



INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Situational awareness for stakeholders and decision makers.



Report # 21-012

05 February 2021

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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.

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1. CURRENT SITUATION

USA Officials are warning that the Chinese regime has recently been trying to aggressively collect our personal information, which presents a danger to the economy and national security. In the past year, agencies, government organizations and even companies have taken steps to ensure the flow of medical and biodata to China, where the quest to control our biodata and medical future is becoming a new space race of sorts. In March of 2020, a company called BGI Group that created China's first cloned pig in 2010 and is the world's largest biotech and geonomics firm based in China, approached the state of Washington with an offer to assist the state with building and running a modern COVID-19 testing laboratory. An enticing offer, but officials were concerned about BGI Group and its association with the Communist Party of China (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA), China's military. The partnership showcases how China has begun integrating private technology companies into its military related research under the CCP. BGI reportedly provided COVID-19 test kits in various places outside of China, including Europe, Australia, Canada, and the USA. Furthermore, shares of BGI Genomics Co have doubled in the past 12 months to a market value of approximately \$9 billion.

For this reason, counterintelligence officials released a rare warning for persons and companies that "Foreign powers can collect, store and exploit biometric information from Covid tests" for their own genetic research, which has been denied by BGI. It is suspected these are "modern day Trojan horses" bearing "gifts", but really having alternative motives, such as gathering information about and targeting genetic weaknesses in the USA population which could be used to increase the power of its own military. For example, BGI and the PLA have worked on projects together, including one genetic research targeted at making its military members less susceptible to altitude sickness. Of interest, China recently enacted a law stopping any access to their biological data or samples, illustrating its own fear of something that the company is doing. In May 2020, BGI received a Health Canada Authorization under Interim Order to supply COVID-19 PCR tests, suggesting that Canadian medical data may already be compromised by this partnership.

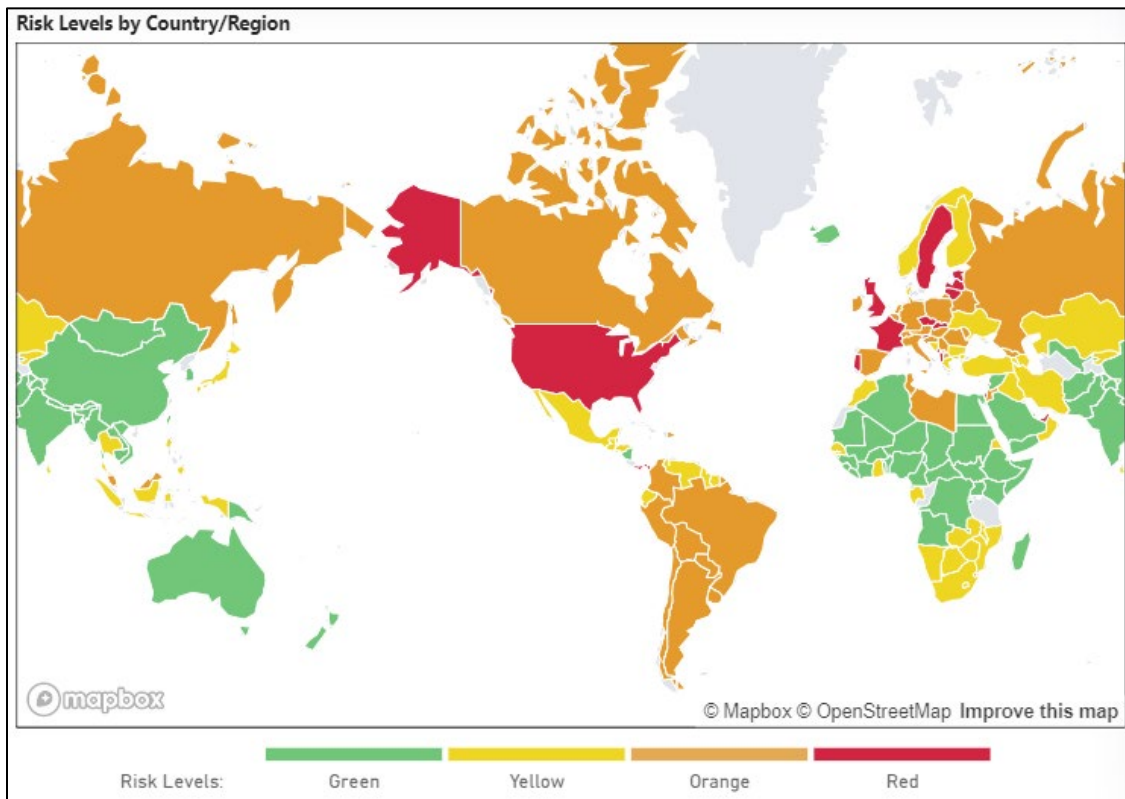
Despite arguments of xenophobia in dealing with China, it is important to remember that this is not about the Chinese people but about the Chinese government, well known for its measured and deliberate espionage of other countries, as well as human rights violations against its own people. The USA administration held a tough stance on China and has proposed a rule to add gene editing software to the USA export control list, as it may be used to create biological weapons once the technology has advanced. Officials in the current administrations have also stated they support a tough approach from the rising threat of China. Furthermore, a technology industry panel on artificial intelligence, appointed by the USA government, is also warning that the Chinese government's financial support of its biotechnology sectors and the PLA's interest in applications could be used by the military to enhance mental or physical strength of its military. The panel is set to deliver its report in March and has already recommended that the USA government take a "more aggressive public posture regarding BGI". China's response stated that the USA government had "wantonly misinterpreted and smeared China's military-civil fusion policy," and was imposing sanctions which hinder research and scientific advancement.

Analyst Note: BGI has connections to Vancouver General Hospital¹ and the University of BC². This company also has connections to a cult, Create Abundance/Golden Touch³, which saw one of its senior members murdered last summer at their headquarters in prominent South Surrey neighborhood. This company is also linked⁴ to the CCP's United Front Work Department⁵ (UFWD⁶).

2. GLOBAL

2.1 COVID UPDATE

Country/Region	United States	Country/Region	Canada
Daily new cases per 100k people (7d moving avg.)	42.5	Daily new cases per 100k people (7d moving avg.)	11.1
Risk level	Red	Risk level	Orange
Total cases	25,989,230	Total cases	786,417
Total deaths	438,325	Total deaths	20,213



¹ <https://www.prostatecentre.com/news/bgi-and-vancouver-prostate-centre-working-together-precision-medicine-improve-outcomes-men>

² <https://psychiatry.ubc.ca/page/18/?cat=-1%2Fpage%2F2The>

UBC alumnus, **Gane Ka-Shu Wong** (BASC'83). Lectured about DNA/RNA sequencing and its applications for medicine, science and applied science. Wong has worked with the Human Genome Project, helped found BGI-Shenzhen (formerly Beijing Genomics Institute)

