



INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Situational awareness for stakeholders and decision makers.



Report # 21-018

19 March 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. CURRENT SITUATION	2
2. GLOBAL	3
2.1 COVID UPDATE	3
2.2 COVID-19 World News	5
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	8
3.3 Canada Awareness	9
3.4 Canada – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism	10
4. USA	12
4.1 COVID UPDATE	12
4.2 COVID-19 USA News.....	13
4.3 USA Awareness.....	13
4.4 USA – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism (Provided by Welund).....	14
5. PALADIN RISK SOLUTIONS - SERVICES	18

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

Last week, on March 12th, 2021 a Mexican lawmaker rolled a joint on the floor of the lower house of Congress as the legislators were discussing the legalization of marijuana. The legislation was passed 316 to 129: the legalization of marijuana for growth, sale, and recreational use. The legislation now goes back to the Senate for review before landing on the desk of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who is expected to sign it. The possession of very small amounts of drugs has been legal in Mexico since 2009, but this step puts Mexico on the verge of establishing the world's largest legal cannabis market, a milestone in a country and region ravaged by the war on drugs.

Advocates say legalization will make Mexico safer by bringing cannabis out of the illegal economy. Still, experts say that Mexican cartels have diversified away from the drug in recent years to a wide range of activities including cocaine and fentanyl trafficking, extortion, and more. Between fiscal years 2015 and 2020, as more U.S. states legalized marijuana, seizures of the drug at the U.S.-Mexican border dropped about 83%. The International Crisis Group's Falko Ernst told the New York Times that while legalization is an important step, significantly reducing the activities of organized crime will require additional state policies and resources.

Investors are eyeing Mexico as it could be the next 'Cannabis rush'. "Mexico is positioning itself as the biggest market in the world at the country level, ahead of the United States and Canada," said Erick Ponce, president of the Cannabis Industry Promotion Group.

According to a January report from a cannabis data analysis company, New Frontier Data, the Mexican marijuana industry could be worth as much as \$3.2 billion dollars annually, and major cannabis companies like Canada's Canopy Growth are already eyeing the market. Earlier this December, In December, Canopy Growth announced it was closing five facilities and laying off more than 200 employees in a bid to speed up profitability.

However, many business analysts and economists are wary, and caution that the cannabis industry in Mexico could face significant challenges. Opening a licit market would matter more legally and symbolically than economically, they argue, citing relatively low domestic demand and little chance of exporting the product, as well as seemingly restrictive regulatory measures. "It's hard to see any obvious broad effects" on the Mexican economy, said Jeffrey Miron, an economist at Harvard University. "You will see a little bit of a bump in measured G.D.P.," he added, but "people claiming that it will be a big boost to the economy through legalization, I don't think that makes sense at all."

Canada may be a cautionary tale. In the lead-up to its own legalization in 2018, investors and analysts predicted a surge in cannabis cash, but the business has not been a rousing success. In the last quarter of 2020, the country's national statistics agency estimated that consumers spent \$918 million Canadian dollars (about \$736 million U.S. dollars) on legal weed products, considerably less than was predicted before legalization.

Official figures indicate that Canada, with a much smaller population, has many more regular users than Mexico: Prior to legalization, around 15% of Canadians said they had smoked marijuana in the past three months, according to the national statistics agency, a consumer base of more than 5 million potential users.

By contrast, a 2016 Mexican government study found that only about 1.2 % of the population aged 12 to 65 said they had smoked marijuana in the previous month, and 2.1 percent, about 1.8 million, in the previous year.

Earlier last week, after months of speculation, Morocco's cannabis legalization bill has finally been made public. Morocco is also seeking to legalize cannabis at a breakneck pace, with its legalization bill likely to receive approval

within a month or so. While it faces strong opposition from the Islamic Justice and Development Party, the nation's prime minister says he supports legalizing medical marijuana.

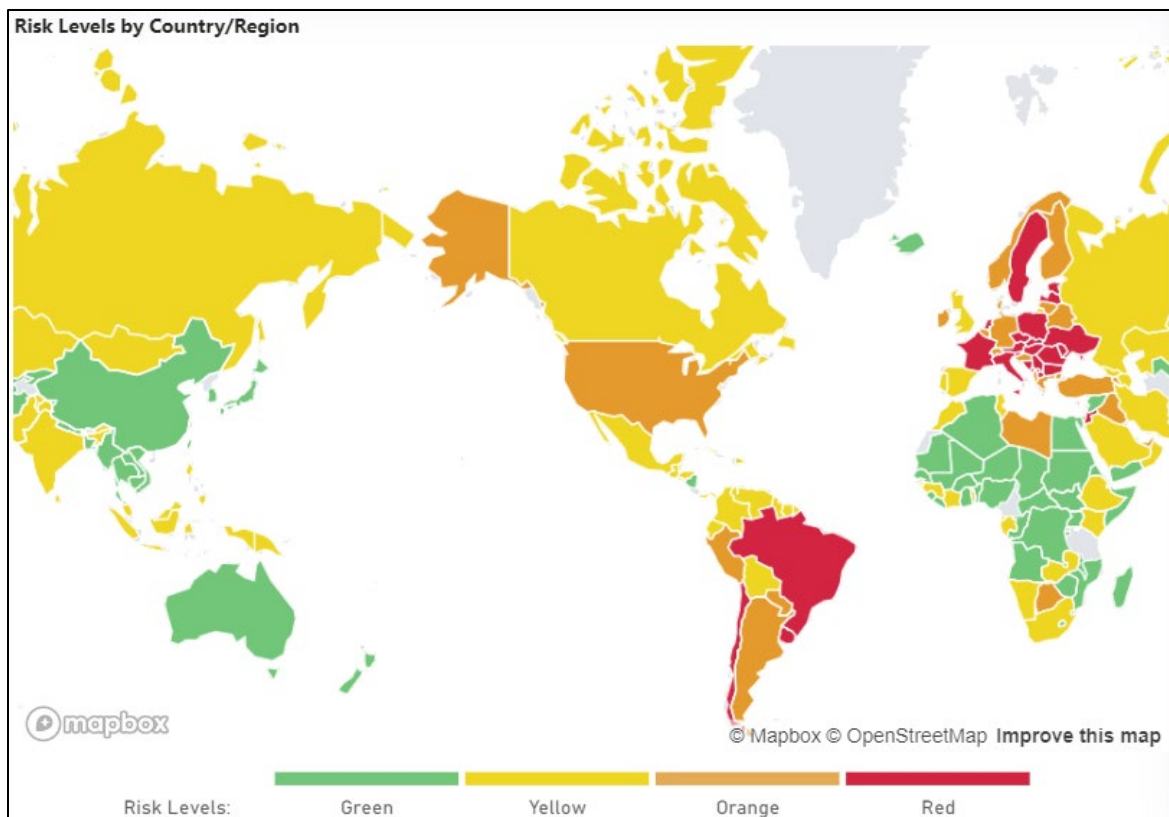
Legalization of marijuana has become a global trend over the past 5 years, as more and more countries are looking to raise additional taxes and clear out the illicit drug trade. The trend seems to be here to stay, as even traditionally 'conservative' state actors are softening their stance on the drug. While skeptics are pointing out that legalization is a long and challenging process involving many stakeholders, including the health authority, relevant regulatory bodies, producers, local governments, investors, among others, it is crucial for all parties to recognize the need for industry focused due diligence and best risk assessment practices.

