



# INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Situational awareness for stakeholders and decision makers.



Report # 20-005  
18 December 2020

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## 1. CURRENT SITUATION

China's power and actions have recently been highlighted in the headlines, with the recent changes in world powerhouses due to COVID-19 and its effects. However, the western world has also opened to the threat that China presents, as many are still suspicious as to the origins of COVID-19 and the Chinese government's initial global response to the pandemic. China and Australia's relationship is noteworthy as it was previously based on durable relations and trade treaties although the relationship was deteriorating even before COVID-19; subsequently, causing a mutual state of suspicion due to bilateral tensions. Since the pandemic started, the relationship has seen open hostility and even Chinese coercion. China has blocked some Australia goods, issued threatening remarks and called Australia the gum on the sole of its shoe. China also posted a list of grievances against Australia and arrested an Australian journalist on ambiguous security related allegations. China's November 2020 list of grievances has included Australia's ban on the 5G Huawei equipment, revoking of visas for numerous Chinese journalists and academics, and Australia's rejection of Chinese investment in agriculture and infrastructure. Additionally, Australia has passed a bill allowing its foreign minister to veto any sub-national government agreement with state institutions of other countries. Although China is not specifically named, it is believed this is related to a previous agreement between the State of Victoria and China, which the Federal Australian government did not support. China then issued several retaliatory economic measures, including implementing tariffs on Australia barley and wine, targeting lobster, cotton and copper exports, deferring shipments of coal, and discouraging Chinese nationals from going to Australia for tourism and study. In response, Australia has refused to cede, despite having 5% to 10% of its exports now being subject to China's retaliatory measures, believed to range from \$15 to \$20 billion USD.

China is also using propaganda to make Australia look barbaric by referencing when Australia identified a war crime by its military in Afghanistan. Unapologetically, the Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesperson tweeted an image generated by a computer which depicts a bloodied knife being held by an Australian soldier to a child's throat. When Australia's Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, asked for an apology - China rejected the request. It appears that both the Australian government and its opposition, are both opposed to the foreign interference by China, and both appear to support dissociating from China with regards to economic and social matters.

Globally, we are seeing democracies facing new risks in 2021. Human rights have been surpassed during the pandemic in both democratic and non-democratic countries. A record of 274 journalists have been imprisoned in 2020 for covering civil unrest or mishandling of the pandemic by governments. The countries which committed most of the arrests are China, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Additionally, it is believed that conditions for democracy or human rights have worsened in about 80 countries, a globally substantial number. Media restrictions were seen in India and the USA, as well as non democratic countries such as Russia and China. Other democratic countries, such as Hungary, provided themselves with emergency powers due to the pandemic which do not have an end, many of which are non-democratic in nature. It is unclear whether these powers will be easily removed once the pandemic is no longer a threat necessitating such measures.

It is likely that many governments will try to hold onto power despite possible improvements in the pandemic, such as vaccination programs and economic recoveries. If the public holds a perception of its government holding onto power without the need due to improving pandemic conditions, it is likely that public protests will continue, especially as recovery may not be equal across every country and every citizen. As emergency benefit programs are no longer offered but unemployment and financial difficulties are still rampant, it is believed that some authoritarian countries will begin a concentrated effort against the protesters, to hold onto their powers.

A recent report by the Canadian Civilian Review and Complaints Commission found that the RCMP was mostly reasonable when conducting monitoring of individuals protesting the Northern Gateway Pipeline between 2012 and 2013. However, one concern the independent complaints body had was retaining data on peaceful demonstrators, including creating profiles for each. Further concerns include systemic discrimination and racism, and how the RCMP conducts itself with specific groups which may be more represented amongst demonstrators.

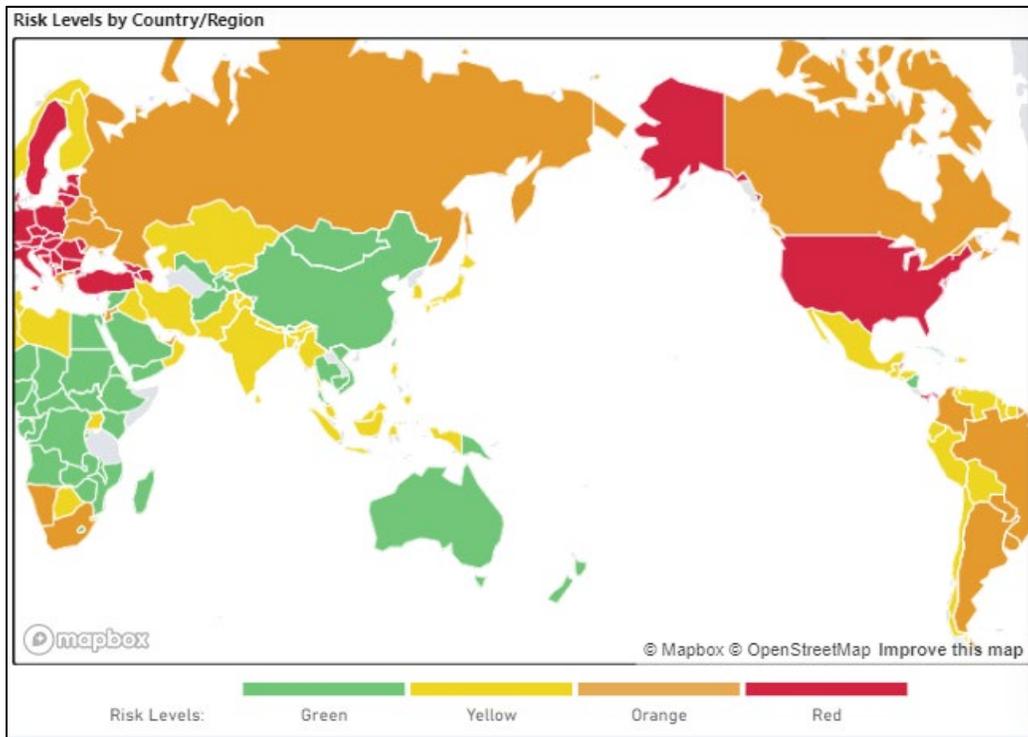
The complaint was put forth by the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) who alleged that RCMP conducted covert operations on environmental and aboriginal groups opposing a pipeline. The activities of the individuals were monitored and the RCMP reportedly infiltrated peaceful organizations and disclosed information to other government departments such as the Natural Energy Board.

The BCCLA additionally made a complaint against CSIS for a similar type of 'spying'. The RCMP and other law enforcement agencies are public departments which must abide by legislation which may impact their ability to conduct operations to ensure national energy projects are able to continue, despite concerns by a small minority. Private companies are in a better place to conduct similar operations as law enforcement, as they are not subject to the same regulatory constraints imposed on the government, or Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. FOI requests allow the public to access information regarding sensitive activities that may be deemed as necessary by the government, but may be disliked by a group of individuals. Paladin Risk Solutions Inc. can provide similar services and sometimes have more robust and less obvious capabilities than law enforcement due to a more client orientated focus rather than public safety.

