



INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Situational awareness for stakeholders and decision makers.



Report # 21-015

26 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

Ransomware has become the largest cyber threat faced by the healthcare industry to date, especially during the pandemic, where hospitals are already strained and at a heightened operation tempo. Cyber threats account for at least 28% of targeted attacks on healthcare. An example of where ransomware occurs includes when criminals lock a hospital's cyber systems, such as patient and personnel records, and demand a ransom be paid to unlock the data. \$123 million was demanded and received from hospitals in return for access to patient records, and some have not been able to get information back even with after a ransom was paid.

Ransomware is detrimental in many ways, including delaying or entirely cancelling patient care due to locked out digital records as well as treatments. The main motivations appear to be medical identity theft, theft and sales of stolen information on the black market and unauthorized access to or theft of the patient's information. Additionally, thieves may be interested in stealing intellectual property or information pertaining to clinic or operational practices of the company. The reputational damage this kind of attack can cause can be extremely significant as patient trust is diminished and legal action may be taken, which could further impact the healthcare entity's financial standing.

Health care organizations and hospitals have not been known to have strong cybersecurity defenses, thus allowing criminals to exploit patient's safety by launching attacks. Ransomware often finds open hospital databases which allow the data to be leaked and then used against them. Often unprotected databases can be found on a local server and specialized equipment that is connected to the server, or these databases exist in SaaS or cloud-based platforms which may leave data exposed and visible.

Hospitals are often also unaware that their security controls may not be effective. Integrated third party software is one way criminals gain access without detection. Third party companies or software are frequently relied upon for tech support, billing or data reporting, and may also lead to further victimization should they be compromised. A due diligence assessment of these third parties is an additional safety measure that healthcare providers should consider.

Forbes reported¹ Thursday 25 February 2021, that hackers broke into the biochemical systems at one of the world's top biology labs, the Oxford University lab studying Covid-19. Forbes stated that, "A breach of the lab could place research data at risk of being stolen, including research into the coronavirus. There's also the threat of sabotaged research, if hackers were able to tinker with the flow of liquids or other aspects of the purification technology... Previously, Russian and North Korean hackers had been blamed for targeting Covid-19 researchers. But while some attacks on organizations studying Covid-19 have been linked to international espionage, the one suffered by Oxford University appears to have been the work of financially motivated criminals, though ones with alleged ties to government hackers."

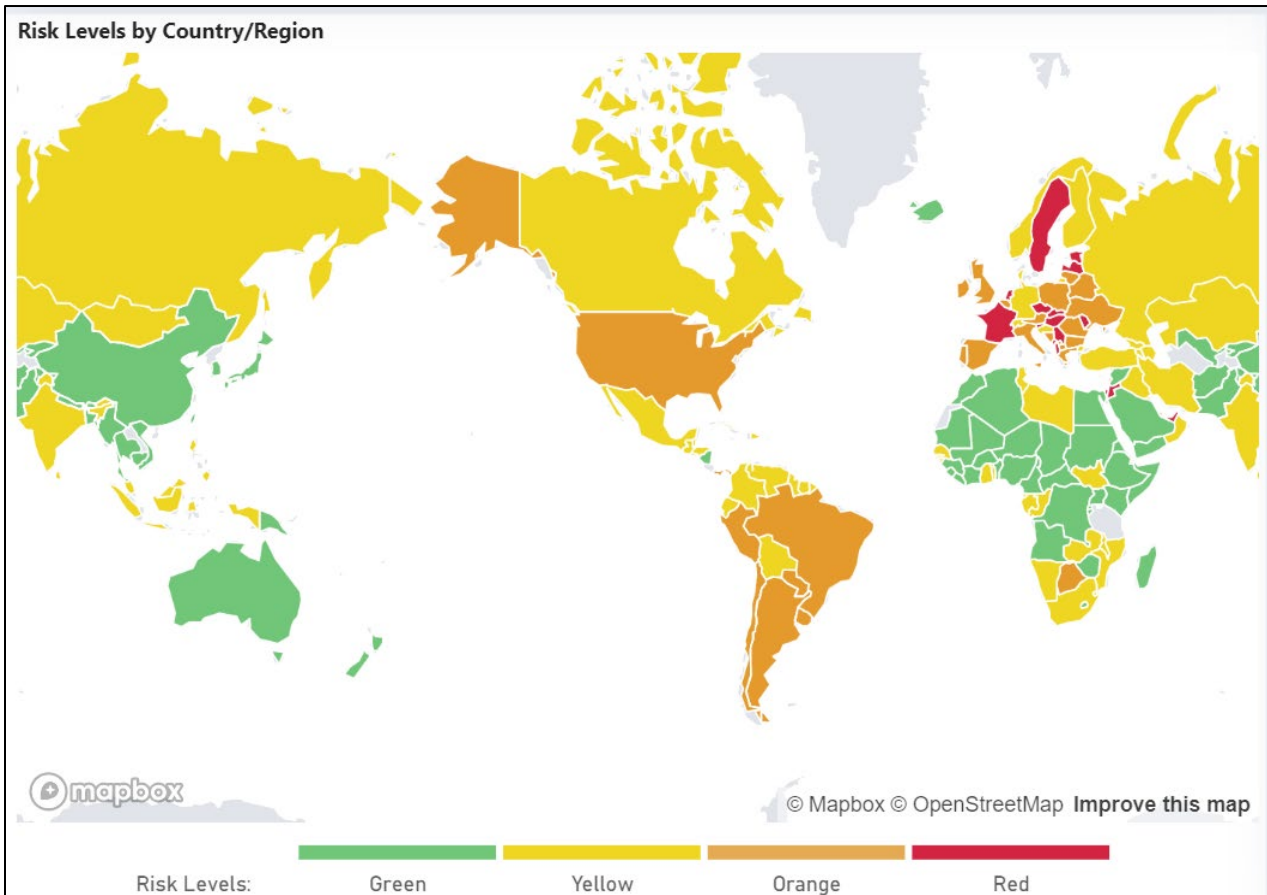
It is worth noting that the Center for internet Security has launched a free ransomware protection service called Malicious Domain Blocking and Reporting (MDBR), for private hospitals in the USA. This service has already been available for public hospitals and health departments and organizations through the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), for which funding is provided by the USA Department of Homeland Security.

