread swattingⁱ conspiracy in the country.”³³ According to officials, the perpetrator was not alone and had co-conspirators in Canada and the U.K., who chose their targets based on race. By calling in false emergencies, perpetrators accomplish two goals: strike fear in the location of the emergency, which can be xenophobically motivated (e.g., a historically black college; religious institutions like a synagogue, etc.), while also causing emergency services to waste precious resources on false emergencies.

These and other arrests were part of a large sweep carried out around the U.S. against AWD, whose members have been linked to at least five murders.³⁴ These arrests left the group largely defunct and shattered their ability to form and operate anything resembling a traditional hierarchical terrorist organization.

Although the structure of AWD as an organization has since fallen out of favour with most xenophobic extremists, its legacy and the ideas its members spread persist. Perhaps one of the most important ideological legacies left by AWD was re-popularizing James Mason’s Siege.

In 2017, members of AWD tracked Mason down in Denver, where he lived, and received his blessing to promote his ideas online and within the group itself.³⁵

Unfortunately, AWD’s post-organizational legacy and absence in favour of smaller and more isolated individuals and cells may also make identifying and preventing xenophobic extremist attacks more difficult.

This is evidenced by the recent mass shooting at a Buffalo, New York supermarket by an accelerationist lone actor inspired by the ‘great replacement’ conspiracy theory. In his manifesto, he detailed the same accelerationist points emphasized earlier by AWD.³⁶

Another important legacy left by AWD are the significant transnational ties established across Europe and Russia. This creates the potential for AWD’s ideas to continue to spread and can make rooting out sympathizers more difficult.

For example, in April 2022, German police arrested 4 individuals, and are investigating 10 others who are allegedly supporters of a group called Atomwaffen Division Deutschland, an offshoot of the North American brand of AWD.³⁷

More recently, in May 2022, Swedish police arrested a man with enough bomb-making materials to “kill hundreds.”³⁸ According to court documents obtained in the case, the man drew inspiration from AWD, and other infamous neo-Nazis like Anders Breivik.

Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Ukraine is particularly important as the ongoing conflict acts as a physical “battlefield laboratory” where followers can travel to gain combat experience.³⁹

During its height, AWD allegedly established connections with the Azov Battalion, a Ukrainian paramilitary militia that has promoted Nazi symbols and ideas.⁴⁰ With the ongoing war in Ukraine, it remains to be seen if individuals linked to the xenophobic extremist movement will continue to leverage these transnational linkages to participate in combat. This has occurred in other instances with tragic consequences.

ⁱ Swatting is the action of making false bomb threats to emergency services with the aim of overwhelming law enforcement.

For example, The Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), an ultranationalist white supremacist group based in St. Petersburg, Russia, also actively encourages white supremacists from around the world to travel and participate in combat training in Ukraine.⁴¹ To date, at least one terror attack in Europe has been directly linked to white supremacists who trained with RIM.⁴²

Like the transnational ties forged in Europe and Russia, in the past, AWD supporters and members have also engaged in some cross-border movements and collaboration between the U.S. and Canada prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. One notable series of arrests in 2019 involved an AWD plot to attack power stations in the south-eastern U.S.⁴³

In an unsealed affidavit, the FBI alleges that an Ohio teen communicated over encrypted messaging applications with more than a dozen people to plan an elaborate attack on the U.S. power grid during the summer of 2020 and aspired to create militant cells inspired by AWD around the country. One of these contacts was a Canadian man who attempted to cross the border into Detroit. Border agents stopped him and found an assault rifle, two other guns, and white supremacy and neo-Nazi content on his phone, including a copy of *Siege*.⁴⁴ From this arrest, officials discovered the plot, which would set off the wider investigation.

Although North American chapters of AWD are now largely defunct, its ideas continue to inspire others, and recent arrests in Europe indicate that outside North America, remnants of the network remain.⁴⁵ Although AWD is certainly not responsible for creating ideas such as *Siege Culture* or accelerationism, AWD's rapid rise and widely publicized fall as a keynote group espousing these ideas has certainly had an impact on and inspired and inspired the current landscape of the xenophobic extremist movement today.

The Base

The Base, another recent addition to Canada's terrorist list alongside AWD, is a similar white nationalist accelerationist group.⁴⁶ Founded around the same time as AWD, it emerged from the same online ecosystem of white nationalist and neo-Nazi forums and boasted significant transnational ties and opportunities for paramilitary training.

Like AWD, the Base was also the subject of a similarly effective police takedown that has effectively dismantled the group's organizational capacity in the last few years. However, the group's ideas are still popular amongst neo-Nazi sympathizers and supporters. Like AWD, it retains the potential to inspire small cells or individuals from across the xenophobic extremist movement to conduct violent attacks.

Founded online by an American living in Russia, Rinaldo Nazzaro was heavily involved in recruitment and instructing members on how to avoid detection and carry out attacks.⁴⁷ Unlike AWD, which touted a largely leaderless structure, Nazzaro acted as a key decision-maker and moral leader for the group throughout its existence.

The group promoted the importance of paramilitary and survivalist training and sought out current or ex-military personnel. For example, in a series of covert recordings passed on to U.S. civil rights organizations, Nazzaro and other Base leaders were recorded during recruitment meetings indicating the group was eager to recruit experienced soldiers from western militaries across North America, the U.K., and Europe.⁴⁸



The Base's activities, rooted in their accelerationist ideas, included physical survival and weapons training in preparation for the aftermath of an imminent collapse of western governments. For example, a string of arrests across the United States in 2020 targeted individuals involved in operating a series of 'hate camps' for Base members to engage in tactical and firearms training.⁴⁹

The paramilitary structure of the Base is also a concern from a recruitment perspective. To date in Canada, other militia-type groups that offered this type of training, namely the Canadian iteration of the now defunct Three Percenters, possessed some, albeit weak, norms against violence and demonstrated a willingness to expel overtly homicidal individuals from their ranks. These norms, however, were largely absent within the subculture of the Base, whereby its extreme rhetoric and activities appealed to individuals deemed 'too extreme' for other militia-type groups.

One of the Base's 'hate camps,' purchased by a corporate entity affiliated with Nazzaro (most of the other properties were owned by its members), was located roughly 50 kilometres south of the Canada-U.S. border in north-eastern Washington state. It is unclear, however, if training occurred at this specific location.⁵⁰ Its location in a remote area in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) has long captured the imagination of white supremacists and militia movements in the United States and Canada. They view the region both as being a safe "fallback" area post-governmental collapse, and as a region hospitable to the emergence of a white proto ethno-state.⁵¹

This belief dates back to at least the 1980s and white supremacist ideologues like Richard Butler, David Lane, and Harold Covington. Lane and Butler were linked to two important groups active during the late 20th century, namely the Order and Aryan Nations. Covington was active in a number of domestic and international white supremacist groups and was an advocate for the "Northwest Territorial Imperative".

The continued resonance of the PNW in the minds of the next generation of xenophobic extremists is further evidence of some inter-generational transfer of beliefs and ideas between successive manifestations of the movement. For example, several members of the Base expressed affinity for Covington's beliefs and attempts at organizing. And at least two Base members, including Nazzaro himself, met or tried to meet Covington before his death in 2018.⁵²

Like the cross-border activities of AWD discussed above, the relative porosity of the Canada-U.S. border (e.g., across British Columbia and Alberta) raises the possibility that the region could serve as a conduit for illegal travel between the two countries in the furtherance of xenophobic extremist goals, including those once held by the Base and its supporters.

Cross-border cooperation between members in the U.S. and Canada has occurred in the past. It presents the opportunity for Canadians to gain direct access to paramilitary training in 'hate camps' described above. For example, in 2020, an American was sentenced to 5 years in prison after he transported a Canadian man from Winnipeg, Patrik Mathews, to participate in paramilitary training camps including firearm drills.⁵³ However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts on cross-border activity, it remains to be seen if cross-border collaboration between American and Canadian xenophobic extremists will increase.

Similar to AWD, the Base in the U.S. suffered serious setbacks by law enforcement. In January 2020, the FBI conducted a series of raids and arrests targeting the group's leadership structure. The FBI also planted an infiltrator in the Georgia Base cell, leading to several members' arrests.⁵⁴ In a series of leaked phone calls hours after members received news about the arrests, Navarro is heard giving a pep talk to other nervous Base leaders, citing AWD as inspiration:

"Look at Atomwaffen. They've been through everything. They've been through the satanic panic, through all kinds of doxxing, now through their own series of arrests, et-cetera, et-cetera... There was a time where they almost disappeared, but they stuck it out and are still around. The important thing about maintaining the brand is it can be salvaged and be rehabilitated, and that would give us more credibility in the long run."

– Navarro on a call with other remaining Base leaders following news of several Base member arrests.⁵⁵

After the initial arrests, phone and chat logs show that some members began to panic, begging Nazzaro to remove them from chat groups or announcing their departure from the group altogether. Others, like a high-profile Base leader in Michigan who had organized 'hate camps,' strengthened their resolve, stating they would not be arrested without a fight. However, he was later arrested and taken into custody peacefully.⁵⁶

Several days later, the Guardian published an article that revealed Nazzaro's identity, which sent him into hiding.⁵⁷ Before doing so, Nazzaro gave another member access to the group's Telegram and email accounts, who turned out to be an anti-fascist infiltrator.

The infiltrator publicly embarrassed the group by changing the group's Telegram name to 'the Base is a Honey Pot,' and posting memes that poked fun at Nazzaro and the neo-Nazi community.⁵⁸ This last act by the infiltrator likely permanently damaged the group's reputation beyond repair, and so far, the group has shown no credible signs of resurgence.

As stated above, it is still possible the group's legacy will inspire lone actors and small cells from across the xenophobic extremist movement.

The Canadian Armed Forces

White supremacy and neo-Nazi groups across many countries have a clear desire to recruit current and former military personnel.⁵⁹ The media highlighted this after the January 6th Capitol riots in the U.S., where the Pentagon found that at least 1 in 10 rioters had links to the U.S. military.⁶⁰ Similarly, several members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have been found to have links to Proud Boys groups, The Base, Atomwaffen, Combat-18 and others.⁶¹

A notable case was the arrest of a former CAF reservist in the U.S., who prosecutors accuse of attempting to recruit for the Base to set off a race war.⁶² He fled from Winnipeg after the local media publicly revealed his involvement in a hate group, which sparked an investigation by the CAF. The RCMP raided his home and seized several weapons.⁶³ The FBI later arrested him in the U.S. where he was found carrying a firearm and allegedly participated in paramilitary training provided by Base members.⁶⁴ Later in 2021, he and one of his co-conspirators were sentenced to 9 years in prison.⁶⁵

This case indicates what some argue is a larger CAF issue. An internal CAF report from November 2018 indicated that since 2013, 16 members of the Canadian armed forces and reserves were found to have links with extremist groups, including the Proud Boys, Atomwaffen, La Meute, Hammerskins Nation, the Three Percenters and the Soldiers of Odin; though not all of these classify as white supremacy or neo-Nazi groups.⁶⁶ In addition, at least 37 other CAF members were alleged to have engaged in racist or hate-motivated conduct between 2013 and 2018, though not associated with a formal group.⁶⁷

Overall, these numbers represent a very small proportion of the CAF, and the report ultimately concludes that, at present, there is no “significant threat to the CAF/DND.”⁶⁸

A more recent report by the Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination from January 2022 noted that “membership in extremist groups is growing, it is becoming increasingly covert, and technological advances such as Darknet and encryption methods pose significant challenges in detecting these members.”⁶⁹ Although the report does not specify the number of individuals with links to extremist groups or ideologies, publicly reported cases underscore the disproportionate effects even one CAF member’s involvement with an IMVE group can have on the military.⁷⁰

The presence of extremists – particularly xenophobic extremists – within the CAF confirms the larger trend of valuing combat training and explicitly recruiting current and former members of the armed forces.

Correspondingly, the 2019 Iron March data leak exposed the identity of at least 88 users based in Canadian cities, several of which claimed to be CAF members.⁷¹ Many users on Iron March, including these self-proclaimed CAF members, actively encouraged other Canadians on the forum to join the CAF or the armed forces in their country to obtain firearms training.⁷²

As a result of a series of data leaks, high-profile incidents and media reporting, the issue of white supremacy and neo-Nazi sympathies within Canada's military has since been acknowledged by the Department of Defence.⁷³ Researchers are developing policy frameworks to improve recruitment, moderation, and security processes for the CAF, which aims to shut out violent extremism from its ranks and address the more pervasive issues of racism, discrimination, and bias within the institution.⁷⁴

As part of these efforts, the CAF has announced a new system to monitor and track suspected incidents of hateful conduct and adapted a series of new policies designed to address hate and extremism in its ranks.⁷⁵

For example, in 2020, the CAF introduced its "hateful conduct" policy, which seeks to help identify and weed out service members with potential ties to hateful or extremist groups.

Alongside its new policy, the CAF has also broadened the definition of "hateful content" to include "the display or communication of words, symbols, or images, by a CAF member, that they knew or ought reasonably to have known would constitute, encourage, justify or promote violence or hatred against a person or persons on an identifiable group, based on their national or ethnic origin, race, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics or disability."⁷⁶

IDEOLOGICAL FLUIDITY BETWEEN IMVE GROUPS

A recent trend within the IMVE spectrum has been the mixture of various ideological motivations traditionally seen as distinct from each other. For example, in several instances of violence perpetrated by incels, the assailants also espoused a variety of xenophobic extremist ideologies.

For example, in May 2020, a man from Queens, New York, was arrested in a sting operation after allegedly purchasing illegally defaced weapons known as "ghost guns" from undercover agents. He intended to use them during the impending "boogaloo," a term used by several extremist groups to refer to a race or civil war.⁷⁷

According to the federal complaints, the man wanted to form an "incel hit squad" and expressed anti-Semitic sentiments, similar to many neo-Nazi groups.

In February of 2020, a man committed two mass shootings in Hanau, Germany, which left 10 people dead, including himself. He left behind a manifesto that included a myriad of ideas drawn from across the IMVE spectrum, including calling for the extermination of non-whites and his self-identification as an involuntary celibate, noting he hadn't had a relationship with a woman in 18 years. However, his association with the broader online incel community remains contested.⁷⁸

Finally, in 2017 a member of the Atomwaffen Division converted to Islam and then killed two of his roommates (also members of Atomwaffen) for allegedly disrespecting his beliefs.⁷⁹

ANTI-AUTHORITY EXTREMISM

Background and Ideological Trends in Alberta

Individuals and groups espousing anti-authority extremism are motivated by belief systems centered on rejecting the power and legitimacy of the modern state, as well as the sovereignty of the individual. To justify their beliefs, anti-authority extremists refer to a body of false but legal-sounding rules they claim to be the 'true' law.⁸⁰

Adherents lay claim to privileged knowledge of certain processes by which historical documents like the Magna Carta or the U.S. Constitution, paired with a defined set of pseudo-legal arguments, can be used to 'liberate' people from the necessity of following laws or being subject to the whims of corporations.

In Canada and Alberta, individuals espousing particular anti-authority ideologies have gone by different groups' names, including the loosely connected detaxer movement, Freeman on the Land (FOTL) or Sovereign Citizens (SC). However, today, many anti-authority adherents no longer associate themselves with groups and can instead be categorized broadly as the pseudo-legal movement (PLM).

PLM adherents are under the false assumption that they are exempt from Canadian civil law simply by claiming legal impunity. Like other extremist ideologies, many of these pseudo-legal beliefs are built on conspiratorial foundations. PLM adherents believe that the current government authority is illegitimate, yet this 'fact' is unknown by the general population.⁸¹ In this way, PLM adherents claim to have 'privileged' knowledge of the 'true' nature of government and authority.

Many PLM adherents use historical but legally-irrelevant documents such as the Magna Carta to justify what they view as "lawful dissent." The Magna Carta refers to a treaty between sovereign people and King John of the English monarchy in 1215. This treaty has no relevance or implication in Canada's legal framework and cannot be used as a permissible argument in a Canadian court of law. However, "lawful dissenters" take on an Oath of Allegiance to the Barons committee as part of their "lawful duty to disobey statutes" under Article 61 of the Magna Carta.

Variants of pseudo-legal beliefs exist in multiple countries, particularly in the U.S., the U.K., and Canada. The most prominent manifestation of this type of belief system in Canada was the FOTL movement, which evolved from the earlier detaxer movement, an adaptation of U.S.-style pseudo-law for Commonwealth countries.

Since the early-to-mid 2010s, however, the FOTL ideology has experienced a steady decline in popularity, largely due to the withdrawal of key FOTL figures – like Robert A. Menard – from the public as a result of arrests and public losses in court, as well as the general failure of FOTL legal arguments and concepts in court.⁸² However, communications with a confidential Government of Canada source indicate that, despite the academic consensus of a decline in activity, the FOTL have seen somewhat of a resurgence during the Covid-19 pandemic. It remains to be seen if this resurgence will continue or decline due to fewer public health measures.

Despite the fluctuating popularity of the FOTL, belief in 'lawful dissent' and the misapplication of the Magna Carta has remained to define features of the current PLM wave. Specifically, the last several years have seen the re-emergence of pseudo-legal 'gurus': individuals looking to profit from instructing others about how to opt-out of the social contract, as well as an increase in the number of protest groups using pseudo-legal arguments borrowed from the anti-authority ideological space.

There have also been increasing signs of anti-authority activity outside of the traditional hotspots in North America, particularly in some European countries, such as the Reichsbürger in Germany, and Australian variants of FOTL. As mentioned in OPV's 2019 report, anti-authority adherents tend to be overwhelmingly non-violent and prefer to rely on using false liens, lawsuits, or other legal documents that lack credible factual basis as a tool of harassment. This continues to be true, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, where we have seen a disorganized but prominent new wave of PLM adherents in Canada and Alberta, which blend traditional anti-authority narratives, anti-public health order rhetoric, and conspiracy theories.

Although rare, when anti-authority extremists resort to violence, their primary target tends to be law enforcement and government officials. In a recent example, a 26-year man in Alberta was arrested in February of 2021 on charges related to possessing weapons prohibited in Canada, explosive substances, police gear, and impersonating a peace officer.⁸³

It is worth noting that the man also possessed small amounts of triacetone triperoxide (TATP), a substance used in the making of explosives and has been used in other high-profile terrorist attacks, including the London bombings in 2005.⁸⁴ The arrest was allegedly prompted by posts he made online, which the RCMP described as "involving anti-government messaging."⁸⁵

Although details of the online messages were initially limited, later investigation revealed the man was a frequent poster on the anonymous message board known as 4chan, and his beliefs appeared to align closely with other xenophobic extremists.⁸⁶ However, the RCMP noted that despite these beliefs, there was also "some anti-government type of sentiment" to many of his posts.⁸⁷

A new trend since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the targeting of public health authorities, which rarely occurred before 2020. Additionally, PLM adherents have also increasingly attended protests, which has become a common way to increase visibility and make their sentiments known.

For example, a highly militarized anti-authority fringe group known as the Boogaloo movement in the U.S. found fertile ground in the wake of Covid-19 and civil rights movements, and individuals linked to the movement have since been involved in several high-profile attacks and plots.⁸⁸ Like other anti-authority movements, the Boogaloo movement is only loosely connected and individuals appear to operate in small, disconnected cells. Although this particular movement has yet to gain similar momentum in Canada, many attendees of the 2022 Trucker Convoy across the country evidenced similar anti-authority sentiments.

Many anti-authority groups and PLM ideologies at anti-public health rallies have led some to speculate if the Covid-19 pandemic will lead to an increase in extremist radicalization. However, the link between the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and extremist activity is not yet known. For example, research published in March 2021 by OPV researchers has found that while online extremist activity has increased since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, particularly amongst anti-authority groups, it has yet to translate into a commensurate rise in terrorism.⁸⁹

Status of Anti-Authority Extremism in Alberta

Due to the lack of reliable and consistent data on membership, the number of people within Alberta who are connected to the Freeman on the Land (FOTL) and other similar anti-authority ideological groups is difficult to ascertain.⁹⁰ This is largely because, unlike some other groups within the IMVE category, anti-authority ideologies are often adopted as a way of life rather than based on association with a group.

Therefore, although individuals may borrow ideas and beliefs from FOTL ideology, they may not view themselves as 'members' or even be connected to the FOTL in any meaningful way. This creates a constellation of loosely or entirely disconnected individuals with varying beliefs. This was echoed in our interviews with law enforcement officials across Alberta, who overwhelmingly agreed that individuals who hold anti-authority beliefs tend to be unconnected and largely independent of one another:

"A lot of these people that have these anti-societal views, a lot of them are loners, that's what I'm finding. And so, you have that plus you have the whole Covid thing, if you have someone who's a Freeman on the Land – because we have a few of those too – they're more individualized."

– Law enforcement official

"We're fairly isolated and we only have one highway in and out. And so, we do have people that come here [and] who believe this area is somewhat untouched... We have had in the past, actually one individual who came to Canada on a visa, and then decided to use that visa to start a cabin in the woods. And built that cabin on Crown land, which is obviously unlawful."

"So, we have had that kind of isolationist mentality exhibited. We also have someone else in the community who kind of adheres to the Freeman code or ethos, or anti-government. But, very much those individuals, their main objective is to be left alone. They don't really have a strong interaction [with us]; they're not trying to muster up a following. They're not trying to influence the local community."

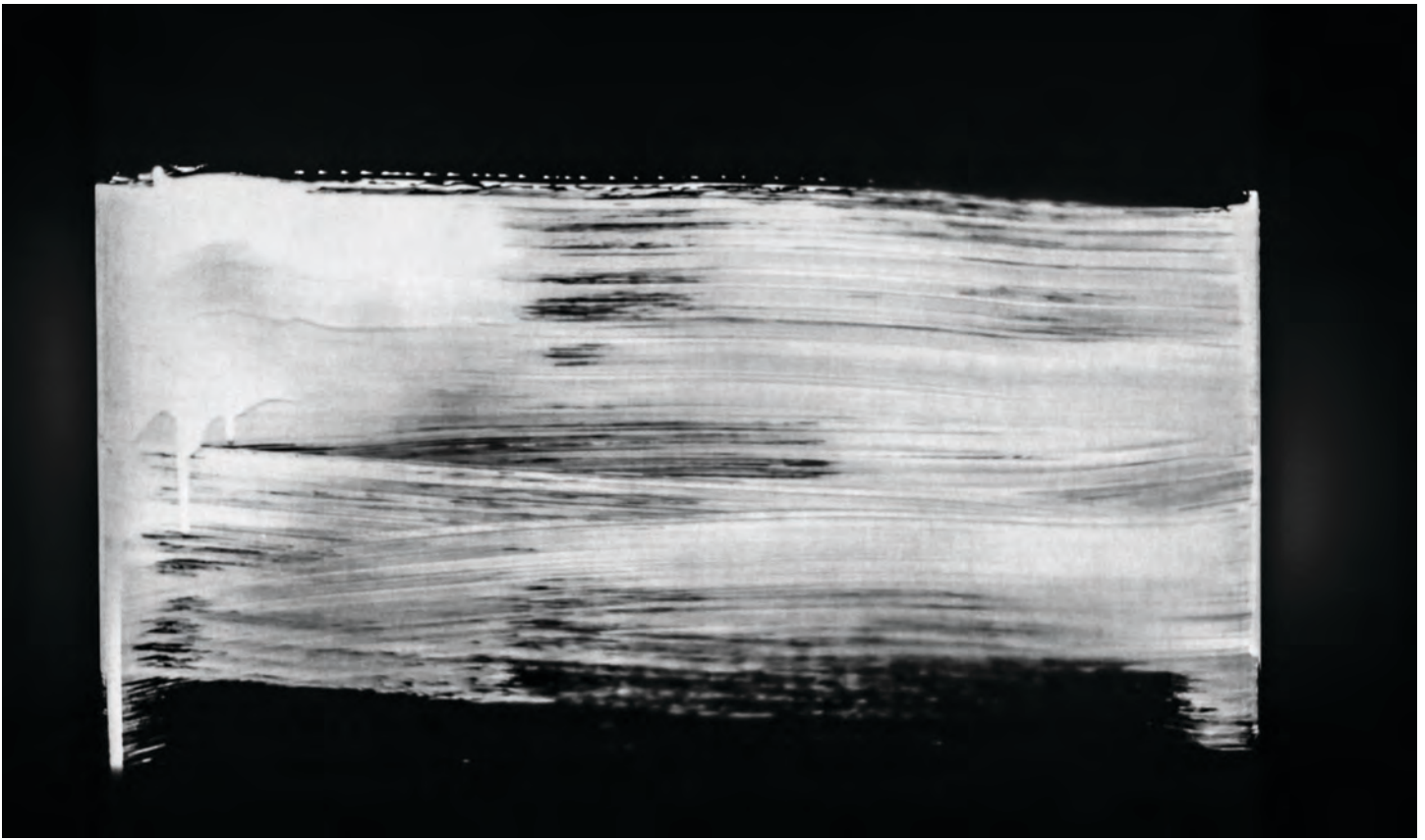
– Law enforcement official

"I don't think the [anti-authority extremists] I remember encountering here subscribe to that specific ideology of Freeman on the Land, or Sovereign Citizens. Just more of, well, they'll say some of the phrases that those groups use. The one's we've seen are not like outright full members of those groups."

– Law enforcement official

"We do have Freeman on the Land... [But] they are kind of scattered, and we haven't seen any instances where they're gathering together or working collaboratively."

– Law enforcement official



“We get the sporadic popping [up] of [FOTL]. Usually, it’ll be something as simple as a traffic stop, and they claim that they’re Freeman and they don’t have to follow the rules. They don’t have to have a license and stuff like that. But commonly, for two things, we don’t see them grouped together because they’re Freeman and they don’t really seem to want to follow the rules or be [linked] up with anyone. [They] just want to be left alone.”

– Law enforcement official

Despite their historically disconnected nature, the FOTL remain one of the most well-known anti-authority ideological groups in Canada and Alberta, and their rhetoric continues to be used by the contemporary PLM or other anti-authority extremists. Research suggests that throughout its existence, the FOTL has splintered and has multiple arms, of which adherents may only loosely connect themselves to FOTL.⁹¹ For example, according to law enforcement officials we interviewed, FOTL ideas continue to be influential in the PLM today, even if individuals do not identify themselves as Freeman:

“[The new wave of anti-authority extremism is] getting very close [to Freeman on the Land]. If you look at the Freeman ideologies, their different beliefs, and now you’re seeing this anti-government [wave]... it’s getting to that very gray area... my concern is it does start to look like the Freeman ideologies.

And, it’s very hard for society, even law enforcement, when you deal with these individuals, to try and figure out are they pseudo-law promoters? When they start to identify they’re trying to break government and police laws, and bend them to their will... is this someone who’s going down the FOTL road, or is this just a watered-down version? It makes it really challenging right now, because we’re used to a more defined line between the two. But now we’re starting to see a lot of anti-government sentiment rise. If anything, it seems like it’s been a rejuvenation in some [FOTL] beliefs.”

– Law enforcement official

Although researchers have noted a decline of FOTL since about 2014, as noted above, a confidential Government of Canada source has said that the FOTL are currently experiencing a resurgence. Although it remains to be seen how sustainable this is, many law enforcement officials we interviewed noted a substantial increase in broader PLM in the province over the last few years:

“Anti-authority is, in my opinion, growing rapidly right now... For pseudo-law and pseudo-legal anti-authority groups and individuals, there’s been a substantial growth. Again, this is something that seems cyclical. So, there was a big pseudo-law cycle from 2009 until about 2014 that peaked around 2011-2012. That was the Freeman on the Land in Canada, Sovereign Citizens in the States. They were the dominant brand of pseudo-law that caught on back then. Nowadays, it’s a bit different. Again, we’re [seeing] that massive appetite [for that brand of extremism].”

– Law enforcement official

“The last two years with Covid has created an entirely new number of groups. Whether it’s anti-mask, anti-vax, [there’s] much more anti-government rearing its head.”

– Law enforcement official

FOTL, like other PLM adherents, commonly use dubious or illegitimate legal strategies to make their objections known and to obstruct or intimidate others.⁹²

For example, in 2020, an Alberta court decision barred a prominent anti-authority figure known as Jacquie Phoenix from representing a mother in a child-custody dispute.⁹³ Phoenix is part of a pseudo-legal scheme known as the Magna Carta Lawful Rebellion, which is “a loose collection of individuals who, in 2020, notified a collection of Alberta courts of their “legal immunity.”⁹⁴

This court decision is particularly notable for the lengths the judge went to refute the arguments made by Phoenix about the Magna Carta, noting that Article 61 —which pseudo-legal adherents argue justifies lawful dissent — was removed 700 years ago.⁹⁵

In response, Phoenix continued to send letters to court staff, threatening them with trial and life in prison, prompting the judge to issue a second ruling which addressed pseudo-legal and pandemic-related conspiracies.⁹⁶ The judge has since threatened Phoenix with contempt for threatening court staff.

Phoenix is a particularly prolific ‘guru’ in the online pseudo-legal community and offers Zoom courses on Magna Carta theory.⁹⁷ She also makes pseudo-legal arguments and tactics more accessible for anti-authority adherents by providing pseudo-legal documents that can be downloaded via her Facebook page.

Her beliefs are highly emblematic of this new wave of the PLM in Canada, whereby adherents deny the Covid-19 pandemic and related public health orders as “nonsense” and promote a variety of conspiracies, including QAnon-linked conspiracies. Indeed, many law enforcement officials have noted that these new anti-authority adherents overwhelmingly target public health officials as a result of public health orders and directives:

“Out of that anti-[Public Health Order] movement... especially the ones who have made threats of violence..., the majority of them seem to be more invested in the pseudo-legal part of anti-authority extremism... All of the threats of violence that we have seen have involved some kind of invalidation of government in general. Whether it’s because they believe that the Magna Carta has created a band of rebel barons and they’re going to pledge loyalty to them. Or, whether they believe there’s some offenses that have been committed by conventional politicians, and they believe that invalidates all of their authority and they just want the whole system gone. Those are the two main themes that we see.”

– Law enforcement official

“We’ve had some [anti-authority individuals] try to serve the mayor with special papers for the lockdowns or vaccinations and stuff like that. We’ve had some send letters to the chief, especially the Sovereign Citizen or Freemen on the Land people.”

– Law enforcement official

When anti-authority extremists resort to violence, they tend to target members of government and law enforcement. One notable, albeit dated, example is Ian Bush’s murder of a retired Chief Court of Canada tax judge Alban Garon, his wife and their neighbour in Ottawa in 2007. Bush was found guilty of triple homicide in 2015 and had long held contempt for the Canada Revenue Agency.

Although Bush had no formal ties to anti-authority groups, he likely ascribed to some form of anti-authority ideology, similar to that of the detaxers or the FOTL. Although the attacks occurred 15 years ago, the atrocity of Bush’s actions continue to inform court-dealings with anti-authority actors today. For example, an Ottawa-based human rights lawyer filed a criminal complaint against Phoenix in 2020, citing the murders committed by Bush as evidence that this kind of behavior and ideology should be taken seriously to avoid further tragedies.⁹⁸

Although violence by members of the anti-authority movement has been far less common in Canada than in the U.S., the threat cannot be ignored. A closer study of on-duty murders of members of law enforcement in Canada may reveal more cases where perpetrators were influenced, at least in part, by anti-authority grievances or ideologies. While the majority of law enforcement officials we interviewed agreed that their dealings with anti-authority extremists to date had been peaceful, they were careful to note that there is always the potential for an escalation to violence:

“The one we were involved with was actually a tax enforcement issue, initially, and then when we went and assisted Alberta Revenue folks with executing a warrant of arrest for their charges, it ended up then bringing [the individual] into physical conflict with police and now [they are] facing some criminal code charges in relation to resisting arrest. [This individual] had made some posts to local Facebook groups talking about the police being the Storm Troopers of the state, you know, that kind of stuff we see on and on.”

– Law enforcement official

“If [the province suffered a mass casualty] attack within the next three years, [xenophobic extremists are] probably the category I’d be least surprised for it to come out of. But, the probability in my opinion is equally close for jihadists, [and] incels. I’d give a lower rating to pseudo-legal groups. But, that is, I think, way more likely to be [an individual event]. That’s going to be, you know, somebody stabs a police officer during a traffic stop, or something like that.”

– **Law enforcement official**

“I think that potential [for violence] is there. There’s evidence to show it’s there. We haven’t had somebody act out, no. Not recent[ly]. But, the evidence is there to show it could happen.”

– **Law enforcement official**

Additionally, the current increase in PLM activity in the province could provide an environment which encourages violence. However, for now, the current and increasing trend in the province is for members of the PLM to resort to vexatious litigation as a way to make their sentiments known. As one member of law enforcement noted, this can have a substantial impact on government service, particularly during the pandemic:

“As far as actual radicalization into violence, it’s very limited out of the pseudo-law crowd. We’ve only seen a handful that I can think of in the last couple years who have actually started collecting weapons. For the most part, those people are just at the nuisance level, [but] that nuisance varies in impact. During the pandemic, the nuisance has been substantial. So, the impact on government service is pretty significant, but it’s not violent extremism, necessarily. It’s just extremism.”