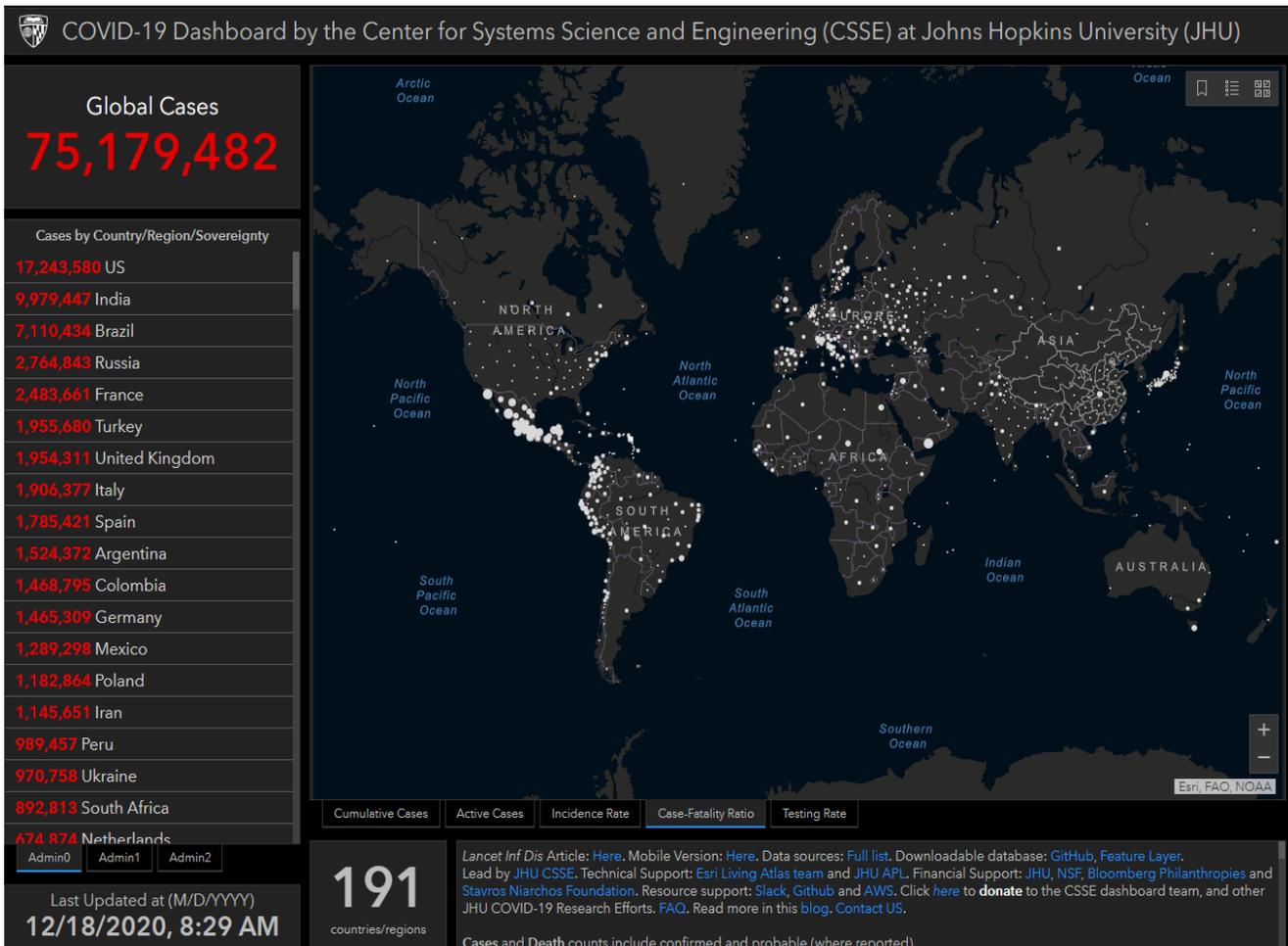
In response, Justin Trudeau said that the government will conduct a review of how the police stores information on protestors deemed to be peaceful. It is unknown what the government's definition of peaceful is, or whether measures of direct action such as blockading roadways or train tracks would qualify as a non-peaceful protest. As such, it is likely that to ensure the smooth planning and execution of an energy project, law enforcement may not be able to provide as robust monitoring services for energy companies as private companies.

## 2. GLOBAL

### 2.1 COVID UPDATE



#	Country, Other	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Recovered	Active Cases	Serious, Critical	Deaths/1M pop	Tests/1M pop	Population
	World	75,550,924	+274,056	1,673,235	+5,530	53,034,526	20,843,163	107,219	214.7		
1	<a href="#">USA</a>	17,669,508	+36,358	318,582	+544	10,296,261	7,054,665	28,198	960	689,449	331,902,144
2	<a href="#">France</a>	2,427,316		59,619		181,506	2,186,191	2,808	912	454,511	65,340,640
3	<a href="#">Brazil</a>	7,120,103	+8,576	184,992	+116	6,177,702	757,409	8,318	867	120,511	213,258,918
4	<a href="#">Italy</a>	1,906,377		67,220		1,203,814	635,343	2,855	1,113	411,592	60,420,388
5	<a href="#">Belgium</a>	618,204	+3,146	18,371	+93	42,402	557,431	571	1,582	558,615	11,613,026
6	<a href="#">Russia</a>	2,791,220	+28,552	49,762	+611	2,228,633	512,825	2,300	341	581,680	145,963,586
7	<a href="#">Ukraine</a>	944,381	+12,630	16,256	+260	561,222	366,903	177	373	119,453	43,610,883
8	<a href="#">Germany</a>	1,457,487	+19,049	25,558	+393	1,069,400	362,529	4,836	305	381,060	83,908,358
9	<a href="#">India</a>	9,989,130	+11,296	144,925	+96	9,531,980	312,225	8,944	105	114,637	1,386,271,357
10	<a href="#">Serbia</a>	292,640	+4,910	2,580	+51	31,536	258,524	349	296	242,879	8,720,936
11	<a href="#">Poland</a>	1,182,864	+11,013	24,771	+426	915,576	242,517	1,725	655	180,808	37,827,296
12	<a href="#">Iran</a>	1,145,651	+7,121	53,273	+178	865,474	226,904	5,627	631	82,194	84,488,279
13	<a href="#">Mexico</a>	1,289,298	+11,799	116,487	+718	953,762	219,049	3,890	899	25,482	129,558,105
14	<a href="#">Turkey</a>	1,955,680		17,364		1,721,607	216,709	5,803	205	258,403	84,757,932
15	<a href="#">Hungary</a>	295,977	+4,428	7,725	+187	89,814	198,438	564	801	254,599	9,648,909



## 2.2 COVID-19 World News

- [Moderna's vaccine is highly effective, FDA says, clearing way for second vaccine](#)

According to FDA documents, Moderna's vaccine is approximately 94% effective at preventing symptomatic illness, causing it to reduce the spread of the virus overall. It is believed the FDA may provide emergency use authorization for the vaccine possibly by the end of this week. It is about as effective as Pfizer's vaccine, and is given in two doses 28 days apart. Without the second dose, the vaccine still reduces asymptomatic transmission by 63% after the first dose. Vaccine side effects include fatigue, muscle pain and headache, with nausea and facial swelling noted as rare effects. Data on seniors suggests that they experienced less of these side effects; although unclear why. It is possible the immune system may not make as strong of an immune reaction, although it was found that the vaccine is effective on older individuals. Once the vaccine is approved, 6 million doses will be distributed across the USA.
- [British officials identify coronavirus mutations, but significance remains unclear](#)

As vaccines are rolling out, the coronavirus is on the move as well, not merely spreading but also mutating, and possibly becoming more transmissible. There is no evidence that these changes are making the virus deadlier, but new research has provided evidence that the virus is not a static target of vaccines and will need to be watched closely to see how it responds to therapeutic interventions and the human immune system.

- [In Sweden, Infections and Calls for a Lockdown Are Rising](#)  
Sweden has been an outlier in the pandemic as it avoided lockdowns and kept restaurants, bars, schools, movie theaters and gyms mostly open. And while death rates were high compared to its Nordic neighbors, they were comparable to those of larger European countries.
- [Data show ongoing COVID surge in Americas, new increase in Africa](#)  
The latest weekly update from the World Health Organization (WHO) on the COVID-19 pandemic shows new infections continuing to rise, with stabilization in Europe and a reduction in cases in other regions of the world being offset by the ongoing surge in the Americas and a sharp increase in cases in Africa.
- [One-quarter of the world may not get a Covid-19 vaccine until 2022, experts warn](#)  
As wealthy governments race to lock in supplies of Covid-19 vaccines, nearly a quarter of the world's population — mostly in low and middle-income countries — will not have access to a shot until 2022, according to a new analysis.