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2021/02/25/exclusive-hackers-break-into-biochemical-systems-at-oxford-uni-lab-studying-covid-19/?sh=71dc90602a39>

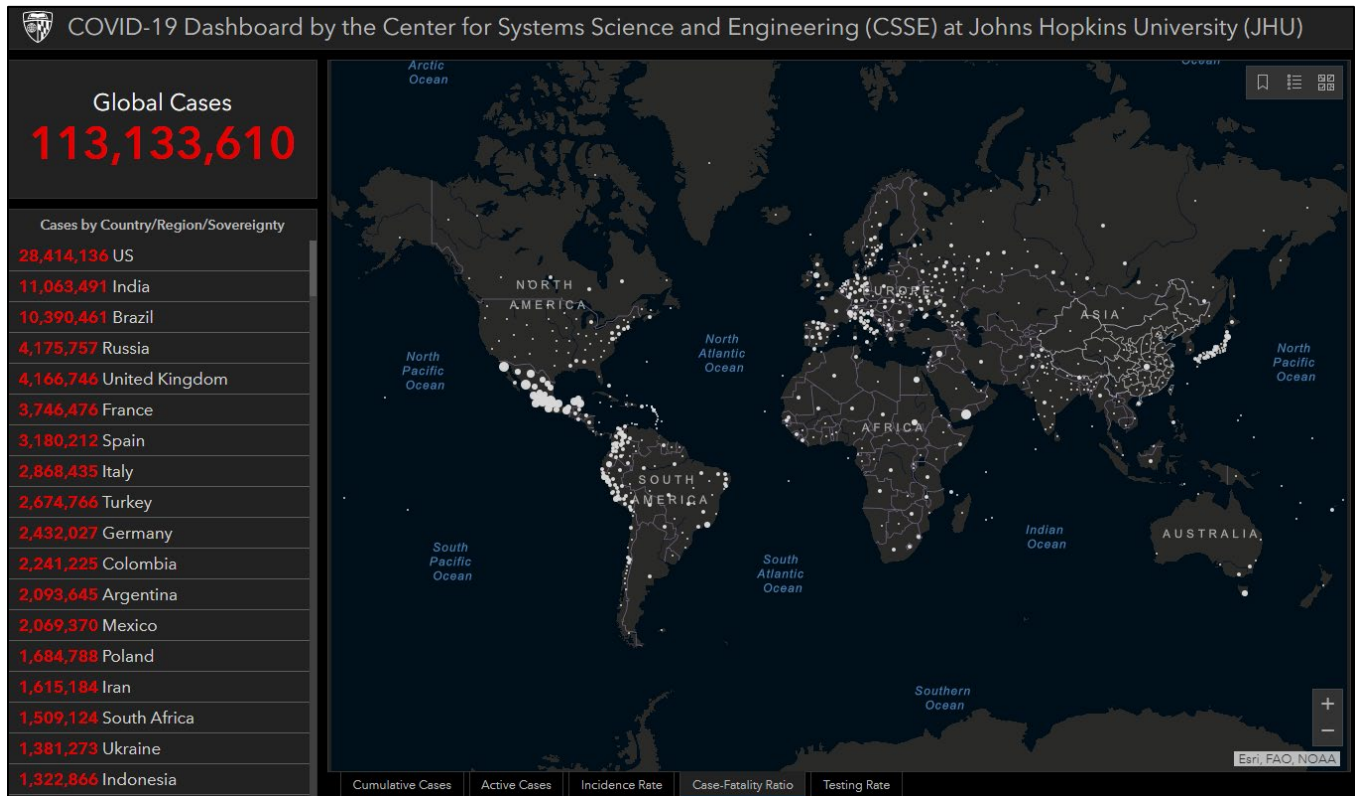
2. GLOBAL

2.1 COVID UPDATE

Country/Region	United States	Country/Region	Canada
Daily new cases per 100k people (7d moving avg.)	21.1	Daily new cases per 100k people (7d moving avg.)	7.8
Risk level	Orange	Risk level	Yellow
Total cases	28,353,026	Total cases	852,269
Total deaths	505,660	Total deaths	21,762



#	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	113,685,446	+146,086	2,521,873	+3,453	89,244,638	21,918,935	91,559	14,585	323.5			
1	USA	29,056,463	+4,201	520,911	+126	19,437,119	9,098,433	15,861	87,448	1,568	354,411,156	1,066,627	332,272,677
2	France	3,686,813		85,582		254,868	3,346,363	3,430	56,401	1,309	51,853,607	793,255	65,368,185
3	UK	4,154,562		122,070		2,727,466	1,305,026	2,118	60,989	1,792	88,387,049	1,297,531	68,119,415
4	Brazil	10,393,886		251,661		9,323,696	818,529	8,318	48,672	1,178	28,600,000	133,928	213,547,458
5	Belgium	763,885	+3,076	22,006	+18	52,091	689,788	362	65,724	1,893	9,343,355	803,892	11,622,651
6	Spain	3,180,212		68,813		2,617,239	494,160	3,123	68,002	1,471	38,491,517	823,055	46,766,659
7	Italy	2,868,435		96,974		2,375,318	396,143	2,168	47,488	1,605	39,317,412	650,913	60,403,451
8	Russia	4,223,186	+11,086	85,304	+428	3,783,386	354,496	2,300	28,931	584	110,200,000	754,921	145,975,513
9	Mexico	2,069,370	+8,462	183,692	+877	1,620,008	265,670	4,798	15,941	1,415	5,384,564	41,478	129,817,023
10	Poland	1,684,788	+11,539	43,353	+259	1,405,552	235,883	1,467	44,548	1,146	9,767,553	258,268	37,819,399
11	Ireland	217,478		4,271		23,364	189,843	137	43,725	859	3,467,852	697,227	4,973,779
12	Iran	1,615,184	+8,103	59,899	+69	1,379,922	175,363	3,720	19,071	707	10,616,717	125,354	84,693,887
13	Indonesia	1,322,866	+8,232	35,786	+268	1,128,672	158,408		4,803	130	10,708,262	38,881	275,411,610
14	India	11,068,521	+5,483	156,890	+29	10,754,497	157,134	8,944	7,969	113	214,661,465	154,559	1,388,864,178
15	Argentina	2,093,645		51,795		1,886,732	155,118	3,467	46,048	1,139	7,322,351	161,049	45,466,686



Global Case to Fatality Ratios

2.2 COVID-19 World News

- [China did 'little' to hunt for Covid origins in early months, says WHO document](#)
An internal WHO document shows that for eight months China did “little” when conducting an epidemiological investigation into the origins of the pandemic. A WHO team that met with Chinese officials in July, in a first meeting of the WHO mission studying the virus, was not provided with any documents or written date during its discussion with the officials. The US national security advisor called on China to make its public records from the early days of the pandemic available to all countries. In the recent January trip to China, the WHO team requested raw patient data of the 174 initial cases, of which half had an exposure to the seafood market the virus was first detected. However, the Chinese government has only provided the mission a summary of the patient data. China’s lack of transparent cooperation with the world on the COVID-19 investigation does not provide it with a positive global view as the majority world is still grappling with the pandemic, if not seeing its worst. Furthermore, it is likely that the less truth is known about what has occurred, the worse it looks for China, despite its attempts at looking innocent and competent. Withholding information has only made the world take more guesses at what actually happened which could be worse than what truly occurred in China during the beginning of the pandemic.
- [Massive Google-funded COVID database will track variants and immunity](#)
- [Pfizer seeks to store vaccine at higher temperatures, easing logistics](#)
- [WHO agrees compensation fund for serious COVAX vaccine side effects](#)
- [Germany approves COVID home tests to ease way out of lockdown](#)
- [UK eyes Israeli vaccine passport as route to speedy re-opening](#)