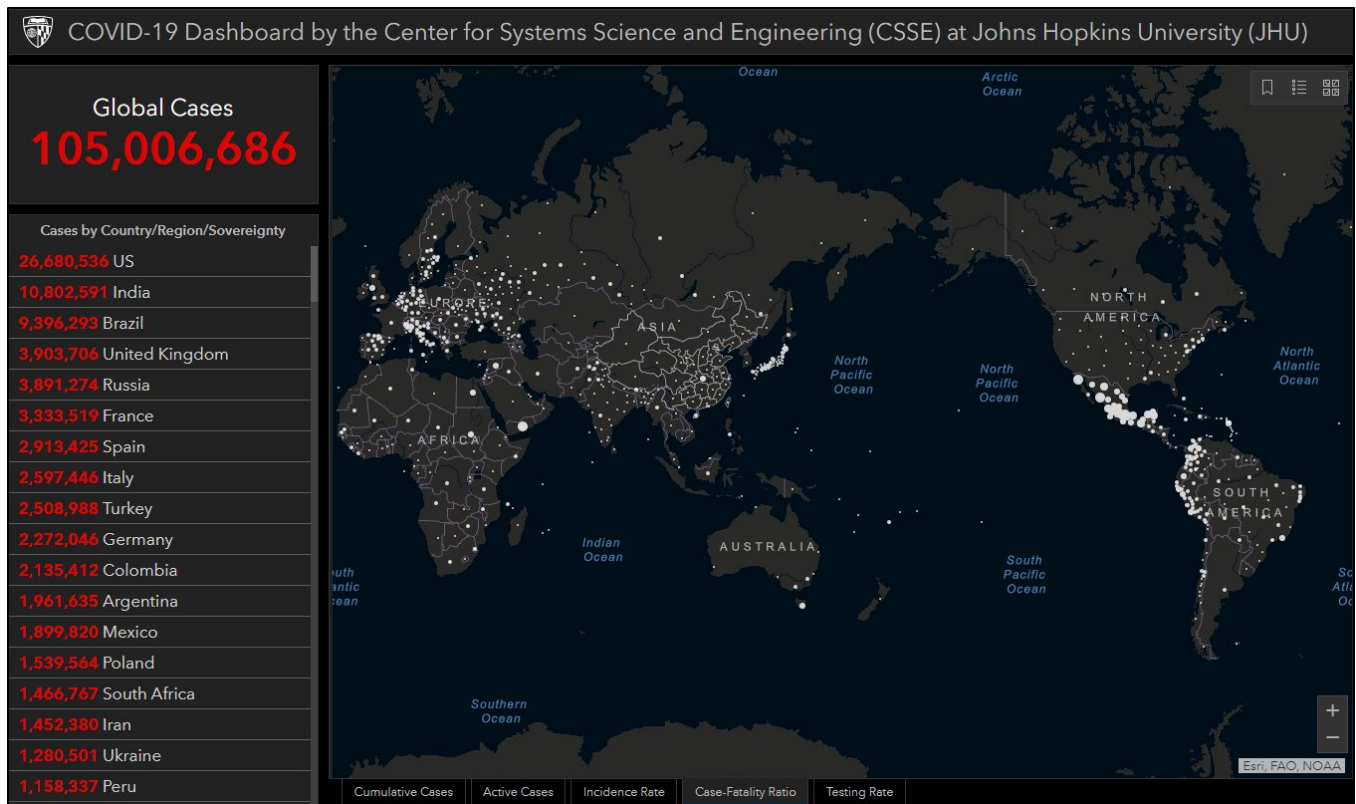
³ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ihit-woman-suspicious-death-bo-fan-create-abundance-1.5626182>

⁴ <https://sinopsis.cz/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/rollandbri.pdf>

⁵ <https://nationalpost.com/news/how-china-uses-shadowy-united-front-as-magic-weapon-to-try-to-extend-its-influence-in-canada>

⁶ <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2020/06/08/chinas-foreign-interference-likely-widespread-in-canada-says-author-of-new-report.html>

#	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	105,550,171	+147,048	2,297,584	+4,778	77,383,689	25,868,898	105,813	13,541	294.8			
1	USA	27,278,671	+4,657	467,109	+112	17,034,751	9,776,811	23,167	82,125	1,406	318,798,858	959,771	332,161,517
2	France	3,274,608		77,952		228,472	2,968,184	3,277	50,101	1,193	45,205,557	691,640	65,359,921
3	UK	3,892,459		110,250		1,828,510	1,953,699	3,625	57,159	1,619	75,610,452	1,110,302	68,098,996
4	Brazil	9,397,769		228,883		8,291,763	877,123	8,318	44,026	1,072	28,600,000	133,982	213,460,896
5	Belgium	718,847	+2,452	21,260	+44	49,441	648,146	306	61,864	1,830	8,447,768	727,017	11,619,763
6	Russia	3,934,606	+16,688	75,732	+527	3,413,495	445,379	2,300	26,955	519	103,600,000	709,725	145,971,935
7	Italy	2,597,446		90,241		2,076,928	430,277	2,151	42,998	1,494	33,603,023	556,263	60,408,532
8	Serbia	402,700		4,085		31,536	367,079	138	46,201	469	2,664,142	305,652	8,716,246
9	Mexico	1,899,820	+13,575	162,922	+1,682	1,461,011	275,887	5,692	14,643	1,256	4,805,195	37,037	129,739,348
10	Poland	1,539,564	+6,053	38,712	+368	1,294,687	206,165	1,338	40,706	1,024	8,835,802	233,617	37,821,768
11	Switzerland	531,873	+1,584	9,570	+14	317,600	204,703	253	61,188	1,101	4,479,886	515,381	8,692,379
12	Germany	2,267,062	+1,568	61,008	+123	2,008,200	197,854	4,222	27,007	727	40,705,522	484,912	83,944,131
13	Indonesia	1,134,854	+11,749	31,202	+201	926,980	176,672		4,123	113	9,578,686	34,800	275,245,757
14	Ireland	200,744		3,586		23,364	173,794	181	40,386	721	3,150,632	633,852	4,970,615
15	Argentina	1,961,635		48,700		1,754,705	158,230	3,570	43,167	1,072	6,393,504	140,693	45,442,913



Global Case to Fatality Ratios

2.2 COVID-19 World News

- [Europol Warning on the Illicit Sale of False Negative COVID-19 Test Certificates](#)
Europol has released a warning about illegal sales of false COVID-19 test certificates for travel purposes. As long as travel restrictions remain in place, this type of illicit activity will likely grow, and criminals will continue to try to capitalize on this opportunity. In Europe, they have found a forgery ring which was providing negative tests for arrival into an airport in France, and in the UK, they found these documents sold for about \$100 GBP. In Spain, an individual was charged with selling fake tests for approximately \$40 EUR. Production of such fake documents is not difficult considering the various technological advances including superior printers and software which produces high quality forged documents.
- [AstraZeneca vaccine appears to substantially reduce transmission of the coronavirus, study shows](#)
UK researchers are releasing information that finds the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is not only effective in preventing symptomatic infections, but also appears to be effective at reducing the transmission of the virus. The analysis also found that giving more time between first, with up to six weeks, and second doses is beneficial and that good efficacy (70%) is found after just one dose. Even three months after one dose, the study estimates that efficacy of 76%. The study has cautioned that it is preliminary and did not directly measure the reduction of transmission in the vaccinated, and that these findings should be confirmed by other analyses. Confirmation of reduction in transmission from vaccination is of utmost importance in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19, a fact not yet confirmed by science but as more and more vaccinations are taking place, it will likely soon have more data on this matter.
- [COVID-19 rarely spreads through surfaces. So why are we still deep cleaning?](#)
At the beginning of the pandemic, sources of infection of COVID-19 were not as well known, and precautions were taken by many to ensure that surface transmission is not a driving factor of COVID-19. Even today, sanitization protocols are advertised as COVID-19 health measures, with every mall store requiring an individual to sanitize their hands upon entering. However, as more research has been undertaken, spread through contaminated surfaces (known as fomites) has become less worrisome as a source of transmission. The American CDC concluded that surface transmission is “not thought to be the common way that COVID-19 spreads.” Studies looking at viral RNA in an effort to decipher how long the virus remains on surfaces, some which found days long surface contamination, do not necessarily mean the virus is active. It is equivalent to finding a corpse, no longer alive, and no longer infectious. The fact that the virus can survive on surfaces does not mean it is infectious. However, it’s easier to clean surfaces than to improve ventilation, and providing an appearance and feeling of safety to customers, and even oneself. Surface disinfectant sales have increased over 30% since the pandemic started, and despite the CDC stating it is not a common mode of transmission, it still expresses that frequent disinfection of surfaces is “important”. Meanwhile, an important and yet not well studied form of transmission is aerosol transmission, in which droplets are airborne. In places such as crowded malls, it is likely that touch surfaces may hold a lot less transmission possibility than aerosol transmission, yet little is done by many to improve ventilation. For now, it appears that sanitization procedures are a mere self-comfort measure, with over 75% of respondents in one survey suggesting they feel safer when cleaning and disinfecting procedures are used.
- [The Virus Variant Spreading in Britain May Make Vaccines Less Effective, Study Shows](#)
The UK is reporting that the new B.1.1.7 variant may be harder to control with current vaccinations, making them less effective against it, but still providing some protection. The mutations allow the variant to stick to cells better, thus increasing transmission by 25% to 40%. The mutation for the UK variant appears to be similar as the one for the South African variant, suggesting the virus is mutating in a similar way, or at least surviving and continuing the most useful of variations in more than one variant. The variant has now been reported in

