



INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Situational awareness for stakeholders and decision makers.



Report # 20-006
24 December 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. CURRENT SITUATION	2
2. GLOBAL.....	3
2.1 COVID UPDATE.....	3
2.2 COVID-19 World News	4
2.3 Global Awareness	5
2.4 Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism	6
3. CANADA.....	7
3.1 COVID UPDATE.....	7
3.2 COVID-19 Canada News	9
3.3 Canada Awareness.....	10
3.4 Canada – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism	10
4. USA.....	13
4.1 COVID UPDATE.....	13
4.2 COVID-19 USA News	14
4.3 USA Awareness.....	14
4.4 USA – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism (Provided by Welund).....	15
5. PALADIN RISK SOLUTIONS - SERVICES	19

NOTE: Paladin Risk Solutions is utilizing a secure cloud application to provide multiple layers of protection on the web and prevent exposure of open-source intelligence gathering and dark web investigations. This software enables research teams to maximize security, accelerate intelligence gathering and analysis, streamline network operations, and ensure full control and auditability of all research activity.

DISCLAIMER: *This report is confidential and is intended to be used solely by the client for whom this report was prepared and to whom it is addressed for information purposes only and for no other purpose, except as may be expressly stated herein. This report may not be copied, reproduced, disseminated, distributed or otherwise made available to any third party, in whole or in part, without the express written consent of Paladin Risk Solutions Inc. which consent may be withheld for any reason. In preparing this report, Paladin Risk Solutions Inc. has used its professional care and diligence and has endeavored to include in this report and to base its analysis upon information that it believes to be relevant to the purposes of this report; however, no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made by Paladin Risk Solutions Inc. as to the accuracy or completeness of the information included in this report.*

1. CURRENT SITUATION

Criminals are known to be entrepreneurial, quick to adapt and evolve despite difficulties and challenges. While individuals, companies, countries and organizations have found difficulty surviving in face of the pandemic, organized crime finds a way to flourish as it historically always has. COVID-19 was particularly difficult on Latin and Caribbean countries, despite only having 9% of the world's population, it saw almost one third of global deaths from the virus. Countries which experienced economic development and pulled many out of poverty are now losing those decades of progress. Latin America's economy is expected to reduce by approximately 10%. Despite difficulties faced by organized crime groups, such as complications with acquiring precursor drugs and counterfeit goods from Asia - which subsequently cause an increase in drug prices, they are thriving. Furthermore, gangs are seeing a reduction in their extortion revenue that normally correlates to an abundance of travelers. They are also having difficulty conducting human smuggling due to the tight travel restrictions.

In Latin America, criminal gangs took on some government activities such as enforcing curfew and quarantines in El Salvador and Brazil. Gangs in Brazil kept business owners from price gouging important services and goods during the pandemic, some even handed out hand sanitizer. Venezuela's paramilitary organizations were helping security forces ensure people did not venture outdoors. El Salvadorian and Mexican gangs distributed government provided assistance or delivered their own aid packages displaying their logos. Honduran organized crime groups held raffles and bought food for the hungry with the proceeds of crime.

Organized crime has traditionally provided some sort of control and assistance to the people in their areas, like a government. Although some criminal gangs appeared to be assisting those in need, a lack of willingness or ability to pay back the debts still lead to death or further servitude.

Latin American governments, sometimes viewed as corrupt, have been ineffective at assisting residents which is allowing criminal groups to step up in the meantime. Even in democratic governments many are expressing their concerns of an overuse of power by protesting mask and lockdown measures. In countries rife with corruption, it is not difficult for gangs to appear as better than the government.

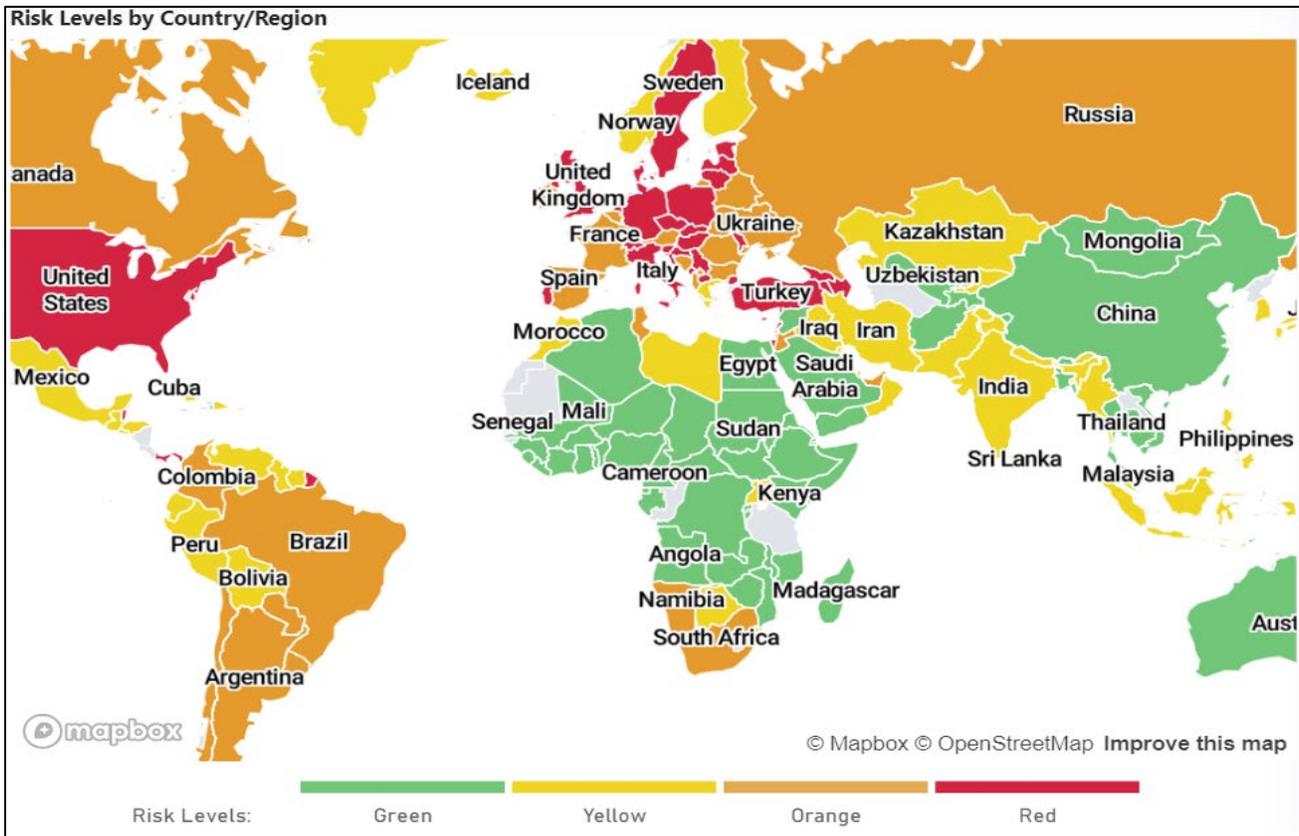
It is not the first time that governments have utilized criminal organizations to assist them in governance, and for some officials, it is clear evidence that governments may need assistance from these organizations to stop COVID-19 transmission. Furthermore, some areas do not have any government influence, with criminal gangs firmly holding power. These gangs will continue to conduct their activities and assist in areas where governments cannot provide for citizens.

Continuing to adapt, criminal gangs have innovated and flourished in other ways. In Brazil, wildlife trafficking has seen an increase and drug smugglers are finding new routes to deliver their illicit cargo as previous ones were no longer viable due to the pandemic. Smugglers use ambulances or dress as essential workers to deliver their drugs, while some sold fraudulent, or even authentic but stolen, COVID-19 medications.