2. GLOBAL

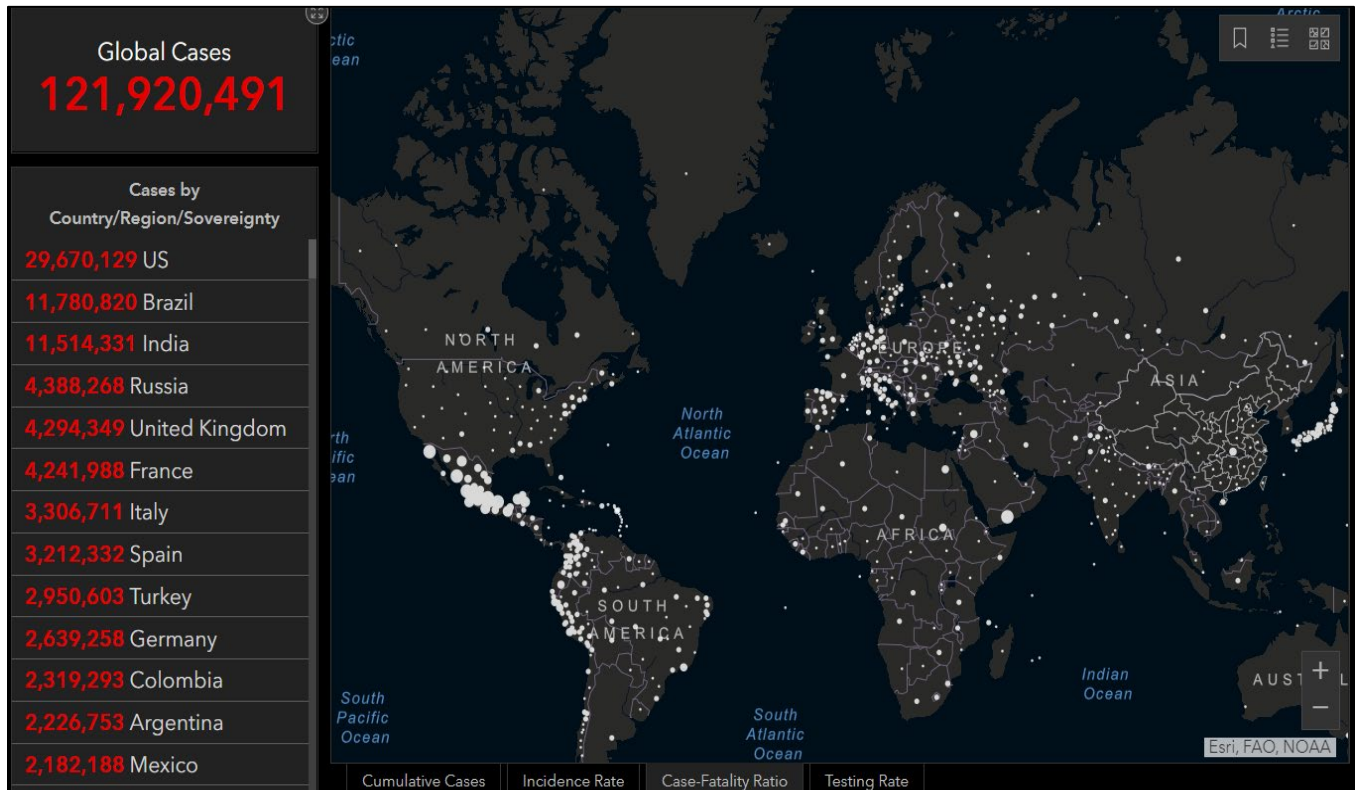
2.1 COVID UPDATE

Country/Region	United States
Daily new cases per 100k people (7d moving avg.)	17.0
Risk level	Orange
Total cases	29,631,797
Total deaths	537,667

Country/Region	Canada
Daily new cases per 100k people (7d moving avg.)	8.5
Risk level	Yellow
Total cases	915,868
Total deaths	22,519



#	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	122,513,338	+149,223	2,705,557	+2,982	98,756,513	21,051,268	89,305	15,717	347.1			
1	USA	30,360,639	+1,759	552,475	+5	22,523,803	7,284,361	9,208	91,342	1,662	385,682,397	1,160,352	332,383,837
2	France	4,181,607		91,679		278,263	3,811,665	4,246	63,962	1,402	58,498,845	894,800	65,376,448
3	Brazil	11,787,600		287,795		10,339,432	1,160,373	8,318	55,177	1,347	28,600,000	133,874	213,634,020
4	Belgium	822,801	+4,659	22,624	+24	55,125	745,052	534	70,775	1,946	10,325,566	888,180	11,625,538
5	UK	4,280,882		125,926		3,593,136	561,820	968	62,825	1,848	110,914,005	1,627,741	68,139,835
6	Italy	3,306,711		103,855		2,655,346	547,510	3,333	54,748	1,720	45,894,515	759,863	60,398,370
7	Poland	2,010,244	+25,998	48,807	+419	1,620,272	341,165	2,245	53,157	1,291	11,032,529	291,734	37,817,030
8	Russia	4,437,938	+9,699	94,267	+443	4,049,373	294,298	2,300	30,401	646	116,700,000	799,430	145,979,091
9	India	11,514,331	+386	159,405		11,083,679	271,247	8,944	8,286	115	231,370,546	166,497	1,389,642,025
10	Mexico	2,182,188	+6,726	196,606	+698	1,724,794	260,788	4,798	16,800	1,514	5,839,528	44,956	129,894,699
11	Ukraine	1,519,926	+15,850	29,515	+262	1,248,782	241,629	177	34,904	678	7,573,737	173,925	43,545,901
12	Czechia	1,449,696	+10,576	24,331	+101	1,216,950	208,415	1,992	135,193	2,269	10,510,686	980,187	10,723,142
13	Ireland	228,796		4,566		23,364	200,866	83	45,971	917	3,786,972	760,903	4,976,942
14	Iran	1,786,265	+7,620	61,649	+68	1,528,694	195,922	3,879	21,075	727	12,039,329	142,048	84,755,570
15	Spain	3,212,332		72,910		2,945,446	193,976	1,997	68,687	1,559	41,114,319	879,118	46,767,694



Global Case to Fatality Ratios

2.2 COVID-19 World News

- [Africa's COVID-19 vaccination gains pace, nearly 7 million doses given](#)
- [Europe Falls Behind in Efforts to Track Covid-19 Variants](#)
- [Boris Johnson says he will get Oxford-AstraZeneca jab on Friday](#)
- [Germany reports highest daily COVID cases for two months](#)
- [Brazil records more than 90,000 new COVID cases in a single day](#)

The Brazilian health ministry said on Wednesday that 2,648 additional deaths had been recorded over the previous 24-hour period, bringing the country's total to more than 282,000 deaths – second only to the United States. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is facing mounting pressure to get the surging pandemic under control as public discontent over his handling of the crisis is growing. Earlier this week, the far-right leader named a new health minister – the country's fourth since the start of the pandemic last year.