2.3 Global Awareness

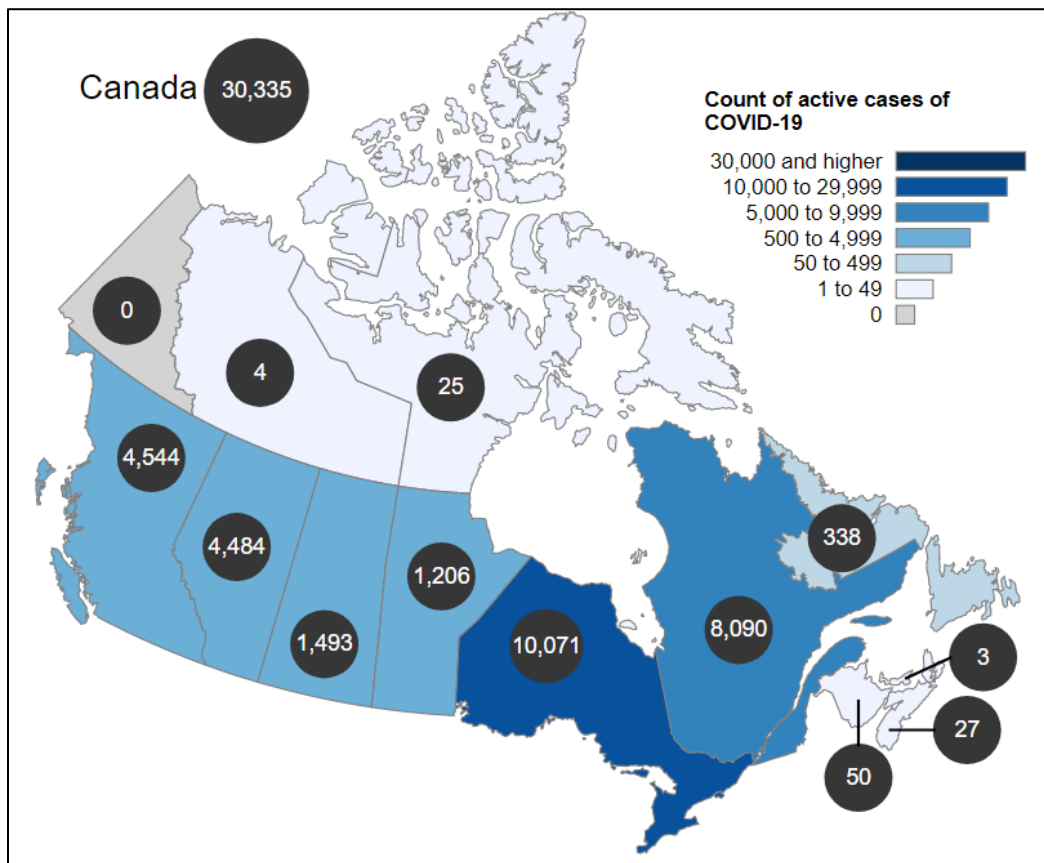
- [The Indian vaccine giant expected to supply much of the world warns that it has been directed to put its country’s needs ahead of exports](#)
India produces about 60% of the world’s supply of vaccinations and is currently undergoing one of the largest COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. Despite India being able to administer hundreds of millions of vaccinations in a year for disease such as measles and tuberculosis, they are struggling to inoculate Indians against COVID-19. Since mid-January, less than 1% of the Indian population has received its first inoculation and now the CEO of one of the country’s largest pharmaceutical companies, Serum Institute, is warning that countries that are relying on the company’s supply may have to wait as they have been directed by the Indian government to ensure domestic supply orders are completed before export orders are filled. Serum Institute produces the AstraZeneca vaccine and will also produce the Novovax vaccine once approved. The company expects to produce hundreds of millions of AstraZeneca vaccines and over a billion of Novovax vaccine for COVAX, the global initiative providing low and middle-income countries with vaccines. Should low and middle-income countries not receive vaccinations at the same rate as richer countries, which are able to pay for them, it will make it difficult to end the pandemic.
- [Facebook to invest \\$1 billion in news industry after Australia row](#)
- [Israel adopts law allowing names of unvaccinated to be shared](#)
- [U.S. president, Saudi king have phone call ahead of expected Khashoggi report release](#)


2.4 Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism

- [Russia beefs up fines for protest violations after Navalny rallies](#)
 Legislation was put forward by the Russian President Vladimir Putin, which increased fines for offences committed during street protests. This was as an action against the thousands who have been detained after attending protests in favor of Alexei Navalny, the Kremlin critic who was poisoned last year. The fines, previously sat at 1,000 Rubles, increased to 4,000 Rubles (\$54.30 US), and may also include a 15-day detention. Protest organizers were hit with higher fines, and Putin argues that the protests are by activists who are paid by foreign countries to bring instability and insecurity to the region. Russia has been known for assassinating or having their government's critics disappear, and Navalny's poisoning is a clear example of Russia's attempts at deterring its critics from speaking against the government.
- [French farmers protest as food price talks reach crunch stage](#)
 Farmers have staged protests at supermarkets and distribution centres in parts of France, as they try to secure better prices for their produce. Their representatives are in talks with food giants while supermarkets are taking part in discussions over prices, under a law passed in 2018. Farmers say they are not earning enough to cover their costs, while retailers argue consumers cannot afford to pay more.