– **Law enforcement official**

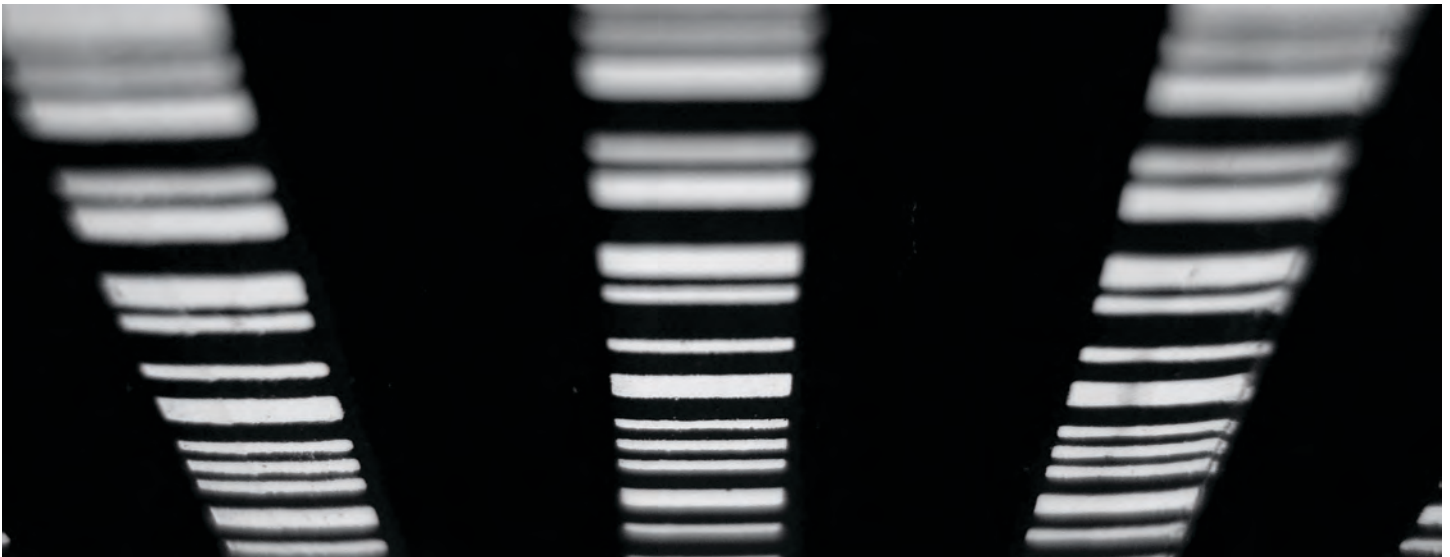
BOOGALOO MOVEMENT

The Boogaloo movement is a loosely organized movement that has been most active since 2019 and is based around a collection of anti-government beliefs. The group’s name is derived from a 1980s breakdancing movie *Breakin’ 2: Electric Boogaloo*, whose title was the subject of an online phrasal joke and became dubbed by adherents as *Civil War 2: Electric Boogaloo*. The term ‘boogaloo’ itself refers to a violent uprising or civil war and got its start online in the early-to-mid 2010s on 4chan.⁹⁹

The term ‘boogaloo’ has since been adopted by various extremist movements like radical gun rights activists, white nationalists, and neo-Nazis. It is meant to reference an impending civil or race war that will overthrow the government and establish a new order. Members of the Boogaloo movement tend to be heavily armed and espouse accelerationist violence, though they lack the hierarchy emblematic of other militias.¹⁰⁰

The ‘Boogaloo’ movement is a somewhat unique threat in that, despite being relatively ‘young,’ individuals claiming to be ‘boogaloo bois’ have engaged in a significant amount of violence in the U.S. in a short period. In line with the target selection common among the anti-authority movement, most violence has targeted government and law enforcement officials.

For example, two individuals in Minnesota were charged and sentenced to prison for attempting to provide material support and resources to Hamas, a foreign terrorist organization.¹⁰¹ The two self-proclaimed ‘boogaloo bois’ believed that providing support to Hamas would aid in their desire to overthrow the U.S. government because, as they believed, Hamas shared the same goals to harm the U.S. government.



Individuals claiming to be 'boogaloo bois' were also engaged in various protests in the U.S. in 2020, including civil rights and police reform protests and anti-Covid lockdown protests. In Las Vegas, three men connected with the Boogaloo movement were charged with conspiracy to cause destruction during the civil rights protests there, and for possessing Molotov cocktails.¹⁰² The extent to which the movement's support of civil liberties movements was genuine rather than opportunistic, however, remains open to debate.

In some cases, members have used the protests as cover to carry out attacks against law enforcement. In May and June of 2020, two ambush-style attacks were carried out in California. The first attack targeted two security officers in front of a federal courthouse in Oakland and resulted in the death of one officer.¹⁰³

The second occurred a week later in Santa Cruz, where sheriff's deputies were shot at and had pipe bombs thrown at them, resulting in the death of one deputy.¹⁰⁴ Both attacks were carried out by the same individual who wrote phrases like "boog" (short for boogaloo) and 'I became ungovernable' with his blood on the hood of his car before his arrest. The number of violent attacks and plots linked to the Boogaloo movement suggests the threat from their nascent movement in the U.S. is high.

Given the movement's growing presence and threat in the U.S., several Canadian media outlets and experts have since reported that there appears to be some growing online support in Canada.¹⁰⁵

This online growth was largely prompted by a long-promised federal ban on 'assault style weapons' introduced in the spring of 2020. However, despite initial concern about the threat a Boogaloo-style movement could pose in Canada, it appears that, at least for now, the movement has gained little traction in Canada. This is presumably at least partly due to differences in Canadians' political culture and relationship to firearms ownership.¹⁰⁶

Despite initial fears over the group's growing popularity online, there is currently no evidence that the group is particularly active in Canada. For example, there have been no reported Boogaloos at Canadian protests or organizations in person.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, many of the Facebook pages, which were allegedly populated by Canadian members discussing killing protesters and the RCMP, have since been removed.

In January 2021, a Montreal-based anti-government website claiming to be the “press platform” of the Boogaloo movement, which promoted armed protests in the U.S. ahead of the 2021 presidential inauguration, was taken down.¹⁰⁸ Although it remains unclear if the site’s moderator was indeed Canadian—as the RCMP investigation is ongoing—indications suggest there is at least some nascent online support for the movement within Canada. Law enforcement officials Alberta:

“I divide anti-authority in two directions – there’s the pseudo-law or pseudo-legal driven versions of anti-authority; and the [second] one is the catch-all anti-authority, so that would include groups that are loosely anti-government, but are kind of libertarian-driven. So, the Boogaloo movement [in the U.S.] was a symptom of that appetite being filled. But, we also haven’t seen very much of that anti-authority category in Alberta. There’s a substantial appetite [for those types of narratives], but as far as actual extremism emerging out of that, we haven’t seen very much of it.”

– Law enforcement official

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Anti-Lockdown Protests

The global Covid-19 pandemic has invoked many anti-government sentiments both within and outside of Canada. The ideologies espoused by many anti-authority groups and movements have been used, knowingly and unknowingly, by anti-lockdown protesters around the world. For example, a woman in Singapore who claimed to be a sovereign citizen was arrested after refusing to wear a mask in 2020.¹⁰⁹

Although Covid-19 protests have been overwhelmingly non-violent, there are several reports of protestors espousing anti-authority views or outright claiming to be sovereign citizens and resorting to violence against law enforcement.

Notably, within the last two years, Australia has seen a marked increase in lockdown resistance – particularly violent resistance – which law enforcement attribute to a resurging sovereign citizens movement.¹¹⁰ In Melbourne, one woman repeatedly smashed a policewoman’s head into the ground after being stopped for not wearing a mask; meanwhile others have engaged in “baiting” police at checkpoints around the city.¹¹¹

In Germany, members of the Reichsbürger movement have joined in protests against Covid-19 measures and lockdowns, which, for the most part, have been non-violent.¹¹² However, several of these protests ended in violence, for which German authorities have blamed extremist agitators, including Reichsbürger members.

For example, in August 2020, hundreds of anti-Covid lockdown protesters attempted to storm the Reichstag, which houses the German parliament. Many of the individuals involved displayed Reichsbürger insignia and Nazi symbols.¹¹³ Additionally, at the end of 2020, German intelligence agents placed a particular group of anti-Covid lockdown protesters under observation due to significant influence from extremists. According to German intelligence, several leaders of this particular protest group were also known Reichsbürger members.¹¹⁴

These international trends, coupled with the presence of Boogaloo movement members at many civil rights and anti-COVID lockdown protests, indicate that anti-authority groups are increasingly taking advantage of the current global state of affairs to promote their ideas and beliefs. It also demonstrates the popularity of these ideas across a variety of audiences around the world. A table has been included here to demonstrate this. It lists all the known terrorism incidents by anti-authority groups in the U.S. and Canada that have been linked to the pandemic and civil rights protests during 2020.

U.S. ANTI-AUTHORITY INCIDENTS LINKED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OR CIVIL RIGHTS PROTESTS

Date (2020)	Group/Affiliation	Location	Incident	Pandemic link	Civil Rights Protests link
March	Boogaloo Movement	Missouri, USA	A Missouri man planned to bomb a Kansas City-area hospital. ¹¹⁵	Although the man had plans in place before the beginning of the pandemic, the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns seem to have accelerated his plans and resulted in him targeting a hospital. ¹¹⁶	N/A, civil rights protests had not yet begun, though it is evident that the man held racist views.
May	Boogaloo Movement	Minnesota, USA	A man who had travelled from Texas to meet up with other Boogaloo Bois was charged after shooting 13 rounds from an AK-47 style rifle into the Minneapolis Police Department building during civil rights and police reform protests, and then assisted other looters in setting the building on fire. ¹¹⁷	Unknown	The attack occurred during civil rights and police reform protests in the city.
May	Boogaloo Movement	Nevada, USA	Three men were arrested on terrorism-related charges after they conspired to spark violence during anti-lockdown and civil rights and police reform protests. ¹¹⁸ Authorities arrested them on their way to the protests carrying Molotov cocktails.	Unknown	The men were specifically targeting civil rights and police reform protests.
May & June	Boogaloo Movement	California, USA	One individual carried out two ambush-style attacks were carried out, the first targeting two security officers in front of a federal courthouse in Oakland, which resulted in the death of one officer. The second occurred a week later in Santa Cruz, where Sheriff's deputies were attacked with gunshots and a pipe bomb, resulting in the death of one deputy. The individual wrote the word "boog" with his blood on the hood of his car before being arrested. ¹¹⁹	An exact link is unclear, but a friend interviewed after the attacks said that the individual said that Covid-19 quarantine rules may have played a part.	The first attack occurred purposefully while civil rights and police reform protests were taking place as a way to divert police attention.

CANADIAN ANTI-AUTHORITY INCIDENTS LINKED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OR CIVIL RIGHTS PROTESTS

Date	Group/ Affiliation	Location	Incident	Pandemic Link	Civil Rights and Police Reform Protest Link
September 2020	Yellow Vests; Soldiers of Odin	Red Deer, AB	During a civil rights protest, a group of counter-protesters showed up. A counter-protester proceeded to assault a protester. Disruptions to civil rights and police reform protests continued in October. ¹²⁰	The Red Deer mayor noted high tensions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. ¹²¹	Pat King asked his supporters to disrupt a civil rights and police reform protest, calling them Antifa and "left-wing anarchists," and that they were threatening people in the community.
June 2020	WEXIT; Yellow Vets	Innisfail, AB	The organizer for a civil rights protest was met with racist comments and threats. One of the individuals was the WEXIT leader, Peter Downing. During the protest, they met two counter-protesters, one of them being Pat King. ¹²²	Unknown.	The organizer of the civil rights protest was the main target. During the protest, two individuals shouted, "All Lives Matter," a common criticism of the Black Lives Movement. ¹²³
November 2021	Unknown.	Grand Prairie, AB	Anti-masker protesters hung a noose outside an Alberta MLA with a note that said, "no to masks, end the gov't, hang 'em all." ¹²⁴	The Alberta MLA spoke out against Covid-19 restrictions and was forced to resign after a trip to Hawaii in December 2020. ¹²⁵	None.
July 2021	[Supporters of Kevin Johnston]	Calgary, AB	The Alberta Health Minister, Tyler Shandro, was harassed by supporters of Kevin J. Johnston. The supporters chanted, "lock Shandro up," and called them a war criminal. ¹²⁶	Johnston supporters are anti-mandates. Kevin J. Johnston is currently facing charges of allegedly harassing an employee of Alberta Services.	None.
February 2022	Diagolon; Plaid Army	Coutts, AB	13 individuals were arrested during a search warrant, which found firearms, body, armour, high-capacity magazines, and a machete. Some members of the group conspired to murder RCMP officers. ¹²⁷	This group was a part of the blockade in Coutts, Alberta. The blockade was protesting COVID-19 vaccines and government mandates. ¹²⁸	None.

Canadian “Freedom Convoy” Protests 2022

In January 2022, vehicles from across the country joined a self-declared “Freedom Convoy” headed for Ottawa to protest the continued public-health restrictions and mandates related to Covid-19, including a vaccine mandate for truck drivers crossing the Canada-U.S. border.

On January 27, the first trucks arrived in downtown Ottawa, blocking traffic. Hundreds of vehicles remained parked in front of Parliament Hill in downtown Ottawa for the following three weeks and were joined by thousands of protesters.¹²⁹

Concurrently, similar protests took place in other cities and at several border crossings around the country, and in the U.S., Germany, New Zealand, and Australia. Altogether, it became one of the largest anti-authority events in Canadian history. Although most protesters were peaceful and not connected to extremist groups, some individuals displayed symbols or acted in ways that indicated either their affiliation with certain groups or sympathies toward their ideologies.

These protests were emblematic of a growing trend amongst the anti-mandate and anti-lockdown movement in Canada, which has spurred the revitalization of several Freeman tropes for those seeking an ‘alternative’ explanation to the law.

In Ottawa, Robert A. Menard – largely credited as the founder of the modern Freeman movement in Canada – held several Canadian Common Corps of Peace Officers (C3PO) “peace officer” swearing-in ceremonies.¹³⁰ Once sworn in, these self-proclaimed “peace officers” believe they have the power to detain and arrest members of the public who they view as “breaching the peace.” However, a C3PO is not a recognized nor a legitimate law enforcement organization. Moreover, it is against Canada’s **Criminal Code** to falsely represent oneself as a peace officer or public officer.

This phenomenon has been a problem for law enforcement in the past, particularly during the height of Freeman activity in the early to mid-2010s.¹³¹ Many so-called C3PO “peace officers” wear self-made badges for to confuse and convince the public of their legitimacy. For example, in 2014 Menard was arrested and charged in Ontario on multiple counts of impersonating a peace officer,¹³² and a year later unsuccessfully sued to be recognized as one.¹³³

One of the most notable events during the Freedom Convoy protests occurred in Coutts, Alberta, which serves as a border crossing into the state of Montana. Here, individuals linked to the protests blocked the border crossing for more than two weeks, disrupting normal and commercial traffic. Protesters were eventually removed by law enforcement. However, after several raids on trailers near the protest site, which led to the seizure of a cache of weapons and body armor, 13 individuals were charged for making threats to harm members of the RCMP.¹³⁴ In addition, four of these individuals were charged with conspiring to murder RCMP officers, all from southern Alberta.

Of these four southern Alberta men, two allegedly had ties to a relatively new IMVE movement known as Diagon. This loosely organized militant accelerationist group blends neo-fascism and anti-authority ideologies.¹³⁵

Like the Boogaloo movement, the notion of Diagonal originally began as an online joke, referring to a fictional diagonal geographic line from the Canadian prairies to Florida, dividing the 'sane' people who reject the government and current status of society and the 'insane' people who blindly accept it. However, according to the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, it has attracted a growing network of anti-authority individuals.¹³⁶ However, despite initial reports of the men's alleged affiliations, it remains unclear if Diagonal played a role in motivating these individuals. Despite this, however, this group is certainly one to continue to monitor in the future.

GENDER AND IDENTITY-DRIVEN VIOLENCE

Introduction: Incels

Incels, or "involuntary celibates," are a predominantly male online community whose rhetoric dehumanizes women. The online incel community began in the 1990s as an online support group for those struggling to find a partner.¹³⁷ Since the 2000s, however, the term "involuntary celibate" was hijacked by online misogynists and has grown into a substantial and active online community comprised of different online forums where users regularly share memes, interact, and commiserate with one another.

However, some lone actors on the fringe of the incel community have mobilized offline to commit mass attacks, including against women in places like salons, spas, or gyms. Individuals who ascribe to violence and identify as incel have been involved in a range of deadly attacks, including several recent violent incidents within Canada and around the world. As a result of increased attacks in Canada, the 2019 CSIS Public Report recognized incel attacks as a form of IMVE known as gender and identity-driven violence.¹³⁸

Importantly, there is a distinction between the overwhelmingly non-violent self-identifying incels who participate in the online community and those on the fringes who believe their real or perceived injustices justify violence. Although violence from these fringe incels remains low and sporadic in numbers, the nature of involuntarily celibate online community and the rhetoric used to depict women are incredibly toxic.

Gender-based violence is a potential threat posed when this rhetoric is adopted by individuals on the fringe of the community with the propensity to be mobilized toward violence. This includes harassment and other forms of interpersonal violence, such as stalking and assault, which may not be flagged or identified as extremist. However, as emphasized in OPV's 2020 report about incels, many within the broader incel community also report higher rates of mental health issues. They are much more likely to inflict harm on themselves than others, indicating a need to provide support for these individuals.¹³⁹

Status of Incel-Linked Violent Trends

In Alberta and Canada

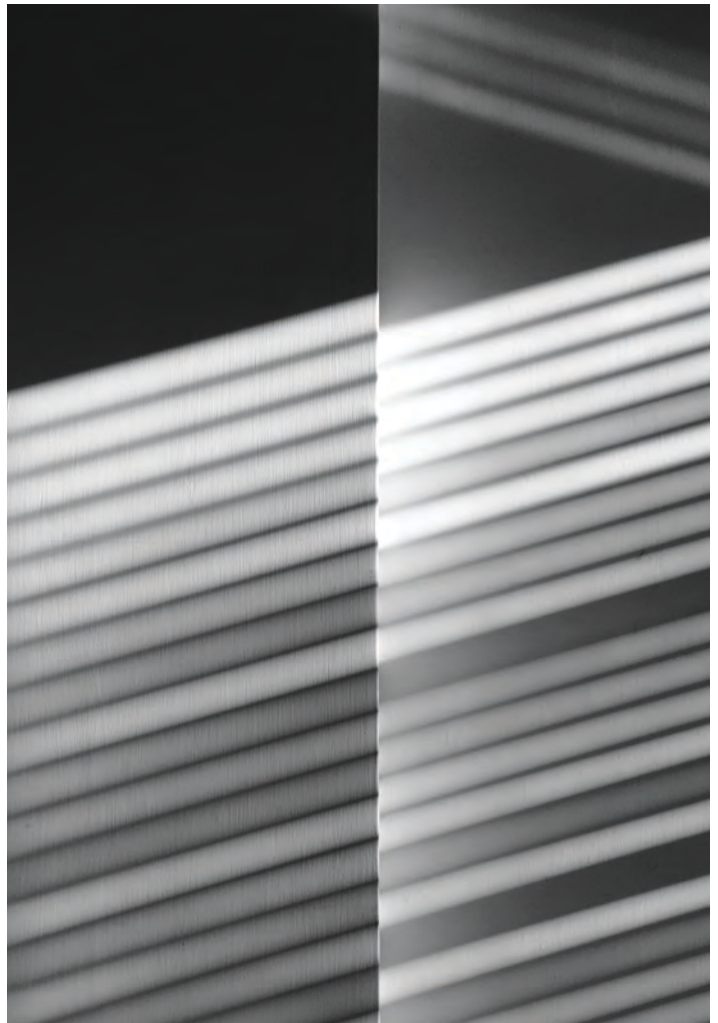
In Canada, the deadliest incel-linked attack remains the 2018 vehicle ramming in Toronto, which killed 10 and injured 16. Like many American incel attackers, the perpetrator claimed to view Elliot Rodger -- the first incel-linked attacker who killed 6 and injured 14 in an attack in Isla Vista, California, in 2014 -- as a martyr for the cause. On the day of the attack, Alek Minassian wrote on his Facebook, "All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger".¹⁴⁰

While many consider this a clear example of incel-motivated violence, evidence from the court has muddled these conclusions. For example, in explaining her judgment, the judge noted that although it is difficult to pin down the precise motivations for the attack, she accepted multiple expert witness conclusions that Minassian had lied to police about many of his incel-related claims, including that he had communicated online with Elliot Rodger and Chris Harper-Mercer, another incel-linked attacker.¹⁴¹

Instead, she noted that Minassian was likely seeking to attach the incel label to draw notoriety. However, Minassian did have many hallmark incel traits, such as never having had a romantic relationship with a woman. Regardless of his true motivations, some incels consider Minassian to be a 'martyr' for the cause, as evidenced by recent polls of online incel forums.¹⁴²

Although there have been fewer attacks in Canada than in the U.S., since the OPV's last report in 2019, several more recent incidents have occurred. For example, in June 2019, a man stabbed a pregnant woman in Sudbury, Ontario, citing his frustration with not being able to find a romantic partner as the cause for his violence.¹⁴³ Additionally, the assailant cited Minassian as inspiration for his attack. This individual was recently sentenced in December 2021 to two life sentences for the crime.¹⁴⁴

Another occurred in February 2020 when a youth stabbed a woman to death and injured another at an erotic massage parlor in Toronto. Three months later, Toronto Police declared the attack was being investigated and treated as a terrorist incident motivated by incel ideology, which marks the first time an attack motivated by incels has been charged as an act of terrorism in Canada.¹⁴⁵ As noted above, the CSIS Public Report from 2019 recognized incel attacks as a form of IMVE terrorism known as gender and identity-driven violence and likely contributed to the escalation of charges from murder to terrorist-murder.¹⁴⁶



In Alberta, there have been fewer incel attacks, though this does not mean the threat is entirely absent. According to members of law enforcement who we interviewed, although the threat is generally very low, the isolated nature of incels makes them more difficult to track and intercept:

“For [the] gender or sexually motivated violent extremism, again, there’s an appetite. I think the appetite for this is quite a bit smaller [than for other forms of violent extremism], it’s kind of niche... We know they’re around, [and] we know that there’s an appetite. It’s a fairly small appetite, but there’s a lot of very effective narratives that are almost entirely spread online. The solitary nature of incels... drives that mostly online. All that to say, as far incels up here and any of the gender-driven stuff goes, [we are] not seeing a huge movement. But, we know they’re there [and] we know there’s a scattering of them. But they’re so isolated it’s difficult to pick up.”

– Law enforcement official

Additionally, while most incels in the province of Alberta have not been motivated to violence, law enforcement has attempted to monitor those with a cause for concern:

“Another group we’ve followed [which has] a strong presence online is incel. It’s a whole different world. And we’ve got a couple here [locally] that we watch. They’re concerning, for sure... At what point does it turn into violence? But, when they’re online and they’re chirping, is it arrest-able? [That] depends if it’s a threat, or if it’s just a lot of rhetoric and talk that’s concerning.”

– Law enforcement official

The Involuntary Celibate Belief System

Incels are part of the “manosphere,” which includes a myriad of misogynistic ideologies like Men’s Rights Advocates (MRA), Pick-Up Artists (PUAs), and Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW). Individuals who ascribe to these ideologies tend to congregate online on social media sites like 4chan and Reddit, and promote traditional forms of masculinity, hostility toward women, and anti-feminism.¹⁴⁷

Like others in the manosphere, incels share a belief about the dualistic reality of men vis-à-vis women in society presented in a rigid, hierarchical fashion. However, whereas others in the manosphere tend to promote hypermasculinity and sexual prowess, incels promote defeatism and languish in self-deprecation about their perceived lack of conventional masculine traits and their inability to have sex or any other romantic interactions with women. In general, incels place themselves in the category of “beta” males (as opposed to “alpha” males that attract women), who are sexually disenfranchised individuals that make claims to “victimhood and aggrieved entitlement.”¹⁴⁸

While the incel belief ecosystem is diverse and constantly changing, it can be summarized as a collection of “pills”, each encapsulating a worldview. The “pill” most frequently linked to incels is the “blackpill,” a philosophy which, amongst other things, purports that one’s place in society is determined solely by his or her genetically pre-determined physical characteristics alone.¹⁴⁹

The blackpill is an extension of the larger extreme right-wing community's notion of being "red-pilled," a reference to the movie *The Matrix* whereby taking the red pill (as opposed to the blue pill) awakens a person to the previously hidden nature of reality. In the manosphere, members refer to themselves and others as being "redpilled" to describe their 'realization' that men are disadvantaged by the unfair desires and disproportionate power of feminists and women in general. They also allege that men never held the systemic or structural power that feminists allege.¹⁵⁰

The blackpill accepts many of the redpill's core tenets, particularly about society's hierarchy and the 80/20 rule (also known as hypergamy -- the act of "marrying up" in society, or having very high standards), which purports that 80% of women want only 20% of men (i.e., stereo-typical alpha males, known in the incel community as 'Chads').¹⁵¹ However, unlike "blackpilled" incels, those who are "redpilled" tend to believe that there is something they can do to correct these perceived injustices.

For example, many "redpilled" incels engage in 'looksmaxxing,' a colloquial term for improving one's physical appearance to become more attractive. While some forms of looksmaxxing can be harmless, and even beneficial to the individual, such as exercising and eating more healthily; some incels take looksmaxxing to the extreme by seeking plastic surgery and other permanent ways to alter their appearances. Looksmaxxing also includes internalization of racist beauty standards, such as the act of bleaching one's skin to appear whiter.

Others have tried to learn 'game,' a term borrowed from the Pick-Up Artist community, which aims to improve one's social skills with women in order to become more sexually successful. While these tactics may appear innocuous at first glance, they are rooted in the misogynistic belief that women are only passively aware of their attractions and can be easily manipulated for pleasure by men.

While the locus of control purported by the redpill is mostly *internal*, the blackpill is a nihilistic, defeatist, and fatalist worldview which purports that wealth in modern society, the absence of ecological pressures, and changing social dynamics afford women the ability to be "choosy" with their mates.

As a result, the locus of control amongst "blackpilled" incels is external, meaning that both the source and the solution to the problem are not within the individual's control. This results from the blackpill's focus on the biological determinants of sexual attraction, which incels argue can only be changed through thousands of years of evolution. Therefore, "blackpilled" incels believe that no amount of 'looksmaxxing' will change their lot. The result is a society where idealized men and women, known as "Chads" and "Stacys", are at the top of the social hierarchy. Chads (or the stereotypical alpha male) usually get their pick of women.

In the middle of the hierarchy are what incels call "normies," who can vary in their level of attractiveness. However, according to incels, most normies aspire to be with either Chads or Stacys. Incels place themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy as the least attractive. However, they believe they hold privileged insights about the world – namely, that they are destined to languish in isolation and misery because of the inescapable consequences of the unfair social hierarchy despite the mainstream narrative that everyone can find love.¹⁵²

Incels, like others in the manosphere, harken back to the "golden age" of patriarchal society, where traditional gender roles were not only followed but accepted as socially correct.¹⁵³ Many incels argue that the sexual and feminist revolution in the 1960s/70s led to the destruction of this idealized society. However, some argue that the incel category always existed to some extent but was accelerated after this point.

As a result of this revolution, incels argue that the intrinsically shallow nature of women's intentions has been revealed in that they base their decisions almost entirely on physical and sexual appeal. This effectively eliminates most normies and all incels from the potential dating pool and signals the exclusion of their genes from the larger pool. For this reason, incels blame women for their unjust situations, and therefore, some incels conceive of violence against women as a way to punish or take revenge against this perceived injustice.

In 2014, the first attack perpetrated by a member of the then-nascent online incel community in Isla Vista, California, resulted in a more distinct coalescence of incels as a separate online community from the broader manosphere.¹⁵⁴ In 2016, incel forums began to shift from red pill terminology to the black pill, accepting core tenets of the redpill but rejecting the notion that the state of men vis-à-vis women can change.¹⁵⁵

Since then, several high-profile attacks by individuals claiming to be incel have occurred across the world, including in Canada in 2018 when Alek Minassian rammed a van onto a busy sidewalk in Toronto. The online incel ecosystem has also undergone various transformations, largely due to repeated de-platforming due to violent or unlawful content. Many of the most popular incel subreddits have now been banned, forcing many to seek out incel-specific forums online, which often have little or no content moderation.

Incel Violence Around the World

Since OPV's last report, several violent attacks have been carried out by individuals linked to incels, most of which occurred in the United States. What is notable about a number of these cases, like in the cases perpetrated in Canada, is the assailants' references and admiration of Elliot Rodger. Although research on the violent tactics of incels remains sparse, some researchers indicate that the culture of martyrdom exhibited amongst incels is similar to RMVE groups and indicates that murder-suicides are preferred to other types of attacks.¹⁵⁶

For example, in November 2018, a man shot and killed two women at a yoga studio in Tallahassee, Florida. An investigation of his online presence later revealed that he identified as and engaged with incel material. He also mentioned Elliot Rodger in a self-recorded video that he posted online.¹⁵⁷

In April 2020, the FBI arrested a California man and self-proclaimed incel after he conducted a 4-year online harassment against two teenage girls. He expressed sympathy for Elliot Rodger and allegedly made hundreds of threats to use both sexual and physical violence against the teenagers if they continued to reject his sexual advances.¹⁵⁸

In June 2020, a man in Virginia attended a local emergency room after he sustained significant injuries to his hand and body. Although he initially told authorities he had suffered from a lawnmower accident, an investigation later found he was attempting to build a bomb to target "hot cheerleaders," and found a partially-destroyed letter that referenced Elliot Rodger.¹⁵⁹

Finally, in September 2020, a New York man was arrested after he made threats and stalked a couple from Long Island for a year. He allegedly idolized Elliot Rodger and sent the male victim a photo of the woman that Elliot Rodger stabbed, writing, "This is what happened when a woman said 'no' to Elliot Rodger."¹⁶⁰

Other incel attacks or incidents that occurred in the U.S. without explicit reference to Rodger include a man arrested two blocks away from a 2019 Utah women's rights rally after he posted to Facebook that he wanted to kill women in a public space and be the next mass shooter.¹⁶¹

Later in June 2019, a discharged army veteran who intended to shoot up a Dallas federal courthouse was intercepted and killed by officers before he could injure anyone. The man had allegedly shared incel memes on his social media accounts.¹⁶² As a result, the Maryland Air Force base began instructing its personnel on identifying the warning signs of incels, and the spokesman for the base called incels "a very real threat to military members and civilians."¹⁶³

In May 2020, a man opened fire in an entertainment district in Glendale, Arizona, critically injuring a man and leaving a woman and a teenage girl injured. The man allegedly was looking to target couples and identified as an incel.¹⁶⁴ More recently, in July 2021, an Ohio man's plot to conduct a mass shooting of sororities at an undisclosed university was foiled when he was arrested and charged by police.¹⁶⁵ According to prosecutors, the man had been a frequent visitor of a popular incel forum.

A month later in August 2021, Jake Davison carried out a mass shooting in Plymouth, U.K. which claimed five lives, including his mother, before taking his own life. Initial media reports linked Davison to incel beliefs. However, Davison's connection to incels sparked public debate as to whether the attack was, in fact, motivated by the incel belief system.

For example, while Davison had recorded himself in video blogs discussing the blackpill, he was a frequent poster on a subreddit called r/IncelExit, a popular forum for those looking for support to exit the online incel community. In his posts online, Davison was critical not only of the blackpill but of incels generally and in some cases, wrote that he did not identify as an incel.¹⁶⁶ Ultimately, after investigating, U.K. Counter Terrorism Policing concluded that the attack was not a terrorist attack and was not motivated to further an ideological cause.¹⁶⁷

THE FUTURE OF INCEL VIOLENCE

Since 2014, there have been roughly 10 fatal attacks, resulting in 54 deaths, across North America by self-identified incels or individuals who appeared to be inspired partly by the incel ideology.ⁱⁱ However, there is likely an unknown number of interpersonal violent incidents stemming from self-identified incels in the form of stalking, harassment, assault and other misogynistic behaviors. Because these acts do not always get flagged as extremism, they can go under or unreported.

ii In order, this includes the 2014 Isla Vista, California attack perpetrated by Elliot Rodger which resulted in 7 fatalities, including Rodger himself; a 2015 attack in Oregon, which resulted in 10 fatalities including the assailant; a 2016 attack in Edmonton, which resulted in 1 fatality; a 2017 attack in New Mexico, which resulted in 3 fatalities including the assailant; a 2018 attack in Tallahassee, Florida, which resulted in 3 fatalities including the assailant; a 2018 attack in Toronto, which resulted in 10 fatalities; a 2018 attack in Parkland, Florida, which resulted in 17 fatalities; a 2019 attack in Dallas, Texas, where the only fatality was the assailant; a 2019 attack in New York, which resulted in 1 fatality; and a 2020 attack in Toronto, which resulted in 1 fatality. This does not include Jake Davison's attack in 2021, which resulted in 6 fatalities (including Davison himself).