- [Tanzania's COVID-skeptic President John Magufuli dies at 61](#)
- [Covid vaccine: UK supply hit by India delivery delay](#)
- [EU's drug regulator backs 'safe and effective' AstraZeneca vaccine](#)

Germany, France, and other European nations announced plans to resume using AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday after EU and British regulators moved to shore up confidence in the shot, saying its benefits outweigh the risks. Reports of rare brain blood clots had prompted more than a dozen nations to suspend use of the shot, the latest challenge for AstraZeneca's ambition to produce a "vaccine for the world", as the global death toll from the coronavirus passes 2.8 million. France said it would resume use of the vaccine, with Prime Minister Jean Castex saying he would receive the shot himself on Friday afternoon. Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi said Italy would do the same, and that his government's priority remained to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible. Spain said it was evaluating a possible resumption, while Cyprus, Latvia and Lithuania said they would restart administering the vaccine.

"The EMA's (verdict) now provides clarity about the safety of this vaccine, which should now be vaccinated at a high rate after this safety stop in order to efficiently prevent the actual risk, i.e. sometimes serious medical harm from Covid-19," said Clemens Wendtner, head of infectious diseases at Munich clinic Schwabing. The drug maker's own review covering more than 17 million people who have received its shot in the EU and Britain found no evidence of increased risk of blood clots. The World Health Organization this week also reaffirmed its support for the shot.

2.3 Global Awareness

- [Alexei Navalny broke his silence from Russian prison, describing 24/7 surveillance and being woken up every hour](#)
 - [Uber's UK drivers to get paid vacation, pensions following Supreme Court ruling](#)
- Uber is reclassifying its 70,000 drivers in the United Kingdom after the UK Supreme Court upheld a ruling last month that they should be classified as workers and not independent contractors. The company said Tuesday that as "workers" — a classification unique to employment law in the UK that falls short of "employee" — drivers will be entitled to minimum wage, vacation time, and a pension. Uber did not apply the changes to its Uber Eats food delivery workers, only ride-hail drivers. Uber said the minimum wage will be based on engaged time after a trip is accepted and after expenses — a definition that received push back from drivers on Wednesday. The court determined last month that drivers are working from the time they turn on Uber's app, rather than only when transporting passengers as the company has argued.
- [Russia and Iran tried to interfere with 2020 election, U.S. intelligence agencies say](#)

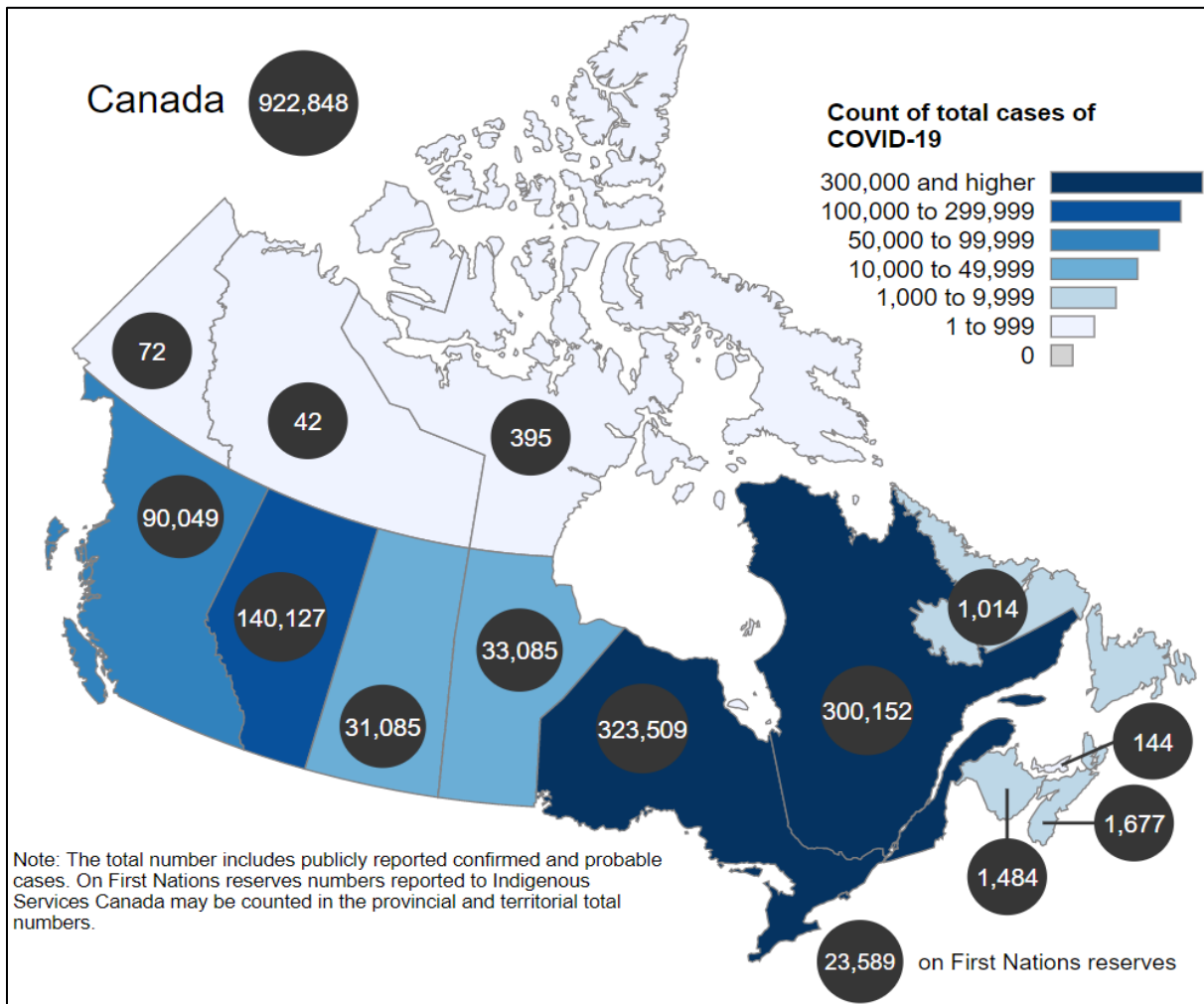
- [Russia calls back US ambassador as it ponders 'irreversible degradation' after Biden brands Putin a 'killer'](#)
In an interview with ABC that aired Wednesday, Biden said Putin "will pay a price" for his efforts to undermine the 2020 US election following a landmark American intelligence assessment that found the Russian government meddled in the 2020 election with the aim of "denigrating" Biden's candidacy. Putin himself responded Thursday saying, "I would like to offer President Biden [the opportunity] to continue our discussion, but on condition that we'll do so what is called live, online. Without anything pre-recorded, in an open and direct discussion."
"It seems to me, it would be interesting both for Russian people and for the US people, as well as for many other countries," Putin added. On Wednesday, Russia pulled its ambassador to the US after Biden called his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, "a killer." Although the Russian Foreign Ministry said Ambassador Anatoly Antonov was called back to ensure bilateral ties did not degrade irreparably, the US made no immediate efforts to remedy the damage caused by Biden's remarks.
- [Spain approves euthanasia law, becoming the fifth country in the world to regulate the practice](#)
- [UK companies face curbs on dividend and bonus payments](#)
- [FCC cracks down on robocalls with record \\$225 million fine](#)