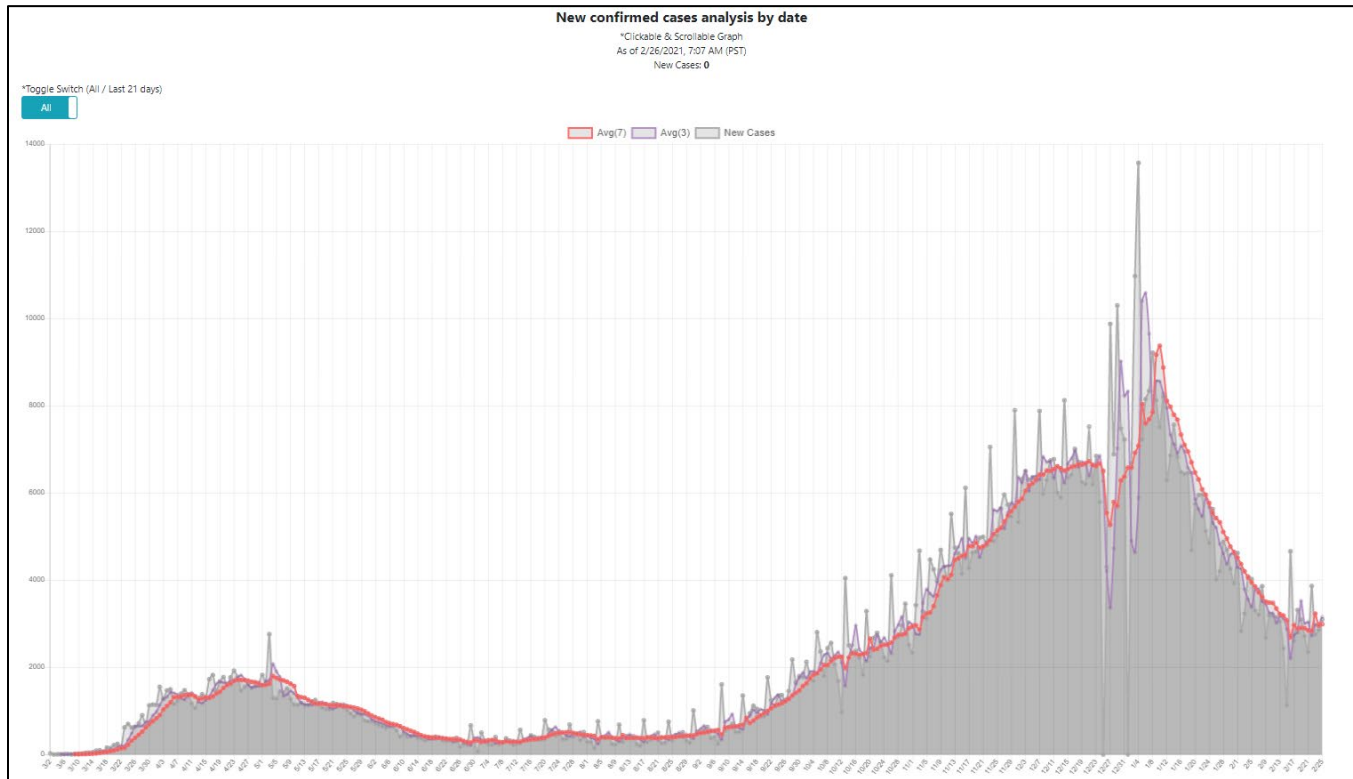
3. CANADA

3.1 COVID UPDATE



Prov.	Total Confirmed	Total Deaths	Total Recovered	Total Active
Total	858,225	21,865	806,022	30,338
BC	78,673	1,348	72,781	4,544
ON	297,311	6,916	280,324	10,071
QC	285,330	10,361	266,879	8,090
AB	132,432	1,874	126,074	4,484
MB	31,657	888	29,563	1,206
NB	1,427	26	1,351	50
SK	28,191	380	26,318	1,493
PEI	120	0	114	6
NL	973	5	630	338
NS	1,624	65	1,532	27
YT	72	1	71	0
NT	47	0	43	4
NU	355	1	329	25
	13	0	13	0
Rate of change	↑ 0.0%	↑ 0.0%	↑ 0.0%	0.0%

Prov.	Total Test	Total Waiting	Total Hosp	Total ICU
Total	24,615,202	-	-	-
BC	1,906,311	-	228	62
ON	10,872,503	40,639	687	283
QC	6,573,769	-	633	122
AB	3,387,829	-	280	56
MB	519,892	-	75	10
NB	226,534	-	2	1
SK	568,314	-	156	18
PEI	96,845	-	-	-
NL	110,665	-	5	0
NS	323,320	-	1	1
YT	8,057	13	-	-
NT	14,403	14	0	0
NU	6,760	384	0	0
Rate of change	↑ 0.0%	-	-	-



3.2 COVID-19 Canada News

- [Variants will likely make up 40% of Ontario's COVID-19 cases by mid-March, modelling predicts](#)
 Health modeling coming out of Ontario has shown that the public health measures have assisted in reducing the transmission of COVID-19. However, variants of concern such as the UK variants appear to be increasing and it is believed that soon, case numbers as well as hospitalization will soon be increasing. Vaccinations in long term care homes have assisted in decreasing the number of infections and deaths, and doctors predict the pandemic will recede again in the summer. Ontario's overall test positivity rate was at 3.1 percent, while Peel Region saw a 7.1 percent rate. If the variants of concern continue to spread, it is likely that by the second week of March the province will see 40% of its cases associated with the variants.
- [Some travellers through Toronto Pearson airport violating Quarantine Act](#)
 Police in Ontario are warning that some travelers are refusing to comply with the new Quarantine Act rules regarding quarantining in a hotel for three days. Those who refused were fined; however, it is unclear the price tag of the fine. Police also advised that they will not detain anybody for violating the Quarantine Act unless there are aggravating circumstances such as an offence under the Canadian Criminal Code.
- [Ontario reports more than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases, nine additional deaths](#)
- [How Ottawa's mistakes ensured you'll likely be vaccinated six months later than everyone else](#)
- [AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines — where is Canada at on approvals?](#)
- [Alberta releases a pandemic budget, with money for COVID-19 and economic recovery](#)

3.3 Canada Awareness

- [Canada's Trudeau, Cabinet abstain from China genocide vote](#)
The Canadian government voted this week to declare China's treatment of the Uighurs as genocide. However, Justin Trudeau, as well as many of his cabinet abstained from the China vote. Last week, Trudeau advised that genocide was a "loaded term", despite using it previously to call Canada's treatment of the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls as genocide. The vote also called for the International Olympic Committee to move the 2022 Winter Olympics away from Beijing. The vote is non-binding and cannot be actionable until work is completed together with international allies. The USA's previous administration had declared China's treatment its ethnic minorities as genocide and crimes against humanity, which was reiterated by the new administration. Since 2016, China has put over one million Muslim Uighurs and other minorities in indoctrination camps called "training camps", even naming Uighurs women as baby making machines. China advises that these camps were necessary from a national security perspective, and helped to reduce terrorism in its country. The international community must come together to ensure that China knows that its treatment of minority groups is not acceptable. Of interest, China has been elected to be on the UN Human Rights Council, where it gave a speech this week attempting to shift the definition of human rights to a one more suitable to the Chinese Community Party, which was "people' centered" and "on sense of people's gains, happiness and security".
- ['Human beings are not bartering chips': Biden calls for China to release 2 Michaels](#)
USA President Biden and Canada's Prime Minister Trudeau held a bilateral meeting this week, where Biden promised that he will assist Canada in securing the release of the two Canadian Michaels; Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, both of whom have been arbitrarily detained in China. He advised that "Human beings are not bartering chips", and called for the release of the prisoners. The two leaders also spoke of the economic recovery from COVID-19, based on economic cooperation, and indicated they will be focused on a "inclusive recovery" as the pandemic did not affect everyone in an equal manner. No conversations were had regarding the cancellation of the Keystone XL Pipeline. As Canada's largest trading partner, a strong and cordial relationship between the two countries puts both in a stronger place than alone.
- [Canada's housing market showing 'early signs' of overheating, Bank of Canada warns](#)
- [100,000 Alberta seniors book COVID-19 vaccination as AHS says website 'stabilized'](#)
- [Canada's top military commander steps aside following sexual misconduct claim](#)

3.4 Canada – Political Extremism, Civil Unrest and Activism



welund

During the week of 18-25 February 2021, the majority of activist activity noted by Welund in Canada took place in the government sector (48%), followed by oil and gas (13%) and mining (10%). Protests made up the majority of activity (34%), followed by critical commentary (13%).