## 2.3 Global Awareness

- [China to crank up anti-trust heat on Big Tech after unprecedented fines](#) (Oxford Analytica)  
Beijing should consider taxing large Chinese technology companies built on leveraging mass user data, a senior official of the China Securities Regulatory Commission said. The comment is in line with the Communist Party's effort to assert control over China's booming technology sector, especially its leading lights such as Alibaba, Tencent and Baidu. The State Administration of Market Regulation has announced anti-trust probes into high-profile acquisitions by Chinese big tech, whereas the government last month drafted new anti-monopoly rules for internet firms. The government is particularly keen to rein in fintech operations in order to preserve systemic financial stability. China and democratic countries (including the United States, Japan, Australia, India and in Europe) appear to be converging around several concerns about the digital economy, especially anti-trust, data monopoly and potentially taxation. Through new rules, democratic countries with a broadly liberal market approach are aiming to foster competition in the digital economy and protect their domestic companies from US tech giants. By contrast, Chinese rules are an instrument for the state to tighten its control over the commercially and strategically significant technology sector, and to ensure compliance of its top tech entrepreneurs with a global profile, particularly Alibaba's Jack Ma.
- [Minimum wage hike raises unemployment risks in Mexico](#) (Oxford Analytica)  
The National Wage Commission yesterday approved a 15% minimum wage hike from January 1, bringing it to MXN 141.70 (USD 7.16) per day for workers across most of Mexico, from MXN 123.22 currently. In special economic areas, it will rise to MXN 213.29 from MXN 185.56. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) has strived to bolster Mexicans' purchasing power, describing past wages as shameful; his government increased the minimum wage by 20% this year and 16% in 2019. Business groups yesterday warned the latest hike could see 700,000 companies fail over the next three months, with Coparmex President Gustavo de Hoyos describing it as "irrational", particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that more than 1 million small and medium-sized enterprises had already disappeared between March and July according to government figures. Coparmex proposals of a less drastic wage increase, or a government contribution of MXN 6.42 per worker, were reportedly rejected. Previous administrations tended to keep increases just above inflation; the minimum wage when AMLO took office was just MXN 88.36. The hike will

be popular and should help many formal workers through the pandemic. However, it poses inflation risks and will exacerbate pressures on already struggling businesses. Bankruptcies threaten increased unemployment.

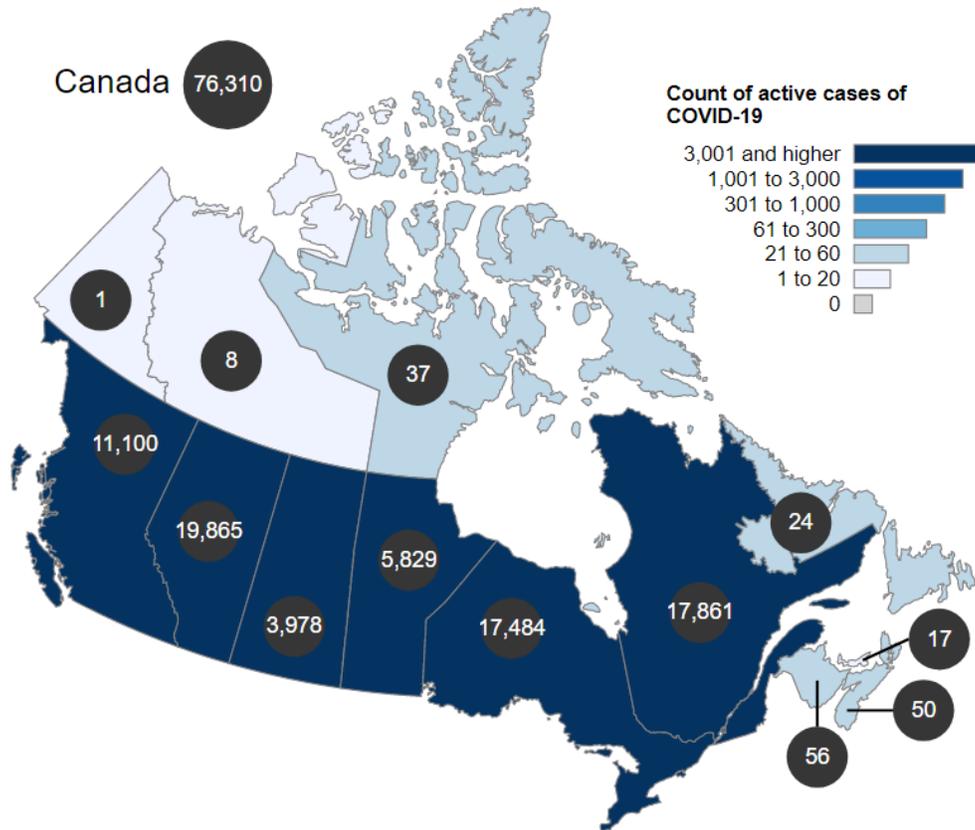
- [Wall Street ends at record highs as investors eye fiscal stimulus](#)
- [Suspected Russian hacking spree used another major tech supplier -sources](#)
- ['We are not afraid': Wuhan residents say they hope WHO team finds virus origins](#)
- [Britain, EU strike pessimistic tone in post-Brexit trade talks](#)

## 2.4 Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism

- [India's top court suggests government delay farm laws at heart of protests](#)  
Protests against India's new agricultural laws are continuing since September. A court proposal this week was made for mediation between the government and the demonstrators, however, the court then suggested that the mediation talks take place to a review of the response of both sides. In the meantime, it was recommended the government delay the imposition of the law while a discussion is had. It is believed that neither side will be likely to concede, and it is likely that this will be decided through the court system.
- [Eight Hong Kong activists charged for security law protest](#)  
After enforcing its new security laws, Beijing charged eight well known Hong Kong pro-democracy activists for taking part in a peaceful protest against the new laws. The charges of 'unlawful assembly' include organizing or taking part in a protest, whether peaceful or not. The law stops citizens from expressing any anti-China sentiment, and imprisons those who take part in such 'unlawful assemblies.'
- [Tunisian activists protest surveillance a decade on from Arab Spring](#)  
Demonstrations in Tunisia continue as people protest government surveillance in a country with no laws on government digital surveillance. Despite Tunisia benefiting from the Arab spring, which occurred ten years ago, it is seeing a decline in democratic institutions and regression on freedom of speech. The Arab spring allowed people to criticize the government legally. However, recently the government has issued various statements including the police providing information on how to complain about individuals who have insulted the country's security forces. The country also expressed in late 2019 that anyone who questions or offends any government departments may be legally held responsible.
- [The 'biggest ever' anti-lockdown protest is due to take place this weekend after London entered Tier 3](#)