2.4 Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism

- [Thailand protests collapse as leaders languish in jail](#)
- [Hundreds protest outside UK Parliament and police headquarters for third night](#)
Hundreds of people protested outside Parliament and London's police headquarters for a third consecutive night on Tuesday, angered by the killing of Sarah Everard and government plans to tighten the law on demonstrations. Boris Johnson is set to pass a new law banning protests that are noisy or cause "annoyance." The law would limit the right to protest outside Parliament and carry a max sentence of 10 years.
Members of the UK Parliament will debate the Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts Bill at its second reading in the House of Commons on Tuesday. It would give police officers significantly greater powers to crack down on protests. The legislation comes amid public outcry over the London Metropolitan Police's heavy-handed response this past weekend to a vigil in London for Sarah Everard, who was abducted and killed last week while walking home from a friend's house.
- ['We are hungry': Lebanese protest worsening economic crisis](#)
- [Myanmar protests: Ousted speaker in hiding vows to continue 'revolution'](#)

3. CANADA

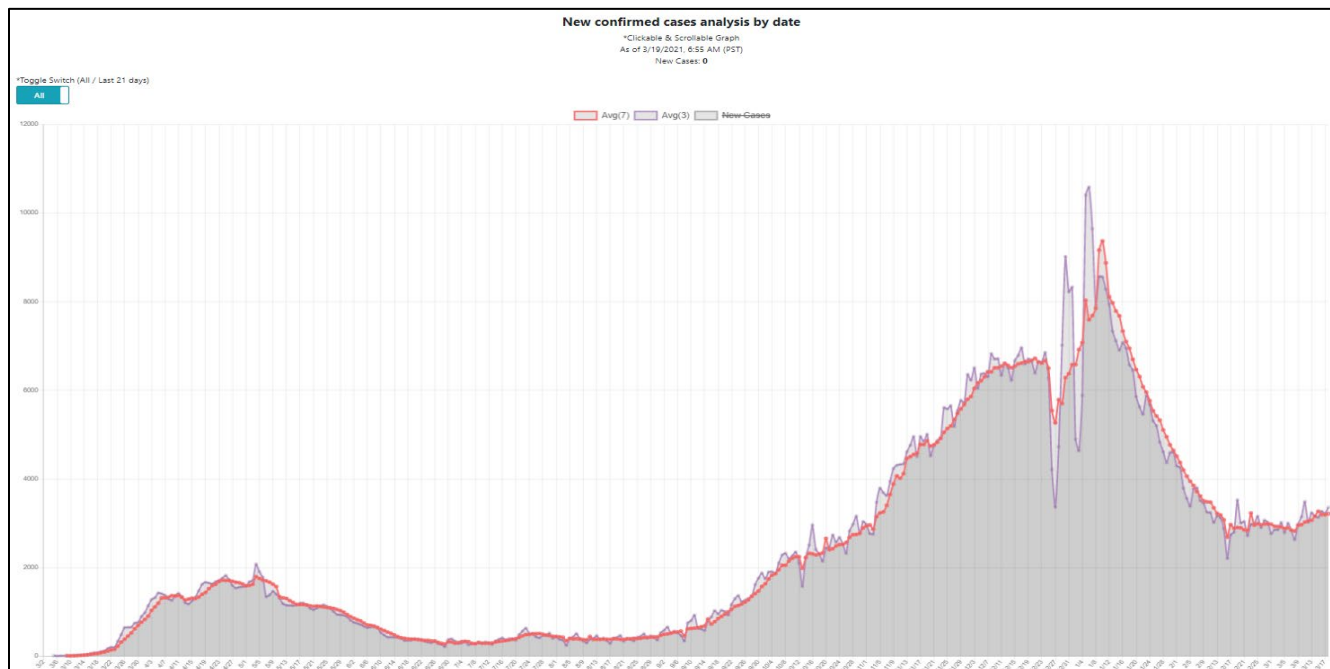
3.1 COVID UPDATE



Prov.	Total Confirmed	Total Deaths	Total Recovered	Total Active
Total	922,853	22,590	867,983	32,280
BC	90,049	1,419	83,613	5,017
ON	323,509	7,202	303,493	12,814
QC	300,152	10,576	282,693	6,883
AB	140,127	1,957	133,086	5,084
MB	33,085	918	31,078	1,089
NB	1,484	30	1,405	49
SK	31,085	411	29,392	1,282
PEI	144	0	140	4
NL	1,014	6	970	38
NS	1,677	66	1,594	17
YT	72	1	71	0
NT	47	0	46	1
NU	395	4	389	2
✚	13	0	13	0
Rate of change	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Public Health Canada - Reported numbers
Confirmed cases include presumptive cases
https://www150.communiquedecanada.gc.ca/2020/04/2020-04-20-01.html

Prov.	Total Test	Total Waiting	Total Hosp	Total ICU
Total	26,779,475	-	-	-
BC	2,083,522	-	286	85
ON	11,925,298	32,330	730	304
QC	7,120,645	-	519	101
AB	3,564,100	-	264	43
MB	557,277	-	60	11
NB	243,016	-	1	0
SK	620,536	-	136	27
PEI	114,367	-	-	-
NL	121,348	-	2	0
NS	396,082	-	1	0
YT	8,277	15	-	-
NT	15,459	35	0	0
NU	9,548	328	0	0
Rate of change	0.0%	-	-	-



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

3.2 COVID-19 Canada News

- [Front-line workers in B.C., including teachers, grocery store staff to begin receiving vaccines in April](#)
- [EU threatens to halt COVID vaccine exports as Canada prepares for big deliveries](#)
- [More than 3,516,197 doses of approved COVID-19 vaccines have been administered across Canada](#)

In total, 4,773,170 doses of COVID-19 vaccines (including Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech and AstraZeneca) have been delivered to the provinces for administration. As of today, 74.7% of doses delivered to the provinces have been administered. The Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines require two doses, a number of weeks apart, for full efficacy. Consequently, we report both the total number of doses administered, and the total number of Canadians who have been fully vaccinated. As of today, more than

2,950,647 Canadians have received at least one dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine. 615,681 Canadians are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, having received both required doses.

- [Moderna, feds say vaccine shipments to Canada not reduced, will arrive by end of month](#)
- [B.C Premier Horgan sees 'more flexibility' for the vaccinated as B.C. reports 498 new cases](#)

Premier John Horgan said he expects a “relaxing” of health restrictions as more British Columbians get vaccinated, and that people who have received a COVID-19 vaccine will be able to participate in more activities than those who have not yet been immunized. “We will be making changes as more people get vaccinated,” Horgan said at a news conference on Wednesday. “Those that have been vaccinated will have a bit more flexibility, of course, because they’re less risk to the people around them, and the people around them are less risk to them.”

- [U.S. to send 1.5 million 'releasable doses' of AstraZeneca vaccine to Canada](#)

3.3 Canada Awareness

- [New Brunswick monitoring more than 40 cases of unknown neurological disease](#)
- [Rogers-Shaw merger could mean higher prices for consumers, experts warn](#)

News that the long-anticipated merger between Rogers Communications and Shaw Communications might finally happen evoked starkly different reactions from investors, on one side, and consumer advocates on the other. The two companies said Monday they have reached an agreement for Rogers to acquire Shaw in a deal valued at \$26 billion, including debt. The deal would combine Canada’s two largest cable companies as well as their wireless networks. Some experts see this behavior as anti-competitive and anti-consumer.