Law enforcement officials we interviewed noted that tracking and intercepting incels who mobilize to violence can be difficult because most violence coming from the fringes of the incel community tends to be perpetrated by lone actors. This makes detection, intervention, and disruption more challenging.¹⁶⁸

However, on average, incels are more likely to represent a threat to themselves than to others. This is indicated by a poll conducted on a popular incel forum, where only 17 of the 272 respondents agreed with the statement that incels are “willing to endorse violence.”¹⁶⁹ Conversely, the survey indicated that incels are more likely to suffer from suicidal thoughts and other mental health issues, underscoring the risk of self-harm and low levels of mental health endemic within this community.

For example, 84.6% of respondents indicated they experienced depressive symptoms; 80.1% indicated they experienced anxiety symptoms; and nearly 70% indicated they have suicidal ideations.¹⁷⁰ Nearly 45% also self-reported that they have symptoms of autism spectrum disorder, though this was not confirmed with official diagnoses.

The intersection between many individuals who identify as incel and mental health has also been raised by law enforcement officials we interviewed in the province. For example, one official noted that determining whether or not an individual poses a threat when they have mental illness is a difficult line to walk:

“It’s hard to judge, it’s hard to know who is the real threat sometimes. Is this person just blowing off steam? Are they just venting? Is it a mental health issue? Or is this person really [serious], are they intending on carrying through with some of the stuff that they’re talking about? It really can be difficult to decipher a lot of the time and, of course, you hear about plenty of cases where actual violence does occur and the person was suffering from mental health issues. It’s not as easy to just say, “Ah, this [person] has a mental health issue, we don’t need to worry... [they’re] never going to do anything.”

Well, [they] might, you don’t know. It might escalate. It’s very difficult.... We just went through this with [an incel] guy – we’ve got a guy [here] who goes online every now and then and just goes off and is extremely graphic and violent in his ideation. But, there’s no imminent, specific threat to any specific person or group. So, what can we do about it, ultimately? We’d like to get a Peace Bond or something, or a charge on a person like this, but if there’s nothing in the law that facilitates that, then we’re kind of left to, “Well, we can have a knock on his door and have a chat with him again and try to make our own assessment on where we think his head is at right now,” but ultimately, we’ve just got to sit back and wait.”

– Law enforcement official

The prevalence of mental health issues suggests that many incels could benefit from psycho-social interventions and support.¹⁷¹

Unfortunately, many among the incel community consider psycho-social support useless, likely deterring incels from seeking support. For example, according to the poll of incels, participants reported that only 51.5% had ever tried therapy; further, only 15% of those who had tried therapy felt it had been helpful.¹⁷²



For those who had not tried therapy, they reported they believed it was “a scam” or “a waste of money,” mostly because therapy fails to address the perceived physical, rather than mental, attributes which contribute to their incelism. However, this does not mean that therapeutic support is ineffective. Some incels use the term ‘taking the purple pill,’ which encourages seeking peer support and may be used as a gateway to introduce individuals to further support services.¹⁷³ Policy and practitioner recommendations about interventions for individuals who identify as incels can be found in OPV’s report “Incels: Background for Practitioners”.¹⁷⁴

Finally, with most of the attention focused on incels, it is important to consider the threat posed by other actors within the manosphere. For example, some law enforcement officials we interviewed voiced concern over individuals linked to the manosphere, but not incels in particular:

“We have had investigations into anti-women [ideologies]. I don’t want to say the name because it’ll just bring attention to the site... But we have had investigations into people that are [in] anti-women, groups, you know, just some investigating to see their ideology... No violence, just intelligence that we know people with those ideologies are here. So, of course, when we assess those individuals and interview them, they’re like “no, I’d never act out, I just have some of these beliefs...” We obviously still investigate.... [but] we’ve not investigated anybody connected to incel. So, maybe [the manosphere] is a gateway group? Maybe it will lead [someone] to incel. I don’t want to ignore the variants because that is a potential.”

– Law enforcement official

ECO EXTREMISM

As a result of controversial pipeline expansion projects in British Columbia and Alberta, some individuals and groups have mobilized to make their opposition known. For example, in 2020, there were 41 incidents of shunts placed on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway tracks near Bellingham, Washington. Shunts are meant to disrupt the electrical current on railway tracks which mimic the electrical signal of another train on a track, preventing other trains from entering the area. However, depending on where they are placed on the tracks, shunts can also cause train decoupling, collision, and even derailment. Shortly after the first shunts were discovered, an anarchist group claimed responsibility online, stating that the goal was to prevent supplies from reaching the Coastal GasLink project in B.C.¹⁷⁵

Although most of the shunts have been discovered by authorities before they could cause any damage, in October 2020, several shunts caused a train carrying hazardous and combustible materials to decouple near a residential area.¹⁷⁶ Although no one was injured, any explosion or leak could have caused significant environmental or property damage or bodily harm. A month later, in November 2020, two women were arrested and charged with terrorism after placing several shunts on the tracks of the BNSF railway.¹⁷⁷ According to authorities, the two women were motivated by opposition to the Coastal GasLink pipeline expansion project. However, they were only charged with the single incident and not the other 41 reported.

A more recent attack occurred in February 2022. Police responded to a call from a Coastal GasLink pipeline worksite near Houston B.C., after 20 masked individuals allegedly attacked security guards and employees with axes, flares, and other incendiary devices.¹⁷⁸ The attackers used on-site equipment to damage other machinery, causing millions of dollars in damage. By the time the police arrived, the attackers had fled. On their way to the site, however, the police were confronted by several blockades allegedly laid by the attackers, including a board with exposed spikes that injured an officer. So far, the RCMP have not named the individuals or group responsible for the attack, but the investigation is ongoing.¹⁷⁹

Although attacks against railways and pipelines have been rare and successfully mitigated by authorities for the most part, the potential for continued attacks both in the U.S. and Canada as pipeline expansions continue remains possible.

PATRIOT & MILITIA GROUPS

Background

Patriot and militia groups blend several ideologies and conspiracy theories and do not necessarily fit neatly into ideological categories. For example, some groups embrace xenophobic or accelerationist views, while others eschew them. Some groups adopt a variety of general anti-government or anti-authority views, while others are more specific about which parts or components of government they view as their enemy.

The bridging commonality between different patriot and militia groups is their overarching emphasis of nationalist sentiments. Additionally, most patriot and militia groups emphasize pro-gun opinions, firearms/paramilitary training, and survivalism. Generally, these groups view themselves as allies of the state military and law enforcement. Many groups consider the past 'better' times and view themselves as 'guardians' of a more traditional, nationalistic way of life. Their views usually center around anti-immigrant and racist sentiments, enhanced individual freedoms, and the enforcement of law and order.

Patriot and militia groups have been actively targeting a variety of rallies and protests that have occurred both as a result of Covid-19-related restrictions, as well as civil rights and police reform protests. Because many patriot and militia groups espouse some form of anti-government sentiment, pandemic restriction protests have been a popular way for the groups to mobilize, increase visibility and express their opinions about government overreach. Additionally, due to many patriot and militia groups' xenophobic sentiments, civil rights and police reform protests were high-visibility targets for these groups.

Finally, due to many civil rights and police reform protester sentiments toward law enforcement's treatment of communities of colour, some patriot and militia groups like the Three Percenters in the U.S. have shown up to 'enforce' their view of law and order.¹⁸⁰ Patriot and militia groups – by virtue of their categorization – tend to show up to public events heavily armed. Many of the most active groups in the U.S. during this time also have a presence (albeit smaller) within Canada, including the Proud Boys and the Three Percenters. Canadian mainstays like the Soldiers of Odin (SOO) have also taken advantage of the ongoing civil rights and pandemic-related protests to increase their visibility.

Status of Patriot & Militia Groups in Alberta

Patriot and militia groups have significantly declined in the province since the OPV's last report. As a result of infighting, splintering, and the listing of several groups as official terrorist entities, many groups no longer operate in an organized way. Where they do operate, it is mostly to do charity work. However, as discussed above, some of the SOO and Urban Infidels members have allegedly been present at recent anti-lockdown protests in the province such as the February 2021 torch rally.¹⁸¹

These trends were echoed by many law enforcement interviewees, who noticed a precipitous decline in the physical presence of these groups in the last several years:

“Yeah, it's largely collapsed. There are remnants, like individuals who spent the money on a vest patch and kind of want to get the max out of their investment. But, for the most part, as far as organized activity goes, we haven't seen anything. Social media activity, we haven't seen anything, probably for, pretty easily, over a year and a half.”

– Law enforcement official

When asked what has contributed the most to the decline in patriot and militia groups in their area, one law enforcement official provided further insight:

“That’s a good question. I would say it’s a combination of everything. I wouldn’t put all the eggs in one basket. I would think it is – [the] government saying zero-tolerance, naming some of these groups [as terrorist entities]. You [also] have social media lashing out, community standing up, [and] the increase in reporting. So, I would say it’s across the board. It’s the education we’re seeing, people being called out on social media for their beliefs and being held more accountable.

Us as law enforcement, as well, keeping track of these individuals, doing enforcement where we can, and showing zero-tolerance for that kind of behavior. I think it’s a combination of everything. You know, to me, it was everything happening basically in that same time frame. And maybe [the ideologies weren’t] that appealing, or maybe it lost appeal. I think it was also a lot of conflict within these groups, among leadership and ideologies, and so, you were seeing that disarray as well, lack of leadership. And, I think after a while, that combined with society’s pressures... I think it lost its appeal. Hard to say. I’m theorizing.”

– Law enforcement official

THREE PERCENTERS

Founded in 2008, the Three Percenters are a collection of loosely associated groups across North America that focus on the right to bear arms, the defense of traditional liberties, and their pledge of armed resistance against those who try to restrict these rights. The name refers to the alleged percentage of American colonists who engaged in armed resistance against the British during the Revolutionary War.

The Three Percenters ideology is similar to other groups like the Oath Keepers – which has a significant presence in the U.S. but less so in Canada – in that they view themselves as upholders and defenders of the U.S. Constitution in the face of a tyrannical federal government. The Three Percenters also believe in a variety of conspiracies: most prominent is the notion that the U.S. government is composed of malevolent socialists intent on violating individual liberties and disarming Americans to conduct a government takeover.

The Three Percenters formed as part of a wave of new patriot and militia groups in response to the 2008 and 2012 elections of President Barack Obama and increased tensions over race and gun rights.¹⁸² Since then, members of the Three Percenters have been involved in a variety of public events and rallies, as well as several violent incidents.

For example, members of the Three Percenters attended the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, where one woman was killed.¹⁸³ In 2017, a Three Percenter was arrested after he attempted to detonate a bomb-filled van next to an Oklahoma City bank.¹⁸⁴ In 2018, three men were arrested in connection to a non-fatal bombing of a Minnesota mosque, and it was later found that one of them ran a local Three Percenter group in Illinois.¹⁸⁵

Like other patriot and militia groups who view themselves as upstanding members of their communities, many local Three Percenter chapters have organized food banks and other charitable events to help address community needs.¹⁸⁶ Groups like the Three Percenters lever their charitable activities to present a positive public image and garner interest and membership. Some known Three Percenters have even gone on to run for public office in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington.¹⁸⁷

Despite their attempts to create a positive public image, Three Percenters have also been involved in several recent instances of violence. For example, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Three Percenter forums on Facebook have been riddled with members threatening Covid-19 contact tracers.¹⁸⁸

In May of 2020, during a Second Amendment rally in Kentucky protesting public health measures, several Three Percenters were among a group of protesters who breached barriers to access the front porch of the Governor's Mansion and began harassing the occupants.

The hecklers later hung an effigy of the Kentucky governor from a tree.¹⁸⁹ In Michigan in October 2020, one of the leaders who was arrested in a foiled plot to kidnap the Michigan Governor was a member of the Wisconsin branch of Three Percenters.¹⁹⁰ Finally, on January 6th, protesters breached and entered the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C.. After this event, at least one individual linked to the Three Percenters was arrested and charged for his involvement.¹⁹¹

The Three Percenters also have adherents in Canada, yet here their grievances take on a more distinctly anti-Islamic tone. It is suspected that Canadian Three Percenters groups formed sometime in 2015, shortly after Justin Trudeau became Prime Minister, and local chapters began popping up around the country. In 2018, CBC News reported that the group was growing in membership, including a new chapter in Ontario formed in 2017.¹⁹²

Like their American counterparts, Canadian Three Percenters (III%, or "Threepers,") have participated in public rallies and protests, often assuming what they term 'security' positions. This has prompted some Canadian cities like Hamilton in Ontario to ban any unlicensed security guards on city property.¹⁹³ For example, during a 2017 anti-Islam rally in Toronto, Vice News alleges that three men connected with the III%ers appeared and allegedly assaulted a journalist, resulting in one man being charged with assault and another wanted for arrest.¹⁹⁴

Status of Three Percenters in Alberta

Since OPV's last report, the Three Percenters in Alberta have undergone a variety of sporadic fits-and-starts. Adding to their rocky existence, the Three Percenters were added to the Canadian list of terrorist entities in 2021.¹⁹⁵

For example, in early 2019, there was evidence that the Albertan III%ers began regimented training with firearms and live ammunition, similar to their American counterparts who emphasize paramilitary training.¹⁹⁶ Despite this, no violent actions or threats are known to have happened in Canada. However, the group claims to have several mosques in Alberta under surveillance.¹⁹⁷ It is also worth noting that recent evidence suggests some members of the Canadian Armed Forces are linked to the Three Percenters, as well as other militia groups like Proud Boys, the Soldiers of Odin, and La Meute.¹⁹⁸

According to law enforcement officials interviewed for this report, despite a spurt of activity in 2019 and early 2020, Alberta Three Percenters have since suffered from organizational issues:

“We do have a Three Percenter chapter here. It’s kind of dissolved into a whole bunch of nothing... But I know that recently they’ve been brought forward because they’re starting up again, and there’s a few different people that are starting that group again and things are kind of changing. We haven’t seen any people prepping or doing anything like that or firearms training... I think they’re just trying to reorganize and they don’t really know what they’re going to look like at this point, but I know they’re trying to create [something].

And the one group we had here was not a threat to the community. They were more like prepping, firearms training, that kind of thing, getting ready for a war. We did surveillance on them, we did a probe on them, we never saw them doing anything that would create concern for our community or for national security issues. They were fairly disorganized here and there wasn’t a huge group of them.”

– Law enforcement official

Other law enforcement officials interviewed credited the naming of the Three Percenters as a terrorist entity for their dissolution:

“Three Percenters – same thing, they had a group here, a leader, and a couple followers, and with their listing as a terrorist entity it’s pretty much silenced them.”

– Law enforcement official

Others argued that the group’s organizational issues faced in 2019 prevented it from ever getting off the ground in the first place:

“We hadn’t really seen any organized in-person activity from the Three Percenters since late 2019, maybe early 2020, but that wasn’t... actual organized activity, that was attempts to organize that failed. So, their group had essentially fizzled out by then.”

– Law enforcement official

After the Three Percenters were designated as a terrorist entity in 2021, some reports allege that the group was rebranded and reformed with different names. However, to date, there is little information about how successful this rebranding has been, and there is no current evidence to indicate a substantial growth or threat.

THE SOLDIERS OF ODIN

The Soldiers of Odin (SOO) are an anti-immigrant vigilante group that share similar ideological threads with xenophobic extremists. Initially founded in Finland in 2015 amid the European migrant crisis, the Canadian SOO are an offshoot of similar European groups of the same name. Despite the potential, the Canadian SOO have largely failed to establish transnational ties or cooperation with their parent organizations in Europe.¹⁹⁹

Like the Three Percenters, Canadian SOO are highly anti-immigrant and particularly anti-Muslim, engaging in community patrols as a show of force.²⁰⁰ Like the Three Percenters, SOO members also regularly attend public protests and rallies. The SOO have several chapters across Canada, notably in Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec. Recent reports also suggest that some members of the Canadian Armed Forces have been affiliated with the SOO.²⁰¹

Although there are conflicting reports about whether or not the group is now entirely defunct,²⁰² local news outlets have indicated that individuals linked to the SOO have attended several recent events.

For example, in March 2020, during an indigenous demonstration outside of the B.C. Legislature opposing the construction of a pipeline, demonstrators claim they received threats from the SOO to tear down their encampments and incite violence.²⁰³

In September 2020, an Albertan was arrested and charged after a year and a half investigation revealed he was printing firearm parts with a 3D printer, known colloquially as “ghost guns” due to the absence of serial numbers. A media investigation later found that he was an online supporter of SOO and other similar extremist groups. However, the RCMP has made no such statements regarding his potential affiliations.²⁰⁴

Significantly, this represents the first time such charges have been laid for 3D printing parts of weaponry in Alberta, and charges of intent to traffic the homemade weapons to circumvent firearms laws.²⁰⁵ Also, in Alberta in September 2020, an anti-racism rally in Red Deer turned violent after counter-protestors – which included SOO members – confronted and shoved the demonstrators.²⁰⁶

In February 2021 in Edmonton, anti-lockdown protesters gathered in what became known as the Edmonton torch rally. Held in front of an Alberta legislature, protesters gathered and displayed torch imagery, an image incorporated from the 2017 Charlottesville Unite the Right protests and used by older groups like the Ku Klux Klan.

Though not all protesters apparently understood the symbolism behind the torch imagery, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney condemned the extremist elements among them, including members of the SOO and Urban Infidels, a related patriot group.²⁰⁷

More recently, during the 2022 Trucker Convoy protests in Canada, one of the protest’s Toronto leader’s made media headlines after he posted a video in December 2021 which featured the SOO logo, encouraging other Canadians to stand up for their rights.²⁰⁸ Although it remains unclear if he had any affiliation (past or present) to the group, many used this to question the degree of links that some protesters had to extremist groups.

Status of Soldiers of Odin in Alberta

The SOO have undergone significant organizational changes and splintering within Alberta, resulting in a complex matrix of new interrelated groups. In 2018 the Edmonton SOO splintered into three groups – the Canadian Infidels, the Wolves of Odin and The Clann – after a controversy where politicians unknowingly took photos with local SOO members.²⁰⁹ Although their names differ, their anti-Muslim and nationalistic ideologies remain virtually the same. After the split, Wolves of Odin and Canadian Infidels members were reported working together and scouting an Edmonton mosque premise in 2019.²¹⁰

Two weeks later, a hate letter was delivered to another mosque bearing the logo of the Alberta Clann, which included members of the SOO, the Wolves of Odin, and the Canadian Infidels.²¹¹ Although the links between these groups are difficult to ascertain, at least some members are conversing with one another, though rifts and disagreements are common.

Since the OPV's last report, the SOO have taken a hard hit both on and offline. As of April 2019, Facebook began banning pages and groups associated with SOO, and pages linked to its splinter group the Wolves of Odin.²¹² Politicians have also sought to distance themselves from the group after unknowingly taking photos with SOO members wearing the group's insignia.²¹³ Further, after the Grande Prairie chapter of the SOO organized an Easter dinner at the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Legion condemned the event and distanced itself from the group.²¹⁴ These setbacks have made it more difficult for the group to organize online, though the dissolution and formation of new groups with new names likely circumvents this issue to some extent.

According to law enforcement officials we interviewed in the province, the SOO have either largely reverted to charitable work or have become defunct entirely:

“There is a Soldiers of Odin Chapter here. They do mostly charity work but one of them has been individually suspected of non-SOO criminality in the past. The SOO [here] mostly help to raise money for different things, [like veterans groups].”

– Law enforcement official

However, the extent to which this means that members no longer individually espouse the group's ideological beliefs is debatable. On the other hand, members could simply be biding their time and avoiding further investigation from law enforcement for the time being.

NORTHERN GUARD

Recent splinters within SOO chapters have resulted in several new offshoots outside Alberta. One of these is the Northern Guard, an all-male, anti-immigrant militant group active mostly in Eastern Canada. It was formed by members of the former Quebec branch of the SOO, and as of 2019, it had opened a new chapter in Halifax.²¹⁵ Like the SOO, the Northern Guard engages in regular patrols of the community and sometimes undertakes initiatives to 'soften' their image. For example, shortly after the chapter opened, members of the Halifax Northern Guard were spotted handing out pizza slices to the homeless across the city.²¹⁶

However, their rhetoric and members' occasional propensity for violence betray the organization's true nature. For example, in June of 2019, a Northern Guard member assaulted several people at the Hamilton Pride event.²¹⁷ A few months later, in October 2019, the reopening of a popular Syrian restaurant was disrupted after a Northern Guard member and several others heckled the owner and made false accusations that he was a refugee linked to Daesh.²¹⁸ After the hecklers published these false accusations online, the restaurant owner faced a barrage of death threats.

In a recent case in 2020, SOO and Northern Guard members attended a demonstration in Collingwood, Ontario, organized by Mankind Against Pedophiles and Predators (MAPP) and hosted by Ontario's Northern Guard president.²¹⁹ While the demonstration was small and non-violent, the Northern Guard's Facebook group moderator contributed a diatribe that condemned the LGBTQ community as an attack on the traditional family unit and added the letter 'P' at the end of the acronym to indicate 'pedophile.'²²⁰ The Sergeant at Arms of the Northern Guard's Alberta chapter added "The LGBTQ community will not be finished until they can fuck children."²²¹

Status of Northern Guard in Alberta

According to the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, many patriot groups, including the Northern Guard, are either stagnant or declining.²²² This is also true of more recent splinters like the Urban Infidels. This is echoed by some of our interviews with law enforcement officials in the province who mentioned that the presence of these groups had declined precipitously in the province:

“The people that we have seen have shown up as individuals at anti-Public Health Order events. The last group that we really saw active was the Urban Infidels. They were the last organized [post-SOO] group.”

– Law enforcement official

This stagnation is likely due to the infighting and splintering which characterized these groups for the last several years. For example, despite its short-lived existence, the Calgary-based chapter of the Northern Guard has already splintered twice, resulting in new and rebranded groups.²²³ These groups will likely continue to rebrand themselves — mostly due to de-platforming efforts by social media companies — although their mission tends to remain relatively unchanged regardless of their name. A law enforcement official echoed this in an interview, noting that the groups were not as public as before, which could signal they are moving deeper online:

“It’s really hard to measure this. Because... you’re not seeing the visual presence as much anymore. In 2018, I think you would have [seen] more of the groups wearing the vests, being out in the community, more vocal. So, you would see your groups like Soldiers of Odin, Northern Guard, out doing community interactions, feeding the poor, that kind of thing. Trying to gain legitimacy. And they would show up to rallies and protests and march.

Those groups... you don’t see them as much. It seems like they’ve dissolved. We don’t see them wearing the colors, the brands, the patches as much. Having said that, though, we do recognize... a lot of [those] people have kept their communications not on open social media. Their ideologies are not expressed in the public forum as much anymore. Which makes it really hard to track. Having said that, though, my concern is — and there’s always glimpses of intelligence that show these militia groups still exist — [that] they’re still, there’s a presence... We see those ideologies still exist.

The other thing that concerns me is groups that showed up in the days when they wore the vest, have now changed — to me — changed their dialect, and they’re now trying to present more legitimate. So, even though they’ve potentially rebranded, or, taken a different approach, I still think the concern is there... But, no evidence to show an escalation at this stage.”

– Law enforcement official

PROUD BOYS

Proud Boys are a traditionalist, neo-fascist chauvinist organization loosely tied to white power domains with a considerable following in the U.S., a smaller following in Canada, and a marginal presence in the U.K. and Australia. While the group tends to be openly misogynistic and homophobic at times, it is mostly nationalistic like many other patriot and militia groups, displaying Western ideals that are somewhat dissociated from other transnational neo-Nazi movements. Overall, though, the group advocates for racial purity and is anti-immigration. In Canada, however, the Proud Boys took on a more explicitly neo-Nazi tone than their American counterparts.²²⁴ It is also another recent addition to Canada's list of terrorist entities.

The group is perhaps most notorious for its support of former President Donald Trump and some of its members' roles in the U.S. Capitol building riots on January 6th, 2021. Here, a mob of supporters for then-President Trump, who had lost his 2020 re-election bid, stormed and violently breached the U.S. Capitol building in an attempt to overturn the electoral results. As a result, five people died, including a Capitol police officer, and around 60 other Capitol police were injured.²²⁵

Many riot participants have since been arrested and charged criminally, including 11 Proud Boys members.²²⁶ Notably, a new indictment alleges that two Proud Boys members conspired, planned, and fundraised for the January 6th riots ahead of time.²²⁷

The future of the group in the U.S. is at an inflection point and undergoing significant changes due to the arrest and outing of its leadership as a former FBI informant, as well as the 2021 Capitol riots. The latter has opened up the group to increased scrutiny from U.S. law enforcement, and many of its members have since been arrested and charged with federal crimes. Additionally, the news that a Proud Boys leader was once an FBI informant has led to questions about his and the group's legitimacy.²²⁸

In Canada, though the group has tended to be far less violent than in the U.S., there nonetheless have been several high-profile events that brought the group significant media attention. Perhaps the most notable was in 2017 when five self-identified Proud Boys members were involved in a confrontation with participants of an Indigenous ceremony in Halifax.²²⁹ Four of those men were members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

More recently, in the summer of 2020, in Sahali, a neighborhood in Kamloops, B.C., RCMP were notified of posters promoting the Proud Boys.²³⁰ In August 2020 in Calgary, counter-protesters, including a small group of Proud Boys, attended a civil rights and police reform protest, though no clashes between the protesters occurred.²³¹

Although the group in name is largely defunct now in Canada, partly due to the fallout from the 2021 Capitol riots, some researchers warn that members have simply rebranded themselves but carry the same ideology. For example, a Proud Boys chapter in Hamilton, Ontario, began using the name "Canada First" shortly after the Canadian government listed the group as an official terrorist entity.²³² It remains to be seen if rebranding has the effect of reinvigorating the movement or if it will continue to fizzle out.

Status of Proud Boys in Alberta

The Canadian Proud Boys chapters have been significantly affected by the fallout of the Capitol riots in the U.S. Indeed, many Canadian Proud Boys chapters have since folded or been dissolved. Additionally, Canada's subsequent official labelling of the group as a terrorist organization has also dealt a blow to Proud Boys groups across the province.²³³ According to law enforcement officials we interviewed in Alberta, this has largely been the case in the province. For example,

"In the last few years we've had a number of additional groups added to the terrorist entity list in Canada. So, that has affected the groups that we had – actually a few groups that we had – here [locally].

Three of them specifically – Combat-18, Blood and Honour, they had a small group here. They don't [now], they've been wiped out. Proud Boys – same thing, once they got listed as a terrorist entity, they've really been silenced. We haven't seen them. [One individual] actually turned in his actual jacket. We've got it hanging here in our office. A Proud Boy jacket. Because when they [came] on the Canadian entities list, he turned it over."

– Law enforcement official

Like other patriot and militia groups, the danger now is that former Proud Boys members will splinter, rename, rebrand, and re-emerge, making it more difficult for law enforcement to track. From the interviews with law enforcement officials in Alberta, this would indeed be in line with their previous group activity, though there is currently no evidence to demonstrate this is currently ongoing with former Proud Boys members:

"The Proud Boys are difficult because they were still technically active, like they were present in the province, they stopped activity but the history of the Proud Boys in the province has been stop-start. So, they have brief periods of frenetic activity where they recruit a bunch of people, they're very public, they do public protests, they wear their shirts, all that stuff. And then, usually due to personality conflicts, the group falls apart for a while. So, it could have been part of that natural cycle. The timing [of the Canadian terrorist entities listing] was probably right, just to prevent them from reorganizing again."

– Law enforcement official

LA MEUTE

Founded in 2015 in Quebec by two former Canadian Armed Forces members and a third person whose identity has never been revealed, La Meute is a Québécois nationalist, anti-immigrant and anti-Islam group. By 2016, the group had more than 40,000 members on its private Facebook page, though it is unclear how many are active due to the secretive nature of the page.²³⁴

Roughly translated as The Animal Pack, La Meute is primarily concerned with immigration (particularly anti-Muslim immigration) and preserving Québécois culture. Unlike other patriot and militia groups, La Meute has mostly kept its presence restricted to the online sphere and is very organized in maintaining its secrecy. However, La Meute has not been immune to infiltrators who have published 'tell-all' blogs from their time in the group.²³⁵

According to ex-members interviewed by Vice News, the group is organized hierarchically and has several cells distributed across the administrative regions of the province; meanwhile, the group's senior leadership is mostly composed of ex-military members.²³⁶ La Meute is also a well-oiled machine when it comes to campaigning. Printable flyers are provided for members to distribute, and the group even offers a 10% discount to get a tattoo of the group's logo from select tattoo artists.²³⁷

Despite the group's relatively low-key existence, La Meute shot to the fore of the public's attention in 2017 after several widely covered events. First, in July 2017, several members of La Meute were associated with a committee effort to reject a Muslim cemetery project in Saint-Apollinaire, Q.C.²³⁸

A month later, in August, a member of La Meute was spotted by Vice News reporters covering the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, VA, where one woman was killed.²³⁹ This member was later excluded from the group. A few days after this, La Meute staged an anti-immigration protest in Quebec City.²⁴⁰ The protest quickly turned violent after counter-protesters showed up to confront them, and the Quebec City police then deemed the protest illegal.²⁴¹

In 2019 the group became embroiled in internal fighting, and two senior leaders left the group. Although the details of their departure are unclear, a former co-founder, who was ousted from the group in 2017 along with several other leaders after allegedly mishandling the group's funds, publicly declared that "the ship is sinking."²⁴²

The departures occurred shortly after the passage of Bill 21 in Quebec, which prohibited individuals from working in positions of coercive authority (such as judges, teachers, and public employees) to wear religious symbols, including hijabs, burqas, or turbans. La Meute members considered the bill's passage a victory, and according to the group's spokesperson, the "wear and tear" from fighting and winning this battle is likely the reason for the departures.²⁴³

As a result of the persistent infighting, the group has lost much of its popularity. However, according to some experts, resistance to Covid-19 lockdowns in Quebec somewhat revived the group. For example, in September of 2020, the main event at a large anti-lockdown demonstration in Montreal was a speech by one of the former leaders of La Meute, who was ousted in 2019.²⁴⁴

In 2022, during the Freedom Convoy in Ottawa, a spokesperson for La Meute spoke to La Presse stating they were using the current political climate to organize their clans to protest the vaccine passport, but noted they are not anti-vaccine.²⁴⁵ Although there is currently no evidence of a significant La Meute revival, the potential for the group to capitalize on the current political atmosphere remains possible.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2019* (April 2020), p. 13, <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/PubRep-2019-E.pdf>.
- 2 Leah West & Michael Nesbitt, "Proscribing Far Right Terrorism: Canada's new terrorist listing of two far right extremist groups," *Intrepid Podcast*, July 4, 2019, <https://www.intrepidpodcast.com/blog/2019/7/4/proscribing-far-right-terrorism-canadas-new-terrorist-listing-of-two-far-right-extremist-groups>.
- 3 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2020* (April 2021), p. 27, <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/2021/CSIS-Public-Report-2020.pdf>.
- 4 Doyle Potentau, "White supremacy clippings littered near North Okanagan schools denounced by local officials," *Global News*, October 1, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7372648/propaganda-clippings-north-okanagan/>.
- 5 Cillian O'Brien, "Canadian Armed Forces investigating reservist for potential racist activities," *CTV News*, August 20, 2019, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/canadian-armed-forces-investigating-reservist-for-potential-racist-activities-1.4557639>.
- 6 Stewart Bell, "Proud Boys added to Canada's list of terrorist groups," *Global News*, February 3, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7616542/proud-boys-added-canada-list-terrorist-groups/>.
- 7 Darren Rathwell, "Stickers tied to white supremacy under investigation in Brooks" *Lethbridge News Now*, December 12, 2021, <https://lethbridgenewsnow.com/2021/12/12/stickers-tied-to-white-supremacy-under-investigation-in-brooks/>.
- 8 Wendy Gillis & Alex Boutilier, "Terrorism charges laid in London Muslim family killing. Decision called 'hugely important' symbolic move," *Toronto Star*, June 14, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/06/14/terrorism-charges-laid-in-london-muslim-family-killing.html>.
- 9 Jade Parker, "Accelerationism in America: Threat Perceptions," *Global Network on Extremism & Technology*, February 4, 2020, <https://gnet-research.org/2020/02/04/accelerationism-in-america-threat-perceptions/>.
- 10 Jade Parker, "Accelerationism in America: Threat Perceptions," *Global Network on Extremism & Technology*, February 4, 2020, <https://gnet-research.org/2020/02/04/accelerationism-in-america-threat-perceptions/>.
- 11 Bethan Johnson & Mathew Feldman, *Siege Culture After Siege: Anatomy of a Neo-Nazi Terrorist Doctrine* (The Hague, Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, July 2021), <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2021/07/siege-culture-neo-nazi-terrorist-doctrine.pdf>.
- 12 Zack Beauchamp, "Accelerationism: the obscure idea inspiring white supremacist killers around the world," *Vox*, November 18, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/11/11/20882005/accelerationism-white-supremacy-christchurch>.
- 13 Zack Beauchamp, "Accelerationism: the obscure idea inspiring white supremacist killers around the world," *Vox*, November 18, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/11/11/20882005/accelerationism-white-supremacy-christchurch>.
- 14 Jaela Bernstein, "Racist conspiracy theory unified white supremacists long before Buffalo, N.Y., shooting," *CBC News*, May 20, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/great-replacement-theory-canada-1.6459699>.
- 15 Graham Macklin, "The Christchurch Attacks: Livestream Terror in the Viral Video Age," *CTC Sentinel* 12:6 (July 2019), <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CTC-SENTINEL-062019.pdf>.
- 16 Zack Beauchamp, "Accelerationism: the obscure idea inspiring white supremacist killers around the world," *Vox*, November 18, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/11/11/20882005/accelerationism-white-supremacy-christchurch>.
- 17 BBC News Team, "US soldier Ethan Melzer accused of planning attack on own unit," *BBC News*, June 23, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53145806>.
- 18 BBC News Staff, "US soldier Ethan Melzer accused of planning attack on own unit," *BBC News*, June 23, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53145806>.
- 19 Peter Smith, "Suspect in Fatal Stabbing Outside Toronto Mosque Appears to Follow Hitler-Worshipping Satanist Movement," *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, September 18, 2020, https://www.antihate.ca/suspect_stabbing_toronto_mosque_follow_hitler_worshipping_satanist_movement.
- 20 Jason Wilson, "Leak from neo-Nazi site could identify hundreds of extremists worldwide," *The Guardian*, November 7, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/nov/07/neo-nazi-site-iron-march-materials-leak>.
- 21 H.E. Upchurch, "The Iron March Forum and the Evolution of the 'Skull Mask' Neo-Fascist Network," *CTC Sentinel* 14:10 (December 2021), <https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CTC-SENTINEL-102021.pdf>.