over 72 countries and is beginning to be the dominant variant in some of these countries. A study which looked at the specific mutation has found that it was difficult for antibodies found from people who have received the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine to neutralize the virus. Some new evidence may also suggest it could cause more deaths, although this will still need to be confirmed.

- [Israel to Widen Covid-19 Vaccines to General Public as Cases Surge Due to UK variant](#)

Countries are in a vaccination race against the UK variant, which is beginning to become the dominant variant in some areas. Israel began inoculating everyone over the age of 16, with new cases surging and about 80% of which come from the UK variant. Israel's goal is to vaccinate all of its population by March, and currently has the world's fastest COVID-19 vaccination drive. Israel has already given the first dose of the vaccine to over a third of its population, and about 20% of the population is fully vaccinated. Israel is providing anonymous health data to Pfizer, and as a small country will likely act as a field experiment of the COVID-19 vaccine and its efficacy.

- [AstraZeneca, Oxford expect 'next generation' COVID-19 vaccine to tackle variants by autumn - executive](#)
- [Brazil to allow emergency use of COVID-19 vaccines tested abroad](#)
- [Coming Soon: The 'Vaccine Passport'](#)
- [BioNTech promises 75 million additional vaccine doses for the E.U.](#)
- [Switzerland won't authorize Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, citing lack of data](#)

2.3 Global Awareness

- [WHO team in Wuhan hold "good discussions" with Chinese counterparts](#)

An investigation team by WHO into the origins of COVID-19 are currently in China, and have recently visited the country's CDC in Hubei, where the outbreak began. Spending 4.5 hours in the facility after completing two weeks of quarantine, and the team's reports having "very good discussion" with its Chinese counterparts. The team can only visit where its Chinese hosts have provided consent, and are not allowed to speak with any community members. The areas they have been visiting include the seafood market linked to the outbreak, hospitals which saw the beginning of the outbreak and an exhibition about the battle with the pandemic. The group still doesn't know its upcoming itinerary but reports having their questions answered while still having further questions. It is clear that China is trying to control the investigation and only show what they are wanting the team to see. It is unclear how a proper investigation can be done when the group investigating cannot conduct the searches it wishes or speak to community members, showcasing China's possible attempt at hiding the truth behind the pandemic's origins.

- ['It's a perfect storm': A shipping container crisis has upended the global food trade](#)

Due to global competition for ribbed steel containers, there is problems in the supply changes of food, with each country having difficulties shipping its exports. China's economy has bounced better than other countries, and is not paying extra for containers, making it more profitable to send them empty to China than fill them with content. Typically, they are filled to ensure that profit is made in both directions. This is causing many countries to reduce its shipping, including India which shipped only one fifth of the volume it did this January compared to last years. It is also believed that shipping prices can more than double this year, further increasing the cost of many items.

- [Are Private Messaging Apps the Next Misinformation Hot Spot?](#)

Encrypted messaging systems have typically been used by people in jobs high in confidentiality, such as law enforcement, journalism and politics. However, last month, tens of millions of people downloaded Signal or Telegram, private messaging apps. The new users include those who are worried about WhatsApp's (which is owned by Facebook) new privacy policy, and by users of the social platform Parlor, as well as those banned from posting on Twitter and Facebook. It is worrisome that some of these platforms may also be places for spreading misinformation or for criminals to take advantage of. Facebook allows content to be visible not just from your friends, but also content first uploaded by those other than your friends. In private messaging apps, information can only be shared between individuals who know each other's account telephone numbers. Facebook is similar to a large auditorium full of people, while encrypted apps act similarly to a large house with private rooms in which each person is required to knock on another's door to pass information. Due to the amount of privacy invasion by online apps and websites, it is likely good to have platforms in which information can be sent in an encrypted and confidential format.

Analyst Note: *Check out WikrMe as an alternative encrypted data and voice application.*

- [Jailed Kremlin critic Navalny's wife tells allies: we'll win anyway](#)
- [COVID's mental-health toll: how scientists are tracking a surge in depression](#)

2.4 Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism

- [Kremlin says thousands of arrests at protests was necessary response](#)