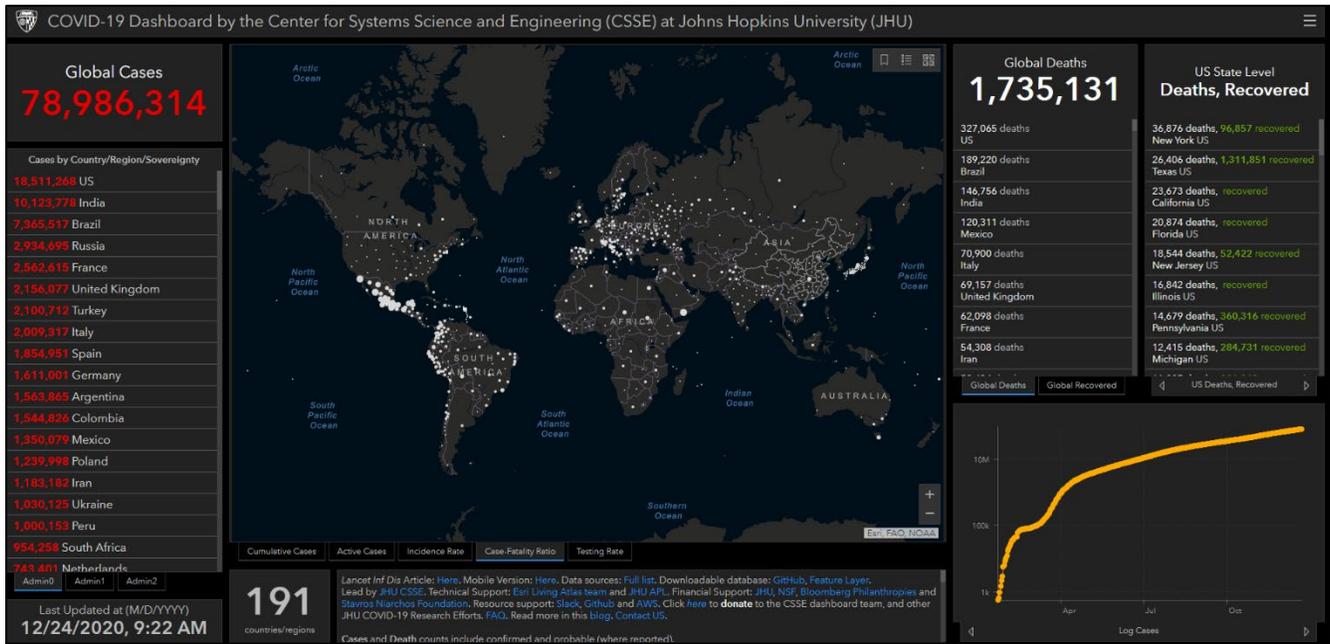
Furthermore, criminals are investing in infrastructure and talent that can assist them with cyber crimes, which has seen intensive growth since the pandemic started. Identity theft, fraud and phishing websites are increasing as is the criminal use of encrypted communications since face-to-face activity is becoming more difficult. Despite their challenges, criminals appeared to have adapted faster than most individuals or organizations that saw an impact from COVID-19, showcasing their ingenuity and adaptability.

2. GLOBAL

2.1 COVID UPDATE



#	Country, Other	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Recovered	Active Cases	Serious, Critical	Tot Cases/ 1M pop	Deaths/ 1M pop	Total Tests	Tests/ 1M pop	Population
	World	79,261,353	+224,693	1,741,463	+4,743	55,839,487	21,680,403	106,385	10,168	223.4			
1	USA	18,926,229	+9,077	334,356	+138	11,104,857	7,487,016	28,728	57,018	1,007	240,158,809	723,514	331,933,904
2	France	2,505,875		61,978		187,272	2,256,625	2,710	38,350	949	31,689,112	484,966	65,343,001
3	Brazil	7,366,677		189,264		6,405,356	772,057	8,318	34,539	887	28,600,000	134,094	213,283,650
4	Italy	1,991,278		70,395		1,322,067	598,816	2,624	32,958	1,165	25,558,583	423,023	60,418,936
5	Belgium	632,321	+3,212	18,939	+118	43,513	569,869	511	54,445	1,631	6,708,083	577,593	11,613,851
6	Russia	2,963,688	+29,935	53,096	+635	2,370,857	539,735	2,300	20,304	364	87,578,209	599,996	145,964,608
7	Germany	1,599,177	+11,269	29,359	+232	1,184,400	385,418	5,243	19,058	350	33,708,381	401,708	83,912,739
8	Ukraine	1,001,132	+11,490	17,395	+223	631,435	352,302	177	22,958	399	5,348,820	122,661	43,606,599
9	India	10,141,215	+17,671	147,029	+251	9,709,469	284,717	8,944	7,314	106	165,308,366	119,228	1,386,493,599
10	Serbia	316,344	+4,091	2,882	+49	31,536	281,926	312	36,276	330	2,203,391	252,672	8,720,361
11	Poland	1,239,998	+13,115	26,752	+497	975,876	237,370	1,610	32,781	707	6,976,460	184,433	37,826,620
12	Mexico	1,350,079	+11,653	120,311	+816	1,005,248	224,520	3,913	10,419	928	3,452,803	26,646	129,580,298
13	Iran	1,183,182	+6,178	54,308	+152	924,685	204,189	5,371	14,001	643	7,253,750	85,837	84,505,903
14	Hungary	311,554	+3,292	8,729	+113	120,529	182,296	491	32,290	905	2,575,650	266,948	9,648,508
15	Turkey	2,082,610		18,861		1,901,307	162,442	4,901	24,567	222	23,030,162	271,669	84,772,801



2.2 COVID-19 World News

- [Britain cut off from Europe, other countries over new coronavirus strain](#)

With the discovery of a new and rapid spreading variant of COVID-19 in Britain, over 40 countries have put some form of travel restrictions to and from the UK, including Canada, USA, France, India, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and many others. Those who have recently arrived from the UK are requested to take a COVID-19 test, France has banned the entry of trucks into the country from the UK, leaving thousands of truckers unable to leave back to their home countries. It is believed the crossing will reopen soon. The UK was London and its neighboring areas a strict lockdown due to the new and out of control strain that is not believed to be more lethal but about 50% more transmittable. The new strain appears to be mostly centered around the London area, where measures include no bubbles, essential only travel and non-essential stores are to be closed.
- [BioNTech CEO says coronavirus vaccine 'highly likely' to protect against new strain](#)

BioNTech is quite confident that their COVID-19 vaccine protects against the new variant of the virus. However, studies are required to confirm and ensure its safety. The new strain's proteins are believed to still be 99% identical to the previous strain, and a definitive answer on the vaccine's effectiveness on the new strain will likely come in two weeks. The company suggests that even if the vaccine requires adjustment to the new variant, it could be completed in about six weeks but may require an additional authorization from regulators before it can be given. As this is not the first variant discovered, it is hopeful that since variants do not change the virus significantly that the vaccinations protect against different variants.
- [Oxygen level while walking identifies at-risk patients; cancer patients should get vaccine priority](#)

It can be helpful to assess blood oxygen levels in patients when they are walking if that level is normal when they are sitting, a new study suggests. A low level of oxygen in the blood, or hypoxia, contributes to shortness of breath and worsening illness in patients with COVID-19. Roughly one in four COVID-19 patients developed hypoxia when they got up and walked. These individuals were nearly five times more likely to eventually need

basic oxygen support and nearly eight times more likely to need advanced oxygen therapy, compared to patients whose blood oxygen levels held steady while walking.