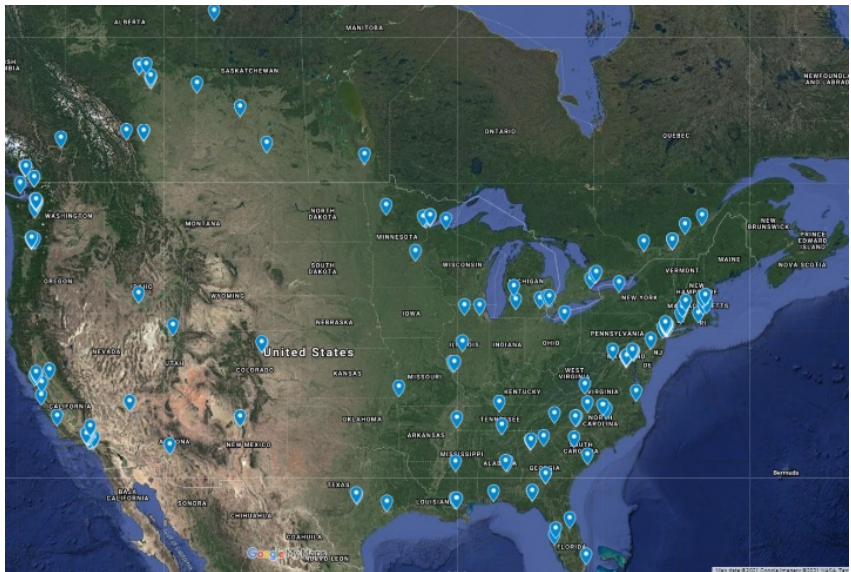
Activist activity in Canada saw an increase this week. A reprieve from the extreme cold weather in Western Canada coupled with key upcoming dates surrounding infrastructure projects perpetuated a growth in activity, especially against the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX) project. Targets included construction sites and insurance providers for the pipeline.

Anti-lockdown protesters executed weekly marches in most major cities and townships across Canada. Despite the majority of provinces announcing a 'reopen' strategy, campaigners continued to organize large-scale marches to demand an immediate end to covid-19 public health restrictions.

Protests: Anti-TMX groups held a series of protests in BC. Four Indigenous activists with Braided Warriors were arrested in Vancouver after a protest at the downtown office of AIG Insurance. Video of the incident allegedly showed Vancouver Police officers forcibly removing the protesters from the site, which led to a cohort of activist groups condemning the actions of law enforcement during the 'Braided Rally Arrests'.

Additionally, activists in Burnaby, BC continued to occupy a 'tree sit' and oppose further construction along the proposed route for the TMX. A 'tree spike' action was executed, in which activists targeted trees scheduled to be cut in preparation for pipeline construction.

Beyond weekly anti-lockdown marches regularly scheduled in Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver, approximately 100 activists in Winnipeg executed a march and protest at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. Organizers claimed the march was to raise awareness for 'mental health', a problem the group argued has been exacerbated by lockdown measures. A similar protest was held at Parliament Hill by approximately 200 activists who argued lockdowns violated their Charter rights. Complete details on upcoming protests as of 25 February 2021 can be requested [here](#).



Past and upcoming protest activity as noted by Welund between 17 February and 3 March

Outlook:

Anti-TMX campaigns will likely continue with regular activity, especially following the 'Braided Rally Arrests'. The situation has also been exacerbated by a recent oil tanker spill in the Burrard Inlet. Campaigners will also likely continue targeting financial institutions and insurance providers, as the pipeline is scheduled for renewals on its loan and insurance coverage in March 2021. Campaigners have also stated they will support activists who have been arrested during protests or direct actions against the project at their scheduled court appearances. Anti-lockdown protesters have scheduled a 'super rally' in Calgary on 27 February, with a second confirmed event in Edmonton. We Are All Essential has made a nation-wide call for marches to support small businesses on 1 March. Other upcoming actions include marches and protests in solidarity with those opposing the forestry industry and climate change.

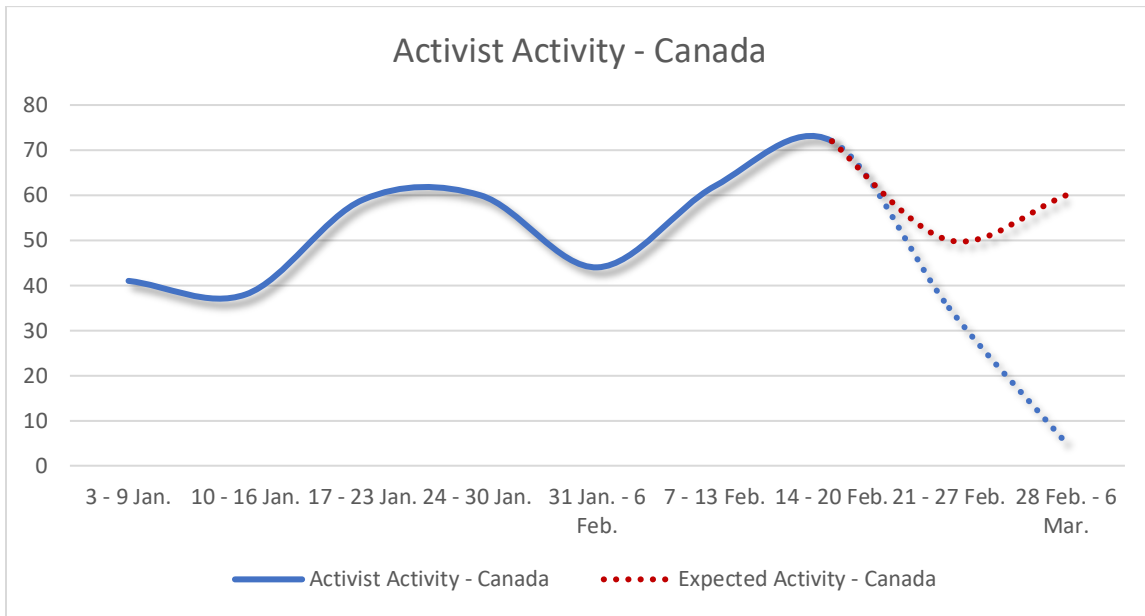


Figure 1 Total activist activity in Canada as noted by Welund.