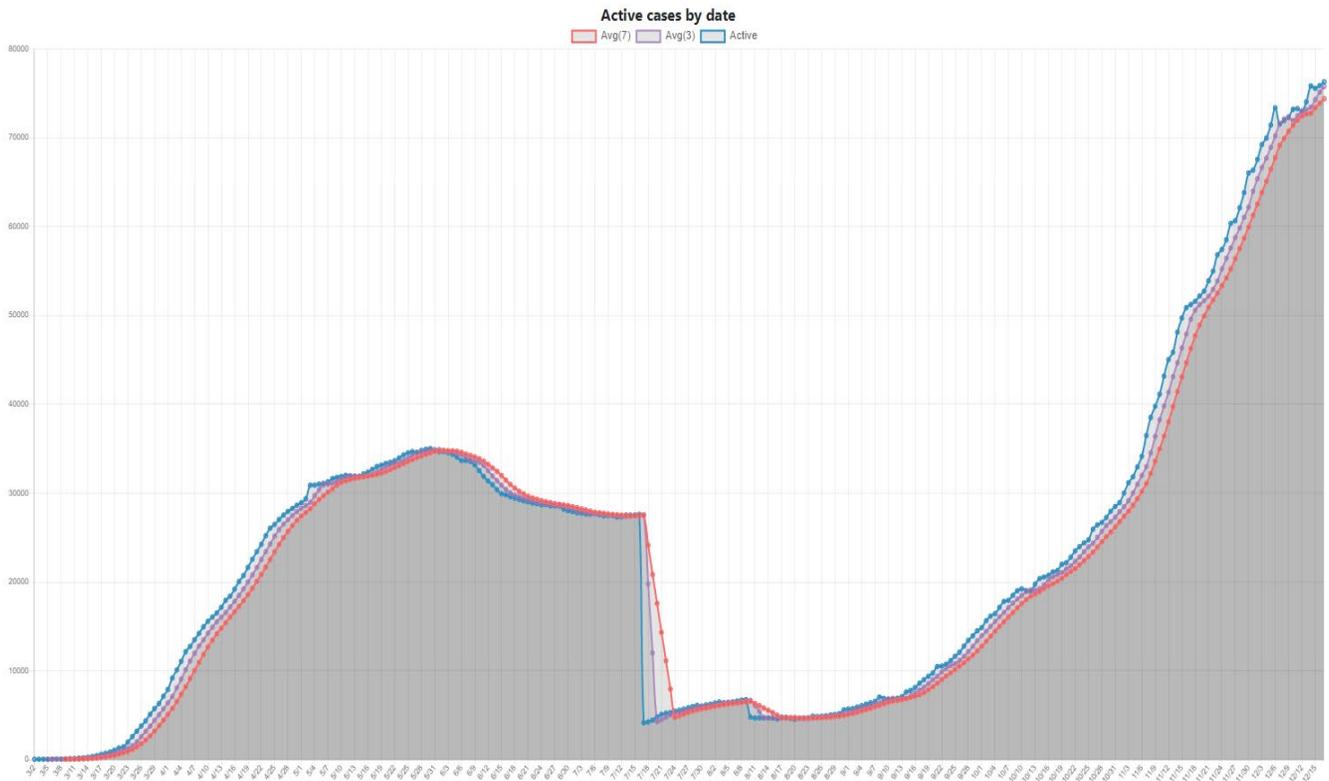
### 3. CANADA

#### 3.1 COVID UPDATE



Prov.	Total Confirmed	Total Deaths	Total Recovered	Total Active
<b>Total</b>	<b>488,638</b>	<b>13,916</b>	<b>398,412</b>	<b>76,310</b>
BC	44,776	713	32,963	11,100
ON	148,967	4,058	127,425	17,484
QC	171,028	7,635	145,532	17,861
AB	86,168	790	65,513	19,865
MB	22,047	537	15,681	5,829
NB	573	8	509	56
SK	12,832	105	8,749	3,978
PEI	90	0	73	17
NL	367	4	339	24
NS	1,436	65	1,321	50
YT	59	1	57	1
NT	23	0	15	8
NU	259	0	222	37
	13	0	13	0
Rate of change	↑ 0.0%	↑ 0.0%	↑ 0.0%	0.0%

Prov.	Total Test	Total Waiting	Total Hosp	Total ICU
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,856,485</b>	-	-	-
BC	1,351,612	-	358	93
ON	7,166,667	78,631	919	263
QC	4,440,863	-	1002	134
AB	2,582,185	-	763	138
MB	396,779	-	314	42
NB	143,328	-	3	2
SK	396,555	-	126	22
PEI	71,879	-	-	-
NL	68,798	-	1	0
NS	217,323	-	0	0
YT	5,815	52	-	-
NT	9,247	32	0	0
NU	5,434	647	0	0
Rate of change	↑ <b>0.0%</b>	-	-	-



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

### 3.2 COVID-19 Canada News

- [Canada gearing up to distribute Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine, pending approval](#)  
Canada is expected to approve the Moderna vaccine “in the coming weeks”, while the government is already planning for the delivery and execution of the vaccine program. Moderna’s vaccine is not required to be stored at -70 Celsius like Pfizer’s, instead requiring regular freezer temperatures. This allows the vaccine to reach more areas of Canada, including the secluded north. The Canadian Armed Forces has already delivered five freezers appropriate for storage of this vaccine. The Federal Government has reportedly secured 168,000 doses of the vaccine arriving up to 48 hours after the vaccine approval, delivered to 56 distribution sites across the country. Health Canada is reporting the agency is awaiting quality control information from the company, which is expected to arrive soon. The Federal Government has announced that it will allow the provinces to decide who will be first vaccinated, and is only responsible for approving and distributing the vaccine. The Moderna vaccine approval is of upmost importance as Pfizer’s vaccine is not ideally stored, leaving many vulnerable populations in Canada’s rural areas, which also do not have appropriate medical facilities to assist those with COVID-19 vaccine.
- [Canadians may face travel restrictions for years if coronavirus vaccine not available for everyone](#)  
Despite Canada promising having enough vaccine doses for all citizens, global travel restrictions will likely stay in place until low-income countries see a large amount of their citizens vaccinated. While developed countries have secured more than one dose for each citizen (Canada has secured five doses per citizen), other countries cannot access any at all and are not believed to likely have access to the vaccine in 2021 at all. For this reason, Canada and other developed countries is encouraged to donate resources and funds to ensure that those in vulnerable populations globally are able to be protected.
- [‘Tremendous cost’: Coronavirus hospitalizations soar as vaccine raises hope](#)
- [Ontario premier not tightening restrictions as province reports record-high 2,432 new COVID-19 cases](#)
- [PM says feds being cautious with estimates, but vaccine timeline could accelerate](#)
- [B.C. deficit projected to hit \\$13.6B amid COVID-19 spending](#)
- [Health Canada warns of counterfeit COVID-19 vaccines sold online](#)

### 3.3 Canada Awareness

- [CSIS warns of threats to vaccine distribution chain](#)  
Following Interpol’s 02 December warning, the Canadian Security Intelligence Services appears to be singing the song of its American counterpart, suggesting that state actors may be attempting to sabotage vaccination supply chains and plans. CSIS recently had a briefing with various parties involved in the supply chain including the Canadian Institute of Traffic and Transportation, Air Canada Cargo, Shopper Drugs Mart, and other companies, who were informed of malicious foreign actors that may be targeting these organizations or their employees. The malicious actors, China and Russia, have been previously identified as countries that are currently participating in commercial espionage. CSIS also previously informed Canadians that they believed that a group backed by Russia has already tried to hack and get Canadian vaccine information. CSIS is taking measures to inform different Canadian businesses and government organizations of these threats so that they are able to take proactive security measures to not only protect their organizations, but also Canadians and

Canadian national security. CSIS is additionally expressing concern that part of the intent of foreign actors is to undermine confidence in the government and cause more fear and distrust in the vaccine process. This would cause less individuals to become vaccinated and hinder the ability of Canada to recover economically, allowing other countries to get ahead economically.

- [Federal government has no plans for debt forgiveness over CERB confusion, says Qualtrough](#)  
The Canadian government has sent 441,000 Canadian a letter advising them that their CERB payments had to be repaid due to them not being eligible for the benefit. Some of those that have to repay the benefit express frustration with the government for not communicating in a clear manner; the government's CERB application required an individual to make at least \$5,000 before taxes in the previous 12 months. As the government did not have a sliding scale for CERB, some individuals who received the CERB ended up with more money than they would have received should the pandemic not happened. The Canadian government has advised that there are no plans for a government debt forgiveness, but at the same time advised that "nothing is off the table". The CRA has not began collecting the payment but encouraged those who may repay their CERB to do so by the end of the year to ensure no issues with tax filing for 2020. In an effort to ensure Canadian confidence in their institutions, the government must eventually collect money from those who did not fit the criteria of the benefit, despite it not being a popular option or being a hardship on some individuals.
- [Watchdog finds RCMP's policing of anti-pipeline protesters reasonable — but sees gaps in surveillance policies](#)
- [There have been more than 7 million entries into Canada since COVID-19 began. CBSA explains why](#)
- [Biden administration is 'good news for Canada,' foreign affairs minister says](#)
- [Canada floats idea of North American ban on new gasoline-powered cars](#)

### 3.4 Canada – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism



welund

During the week of December 11 to 17, 2020, the majority of activist activity noted by Welund in Canada took place in the government sector (64%), followed by real estate (14%). Protests made up the majority of activity (41%), followed by critical commentary (19%), and webinars (12%). As projected previously, activity continued to steadily decline ahead of the holiday season.