- [For Europe, It's wave after wave](#)
- [Mexico Misled Citizens About the Severity of Coronavirus in its Capital](#)
- [Another new variant of COVID-19 is spreading rapidly in South Africa](#)
- [UK imposes more lockdowns as mutated COVID variant causes record cases](#)

2.3 Global Awareness

- [A Massive Fraud Operation Stole Millions From Online Bank Accounts](#)

IBM researchers found a fraud operation which utilized a network of cellular emulators to steal money from online bank accounts. This large-scale operation did not require many emulators to mimic cellular phones, with only 20 emulators used to mimic 16,000 phones of individuals whose bank accounts have been compromised. Once the scammers were able to enter the usernames and the passwords into the emulators and the banking apps, they were able to send money order that took out funds from the accounts. To bypass the bank's fraud protection, the fraudsters used the identifiers found on the devices of the individuals with the compromised accounts and spoofed those together with the GPS locations and the devices used. For those that have two factor authentication, the SMS messages were accessed via the emulators, rendering the multi factor authentication worthless. Despite many believing that two factors authentication is a strong safety measure, criminals are becoming more sophisticated and further measures may be required to ensure that this type of fraud automation is not successful. Bank accounts were likely compromised using malware of phishing attacks, and the scammers learned from their mistakes by monitoring their operations in real time, using logs to evolve their attack techniques. As attacks become more sophisticated, not only will the average person not be able to shield themselves from possible attacks, large corporation and organizations including banks will have to up their game and possibly deflect, where possible, large and ever evolving attacks.
- [U.K. braces for possible food shortages as nations cut off ties amid new coronavirus strain](#)

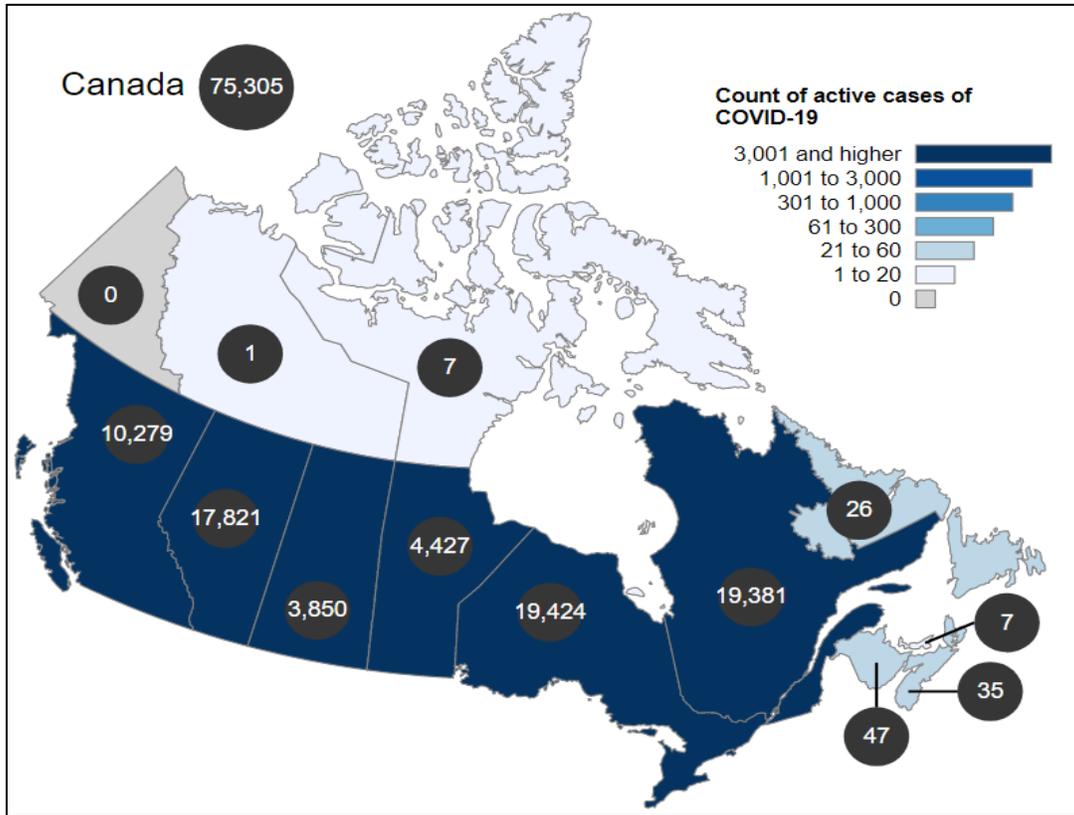
As the UK is cut off from the world due to the new variant of the COVID-19 virus, the UK is seeing empty shelves. Citizens panic buying things such as toilet paper, bread, vegetables and meat. Stores advise they are expecting to run out of lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli and citrus in the coming days. The government advised enough food is available until Christmas, while food suppliers advised that if the disruption was to continue it is likely that other items may not be available. Truckers are allowed to enter Britain but cannot return and therefore most are unwilling to drive into Britain to deliver supplies. Some who tested negative for COVID-19 were able to catch ferries while other have been unable to return to the home countries due to the ban, causing British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to request France lifts its ban on freight services to and from the UK, which is currently in the talks. The new strain, which was identified in September and is reportedly about 50% more transmissible than the previous strain, was spreading rapidly and likely already managed to be transmitted to other countries due to the time lapsed since its discovery. Cases have already been detected in other countries such as Denmark, Netherlands, Iceland and Italy.
- [Brexit deal marathon heads to the finish line](#)

2.4 Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism

- [Farmers' protest could set back India's economic recovery from Covid, says minister](#)
Indian farmers are still protesting the new agricultural laws, which allow farmers to sell directly to wholesale buyers and retailers, instead of going through the government led price market previously used. Farmers are afraid that it would reduce their negotiating power with the large companies. Furthermore, one of the bill's points forbids farmers from disputing matters in court. Overall, individuals are concerned that the government has shut down the ability for consultation, showcasing a lack of interest in discussion and unwilling to listen to dissent. However, farmers are also indicating a lack of willingness to amend the law, calling for it to be withdrawn. One of India's ministers is expressing concern with the protests and their reported hinderance to economic recovery from the pandemic and further stated that previous measures including minimum support prices will stay in place, guaranteeing farmers at least some profit for their crops.
- [Thousands Protest in Sudan in Call for Faster Reform](#)
Thousands of Sudanese protesters took to the streets of the capital Khartoum and its twin city Omdurman on Saturday, demanding an acceleration of reforms on the second anniversary of the start of an uprising that ousted Omar al-Bashir. Many Sudanese are unhappy with what they see as the slow or even negligible pace of change under the transitional government that has struggled to fix an economy in crisis. The government was formed under a three-year power sharing agreement between the military and civilian groups, which is meant to lead to fair presidential and parliamentary elections. Sudan's state TV aired footage of thousands of protesters gathering outside the presidential residence in Khartoum that now hosts the sovereign council, a joint military-civilian ruling body.