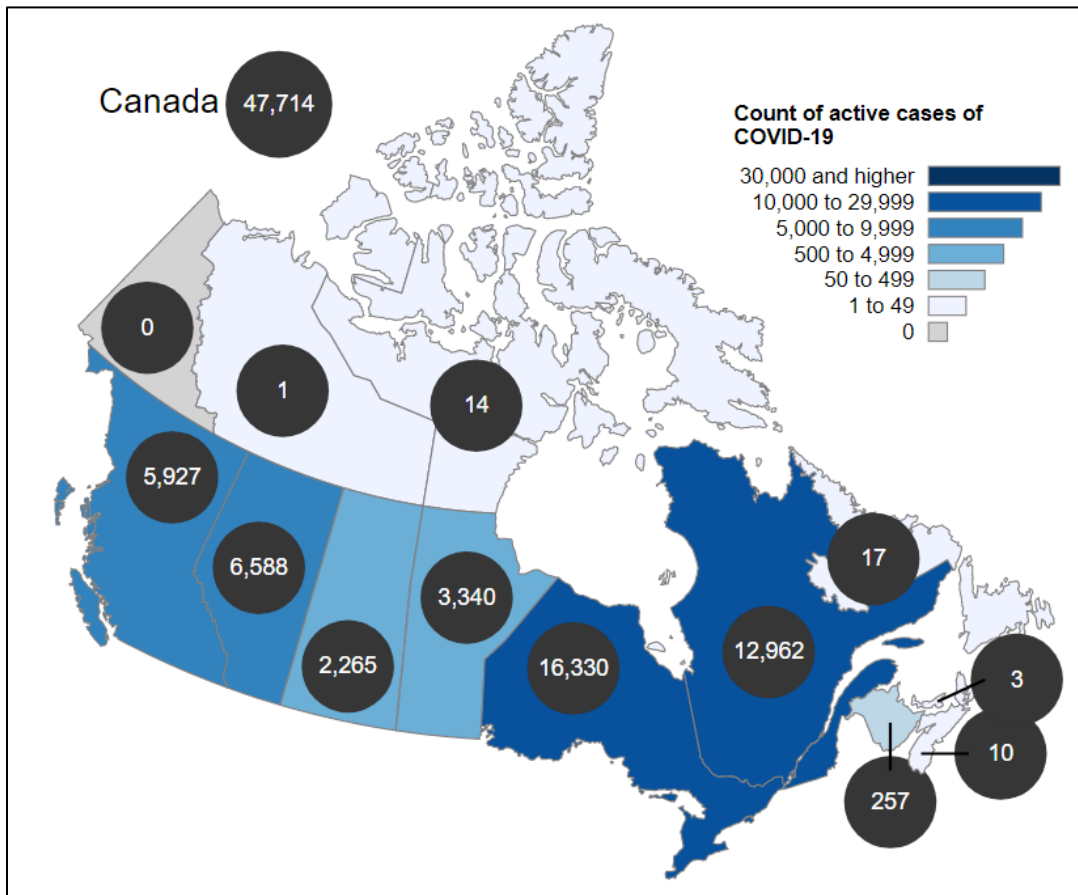
Responding to Western criticism, the Russian government stated that it was necessary to detain thousands of people protesting against the opposition leader Alexei Navalny and his prison sentence. Officials blamed demonstrators for provoking law enforcement and not vice versa. Navalny, was poisoned by a Russian nerve agent and spent five months recovering from the poisoning which has been blamed on the Kremlin. However, the Kremlin refused to take responsibility despite various European lab tests showing it was most likely conducted by Russian authorities. This week, Navalny was sentenced to two years and eight months in prison, for violating his probation terms while he was recovering in Germany. Protests supporting Navalny have taken place in all Russian 11 time zones in the last two weeks, with tens of thousands protesting against Putin in some of the largest anti-Putin protests in years.


Analyst Note: *This unrest is likely to see heavy handed repercussions by Russian authorities which could increase the volatility of future protests or activism.*

- [Farmers' protest: Why did a Rihanna tweet prompt Indian backlash?](#)
- [Anti-coup protest on streets of Myanmar's second city](#)

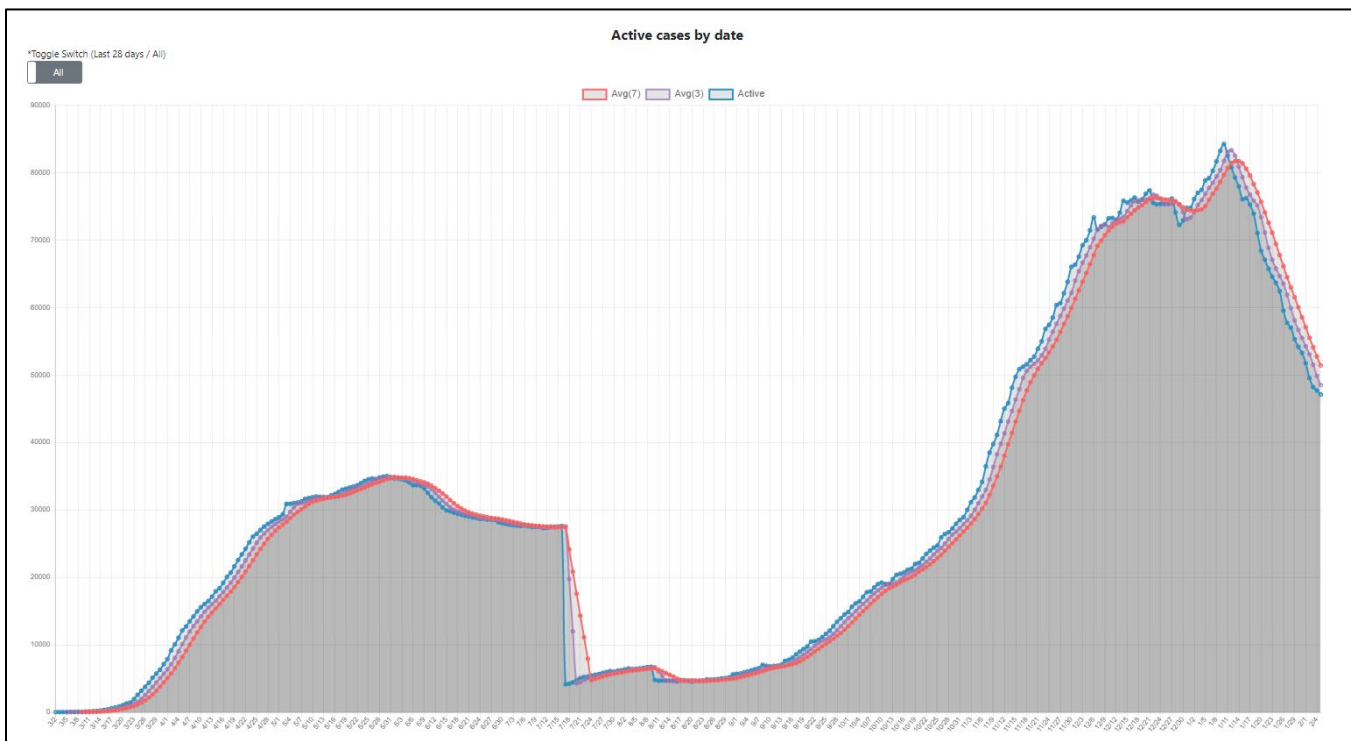
3. CANADA

3.1 COVID UPDATE



Prov.	Total Confirmed	Total Deaths	Total Recovered	Total Active
Total	795,407 (↑1,670)	20,558 (↑45)	727,744 (↑2,233)	47,105 (-608)
BC	69,245	1,240	62,078	5,927
ON	275,330 (↑1,670)	6,438 (↑45)	253,170 (↑2,233)	15,722 (-608)
QC	266,672	9,941	243,769	12,962
AB	125,672	1,684	117,400	6,588
MB	29,968	837	25,791	3,340
NB	1,318	18	1,043	257
SK	24,680	329	22,086	2,265
PEI	112	0	110	2
NL	411	4	390	17
NS	1,584	65	1,509	10
YT	70	1	69	0
NT	36	0	35	1
NU	296	1	281	14
	13	0	13	0
Rate of change	↑ 0.2%	↑ 0.2%	↑ 0.3%	-1.3%

Prov.	Total Test	Total Waiting	Total Hosp	Total ICU
Total	22,493,407	-	-	-
BC	1,751,908	-	257	76
ON	9,849,313	47,282	1043 (-58)	325 (+2)
QC	5,985,249	-	1070	175
AB	3,213,391	-	517	93
MB	484,302	-	109	20
NB	205,919	-	5	2
SK	517,756	-	216	30
PEI	89,856	-	-	-
NL	81,345	-	0	0
NS	289,252	-	2	1
YT	6,323	27	-	-
NT	12,273	22	0	0
NU	6,520	323	0	0
Rate of change	↑ 0.0%	-	-	-



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

3.2 COVID-19 Canada News

- [EU says it has authorized vaccine delivery to Canada](#)

With Canada having no facilities to currently manufacture a vaccine, Canada is relying on the European Union (EU) manufacturing facilities for its doses. However, the EU has recently attempted to put in an export ban on vaccinations to ensure it is receiving all the doses it requires. The Canadian Minister of International Trade, as

well as the Prime Minister Trudeau advised they had verbal conversations with EU officials that promised Canada's doses will not be affected. However, Canada is not on the official exemption to the export control list, despite other countries such as Norway and Iceland being on the list. As such, it is unclear whether the verbal promises of EU officials are sufficient to ensure the information is correct. With the rise of variants, the supply of vaccinations is crucial in ensuring they do not spread, with both vaccines approved by Health Canada suggesting they offer protection against the variant. However, it is unclear whether this may hold true for future variants.