- 22 H.E. Upchurch, "The Iron March Forum and the Evolution of the "Skull Mask" Neo-Fascist Network," *CTC Sentinel* 14:10 (December 2021), <https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CTC-SENTINEL-102021.pdf>.
- 23 Mack Lamoureux, "The Woman Who Plotted a Valentine's Mass Murder Shares How the Internet Radicalized Her," *Vice News*, February 21, 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/eve54j/the-woman-who-plotted-a-valentines-mass-murder-shares-how-the-internet-radicalized-her>.
- 24 Mack Lamoureux, "The Woman Who Plotted a Valentine's Mass Murder Shares How the Internet Radicalized Her," *Vice News*, February 21, 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/eve54j/the-woman-who-plotted-a-valentines-mass-murder-shares-how-the-internet-radicalized-her>.
- 25 Christy Somos, "Map of hate: Publication pinpoints Canadian users of neo-Nazi site Iron March," *CTV News*, November 27, 2019, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/map-of-hate-publication-pinpoints-canadian-users-of-neo-nazi-site-iron-march-1.4703545>.
- 26 Christy Somos, "Map of hate: Publication pinpoints Canadian users of neo-Nazi site Iron March," *CTV News*, November 27, 2019, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/map-of-hate-publication-pinpoints-canadian-users-of-neo-nazi-site-iron-march-1.4703545>.
- 27 Alexander Reid Ross, Emmi Bevensee, & ZC, "Transnational White Terror: Exposing Atomwaffen And The Iron March Networks," *Bellingcat*, December 19, 2019, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2019/12/19/transnational-white-terror-exposing-atomwaffen-and-the-iron-march-networks/>.
- 28 Alexander Reid Ross, Emmi Bevensee, & ZC, "Transnational White Terror: Exposing Atomwaffen And The Iron March Networks," *Bellingcat*, December 19, 2019, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2019/12/19/transnational-white-terror-exposing-atomwaffen-and-the-iron-march-networks/>.
- 29 Stewart Bell, "Proud Boys added to Canada's list of terrorist groups," *Global News*, February 3, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7616542/proud-boys-added-canada-list-terrorist-groups/>.
- 30 Jacques Singer-Emery & Rex Bray, III, "The Iron March Data Dump Provides a Window Into How White Supremacists Communicate and Recruit," *Lawfare*, February 27, 2020, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/iron-march-data-dump-provides-window-how-white-supremacists-communicate-and-recruit>.
- 31 Chris Ingalls, "Neo-Nazis from Washington arrested with guns, ammo in Texas," *K5 News*, November 14, 2019, https://www.king5.com/amp/article/news/investigations/wa-neo-nazis-arrested-in-car-full-of-guns-and-ammo/281-7901f669-b849-41ce-b7d1-b824de28a893?__twitter_impression=true.
- 32 Ali Winston, "Atomwaffen Division's Washington State Cell Leader Stripped of Arsenal in U.S., Banned from Canada," *The Daily Beast*, October 19, 2019, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/kaleb-james-cole-atomwaffen-divisions-washington-state-leader-stripped-of-arsenal-in-us-banned-from-canada>.
- 33 Rachel Weiner, "Former leader of neo-Nazi Atomwaffen group sentenced for swatting," *The Washington Post*, May 4, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/legal-issues/atomwaffen-leader-prison-sentence/2021/05/04/95544e16-a14b-11eb-a7ee-949c574a09ac_story.html.
- 34 Jason Wilson, "Sweep of arrests hits US neo-Nazi group connected to five murders," *The Guardian*, March 6, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/06/neo-nazi-arrests-deals-blow-us-group-atomwaffen-division>.
- 35 Zack Beauchamp, "A neo-Nazi idea to spark a race war inspired the Buffalo killings," *Vox*, May 16, 2022, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2022/5/16/23074812/buffalo-shooting-accelerationism-great-replacement-neo-nazi>.
- 36 Zack Beauchamp, "A neo-Nazi idea to spark a race war inspired the Buffalo killings," *Vox*, May 16, 2022, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2022/5/16/23074812/buffalo-shooting-accelerationism-great-replacement-neo-nazi>.
- 37 The Associated Press, "Germany arrests 4 in investigation of far-right groups," *ABC News*, April 6, 2022, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/germany-arrests-investigation-groups-83904901>.
- 38 Mack Lamoureux, "Swedish Police Say They Thwarted Neo-Nazi Bombing and Mass Murder Plot," *Vice News*, May 31, 2022, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/y3va9g/sweden-neo-nazi-mass-murder-plot-arrest>.
- 39 No Author, *The Atomwaffen Division: The Evolution of the White Supremacy Threat* (New York, NY: The Soufan Center Special Report, August 2020), <https://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/The-Atomwaffen-Division-The-Evolution-of-the-White-Supremacy-Threat-August-2020-.pdf>.
- 40 No Author, "Examining Atomwaffen Division's Transnational Linkages," *The Cipher Brief*, https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column_article/examining-atomwaffen-divisions-transnational-linkages.
- 41 Ezel Sahinkaya & Danila Galperovich, "Radical Russian Imperial Movement Expanding Global Outreach," *VOA News*, May 9, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch-radical-russian-imperial-movement-expanding-global-outreach/6189020.html>.

- 42 Ezel Sahinkaya & Danila Galperovich, "Radical Russian Imperial Movement Expanding Global Outreach," *VOA News*, May 9, 2020, https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch_radical-russian-imperial-movement-expanding-global-outreach/6189020.html.
- 43 Amy Forliti, "White supremacists plotted to attack US electric grid by shooting into power stations, FBI says," *USA Today*, December 22, 2020, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/12/22/white-supremacists-plotted-attack-us-power-grid-fbi-says/4018815001/>.
- 44 Tom Blackwell, "Gun-toting Canadian triggers FBI probe of alleged white-supremacist terror plot tied to U.S. election," *National Post*, January 15, 2021, <https://nationalpost.com/news/gun-toting-canadian-triggers-fbi-probe-of-alleged-white-supremacist-terror-plot-tied-to-u-s-election>.
- 45 Ben Makuch & Mack Lamoureux, "German Police Launch a Massive Raid of Suspected Neo-Nazis," *Vice News*, April 6, 2022, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/qjb5wp/germany-police-neo-nazi-raid>.
- 46 Stewart Bell, "Proud Boys added to Canada's list of terrorist groups," *Global News*, February 3, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7616542/proud-boys-added-canada-list-terrorist-groups/>.
- 47 Daniel De Simone, Andrei Soshnikov & Ali Winston, "Neo-Nazi Rinaldo Nazzaro running US militant group The Base from Russia," *BBC News*, January 24, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51236915>.
- 48 Daniel De Simone & Ali Winston, "Neo-Nazi militant group grooms teenagers," *BBC News*, June 22, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-53128169>.
- 49 Tresa Baldas, "Feds arrest leader of white supremacy group who ran 'hate camp' in Michigan," *Detroit Free Press*, October 29, 2020, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2020/10/29/base-white-supremacy-michigan-watkins/6069096002/>.
- 50 Chad Sokol, "Neo-Nazi terrorist group has rumored 'hate camp' in Washington," *Herald Net*, January 24, 2020, <https://www.heraldnet.com/northwest/neo-nazi-terrorist-group-has-rumored-hate-camp-in-washington/>.
- 51 "What is the militant neo-Nazi group 'The Base'," *Front Burner, CBC News Podcasts*, <https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/front-burner/id1439621628?i=1000447603021>.
- 52 Mack Lamoureux, Ben Makuch, & Zachary Kamel, "How One Man Built a Neo-Nazi Insurgency in Trump's America," *Vice News*, October 7, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7g9kb/how-one-man-built-a-neo-nazi-insurgency-in-trumps-america>.
- 53 Nicholas Reimann, "Member of Neo-Nazi Group Who 'Intended To Inflict Violence' Pleads Guilty To Federal Charge," *Forbes*, December 8, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicholasreimann/2020/12/08/member-of-neo-nazi-group-who-intended-to-inflict-violence-pleads-guilty-to-federal-charge/?sh=1449f3d4584a>.
- 54 Mack Lamoureux & Ben Makuch, "Inside a Neo-Nazi Terror Cell as It Reckons With FBI Arrests," *Vice News*, November 30, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/akd37j/inside-a-neo-nazi-terror-cell-as-it-reckons-with-fbi-arrests>.
- 55 Mack Lamoureux & Ben Makuch, "Inside a Neo-Nazi Terror Cell as It Reckons With FBI Arrests," *Vice News*, November 30, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/akd37j/inside-a-neo-nazi-terror-cell-as-it-reckons-with-fbi-arrests>.
- 56 Mack Lamoureux & Ben Makuch, "Inside a Neo-Nazi Terror Cell as It Reckons With FBI Arrests," *Vice News*, November 30, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/akd37j/inside-a-neo-nazi-terror-cell-as-it-reckons-with-fbi-arrests>.
- 57 Jason Wilson, "Revealed: the true identity of the leader of an American neo-Nazi terror group," *The Guardian*, January 24, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/23/revealed-the-true-identity-of-the-leader-of-americas-neo-nazi-terror-group>.
- 58 Mack Lamoureux & Ben Makuch, "Inside a Neo-Nazi Terror Cell as It Reckons With FBI Arrests," *Vice News*, November 30, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/akd37j/inside-a-neo-nazi-terror-cell-as-it-reckons-with-fbi-arrests>.
- 59 Lee Berthiaume, "Some military personnel linked to hate disciplined, but allowed to stay," *CTV News*, November 18, 2019, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/some-military-personnel-linked-to-hate-disciplined-but-allowed-to-stay-1.4690800>.
- 60 Marshall Cohen, "1 in 10 defendants from US Capitol insurrection have military ties," *CNN*, May 28, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/28/politics/capitol-insurrection-veterans/index.html>.
- 61 Stewart Bell, "Extremist groups 'actively recruiting military and police, Canadian intelligence report warns,'" *Global News*, August 23, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/8128463/extremist-groups-military-recruitment-report/>.
- 62 Lee Berthiaume, "Top general says military started dealing with suspected neo-Nazi in the spring," *CTV News*, August 22, 2019, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/top-general-says-military-started-dealing-with-suspected-neo-nazi-in-the-spring-1.4560803>.
- 63 Stewart Bell & Andrew Russell, "Canadian neo-Nazi recorded violent, racist videos before arrest, prosecutors allege," *Global News*, January 23, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/6443305/canadian-neo-nazi-videos-arrest-us/>.

- 64 Sarah Petz, "U.S. judge sentences Manitoban ex-reservist Patrik Mathews to 9 years in prison for role in neo-Nazi plot," *CBC News*, October 28, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/patrik-mathews-sentencing-1.6226116>.
- 65 Sarah Petz, "U.S. judge sentences Manitoban ex-reservist Patrik Mathews to 9 years in prison for role in neo-Nazi plot," *CBC News*, October 28, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/patrik-mathews-sentencing-1.6226116>.
- 66 Mack Lamoureux & Ben Makuch, "Canadian Military Confirms Neo-Nazi Group Atomwaffen Within Its Ranks," *Vice News*, May 28, 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/a3xndb/canadian-military-confirms-neo-nazi-group-atomwaffen-was-within-its-ranks>.
- 67 Stewart Bell & Mercedes Stephenson, "Canadian Armed Forces members linked to six hate groups: internal report," *Global News*, May 27, 2019, <https://globalnews.ca/news/5322011/canadian-armed-forces-members-linked-to-six-hate-groups-internal-report/>.
- 68 Mack Lamoureux & Ben Makuch, "Canadian Military Confirms Neo-Nazi Group Atomwaffen Within Its Ranks," *Vice News*, May 28, 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/a3xndb/canadian-military-confirms-neo-nazi-group-atomwaffen-was-within-its-ranks>.
- 69 Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination with a focus on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism, LGBTQ2+ Prejudice, Gender Bias, and White Supremacy: Final Report* (January 2022), p. 39, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/mnd-advisory-panel-systemic-racism-discrimination-final-report-jan-2022.html>.
- 70 Mack Lamoureux & Ben Makuch, "Canadian Military Confirms Neo-Nazi Group Atomwaffen Within Its Ranks," *Vice News*, May 28, 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/a3xndb/canadian-military-confirms-neo-nazi-group-atomwaffen-was-within-its-ranks>.
- 71 Christy Somos, "Map of hate: Publication pinpoints Canadian users of neo-Nazi site Iron March," *CTV News*, November 27, 2019, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/map-of-hate-publication-pinpoints-canadian-users-of-neo-nazi-site-iron-march-1.4703545>.
- 72 Roberto Rocha & Jeff Yates, "Leak of thousands of posts from defunct neo-Nazi forum offers clues to identify Canadian members," *CBC News*, November 8, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/iron-march-message-board-canadian-forces-1.5353201>.
- 73 Roberto Rocha & Jeff Yates, "Navy investigating reservist who encouraged fellow members of neo-Nazi web forum to enlist," *CBC News*, December 4, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/navy-reservist-iron-march-data-1.5382424>.
- 74 Christy Somos, "Map of hate: Publication pinpoints Canadian users of neo-Nazi site Iron March," *CTV News*, November 27, 2019, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/map-of-hate-publication-pinpoints-canadian-users-of-neo-nazi-site-iron-march-1.4703545>.
- 75 Andrew Russell, "Canadian Armed Forces creates 'hateful conduct' policy to combat extremism in its ranks," *Global News*, July 15, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7180617/canadian-armed-forces-hateful-conduct-policy-extremism/>.
- 76 Andrew Russell, "Canadian Armed Forces creates 'hateful conduct' policy to combat extremism in its ranks," *Global News*, July 15, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7180617/canadian-armed-forces-hateful-conduct-policy-extremism/>.
- 77 Jake Offenhartz, "Alleged Neo-Nazi 'Incel' Arrested in Queens Weapons Sting," *Gothamist*, May 13, 2020, <https://gothamist.com/news/alleged-neo-nazi-incele-arrested-queens-weapons-sting>.
- 78 Bill Bostock, "The mass shooter who killed 9 in Germany published a racist manifesto where he identified as an incel and accused Trump of stealing his populist slogans," *Insider*, February 20, 2020, <https://www.insider.com/hanau-terrorist-manifesto-shows-non-white-hatred-incele-trump-theft-2020-2>.
- 79 Tim Stelloh, "Neo-Nazi-Turned-Muslim Charged With Killing Roommates Who 'Disrespected' Faith," *NBC News*, May 22, 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/neo-nazi-turned-muslim-charged-killing-roommates-who-disrespected-faith-n763251>.
- 80 Donald Netolitzky, "A Pathogen Astride the Minds of Men: The Epidemiological History of Pseudolaw," *SSRN* (May 2018), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3177472.
- 81 Donald Netolitzky, "A Pathogen Astride the Minds of Men: The Epidemiological History of Pseudolaw," *SSRN* (May 2018), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3177472.
- 82 Donald Netolitzky, "A Pathogen Astride the Minds of Men: The Epidemiological History of Pseudolaw," *SSRN* (May 2018), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3177472.
- 83 Travis McEwan, "'Extreme' posts lead to arrest of Alberta man considered a threat to public, police," *CBC News*, April 29, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/threat-parkland-county-charges-1.6008113>.

- 84 Jonny Wakefield, "'Threat to critical infrastructure, police and the public': Alberta man arrested in extremism investigation," *Edmonton Journal*, April 29, 2021, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/crime/rcmp-national-security-unit-arrests-alberta-man-with-cache-of-guns-explosives-in-extremism-investigation>.
- 85 Travis McEwan, "'Extreme' posts lead to arrest of Alberta man considered a threat to public, police," *CBC News*, April 29, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/threat-parkland-county-charges-1.6008113>.
- 86 Jonny Wakefield, "'Moleman': 4chan user linked to Alberta man charged in extremism investigation," *Edmonton Journal*, October 8, 2021, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/moleman-inside-the-dark-web-alter-ego-of-the-alberta-man-charged-in-rcmp-extremism-investigation>.
- 87 Jonny Wakefield, "'Threat to critical infrastructure, police and the public': Alberta man arrested in extremism investigation," *Edmonton Journal*, April 29, 2021, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/crime/rcmp-national-security-unit-arrests-alberta-man-with-cache-of-guns-explosives-in-extremism-investigation>.
- 88 Jared Thompson, "Examining Extremism: The Boogaloo Movement," blog entry, *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, June 30, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-boogaloo-movement/>.
- 89 Michael King & Sam Mullins, "COVID-19 and Terrorism in the West: Has Radicalization Really Gone Viral?" *Just Security*, March 4, 2021, <https://www.justsecurity.org/75064/covid-19-and-terrorism-in-the-west-has-radicalization-really-gone-viral/>.
- 90 Barbara Perry, David Hofmann & Ryan Scrivens, "Anti-Authority and Militia Movements in Canada," *The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare* 1:3 (2019): 1-30.
- 91 Perry, Barbara, David Hofmann, and Ryan Scrivens. "Anti-Authority and Militia Movements in Canada." *The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare* 1:3 (2019): 1-30.
- 92 Mack Lamoureux & Wallis Snowden, "'Paper terrorism' case leads to charge against Freeman on the Land member," *CBC News*, September 21, 2016, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/paper-terrorism-case-leads-to-charge-against-freeman-on-the-land-member-1.3772454>.
- 93 Tom Blackwell, "Alberta judge bars new 'pseudo law' advocate who claims Magna Carta puts her outside court's authority," *National Post*, August 27, 2020, <https://nationalpost.com/news/alberta-judge-bars-new-pseudo-law-advocate-who-claims-magna-carta-puts-her-outside-courts-authority>.
- 94 Tom Blackwell, "Alberta judge bars new 'pseudo law' advocate who claims Magna Carta puts her outside court's authority," *National Post*, August 27, 2020, <https://nationalpost.com/news/alberta-judge-bars-new-pseudo-law-advocate-who-claims-magna-carta-puts-her-outside-courts-authority>.
- 95 Tom Blackwell, "Alberta judge bars new 'pseudo law' advocate who claims Magna Carta puts her outside court's authority," *National Post*, August 27, 2020, <https://nationalpost.com/news/alberta-judge-bars-new-pseudo-law-advocate-who-claims-magna-carta-puts-her-outside-courts-authority>.
- 96 Tom Blackwell, "Stopping a 'virus': Alberta judge again rebukes woman who claims Magna Carta invalidated Canadian law," *National Post*, December 21, 2020, <https://nationalpost.com/news/stopping-a-virus-alberta-judge-again-rebukes-woman-who-claims-magna-carta-invalidated-canadian-law>.
- 97 Tom Blackwell, "Alberta judge bars new 'pseudo law' advocate who claims Magna Carta puts her outside court's authority," *National Post*, August 27, 2020, <https://nationalpost.com/news/alberta-judge-bars-new-pseudo-law-advocate-who-claims-magna-carta-puts-her-outside-courts-authority>.
- 98 Tom Blackwell, "Lawyer files criminal complaint against pseudo law follower accusing Alberta judge of sedition," *National Post*, September 3, 2020, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/lawyer-files-criminal-complaint-against-pseudo-law-follower-accusing-alberta-judge-of-sedition>.
- 99 Marc-André Argentino, "Digital Platforms and Extremism 2: Electric Boogaloo," *Global Network on Extremism & Technology*, June 8, 2020, <https://gnet-research.org/2020/06/08/digital-platforms-and-extremism-2-electric-boogaloo/>.
- 100 Benjamin Goggin & Rachel E. Greenspan, "Who are the Boogaloo Bois? A man who shot up a Minneapolis police precinct was associated with the extremist movement, according to unsealed documents," *Insider*, October 26, 2020, <https://www.insider.com/boogaloo-bois-protest-far-right-minneapolis-extremist-guns-hawaiian-shirts-2020-5>.
- 101 United States Department of Justice, press release, "Second 'Boogaloo Bois' Member Sentenced to Prison for Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Hamas," June 1, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/pr-second-boogaloo-bois-member-sentenced-prison-conspiring-provide-material-support-hamas>.

- 102 Andrew Blankstein, Tom Winter & Brandy Zadrozny, "Three men connected to 'boogaloo' movement tried to provoke violence at protests, feds say," *NBC News*, June 3, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/all/three-men-connected-boogaloo-movement-tried-provoke-violence-protests-feds-n1224231>.
- 103 CBS Bay Area News Staff, "Update: Security Officers Gunned Down At Oakland Federal Building; DHHS Official Calls Gunman 'An Assassin'," *CBS News*, May 30, 2020, <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/05/30/george-floyd-officers-gunned-down-at-oakland-federal-building-one-dead-one-wounded/>.
- 104 Brandy Zadrozny, Ben Collins & Andrew Blankstein, "Man charged in deputy ambush scrawled extremist 'Boogaloo' phrases in blood," *NBC News*, June 11, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/man-charged-deputy-ambush-scrawled-extremist-boogaloo-phrases-blood-n1230321>.
- 105 Elizabeth Thompson and Andrea Bellemare, "Support for anti-government, pro-gun Boogaloo movement growing in Canada," *CBC News*, July 1, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/boogaloo-guns-government-facebook-1.5632056>.
- 106 Public Safety Canada press release, "Boogaloo Movement in Canada," February 3, 2021, <https://www.securitepublique.gc.ca/cnt/trnsprnc/brfng-mtrls/prlmntry-bndrs/20200708/026/index-en.aspx>.
- 107 Elizabeth Thompson and Andrea Bellemare, "Support for anti-government, pro-gun Boogaloo movement growing in Canada," *CBC News*, July 1, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/boogaloo-guns-government-facebook-1.5632056>.
- 108 Jonathan Montpetit, "Anti-government website hosted in Montreal shut down after promoting armed protests in U.S.," *CBC News*, January 13, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montreal-website-extremists-protests-u-s-1.5870183>.
- 109 NZ Herald Staff, "Coronavirus causes rise in 'sovereign citizens' movement," *NZ Herald*, May 15, 2020, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/coronavirus-causes-rise-in-sovereign-citizens-movement/46HPSORTOTVH44272VJOLDR3PE/>.
- 110 BBC News Staff, "Coronavirus: Melbourne police 'assaulted and baited' over lockdown rules," *BBC News*, August 4, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-53645759>.
- 111 BBC News Staff, "Coronavirus: Melbourne police 'assaulted and baited' over lockdown rules," *BBC News*, August 4, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-53645759>.
- 112 Matt Bradley, Carlo Angerer & Adela Suliman, "QAnon supporters join thousands at protest against Germany's coronavirus rules," *NBC News*, August 29, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/qanon-supporters-join-thousands-protest-against-germany-s-coronavirus-rules-n1238783>.
- 113 No Author, "Germany coronavirus: Hundreds arrested in German 'anti-corona' protests," *BBC News*, August 30, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53959552>.
- 114 Sabine Siebold, "Citing far-right sway, Germany tracks COVID protesters," *Reuters*, December 9, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/germany-security-coronavirus/citing-far-right-sway-germany-tracks-covid-protesters-idUSKBN28J108?edition-redirect=ca>.
- 115 AP News Staff, "FBI: Government's response to virus spurred would-be bomber," *AP News*, April 15, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/ad891a0e69f0e3d285c397a1626d1e0d>.
- 116 Michael King & Sam Mullins, "COVID-19 and Terrorism in the West: Has Radicalization Really Gone Viral?" *Just Security*, March 4, 2021, <https://www.justsecurity.org/75064/covid-19-and-terrorism-in-the-west-has-radicalization-really-gone-viral/>.
- 117 Alexander Mallin, "'Boogaloo Bois' member charged in attack on Minneapolis police precinct during George Floyd protests," *ABC News*, October 23, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/boogaloo-bois-member-charged-attack-minneapolis-police-building/story?id=73789955>.
- 118 Michelle L. Price & Scott Sonner, "Prosecutors: 3 men plotted to terrorize Vegas protests," *AP News*, June 3, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/6223153093f08fa910c4ab445771b773>.
- 119 Brandy Zadrozny, Ben Collins & Andrew Blankstein, "Man charged in deputy ambush scrawled extremist 'Boogaloo' phrases in blood," *NBC News*, June 11, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/man-charged-deputy-ambush-scrawled-extremist-boogaloo-phrases-blood-n1230321>.
- 120 Canadian Anti-Hate Network Staff, "After Threatening Demonstrators Who 'Come To My Fucking Town,' Pat King Is Organizing Another Counter Protest Against Anti-Racist Rally In Alberta," *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, September 17, 2020, https://www.antihate.ca/wexit_co_founder_pat_king_threatens_demonstrators.
- 121 Adam MacVicar, "Alberta RCMP investigating after Red Deer anti-racism rally gets violent," *Global News*, September 22, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7351569/alberta-rcmp-red-deer-anti-racism-rally/>.

- 122 Yellow Vests Canada Exposed, "Far-Right Fail to Bait Anti-Racist Protesters in Rural Alberta," blog entry, *Anti-Racist Canada*, June 16, 2020, <https://anti-racistcanada.blogspot.com/2020/06/guest-article-far-right-fail-to-bait.html>.
- 123 Stephanie Hilash, "People Drove Into An Alberta Anti-Racism Protest & Screamed 'All Lives Matter' (VIDEO)," *Narcity*, June 15, 2020, <https://www.narcity.com/innisfail-alberta-protest-had-people-drive-in-and-shout-all-lives-matter-video>.
- 124 Ashley Joannou, "Allard resigns as Alberta municipal affairs minister, Kenney's chief of staff steps down amid controversy over international travel," *Edmonton Journal*, January 5, 2021, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/politics/allard-resigns-as-alberta-municipal-affairs-minister-kenneys-chief-of-staff-steps-down-amid-controversy-over-international-travel>.
- 125 Lisa Johnson, "Alberta MLA says she's outraged COVID-19 protesters left noose outside her home," *Edmonton Journal*, November 2, 2021, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/politics/alberta-legislature-november-2>.
- 126 Newsroom Staff, "Protesters harass Health Minister Tyler Shandro and family at Canada Day event," *Calgary Herald*, July 1, 2021, https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/protesters-harass-health-minister-tyler-shandro-and-family-at-canada-day-event?_gl=1*x4uksr*_ga*MTQzMTQ2MjYxNC4xNjQ2MDYwOTI1*_
- 127 David Staples, "David Staples: Huge win for Canadian decency as Coutts blockade ends peacefully," *Edmonton Journal*, February 16, 2022, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/politics/david-staples-huge-win-for-canadian-decency-as-coutts-blockade-ends-peacefully>.
- 128 No Author, "Weapons Seizure With Possible Ties To Militia Network Prompts Some To Leave Coutts Blockade," *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, February 15, 2022, https://www.antihate.ca/weapons_seizure_possible_ties_militia_network_prompts_some_to_leave_coutts_blockade.
- 129 CBC News Team, "The convoy crisis in Ottawa: A timeline of key events," *CBC News*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/timeline-of-convoy-protest-in-ottawa-1.6351432>.
- 130 Glen McGregor, "There was another 'peace officer' swearing-in of protesters last night. Larger group who now claim they're empowered to detain and arrest as members of the Canadian Common Corps of Peace Officers," *Twitter*, February 10, 2022, https://twitter.com/glen_mcgregor/status/1491872930782855183.
- 131 Douglas Quan, "Government-dodging Freeman on the Land movements creates 'major policing problem': CSIS report," *Vancouver Sun*, December 29, 2012, <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/national/canadian-government-dodging-freeman-on-the-land-movement-creates-major-policing-problem-says-csis-report>.
- 132 Unrau v. National Dental Examining Board, 2019 ABQB 283 (Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta), < https://www.albertacourts.ca/docs/default-source/qb/judgments/unrau-v-national-dental-examining-board---reasons-for-decision.pdf?sfvrsn=1fe6ba80_2>, retrieved on 2022-07-03
- 133 Donald J Netolitzky, "Organized Pseudolegal Commercial Arguments in Canadian Inter-Partner Family Law Court Disputes," *Alberta Law Review* 54:4 (2017), <https://canlii.ca/t/6rz>.
- 134 Meghan Grant, "Coutts arrests: new details on the men and women charged in border blockade," *CBC News*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/coutts-arrests-charges-border-protest-1.6354587>.
- 135 Christy Somos, "What is the Diagonal extremist group and what does it want?" *CTV News*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/what-is-the-diagonal-extremist-group-and-what-does-it-want-1.5785646>.
- 136 Christy Somos, "What is the Diagonal extremist group and what does it want?" *CTV News*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/what-is-the-diagonal-extremist-group-and-what-does-it-want-1.5785646>.
- 137 Jim Taylor, "The woman who founded the 'incel' movement," *BBC News*, August 30, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45284455>.
- 138 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2019* (April 2020), <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/PubRep-2019-E.pdf>.
- 139 David Jones, Zoe Hastings & Laura Stolte, *Incels: Background for Practitioners* (Edmonton, AB: The Organization for the Prevention of Violence, May 2020), <https://preventviolence.ca/publication/incels-background-for-practitioners/>.
- 140 Rachel Janik, "'I laugh at the death of normies': How incels are celebrating the Toronto mass killing," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, April 24, 2018, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/04/24/i-laugh-death-normies-how-incels-are-celebrating-toronto-mass-killing>.
- 141 Lauren O'Neil, "Here's the full verdict in the Alek Minassian Toronto van attack trial," *BlogTO*, March 3, 2021, <https://www.blogto.com/city/2021/03/alek-minassian-trial-full-verdict-toronto-van-attack/>.