Anti-lockdown sentiment, solidarity with Punjab farmers, and opposition against the covid-19 vaccine primarily contributed to the number of protests in the government sector. The reimplementing of lockdown measures in most major municipalities across Canada likely contributed to the rise of critical commentary and webinar type actions.

The Coastal GasLink pipeline (CGL) and the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX) project remained the primary focus of infrastructure opposition.

**Protests:** Campaign groups increased their focus on TMX in response to preparations by contractors to resume construction on the pipeline. Activists filed applications to prevent the clearing of trees in Burnaby and criticized the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for authorizing the project and thereby "causing the destruction" of Holmes Creek. Groups also supported a new anti-TMX campaign started by the Green Party of Canada.

Anti-lockdown and anti-mask campaign groups continued their weekly marches and rallies in most major municipalities across Canada. Large marches were noted in Calgary, Edmonton, and Toronto. The focus of these

protests has started to include opposition against the covid-19 vaccine. Additionally, weekly protests in solidarity with Punjab farmers also continued in these cities as well.

**Outlook:** Welund projects a steady decrease in protest activity as a result of the upcoming holiday season and the reimplemented covid-19 lockdown measures across Canada. Opposition against the covid-19 vaccine will likely become a focus as more of the medication is distributed. Preliminary concerns have focused on securing or providing equitable access to the vaccine, questioning its potential side-effects, discrediting vaccine developers for their expedited development of the medication, and general opposition against mandatory vaccinations. Many weekly anti-mask and anti-lockdown campaigns have started to integrate the anti-vaccine movement into their actions.

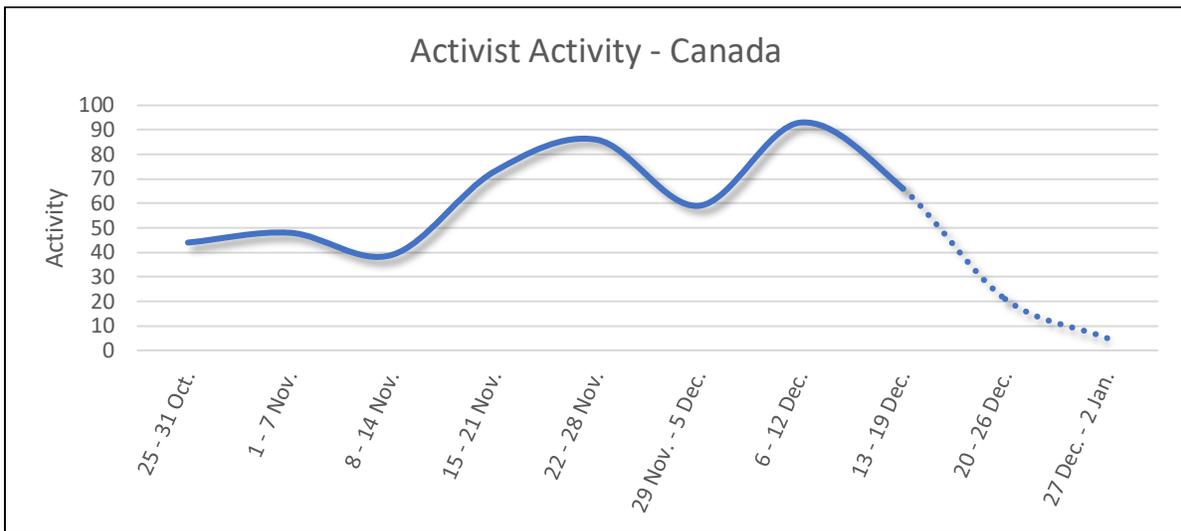


Figure 1 Total activist activity in Canada as noted by Welund North America.