- [How the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine differs from those already approved in Canada](#)
The Novavax vaccine has just applied to Health Canada for Emergency Use, and Prime Minister Trudeau announced that Canada is partnering up with Novavax to produce the vaccine in a Canadian manufacturing facility. This will be the first vaccine manufactured in Canada. The vaccine differs in its mechanism of how it is engineered in inducing an immune response in the body. When nanoparticles of a lab grown spike protein, which are meant to mimic the natural spike protection, are put together with an adjuvant (a compound that enhances immune response), the body recognizes and then fights off the virus. Novavax uses a proprietary adjuvant called Matrix-M, that the company says it boosts the body's immune response and generates a bigger immune response with a lower dose.
- [Moderna is reducing vaccine deliveries this month. Canada doesn't know why](#)
- [It's time to tighten up the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy](#)
- [The numbers are in: Canada's COVID-fighting efforts are among world's worst](#)
- [Ottawa warns provinces to expect further disruptions to Moderna vaccine shipments this month](#)
- [Pandemic fatigue cuts support for Dr. Bonnie Henry, Adrian Dix](#)

3.3 Canada Awareness

- [Confused about the new travel restrictions? Expert breaks it down](#)
New travel restrictions were put together by the federal government last week, and some may not be clear about the exact requirements. Travelers must still finish a mandatory 14-day quarantine upon arrival. Additionally, previous to departure (up until 72 hours), Canadians must take a PCR COVID-19 test and present the airline with a negative result. Now, travelers must also take another PCR test upon landing in Canada, and will be required to quarantine in a government-supervised hotel for up to three days (at an approximately cost of about \$2,000) until they receive a negative result. If your result is negative you can complete the remainder of your quarantine at home, but must take a test at day 10. For those who refuse to stay at the hotel may face a fine of up to \$750,000 or up to six months in prison. Exemptions to the rule include essential workers including temporary foreign workers, people who move essential goods, and people who are receiving non COVID-19 medical care. The government has also suspended all flights from Mexico and the Caribbean countries until April 30, 2021. This set of restrictions has been called the "biggest blow by far to the travel industry since the beginning of the pandemic", and is put in place in order to ensure the reduction in transmission of the new variants from overseas. The plan is not yet ready for rollout and as such, travelers are not yet subject to the mandatory quarantine hotel stay until at least February 14.
- [Cruise vessels banned from Canadian waters until February 2022](#)
Canadian Transport Minister Omar Alghabra said that cruise vessels that carry more than 100 people will not be allowed to operate in Canadian waters until February 2022. This temporary ban will allow the health care

system to continue to protect the vulnerable in our communities and reduce the impact on the healthcare system.

- [Canada puts Proud Boys on terror list, cites active security threat](#)
- [Cancer that went undetected during the pandemic an 'impending disaster,' specialists warn](#)

3.4 Canada – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism



welund

each).

During the week of 28 January – 4 February 2021, the majority of activist activity noted by Welund in Canada took place in the government sector (38%), followed by finance (28%). Protests made up the majority of activity (21%), followed by critical commentary and organizing (17%

In general, activist activity in Canada slowed down over the past week. This could be attributed to the onset of freezing temperatures in multiple regions, as well as covid-19 health restrictions and lockdowns. Many groups have also recently welcomed a series of perceived victories with the announcement of climate change policies by major Canadian financial institutions and the cancellation of the Keystone XL (KXL) pipeline permits in the US. These ‘victories’ occurred after focused and long-term efforts. As such, activists may also be experiencing a period of campaign ‘fatigue’ and are taking the opportunity to recuperate, fundraise, and organize members for upcoming actions later in the year. Many groups are also likely adapting to the changing political and economic landscape as a result of the newly elected Biden administration.

Protests: On 29 January 2021, all five major Canadian banks were the target of a national day-of-action. Activists participating in the ‘Fossil Banks, No Thanks!’ campaign executed a series of in-person and online actions to demand banks divest from fossil fuels. RBC experienced the greatest volume of targeted in-person actions. Other Canadian banks were targeted with poster campaigns outside of branches and at ATMs. The majority of the actions were held virtually, as campaign groups performed call-in, email, and social media ‘zap’ campaigns targeting branch managers and the CEOs of the various major banks. Canadian Extinction Rebellion groups held an anti-Trans Mountain (TMX) march and protest in Vancouver demanding the federal government cancel the project. Four activists were arrested for blockading the entrance to the Port of Vancouver. Anti-lockdown protesters in Toronto attempted to execute a ‘shopping swarm’ to protest against the provinces covid-19 restrictions. Several protesters were arrested. Well-known anti-lockdown protest organizer Chris Sky was allegedly banned from the city after his arrest at the protest.

Outlook: Anti-TMX activists will hold a series of upcoming protests and direct actions in the coming weeks. Campaigners have organized a day-of-action in Burnaby on 15 February, during the Family Day long weekend. An activist group in Burnaby is also looking to fill a project coordinator position focused on future anti-TMX actions and campaigns in the region. Climate change campaign groups asserted that the ‘Fossil Banks No Thanks!’ day-of-action was the first of a series of planned actions against Canadian banks in 2021. Activists have claimed they will target banks leading up to and during their Annual General Meetings (AGMs) in the spring, as well as on Earth Day on 22 April. Anti-lockdown campaign groups will also likely increase activity over the next few weeks as some provinces implement further lockdown measures and in response to the recent ‘returning traveler’ mandates implemented by the federal government. A series of anti-mask marches have been planned in Calgary to protest against the Alberta Government’s covid-19 mandates. Additionally, groups campaigning to defend constitutional rights are planning to file lawsuits against the new federal covid-19 restrictions.