- 142 Anne Speckhard, Molly Ellenberg, Jesse Morton & Alexander Ash, "Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum," *Journal of Strategic Security* 14:2 (2021), <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol14/iss2/5/>.
- 143 Arron Pickard, "Marcus Drive 'incel' attacker told police he was 'out to murder a little white girl,'" *Sudbury.com*, January 13, 2020, <https://www.sudbury.com/local-news/marcus-drive-incel-attacker-told-police-he-was-out-to-murder-a-little-white-girl-2018238>.
- 144 Sudbury.com Staff, "Sudbury 'incel' attacker gets two life sentences for brutal attempted murder in store parking lot," *Sudbury.com*, December 15, 2021, <https://www.sudbury.com/court/sudbury-incel-attacker-gets-two-life-sentences-for-brutal-attempted-murder-in-store-parking-lot-4867878>.
- 145 Stewart Bell, Andrew Russell, & Catherine McDonald, "Deadly attack at Toronto erotic spa was incel terrorism, police allege," *Global News*, May 19, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/6910670/toronto-spa-terrorism-incel/>.
- 146 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2019* (April 2020), <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csisc-scrs/documents/publications/PubRep-2019-E.pdf>.
- 147 Anne Speckhard, Molly Ellenberg, Jesse Morton & Alexander Ash, "Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum," *Journal of Strategic Security* 14:2 (2021), <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol14/iss2/5/>.
- 148 Debbie Ging, "Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere," *Men and Masculinities* 22:4 (2019), p. 640, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1097184X17706401>.
- 149 Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware, & Ezra Shapiro. "Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43: 7 (July 2, 2020), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1751459?journalCode=uter20>.
- 150 Megan Kelly, Alex DiBranco, & Julia R. De Cook, *Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism* (Washington, DC: New America, February 2021), <https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/misogynist-incels-and-male-supremacism/>.
- 151 No Author, *Incels: A First Scan of the Phenomenon (in the EU) and its Relevance and Challenges for P/ CVE* (Luxembourg: Radicalisation Awareness Network, European Commission, 2021) https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2021-10/ran_incels_first_scan_of_phenomen_and_relevance_challenges_for_p-cve_202110_en.pdf.
- 152 Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware, & Ezra Shapiro. "Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43:7 (July 2, 2020), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1751459?journalCode=uter20>.
- 153 Stephanie J. Baele, Lewys Brace, & Travis G. Coan, "From 'Incel' to 'Saint': Analyzing the violent worldview behind the 2018 Toronto attack," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 8 (August 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1638256>.
- 154 Megan Kelly, Alex DiBranco, & Julia R. De Cook, *Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism* (Washington, DC: New America, February 2021), <https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/misogynist-incels-and-male-supremacism/>.
- 155 Megan Kelly, Alex DiBranco, & Julia R. De Cook, *Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism* (Washington, DC: New America, February 2021), <https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/misogynist-incels-and-male-supremacism/>.
- 156 Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware, & Ezra Shapiro. "Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43:7 (July 2, 2020), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1751459?journalCode=uter20>.
- 157 David Mack, Amber Jamieson, & Julia Reinstein, "The Tallahassee Yoga Shooter Was A Far-Right Misogynist Who Railed Against Women And Minorities," *Buzzfeed News*, November 3, 2018, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/davidmack/tallahassee-yoga-shooter-incel-far-right-misogyny-video>.
- 158 Andrew Blankstein, "California man promoting 'incel ideology' charged with allegedly threatening teens," *NBC News*, April 21, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/california-man-promoting-incel-ideology-charged-allegedly-threatening-teens-n1189206>.
- 159 AP News Staff, "Man's hand blown off; note references violence against women," *AP News*, June 6, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/4aede80947dc6faead4c49a3ea15c840>.
- 160 Rebecca Rosenberg, "FBI busts 'incel' for sending rape, death threats to Long Island couple," *New York Post*, September 10, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/09/10/fbi-busts-incel-for-sending-rape-death-threats-to-couple/>.
- 161 Melissa Jeltsen, "Man Arrested For Threatening To Kill 'As Many Girls As I See' On Day Of Women's March," *HuffPost*, January 23, 2019, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/man-arrested-for-threatening-to-kill-as-many-girls-as-i-see-on-day-of-womens-march_n_5c4887f7e4b025aa26bf24cf?ri18n=true.

- 162 Scott Martelle, "Opinion: A thwarted Dallas shooting goes viral. If only all gun violence got the same attention," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/enterthefray/la-ol-dallas-gunman-brian-isaack-clyde-video-federal-building-20190618-story.html>.
- 163 J.D. Simkins, "Air Force cautions troops to be aware of sexless 'involuntary celibates'," *Air Force Times*, June 21, 2019, <https://www.airforcetimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2019/06/21/air-force-cautions-troops-to-beware-of-sexless-involuntary-celibates/>.
- 164 Elliott C. McLaughlin, Andy Rose, & Kostantin Toropin, "Suspect in Arizona shooting wanted to target couples, prosecutor says," *CNN*, May 21, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/20/us/westgate-arizona-shooting/index.html>.
- 165 Jaclyn Diaz, "Police Foiled An Ohio Incel's Plot To Kill Women In A Mass Shooting, Prosecutors Say," *NPR*, July 22, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/22/1019089834/police-foiled-an-ohio-incels-plot-to-kill-women-in-a-mass-shooting-prosecutors-s>.
- 166 Spiked Staff, "'This was not an incel shooting'," *Spiked*, August 20, 2021, <https://www.spiked-online.com/2021/08/20/this-was-not-an-incel-shooting/>.
- 167 Lizzie Dearden, "Plymouth shootings were not terror attack, senior police officer says," *Independent*, September 28, 2021, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/plymouth-shootings-incel-terror-attack-b1928366.html>.
- 168 Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware, & Ezra Shapiro. "Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43:7 (July 2, 2020), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1751459?journalCode=uter20>.
- 169 Anne Speckhard, Molly Ellenberg, Jesse Morton & Alexander Ash, "Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum," *Journal of Strategic Security* 14:2 (2021), <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol14/iss2/5/>.
- 170 Anne Speckhard, Molly Ellenberg, Jesse Morton & Alexander Ash, "Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum," *Journal of Strategic Security* 14:2 (2021), <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol14/iss2/5/>.
- 171 Anne Speckhard, Molly Ellenberg, Jesse Morton & Alexander Ash, "Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum," *Journal of Strategic Security* 14:2 (2021), <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol14/iss2/5/>.
- 172 Anne Speckhard, Molly Ellenberg, Jesse Morton & Alexander Ash, "Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum," *Journal of Strategic Security* 14:2 (2021), <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol14/iss2/5/>.
- 173 David Jones, Zoe Hastings, & Laura Stolte, *Incels: Background for Practitioners* (Edmonton, AB: The Organization for the Prevention of Violence, May 2020), <https://preventviolence.ca/publication/incels-background-for-practitioners/>.
- 174 David Jones, Zoe Hastings, & Laura Stolte, *Incels: Background for Practitioners* (Edmonton, AB: The Organization for the Prevention of Violence, May 2020), <https://preventviolence.ca/publication/incels-background-for-practitioners/>.
- 175 U.S. Department of Justice, press release, "Pair charged with interfering with safety on railroad tracks," November 30, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdwa/pr/pair-charged-interfering-safety-railroad-tracks>.
- 176 U.S. Department of Justice, press release, "Pair charged with interfering with safety on railroad tracks," November 30, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdwa/pr/pair-charged-interfering-safety-railroad-tracks>.
- 177 U.S. Department of Justice, press release, "Pair charged with interfering with safety on railroad tracks," November 30, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdwa/pr/pair-charged-interfering-safety-railroad-tracks>.
- 178 CBC News Staff, "RCMP investigate alleged attack on Coastal GasLink pipeline worksite in B.C.," *CBC News*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/rcmp-coastal-gaslink-bc-violence-investigating-1.6356257>.
- 179 Matt Simmons, "Tracking what we know – and don't know – about the attack on a Coastal GasLink worksite," *The Narwhal*, February 24, 2022, <https://thenarwhal.ca/coastal-gaslink-attack-explainer/>.
- 180 Anna V. Smith, "Patriot militia groups mobilize during a deadly pandemic and massive protests," *High Country News*, July 27, 2020, <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.8/north-patriot-militia-groups-mobilize-during-a-deadly-pandemic-and-massive-protests>.
- 181 Michelle Bellefontaine, "After criticism, Premier Jason Kenney condemns racist elements at Edmonton torch rally," *CBC News*, February 22, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-rally-anti-mask-torch-1.5923797>.
- 182 Spencer Sunshine, "Profile on the Right: Three Percenters," *Political Research Associates*, January 5, 2016, https://www.politicalresearch.org/2016/01/05/profiles-on-the-right-three-percenters#_edn4.

- 183 Casey Michel, "How Militias Became the Private Police for White Supremacists," *Politico*, August 17, 201, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/08/17/white-supremacists-militias-private-police-215498>.
- 184 CBS News Staff, "FBI: Oklahoma City bank explosion plot foiled by undercover operation," *CBS News*, August 14, 2017, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fbi-oklahoma-city-bank-explosion-plot-foiled-by-undercover-operation/>.
- 185 Aaron Sankin & Will Carless, "The Hate Report: Get to know the Three Percenters," *Reveal News*, March 16, 2018, <https://revealnews.org/blog/hate-report-get-to-know-the-three-percenters/>.
- 186 Anna V. Smith, "Patriot militia groups mobilize during a deadly pandemic and massive protests," *High Country News*, July 27, 2020, <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.8/north-patriot-militia-groups-mobilize-during-a-deadly-pandemic-and-massive-protests>.
- 187 Anna V. Smith, "Patriot militia groups mobilize during a deadly pandemic and massive protests," *High Country News*, July 27, 2020, <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.8/north-patriot-militia-groups-mobilize-during-a-deadly-pandemic-and-massive-protests>.
- 188 Anna V. Smith, "Patriot militia groups mobilize during a deadly pandemic and massive protests," *High Country News*, July 27, 2020, <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.8/north-patriot-militia-groups-mobilize-during-a-deadly-pandemic-and-massive-protests>.
- 189 Anna V. Smith, "Patriot militia groups mobilize during a deadly pandemic and massive protests," *High Country News*, July 27, 2020, <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.8/north-patriot-militia-groups-mobilize-during-a-deadly-pandemic-and-massive-protests>.
- 190 Bruce Vielmetti, "'Three Percenter' hosted Wisconsin training by Michigan men charged in plot to kidnap governor," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, October 9, 2020, <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/crime/2020/10/09/three-percenter-hosted-wisconsin-training-michigan-men-plot-governor-whitmer/5938227002/>.
- 191 Jaclyn Diaz & Rachel Treisman, "Members Of Right-Wing Militias, Extremist Groups Are Latest Charged In Capitol Siege," *NPR*, January 19, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/sections/insurrection-at-the-capitol/2021/01/19/958240531/members-of-right-wing-militias-extremist-groups-are-latest-charged-in-capitol-si>.
- 192 Kristy Hutter, "Three Percenters are Canada's 'most dangerous' extremist group, say some experts," *CBC News*, May 10, 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/three-percenters-canada-1.4647199>.
- 193 Samantha Craggs, "Hamilton councillors target white supremacists with ban on unlicensed security guards," *CBC News*, October 19, 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/security-city-hall-1.4361220>.
- 194 Mack Lamoureux, "Inside Canada's Armed, Anti-Islamic 'Patriot' Group," *Vice News*, June 14, 2017, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/new9wd/the-birth-of-canadas-armed-anti-islamic-patriot-group>.
- 195 Amanda Coletta, "Canada labels the Three Percenters a terrorist entity," *Washington Post*, June 25, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/06/25/canada-three-percenters-terrorist-entity/>.
- 196 Mack Lamoureux, "Alberta Muslim Council Urges Three Percenters Militia To Be Placed On Terror List," *Vice News*, March 20, 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/eve9jj/alberta-muslim-council-urges-three-percenters-militia-to-be-placed-on-terror-list>.
- 197 Enzo Dimatteo, "Canada's right-wing extremism problem," *Now Toronto*, January 27, 2021, <https://nowtoronto.com/news/donald-trump-and-the-rise-of-right-wing-extremism-in-canada>.
- 198 Mack Lamoureux & Ben Makuch, "Canadian Military Confirms Neo-Nazi Group Atomwaffen Was Within Its Ranks," *Vice News*, May 28, 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/a3xndb/canadian-military-confirms-neo-nazi-group-atomwaffen-was-within-its-ranks>.
- 199 Emil Archambault & Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, "The Soldiers of Odin in Canada: The failure of a transnational ideology," in *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities* (London: Routledge, p. 272-285), <https://dro.dur.ac.uk/34741/>.
- 200 Jacob Davey, Cécile Guerin, & Mackenzie Hart, *An Online Environmental Scan of Right-wing Extremism in Canada* (London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, June 9, 2020), <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/canada-online/>.
- 201 Jacob Davey, Cécile Guerin, & Mackenzie Hart, *An Online Environmental Scan of Right-wing Extremism in Canada* (London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, June 9, 2020), <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/canada-online/>.
- 202 Grant LaFleche, "'Freedom Convoy' leader shared symbol of far-right hate group on TikTok," *Toronto Star*, January 28, 2022, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2022/01/28/freedom-convoy-leader-shared-symbol-of-far-right-hate-group-on-tiktok.html>.
- 203 Jasmine Bala, "Wet'suwet'en demonstrators say they were targeted by White Supremacists," *Chek News*, February 29, 2020, <https://www.cheknews.ca/wetsuweten-demonstrators-say-they-were-targeted-by-the-soldiers-of-odin-650597/>.
- 204 Peter Smith, "Canadian man arrested for allegedly 3D-printing gun parts," *Daily Hive News*, September 6, 2020, <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/canadian-man-arrested-3d-printing-gun-parts>.

- 205** Peter Smith, "Canadian man arrested for allegedly 3D-printing gun parts," *Daily Hive News*, September 6, 2020, <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/canadian-man-arrested-3d-printing-gun-parts>.
- 206** Adam MacVicar, "Alberta RCMP investigating after Red Deer anti-racism rally gets violent," *Global News*, September 22, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7351569/alberta-rcmp-red-deer-anti-racism-rally/>.
- 207** Michelle Bellefontaine, "After criticism, Premier Jason Kenney condemns racist elements at Edmonton torch rally," *CBC News*, February 22, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-rally-anti-mask-torch-1.5923797>.
- 208** Grant LaFleche, "'Freedom Convoy' leader shared symbol of far-right hate group on TikTok," *Toronto Star*, January 28, 2022, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2022/01/28/freedom-convoy-leader-shared-symbol-of-far-right-hate-group-on-tiktok.html>.
- 209** Andrea Ross, "UCP says candidates unknowingly posed for photos with Soldiers of Odin members," *CBC News*, October 7, 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/ucp-soldiers-of-odin-photo-1.4854143>.
- 210** Omar Mosleh, "What's in a name? Alberta's extremist groups splinter over how they should spread their message," *Toronto Star*, February 1, 2019, <https://www.thestar.com/edmonton/2019/01/31/whats-in-a-name-albertas-extremist-groups-splinter-over-how-they-should-spread-their-message.html>.
- 211** CBC News Staff, "Hate mail sent to Edmonton mosque touches off provincial political battle," *CBC News*, February 6, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-mosque-hate-mail-anti-islam-1.5008013>.
- 212** Kathleen Harris, "Facebook bans Faith Goldy and 'dangerous' alt-right groups," *CBC News*, April 8, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/facebook-faith-goldy-ban-alt-right-1.5088827>.
- 213** Andrea Ross, "UCP says candidates unknowingly posed for photos with Soldiers of Odin members," *CBC News*, October 7, 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/ucp-soldiers-of-odin-photo-1.4854143>.
- 214** Julia Wong, "Royal Canadian Legion issues directive after Soldiers of Odin event held at Alberta legion," *Global News*, May 4, 2019, <https://globalnews.ca/news/5240573/royal-canadian-legion-soldiers-of-odin-grande-prairie/>.
- 215** Alexa MacLean, "Canadian Anti-Hate Network tracking 'hate group' in Halifax," *Global News*, April 5, 2019, <https://globalnews.ca/news/5134538/canadian-anti-hate-network-halifax-northern-guard/>.
- 216** Alexa MacLean, "Canadian Anti-Hate Network tracking 'hate group' in Halifax," *Global News*, April 5, 2019, <https://globalnews.ca/news/5134538/canadian-anti-hate-network-halifax-northern-guard/>.
- 217** Dan Taekema, "Mann accused of assault for anti-Pride protest makes 1st court appearance," *CBC News*, June 27, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/chris-vanderweide-pride-1.5192540>.
- 218** Canadian Anti-Hate Network Staff, "Police Investigating Harassment Campaign Against Al-Soufi Family," *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, October 14, 2019, https://www.antihate.ca/police_investigating_soufi_harassment_campaign.
- 219** Jessica Owen, "Group with far-right ties attends demonstration in Collingwood," *Orillia Matters*, September 11, 2020, <https://www.orilliamatters.com/local-news/group-with-far-right-ties-attends-demonstration-in-collingwood-2706376>.
- 220** Canadian Anti-Hate Network Staff, "Facebook Page Run By Northern Guard Blames LGBTQ+ Community For Pedophilia," *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, September 29, 2020, https://www.antihate.ca/facebook_page_northern_guard_blames_lgbtq_community_pedophilia.
- 221** Canadian Anti-Hate Network Staff, "Facebook Page Run By Northern Guard Blames LGBTQ+ Community For Pedophilia," *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, September 29, 2020, https://www.antihate.ca/facebook_page_northern_guard_blames_lgbtq_community_pedophilia.
- 222** Kurt Phillips, "State of Hate: Canada 2020," *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, February 26, 2020, https://www.antihate.ca/state_of_hate_canada_2020.
- 223** Kurt Phillips, "State of Hate: Canada 2020," *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, February 26, 2020, https://www.antihate.ca/state_of_hate_canada_2020.
- 224** CityNews Staff, "Extremist groups in Alberta 'emboldened': Canadian Anti-Hate Network," *CityNews*, September 30, 2020, <https://www.660citynews.com/2020/09/30/extremist-groups-in-alberta-emboldened-canadian-anti-hate-network/>.
- 225** Kenya Evelyn, "Capitol attack: the five people who died," *The Guardian*, January 8, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/08/capitol-attack-police-officer-five-deaths>.
- 226** Evan Perez, Katelyn Polantz, & Mallory Simon, "New charges allege Proud Boys prepped for Capitol insurrection," *CNN*, February 3, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/03/politics/proud-boys-indicted-capitol-riot/index.html>.

- 227** Evan Perez, Katelyn Polantz, & Mallory Simon, "New charges allege Proud Boys prepped for Capitol insurrection," *CNN*, February 3, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/03/politics/proud-boys-indicted-capitol-riot/index.html>.
- 228** Aram Roston, "Exclusive: Proud Boys leader was 'prolific' informer for law enforcement," *Reuters*, January 27, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-proudboys-leader-exclusive-idUSKBN29W1PE>.
- 229** Adina Bresge, "2 navy members linked to Canada Day incident at Indigenous ceremony in Halifax," *CBC News*, July 3, 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/canada-day-halifax-indigenous-ceremony-proud-boys-1.4189020>.
- 230** Black Press Media Staff, "Far-right Proud Boys posters popping up in Kamloops," *Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows News*, July 24, 2020, <https://www.mapleridgenews.com/news/far-right-proud-boys-posters-popping-up-in-kamloops/>.
- 231** Stephanie Thomas, "Rally through downtown Calgary supports numerous marginalized groups," *CTV News*, August 29, 2020, <https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/rally-through-downtown-calgary-supports-numerous-marginalized-groups-1.5084900>.
- 232** Emma Paling, "Proud Boys Canada may have disbanded 'in name only,' researchers warn," *CBC News*, May 2, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/proud-boys-canada-dissolves-1.6011282>.
- 233** Stewart Bell, "Canadian Proud Boys in 'panic' as platforms go offline and government talks of terror listing," *Global News*, January 11, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7568383/canadian-proud-boys-panic/>.
- 234** Radio Canada Staff, "43,000 members for the far-right group La Meute," *Radio Canada*, December 5, 2016, <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1004095/43-000-membres-pour-le-groupe-dextreme-droite-la-meute>.
- 235** GAPPAsquad, "'La Meute' seen from the inside," *GAPPA*, January 29, 2016, <https://gappasquad.wordpress.com/2016/01/29/la-meute-vue-de-linterieur/>.
- 236** Brigitte Noel, "The illusions and disillusion of La Meute, the 'largest far-right group in Quebec'," *Vice News*, January 4, 2017, <https://www.vice.com/fr/article/8qgjm4/les-illusions-et-desillusions-de-la-meute-le-plus-grand-groupe-dextreme-droite-au-quebec>.
- 237** Brigitte Noel, "The illusions and disillusion of La Meute, the 'largest far-right group in Quebec'," *Vice News*, January 4, 2017, <https://www.vice.com/fr/article/8qgjm4/les-illusions-et-desillusions-de-la-meute-le-plus-grand-groupe-dextreme-droite-au-quebec>.
- 238** Isabelle Porter, "Cimetière musulman: le groupe La Meute actif dans le comité du non," *Le Devoir*, July 18, 2017, <https://www.ledevoir.com/politique/quebec/503641/cimetiere-musulman-des-opposants-membres-de-la-meute>.
- 239** Simon Coutu, "On a parlé avec l'un des Québécois de l'extrême droite présents à Charlottesville," *Vice News*, August 17, 2017, <https://www.vice.com/fr/article/5999yz/on-a-parle-avec-lun-des-quebecois-de-lextreme-droite-presentes-a-charlottesville>.
- 240** Jonathan Montpetit, "Out of the Shadows: Inside La Meute," *CBC News*, August 31, 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/out-of-the-shadows-inside-la-meute-1.4270835>.
- 241** Claire Loewen, "Counter-protesters swarm far-right La Meute protest in Quebec City," *Montreal Gazette*, May 3, 2018, <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/hundreds-of-counter-protesters-swarm-far-right-la-meute-protest-in-quebec-city>.
- 242** Claire Loewen, "Counter-protesters swarm far-right La Meute protest in Quebec City," *Montreal Gazette*, May 3, 2018, <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/hundreds-of-counter-protesters-swarm-far-right-la-meute-protest-in-quebec-city>.
- 243** Gabriel Béland, "La Meute est en train de mourir, croit son cofondateur," *La Presse*, June 18, 2019, https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/2019-06-18/la-meute-est-en-train-de-mourir-croit-son-cofondateur?utm_categorieinterne=traffickers&utm_contenuinterne=cyberpresse_vous_suggere_5230709_article_POS1.
- 244** Jonathan Montpetit, "How right-wing extremists, libertarians and evangelicals built Quebec's movement against COVID-19 restrictions," *CBC News*, September 25, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-anti-mask-movement-qanon-covid-19-1.5737040>.
- 245** Gabriel Béland, "La Meute orchestre son retour en fin de semaine à Québec," *La Presse*, February 4, 2022, <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/2022-02-04/la-meute-orchestre-son-retour-en-fin-de-semaine-a-quebec.php>.

HATE, EXTREMISM, AND TERRORISM

In Alberta, Canada,
and Beyond

The Shift from 2019 to 2022

III. Religiously-Motivated Violent Extremism

Michele St-Amant, David Jones,
Michael King, & John McCoy



organization for
the prevention
of violence

RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISM (RMVE)

INTRODUCTION

Religiously motivated violent extremism (RMVE) is the term used by the Canadian federal government to refer to a set of grievances that encourages violence in a “spiritual struggle against a perceived immoral system.”¹ RMVE actors can only address this struggle through the act of violence.²

According to the CSIS Public Reports for 2020 and 2021, the threat from RMVE actors in Canada comes primarily from individuals acting alone and drawing inspiration from two groups in particular – Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), otherwise known as Daesh.

While Al Qaeda and Daesh represent the focus of national security agencies, it is important to recognize the diverse forms of RMVE that have global and local impacts.. RMVE actors have adopted movements that cross through multiple faiths – such as millenarianism and apocalypticism and have drawn on texts and scriptures from global religions including Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism.

For example, the violent extremist elements among the Christian Identity movement and violent anti-abortion activists and groups like the Army of God have historically posed a threat in North America, particularly in the United States. Several contemporary IMVE groups incorporate religious symbols, principles, and concepts into their ideology, although some, like the Order of Nine Angles, do not conceive of themselves as explicitly religious.

Additionally, as was the case with the Poway synagogue shooter, several lone actor extremists have framed their actions as, in part, religiously justified. While the re-emergence of a virulent form of religiously justified xenophobic extremism is worth tracking, in the interest of analytic clarity, this report’s discussion of these trends is contained within the IMVE section. It thus adheres to categories used by the Government of Canada.

In other parts of the world, such as in South Asia, tensions between diaspora movements that meld religious, nationalistic, and ethnic-based ideologies have resulted in several violent extremist events, such as the 2019 Pulwama attack in India.

Categorizing these disparate movements that prioritize, for example, nationalistic and xenophobic belief systems while employing religious iconography, justifications, and dogma can be challenging. While each of these groups and movements poses a potential threat to public safety, this section will focus on the threat from Al Qaeda and Daesh, as these two groups represent the locus of discussion around RMVE and national security and the bulk of activity witnessed in Canada in recent years.

Much of this activity, primarily since 2014, has been related to the recruitment and travel of foreign fighters to Syria, Iraq, and other conflict zones in the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa.

THREATS TO CANADA AND ALBERTA

According to both Public Safety Canada's 2018 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service's (CSIS) 2020 Public Report, the primary domestic threat related to Religiously Motivated Extremism, particularly Al Qaeda and its affiliated splinter groups (AQAS), continues to be from individuals inspired by these groups using low-tech, high-impact terrorist attacks which can be "planned and executed swiftly with little warning."³

Specifically, these attacks are likely to be inspired — rather than specifically directed— by these groups, with a preference for "soft" targets such as crowds in public spaces.⁴ While the threat in Canada never reached the levels seen within Western Europe over the last 20 years, there are still several notable cases from within Canada since the OPV's last report demonstrating the threat is both present and persistent.

In February 2020, a Toronto woman became the first Canadian killed due to terrorism within Canada since October 2014. Although the attack was initially not labeled a terrorist incident, new evidence increased the charge to "murder-terrorist activity."⁵

In August 2021, the attacker was sentenced to life in prison with no eligibility for parole for 25 years and admitted in an agreed statement of facts that following the attack, he placed a note next to the woman's body with a popular Daesh slogan, "Islamic State Baquiya."⁶ He also had a note in his bag which read "This is for the Islamic State, & all the crimes against Muslims."ⁱ

This case is notable in two ways. First, it demonstrates the persistence of the threat of Daesh-inspired terrorism in the West. Even though the group is significantly diminished, it retains inspirational power amongst its global supporters.

Second, the initial uncertainty around the attack's links to terrorism indicates what has been the norm for Al Qaeda and Daesh-inspired attacks in the West for several years — a reliance on lone actors — which can, in some cases, be difficult for law enforcement to initially link to AQAS.

Another notable recent case was the arrest of a youth in Kingston, Ontario, in January 2019 for terrorism offences.⁷ Following his arrest, police found bomb-making and preparation materials in his bedroom, including diagrams of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). What was unique about this case was the involvement of a remote planner based in Syria, who the youth was referred to after inquiring about how to make IEDs on a pro-Daesh online forum.

Despite its considerable territorial losses in Iraq and Syria over the past few years, Daesh still maintains some capacity to communicate with and help supporters conduct attacks in the West.

The Syrian-based attack planner also helped the Kingston youth make contact online with what they believed to be an aspiring lone attacker in the U.S. but was, in fact, a confidential informant for the FBI. The informant then alerted the RCMP - culminating in an extensive, cross-border investigation.

This plot demonstrates that western Daesh supporters and their attack planners are still actively networking across national boundaries and seeking support to carry out attacks.

i "This is for the Islamic State, & all the crimes against Muslims. God is great!"

In Alberta, the threat of AQAS-linked attacks was never particularly high. In general, most AQAS-linked activities were driven by several individuals who traveled to or returned from fighting abroad.

Most law enforcement officials we interviewed in the province said there was no evidence of any AQAS-linked activity in their area. However, one law enforcement official noted that although the threat is low, there remain those who espouse RMVE but lack any formal connections to the groups:

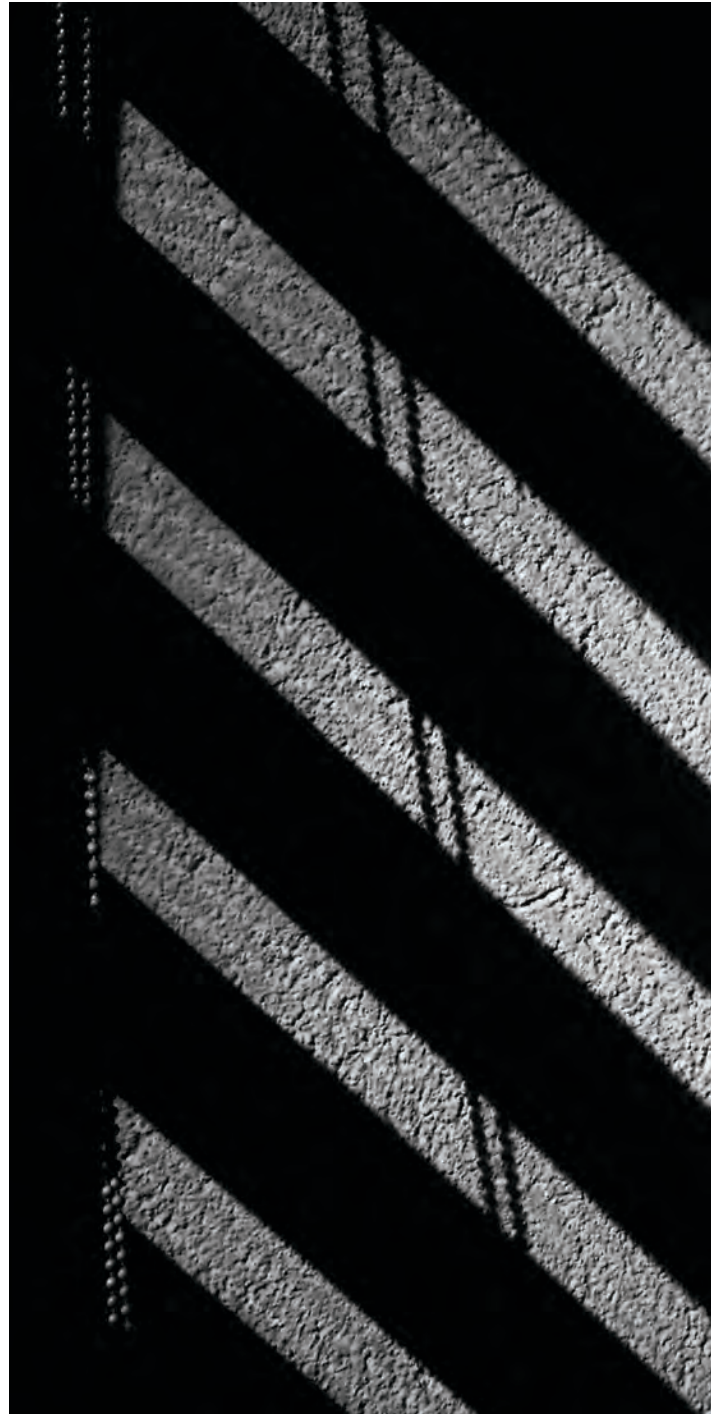
“We’re not seeing any direct ISIS connections. There’s always rhetoric, there’s always talk around it, but in terms of being able to make concrete connections that we have legitimate ISIS followers, or anybody planning something here, I would say we’re unaware of that.”

– Law enforcement official

In general, though, interviewees noted that most RMVE activity in the province has significantly dipped since 2017 and has so far not seen a recovery:

“So, the CSIS Act [categories of] Political, Ideological, and Religious [motivated extremism]. If we’re looking at all of those cumulatively, since 2017 there probably would have been an increase, but that would have to acknowledge that that’s coming off a dip in religious extremism. So, I think there’s been a growth in some areas and recession in others.”

– Law enforcement official



AQAS-LINKED CHARGES IN CANADA SINCE OPV'S 2019 REPORT

Perpetrator/Location	Date	Incident	Charges
Teen from Kingston, ON	2019	The Kingston teenager was arrested after RCMP raided his home and found explosive materials and instructions for bomb-making. The RCMP received a tip from an undercover informant working for the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation after the two communicated online about carrying out an attack.	Charged with four terrorism-related offenses, pleaded guilty in summer 2020, and sentenced to three years in 2022. ⁸
Couple from the Toronto-area	2019	Attempted to travel together to Turkey and onward to Syria to join Daesh but were taken into custody in Turkey and then deported back to Canada.	Both are charged with 2 counts of terrorism for participating in activities of a terrorist group and leaving Canada to participate in activities of a terrorist group. ⁹
Man from the Toronto-area	2019	A convicted al-Qaeda supporter who tried to join Jabhat Al-Nushrah in Syria in 2014 was arrested after his initial release from prison by counterterrorism police, following information he had violated the conditions of his probation by possessing a cellphone with access to the internet.	Violation of parole conditions. ¹⁰
Two cousins from Calgary, AB	2020	Both men are returnees from Syria who joined Daesh in 2013 and returned to Canada in 2014. They were arrested and charged in 2020 after a 7-year probe.	Both faced several counts of terrorism charges, and one cousin faced an additional charge for participation in a kidnapping on behalf of a terrorist group. ¹¹ One of the cousins subsequently pled guilty in 2022 and was sentenced to 12 years in prison.
Man from Burlington, ON	2020	Claimed to have been part of Daesh in Syria in 2014 and was the subject of a popular New York Times podcast, Caliphate.	Charged with perpetrating a terrorism hoax. ¹²
Man from Toronto-area	2020	Attacked and killed a woman walking on a sidewalk in Toronto with a hammer.	Charged with first-degree murder for the purpose of terrorism. ¹³
Man from Toronto-area	2021	This individual had hundreds of propaganda relating to ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the Taliban, attack planning, and bomb-making information.	Placed on a terrorism peace bond for 10 months. ¹⁴

DAESH

Al Qaeda and its affiliates and splinter groups (AQAS), as we in our first report, include various RMVE organizations scattered across the world. However, aside from Al Qaeda's core organization, Daesh – also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) – is one of the most infamous of its splinter groups.