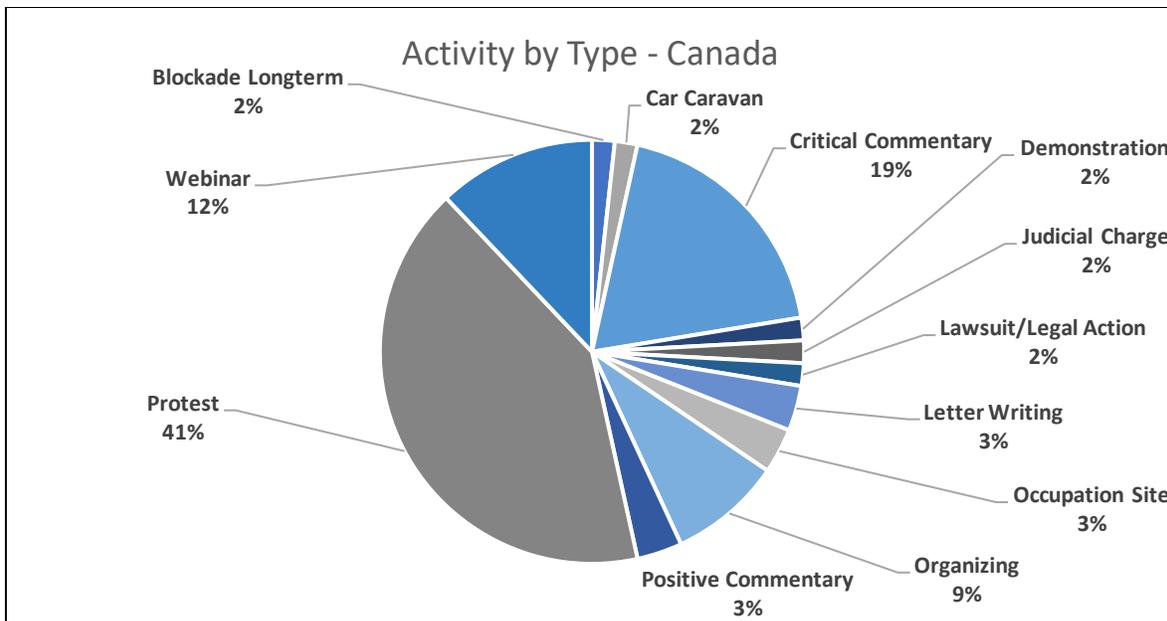


Figure 2 Activist activity in Canada by type as noted by Welund

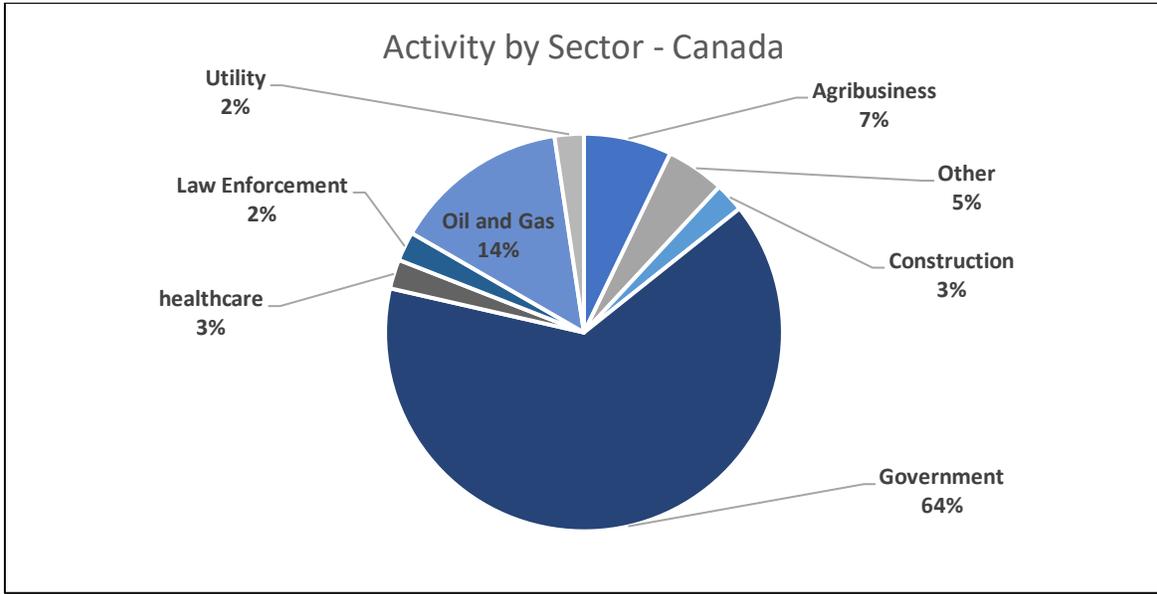
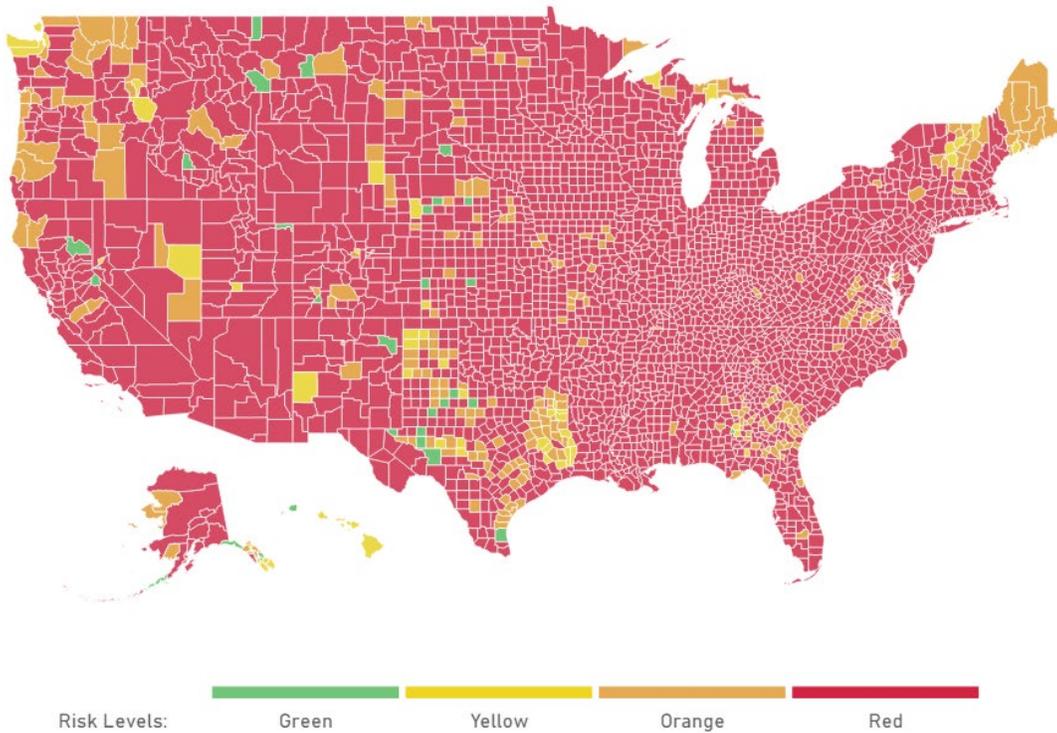


Figure 3 Activist activity in Canada by sector as noted by Welund North America.

## 4. USA

### 4.1 COVID UPDATE

Risk Levels by County



#	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	17,638,215	318,067	10,296,044	7,024,104	53,287	961	228,701,995	690,937	
1	<a href="#">California</a>	1,759,876	22,146	720,977	1,016,753	44,540	560	28,456,358	720,191	39,512,223
2	<a href="#">Florida</a>	1,168,483	20,306	698,164	450,013	54,404	945	14,262,140	664,043	21,477,737
3	<a href="#">Arizona</a>	435,036	7,677	64,500	362,859	59,768	1,055	2,964,436	407,275	7,278,717
4	<a href="#">New York</a>	855,526	36,101	457,633	361,792	43,978	1,856	22,680,046	1,165,856	19,453,561
5	<a href="#">Illinois</a>	879,428	15,985	539,271	324,172	69,400	1,261	12,147,303	958,608	12,671,821
6	<a href="#">Texas</a>	1,556,006	25,401	1,260,972	269,633	53,663	876	14,029,601	483,848	28,995,881
7	<a href="#">Virginia</a>	299,388	4,598	27,307	267,483	35,076	539	4,508,883	528,249	8,535,519
8	<a href="#">Missouri</a>	376,692	5,153	108,589	262,950	61,376	840	3,735,586	608,657	6,137,428
9	<a href="#">Michigan</a>	487,356	11,801	236,369	239,186	48,800	1,182	8,076,063	808,669	9,986,857
10	<a href="#">Colorado</a>	300,414	4,226	61,690	234,498	52,167	734	1,998,476	347,034	5,758,736
11	<a href="#">Maryland</a>	246,553	5,358	9,064	232,131	40,782	886	5,205,154	860,971	6,045,680
12	<a href="#">Georgia</a>	568,396	10,294	327,021	231,081	53,534	970	5,241,468	493,667	10,617,423
13	<a href="#">Pennsylvania</a>	535,729	13,476	317,601	204,652	41,847	1,053	6,677,733	521,617	12,801,989
14	<a href="#">Kentucky</a>	234,021	2,316	33,666	198,039	52,381	518	3,207,769	717,995	4,467,673
15	<a href="#">New Jersey</a>	429,430	18,196	213,266	197,968	48,347	2,049	6,945,615	781,971	8,882,190

## 4.2 COVID-19 USA News

- ['A major breakthrough': FDA authorizes nation's first at-home, over-the-counter COVID-19 test](#)  
 The FDA authorized the first at home test which does not require a lab or a prescription from a doctor. The 15-minute test will likely cost \$30 and is made by the Australian company Ellume. Tests which allowed users to collect their own sample have been approved by the FDA in the past; however, these required the user to send the sample to a lab. Labs in the USA are overwhelmed, and many results are delayed, causing further transmission. The Ellume test allows the user to take a nasal swab which is then put into a cartridge, with a smartphone app providing instructions on how to use the test. Additionally, the test appears to be effective up to 95%, including with those who are asymptomatic. The test returns a 3% false positive rate, with the company suggesting it is more accurate on those without symptoms. Critics are worried that the tests may provide a sense of false security due to its false negatives, causing more infection. However, the test will likely do more good than harm as it expands the ability for COVID-19 testing beyond government approved or doctor/lab assisted tests, allowing a larger number of individuals to be tested.
- [Two Alaska health care workers have allergic reactions after taking Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine](#)  
 An Alaskan healthcare worker experienced an allergic reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine, who was hospitalized but stabilized with treatment. She did not have any history of allergies but still experienced an anaphylactic reaction. Another healthcare worker suffered a non anaphylactic reaction, with eye puffiness, scratchy nose and light headedness. Vaccination sites are required to have treatment for allergic reactions so that these

reactions are not life threatening due to lack of treatment. Dr. Anthony Fauci advised that the safety of the vaccines is “beyond the confines” clinical trials – as million of people receive the vaccine, reactions may be seen that were not experienced during the clinical trials. For the average person, such information is far from comforting, as it makes it sound like there are possibilities people will experience something from the vaccine which has not yet been seen in clinical trials, opening individuals to possible health problems. For many, a vaccination will be a cost benefit analysis – what will I gain from being vaccinated (not get the virus), or what would the “cost” of being vaccinated be (a possible unknown reaction), compared to what will I gain from not being vaccinated (possibly not see an unknown reaction) and what one would lose from getting vaccinated (possibly getting infected the virus). For those who do not perceive a negative reaction from being infected with the virus, such as young people who on average do not see a negative outcome from the virus, may be less likely to take the vaccine due to fear of the unknown. Incentives for some groups of individuals to be vaccinated may increase the number of those who choose to take the vaccination, allowing for herd immunity to occur faster.

