



Foreign interference landscape in Canada: Key actors and objectives

Foreign interference (FI) occurs when entities (foreign states or their proxies) conduct clandestine, deceptive or threatening activities within or against Canada or Canadian interests.

| | China | India | Russia | Pakistan | Iran |
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| Strategic Context | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The People's Republic of China (PRC) is the most active state conducting FI activities in Canada, in scale and scope of activity. FI helps the PRC counter what it perceives as a concerted effort by the West to contain the PRC's development.• PRC officials and proxies are likely to continue to conduct FI activities despite increased public scrutiny.• The PRC is likely to attempt electoral interference over the next year, possibly in the next federal election.• The PRC will almost certainly continue to engage in acts of transnational repression (TNR). | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• India is the second most pervasive FI perpetrator in Canada. As an ascendant global power, India has the intent and capability to interfere in Canadian communities and democratic processes to assert India's geopolitical influence. Indian FI in democratic processes is party agnostic and opportunistic; it targets all levels of government.• Despite the expulsions of six Indian diplomats and consular officials allegedly involved in FI, the Government of India (GoI) will likely continue to attempt electoral interference on provincial and municipal actors over the next year, while laying the groundwork for FI in the next federal election. As a result of the expulsions, the GoI will likely improve their tradecraft and operational security to make their FI activity harder to detect. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russia is a highly capable and sophisticated FI perpetrator.• While Russia continues to conduct FI—notably, disinformation operations in Canada—it currently does not consider Canada a top-tier priority compared to other Western allies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pakistan is a relatively capable and sophisticated FI perpetrator against Canada.• Pakistan engages in a range of FI activities that threaten Canada's political system, democratic institutions, social cohesion and fundamental rights and freedoms.• Pakistan has displayed the intent and capability to engage in electoral interference at both the federal and provincial level. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iran is a relatively capable and sophisticated FI perpetrator against Canada.• Iran likely regards FI and TNR activities as low-cost yet relatively high-yield efforts, and is likely to continue conducting them despite increased media attention and public scrutiny.• Iran is not a significant FI actor in Canadian federal elections. |
| Who | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PRC officials in Canada and China are primarily responsible for planning and organizing political FI in Canada.• Proxies, notably individuals and groups associated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) United Front strategy, are primarily involved in executing FI.• PRC-based entities also engage directly with Canada-based proxies to direct FI activity in Canada.• PRC Intelligence Services are also engaged in TNR. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indian officials, diplomats and declared or undeclared Indian Intelligence Service officers conduct FI activities in Canada.• Indo-Canadian ethnic media and social media promote pro-India messaging to undermine the Canada-based Khalistani movement.• Proxy agents and organizations take both explicit and implicit direction from the GoI. Proxies are especially important for FI activities in the wake of the expulsions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russian Intelligence Services and other Russian Federation (RF) official entities coordinate messaging efforts within an established network of influencers in the West that is mainly comprised of pro-Kremlin or opportunistically aligned opinion-makers.• Other entities linked to Russian state actors are sanctioned platforms and individual contributors who act, willingly and unwillingly, as proxies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Government of Pakistan (GoP) leverages its officials as well as proxies within Canada to conduct FI against Canada. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iranian Intelligence Services act indirectly through agents, contacts and sympathizers, including individuals in Canada associated with organized crime groups. |
| How | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The PRC uses a sophisticated system of incentives and disincentives to condition targets to be responsive to PRC interests.• Incentives include financial and status rewards, many of which occur in the PRC.• Disincentives generally involve coercive practises, including visa controls (both to enter and to leave China) and monitoring, harassment and intimidation, punishing friends and family to deter specific activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incentives and disincentives generally involve coercive practices, including leveraging visa issuance, banning access to India through travel 'blacklists,' monitoring and surveillance of community groups, and threats to family members in India.• The GoI also uses disinformation and media influence campaigns in its FI activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The RF primarily uses disinformation operations, through social media and other platforms, to counter events perceived to be contrary to the RF's interests (e.g. a new bilateral irritant or a global event supported by Canada).• RF disinformation operations are opportunistic; they seize on pre-existing or emerging controversial domestic or foreign policy issues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disincentives generally involve the coercive practice of TNR directed against GoP critics. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disincentives generally involve coercive practices, including monitoring, harassing and intimidating members of community groups or those critical of the regime by direct engagement via social media or cyber intrusion. |
| Why | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To exert control over Chinese Canadian communities.• To suppress dissent and preserve the CCP rule and PRC territorial integrity.• To push Canadian politicians and decision-makers toward adopting pro-PRC positions and policies that run counter to Canada's national interests. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To exert control over ethnic, cultural or religious community groups.• To push Canadian politicians and decision-makers toward pro-GoI positions and policies.• To repair damage to the GoI's reputation post-expulsions and public allegations of FI and TNR. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To ensure regime preservation.• The RF conducts disinformation campaigns to achieve strategic goals, question the integrity of and undermine public faith in Western democratic institutions, sow discord, stoke fear and anxiety, and weaken cohesion in Western democracies.• Among its long-term FI goals are removing sanctions against it, weakening Western support for Ukraine, and confirming Moscow's 'rightful place' within the new international order. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To exert control over Pakistani Canadian communities.• To promote Pakistan's domestic stability and counter India's growing influence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To neutralize foreign-based criticism and dissent in support of regime preservation. |
| Outlook | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The PRC almost certainly views PRC FI activities as low-risk, high-reward endeavours. The PRC will continue to target Canadian democratic institutions to advance PRC strategic objectives to the detriment of Canada's interests. The PRC is likely to leverage new tools and capabilities to do so. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• India will likely contest some of its geopolitical rivalries, e.g., with the PRC or Pakistan, within the respective Canadian communities, leveraging dissidents for strategic advantage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russia will continue to conduct FI activities, including disinformation operations in Canada, to further its short- and long-term strategic objectives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pakistan is expected to continue to conduct FI activities against Canada, in line with its strategic aims to promote political, security and economic stability in Pakistan, and to counter India's growing global influence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iranian FI and TNR activities are likely to increase globally in the short-term in response to perceived threats to the regime. |