Daesh came to the world's attention in the mid-2010s for its gruesome and violent actions in Syria and Iraq during the Syrian Civil War and its ability to usurp and control large swaths of Syrian and Iraqi territory.

Like Al Qaeda, Daesh inspired many Westerners to carry out attacks in the United States, Canada, and Europe; or to travel to Syria and Iraq to fight with Daesh. This became known as the foreign fighter phenomenon, which peaked during the mid-2010s.

Over these years, several Canadians – including a significant number of Albertans – have traveled or attempted to travel to Syria and Iraq. Many have since died overseas, but several others have returned to Canada or are still either held in detainee camps in Syria or at large abroad.

Although Daesh's operational tempo has slowed significantly since the group lost its final territorial stronghold in Syria in 2019, there are still rare cases of individuals attempting to travel to Syria and Iraq or attempting to carry out attacks in the West inspired by Daesh. Despite this general slowdown, the presences of Daesh or Al Qaeda affiliates around the world – from eastern Afghanistan to Central African Republic -- underscores the persistence of the RMVE threat.

The loss of Daesh's final territorial stronghold in northeastern Syria in March 2019, followed by the death of its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in October 2019, has destabilized the group's operations but has not resulted in its total collapse.

Despite these setbacks, Daesh has still been able to maintain both relatively effective operations in Iraq and Syria as well as a network of affiliate groups around the world. For example, Daesh still can carry out a low-level insurgency in rural areas in Iraq and Syria and has some considerable success targeting local government and Kurdish forces.¹⁵

Outside Iraq and Syria, Daesh affiliates in the Sinai, West Africa, Libya, and Afghanistan continue to exert de facto control over patches of territory. However, the relative autonomy each of these affiliates or provinces enjoys also means that the losses experienced by the core group in Syria and Iraq have had little impact, if any, on the affiliate groups around the world.

The collapse of its sanctuary in Iraq and Syria amplified the struggle Daesh was already facing in its ability to recruit foreign fighters. However, there is evidence that foreign fighters have started to trickle into Daesh's other provinces.

A handful of foreign fighters, including allegedly at least one Canadian, were arrested by Afghan forces following a raid targeting Daesh's Khorasan province in eastern Afghanistan in early 2020.¹⁶ Whether these were new foreign terrorist fighters or remnants from Iraq and Syria remains unclear. Moreover, there are still sporadic reports of westerners trying, and largely failing, to join the group's ranks.

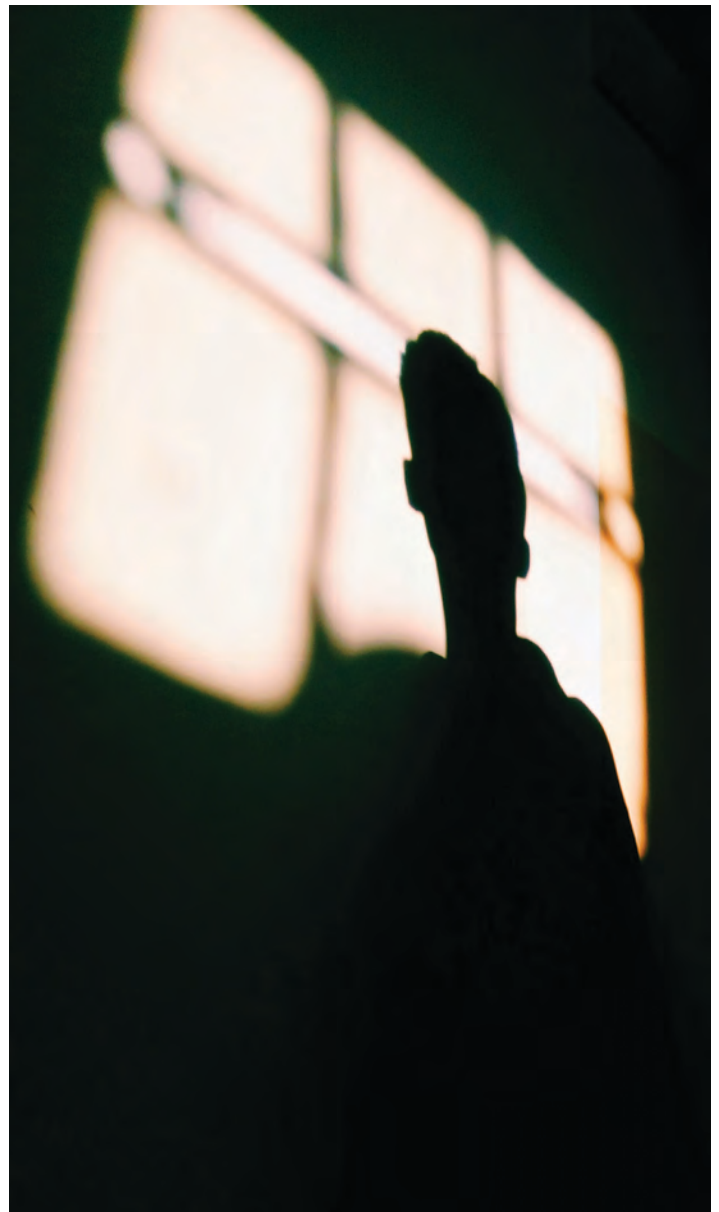
This includes a Toronto-area couple who allegedly attempted to join Daesh in Syria in mid-2019 after traveling to Turkey. They were later apprehended along the Turkish-Syrian border and deported back to Canada.¹⁷ More recently, a man from Quebec was arrested for “suspicious activity” by the Taliban in Afghanistan in January 2022 after crossing into the country from Pakistan.¹⁸ Although Canadian authorities are currently trying to determine the nature of his visit, the Taliban allege that he may have been attempting to join Daesh.

Despite its territorial losses, Daesh demonstrates a persistent ability to inspire or, in some instances, direct violence outside of Syria and Iraq.¹⁹ Though the pace of these attacks is far less than what it was at the peak of the group’s power in 2014 and 2015, the lingering capability is evidenced by large attacks like the 2019 Easter Bombing in Sri Lanka and a series of smaller vehicular or stabbing attacks across Western Europe.

Daesh has also attempted to keep itself relevant during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. In a January 2020 issue of its weekly newsletter called *Al-Naba*, the group lauded the Covid-19 pandemic for the “death and terror” it would inflict on the world.²⁰ This strategy is in line with previous events; for example, Daesh has also used natural disasters and other world events like mass attacks to suggest that God was inflicting divine retribution on the group’s adversaries.

Recently in February of 2022, Daesh was dealt another blow when its leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, killed himself and his family during a U.S. Special Forces raid.²¹ However, experts have debated how this will impact Daesh’s operating capacity as a group.

Al-Qurayshi had been the leader of Daesh since the group’s previous leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was killed. Unlike al-Baghdadi, al-Qurayshi operated in hiding out of fear that he would be killed in the same way as his predecessor; and, unlike al-Baghdadi, who was heavily involved in directing and communicating the activities of Daesh, al-Qurayshi ruled in absentia, delegating to others around him to direct the group.²² As a result, experts claim that a more hands-on leader could soon fill his role.²³



AL-QAEDA

While Daesh's spectacular rise in the mid-2010s eclipsed Al Qaeda (AQ) as the primary focus of international counterterrorism activity, AQ still retains a significant operating capability through its affiliate groups in various parts of the world. Since the 2000s, AQ has focused more on regional and local conflicts than on large-scale attacks in Western countries.

While this may be good news for the West and Canada, it poses serious challenges for the countries where AQ and its affiliated groups operate. For example, the AQ-linked umbrella group Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen (JNIM), active in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, has resisted an aggressive counterterrorism campaign by local, European, and American forces for several years.

In East Africa, in addition to carrying out attacks in populated city centers with tragic regularity, Al-Shabaab – an AQ affiliate group – can operate relatively openly in large parts of southern Somalia. Finally, despite public statements to the contrary, the Taliban continue to provide logistical support and sanctuary to AQ members in Afghanistan.

With ongoing crises and political instability in Afghanistan it is unclear whether the Taliban will abide by any of its security assurances it offered the United States in 2020. These assurances were part of peace negotiations, including a promise not to allow the country to harbour international terrorist organizations like AQ.²⁴

AQ, like Daesh, has also been dealt significant blows in the form of leadership assassinations. For example, between 2020 and 2022, a number of senior AQ leaders were killed in drone strikes, including Ayman al-Zawahiri – Osama bin Laden's successor and AQ's leader since 2011.²⁵

Despite Zawahiri being a less inspirational leader than Bin Laden, the group retains external operations capability and is likely to continue in its efforts to attack western targets, despite its shift toward local conflicts in the MENA and Indian subcontinent.²⁶

In the last several years, the highest profile AQ-linked attack in the West was the 2019 shootings at the Pensacola Naval Air Station, where a Saudi air force officer in the U.S. for military training opened fire on the base.

The subsequent investigation revealed that he had sustained contact with members of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) until his attack.²⁷ Additionally, like Daesh, AQ appears to maintain the ability to inspire Western travelers. Recently, an Arizona woman was arrested in July 2020 after attempting to travel to Afghanistan. She also gave prepaid gift cards to an undercover FBI agent to purchase weapons to kill American soldiers.²⁸

'RETURNEES' AND CANADIANS DETAINED ABROAD

OPV's 2019 report noted that on a per-capita basis, Albertans (approximately 30 to 40 of whom left to join listed terrorist entities) are overrepresented among Canadians who travelled abroad to join terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab and Daesh.²⁹ This phenomenon peaked in 2014-2015 after Daesh declared its so-called Caliphate in Syria. Most of these individuals died overseas, and the remainder tend to fit into one of two groups. The first group encompasses individuals who have already returned to Canada, known as 'returnees'; and the second includes those currently detained abroad in Syria.

According to the Canadian government, as of 2019, about 190 people with connections to Canada were suspected of engaging in terrorist activity abroad.³⁰ About 60 additional individuals had returned to Canada, though this number has remained stable for the last three years.³¹

Since the release of OPV's last report, there have been at least three high profile cases of charges laid against, or investigations of, alleged returnees in Alberta: a woman from Edmonton who is alleged to have been a member of Al-Shabaab; and two cousins from Calgary who joined Daesh in Syria from 2013 to 2014. Together, these cases demonstrate the difficulty Canadian officials face in attempting to uncover, arrest, and prosecute the terrorist activities of Canadians abroad.

In the case of the two cousins from Calgary who were charged with terrorism offences in 2020, the investigation took approximately seven years to gather sufficient evidence.³² In May 2022, one of the cousins who went to Syria via Turkey in 2013 pleaded guilty to committing terrorist offences abroad and was sentenced to 12 years in prison.³³ The other cousin has been charged, but the case has not yet gone to trial.

Meanwhile, the woman in Edmonton was never charged criminally though her alleged role with Al-Shabaab occurred several years prior and only surfaced following the efforts of a Canadian reporter to track her story.³⁴ Given the difficulty of collecting evidence for crimes that occurred abroad in conflict zones, these cases are emblematic of the often long and extensive investigations required in order to criminally charge returnees.³⁵

The Canadians who remain abroad are a heterogeneous group. While half of the estimated 190 have travelled to Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, the other half are in various countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, and North and East Africa. In addition, this heterogeneity indicates the potential need for different kinds of approaches should they return to Canada. Most critically, it is necessary to recognize that most Canadians detained in northeastern Syria are children. While the number of Canadians detained has evolved, the most recent and credible accounts suggest that 20 Canadian children, mostly under the age of eight, are currently languishing in the camps.³⁶

Subsequently, there are significant concerns related to human rights, child welfare, and victimization of Canadian children around this population, and ongoing debates over their return to Canada. If these children are eventually repatriated, facilitating their re-entry into Canadian society will require substantial support from organizations equipped to help them, as well as their parents or caregivers, to negotiate the complex and likely traumatic experiences and indoctrination they faced abroad.

Children situated in these camps will require developmentally appropriate support upon their return. The OPV's 2020 report, *Community Guide for Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Returnees and Their Children*, outlines important recommendations.

The Government of Canada has indicated that criminal prosecution remains the preferred course of action for others suspected to have engaged in extremist activity abroad if and when they return.³⁷

For some returnees – like the two cousins from Calgary – there may be sufficient evidence for the Canadian government to pursue charges. However, for others, criminal prosecution has proven to be difficult, often due to the complications of gathering evidence about their activities in a conflict zone.

When evidence is insufficient, the Government of Canada has indicated several alternative measures to help mitigate the potential threat. While further investigations occur—for example, implementing terrorism peace bonds, conducting physical surveillance, and cancelling or revoking passports.³⁸ In some cases, whether instead of or in addition to alternative measures, individuals may be channeled towards intervention programs aimed at countering violent extremism (CVE).³⁹

In a recent example of these mitigation measures, a terrorism peace bond, which imposes conditions on an individual's freedoms as a result of 'reasonable' fears they will engage in terrorist activities, was considered for a Calgary woman who had previously been held in a detention camp in Syria and returned to the province in November of 2021.⁴⁰ This individual had sworn in an affidavit that she had tried several times to leave Syria but was prevented from doing so by Daesh. She also provided information to the FBI about Daesh suspects.⁴¹ Upon her return, she was reunited with her five-year-old daughter, who had left Syria in March 2021 with the woman's sister and an American diplomat.

There is also evidence from the current returnees, including the woman from Calgary, that the threat level they pose is highly variable. For example, there is currently no evidence that the two cousins from Calgary engaged in any recruitment efforts while in Canada.⁴²

Additionally, while in Iraq awaiting her return, RCMP officers extensively interviewed the woman from Calgary and deemed she did not pose a threat.⁴³ By contrast, the woman from Edmonton is alleged to have not only participated in terrorist activities abroad but also facilitated the radicalization and partially financed travel of at least one Canadian abroad to fight for Daesh after she returned.⁴⁴

This indicates the potential that some returnees may still be committed to their ideologies while others are not.⁴⁵ This realization and the considerable differences in needs, risks, and ethical considerations around the return of adults and children, illustrates the complexity of this issue.

SHEHROZE CHAUDHRY

In September 2020, police arrested and charged Shehroze Chaudhry of Burlington, Ontario – featured in the New York Times’ podcast, Caliphate – with a rarely used criminal charge following a four-year investigation: hoax terrorist activity. Going by the alias Abu Huzayfah, Chaudhry portrayed himself as a former Daesh member who traveled to Syria in 2014 and alleged that he underwent training, participated in violence, and returned to Canada in 2016.⁴⁶

Chaudhry recounted in gruesome detail to the reporters of Caliphate and other news outlets how he participated in several killings.⁴⁷ The podcast caused a backlash in Canada as many wondered why his confessions of criminal and terrorist activity were not used as evidence to arrest him.⁴⁸ Around this time, the Government of Canada was negotiating with Kurdish authorities in Syria about a possible handover of the Canadian detainees.

However, these talks ended abruptly after that, possibly due to the backlash over Chaudhry’s presence in Canada without charge.⁴⁹ Discrepancies within Chaudhry’s own story and timeline sowed doubts in his claims, and he was later arrested and charged by Canadian authorities. The charges were later dropped in exchange for Chaudhry admitting his involvement was fabricated.⁵⁰

The second group is individuals alleged to have joined Daesh and remain detained without charge in Kurdish-controlled prisons or prison camps in Iraq and northeastern Syria. Based on estimates from Canadian activists, academics, and journalists who are in touch with families or have traveled to northeastern Syria, there are at least 46 Canadians detained in the region, including 26 children. Most of them are under the age of six.⁵¹

At least some of these Canadians were residents of or had a nexus to, Alberta. For example, in a CTV News report from 2019, an Alberta woman expressed her desire to return to Canada, especially considering the rapidly deteriorating conditions in the detainee camps and the effect it had on her young children.⁵²

Like many other countries that experienced an exodus of foreign fighters, Canada is facing pressure to repatriate these individuals. To date, Canada has repatriated a five-year-old orphan whose Canadian parents and siblings were killed in an airstrike,⁵³ while a former American diplomat facilitated the return of the woman from Calgary and her child.

While the federal government continues to cite the absence of consular services and the unstable security situation in the country,⁵⁴ an array of voices, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Parliamentary Standing Committee, have called for the repatriation of Canadians.⁵⁵

Among Daesh supporters, two Canadian citizens previously discussed in the OPV's 2019 report have been placed in custody in the United States.

The first is Mohammed Khalifa, a Canadian national detained in 2019 in Syria by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and handed over to the FBI. He was charged with providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization. Khalifa assisted with translating, narrating, and producing English-language propaganda videos intended to recruit individuals from the West to join the Islamic State and conduct attacks against the West.⁵⁶

The second is Abdullahi Ahmed Abdullahi, a Canadian national from Edmonton, Alberta, who helped fund an American's travel to Syria and wired money to support terrorist activities in Syria. Abdullahi was part of the kinship-based network discussed in the OPV's previous report, which saw as many as 14 individuals in Alberta, Minnesota, and Southern California assist one another in their travel to Syria. Abdullahi was indicted in 2014 in the United States and arrested in Canada in 2017. He was extradited to the United States in 2019 to face terrorism charges and has since pled guilty.⁵⁷

RADICALIZING NETWORKS

Media coverage of extremist travelers who left western countries to join groups like Daesh in Syria and Iraq often highlighted the novel aspect of this mobilization: the role that the internet played in inspiring and facilitating the travel of these individuals abroad.

To be sure, the internet did play an important role in increasing the availability of high-quality media content produced by Daesh. It also made individuals already living in territory controlled by the group more accessible to potential travelers.

These 'citizens' were able to both provide a highly romanticized insider's account of life under the so-called caliphate and often played a role in facilitating travel. However, a narrow focus on the online dimension of recruiting risks overlooking the significant effect of persistent radicalizing networks that existed within Western countries.

The limited amount of media coverage devoted to Canadian networks, including those in Alberta, has tended to focus on clusters of individuals – usually friends or families who have traveled together – without discussing the individuals who encouraged or facilitated others to travel.

As a result, there is little publicly available information or general public concern about what role these individuals may play in encouraging another wave of travelers in the future, facilitating terrorist activity abroad, or encouraging domestic attacks.⁵⁸

ENDNOTES

- 1 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2020* (2021), <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/2021/CSIS-Public-Report-2020.pdf>.
- 2 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2021* (2022), https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/2021/public-report/2021_PublicReport_Digital-ENG.pdf.
- 3 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2020* (2021), <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/2021/CSIS-Public-Report-2020.pdf>.
- 4 Public Safety Canada, *2018 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* (2019), p. 3, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/pblc-rprt-trrrsm-thrt-cnd-2018/pblc-rprt-trrrsm-thrt-cnd-2018-en.pdf>; Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2019* (2020), p. 12, <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/PubRep-2019-E.pdf>
- 5 Stewart Bell, "Suspect's alleged statements about ISIS led to terrorism charge over Toronto hammer attack: sources," *Global News*, March 16, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/6661038/toronto-hammer-attack-by-isis-supporter/>.
- 6 Stewart Bell, "ISIS supporter pleads guilty to killing Toronto woman with hammer," *Global News*, August 26, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/8143311/isis-supporter-pleads-guilty-to-killing-toronto-woman-with-hammer/>.
- 7 Stewart Bell, "Documents detail Kingston teenager's descent into ISIS terrorism," *Global News*, July 31, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7241599/kingston-isis-terrorism-details/>.
- 8 Nicole Thompson, "Kingston, Ont., teen sentenced to three years for terrorism charges," *The Globe and Mail*, February 9, 2022, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-kingston-ont-teen-sentenced-to-three-years-for-terrorism-charges-2/>
- 9 Stewart Bell, "Married couple accused of trying to join ISIS will be tried together without preliminary hearing," *Global News*, October 19, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7405825/married-couple-isis-trial/>
- 10 Stewart Bell, "Convicted al-Qaeda supporter arrested for 2nd time since release from prison," *Global News*, August 24, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7294501/convicted-al-qaeda-supporter-arrested/>
- 11 Demi Knight, "RCMP lay terrorism charges against 2nd Calgary man in ongoing investigation", *Global News*, September 25, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7359488/2nd-calgary-man-facing-terrorism-charges/>
- 12 Bobby Hristova, "Burlington, Ont., man faces terrorism hoax charge after claiming to be ISIS member," *CBC News*, September 25, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/shehroze-chaudhry-terrorism-hoax-charge-1.5739814>.
- 13 Sam Pazzano, "Toronto spa worker's murder a terror act committed for incel: Cops," *Toronto Sun*, May 19, 2020, <https://torontosun.com/news/local-news/toronto-spa-workers-murder-committed-for-incel-cops-allege-as-terror-charges-laid>
- 14 Stewart Bell, "Terrorism peace bond placed on Toronto man with ISIS, Al Qaeda propaganda on phone," *Global News*, August 6, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/8092639/terrorism-peace-bond-isis-al-qaeda-propaganda/>
- 15 Jenna Jordan, "The death of Baghdadi isn't the end of ISIS," *Washington Post*, November 5, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/11/05/death-baghdadi-isnt-end-isis/>.
- 16 Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, *Twenty-ninth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities* (February 2022), p. 11-12, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/416/14/PDF/N2141614.pdf?OpenElement>.
- 17 Stewart Bell, "Married couple accused of trying to join ISIS will be tried together without preliminary hearing," *Global News*, October 19, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7405825/married-couple-isis-trial/>.
- 18 "Taliban arrests Canadian man, 22, in Afghanistan," *Global News*, January 14, 2022, <https://globalnews.ca/video/8513282/taliban-arrests-canadian-man-22-in-afghanistan>.
- 19 Clint Watts, "Inspired, Networked & Directed – The Muddled Jihad of ISIS & Al Qaeda post Hebdo," *War on the Rocks*, January 12, 2015, <https://warontherocks.com/2015/01/inspired-networked-directed-the-muddled-jihad-of-isis-al-qaeda-post-hebdo/>.
- 20 Bridget Johnson, "ISIS Lauds 'Death and Terror' of Coronavirus Outbreak", *HS Today*, January 27, 2020, <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/isis-lauds-death-and-terror-of-coronavirus-oubreak/>.

- 21 Tricia L. Bacon & Elizabeth Grimm, "The Islamic State's leader died this month. What type of leader might come next?," *Washington Post*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/02/17/islamic-states-leader-died-this-month-what-type-leader-might-come-next/>.
- 22 Tricia L. Bacon & Elizabeth Grimm, "The Islamic State's leader died this month. What type of leader might come next?," *Washington Post*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/02/17/islamic-states-leader-died-this-month-what-type-leader-might-come-next/>.
- 23 Tricia L. Bacon & Elizabeth Grimm, "The Islamic State's leader died this month. What type of leader might come next?," *Washington Post*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/02/17/islamic-states-leader-died-this-month-what-type-leader-might-come-next/>.
- 24 Lindsay Maizland, "U.S.-Taliban Peace Deal: What to Know," *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 2, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-taliban-peace-deal-agreement-afghanistan-war>.
- 25 Matthew Levitt & Aaron Y. Zelin, "Al-Qaeda's External Operations One Year After the Pensacola Attack," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, December 11, 2020, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/al-qaedas-external-operations-one-year-after-pensacola-attack>.
- 26 Matthew Levitt & Aaron Y. Zelin, "Al-Qaeda's External Operations One Year After the Pensacola Attack," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, December 11, 2020, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/al-qaedas-external-operations-one-year-after-pensacola-attack>.
- 27 Thomas Jocelyn, "Pensacola shooter had 'significant ties' to AQAP, FBI finds," *Long War Journal*, May 18, 2020, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2020/05/pensacola-shooter-had-significant-ties-to-aqap-fbi-finds.php>.
- 28 United States Department of Justice – Office of Public Affairs, press release, "Arizona Woman Arrested for Attempting to Provide Material Support to Al Qaeda," July 24, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/arizona-woman-arrested-attempting-provide-material-support-al-qaeda>.
- 29 John McCoy, David Jones & Zoe Hastings, *Building Awareness, Seeking Solutions: Extremism & Hate-Motivated Violence in Alberta* (Edmonton: Organization for the Prevention of Violence, 2019), <https://preventviolence.ca/publication/building-awareness-seeking-solutions-2019-report/>.
- 30 Public Safety Canada, *2018 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* (2019), <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/pblc-rprt-trrrsm-thrt-cnd-2018/index-en.aspx#s32>.
- 31 Public Safety Canada, *2017 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* (2017), <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/pblc-rprt-trrrst-thrt-cnd-2017/pblc-rprt-trrrst-thrt-cnd-2017-en.pdf>.
- 32 The Canadian Press, "RCMP accuse second Calgary man of travelling to Syria to join Islamic State." *CBC News*, September 25, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/rcmp-calgary-jamal-taan-borhot-fraser-logan-islamic-state-1.5739896>.
- 33 Meghan Grant, "Calgary terrorist who fought as ISIS sniper in Syria sentenced to 12 years in prison." *CBC News*, May 26, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/hussein-borhot-calgary-syria-terrorism-1.6466509>.
- 34 Stewart Bell, "Edmonton woman 'committed' to ISIS 'facilitated extremist activities,' secret documents allege," *Global News*, April 3, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/6761521/edmonton-woman-alleged-isis-recruiter/>.
- 35 Public Safety Canada, *2018 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* (2019), p.29. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/pblc-rprt-trrrsm-thrt-cnd-2018/index-en.aspx#s32>.
- 36 Farida Deif, "Canadians Stuck in Syria Camps Struggle to Survive," *Ottawa Citizen*, October 25, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/25/canadians-stuck-syria-camps-struggle-survive>.
- 37 Public Safety Canada, press release, "Mitigating the Threat Posed By Canadian Extremist Travellers," December 20, 2019, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrtr/cntr-trrrsm/cndn-xtrmst-trvllrs/index-en.aspx>.
- 38 Public Safety Canada, press release, "Mitigating the Threat Posed By Canadian Extremist Travellers," December 20, 2019, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrtr/cntr-trrrsm/cndn-xtrmst-trvllrs/index-en.aspx>.
- 39 Stewart Bell, "'We need to get ready': RCMP planning for return of Canadian ISIS members," *Global News*, February 27, 2019, <https://globalnews.ca/news/5004932/rcmp-preparing-for-return-isis/>.
- 40 Kevin Martin, "Once a member of ISIS, Calgary woman is now a target, court told," *Calgary Herald*, May 20, 2022, <https://calgaryherald.com/news/crime/once-a-member-of-isis-calgary-woman-is-now-a-target-court-told#:~:text=Defence%20counsel%20Yoav%20Niv%2C%20in,operating%20with%20western%20intelligence%20groups..>

- 41 Meghan Grant, "Crown seeks terrorism peace bond in Calgary after Canadian mother freed from ISIS detention camp," *CBC News*, November 25, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/canadian-mother-rcmp-syria-isis-camp-terrorism-peace-bond-calgary-1.6262635>.
- 42 CBC News Staff, "Terrorism charges laid against Calgary man after 7-year probe," *CBC News*, July 22, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/terrorism-charges-rcmp-borhot-calgary-isis-1.5659026>
- 43 Meghan Grant, "Crown seeks terrorism peace bond in Calgary after Canadian mother freed from ISIS detention camp," *CBC News*, November 25, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/canadian-mother-rcmp-syria-isis-camp-terrorism-peace-bond-calgary-1.6262635>
- 44 Stewart Bell, "Edmonton woman 'committed' to ISIS 'facilitated extremist activities,' secret documents allege," *Global News*, April 3, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/6761521/edmonton-woman-alleged-isis-recruiter/>
- 45 *A Grassroots Guide to Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Returnees & Their Children* (Edmonton, Alberta: The Organization for the Prevention of Violence, April 4, 2020), <https://preventviolence.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/August2020-ReturneeGuidelines-Web.pdf>
- 46 Katie Nicholson, "New York Times says Caliphate podcast was conned by Canadian who claimed to be an ISIS recruit," *CBC News*, December 18, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/caliphate-new-york-times-1.5848457>.
- 47 Nazim Baksh & John Lancaster, "Young Canadian ISIS recruit says he saw violence on scale he could never have imagined," *CBC News*, September 11, 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/isis-canadian-recruit-returns-1.4281860>
- 48 Stewart Bell, "What happens when an ISIS member returns to Canada? The story of one Toronto-area man," *Global News*, September 11, 2017, <https://globalnews.ca/news/3733536/isis-member-returns-to-canada-toronto-man/>
- 49 Stewart Bell, "Exclusive: Canadian member of Islamic State caught, but RCMP struggle to lay charges against ISIS fighters," *Global News*, October 8, 2018, <https://globalnews.ca/news/4526514/canadian-isis-caught-in-turkey/>.
- 50 Ian Austen, "Canadian Admits to Fabricating Terrorism Tale Detailed in New York Times Podcast," *The New York Times*, October 9, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/09/world/middleeast/shehroze-chaudhry-caliphate.html>
- 51 Paul Workman & Jonathan Forani, "Orphaned Canadian girl held in Syrian camp is on her way home: family lawyer," *CTV News*, October 5, 2020, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/orphaned-canadian-girl-held-in-syrian-camp-is-on-her-way-home-family-lawyer-1.5132865>.
- 52 Paul Workman, "Canadians among hundreds of ISIS brides who want to return home," *CTV News*, March 1, 2019, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/w5/canadians-among-hundreds-of-isis-brides-who-want-to-return-home-1.4313512>
- 53 Amanda Coletta, "Canada to bring 5-year-old orphan home from Syrian camp while others remain stranded," *The Washington Post*, October 5, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/canada-amira-syria-orphan-repatriated/2020/10/05/bafe08ea-0723-11eb-859b-f9c27abe638d_story.html
- 54 Stewart Bell, "Exclusive: Canada member of Islamic State caught, but RCMP struggle to lay charges against ISIS fighters," *Global News*, October 8, 2018, <https://globalnews.ca/news/4526514/canadian-isis-caught-in-turkey/>.
- 55 Farida Deif & Letta Tayler, "Canada Must Work to Bring Citizens Trapped in Syria Home – Even ISIS Suspects," *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 16, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/16/canada-must-work-bring-citizens-trapped-syria-home-even-isis-suspects>.
- 56 The Associated Press, "Canadian ISIS fighter charged in U.S. with supporting terrorist group," *CBC News*, October 2, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/canadian-isis-fighter-charged-in-u-s-with-supporting-terrorist-group-1.6197773>
- 57 John Marchesan, "Edmonton man pleads guilty in U.S. court to funding terrorist activities in Syria," *City News*, December, 18, 2021, <https://edmonton.citynews.ca/2021/12/18/edmonton-man-pleads-guilty-in-u-s-court-to-funding-terrorist-activities-in-syria/>.
- 58 Although this type of research has been conducted in Australia, see: Bright, David, Chad Whelan, and Shandon Harris-Hogan. "On the Durability of Terrorist Networks: Revealing the Hidden Connections Between Jihadist Cells." *Studies in conflict and terrorism* 43, no.7 (2020): 638-656 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1494411?casa_token=EblT0kdRRzwAAAAA:tXQOiQz2n1pVMtOKkpRbCqvDeqALJSIYKhym4R-rdTVlj8qCiaObU0NAYhhCnPW3fI4UdOK2LKRmH8

HATE, EXTREMISM, AND TERRORISM

In Alberta, Canada,
and Beyond

The Shift from 2019 to 2022

IV. Conspiracies + Hate Crimes

Michele St-Amant, David Jones,
Michael King, & John McCoy



organization for
the prevention
of violence

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Due to the significant growth in the popularity of some conspiracy theories, this report includes a section devoted to this trend, which was absent from the OPV's 2019 report.

Although conspiracy theories and the individuals and groups that believe them are traditionally not lumped together with violent extremist organizations, we have chosen to do so for several reasons.

First, however, it is important to note that most individuals who believe conspiracy theories are non-violent and will never mobilize to violence. However, in the years since the OPV's last report, individuals on the fringe of these groups have conducted violence, especially since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2020 U.S. Presidential election.

Additionally, several established extremist organizations have adopted and incorporated parts of different conspiracy theories into their ideologies. For these reasons, this report now includes a section on conspiracy theories, but with exclusive attention to those conspiracy theories which have seen fringe actors mobilize to violence.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES: A BACKGROUND

While conspiracy theories vary widely in their content, they tend to share the notion that some sort of cabal is pursuing an illegal and insidious hidden agenda unbeknownst to the general public.¹

Believers of conspiracy theories often view themselves as having privileged insights that are missed or ignored by the wider population. As a result, conspiracy theories tend to proliferate most during times of high uncertainty and tension, including after the assassination of U.S. President Kennedy, the attacks of 9/11, and global health crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Individuals often find conspiracy theories more believable during these times because it offers an explanatory narrative and identifies clear culprits to explain otherwise complex, uncontrolled situations. Additionally, the Internet has given conspiracy theories a new mode of spread compared to decades ago, which creates echo chambers of discourse.² Conspiracy theories naturally share a symbiotic relationship with several IMVE ideologies including anti-Semitism, anti-globalisation, anti-authority, and exclusionary nationalism.