- [B.C. auto insurance rebate cheques delayed after ‘criminal’ cyberattack: minister](#)

A “criminal” cyberattack will delay COVID-19 rebate cheques that were supposed to be in the mail this week, says the minister responsible for British Columbia’s public auto insurance agency. Mike Farnworth said Thursday the Insurance Corporation of B.C. discovered last weekend the private Ontario company it hired to print and distribute the rebate cheques was the victim of a cybersecurity breach. “Obviously, it is a criminal attack of a criminal nature,” he said at a news conference. Farnworth said an investigation is underway, which will involve ICBC working with the Kanata, Ont., company it hired to print and distribute the rebate cheques and other cybersecurity investigators. Ultimately, the government may not have final say over the decision, because the Competition Bureau is an independent agency. Its decisions can be appealed to the courts, but there is no way for the government itself to change or overturn them, Lawford said.

- [A woman is dead following an early-morning shooting Wednesday in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside](#)
- [China to begin trials of two Canadians — Spavor on Friday, Kovrig on Monday](#)
- [Federal assisted dying bill passed by Senate just over a week before 'final' court deadline](#)
- [Crime Stoppers warns tens of billions of dollars in counterfeit goods imported into Canada every year](#)

Between \$20 and \$30 billion in counterfeit products move through Canada every year, according to the Canadian Anti-Counterfeiting Network (CACN). “A lot of these items are sold in markets, a lot of them are sold on the black market,” Linda Annis, executive director of Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers said at a press conference. “(If) you see a street vendor and they’ve got really inexpensive stuff – it’s likely counterfeit.

3.4 Canada – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism

Activist Activity in Canada: 25 February - 4 March 2021

Overview:

During the week of 11-18 March 2021, the majority of activist activity noted by Welund in Canada took place in the government sector (45%), followed by law enforcement (19%). Protests made up the majority of activity (30%), followed by critical commentary and webinars (13% each).

Anti-Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX) campaigns remained a focus of Canadian activist groups. Campaigners executed a series of protests, blockades, and direct actions in Vancouver and Burnaby targeting government officials, critical infrastructure, and construction sites. Additionally, campaign groups focused on targeting insurance providers and Canadian banks for investing in, financing, or providing coverage for fossil fuel infrastructure projects, especially for the TMX and Line 3 pipeline projects.

Protests:

An anti-TMX activist locked himself onto a tree cutter at Holmes Creek Camp in Burnaby, BC. Activist groups claimed TMX security forcibly removed the activist before calling the RCMP. They added that the protester sustained injuries during the removal by TMX security, for which he was transported to hospital for treatment before being arrested by RCMP. Campaigners also protested outside the RCMP detachment in support of the land defender while he was being processed.

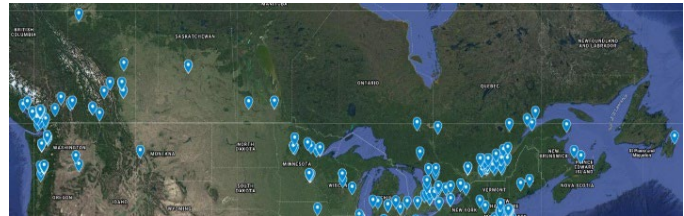


Figure 1: Past and upcoming protest activity as noted by Welund between 10-24 March 2021

The 'lock-on' happened days after campaign groups held a protest at the Holmes Creek Camp to oppose preparations by TMX construction crews to remove trees along the construction route. During the protest, organizers took supporters on a tour of the 'tree-sit' occupation, which has been occupied for almost three months.

Campaign groups in Vancouver also held a series of solidarity actions opposing the TMX and Line 3 pipelines. Members of the Braided Warriors blockaded a railroad near the Renfrew Skytrain to oppose Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline. The activists claimed Vancouver Police 'violently' arrested several protesters to disburse the blockade. In response, activists protested outside of the Vancouver Courthouse in support of those arrested. Additionally, anti-TMX activists protested outside of the office of Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson. The group 'presented' Wilkinson's staff with a list of ten demands opposing the pipeline project and calling for the development of renewable energy solutions.

Outlook:

Opposition against fossil fuel infrastructure projects in Canada will continue in the upcoming week. Youth environmental group 'Sustainabiliteens' has organized a day of action in Vancouver on 19 March to oppose TMX. Major Canadian banks have also been targeted with ongoing fossil fuel divestment campaigns. Stop the Money Pipeline has called for direct actions against Line 3 financiers in Canada. The group called on supporters to engage

in an email campaign targeting the CEOs of all major Canadian banks demanding they divest from Line 3 and other fossil fuel projects.

A cohort of anti-lockdown groups with chapters in multiple countries have announced a partnership with the 'Worldwide Rally for Freedom and Democracy' on 20 March. Organizing for the day of action has increased over the past week since the partnership between the individual groups and the broader movement was established. Confirmed events have been announced across North, Central, and South America, as well as in Europe, the Asia-Pacific Region, and in parts of Africa.

The 'Global Climate Strike' organized by Fridays for Future is expected to host a series of solidarity actions globally on 19 March. Extinction Rebellion Vancouver has updated its planned march to Victoria set to be held on 16-19 April to accommodate its 'Spring Rebellion' on 1 May. The group is also planning to 'occupy' the Cambie Bridge in Vancouver on 27 March.

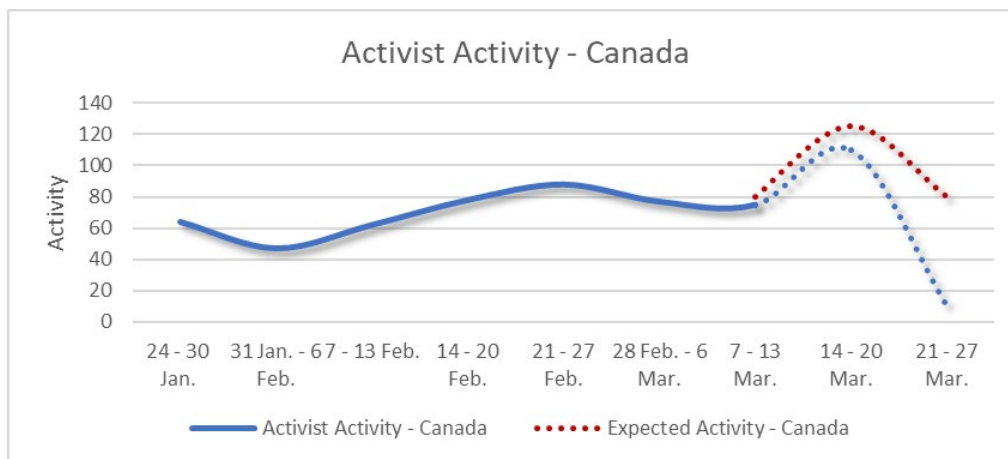


Figure 2 Total activist activity in Canada as noted by Welund.