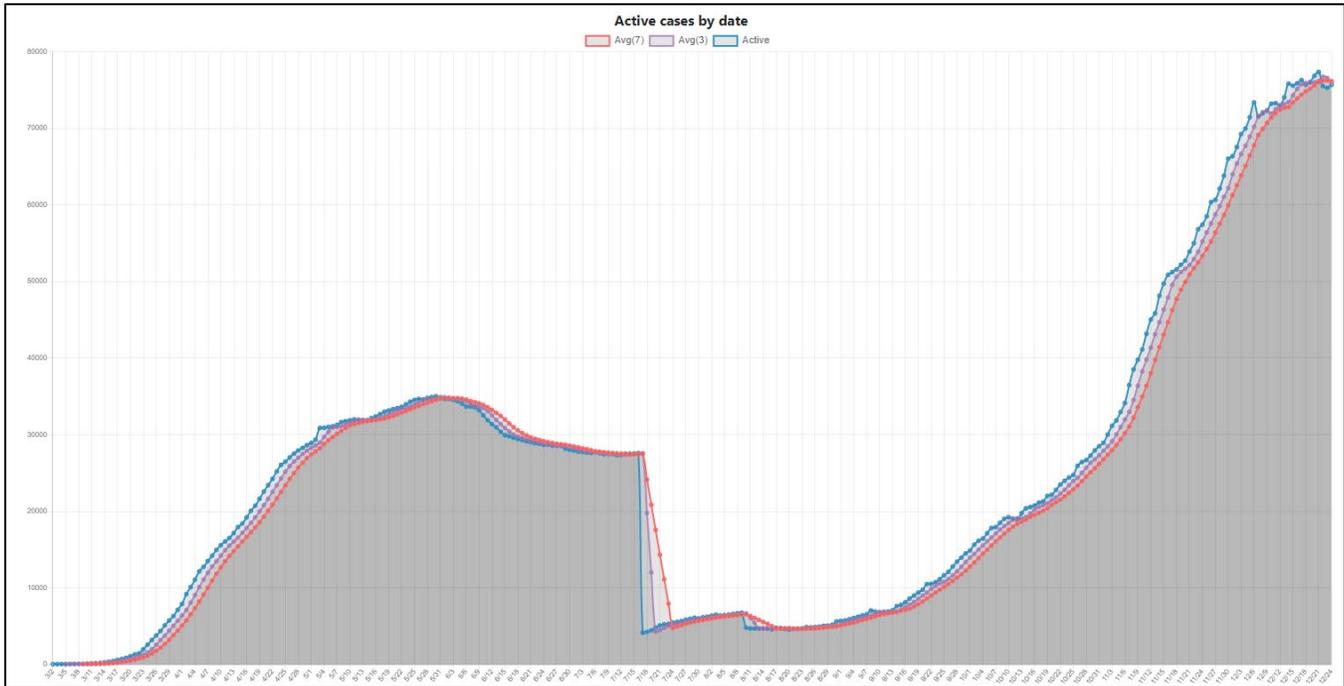
3. CANADA

3.1 COVID UPDATE



Prov.	Total Confirmed	Total Deaths	Total Recovered	Total Active
Total	530,801 (↑2,447)	14,645 (↑49)	440,465 (↑2,013)	75,691 (↑385)
BC	48,027	796	36,952	10,279
ON	165,110 (↑2,447)	4,278 (↑49)	141,023 (↑2,013)	19,809 (↑385)
QC	183,523	7,867	156,275	19,381
AB	93,781	890	75,070	17,821
MB	23,381	605	18,349	4,427
NB	585	8	530	47
SK	14,101	130	10,121	3,850
PEI	91	0	84	7
NL	384	4	354	26
NS	1,458	65	1,358	35
YT	59	1	58	0
NT	24	0	23	1
NU	264	1	255	8
 Rate of change	↑ 0.5%	↑ 0.3%	↑ 0.5%	↑ 0.5%

Prov.	Total Test	Total Waiting	Total Hosp	Total ICU
Total	17,703,902 (+64,592)	-	-	-
BC	1,409,122	-	348	80
ON	7,592,554 (+64,592)	75,250 (+8,274)	967 (-35)	277 (+2)
QC	4,648,504	-	1067	142
AB	2,690,432	-	821	146
MB	409,443	-	259	37
NB	148,195	-	2	1
SK	413,147	-	125	21
PEI	74,587	-	-	-
NL	71,012	-	1	0
NS	226,091	-	0	0
YT	5,872	25	-	-
NT	9,465	19	0	0
NU	5,478	631	0	0
Rate of change	↑ 0.4%	-	-	-



Source: <https://www.covid-19canada.com>

3.2 COVID-19 Canada News

- [Health Canada approves 'game-changer' Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#)
Health Canada has approved the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine this week, and Canada is expected to see first shipments of the vaccine by Christmas, with a total of 168,000 doses of vaccine this month. By the end of 2021, Moderna will provide 40 million doses to Canada. The Moderna vaccine is not required to be kept in extremely low temperatures and will allow for the vaccination of people living in rural and remote areas which do not have access to specialized equipment for freezing of the Pfizer virus. Rural areas often do not have a sufficient health care system to be able to provide support to COVID-19 patients, thus the Moderna vaccine has been called a “game changer” for Canada and other countries that have difficulties with transportation and storage of the Pfizer vaccine.
- [Feds say COVID-19 border controls are sufficient despite complaints from Ontario](#)
Ontario Premier Doug Ford criticized the federal government again, requesting that travellers returning to Canada must provide a negative COVID-19 test before arrival. He further stated that should the federal government not implement such a program, that Ontario will begin testing travellers upon arrival. Canadian officials defended the current system of 14 days quarantine. Furthermore, they advised that only 1.8% of cases are associated with international travel, a small number which will not produce a strong effect on transmission reduction should it be reduced. Additionally, tests are a window to the past, and an individual may have caught the virus at a time that will not yet show on the test. The government also added that upon hearing about the new COVID-19 variant in UK, they banned all travel from that country.
- [New COVID-19 variant not yet identified in Canada: Tam](#)
Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam advised that the new variant of COVID-19 found in the UK has yet to be seen in Canada, but the Public Health Agency of Canada is conducting analysis of known cases to confirm this.
- [Health-care workers lining up for COVID-19 vaccine, but some warn of 'real troubles' with hesitancy](#)
Health officials are worried that vaccine hesitancy may be a problem, even in the healthcare system. In Ontario, on average, only 54 percent of hospital staff received the flu vaccine, while 75 percent long term care workers received it in previous years. Some have advised they believe they are guinea pigs for the vaccine. An explanation for the low flu shot vaccinations may be easily explained for young or healthy workers, for whom the flu may not cause any negative effects, and thus they may not be taking the flu shots. However, we are seeing global reports of healthcare workers of all ages requiring hospitalization or ICU visits and some even dying, possibly due to the large viral load that healthcare workers receive from COVID-19 patients. Hopefully, this factor may increase the likelihood of healthcare workers, many of whom are young, in taking the vaccine and protecting themselves and their patients. Education must be the first step, explaining that no corners were cut on the vaccine, whose three various phases were conducted simultaneously.
- [Canada extends ban on passenger flights from U.K. until Jan. 6](#)
- [Ontario reports 2,408 new COVID-19 cases, 41 more deaths linked to the illness](#)

3.3 Canada Awareness

- [Canada blocks Chinese Arctic gold mine takeover, citing national security](#)
According to Shandong Gold Mining, one of China's largest gold mining companies, was blocked from buying a large Arctic gold mine located in a strategic area of Nunavut. The reasoning behind the decision was national security grounds wherein Canada, as well as Australia, have increased the scrutiny on deals made by Chinese mining companies. Canada began its national security review in October, which was extended and just recently completed. This is not the first time Canadian officials have banned a takeover of a Canadian company due to national security reasons, a \$1.5 billion Chinese acquisition of a construction company was blocked in 2018. Subsequently, Canadian bilateral relations were strained due to the arrest of Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou by Canada at the request of the USA. It is believed that bilateral relations with China will strain even further, as has been and will continue to be seen by not just Canada but other developed countries who see China as a threat to the western democratic way of life.
- [Bank of China, anti-abortion groups among coronavirus wage subsidy recipients](#)
This week, the Canada Revenue Agency released a registry of the almost 340,000 businesses which applied and received the Canada federal wage subsidy benefit. The registry only lists companies and not sole proprietors, due to privacy reasons. Businesses which wrongfully made a claim under the benefit, which has cost the government about \$54 billion, can be reported on the CRA leads website.
- [Canada and U.K. make stopgap deal to avert tariffs after Brexit](#)
- Canada and the United Kingdom have inked a temporary agreement that will head off an automatic increase in tariffs that was set to kick in when Britain leaves the European Union next week. Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland announced the last-minute deal on Tuesday, ensuring Canadian goods such as maple syrup, lobster, beef and car parts aren't slapped with British tariffs on January 1, 2020.
- [GDP growth of 0.4% in Oct. offers glimmer of hope for economy in 2021](#)

3.4 Canada – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism



welund

During the week of 16-23 December 2020, most of the activist activity noted by Welund in Canada took place in the government sector (59%), followed by oil and gas (21%). Protests made up the majority of activity (38%), followed by fundraising and petitions (10%).