Undeniably, most individuals and groups who believe in conspiracy theories are non-violent and will never mobilize to violence. Therefore, belief in a conspiracy is not necessarily an indicator that someone will be more likely to commit violence.

However, for the individuals at the fringes of these communities who do mobilize to violence, they do so to correct a perceived injustice or to expose and undermine the plans of the alleged cabal conspirators.

For example, in June 2018, a man was arrested after driving an armored vehicle onto the Hoover Dam, blocking traffic, and holding up a sign that read “release the OIG report.” This was a reference to a Justice Department report which believes of the QAnon conspiracy allege will expose the illegal actions of the “deep state.”³ As a result of this and other incidents, in 2019, an FBI Intelligence Bulletin identified conspiracy theories as a growing domestic terrorist threat and specifically mentioned QAnon as one such conspiracy theory of notable concern.⁴

In response to the rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus in the spring of 2020, policymakers across the globe and in Canada instructed people to stay home to reduce transmission of the disease. Researchers have raised the possibility of a correlation between time spent at home, often scrolling through social media, and exposure and adoption of a myriad of conspiracy theories.⁵

As a result, engagement with online conspiracies has increased overall (including in Canada), several new conspiracies have proliferated, and believers of existing conspiracies like QAnon have been integral in promoting different pandemic-related narratives. Covid conspiracies also tend to align closely with existing anti-authority and white nationalist narratives, making it possible that more people will be left amenable to the ideas espoused by IMVE groups.

However, most individuals who engage with, believe in and disseminate these theories have no previous engagement with extremist content or affiliation with established groups. It also remains to be seen if there is a direct effect between public health measures, adoption of conspiracies, and in more extreme cases, actual involvement in violence or other criminal behavior.⁶



5G CONSPIRACY IN CANADA

A common Covid-related conspiracy links the virus to 5G telecommunications towers. The 5G conspiracy has been around for several years, and believers allege that the technology built into 5G telecommunication towers and our hand-held wireless devices produce radiation that causes a myriad of health issues, including cancer and permanent damage to our DNA.

Now, the 5G conspiracy has been linked to Covid conspiracies, with believers alleging that the lockdowns allow the government to build more 5G towers secretly, or that 5G towers and wireless devices spread the virus or increase our susceptibility to it.⁷

Several attacks against 5G sites have already occurred in Canada and elsewhere, particularly in the U.K.⁸ For example, in 2020, a month after Canada introduced sweeping public health measures due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a cell phone tower in Laval, Quebec, was targeted, resulting in \$1 million in damage.⁹ Around six other towers were lit on fire north of Montreal a month later in May 2020.¹⁰ A confidential CSIS report obtained by Global News detailed the Canadian government's concern over extremist attacks targeting 5G sites as a result of the rapid spread of these conspiracies across the country.¹¹

QANON

QAnon is an elaborate conspiracy that alleges a "deep state" group of Satan-worshipping, cannibalistic, child sex-trafficking pedophiles rule the world. Believers, especially those in the U.S., identify former President Donald Trump as the enemy of these shadowy figures and believe he was working against them during his presidency.

QAnon is considered a meta-conspiracy theory, which means that it easily incorporates other, older conspiracies like the Lizard people conspiracy, the Great Replacement, or White Genocide, which have existed far longer than QAnon itself.

QAnon builds upon earlier "Pizza Gate" conspiracy during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, which alleged that Hillary Clinton's leaked emails contained coded messages connecting her and several other high-ranking Democratic officials to various U.S. restaurants in a human and child sex-trafficking ring. One of these alleged restaurants was Comet Ping Pong in Washington D.C., a pizzeria that was thereafter the subject of a barrage of threats.¹² This culminated in a believer from North Carolina traveling to D.C. to investigate the theory himself and shooting a rifle in the restaurant, though no one was injured.¹³

QAnon derives its name from a user on the online forum 4chan and its sister site, 8kun (formerly 8chan). In October 2017, a user under the name "Q" began posting anonymously in a thread called "Calm Before the Storm." This became known colloquially as "The Storm" conspiracy, which signaled an imminent event where the "deep state" child-eating pedophiles would be arrested, charged, and imprisoned.¹⁴



"Q" claimed to be a high-level government insider with Q level security clearance – the level of security clearance required in the U.S. to access information on nuclear weapons. "Q" had tasked him/herself with covertly informing the public through so-called "Q drops" (or nuggets of information).

The drops allegedly confirmed the cabal's existence and proved that then President Trump had plans to stage a counter coup against these implicated individuals. Amongst other things, "Q" alleged Trump never had any involvement with Russia and implied that it was these same high-level Democrats who Russian President Vladimir Putin had corrupted. Websites devoted to aggregating, discussing, and decoding "Q"'s vague content soon proliferated, and the conspiracy has since garnered believers across the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia.

The true identity of "Q" has never been confirmed because users on both 4chan and 8kun post anonymously. Adding to the mystery, "Q" stopped posting at the end of 2020 after the U.S. presidential election.¹⁵ However, in February 2022, two forensic and computational linguist teams claim their analysis has given the first empirical glimpse into the true identity of "Q."¹⁶

Although their findings are yet to be verified by other researchers, according to their work, "Q" was actually two different people at different points in time. They argue that evidence points to a South African software developer as the first 'inventor' of "Q," but that the "Q" identity was later handed over to a man named Ron Watkins, the former site administrator of 8kun and current Arizona Congressional candidate.¹⁷ Both have denied being "Q."

The researchers say they hope that unmasking the true identity of "Q" will help reduce the conspiracy's hold on many individuals.

Although many speculated that the QAnon conspiracy would fade away after Donald Trump's loss in the 2020 election and the failure of many of its prophesized events, the QAnon conspiracy has proven highly resilient. It has been linked to several acts of violence in the U.S. and around the world.¹⁸

Indeed, many of the individuals who stormed the U.S. Capitol building on January 6th were Q-supporters and believed the 2020 election had been 'stolen' from Donald Trump.¹⁹

Experts argued that the power vacuum caused by Trump's failed reelection and the absence of "Q" online has quickly been filled by so-called QAnon influencers, or individuals who have amassed large online followings. Many of these share anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi sentiments with other IMVE groups. Additionally, the relevance of the QAnon conspiracy is likely to increase due to the reappearance of a user claiming to be "Q" on 8kun in June 2022.²⁰

QAnon in Canada

Today, the QAnon meta-conspiracy theory connects a complex and wide-ranging number of narratives and beliefs, including anti-5G and anti-Covid-19 vaccination conspiracies. The QAnon conspiracy theory has spread across the world, most notably in several Western countries, including a heavy presence in Canada, where it has been rescripted to implicate a variety of Canadian politicians and elites.

Although many components of the QAnon conspiracy implicate U.S. politicians, the QAnon conspiracy is adaptable to a variety of political realities across the world. QAnon, like other conspiracies, can be molded to fit almost any political circumstance, which has been the key ingredient in its growing popularity outside the U.S. and particularly within Canada.

And, like their American counterparts, not every Canadian who engages with the QAnon conspiracy believes all or even the majority of the theory at-large. The theory is so broad and all-encompassing that many adherents believe bits and pieces of the larger narrative but may never be exposed to or believe the entire collection of theories.

Like their American counterparts, Canadian QAnon believers distrust the media and mainstream news outlets. In-group norms encourage believers to do their own online "research," which has contributed to spreading misinformation on social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter.

In Canada, many of QAnon's central ideas were imported from the U.S., like the implication of political figures and elites in unsavory acts, anti-Semitism, and the belief in a malevolent "deep state" plotting in the shadows.

Like American believers, Canadian QAnon believers heavily implicate the Jewish community in many of their conspiracies. For example, on 8kun, there is a Canadian-specific QAnon "research" page whereby users are encouraged to post evidence confirming the group's conspiratorial beliefs anonymously.

In one particular post from April 22, 2020, an anonymous user posted a YouTube video. The video alleges that several elites whose names are between triple parentheses (an online anti-Semitic symbol used to highlight the names of individuals with a Jewish background or their organizations) helped create and spread the Coronavirus around the world to create a malevolent vaccine.²¹

On another popular Canadian QAnon blog, which describes itself as "Research, Investigative Journalism, Independent Media (Redpilling Future Nationalists)", the editor posts self-researched analyses on a variety of topics related to Canada, including Covid-19, the U.N., and Zionism.

In general, Canadian QAnon believers promote a uniquely Canadian rhetoric that hinges on ultra-nationalism and commonly includes anti-Liberal, anti-Muslim, and anti-Semitic narratives. For example, under a series of posts called “Planned-emic,” (a term which implies the cabal of elites planned the Covid-19 pandemic), the author alleges that Bill Gates and Justin Trudeau are tied to a conspiracy to forcibly mandate the Covid-19 vaccine for all Canadians through a series of convoluted lobby networks.

These and other similar arguments are part of a larger conspiracy that asserts that the “deep state” in Canada, along with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.N., orchestrated the Covid-19 pandemic as a way to manipulate politicians and infringe on the freedoms of Canadians through mandatory vaccines.

Outside of pandemic-related issues, QAnon believers have translated many common American QAnon conspiracies to the Canadian political landscape. For example, #ObamaGate, a popular QAnon hashtag in the U.S. that alludes to former-President Obama’s involvement in an alleged child sex-trafficking ring, has been adapted as #TrudeauGate in Canada.

Many Canadian QAnon believers are highly critical of the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC), particularly Erin O’Toole. For example, when the Conservative Party leader Erin O’Toole tested positive for Covid-19, QAnon believers alleged that the announcement was actually code for him having been arrested for his role in a child-trafficking ring.²²

While Canadian QAnon believers are generally most critical of the Liberal government, many also allege that the Conservative Party is a hollow husk designed by the “deep state” to give the illusion of opposition.

One popular Canadian QAnon blog has a page devoted to posting “evidence” of conspiracies linked to O’Toole and the CPC, including the notion that O’Toole is linked to the “anti-free speech” lobby, Canadian Muslim lobbies, and that he helped to orchestrate the pandemic in Canada.

During our interviews with law enforcement in Alberta, many mentioned that due to the nature of the pandemic there has been a growth in QAnon:

“There’s certainly been a growth of QAnon narratives. Quantifying the number of believers is difficult, again, we don’t have a lot of good data. But, one thing that we’ve definitely noticed is the penetration of QAnon narratives... It’s just been really effective. So, even, everybody from pseudo-law believers, anti-[public health order], which kind of blurs the line into anti-authority, people across the spectrum... I have seen neo-Nazis talk about QAnon stuff. There’s an interesting interaction with neo-Nazis, though, especially the younger generation. They kind of view QAnon as a boomer [generation] thing... it’s gone viral within old[er] people. And so, they either joke about it or they try to use it because they see that it’s [an] effective [narrative]. So, I’ve seen a little bit of that... not a lot that I’ve observed directly. But, yeah, absolutely, it’s been growing.”

– Law enforcement official



“Those people who might be prone to suspicion of government and organizations has certainly, that mentality or that messaging [of QAnon] has had the potential to increase. Their paranoia about government and their opposition to the controls that they might be attempting to enforce. Regardless of what it’s related to, be it the pandemic or a new local bylaw about something, I don’t take a lot of time to peruse local Facebook pages... but when I do... yeah, there’s some funny folks out there. I don’t think it’s reached the point of extremism or an area that we’re super concerned about as a threat of violence as of yet. But, you know, there’s certainly some influence there that we’re seeing.”

– Law enforcement official

As a result of the Covid-19 shutdowns, which began across Canada in March 2020, many mass demonstrations took place over the summer and fall, protesting lockdown restrictions, bylaws requiring masks in public spaces, and economic shutdowns. QAnon believers have made their presence known to many, often by holding signs or wearing t-shirts with a large “Q.” For example, in September 2020, a large anti-mask and anti-lockdown protest in Montreal was attended by many individuals carrying the “Q” sign on posters.²³

Although most believers rarely engage in violence, there have been several notable instances in Canada where QAnon and other conspiracy believers engaged in menacing behaviour. In May 2020, in the midst of the Quebec Covid lockdown, a man from Quebec City called and left threatening messages that Premier François Legault’s days “were numbered” and that he had access to a gun and wanted to shoot Quebec’s top public health official, Dr. Horacio Arruda.²⁴

Quebec provincial police traced the man's location during his phone messages to Texas. When the man returned to Canada on May 16th, border guards searched his vehicle and found several papers detailing different conspiracy theories, though they did not find a gun. He was later arrested for making death threats.

Later in July 2020, a man from Manitoba rammed his truck through the gates of the Governor General's residence and set out on foot toward Rideau Cottage, where the Prime Minister and his family were living at the time.²⁵ He was confronted by police and arrested, and police confiscated five firearms from him, which included several restricted or prohibited guns.

He told police he intended to arrest Trudeau during his daily Covid-19 briefing to make a statement about the government's lockdown policies and its ban on assault-style rifles, noting he believed Canada was turning into a "communist dictatorship." Data from his cell phone and social media indicate he engaged with a variety of conspiracies, including QAnon, and promoted the idea that Covid-19 was a hoax.

In Alberta, over the summer of 2020, two "Q" flags were seen flying on homes in a Calgary neighborhood shortly after the incident at Rideau Cottage.²⁶ Residents of the neighborhood have alleged that the flags were passed out as part of a larger 'recruitment' tactic to introduce others to the conspiracy theory.

In 2021, a man from Gatineau, Q.C. named Kevin Goyette pleaded guilty to charges of making threats to kill the Canadian Prime Minister and other government officials.²⁷ The threats reportedly occurred on a closed Facebook group, where he replied to a poll asking members of the group how far they would be willing to go to stop Covid-19 mask mandates with the following: "a bullet for Legault, Arruda and Trudeau, that would serve as a lesson for the next ones."

More recently, during the 2022 "Freedom" Convoy protests in Ottawa, many people showed up holding "Q" placards or chanting popular QAnon slogans.²⁸ Indeed, one of the protest organizers, James Bauder, has reportedly endorsed QAnon and called for Trudeau to be put on trial for treason.²⁹ Bauder is the leader of a conspiracy group called Canada Unity, which alleges, amongst other things, that Covid-19 related policies are illegal under Canadian law and the Nuremberg Code.³⁰

The Freedom Convoy is against all Covid-19 related public health measures, including vaccine mandates and vaccine passports. Although not all Convoy supporters are connected to extremist groups, it did attract some, including conspiracy theorists such as QAnon believers. For example, at the Freedom Convoy in Ottawa, QAnon logos have been found on trucks, and QAnon stickers were posted across the protest area.

Before the Freedom Convoy, several groups organized similar smaller protests and pickets across Canada relating the Covid-19 pandemic to QAnon. For example, Hold Fast Canada organized pickets outside the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's headquarters, stating that concentration camps were active in Canada.³¹

Another group known as Action4Canada filed a 400-page court document stating that the Covid-19 pandemic was started partly by Bill Gates and the “New World (Economic) Order” to inject 5G microchips into Canadians via the Covid-19 vaccine.³² QAnon falsely claims that the Covid-19 vaccines contain a 5G microchip, which will connect individuals to 5G towers and be tracked by the government.³³ Both groups participated in the 2022 Freedom Convoy.

Canadian QAnon ‘Influencers’

One of the most prolific QAnon figures in Canada is a B.C. resident named Romana Didulo, the leader of an unregistered online political party called the Canada1st Party of Canada.

Amidst the public health measures during the pandemic’s second wave in 2020, Didulo began posting about her party. After this content gained little traction, she switched her rhetoric in May 2021 to include popular QAnon narratives and began to amass followers. Her rise was fueled, in part, by endorsement from other QAnon influencers like Charlie Ward, a popular British QAnon figure.³⁴

By June of 2021, she had garnered over 20,000 followers on her Telegram channel. By December 2021, her following had swelled to over 70,000.³⁵ Didulo’s rhetoric blends common QAnon conspiracies, particularly about the pandemic, and anti-authority beliefs.

In short, Didulo claims that she is “the head of state and commander in chief of Canada,” and was appointed to this position by “the white hats and the U.S. military, together with the global allied troops and their governments – the same group of people who have helped President Trump.”³⁶ She also claims to be the “Queen of Canada” and has replaced Queen Elizabeth II of England, “who has now been executed for crimes against humanity.”³⁷

Because Didulo operates almost entirely online, she has amassed followers from all over Canada who remain relatively unconnected to each other and operate independently. For example, during an interview with a rural detachment in Alberta, a member of law enforcement told us they had come across a novel group:

“Recently, I heard something called The Nuance. I tried to research it but I haven’t come up with anything. So, it might even be brand-spanking new. I never heard it before... The [individual said they had] discredited the old Queen and they’ve hired a new Queen of North America. And I was like, “Oh, that’s interesting.” They don’t recognize the current Queen or the current Canadian or American government. I was called to [the individual’s] property [for noise complaints, trespassing and mischief]. He was throwing a music festival for him and all his friends. He didn’t spew [his beliefs] at first. He was very polite, very respectful to law enforcement. And, he presented it as a business case, if I was interested in changing my views. So, kind of like a ‘new hire’ type of deal.”

– Law enforcement official

Although the group name *The Nuance* does not appear to be used within Didulo’s circle, this individual’s rhetoric seems to indicate he is indeed a follower or supporter of Didulo. Across Alberta and the rest of Canada, many of her followers have taken action by hand delivering and filing fake cease-and-desist notices to businesses and police forces, demanding that they end all activities related to the pandemic.³⁸ During our interviews, law enforcement officials across Alberta spoke about these activities:

“We’ve got [a few of her supporters] here in the local area... I have heard of them attending businesses and schools and serving them notices on behalf of the Queen of Canada.”

– Law enforcement official

“Have you seen that [Canada1st Party] or something like that? We got served a notice in the mail from someone in this area saying that the lockdowns are unconstitutional and this person who names herself the Queen of Canada orders us to stand down and all that stuff... we were served that and a lot of the detachments in the area were served that. But we were served in the mail by one of her political followers. We don’t know who it was but we do know it came from this area... The letter we got is basically a cease-and-desist order from a politician that basically says ‘all Covid-19 vaccines and experimentation, genetic bio-warfare across Canada...’”

– Law enforcement official

Although most of these interactions have been peaceful, Didulo’s rhetoric has become increasingly violent over the last several months. In November 2021, the RCMP executed a search warrant, seized her electronic devices, and conducted a psych evaluation after she posted the following instructions to her 70,000 followers:

“shoot to kill anyone who tries to inject Children under the age of 19 years old with Coronavirus19 vaccines/ bioweapons or any other Vaccines. This order is effective immediately.”³⁹

A month later, in December 2021, a man in Laval, Quebec, was arrested after threatening his daughter’s school in a private chat room of Didulo’s followers.⁴⁰ In the post, he provided details of his daughter’s school, which was offering vaccination to students at that time, and wrote, “[its] time to go hunting bang bang.”⁴¹

Didulo and her followers were also present during the 2022 Trucker Convoy protests in Ottawa.⁴² In a widely shared video, Didulo is seen burning a Canadian flag in front of parliament as her followers watch; her followers have been seen waving the flag of her so-called “kingdom” around the city.⁴³

Other important Canadian QAnon “influencers” include a prominent YouTuber from Ontario who goes by the online moniker “Amazing Polly,” and has been linked to the start of the Wayfair human trafficking conspiracy.⁴⁴ The conspiracy alleged that Wayfair – an online furniture retailer – was trafficking children in cabinets and other furniture with girls’ names. Another prominent “influencer” is Alexis Trudel-Cossette, based in Quebec, who is one of the largest influencers in the online French-speaking conspiracy space.

TRENDS: ONLINE ENGAGEMENT WITH CONSPIRACIES, QANON, AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Conspiratorial thinking is a common marker across different extremist groups, particularly anti-authoritarianism. According to recent research by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), conspiracy theories and QAnon content specifically proliferated online during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic and the run-up to the 2020 U.S. Presidential election.

The report from July 2020 demonstrated that the number of users engaging with QAnon content on many online platforms increased exponentially starting in March 2020 when Covid-19 lockdowns began in the West.⁴⁵ For example, the report found that the number of unique Twitter users engaged in QAnon discussions increased by 140% during March 2020 alone.

To target misinformation, Twitter and other social media platforms announced sweeping account bans starting over the summer of 2020, targeting users sharing and promoting QAnon content.⁴⁶



As a result of backlash around the globe to lockdown measures, QAnon conspiracies have found new breeding grounds for believers. For example, the ISD report found that QAnon content has spread geographically throughout the pandemic, with the U.S. still holding the top spot as the largest QAnon content-producing country, followed by the U.K., Canada, and Australia. The fifth spot, previously held by Russia between 2017 and 2018, was reportedly held by Indonesia in 2019, and is now held by Germany as recently as 2020.

For example, the Amadeu Antonio Foundation out of Berlin found that German-language QAnon groups on Telegram proliferated during the first lockdown in March 2020.⁴⁷ The largest is QGlobal, which grew from 21,000 members before the pandemic to more than 160,000 at the start of 2021.

ASSESSMENT

The rapid growth and popularity of conspiracy theories like QAnon and the 5G conspiracy have forced researchers to reconsider the definitional boundaries of violent extremism. While most believers of these conspiracies may never engage in or even support violence, some have perpetrated violence to further uncover or thwart the conspiracy they believe in.

This is likely to occur again. Additionally, the rise of QAnon 'influencers' like Romana Didulo increases the likelihood that at least some followers will want to answer her calls for violence. This means that the threat to Canada increasingly involves the fringes of not only groups that believe some of these conspiracies, but individuals who are unattached to these groups entirely.

HATE INCIDENTS AND CRIMES

BACKGROUND

Much of this report has focused on belief systems or movements associated with violent extremism and terrorism. However, it is important to recognize that hate crimes and hate incidents represent an equal or more serious threat to social cohesion and Canadians' sense of safety and belonging.

Alberta, like the rest of Canada, has witnessed a worrying rise in police-reported hate crimes over the last several years, a trend that shows few signs of abating. However, despite rising rates and growing attention paid by all orders of government to respond to hate, what exactly constitutes a 'hate crime' or 'hate incident' remains a confusing topic to many Canadians. Therefore, before discussing present trends in Alberta, a brief overview of the legal landscape related to hate offences in Canada is necessary.

Canada lacks a standalone 'hate crime' offence, and hate-motivated offences are dealt with in a few different ways by the Criminal Code.

First, there are three speech-related offences found under the Hate Propaganda section of the Criminal Code: 318 (1) – Advocating Genocide, 319 (1) – Public Incitement of Hatred, and 319 (2) – Willful Promotion of Hatred. Two of these offences require Attorney General consent before police can proceed with laying a criminal charge (318 (1) and 319 (2)), a hurdle that often lessens the probability of a charge being laid.

The Public Incitement of Hatred offence does not require Attorney General consent, and is intended to deal with incidents where speech is likely to lead to a near-term breach of the peace, and therefore requires police to act expeditiously.⁴⁸

The high thresholds and caution police must demonstrate when pursuing these charges is a reflection of Canada's commitment to freedom of expression and a recognition that, ultimately, a free society may be forced to tolerate some forms of 'lawful but awful' speech. Despite these difficulties, there have been several noteworthy convictions under 319 (2) in Canada in the last several years, including the 'Your Ward News' case in Toronto.⁴⁹

There are two additional ways in which criminal offences motivated by hate may be dealt with to explicitly address the underlying motivation for the offence. This can be done either via a mischief charge where the target of the offence is a religious or educational institution (Section 430 (4.3) of the Criminal Code), or by considering a possible hate motivation as an aggravating factor during sentencing, as provided for by Section 718 (2) of the Criminal Code.

Through 718 (2), most hate-motivated crimes – offences like assault, uttering threats, etc.- are dealt with by the courts. However, even the use of hate as an aggravating factor is still relatively rare. Citing a Department of Justice study, the Globe and Mail reported that between 2007 and 2020, "judges discussed or considered laying a harsher sentence because of hate just 48 times".⁵⁰

A related area of concern is 'hate incidents,' where an individual engages in behavior – often the utterance of identity-based slurs or online harassment – that, while non-criminal, can have profound and lasting effects on targeted individuals.

Often, victims in these scenarios feel a sense of disempowerment when, if they decide to report the event to someone, be it a social media company or law enforcement, little action is taken. The growth in non-criminal, yet still damaging, hate-motivated incidents underscore the reality that while policy and legislative responses to hate are necessary, they are ultimately likely to be insufficient, and a broader societal response is required.

Trends

Statistics Canada reported a significant and steady increase in police-reported hate crimes between 2015 and 2020 across the country. In 2016 there were 1,409 police-reported hate crimes of all kinds, including crimes targeting race or ethnicity, against people with disabilities, or sexual orientation.⁵¹

In 2019, there were 1,951 police-reported hate crimes, indicating a 43% increase overall. During the first year of the pandemic, police-reported hate crimes increased by 37%, rising to 2,669 in 2020.⁵²

The vast majority of these hate crimes tend to be committed against particular racial or ethnic groups, religious groups, or an individual's sexual orientation and are increasing.

For example, hate crimes against a race or ethnic group almost doubled from 2019 to 2020 (+80%); crimes against religious groups increased by about 10%; and crimes against sexual orientation increased by about 82%.

Although smaller in number, crimes committed against an individual's sex increased significantly from 12 in 2015 to 53 in 2019, and decreased slightly in 2020 to 46.

Of all metropolitan areas in Canada, the area with the highest police-reported hate crimes per 100,000 population is Peterborough, Ontario.⁵³ The trend south of the border in the U.S. is similar, though the increase is not as stark as in Canada. In 2015, the FBI reported 5,818 hate crime incidents,⁵⁴ and in 2020 there were 8,052, indicating a 38% increase overall.⁵⁵

STATUS OF HATE CRIMES IN ALBERTA

The trends within Alberta's two largest cities – Calgary and Edmonton – are more complex.⁵⁶ In Calgary, the number of police-reported hate crimes has increased from 80 in 2019 to 141 in 2020, indicating a 76% increase. This was the highest number ever of police-reported hate crimes in Calgary. In Edmonton, the overall number has increased from 73 in 2019 to 79 in 2020; however, from 2016 to 2020, police-reported hate crimes in Edmonton have increased by 58%. Some of the interviews with law enforcement in Alberta outline that the LGBTQ+ community is a common target of hate crimes in their area:

“Right now, as far as trends, basically what we’re seeing more of is a lot of vandalism and graffiti. And, a lot of it is focused towards LGBTQ+ in the form of graffiti, vandalism. We’ve had an increase, I would say, and I think a lot of that’s just related to Covid, schools being shut down, kids being more active and going to places where you no longer have people there to prevent incidents from happening. So, a lot of the graffiti you’re looking at, they’re not really gang tags or anything like that, but they are using racial slurs and that has been increasing.”

– Law enforcement official

“[As far as] hate-related crime[s]... we’ve had a couple incidents against the LGBTQ community. With respect to flag burning and things like that. So that was, a couple of incidents... The [LGBTQ] flag burning was local... so, it was a residential flag that was hanging at a house. And somebody went into the yard and took it down and burnt it. We weren’t able to solve the most recent [flag burning], so we don’t even know who that was.”

– Law enforcement official

It is important to note that the actual number of hate crimes is likely even higher due to underreporting. This was echoed during an interview with one Alberta law enforcement official:

“Yeah, I honestly can’t make an assessment with reasonable confidence. There are so many issues with the methodology for recording, the definitions are a disaster in Canada, like it’s just, the whole process and the whole system is so difficult to draw meaningful numbers out of. I really couldn’t say what the overall rate of hate crime is.

I can tell you, from some groups, we’ve seen increased reporting... The reporting percentage is so low that [any] variations in reporting [seems like a big difference.]. [any] changes to rates of reporting are going to show pretty big numerical increases. Which, I think are unfortunately misinterpreted, especially in the media but also by others as being an increase in actual hate crimes. So, I wouldn’t be able to make an assessment on the actual rate of hate crimes in the province.”

– Law enforcement official

“A lot of times we find that [hate crimes/incidents] go unreported. We find out things happened after the fact, so their business has been vandalized or something has occurred. But as far as a targeted community, there’s not a specific one. We’ve seen it with most ethnicities. We don’t have a huge count of hate crimes and incidents here, and again I think a lot of it goes unreported from what we can tell. But it’s mostly verbal or mischief, but no specific targeted community.”

– Law enforcement official

Many victims of hate crimes and incidents are reluctant to report them to the police because they come from marginalized communities, such as the Black and Indigenous communities. These communities have had historically negative relations with law enforcement or believe that the police will not take the crimes seriously. In addition, hate that originates online has been a particularly difficult problem to address for many Alberta law enforcement officials we interviewed:

“We are also concerned with hate-based [activity] through online forums, which seems to be a difficult issue for us to investigate, to track, and I think we find that more often than not if someone is going to make some sort of hate speech or remark it’s likely not to be to the person’s face, it’s [more] likely to be on an online forum where there’s that anonymity and they can say what they want without fear of reprisal. We had people of color at [the local] high school who were targeted in messaging from an online forum. Again, production orders yielded us nothing. We couldn’t get any subscriber information to lock that down.”

– Law enforcement official



“It’s not so much stuff that’s occurring face-to-face, it’s more like online someone’s commenting on [on something] and then they start going at each other... But then again, charges are difficult because you don’t actually know the screen-name if it’s actually the person and sometimes they have fake names and it [makes] trying to figure out who they are [difficult]...”

– Law enforcement official

Moreover, some individuals will reportedly tailor their activities in order to avoid law enforcement action:

“One [person], actually, when we got dispatched [to the place of residence]... we walked in [the] house and it was basically a shrine of Hitler. And [the individual] was writing a book, and was going for publishing... [This individual has] popped up in a few different places trying to just put out hate literature. Not so much hate incidences and directly involving people, and not violent... But more like spreading the word of hate.

And same with the other [person] too, it was more of spreading the verbiage of hatred rather than violently acting against anybody else. It was more, just the propaganda and the dialogue. But not specifically at a person. It was always just in a comment or not directed at anybody because they’re very good about not specifically pointing out a specific person... because they know that they’ll [get] charged. They’re smart about it that way.”

– Law enforcement official

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AGAINST HATE CRIMES AND INCIDENTS

As a result of both the rise in the number of hate crimes over the years and the recognition that many hate crimes and incidents go unreported, several community initiatives have been created to fill this gap and provide support for victims.

One example is StopHateAB.ca, a website which encourages victims – regardless of religious, ethnic or racial background – to self-report through the site if they have been a victim of a hate incident in Alberta. This often goes unreported to law enforcement due to its non-criminal nature.

StopHateAB provides community education and training workshops and compiles the reported incidents to make the information accessible to the community, increasing awareness.

Similarly, the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) tracks anti-Muslim hate crimes and incidents reported to them by victims, the police, or incidents reported to media across the country. These and other community initiatives are critical for empowering victims to report crimes and incidents, giving a more complete picture of the status of hate in Canada. This is especially important for individuals and communities reluctant to report them to law enforcement.

HATE CRIMES AGAINST THE ASIAN COMMUNITY

Hate crimes in Alberta and across Canada are varied in their targeting and in their tactics. Media reports suggest hate crimes targeting the Asian community are increasingly related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter produced a report discussing self-reported anti-Asian incidents motivated by the pandemic, the bulk of which were reported in British Columbia, Ontario, and Québec, with Alberta coming in fourth.⁵⁷

For example, in Calgary in 2020, the downtown Chinese Consulate building was vandalized with hateful messages in reference to the Covid-19 pandemic twice in May.⁵⁸ In June, a Chinese restaurant was broken into and vandalized with hateful messages like “Go back to China.”⁵⁹ The restaurant also appears to have been deliberately set on fire.

Later in September 2020, a Calgary man was charged with mischief to property and causing a disturbance after he harassed and followed a Canadian-born Chinese man and then spat on his car.⁶⁰ In Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department reported that hate crimes against Asians have increased by 717% in 2020 alone.⁶¹

A similar marked increase has been noted in the United States. This has been particularly acute in a recent string of attacks in the California Bay Area, prompting the formation of a new special response unit.⁶² There, an elderly man from Thailand was attacked and killed during his morning walk at the end of January 2021.⁶³

Between March and December 2020 alone, the Stop Anti-Asian Pacific-Islander Hate coalition documented over 3,800 anti-Asian hate crimes across the U.S.⁶⁴

Similarly, a Pew Research Center study from June 2020 indicated that roughly 31% of Asian Americans reported they'd been the subject of racist slurs or jokes since the pandemic began, and 26% said they feared they might be physically attacked.⁶⁵ This trend is likely to continue in the near term, but as the pandemic comes to an end, it remains unclear whether this spike will persist.