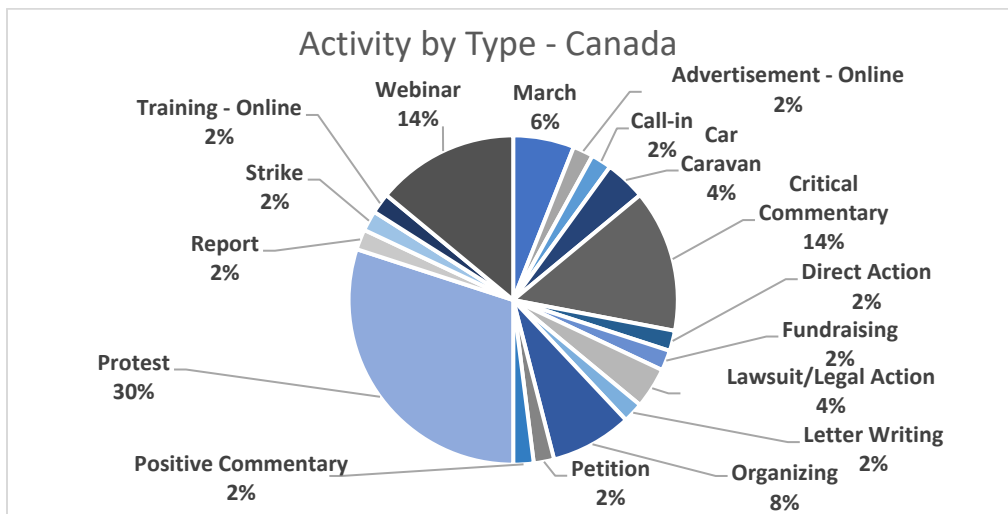


Figure 3 Activist activity in Canada by type as noted by Welund

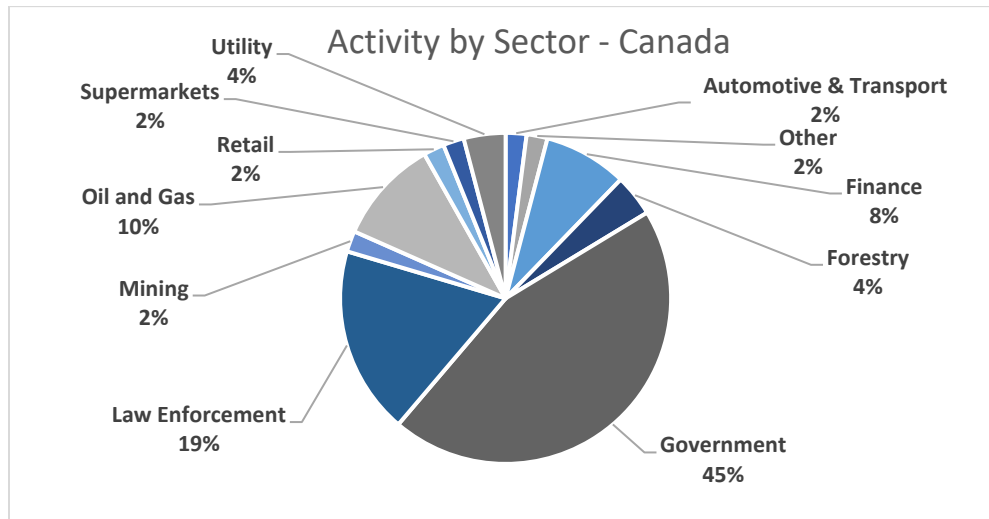
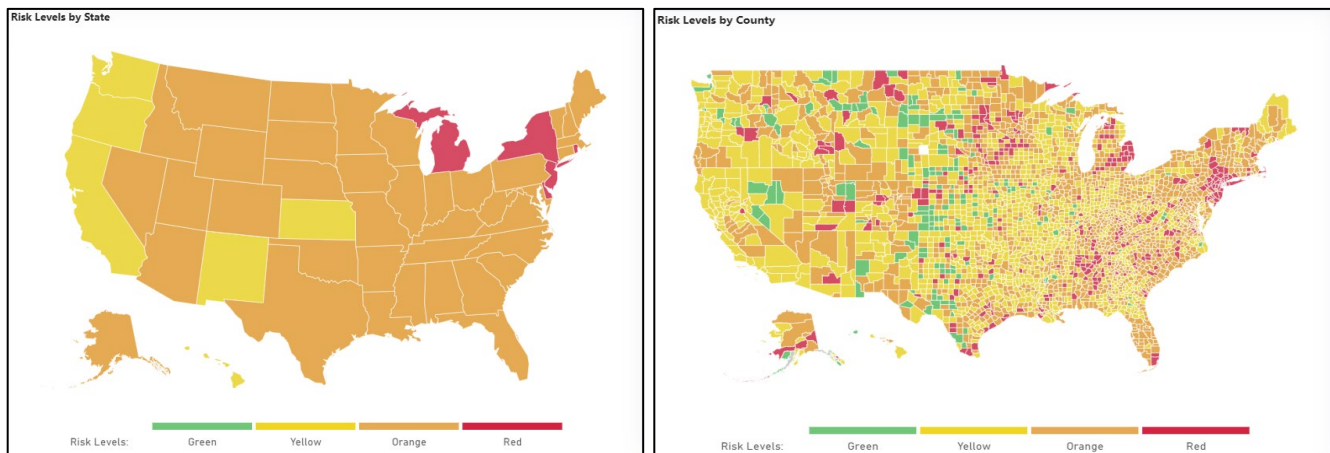


Figure 4 Activist activity in Canada by sector as noted by Welund.

4. USA

4.1 COVID UPDATE



#	USA State	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Recovered	Active Cases	Tot Cases/ 1M pop	Deaths/ 1M pop	Total Tests	Tests/ 1M pop	Population
	USA Total	30,360,639	+1,759	552,475	+5	22,523,803	7,284,361	91,723	1,669	385,682,397	1,165,194	
1	California	3,635,598		56,824		1,914,453	1,664,321	92,012	1,438	51,601,716	1,305,968	39,512,223
2	New York	1,811,288		49,539		932,935	828,814	93,108	2,547	42,015,555	2,159,787	19,453,561
3	Florida	1,994,117		32,613		1,329,665	631,839	92,846	1,518	24,357,867	1,134,098	21,477,737
4	Virginia	600,550		10,182		49,395	540,973	70,359	1,193	8,043,259	942,328	8,535,519
5	Georgia	1,040,817		18,420		596,487	425,910	98,029	1,735	8,058,303	758,970	10,617,423
6	Maryland	396,746		8,113		9,787	378,846	65,625	1,342	8,394,319	1,388,482	6,045,680
7	Kentucky	419,149		5,504		48,964	364,681	93,818	1,232	4,739,044	1,060,741	4,467,673
8	New Jersey	853,349		24,076		627,532	201,741	96,074	2,711	11,474,078	1,291,807	8,882,190
9	Alabama	510,048		10,391		310,742	188,915	104,024	2,119	2,492,531	508,349	4,903,185
10	Washington	356,063		5,230		176,006	174,827	46,759	687	5,630,802	739,446	7,614,893
11	Missouri	568,926		8,914		386,465	173,547	92,698	1,452	5,866,988	955,936	6,137,428
12	Indiana	675,388		12,907		520,198	142,283	100,322	1,917	8,556,561	1,270,987	6,732,219
13	Colorado	446,580		6,142		299,195	141,243	77,548	1,067	2,662,341	462,313	5,758,736
14	Rhode Island	132,616		2,594		8,124	121,898	125,185	2,449	3,301,005	3,116,034	1,059,361
15	Texas	2,749,440		47,257		2,590,824	111,359	94,822	1,630	24,507,017	845,190	28,995,881

4.2 COVID-19 USA News

- [U.S. COVID-19 deaths fall 22% last week, daily vaccinations set record](#)

The United States reported a 22% decline in deaths from COVID-19 last week, while vaccinations accelerated to a record 2.4 million shots per day, according to a Reuters analysis of state, county, and CDC data. As of Sunday, 21% of the U.S. population has received at least one dose of a vaccine, up from 18% a week ago. About 11% has received two doses, up from 9%, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Air travel on Friday hit its highest level since the pandemic started, she said, as warmer weather prompted many people to go on spring break. Nineteen out of 50 states reported more new infections last week compared with the previous seven days, up from 13 states in the prior week, according to the Reuters analysis. New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island had the highest rates of new infections per 100,000 residents.