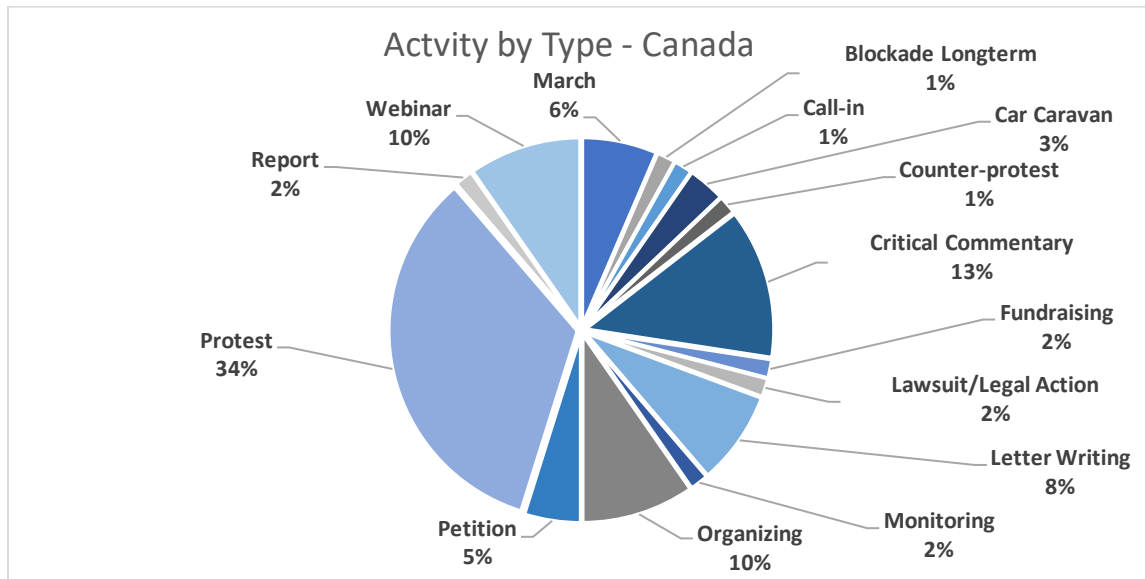


Figure 2 Activist activity in Canada by type as noted by Welund

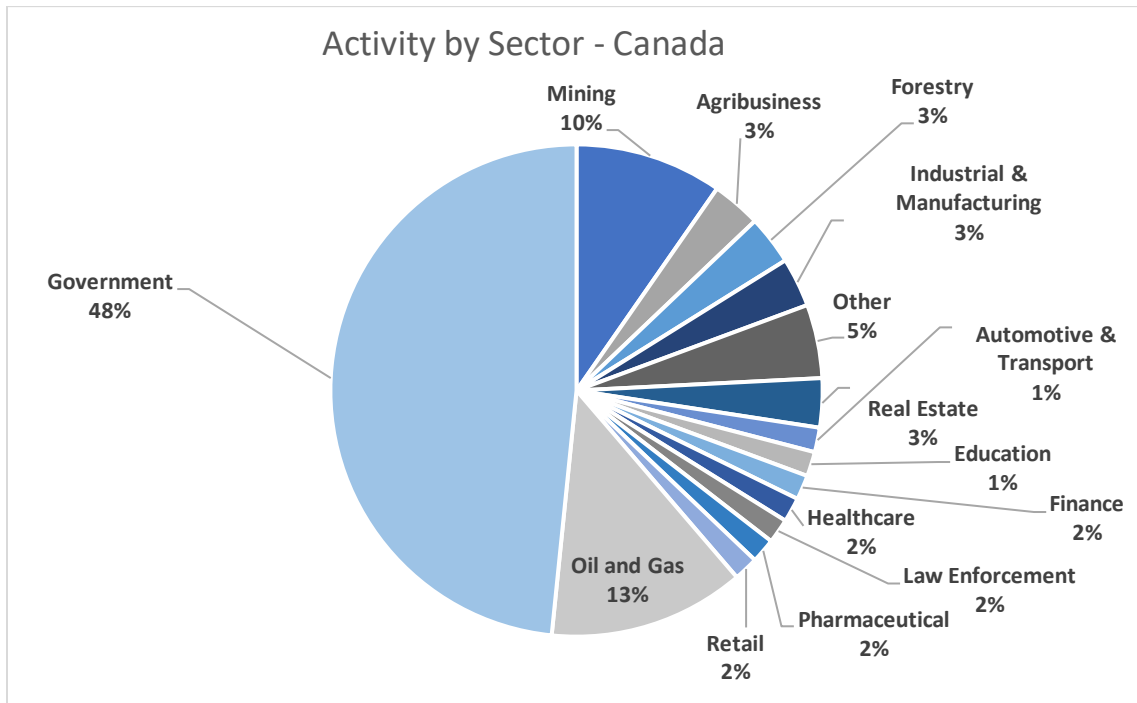
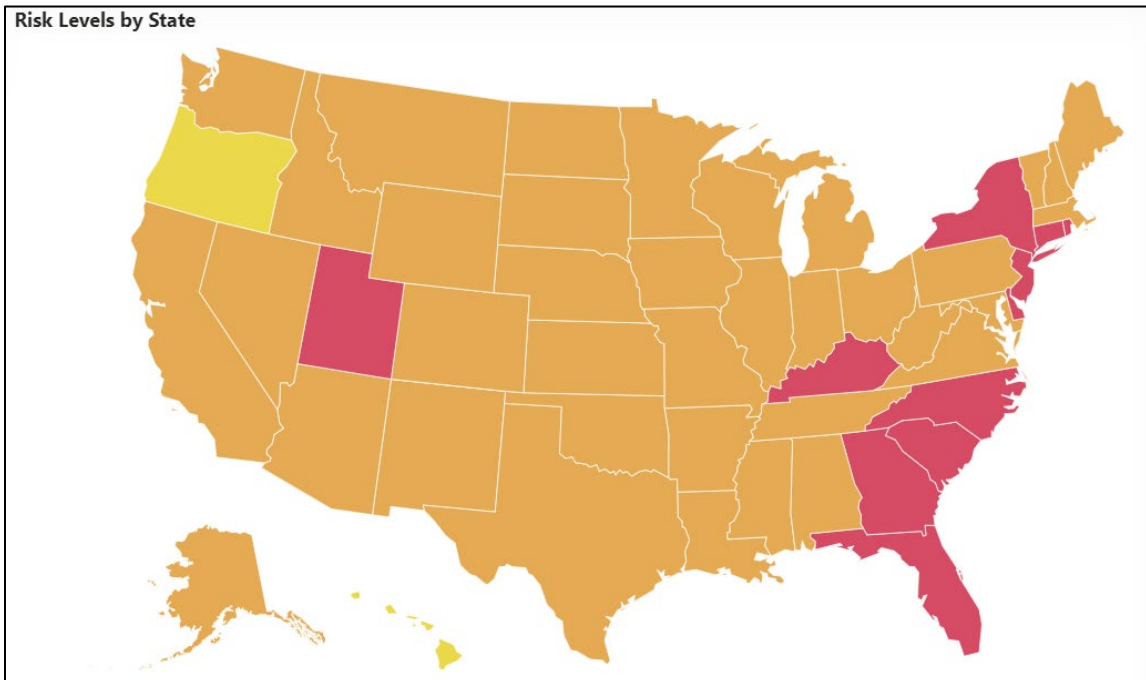
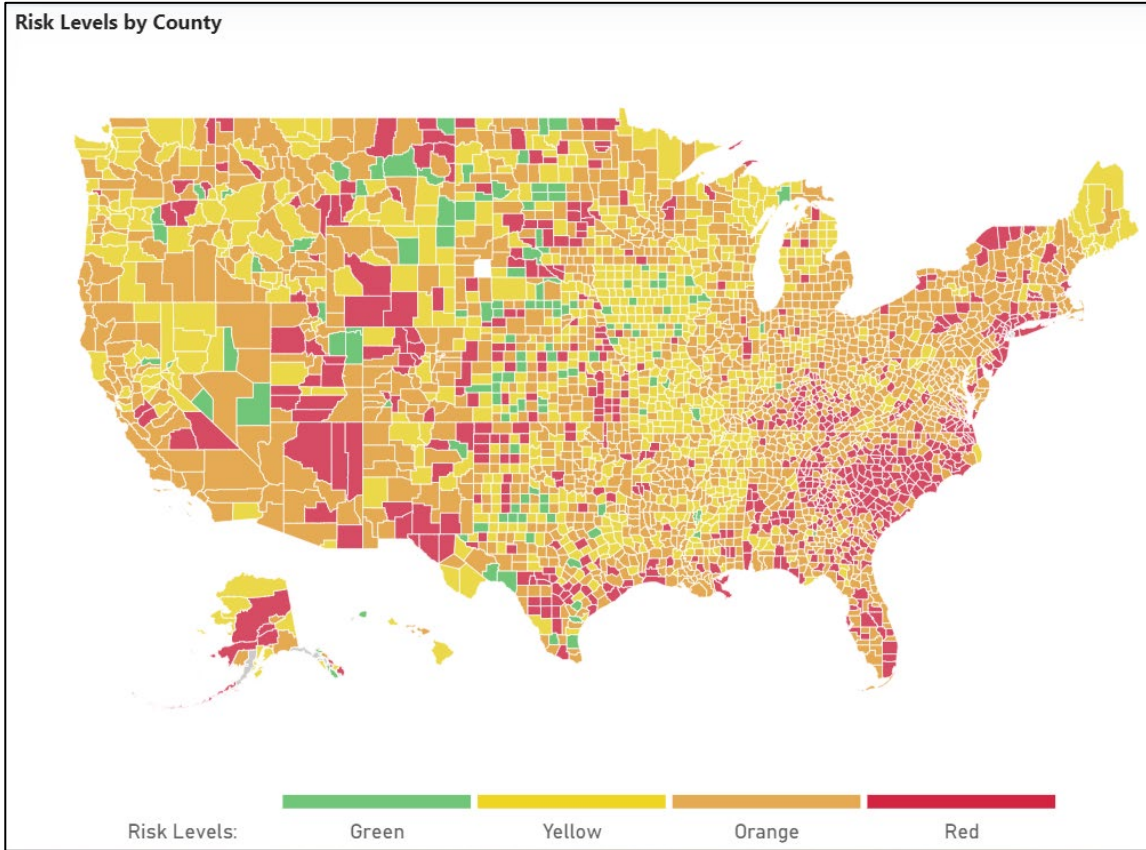