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

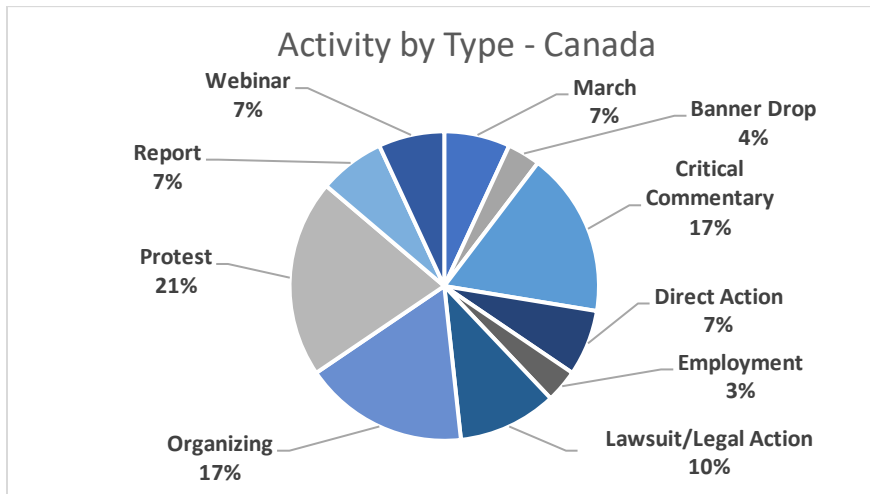


Figure 2 Activist activity in Canada by type as noted by Welund

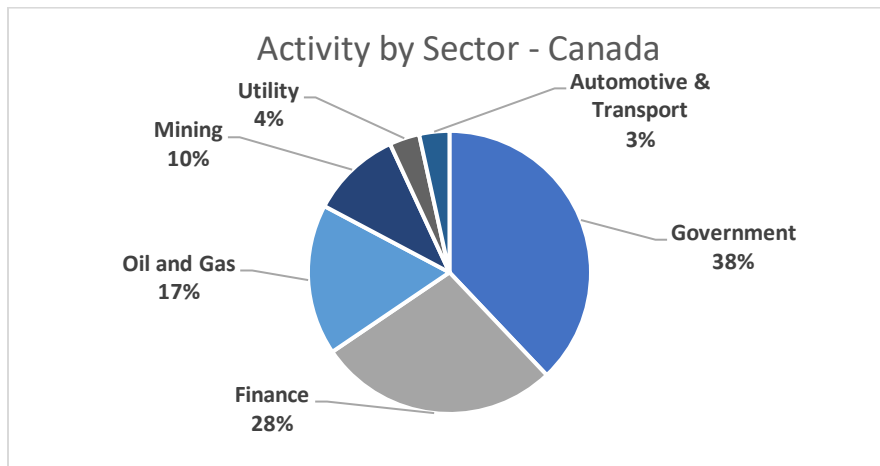
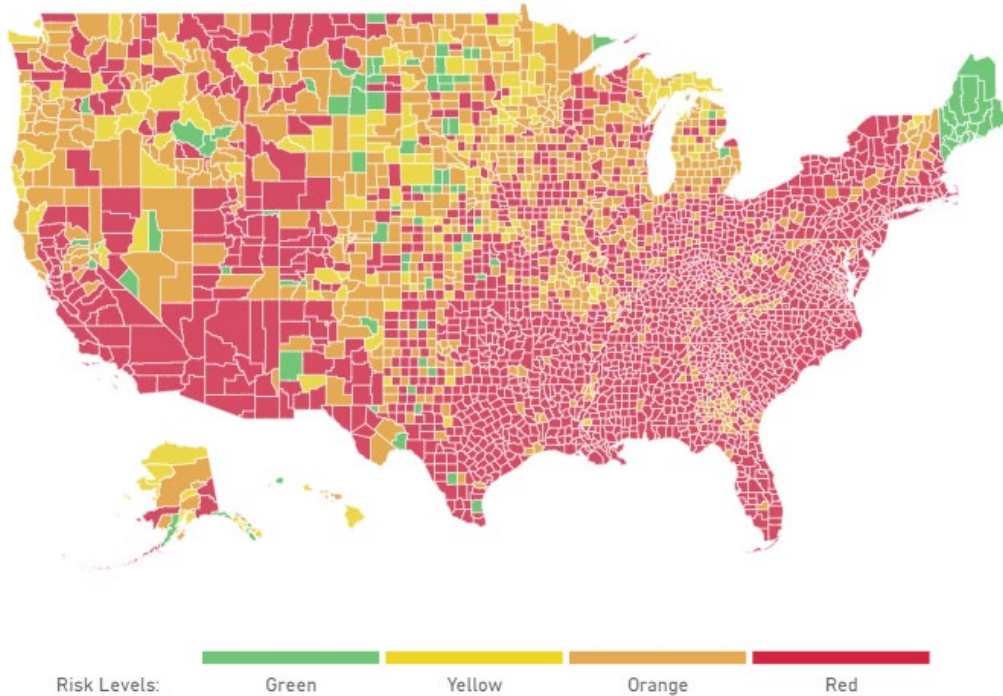


Figure 3 Activist activity in Canada by sector as noted by Welund.

4. USA

4.1 COVID UPDATE

Risk Levels by County



#	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	27,278,671	+4,657	467,109	+112	17,034,751	9,776,811	82,412	1,411	318,798,858	963,131	
1	California	3,366,662		42,968		1,643,527	1,680,167	85,206	1,087	43,235,327	1,094,227	39,512,223
2	New York	1,486,879		44,430		566,803	875,646	76,432	2,284	32,782,663	1,685,175	19,453,561
3	Florida	1,752,330		27,249		912,042	813,039	81,588	1,269	19,474,886	906,748	21,477,737
4	Arizona	771,796		13,752		106,058	651,986	106,035	1,889	3,924,293	539,146	7,278,717
5	Georgia	928,070		14,756		404,327	508,987	87,410	1,390	7,010,956	660,326	10,617,423
6	Virginia	516,398		6,650		41,067	468,681	60,500	779	6,628,525	776,581	8,535,519
7	Texas	2,468,913		38,697		2,069,351	360,865	85,147	1,335	20,664,753	712,679	28,995,881
8	Maryland	360,584	+1,547	7,287	+36	9,514	343,783	59,643	1,205	7,144,618	1,181,772	6,045,680
9	Kentucky	372,012		3,921		44,394	323,697	83,268	878	4,138,554	926,333	4,467,673
10	Missouri	504,452		7,688		207,432	289,332	82,193	1,253	5,019,003	817,770	6,137,428
11	New Jersey	709,096		21,793		413,568	273,735	79,833	2,454	9,552,440	1,075,460	8,882,190
12	Colorado	400,851		5,677		121,682	273,492	69,607	986	2,427,143	421,471	5,758,736
13	South Carolina	453,878		7,487		202,372	244,019	88,154	1,454	5,086,109	987,841	5,148,714
14	Indiana	633,690		11,637		412,819	209,234	94,128	1,729	7,150,804	1,062,176	6,732,219
15	Alabama	467,823		8,365		252,880	206,578	95,412	1,706	2,290,060	467,056	4,903,185

4.2 COVID-19 USA News

- [Covid Stress on U.S. Hospitals Is Easing as Case Numbers Fall](#)
Since their peaks, many states are reporting decreasing COVID-19 hospitalization numbers. California, a state that saw the most hospitalizations has observed a 34% reduction in COVID-19 cases since mid-January, with almost 6,000 less people in hospitals. Only three states have over 20% of patients in hospital for COVID-19 reasons; Arizona, California and Georgia, down from 11 states in mid-January.
- [70% to 85% of Americans need to be fully vaccinated for a return to normal, Fauci says. So far it's less than 2%](#)
According to health officials, at least 70% to 85% of the USA population must be vaccinated in order for a return to normal. To date, only about 2% of Americans have been vaccinated, with 26.4 million people receiving their first dose while 6 million have received both doses. It is hoped that a high level of vaccinations can be achieved by the end of the summer, or at least the beginning of the fall, but is dependent on the transmission of new variants, some of which are more transmissible and are more resilient to current vaccinations. FEMA has provided states with over \$1.7 billion dollars to assist in vaccination efforts, which are being aided by pharmacies and other organizations.
- [Biden administration weighs plan to directly send masks to all Americans](#)
A plan to send every American a cloth mask was scrapped last year by the Trump administration, but the Biden administration is again entertaining the strategy. Biden requested that all Americans wear a mask for the first 100 days of his term and also signed various executive orders that require people wear masks on federal property and on public transit. The number of masks required and the cost of such a plan has not been released. Last year, the Department of Health and Human Services signed a total of \$640 million in contracts under the Project American Strong, with the largest contract given to Hanes, making 450 million masks in two months.
- [Here's the new Democratic plan for \\$1,400 stimulus checks](#)
- [Many who have received the coronavirus vaccine wonder: What can I safely do?](#)
- [The other rebellion: Dozens of Michigan restaurants defy state coronavirus order](#)