- [USA surpasses 17m coronavirus cases as vaccines are distributed](#)  
On Thursday, the USA surpassed over 27 million cases, and saw 247,403 new cases 3,656 deaths in one day. Further concerning is the number of jobless claims, the highest since September at 850,000.
- [U.S. FDA plans to quickly approve Moderna coronavirus vaccine after panel endorsement](#)
- [USA reports record number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths](#)
- [As pandemic rages across U.S., Congress scrambles to reach relief deal](#)
- [SEC sues California biotech company for misleading investors about COVID-19 tests](#)

#### 4.3 USA Awareness

- [New Mexican law threatens US security cooperation](#) (Oxford Analytica)  
Congress this week approved a bill restricting the activities of foreign law enforcement officers on Mexican soil. The law will oblige foreign agencies to share all information gathered in Mexico with Mexican authorities and force the latter to report interactions with foreign partners. The move follows a diplomatic spat between Mexico and the United States over the surprise arrest of Mexico's former Defence Minister Salvador Cienfuegos in California in October. Mexican authorities were not told of the arrest in advance; US charges against Cienfuegos have since been dropped. US Attorney General William Barr warned last week that Mexico's new law could "only benefit... transnational criminal organisations". President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), however, views the situation as a matter of national sovereignty. Speaking in October, he criticized the actions of US officials under previous presidents, saying "they entered Mexico like they owned the place... that no longer happens". Regional security depends on US-Mexican cooperation. Perceptions of US unilateralism and Mexican corruption threaten that. Excessive information sharing under the new law will increase risks of leaks, while extra bureaucracy will hinder the efficiency of investigations. Security tensions could sour AMLO's relationship with US President-elect Joe Biden.
- [35 states file anti-trust lawsuit against Google](#)  
35 American states have launched a lawsuit arguing that Google has an illegal monopoly over the online search market, which they state has had a negative impact on consumers and marketers. A number of anti-trust lawsuits against technology companies have taken place lately, likely in an attempt to catch up to European

laws that are less favorable to technology companies. Despite hefty fines, no visible effect has been made on the operations of the Internet and these companies in Europe. In recent years, the practices and effects of technology companies on society overall have come to light, from privacy concerns, to propaganda and a monopoly on their respective industries. It is likely that regulators and governments will begin to pay even closer attention to the dealing on these companies, who have been left to police their platforms as they wish, and begin regulating such industries.

- [Suspected Russian hacking spree extends beyond original target, U.S. officials admit](#)
- [COVID baby boom? No, 2020 triggered a baby bust - and that will have lasting impacts](#)

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



During the week of 9-16 December 2020, the majority of activist activity noted by Welund in the US took place in the government sector (63%), followed by oil and gas (13%) and finance (11%). Protests made up the majority of activity (45%), followed by critical commentary (10%), and webinars (6%). Overall activity has continued to decline since a peak around the election in early November. Welund expects activity to remain low during Christmas week.

**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, Massachusetts, and Minnesota saw the most protests.

On 11 December, climate activists held a day of action to demand financial institutions divest from fossil fuels. Organized by Stop the Money Pipeline and other fossil fuel divestment activists, actions took place in 60 cities demanding financial institutions divest from TC Energy's Keystone XL (KXL) and Enbridge's Line 3 pipelines.

A notable protest from the past week occurred on 12 December in Washington, DC. Protests and violence erupted following calls for organizing and counter-protesting against a Proud Boys demonstration in Washington, DC that opposed Joe Biden's electoral victory.

On 12 December 2020, far-right and far-left activists clashed during a protest at the Washington State Capitol Building in Olympia, which resulted in one shooting and multiple arrests. The shooting was the second in the capitol in eight days.

The anti-Line 3 tree blockade near Palisade, Minnesota came to end after ten days. As the tree-sitter was removed and 22 protesters were arrested.

**Outlook:** In previous years Welund has noted a decline in activity between Thanksgiving and Christmas, this has been evident in activism this year, especially since the election. The Inauguration Day has the potential to see competing protests by the left and right in the days leading up to and on 20 January. These will most likely be centered on Washington, DC. As some states impose new restrictions amid rising covid-19, right-wing and anti-lockdown movements may organize protests and demonstrations like those that attracted nationwide media attention in April and May. Evictions and homelessness continue to be a focus of some activist campaigns, and there may be an increase in activity as the weather gets colder or if a federal stimulus does prevent evictions.

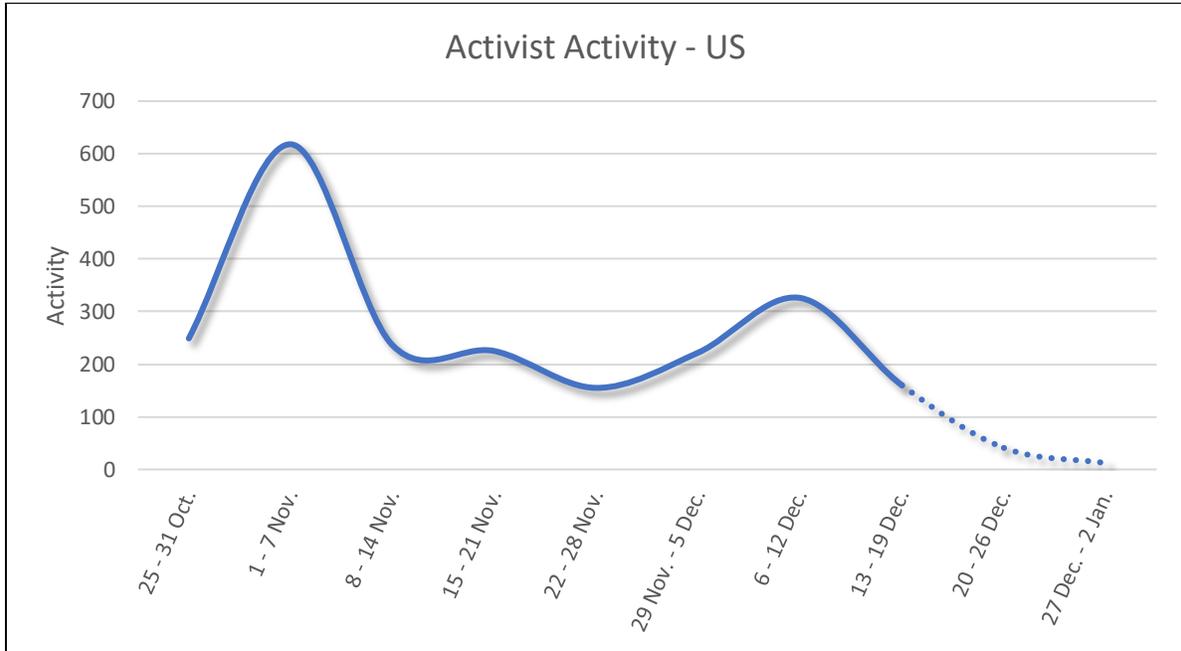


Figure 4 Total activist activity in the US as noted by Welund North America.