Figure 3 Activist activity in Canada by sector as noted by Welund.

4. USA

4.1 COVID UPDATE



#	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	29,055,493	+3,231	520,878	+93	19,437,111	9,097,504	87,780	1,574	354,363,035	1,070,575	
1	California	3,540,157		51,377		1,839,693	1,649,087	89,597	1,300	47,814,160	1,210,111	39,512,223
2	New York	1,656,533		47,497		715,338	893,698	85,153	2,442	37,256,699	1,915,161	19,453,561
3	Florida	1,892,301		30,485		1,095,083	766,733	88,105	1,419	21,488,105	1,000,483	21,477,737
4	Arizona	812,907		15,814		114,855	682,238	111,683	2,173	4,164,785	572,187	7,278,717
5	Virginia	570,982		7,963		46,430	516,589	66,895	933	7,399,523	866,910	8,535,519
6	Georgia	997,388		17,199		471,620	508,569	93,939	1,620	7,598,878	715,699	10,617,423
7	Maryland	379,466		7,805		9,635	362,026	62,766	1,291	7,755,974	1,282,895	6,045,680
8	Kentucky	401,750		4,570		47,259	349,921	89,924	1,023	4,460,890	998,482	4,467,673
9	New Jersey	778,963		23,147		510,894	244,922	87,699	2,606	10,448,986	1,176,397	8,882,190
10	Indiana	659,127		12,494		430,764	215,869	97,906	1,856	7,902,509	1,173,834	6,732,219
11	Missouri	520,389		8,485		297,924	213,980	84,789	1,383	5,391,572	878,474	6,137,428
12	Colorado	424,677		5,925		217,082	201,670	73,745	1,029	2,558,435	444,270	5,758,736
13	Alabama	491,110		9,831		285,130	196,149	100,161	2,005	2,392,439	487,936	4,903,185
14	Texas	2,636,976		43,444		2,397,697	195,835	90,943	1,498	22,736,802	784,139	28,995,881
15	Connecticut	279,159		7,614		96,323	175,222	78,299	2,136	6,637,929	1,861,822	3,565,287

4.2 COVID-19 USA News

- [FDA says Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine meets requirements for emergency use authorization](#)

This week, the US Food and Drug Administration stated that the requirements for the emergency use authorization for the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine have been met. It found that after 14 days of the single dose vaccination, that it is 66.9% effective, while being at least 66.1% effective after 28 days of the jab. This vaccine appears to have better efficacy against the South African variant than thought before, with a 64% efficacy rate. In South Africa, where almost 95% of cases are now of the South African variant, and may be more fitting for that specific region. In the USA, it had an efficacy rate of 72% while Brazil saw a 68% efficacy against mild to severe disease. For severe disease, the protection increased to over 80% in those areas. As most cases of COVID-19 are spread by individuals who are asymptomatic, it appears that the vaccine also protects against asymptomatic infection and transmission, which will likely have a strong effect on reduction of new cases. Furthermore, side effects reported including pain at the injection site, headache, fatigue and muscles pains. However, some incidents to blood clotting and ringing in the ears have also been found in those who received the vaccine, in comparison to those that didn't. This will require further investigation but does not appear to be severe. It is of outmost importance to ensure that the vaccinations may assist against the surge of cases that may occur due to the variants, which only makes quick vaccination campaigns even more important.

- [Nursing Homes, Once Hotspots, Far Outpace U.S. in Covid Declines](#)

American nursing homes have begun their vaccination campaigns in the middle of December, with almost 4.5 million staff and residents of USA long term care homes and nursing homes having received at least one dose of the vaccine. Throughout the pandemic, over 35% of the deaths in the USA have been linked to care homes,

which accounts for only 1% of the USA population. From late December to early February, nursing home cases fell by 80%, doubling the improvement rate of the general population. Deaths at long term care homes have also decreased by 65%. Fun and entertainment has returned to some nursing homes, with many homes are now allowing visits with loved ones, and are even allowing residents to sing in choirs, although they are spaced apart and masked.

- [U.S. retail sales expected to jump on vaccine rollout, pent-up demand in positive sign for economy](#)

The National Retail Federation (NRF) released a report suggesting that this year, USA retail sales may increase by as much as 8.2%, to over \$4.33 trillion. As vaccinations increase and people slowly return to normal, the economy is expected to see its fastest growth in over two decades. The NRF also believes that the economy may have gained between 220,000 to 300,000 jobs for every month in 2021. It is believed individuals will begin to feel more comfortable to venture into public spaces including retail stores, but will still continue to purchase online, with online sales expected to increase around 20%. It is hoped that the new round of stimulus spending, with cheques of \$1,400 sent to households will drive consumers to purchases, sending people of all ages to retail stores.