Anti-mask and anti-lockdown activists continued weekly protests in many municipalities as more provinces implemented further lockdown measures leading into the holidays. These protests have continued despite bylaw and law enforcement in many locations issuing fines for violating public health mandates.

Activity against the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX) project experienced an increase this past week.

Protests: Campaigners opposing the TMX project re-occupied a 'tree-sit' near Burnaby, BC. Activists hoisted a tent into the canopy of three maple trees at Maple Creek, which was occupied by a single protester. In addition, a new series of petitions, letter-writing, and fundraising campaigns were started.

Anti-mask and anti-lockdown campaigns have maintained consistent weekly protests in major cities, with singular events occurring in multiple smaller cities and towns. Several municipalities and townships have experienced

some form of march through their downtown core and other high-traffic areas. A protest held on 20 December in Toronto included a ‘Santa Claus Parade’ theme.

Outlook: Welund continues to project low protest activity through the holiday season. Historically, campaign groups will use the holiday season to provide supporters with a ‘year-end’ summary of successful campaigns, continued efforts, and to make a call out for fundraising for upcoming actions in the new year.

Anti-mask campaign groups have confirmed the continuation of weekly protests despite further lockdown measures being put in place. The increased covid-19 restrictions combined with the willingness of bylaw and police officers to serve anti-lockdown protesters with fines or other charges could be the catalyst for more and larger protests against public health measures.

As the Canadian government continues to roll-out its covid-19 vaccination program, campaign groups may seek to influence which industries or individuals are prioritized. These groups could include labour or union activists, as well as groups focused on the equitable distribution of the vaccine to Indigenous, low-income, or homeless communities.



Figure 1 Total activist activity in Canada as noted by Welund North America.

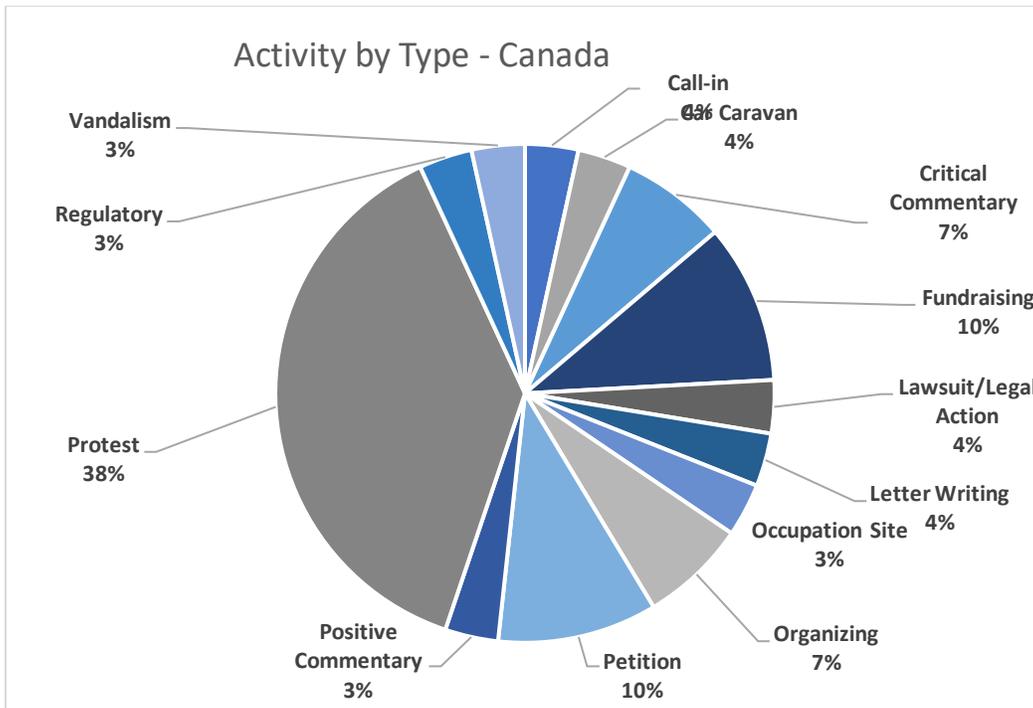


Figure 2 Activist activity in Canada by type as noted by Welund

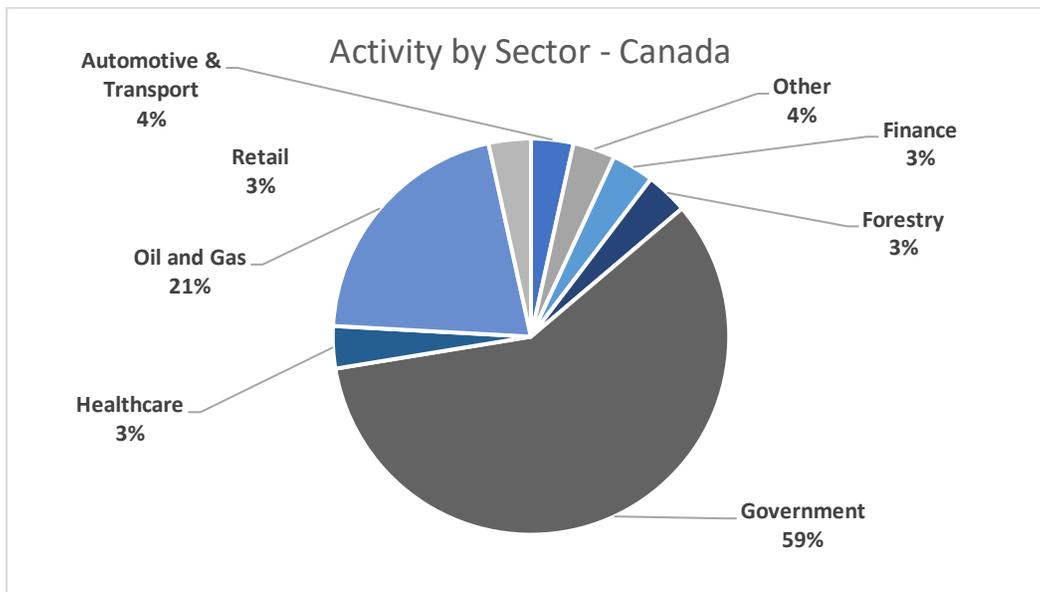
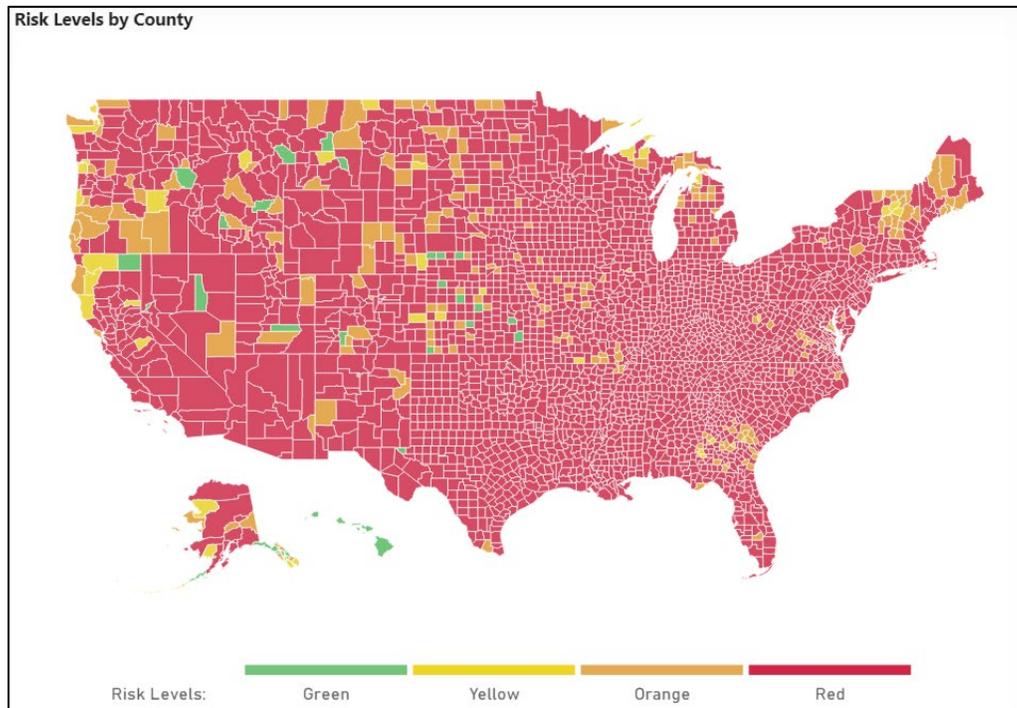