- [U.S. to ramp up COVID-19 screening in schools as part of \\$12 billion testing effort](#)
- [Florida spring breakers 'have forgotten that there's a pandemic,' Miami Beach mayor says](#)
- [Biden says US on pace to hit his administration's goal of 100 million Covid-19 vaccine shots on Friday](#)
- [COVID-19 cases in the U.S. have flattened: Here's why that may predict another surge](#)

4.3 USA Awareness

- [Georgia spa shootings: Suspect officially charged after 8 people killed at 3 businesses; most victims were Asian](#)
Eight people, six of them women of Asian descent, were shot dead in a string of attacks on Atlanta-area day spas on Tuesday, and a man suspected of carrying out all of the shootings was arrested hours later in southern Georgia, police said. Police said the suspect, Robert Aaron Long, 21, of Woodstock, Georgia, told authorities his actions were not racially motivated, and he frequented some of the spas where the shootings happened.

Cherokee County Sheriff's Office spokesman Capt. Jay Baker said Long viewed the spas, which are all listed on a prominent illicit massage parlor matching website, as "a temptation that he wanted to eliminate."

The violence in Georgia unfolded days after U.S. President Joe Biden used a nationally televised speech to condemn a recent surge in hate crimes and discrimination against Asian-Americans. Civil rights groups have suggested that former President Donald Trump contributed to the trend by repeatedly referring to the coronavirus as the "China virus" because it first emerged there.

- [Sheriff defends captain for saying spa suspect had 'really bad day'](#)
- [Honda halts production at most US, Canadian auto plants](#)
- [Fed sees stronger economy and higher inflation, but no rate hikes](#)
- [Putin offers Biden public talks after U.S. president says he thinks he is a killer](#)
- [Biden defends move not to punish Saudi crown prince over Khashoggi killing](#)

Joe Biden has defended his decision to waive any punishment for Saudi Arabia's crown prince in the murder of a US-based journalist, claiming that acting against the Saudi royal would have been diplomatically unprecedented for the United States. Biden overstated the US relationship with Saudi Arabia. The United States has no treaty binding itself with Saudi Arabia, and the kingdom is not one of the Arab countries designated as a major non-Nato ally. The US often refers to the kingdom as a strategic partner because of its oil production, its status as a regional counterbalance to Iran and its counterterrorism cooperation. Experts note that to the US, Saudi Arabia is an important strategic partner in the Middle East. Condemning them and pressuring them to behave is fine but going too far has the potential of driving them to Russia or China, which the US does not want. The Biden administration has already put a lot of pressure on the crown prince by publishing the classified reports linking him to the murder. Going even further by directly sanctioning him has the real risk of irreparably damaging the bilateral relationship.

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

Activist Activity in the US: 25 February – 4 March

Overview:

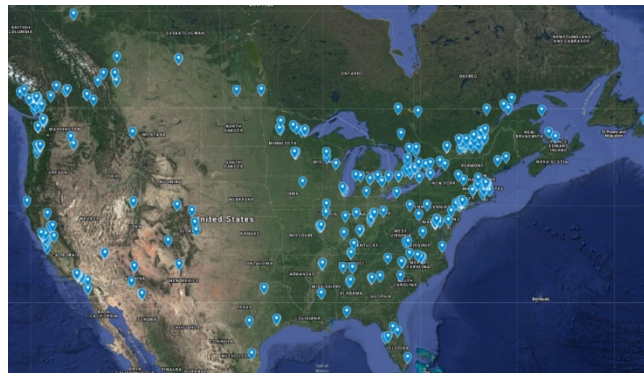
During the week of 11-18 March 2021, the majority of activist activity in the US noted by Welund took place in the government sector (50%), followed by law enforcement (13%) and oil and gas (10%). Protests made up most activity (65%), followed by webinars (5%) and critical commentary (4%).

Stop the Money Pipeline's (STMP) 'Defund Line 3' campaign continues to target the financial institutions invested in Enbridge and the Line 3 pipeline. JPMorgan Chase, Citi, Bank of America, TD Bank, and Union Bank/MUFG were identified as the primary targets.

Protests:

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

13-14 March saw numerous Black Lives Matter protests to mark the anniversary of Breonna Taylor's death. Analysts expect the movement to organize days of action around prominent anniversaries throughout the year.



Past and upcoming protest activity as noted by Welund between 10-24 March

Protests and direct actions have continued in northern Minnesota where construction of Line 3 is underway, most recently on 12 March, when blockaded a road with a boat. The action was “in conjunction with” XR’s week of action. Jane Fonda attended an anti-Line 3 gathering to garner publicity and focus attention to the fight against the pipeline.

Over the past week Portland has been the site of violent protests. There is a risk these may mark a return to the prolonged and violent protests in the city following the death of George Floyd in May 2020. On 11 March, a protest that began as an anti-Line 3 event against Chase and Wells Fargo devolved into a violent and destructive protest after activists moved their protest to the Hatfield Courthouse in downtown Portland. On 12 March, police in Portland detained at least 100 protesters – and charged at least 13 – during the second consecutive night of violent protests that have erupted in the city. On 15 March, anarchists reported that “revolutionaries set fire to the federal courthouse in Portland, in renewed clashes between demonstrators and federal police.”

Outlook:

Analysts are watching how the vaccine rollout and the ‘re-opening’ of some US states will affect in-person and anti-vaxx protests.

Welund expects additional actions against banks to continue throughout the month of March as part of the Defund Line 3 campaign.

On 19 March 2021, climate activists will hold protests around the world as part of a ‘global climate strike’. The day of action will see protests focusing on local, state, and federal government buildings. Financial institutions may be a secondary target.

On 20 March, Support Alabama Amazon Union (SAAU) will hold an international day of action to support Amazon workers voting to unionize at the company's BHM1 Fulfillment Center in Bessemer, Alabama. Protest actions have been scheduled in several cities across the US, either at Amazon warehouses or distribution facilities, as well as at Amazon-owned Whole Foods.

On 20 March 2021, prominent anti-lockdown campaign groups from around the world will participate in the ‘Worldwide Rally for Freedom’ (WRFF) day-of-action against covid-19 restrictions. In North America, confirmed

solidarity protests by well-known anti-lockdown groups have been organized in most major cities in nearly all states

On 22 March, campaigners in the US and Canada have planned events and actions to mark 'World Water Day.' Two events in Bagley, Minnesota and Chicago will focus on opposing Line 3.