4.3 USA Awareness

- [China's Push to Control Americans' Health Care Future](#)
- [Pentagon, stumped by extremism in ranks, orders stand-down in next 60 days](#)
The USA Pentagon has acknowledged that is unsure how it would address white nationalism and similar extremism within its ranks, and is also planning to have military wide stand downs which pause regular activity in the next 60 days in order to figure out the issue. This has been planned since information was released that some individuals who participated in the Capitol riots were current and former military members. The stand down, or pause, is believed to try to accomplish two different things: leaders of each branch can communicate their expectations of how troops should behave, as well as assist leaders in gaining insight from the members on the scope of the problem from their view. As political views are generally becoming more extreme on both sides, it will likely be important for an organization like the Pentagon to define a racist, extremist, or white nationalist as it is a label that has yet to have an operational definition or measurement. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a white nationalist is "one of a group of militant whites who espouse white supremacy and advocate enforced racial segregation". Such a definition will likely not suffice, as it requires

further definition of racial segregation and white supremacy. It is necessary to quantify one's racist or extremist qualities, a measure yet to be decided, before an organization would be able to deny employment due to personal opinions.

- [Fearing violence and political uncertainty, Americans are buying millions more firearms](#)

After the USA Capitol riot, firearms sales in the USA soared in January. Last month alone, at least another \$2 million firearms were bought last month, an 80% hike from last year and the third highest one-month total on record. In 2020, over 23 million firearms were purchased, a 64% increase from the previous year. The surge in firearms sales reflects the political uncertainty felt by Americans, and some Americans are reporting to buy firearms as an investment, similar to buying gold or silver. Some first-time gun owners are reporting being unable to trust that the police can protect them, especially after some police agencies were overwhelmed by protestors during last summer, after the George Floyd protests. The majority of guns sold were small handguns, to be used for self-defense or personal safety, and are not used for hunting or other recreational reasons for owning a gun. As Americans become more and more distrusting of their government, and foreign state actors amplify such feelings with online disinformation and attempts at division, the USA is increasingly coming closer to a state of lawlessness and turmoil which will not only be some citizens against the government, but possible disorder and chaos with a civil battle between citizen vs citizen.

- [Biden signs immigration orders as Congress awaits more](#)

- [Suspected Chinese hackers used SolarWinds bug to spy on U.S. payroll agency – sources](#)

- [Biden Announces End of U.S. Support to Saudi War in Yemen](#)

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



and webinars (9%).

During the week of 28 January - 4 February 2021, the majority of activist activity in the US noted by Welund took place in the government sector (51%), followed by oil and gas (18%) and utility (12%). Protests made up most activity (36%), followed by marches (16%) and critical commentary

Overall, there has been less noted activity since President Biden's inauguration. Activist campaigns have been focused on the new administration and the issues that it will and will not address. The deplatforming of many right-wing and far-right activists in the aftermath of the riot at the US Capitol may still be contributing to reduced activism. The winter storm, especially on the East Coast, may have also contributed to the overall decline in activity.

Welund has observed a renewed focus on the Green New Deal (GND). As part of its campaigning around a GND, the Sunrise Movement outlined the 'core tenets' of its call for wide-ranging political, social, and economic reforms to address climate change. On 2 February, the Green New Deal Network launched its '100 Days for Climate, Jobs and Justice: Winning the THRIVE Agenda' campaign, which aims to "revive our economy while addressing these interlocking crises of climate change, racial injustice, public health, and economic inequity."

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. New York, Minnesota, and California saw the most protests this week.

There has been continued opposition, direct actions, and protests against Enbridge’s Line 3 in Minnesota. There were direct actions against the pipeline on 29 January, and 1 and 2 February. Actions included locking-on to construction equipment, locking-on to each other between barrels, and entering trenches to disrupt construction.

On 30 January, anti-vaccine protesters gathered in Los Angeles and blocked the entrance to Dodger Stadium – which is serving as one of the largest covid-19 vaccination sites in the US. 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.

Outlook: Welund continues to monitor covid-19 cases across the US for indications that additional lockdown measures may inspire protests and demonstrations, similar to those that attracted nationwide media attention in April and May 2020 and those taking place in Canada.

Activists will seek to continue to build on Keystone XL (KXL) success, and use the decision to call on Biden to cancel other pipelines, like the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and Line 3 pipeline. Anti-pipeline and fossil fuel divestment campaigners claimed a success after reports indicated that DAPL lost its insurance bond in Iowa.

On 8-14 February, the Build Back Fossil Free (BBFF) campaign will host a ‘week of action’ demanding that President Biden “build back fossil free” and hold him “accountable to his promises for bold climate action.”

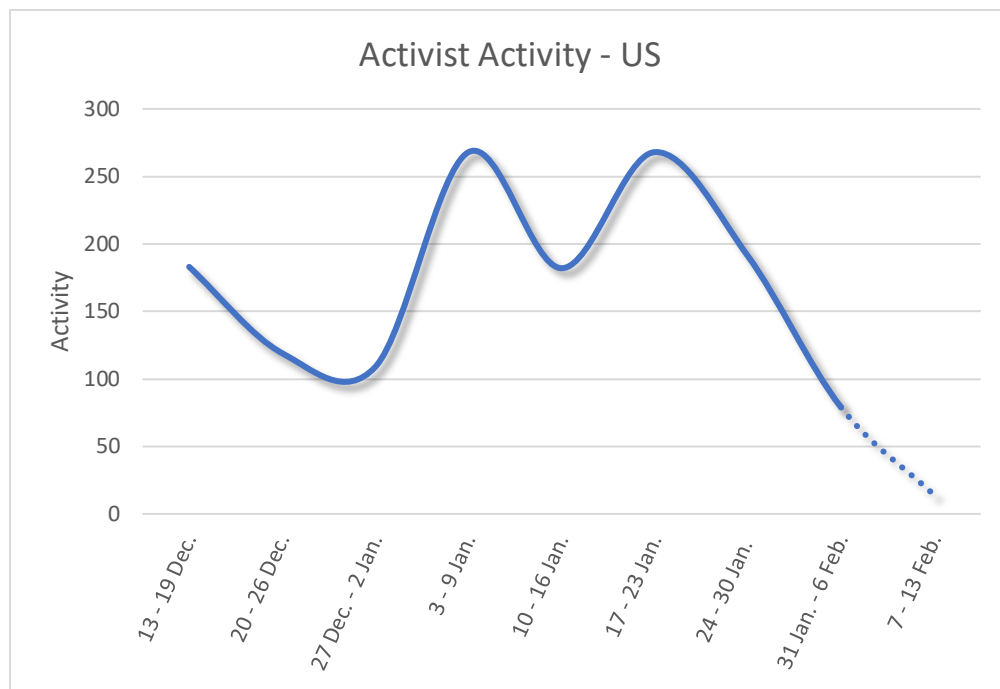


Figure 4 Total activist activity in the US as noted by Welund North America.