Figure 3 Activist activity in Canada by sector as noted by Welund North America.

4. USA

4.1 COVID UPDATE



#	USA State	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Total Recovered	Active Cases	Tot Cases/ 1M pop	Deaths/ 1M pop	Total Tests	Tests/ 1M pop	Population
	USA Total	18,926,229	334,356	11,104,857	7,487,016	57,178	1,010	240,158,809	725,550	
1	California	2,010,813	23,638	801,730	1,185,445	50,891	598	30,468,560	771,117	39,512,223
2	Florida	1,234,399	20,874	712,201	501,324	57,473	972	14,941,870	695,691	21,477,737
3	New York	919,159	36,883	465,945	416,331	47,249	1,896	23,843,897	1,225,683	19,453,561
4	Arizona	473,273	8,179	69,298	395,796	65,021	1,124	3,083,629	423,650	7,278,717
5	Illinois	918,070	16,842	607,758	293,470	72,450	1,329	12,688,071	1,001,282	12,671,821
6	Virginia	319,133	4,760	28,330	286,043	37,389	558	4,776,275	559,576	8,535,519
7	Texas	1,656,659	26,716	1,345,707	284,236	57,134	921	14,728,384	507,947	28,995,881
8	Missouri	400,264	5,743	119,533	274,988	65,217	936	3,928,100	640,024	6,137,428
9	Georgia	608,290	10,519	333,974	263,797	57,292	991	5,480,765	516,205	10,617,423
10	Colorado	316,500	4,462	65,114	246,924	54,960	775	2,070,197	359,488	5,758,736
11	Maryland	257,862	5,568	9,197	243,097	42,652	921	5,419,999	896,508	6,045,680
12	New Jersey	455,346	18,596	222,724	214,026	51,265	2,094	7,347,647	827,234	8,882,190
13	Kentucky	250,280	2,466	35,478	212,336	56,020	552	3,314,833	741,960	4,467,673
14	Pennsylvania	586,908	14,508	360,316	212,084	45,845	1,133	7,020,397	548,383	12,801,989
15	Michigan	508,449	12,415	284,731	211,303	50,912	1,243	8,353,319	836,431	9,986,857

4.2 COVID-19 USA News

- [Congress passes massive Covid relief bill to provide direct aid to struggling Americans](#)
Congress finally voted this week on a COVID-19 relief bill which is noted to be worth \$900 billion. This will include a round of stimulus checks to residents, expansion of unemployment benefits and funding for schools and vaccines. For those earning less than \$75,000 or \$150,000 for a family, will see about \$600 per person and per each dependant under 18. Those on unemployment will continue to receive \$300 a week and business will see funding to a total of \$284 million in loans. Trump is expected to sign the bill into effect, the passing of which stopped a possible government shut down. Americans are relieved to hear that more assistance is coming as the winter outlook for COVID-19 cases appears to be the dimmest yet.
- [Inside the \\$250 million effort to convince Americans the coronavirus vaccines are safe](#)
The federal official in charge of a \$250 million marketing blitz to build trust in the coronavirus vaccines' safety says the campaign will forego trying to convince so-called "anti-vaxxers." Instead, it will focus on swaying those who are simply unsure about the new coronavirus inoculations. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services calls the campaign's target group the "movable middle," said Deputy Assistant Secretary Mark Weber, who is overseeing the initiative.
- [Anthony Fauci Says New COVID Strain in U.K. Has Probably Reached the U.S.](#)
Veteran government scientist Dr. Anthony Fauci has said the new coronavirus mutation that has emerged in the U.K. is likely already in the USA. Scientists in the U.K. say early evidence suggests the new strain is better at infecting people but does not appear to be more deadly. "We have to make that assumption [that it has arrived in the U.S.]" said Fauci. "When you see something that is prevalent in a place like the U.K., there are also mutations that we are seeing in South Africa, and given travel throughout the world, I would not be surprised if it's already here. When we start to look for it, we are gonna find it."
- [California could see 100,000 hospitalizations in January](#)
- [How Full Are Hospital I.C.U.s Near You?](#)
- [U.S. reports 3,401 COVID-19 deaths in just one day](#)

4.3 USA Awareness

- [Biden aides weighing boosting vaccine production with Defense Production Act](#)
To gain a vaccine in the fastest time possible, President Trump has already invoked the Defence Production Act (DPA) to fast-track production of medical equipment and test components. For President Elect Biden to ensure vaccines are produced and given as fast as possible, he has consulted various experts about whether he should also invoke the bill to speed up the production and administration of the vaccine. President Trump's may have overpromised his projections for the mass vaccination in the spring, putting Biden at a risk of being held responsible for unmet projections. Reportedly, while Pfizer negotiated an additional 100 million vaccine doses to the USA, it suggested the country invokes the DPA. Not only would the DPA be required for vaccine components, syringes and needles are believed to be in short supply. As many of these products are made elsewhere than the USA, with China being a major manufacturer, it is possible that vaccinations projections may be too optimistic and will take longer than promised.
- [U.S. economy losing speed as year winds down](#)

Last week, less individuals filed for first time unemployment claims; however, as winter restrictions are in place, consumers are not spending like they would have during this time of the year. Since the beginning of the pandemic, November saw the largest consumer spending drop since May, and even housing has seen a five-month low in November. Overall, it appears that the economy began losing speed in November, and even with the new relief measures, it is believed that some of it will be saved for the future as many individuals are struggling with paying their bills and budgeting for their expenses. Overall, consumers spent less on purchases of goods such as new cars and clothing, and instead are offsetting increases in spending on groceries and in restaurants and accommodations. As time will take for herd immunity to be reached, it is likely that government aid will be required until at least the end of the summer.