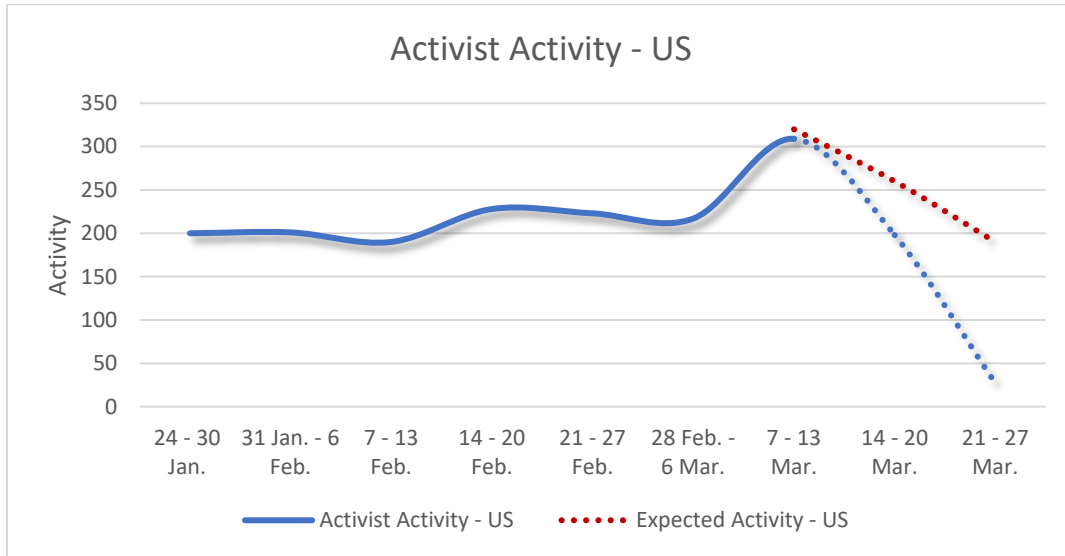


Figure 5 Total activist activity in the US as noted by Welund.

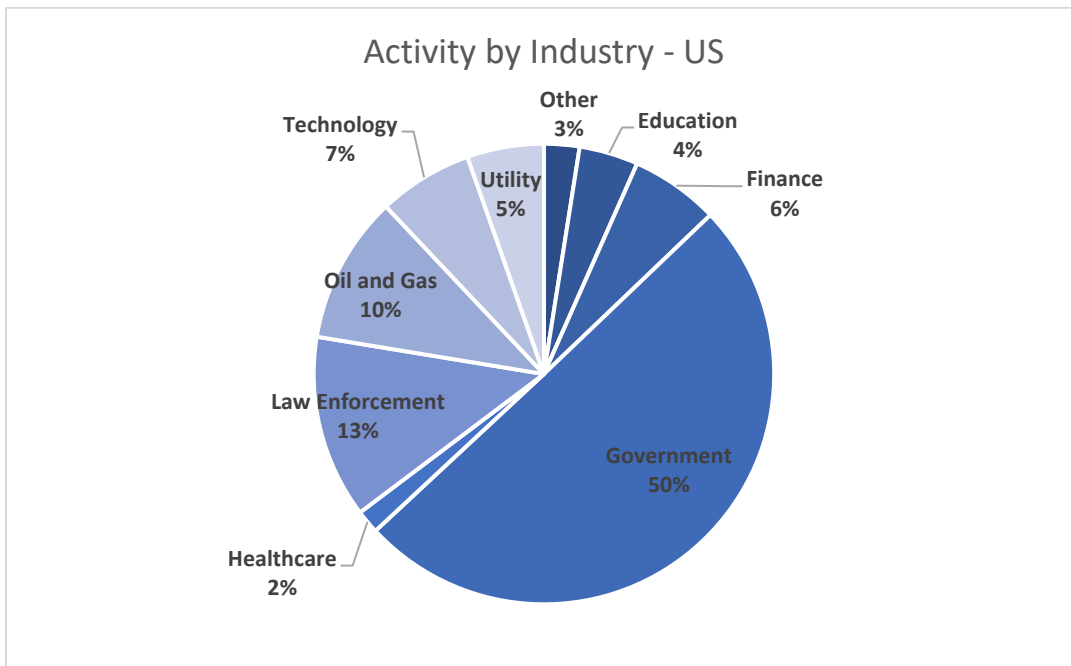


Figure 6 Activist activity in the US by industry as noted by Welund

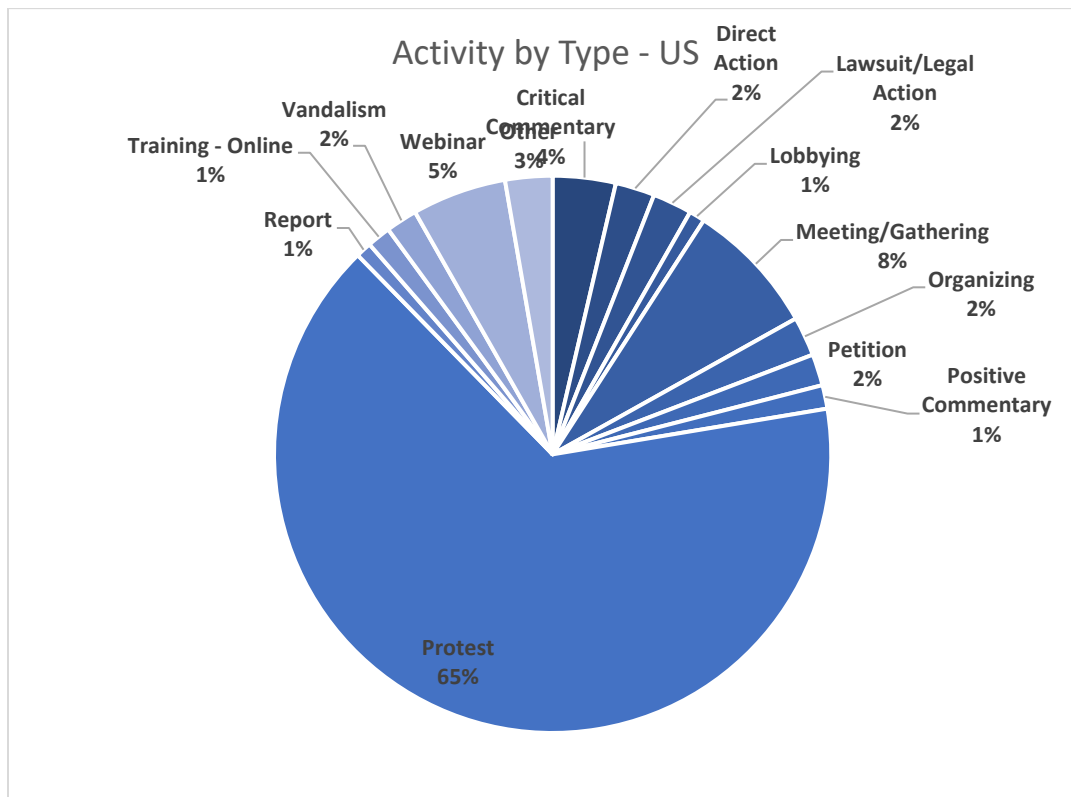



Figure 7 Activist activity in the US by type as noted by Welund.

End Report

Please submit feedback to:



Scott McGregor
Head of Intelligence
Paladin Risk Solutions Inc

Mobile: [604-910-7781](tel:604-910-7781)
Email: smcgregor@paladinrisksolutions.com
Website: paladinrisksolutions.com

Local Experts.
Global Experience.

5. PALADIN RISK SOLUTIONS - SERVICES



PALADIN RISK SOLUTIONS

Specialist Risk Mitigation and Investigations Services.

OUR 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
ADMIRABLE
CORPORATE
CULTURES

 **BEST
MANAGED
COMPANIES**
Platinum member