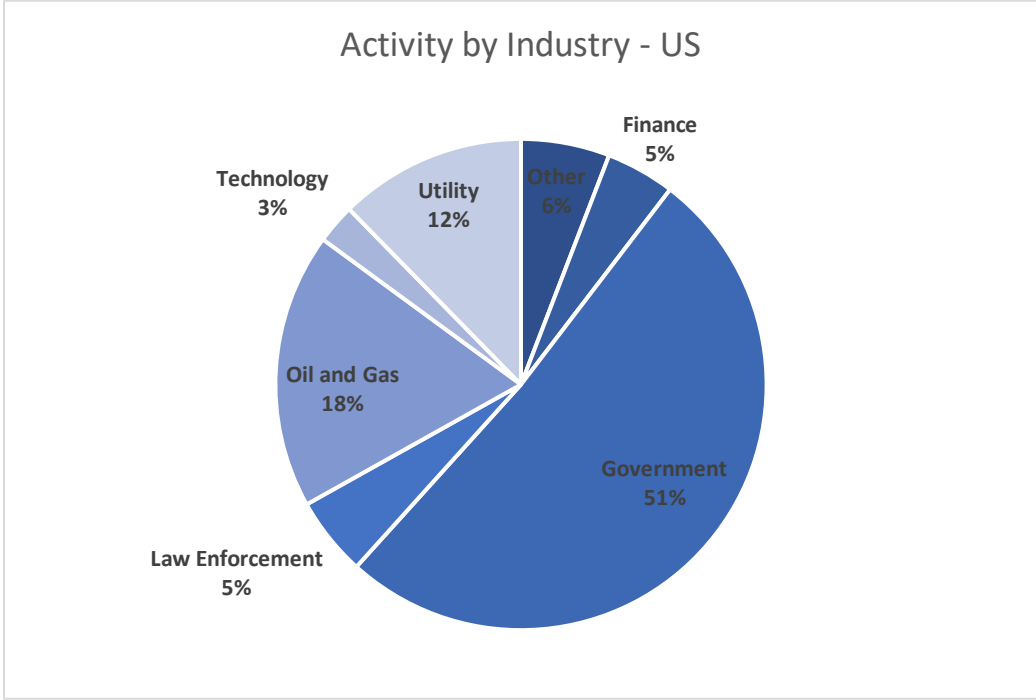


Figure 5 Activist activity in the US by industry as noted by Welund

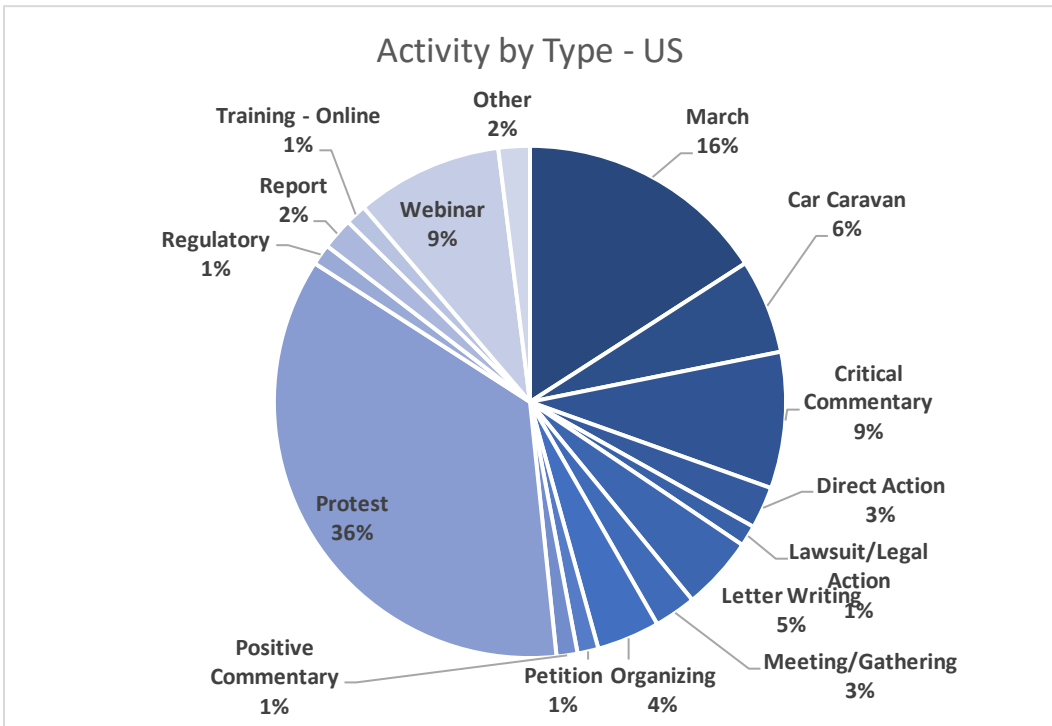



Figure 6 Activist activity in the US by type as noted by Welund North America.

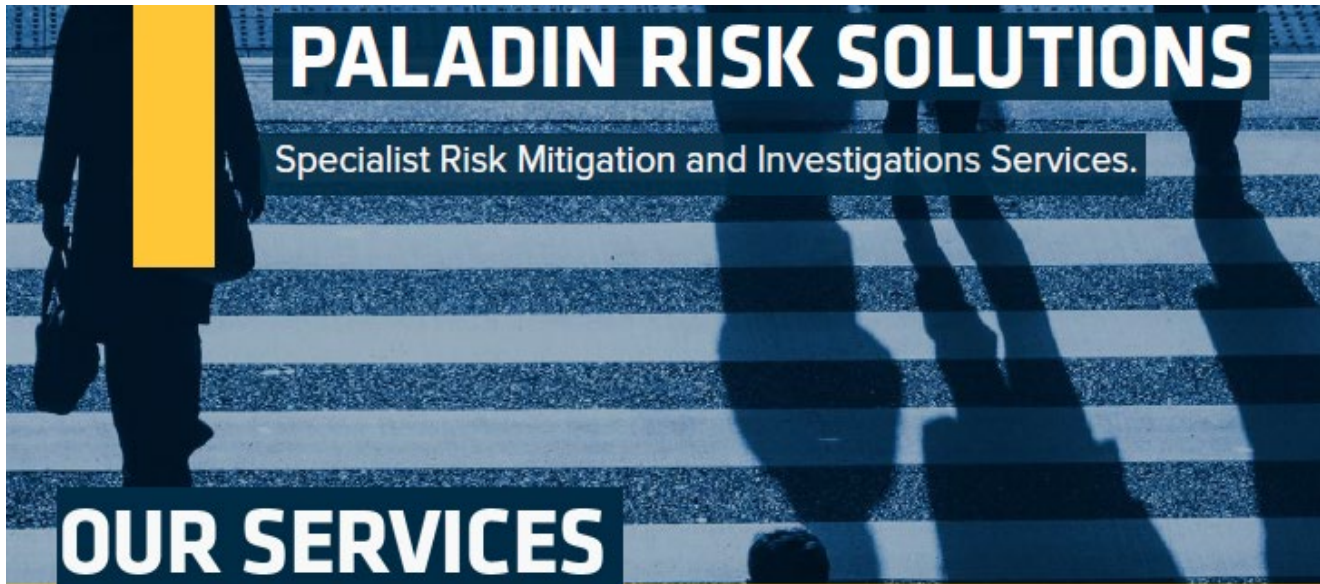
End Report

Please submit feedback to:

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