- [U.S. vs. Facebook: Inside the tech giant's behind-the-scenes campaign to battle back antitrust lawsuits](#)
- [The U.S. has vaccinated just 1 million people out of a goal of 20 million for December](#)
- [Trump vetoes defense legislation](#)
- [U.S. suspects Iranians created website threatening U.S. election officials](#)

The FBI reported that credible information suggests that Iranian cyber scammers created a website which contained death threats to American election officials. The website, which was created at the beginning of the month after the election, showed “an ongoing Iranian intent to create divisions and mistrust in the United States and undermine public confidence in the U.S. electoral process.” Despite some records registered through Yandex, a Russian platform, no links to Russia were able to be proven.

- [‘Mom’s worth it’: US holiday travel surges despite outbreak](#)

4.4 USA – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism (Provided by Welund)



Overview: During the week of December 16 to 23, 2020, most of the activist activity in the US noted by Welund took place in the government sector (58%), followed by oil and gas (17%). Protests made up the majority of activity (42%), followed by critical commentary (11%), and

organizing (7%). Overall activity has continued to decline since a peak around the election. Welund expects activity to remain low during Christmas week.

Activist campaigns have been promoting end of year fundraising efforts. In addition to calls for donations, campaigns have been listing 2020 successes and goals for 2021.

Protests: Despite the pandemic, activists continue to organize in-person protests to broadcast their campaigns and demands. Organizers have incorporated physical distancing and mask-wearing adaptations to limit the risk of gathering for protests. California, New York, Massachusetts, Washington, and Oregon saw the most protests.

This week, members of the Red Lake Nation established a ‘camp site’ near the construction of Enbridge’s Line 3 Replacement Project north of St. Hilaire, Minnesota. The Red Lake Treaty Camp follows weeks of ongoing protests against the project in Aitkin County, Minnesota.

A protest of interest was on December 21, 2020. 300 far-right anti-lockdown activists attempted to enter the Oregon State Capitol building as part of a ‘flash mob rally’. At least two arrests and a number of injuries were reported when some of the activists were forced out of the building by police. The crowd of far-right activists

included a loose collection of members of the Proud Boys, Patriot Prayer, and other groups. Many of the participants were armed with pistols and rifles.

An upcoming protest of interest will take place on January 6, 2021 in Washington, DC. Supporters of President Trump have called for a 'Million MAGA March' to protest the results of the presidential election. A similar Million MAGA March took place on November 14, including 20 arrests and isolated clashes between counter-protesters. Counter-protests can be expected on 6 January to oppose the pro-Trump demonstration.

Outlook: Welund expects overall activist activity to remain relatively lower through the holidays, as analysts have typically recorded reduced activity between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The lead up to the presidential inauguration in January has the potential to see tensions between the left and right spark protest activity between now and Inauguration Day on January 20, 2021.

Rising COVID-19 cases across the US may see some states reimpose restrictions not seen since the spring. Should this happen, the right-wing, anti-lockdown movement may organize protests and demonstrations like those that attracted nationwide media attention in April and May.

The rollout of the coronavirus vaccine has resulted in increased activity from anti-vaccine groups. The spread of misinformation about the vaccines has also increased across social media platforms.

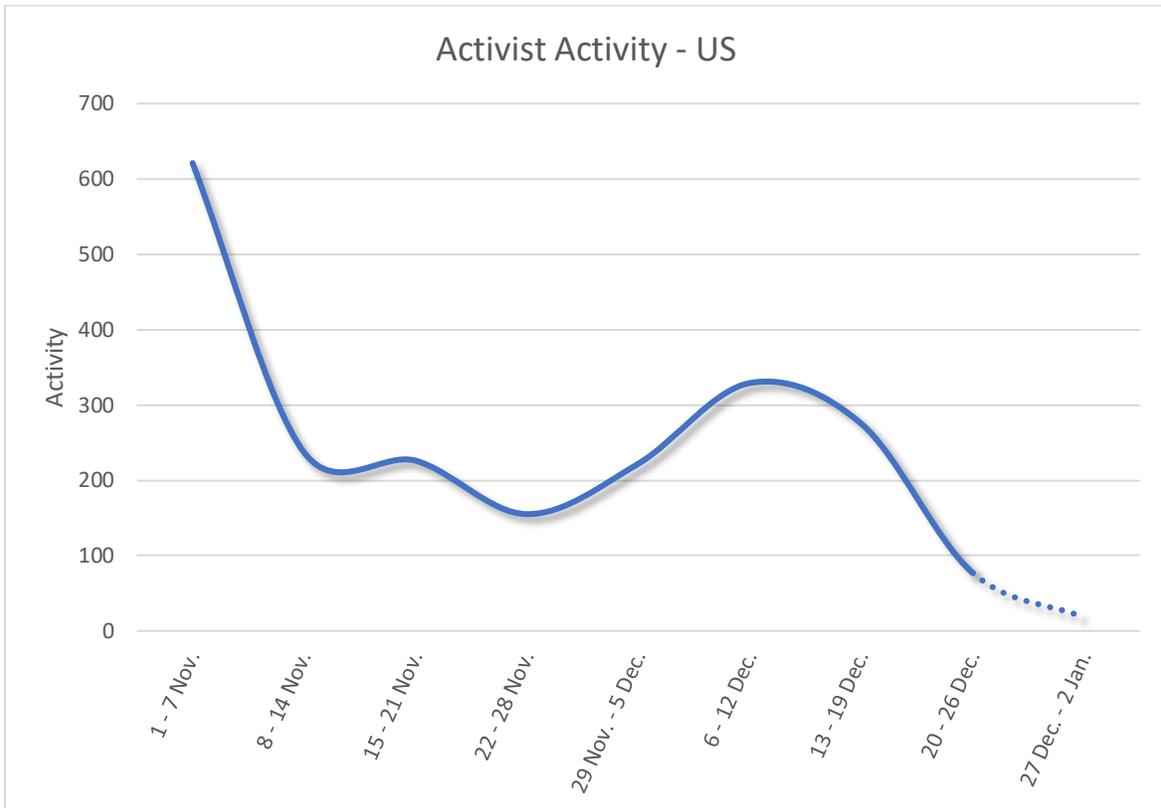


Figure 4 Total activist activity in the US as noted by Welund North America.