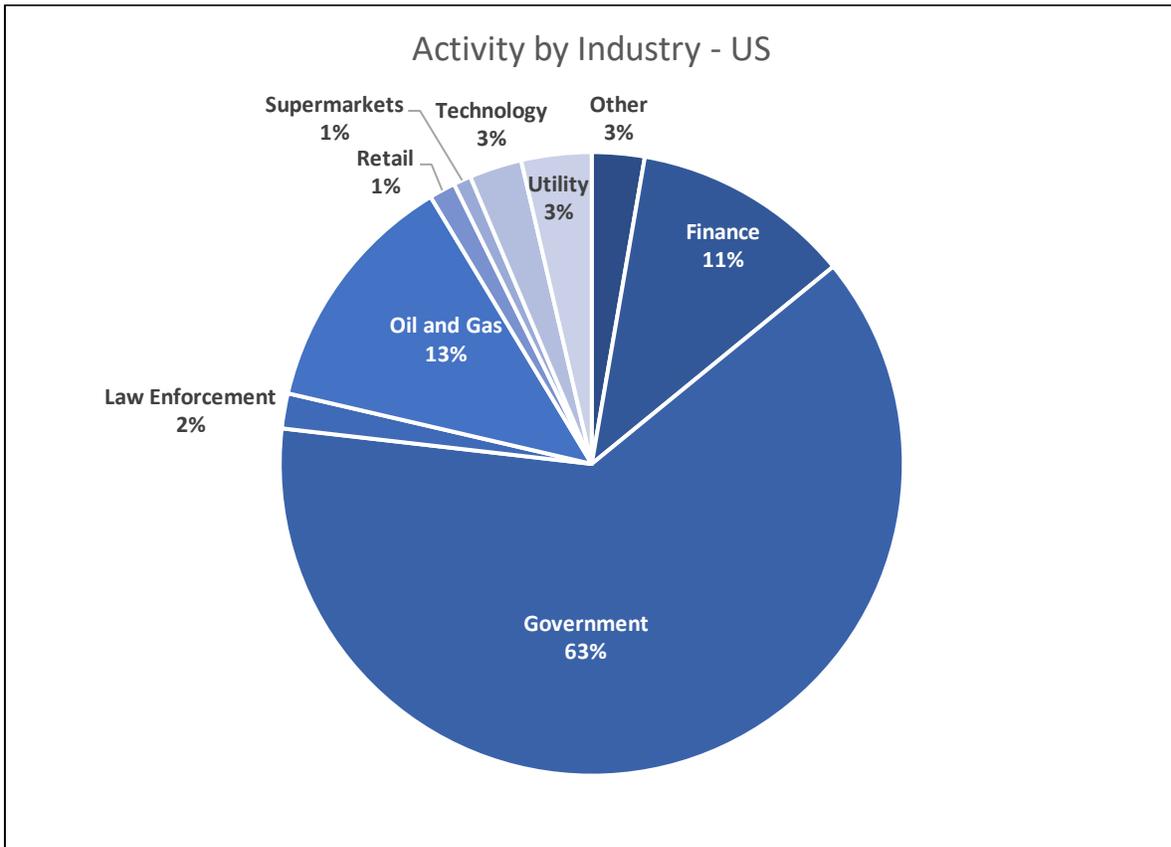


Figure 5 Activist activity in the US by industry as noted by Welund

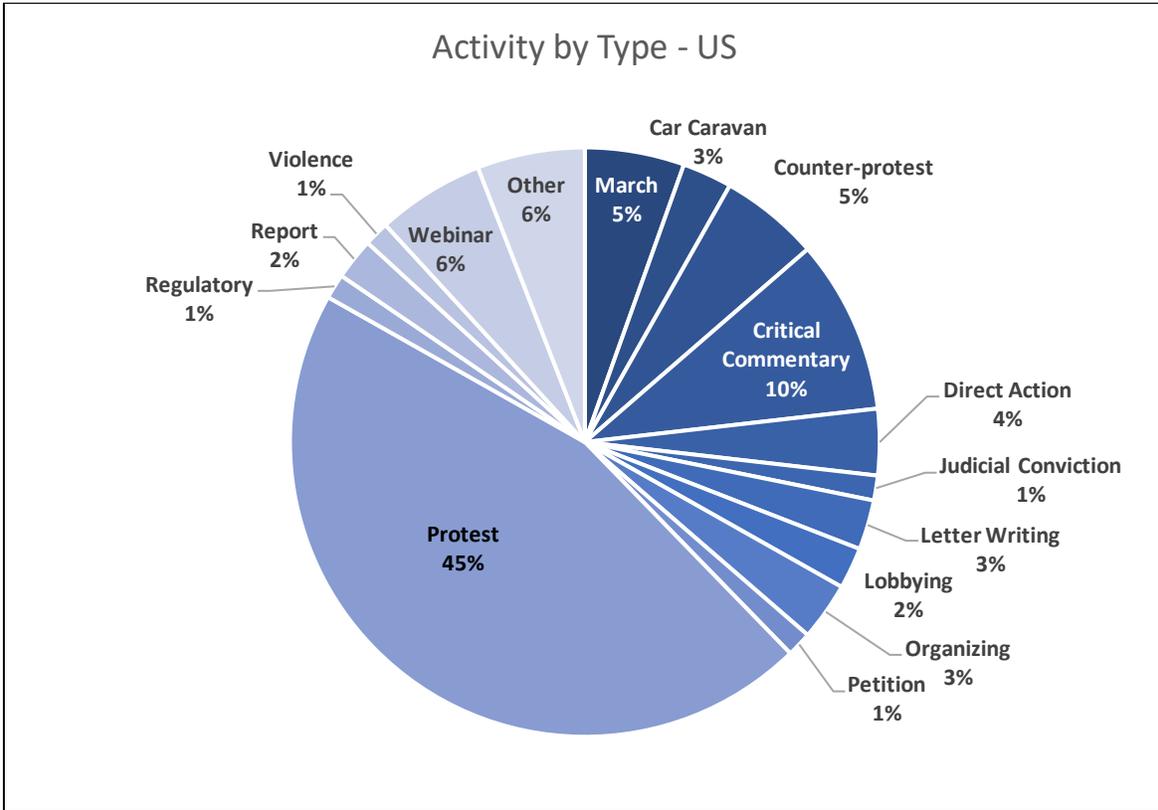


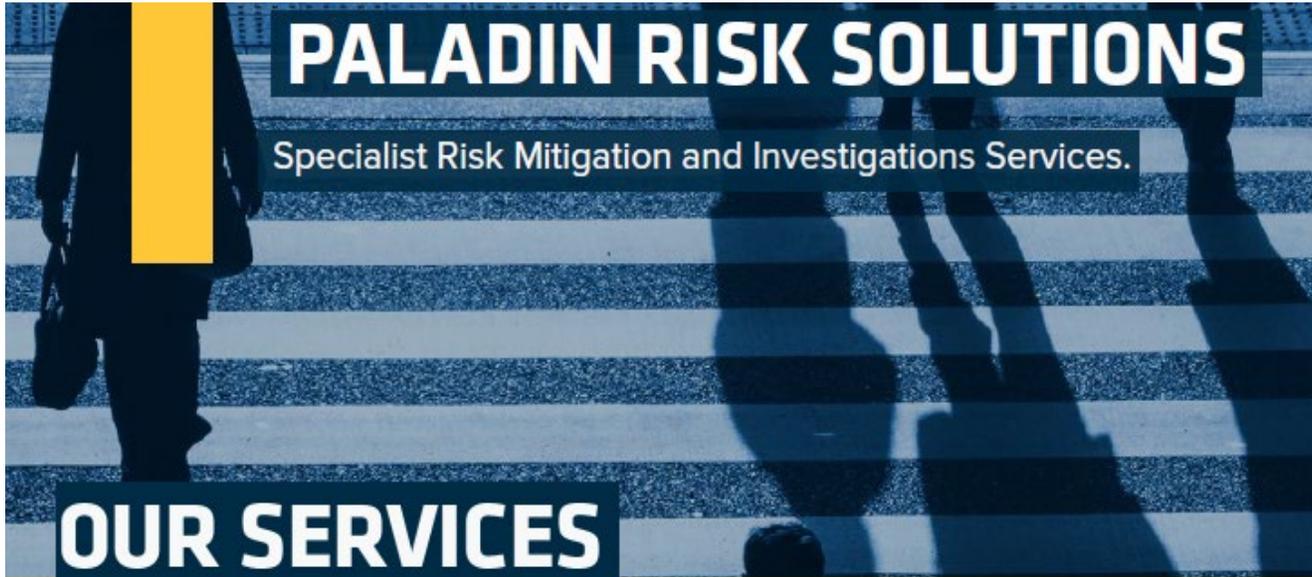
Figure 6 Activist activity in the US by type as noted by Welund.

## End Report

Please submit feedback to:

 <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">Local Experts. Global Experience.</p>	<p><b>Scott McGregor</b> <i>Head of Intelligence</i> <b>Paladin Risk Solutions Inc</b></p>	<p>Mobile: <a href="tel:604-910-7781">604-910-7781</a>            Email: <a href="mailto:smcgregor@paladinrisksolutions.com">smcgregor@paladinrisksolutions.com</a>            Website: <a href="http://paladinrisksolutions.com">paladinrisksolutions.com</a></p>
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## 5. PALADIN RISK SOLUTIONS - SERVICES



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