ANTI-MUSLIM HATE CRIMES

Anti-Muslim hate crimes have been common around the country and within Alberta and, in some cases, have escalated to violence. However, according to an interviewee from Alberta law enforcement, members of the Muslim community have become more forthcoming with reporting hate crimes:

“Based on the reporting... it seems that Muslim community groups within Alberta have become more willing to report to police. Unfortunately, based on what I hear from some of our policing partners, some of that reporting doesn't go to the police necessarily, sometimes it goes straight to the media. So, again, that's one of the kind of confusing things, you've got basically three separate tracks of people tracking hate crimes in the province – you have police-reported crimes, non-police quasi-governmental groups [like] NGOs, and then you also have reports that go straight to the media or social media.”

– Law enforcement official

Interviews with Alberta law enforcement mention a current trend in hate crimes in lower Alberta targeting the Muslim community:

“Again, we're getting the graffiti, mostly targeting the Muslim community. [Locally] for example, if something happens in the States, a shooting at a synagogue or anything like that, we actually get ahead of that and go talk to the community leaders of the Churches. Let them know that, you know, this isn't acceptable here and that we're supportive. And, we just open the lines of communication that way.”

– Law enforcement official

In July 2020, an Edmonton mosque was vandalized with racist graffiti.⁶⁶ The graffiti included several symbols like the “Aryan star” and the number “114,” a possible reference to David Lane's infamous “14-Words” slogan: “we must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.” David Lane was a famous American white supremacist and neo-Nazi who was a member of The Order, a terrorist organization responsible for several high-profile crimes, including the assassination of a Jewish radio host in 1984.



There has also been a recent trend in hate crimes against Black Muslim women in Edmonton. Between 2020 and the publication of this report, seven Black Muslim women were targeted, threatened, or attacked in Edmonton.⁶⁷

The first occurred in December 2020, when three Edmonton women were assaulted in two separate incidents days apart at the Southgate Centre mall. First, on December 8th, two women wearing hijabs were assaulted in the parking lot. A week later, the second attack occurred against another woman wearing a hijab in the Southgate LRT station.⁶⁸ Two unrelated individuals were arrested and charged for these attacks.

Two months later, in February 2021, another man made racial slurs and behaved aggressively toward a Black Muslim woman at the University of Alberta transit centre.⁶⁹ Elsewhere in Edmonton that same day, a man came up behind another Black Muslim woman and pushed her to the ground, threatening to tear off her burqa and kill her.⁷⁰

These three attacks underscore the continued vulnerability of visibly Black Muslim women to hate crimes and also highlight the intersectionality of hate crimes, which target individuals for more than one element of their identities.

In June 2021, a Black Muslim woman was attacked from behind and thrown down on the pavement, and the perpetrator fled without saying anything.⁷¹ On New Year's Day in 2022, a Black Muslim woman was attacked near a Mosque in Edmonton in front of her children; the man was arrested and charged.⁷²

HATE CRIMES AGAINST OTHER RACIAL/ETHNIC, OR RELIGIOUS GROUPS

In the midst of 2020, marked not only by the Covid-19 pandemic but also by civil rights and police reform protests, several high-profile hate crimes and incidents against the Black community in Canada occurred.

For example, over the summer of 2020 in Toronto, two nooses were placed at a construction site where two black workers were stationed at Michael Garron Hospital.⁷³ In December 2020, an Edmonton man was charged after he made death threats and assaulted a Black man walking on a residential street near his home.⁷⁴ A few months later, in February 2021, an anonymous user(s) on Zoom disrupted a Montreal-based virtual presentation organized for Black History Month by drawing racial slurs and pornographic images.⁷⁵

In 2019, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported that anti-Semitic hate crimes hit an all-time high in the U.S. that year, with over 2,100 crimes, including assault and vandalism.⁷⁶

For example, in December 2019, five people in a rabbi's home in New York were stabbed while celebrating Hanukkah by a man wielding a machete.⁷⁷

Across the border, however, Statistics Canada reported in 2019 that despite an overall drop in the number of anti-Semitic incidents from 372 to 296, the Jewish community was still the most targeted group in Canada.⁷⁸

Although hate crimes against the Jewish community have historically not been as violent in Canada as in the U.S., they continue to be a growing concern in many communities.

For example, in January 2021 in Vancouver, a man was assaulted by another man who allegedly hurled anti-Semitic remarks at him.⁷⁹ Across the country in Quebec during the same time, a synagogue was defaced with spray-painted swastikas on all the building doors.⁸⁰ In May 2021, an individual drove their vehicle around an Edmonton neighborhood 'seeking Jews' and making threats to the residents of two homes.⁸¹

Online anti-Semitic harassment has been common around the world and particularly since the start of the pandemic. Many IMVE groups and individuals who hold extremist views have blamed the Jewish community and Israel for the start and spread of the virus due to a variety of conspiracies and prejudices.⁸²

Additionally, many conspiracy theories like QAnon heavily feature the Jewish community as sinister actors in the "deep state." For example, in the U.K. in 2020, the Community Security Trust – an advisory board on security matters – recorded 41 incidents connected to anti-Semitic pandemic-related conspiracies alone.⁸³

Anti-Indigenous hate crimes have also been on the rise in Canada, and hate crimes against Indigenous Canadians likely remain the most underreported to police.⁸⁴

In its most recent report on hate crimes in Canada, Statistics Canada notes that in 2020, there were merely 79 police-reported hate crimes against Indigenous people – a number that is almost certainly a small fraction of the true rate.⁸⁵

A particular high-profile event occurred in February 2020. The Mohawks of Tyendinaga, Ontario engaged in a weeks-long blockade of a railway in support of the north-western B.C. Wet'suwet'en. This was after RCMP enforced an injunction on unceded Wet'suwet'en territory to clear the way for the construction of a controversial Coastal GasLink pipeline.⁸⁶

As a result, a bomb threat against the implicated Indigenous communities was made in an email sent to addresses associated with both Indigenous townships. According to Anti-Racist Canada, the address used to send the threatening email was linked to a suspended Twitter account which was used to make threats to Indigenous communities, including threatening to burn reserves and attack a pregnant Indigenous woman.⁸⁷

"You and your punk friends, the Mohawk warriors, need to call off the blockades... If you don't, you will find a bomb in your mailbox, and your parents will be in dangers. This is a threat, you are on notice..."

the email reads, sent on February 26th.⁸⁸

PROTEST-RELATED INCIDENTS

Similar to other established groups discussed throughout this report, hate-related incidents have also occurred during anti-racism and civil rights protests, and anti-lockdown protests.

For example, in September 2020, two anti-racism events turned violent. In the first event in Ponoka, a demonstrator was struck by a vehicle during a heated exchange between demonstrators and counter-protesters.⁸⁹ Although the RCMP are still investigating, event demonstrators allege that the incident was targeted. A few weeks later in Red Deer, a second anti-racism demonstration ended in violent scuffles between protesters and counter-protesters.⁹⁰

In Calgary in November 2020, a Black Lives Matter mural was vandalized and covered with white paint and is currently being investigated as a hate crime.⁹¹ More recently, in 2021, the Edmonton Public School Board condemned the formation of a "white alliance" student group that appeared on Instagram with posts using the phrase "white lives matter."⁹²

Members of established groups like the Soldiers of Odin (SOO) and the Urban Infidels have been implicated in several more violent responses to BLM protests. For example, in October 2020, an anti-racism rally in Lacombe, Alberta, was interrupted by around a half dozen self-proclaimed Urban Infidels who began yelling "Where are all the Black people?"⁹³

In February 2021, an anti-lockdown protest at the Alberta legislature turned violent when four officers were allegedly punched while attempting to make an arrest.⁹⁴ As discussed elsewhere, showing up at protests and rallies has been a popular way for established extremist groups to increase their visibility and try to rekindle interest in their group - as membership and activity declined precipitously in the years leading up to the start of the pandemic. Whether or not these groups can attract new recruits from the broader anti-public health measures or anti-civil rights milieus remains to be seen.

ASSESSMENT

The threat of hate crimes in Canada has increased by almost 50% in the last 5 years, as evidenced by data from Statistics Canada. The threat to the Asian community is particularly high due to prejudices and hate fueled by the ongoing pandemic, as well as the myriad of conspiracies which attribute the blame of the pandemic toward the Jewish community.

This is true not only for Canada but across the border in the U.S. and around the world. Although hate crimes do not always escalate to violence, the psychological and social implications for the victims and their communities indicate a need for vigilance and continued community resilience.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Jan-Willem Van Prooijen, *The psychology of conspiracy theories* (London: Routledge, 2018).
- 2 Michael Butter, *The Nature of Conspiracy Theories* (Cambridge: Polity Books, 2020).
- 3 Stephanie K. Baer, "An Armed Man Spouting A Bizarre Right-Wing Conspiracy Theory Was Arrested After A Standoff At The Hoover Dam," *Buzzfeed News*, June 17, 2018, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/skbaer/qanon-believer-arrested-hoover-dam>.
- 4 Jana Winter, "Exclusive: FBI document warns conspiracy theories are a new domestic terrorism threat," *Yahoo! News*, August 1, 2019, <https://news.yahoo.com/fbi-documents-conspiracy-theories-terrorism-160000507.html?guccounter=1>.
- 5 Brenna Owen, "Canada not immune to QAnon as pandemic fuels conspiracy theories, experts say," *CTV News*, December 11, 2020, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/canada-not-immune-to-qanon-as-pandemic-fuels-conspiracy-theories-experts-say-1.5226762>;
- 6 Michael King & Sam Mullins, "COVID-19 and Terrorism in the West: Has Radicalization Really Gone Viral?" *Just Security*, March 4, 2021, <https://www.justsecurity.org/75064/covid-19-and-terrorism-in-the-west-has-radicalization-really-gone-viral/>.
- 7 PressProgress Staff, "Canadians Involved in New Age Spirituality and Natural Health Are Being Sucked into the Dark World of QAnon," *PressProgress*, January 28, 2021, <https://pressprogress.ca/canadians-involved-in-new-age-spirituality-and-natural-health-are-being-sucked-into-the-dark-world-of-qanon/>.
- 8 Stewart Bell, "CSIS warns about conspiracy theories linking COVID-19 to 5G technology," *Global News*, December 4, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7496689/csis-conspiracy-theories-coronavirus-covid-19-5g-technology/>.
- 9 Stewart Bell, "CSIS warns about conspiracy theories linking COVID-19 to 5G technology," *Global News*, December 4, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7496689/csis-conspiracy-theories-coronavirus-covid-19-5g-technology/>.
- 10 Jeff Semple, "Coronavirus conspiracy theory linking pandemic to 5G technology sparks cell tower fires," *Global News*, May 16, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/6951569/covid-19-conspiracy-theory-5g/>.
- 11 Stewart Bell, "CSIS warns about conspiracy theories linking COVID-19 to 5G technology," *Global News*, December 4, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7496689/csis-conspiracy-theories-coronavirus-covid-19-5g-technology/>.
- 12 Katie Reilly, "Washington Pizza Place Flooded With Threats Over False Hillary Clinton Conspiracy," *Fortune*, November 22, 2016, <https://fortune.com/2016/11/22/comet-ping-pong-hillary-clinton-fake-news/>.
- 13 Fruzsina Eordogh, "With Pizzagate, Is Cybersteria The New Normal?" *Forbes*, December 7, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/fruzsinaeordogh/2016/12/07/with-pizzagate-is-cybersteria-the-new-normal/?sh=db9f272b6803>.
- 14 Paris Martineau, "The Storm Is the New Pizzagate – Only Worse," *New York Magazine*, December 19, 2017, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/12/qanon-4chan-the-storm-conspiracy-explained.html>.
- 15 Jack Brewster, "'Q' Hasn't Posted In Six Months – But Some QAnon Followers Still Keep The Faith," *Forbes*, June 8, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackbrewster/2021/06/08/q-hasnt-posted-in-6-months-but-some-qanon-followers-still-keep-the-faith/>.
- 16 David D. Kirkpatrick, "Who Is Behind QAnon? Linguistic Detectives Find Fingerprints," *New York Times*, February 24, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/19/technology/qanon-messages-authors.html>.
- 17 David D. Kirkpatrick, "Who Is Behind QAnon? Linguistic Detectives Find Fingerprints," *New York Times*, February 24, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/19/technology/qanon-messages-authors.html>.
- 18 Marc-André Argentino & Sara Aniano, "QAnon and Beyond: Analysing QAnon Trends a Year After January 6th," *Global Network on Extremism & Technology*, January 6, 2022, <https://gnet-research.org/2022/01/06/qanon-and-beyond-analysing-qanon-trends-a-year-after-january-6th/>.
- 19 Marc-André Argentino & Sara Aniano, "QAnon and Beyond: Analysing QAnon Trends a Year After January 6th," *Global Network on Extremism & Technology*, January 6, 2022, <https://gnet-research.org/2022/01/06/qanon-and-beyond-analysing-qanon-trends-a-year-after-january-6th/>.
- 20 Adam Gabbatt, "QAnon's 'Q' re-emerges on far-right message board after two years of silence," *The Guardian*, June 27, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/27/qanon-head-posts-message-board-8kun>.
- 21 Anonymous, 8886137, April 22, 2020, <https://8kun.top/qresearch/res/8838303.html#8886137>.
- 22 Adam Kovac, "How Canada became one of the world's biggest hubs for QAnon conspiracy theories," *CTV News*, November 3, 2020, <https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/how-canada-became-one-of-the-world-s-biggest-hubs-for-qanon-conspiracy-theories-1.5172097>.

- 23 Adam Kovac, "How Canada became one of the world's biggest hubs for QAnon conspiracy theories," *CTV News*, November 3, 2020, <https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/how-canada-became-one-of-the-world-s-biggest-hubs-for-qanon-conspiracy-theories-1.5172097>.
- 24 Jonathan Montpetit, "Quebec extremists radicalized by COVID-19 conspiracy theories could turn to violence, experts warn," *CBC News*, September 17, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/qanon-quebec-anti-mask-conspiracy-theory-violence-1.5726891>.
- 25 The Canadian Press Staff, "Manitoba man who rammed Rideau Hall gates pleads guilty to eight charges," *CTV News*, February 5, 2021, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/manitoba-man-who-rammed-rideau-hall-gates-pleads-guilty-to-eight-charges-1.5297331>.
- 26 Isaiah Lindo, "QAnon flags found flying in southwest Calgary neighbourhood," *Livewire Calgary*, July 9, 2020, <https://livewirecalgary.com/2020/07/09/qanon-flags-flying-in-southwest-calgary-neighbourhood/>.
- 27 KENZA Belhadi, "Probation de 2 ans pour un Gatinois," *TVA Gatineau*, September 29, 2021, <https://tvagatineau.ca/?p=2781>.
- 28 Justin Ling, "5G and QAnon: how conspiracy theorists steered Canada's anti-vaccine trucker protest," *The Guardian*, February 8, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/08/canada-ottawa-trucker-protest-extremist-qanon-neo-nazi>.
- 29 Myah Ward, "What's happening with the Canadian trucker convoy? Here's what you need to know" *Politico*, February 14, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/02/14/canadian-truckers-block-bridge-strike-protests-00008620>.
- 30 Justin Ling, "5G and QAnon: how conspiracy theorists steered Canada's anti-vaccine trucker protest," *The Guardian*, February 8, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/08/canada-ottawa-trucker-protest-extremist-qanon-neo-nazi>.
- 31 Justin Ling, "5G and QAnon: how conspiracy theorists steered Canada's anti-vaccine trucker protest," *The Guardian*, February 8, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/08/canada-ottawa-trucker-protest-extremist-qanon-neo-nazi>.
- 32 Justin Ling, "5G and QAnon: how conspiracy theorists steered Canada's anti-vaccine trucker protest," *The Guardian*, February 8, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/08/canada-ottawa-trucker-protest-extremist-qanon-neo-nazi>.
- 33 Erin Black & Katie Schoolov, "Why the Covid vaccines can't contain a tracking microchip or make you magnetic," *CNBC News*, October 1, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/video/2021/10/01/why-theres-no-5g-tracking-microchip-in-the-covid-vaccine.html>.
- 34 Mack Lamoureux, "QAnons Are Harassing People at the Whim of a Woman They Say Is Canada's Queen," *Vice News*, June 17, 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/3aqvkw/qanons-are-harassing-people-at-the-whim-of-a-woman-they-say-is-canadas-queen-romana-didulo>.
- 35 Mack Lamoureux, "QAnons Are Harassing People at the Whim of a Woman They Say Is Canada's Queen," *Vice News*, June 17, 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/3aqvkw/qanons-are-harassing-people-at-the-whim-of-a-woman-they-say-is-canadas-queen-romana-didulo>.
- 36 Mack Lamoureux, "QAnons Are Harassing People at the Whim of a Woman They Say Is Canada's Queen," *Vice News*, June 17, 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/3aqvkw/qanons-are-harassing-people-at-the-whim-of-a-woman-they-say-is-canadas-queen-romana-didulo>.
- 37 Mack Lamoureux, "QAnons Are Harassing People at the Whim of a Woman They Say Is Canada's Queen," *Vice News*, June 17, 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/3aqvkw/qanons-are-harassing-people-at-the-whim-of-a-woman-they-say-is-canadas-queen-romana-didulo>.
- 38 Mack Lamoureux, "QAnons Are Harassing People at the Whim of a Woman They Say Is Canada's Queen," *Vice News*, June 17, 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/3aqvkw/qanons-are-harassing-people-at-the-whim-of-a-woman-they-say-is-canadas-queen-romana-didulo>.
- 39 Mack Lamoureux, "QAnon's 'Queen of Canada' Calls for Followers to 'Kill' People Vaccinating Children," *Vice News*, November 25, 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7ddgm/qanons-queen-of-canada-calls-for-followers-to-kill-people-vaccinating-children>.
- 40 Mack Lamoureux, "Follower of QAnon Influencer Who Claims to be Canada's Queen Arrested Over School Threats," *Vice News*, December 3, 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/3abbg9/follower-of-qanon-influencer-who-claims-to-be-canadas-queen-arrested-over-school-threats>.
- 41 Mack Lamoureux, "Follower of QAnon Influencer Who Claims to be Canada's Queen Arrested Over School Threats," *Vice News*, December 3, 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/3abbg9/follower-of-qanon-influencer-who-claims-to-be-canadas-queen-arrested-over-school-threats>.
- 42 Emma Graham-Harrison & Tracey Lindeman, "Freedom convoys: legitimate Covid protest or vehicle for darker beliefs?" *The Guardian*, February 13, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/13/freedom-convoys-legitimate-covid-protest-or-vehicle-for-darker-beliefs>.

- 43 Emma Graham-Harrison & Tracey Lindeman, "Freedom convoys: legitimate Covid protest or vehicle for darker beliefs?" *The Guardian*, February 13, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/13/freedom-convoys-legitimate-covid-protest-or-vehicle-for-darker-beliefs>.
- 44 Rachel E. Greenspan, "How the Wayfair human-trafficking conspiracy theory grew out of QAnon," *Insider*, July 13, 2020, <https://www.insider.com/wayfair-human-trafficking-conspiracy-theory-tied-to-qanon-2020-7>.
- 45 Aoife Gallagher, Jacobb Davey & Mackenzie Hart, *The Genesis of a Conspiracy Theory* (London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2020), <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/the-genesis-of-a-conspiracy-theory/>.
- 46 BBC News Staff, "QAnon: Twitter bans accounts linked to conspiracy theory," *BBC News*, July 22, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53495316>.
- 47 Esther Felden, Jordan Wildon, Anne Höhn & Lewis Sanders IV, "As Donald Trump exits, QAnon takes hold in Germany," *DW News*, January 19, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/as-donald-trump-exits-qanon-takes-hold-in-germany/a-56277928>.
- 48 Thompson, Sara K, Feras Ismail & Joe L. Couto, *Hate/ Bias Crimes: A Review of Policies, Practices & Challenges*. Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, (October 2020), https://www.oacp.ca/en/current-issues/resources/Hate%20Crime%20Report_October%202020.pdf.
- 49 Colin Perkel, "Your Ward News duo found guilty of peddling hate against women and Jews," *CBC News*, January 24, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/your-ward-promoting-hate-1.4990806>.
- 50 Mike Hager, Chen Wang & Ian Bailey, "Why aren't more hate crime charges being laid in Canada? A Globe and Mail analysis examines police performance across the country," *The Globe and Mail*, March 20, 2022, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-why-arent-more-hate-crime-charges-being-laid-in-canada-a-globe-and/>.
- 51 Statistics Canada, *Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation*, Canada (selected police services) (July 27, 2021), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601>.
- 52 Statistics Canada, press release, "After five years of increases, police-reported crime in Canada was down in 2020, but incidents of hate crime increased sharply," July 27, 2021, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210727/dq210727a-eng.htm>.
- 53 Statistics Canada, *Police-reported hate crime, number of incidents and rate per 100,000 population, Census Metropolitan Areas* (July 27, 2021), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510019101>.
- 54 U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation Staff, "Latest Hate Crime Statistics Released: Annual Report Sheds Light on Serious Issue," *FBI News*, November 14, 2016, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2015-hate-crime-statistics-released>.
- 55 United States Department of Justice, press release, "FBI Releases 2020 Hate Crime Statistics," <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics>.
- 56 Statistics Canada, *Police-reported hate crime, number of incidents and rate per 100,000 population, Census Metropolitan Areas* (July 27, 2021), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510019101>.
- 57 Justin Kong, Jessica Ip, Celia Huang & Kennes Lin, *A Year of Racist Attacks: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada One Year Into the Covid-19 Pandemic* (Toronto, ON: Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter, 2021), https://mcusercontent.com/9fbfd2cf7b2a8256f770fc35c/files/35c9daca-3fd4-46f4-a883-c09b8c12bbca/covidracism_final_report.pdf.
- 58 Michael Franklin, "'A duty to get involved': Calgary police investigate Chinese consulate vandalism," *CTV News*, May 27, 2020, <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/a-duty-to-get-involved-calgary-police-investigate-chinese-consulate-vandalism-1.4957251>.
- 59 Ryan White, "Racist graffiti found in restaurant in downtown Calgary following break-in, suspicious fire," *CTV News*, June 24, 2020, <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/racist-graffiti-found-in-restaurant-in-downtown-calgary-following-break-in-suspicious-fire-1.4998271>.
- 60 Ina Sidhu, "Calgary man charged in hate crime investigation," *CTV News*, September 29, 2020, <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/calgary-man-charged-in-hate-crime-investigation-1.5125197>.
- 61 Vancouver Police Department, *Report to the Vancouver Police Board* (February 3, 2021), <https://vancouverpoliceboard.ca/police/policeboard/agenda/2021/0218/5-1-2102P01-Year-end-2020-KPI-Report.pdf>.
- 62 Eric Levenson, Stephanie Becker, & Dan Simon, "Rise in attacks on elderly Asian Americans in Bay Area prompts new special response unit," *CNN*, February 8, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/08/us/asian-american-attacks-bay-area/index.html>.
- 63 Eric Levenson, Stephanie Becker, & Dan Simon, "Rise in attacks on elderly Asian Americans in Bay Area prompts new special response unit," *CNN*, February 8, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/08/us/asian-american-attacks-bay-area/index.html>.
- 64 Kimmy Yam, "There were 3,800 anti-Asian racist incidents, mostly against women, in past year," *NBC News*, March 16, 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/there-were-3-800-anti-asian-racist-incidents-mostly-against-women-1261257>.

- 65 Neil G. Ruiz, Juliana Menasce Horowitz, & Christine Tamir, "Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak," *Pew Research Center*, July 1, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/07/01/many-black-and-asian-americans-say-they-have-experienced-discrimination-amid-the-covid-19-outbreak/>.
- 66 Wallis Snowdon, "Edmonton's Al Rashid Mosque spray-painted with racist graffiti," *CBC News*, July 14, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-mosque-racist-graffiti-1.5649535>.
- 67 Canadian Press, "'Racism is a real problem': Growing number of attacks against Black Muslim women," *Peak*, March 3, 2021, <https://www.prpeak.com/national-news/racism-is-a-real-problem-growing-number-of-attacks-against-black-muslim-women-3469892>.
- 68 Wallis Snowdon, "Woman in hijab assaulted in 2nd 'hate-motivated' attack in Edmonton this month," *CBC News*, December 16, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/southgate-lrt-assault-hijab-hate-motivated-1.5843642>.
- 69 Canadian Press, "'Racism is a real problem': Growing number of attacks against Black Muslim women," *Peak*, March 3, 2021, <https://www.prpeak.com/national-news/racism-is-a-real-problem-growing-number-of-attacks-against-black-muslim-women-3469892>.
- 70 Canadian Press, "'Racism is a real problem': Growing number of attacks against Black Muslim women," *Peak*, March 3, 2021, <https://www.prpeak.com/national-news/racism-is-a-real-problem-growing-number-of-attacks-against-black-muslim-women-3469892>.
- 71 Adam Lachacz, "'She was thrown to the ground': Police investigate attack on Muslim woman in Edmonton," *CTV News*, June 13, 2021, <https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/she-was-thrown-to-the-ground-police-investigate-attack-on-muslim-woman-in-edmonton-1.5468914>.
- 72 Tricia Kindlerman, "Man charged after attack on Black Muslim woman outside northeast Edmonton mosque," *CBC News*, January 25, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/man-charged-after-attack-on-black-muslim-woman-outside-northeast-edmonton-mosque-1.6327883>.
- 73 Daina Goldfinger, "Community rallies together following anti-Black hate crime in Toronto: 'It has to stop'," *Global News*, June 23, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7098601/anti-black-hate-crime-toronto-community/>.
- 74 Caley Gibson, "Man charged in another 'hate-motivated incident' in Edmonton: police," *Global News*, December 18, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7531855/edmonton-police-hate-motivated-attack-parkdale/>.
- 75 Phil Carpenter, "Anti-Black racist incidents a growing cause for concern for Montreal families," *Global News*, February 17, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7646635/anti-black-racism-zoom-schools/>.
- 76 Anti-Defamation League, press release, "Antisemitic Incidents Hit All-Time High in 2019," May 11, 2020, <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/antisemitic-incidents-hit-all-time-high-in-2019>.
- 77 Douglas Quan, "'A disturbing new normal': How Jewish Canadians are reacting to spate of anti-Semitic violence," *National Post*, January 3, 2020, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/a-disturbing-new-normal-how-jewish-canadians-are-reacting-to-spate-of-anti-semitic-violence>.
- 78 Statistics Canada, *Table 1 Police-reported hate crimes, by detailed motivation, Canada, 2017 to 2019*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210329/t001a-eng.htm>.
- 79 Simon Little, "'I no longer feel safe in this city,' says Vancouver man after alleged hate-motivated assault," *Global News*, January 9, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7566228/vancouver-anti-semitic-assault/>.
- 80 Annabelle Oliver, "SPVM's hate crime unit investigating after Westmount, Que., synagogue defaced by swastikas," *Global News*, January 13, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7574646/spvm-hate-crime-unit-westmount-synagogue-swastikas/>.
- 81 Emily Mertz, "Anti-Semitic incidents in Edmonton under investigation by police hate crimes unit," *Global News*, May 17, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7870830/anti-semitic-incidents-edmonton-police-hate-crimes-unit/>.
- 82 Daniel J. Rowe, "Anti-Semitic and anti-Asian incidents on the rise during COVID-19: reports," *CTV News*, May 4, 2020, <https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/anti-semitic-and-anti-asian-incidents-on-the-rise-during-covid-19-reports-1.4924306>.
- 83 Michael Holden, "COVID conspiracies fuel anti-Semitic incidents in the UK – report," *National Post*, February 10, 2021, <https://nationalpost.com/pmnn/news-pmn/crime-pmn/covid-conspiracies-fuel-anti-semitic-incidents-in-uk-report>.
- 84 Joe Friesen, "Indigenous people face racist backlash over pipeline protests," *The Globe and Mail*, February 28, 2020, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-indigenous-people-face-racist-backlash-over-pipeline-protests/>.
- 85 Jing Hui Wang & Greg Moreau, Statistics Canada, *Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2020* (March 17, 2022), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm>.

- 86 Alexandra Mae Jones, "As midnight deadline expires, Tyendinaga Mohawks don't budge from blockade," *CTV News*, February 23, 2020, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/as-midnight-deadline-expires-tyendinaga-mohawks-don-t-budge-from-blockade-1.4824371>.
- 87 Erin Seatter, "Bomb threat made against Wet'suwet'en and Tyendinaga Mohawks as far right escalates talk of violence," *Ricochet*, February 28, 2020, <https://ricochet.media/en/2961/bomb-threat-made-against-wetsuweten-and-tyendinaga-mohawks-as-far-right-escalates-talk-of-violence>.
- 88 Erin Seatter, "Bomb threat made against Wet'suwet'en and Tyendinaga Mohawks as far right escalates talks of violence," *Ricochet Media*, February 28, 2020, <https://ricochet.media/en/2961/bomb-threat-made-against-wetsuweten-and-tyendinaga-mohawks-as-far-right-escalates-talk-of-violence>.
- 89 Wallis Snowdon, "RCMP investigate hit-and-run at anti-racism protest in Ponoka", *CBC News*, September 11, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/protest-ponoka-hit-and-run-rcmp-1.5720967>.
- 90 Stephanie Dubois, "RCMP investigate alleged sexual assault at Red Deer anti-racism event," *CBC News*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/alleged-assault-red-deer-anti-racism-event-1.5734505>.
- 91 Heide Pearson, "Vandalism of Black Lives Matter mural investigated as hate crime by Calgary police," *Global News*, November 9, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7452408/calgary-black-lives-matter-hate-crime-investigation/>.
- 92 Allison Bench, "'Hate-filled': Pro-white Instagram account connected to Edmonton school condemned by officials," *Global News*, February 16, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7643596/strathcona-high-school-white-alliance/>.
- 93 CBC News Staff, "Anti-racism event in central Alberta discusses injustice, while being disrupted by far-right protesters," *CBC News*, October 3, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/anti-racism-event-in-central-alberta-discusses-injustice-while-being-disrupted-by-far-right-protesters-1.5749802>.
- 94 Lauren Boothby, "Premier condemns hate groups at Saturday protest; police review Saturday protest videos after officers punched," *Edmonton Journal*, February 22, 2021, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/gracelife-pastor-church-court-protest-video>

HATE, EXTREMISM, AND TERRORISM

In Alberta, Canada,
and Beyond

The Shift from 2019 to 2022

V. Conclusion

Michele St-Amant, David Jones,
Michael King, & John McCoy



organization for
the prevention
of violence

CONCLUSION

Building on our previous provincial threat report published in 2019, this report has sought to provide an update on the extremist and terrorist landscape and how it affects Canada, focusing on Alberta.

The OPV hopes that this report will provide readers with helpful contextual and background information to understand local issues and threats better.

We believe understanding and awareness of local issues is a critical first step in preventing hate-motivated violence, extremism, and terrorism. Similar to other problems, these issues require a whole-of-society response where policymakers, law enforcement, and communities, for example, those who are victimized by hate-based violence, work towards prevention.

While not all communities face the same risks, this report has identified several key trends across Canada.

The first is the rise in xenophobic hate and extremism. This is exemplified in tragic events such as the June 2021 vehicle ramming in London, Ontario, which targeted a Muslim family, and the national rise in police-reported hate crimes over the last 5 years.

Additionally, the current trend in xenophobic extremism, which favors lone actors rather than group-based activities, poses the potential for lone-actor incidents by individuals who have little or no connection to broader extremist groups, making the prevention of violence more difficult.

The second trend, fueled in part by the Covid-19 pandemic, is a rise in the popularity and spread of anti-authority extremist ideologies. While this brand of extremism was previously uncommon, and uniquely the purview of Canadian ideological groups like the Freemen on the Land, this form of extremism is now espoused by a variety of individuals, gurus, and loosely connected groups like Diagonol, who are driven by a host of motivations and conspiracies.

Finally, an ongoing trend – and a new addition to the OPV's threat report – is the proliferation of conspiracy theories like QAnon and the great replacement. The threat that these types of conspiracies pose to Alberta and Canada is twofold.

First, while it is important to note that most individuals who believe in conspiracies will never resort to violence, there have nonetheless been instances where these conspiracies have led individuals to justify violent activities – most notably is the follower of Romana Didulo, who threatened to attack a school for vaccinating children.

Second, these conspiracies have been increasingly adopted by various hate-motivated extremist groups and actors, including anti-authority and xenophobic extremists, lending the potential for individuals who espouse conspiracy theories to drift into extremist ideologies.

These trends in hate-motivated violence, extremism, and terrorism in Alberta and Canada represent a threat to our democratic values and identity as a multicultural society.

For this reason, reports documenting historical precedents and describing these trends are critical for informing and educating the public. We hope that the evidence collected and presented here has done just that and will help Albertans understand and identify the threats and challenges in their communities because community solutions can arise through community awareness.