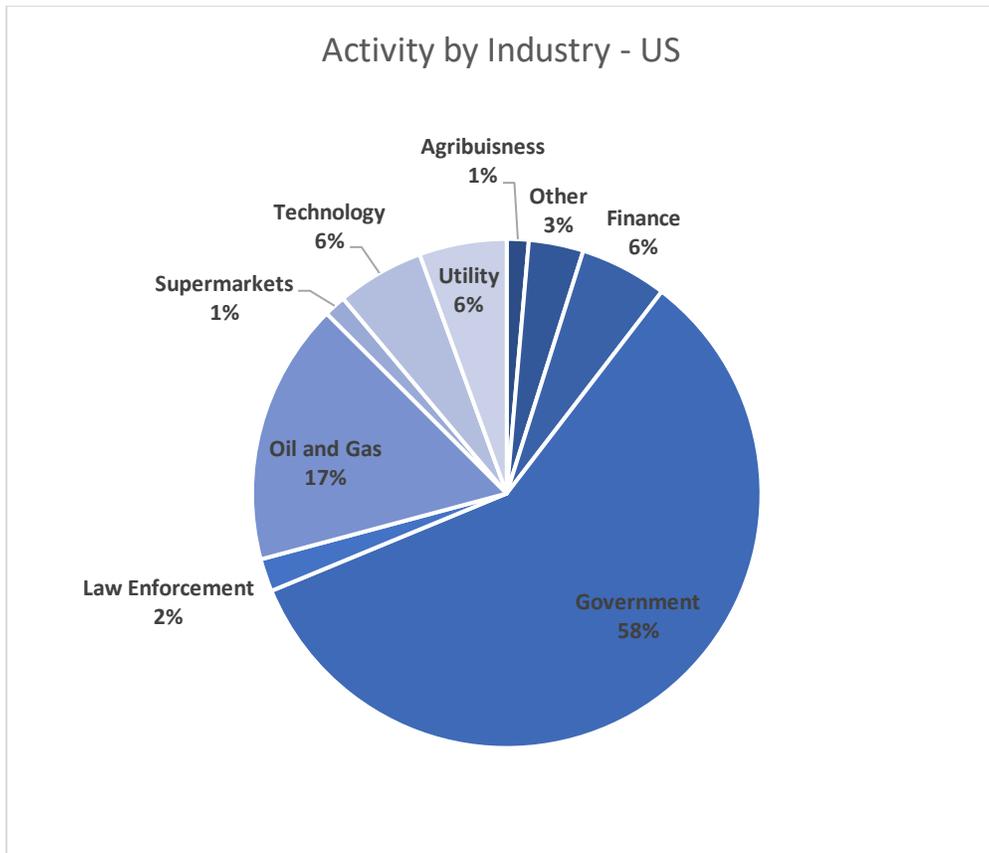


Figure 5 Activist activity in the US by industry as noted by Welund

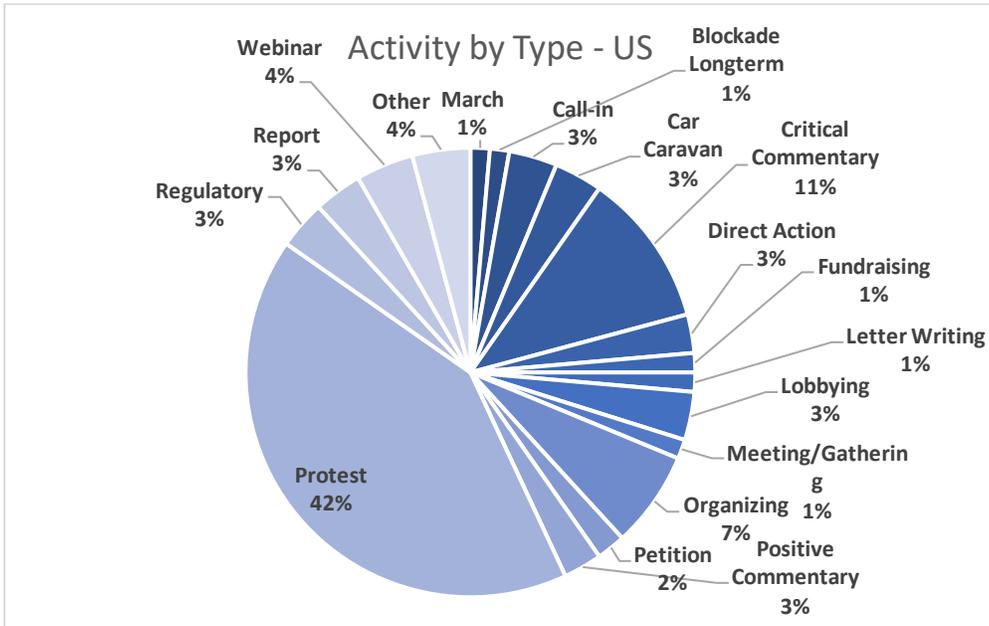


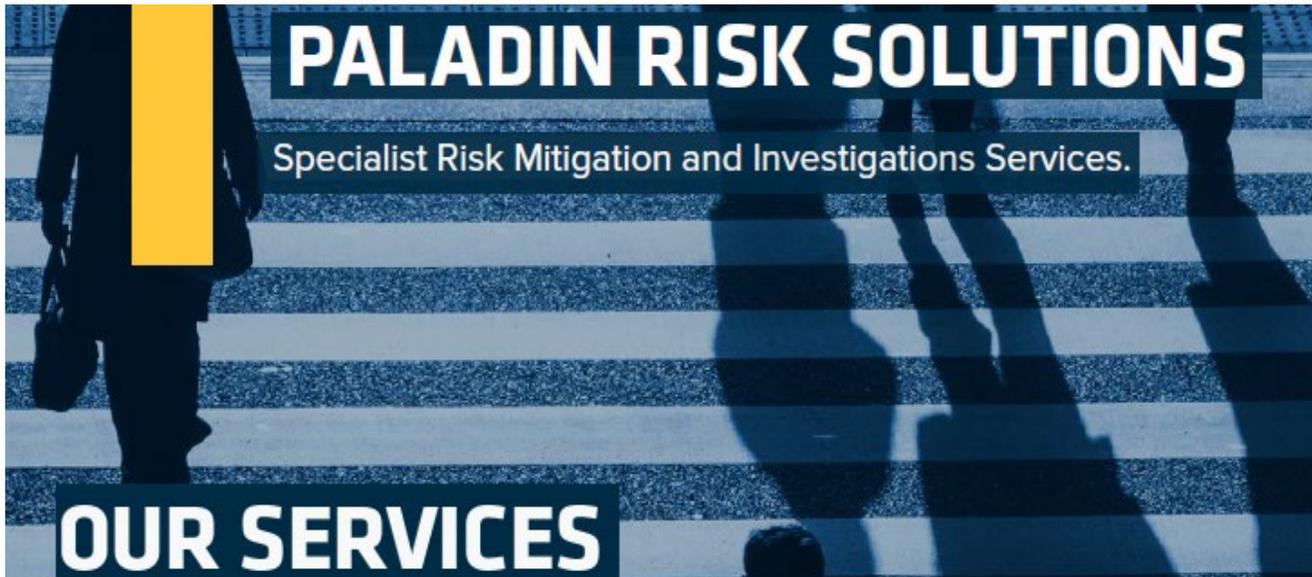
Figure 6 Activist activity in the US by type as noted by Welund North America.

End Report

Please submit feedback to:

 <p><i>Local Experts. Global Experience.</i></p>	<p>Scott McGregor <i>Head of Intelligence</i> Paladin Risk Solutions Inc</p>	<p>Mobile: 604-910-7781 Email: smcgregor@paladinrisksolutions.com Website: paladinrisksolutions.com</p>
---	--	--

5. PALADIN RISK SOLUTIONS - SERVICES



Paladin Risk Solutions is one of the largest, full-service risk mitigation and investigation providers in Canada. We are an industry leader in identifying and mitigating client risk by delivering consulting, intelligence, investigations, due diligence, cybercrime, OSINT and training solutions.

- Complete intelligence and advisory, from a local, national and international lens
- Risk assessments for extractive industries, airports, seaports, pipelines, water, buildings and assets
- Complete Security consulting and audits, technology audits, project oversight and commissioning
- Emergency management and business continuity programs, consulting and training
- Cybercrime and Digital Investigation, Data Privacy and Protection, Cyber Security Issues
- Executive Protection, threat management, and violence in the workplace
- Due diligence, AML, and Asset Tracing, on an international scale
- Background investigations and open source intelligence (OSINT)
- Surveillance and undercover operations
- Various training options as well as general investigative services



**Paladin
Risk Solutions**

www.paladinrisksolutions.com

Waterloo
CANADA'S
MOST
ADMIRED
CORPORATE
CULTURES

CANADA
**BEST
MANAGED
COMPANIES**

Platinum member