- [After weeks of sharp declines, new Covid-19 cases are beginning to flatten](#)
- [Influenza cases appear to have disappeared in some US cities amid COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Biden administration to distribute more than 25 million masks](#)
- [Coronavirus variant will likely drive a new wave of transmission come spring, some experts say](#)

4.3 USA Awareness

- [Drug supply chain issues aren't going away, report says](#)

According to a survey of American pharmacists, it is believed that global issues including pandemics, climate change or trade restrictions may cause a significant threat for drug supply chains. Furthermore, almost 90% say that a technological failure or breach may cause widespread disruption in the delivery of healthcare supplies. Overall, it is difficult to produce all medication required in the USA, with imported prescription drugs having much cheaper prices. Additionally, the USA is reportedly the number one country for spending on brand name drugs, which make up most of the country's \$450 billion annual prescription bill. A reduction in spending on brand name drugs can be completed by approving more overseas manufacturers of generic versions of the same drug. It is likely that countries like Canada and the USA will have to rely on the importing medication as they do not have the ability to produce all the materials, nor the infrastructure to produce such large numbers of medications.

- [Biden CIA nominee Burns calls China an 'authoritarian adversary'](#)

President Biden's nominee for the Director of the CIA, William Burns, said in a Senate committee hearing that a key to USA National Security includes countering the "adversarial, predatory" and "authoritarian" leadership of the Chinese government, who he saw in competition with the USA. He noted that China is becoming stronger in its ability to steal intellectual property, be able to oppress its people with new laws and technological advances and is slowly expanding its reach and influence over the USA. Burns is to be confirmed as the Director of the CIA after the hearings, with a vote by the Senate Intelligence Committee in the upcoming two weeks which will allow time for members to send more questions to decide whether he is a fitting nominee. When asked about his top four priorities, he advised they are "people, partnership, China and Technology". He further states that the Biden administration will produce an assessment of issues related to

Russia, and believes that North Korea and Iran are threat actors. With climate change, global health issues and cyber security issues, he advised that China’s leadership poses the largest geopolitical test.

- [NYC movie theaters to reopen next month in latest step toward normalcy](#)
- [US carries out air strikes in Syria targeting Iranian backed militia structures](#)
- [Biden rushes to address global computer chip shortage via latest executive order](#)

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



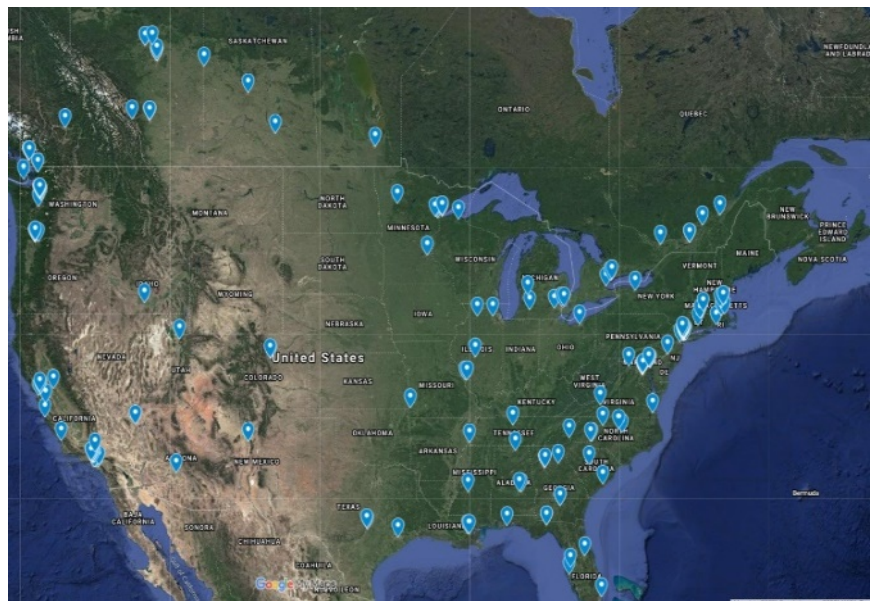
During the week of 18-25 February 2021, the majority of activist activity in the US noted by Welund took place in the government sector (33%), followed by technology (27%) and oil and gas (11%). Protests made up most activity (52%), followed by meeting/gatherings (7%).

Since the widespread power outages caused by cold arctic weather in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mississippi and Arkansas, environmental, climate change, and social justice campaigners have criticized the current system of private utilities, the independent grid in Texas run by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), and the state and local politicians for the handling of the situation. According to activists, the outages were the result of climate change, and had compounded the economic and public health crisis related to the pandemic.

Stop the Money Pipeline (STMP) coalition has been active in its ‘defund Line 3’ campaign targeting the financial institutions invested in Enbridge and the Line 3 pipeline. The campaign outlined the multi-week divestment campaign against financial institutions (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, Massachusetts and Washington saw the most protests this week.

Past and upcoming protest activity as noted by Welund between 17 February and 3 March



There has been continued opposition, direct actions, and protests against Enbridge’s Line 3 in Minnesota. On 24 February, anti-Line 3 activists blockaded Enbridge Line 3 worksites in the Savannah State Forest. Activists locked-on to a flipped over vehicle, and another activist ascended a nearly 40ft bi-pod. There has also been several anti-Line 3 solidarity actions and protests across the US. Complete details on upcoming protests as of 25 February 2021 can be requested [here](#).

Outlook: Welund continues to monitor covid-19 cases across the US for indications that additional lockdown measures amid a spring wave caused by new variants may inspire protests and demonstrations, and how the vaccine rollout will affect in-person protests. Members of the QAnon conspiracy believe Donald Trump will resume the presidency on 4 March 2021. 4 March has historically been a popular date to hold pro-Trump March 4 Trump events as well as counter-protests in the US. On 6 March 2021, Full-Stop Affinity, a “youth liberation anarchist environmentalist affinity group that organizes under the Green Anti-capitalist Front and the Youth Liberation Front,” has called for an “autonomous day of action against the state” in the US. FSA has promoted tactics that seek to create ‘chaos’ to address climate change rather than relying on protests such as marches and youth strikes. Minnesota authorities are preparing for the murder trial of ex-Minneapolis cop Derek Chauvin in George Floyd’s death in Hennepin County. On 8 March 2021, the trial will begin with selection and opening arguments scheduled to begin no earlier than 29 March. The trial is expected to last two to four weeks. On 13 March 2021, Seattle Black Anarcho Coalition has called for a day of action to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Breonna Taylor who was killed by police in Louisville, Kentucky in 2020.

Black Lives Matter anniversaries – such as the death of Breonna Taylor, along with George Floyd’s death (25 May), and Juneteenth (19 June) – provide activists with an opportunity to renew their demands, raise awareness, and issue calls for action. Calls for coordinated action on the anniversary death of Breonna Taylor raise the risk of solidarity protests in major metropolitan

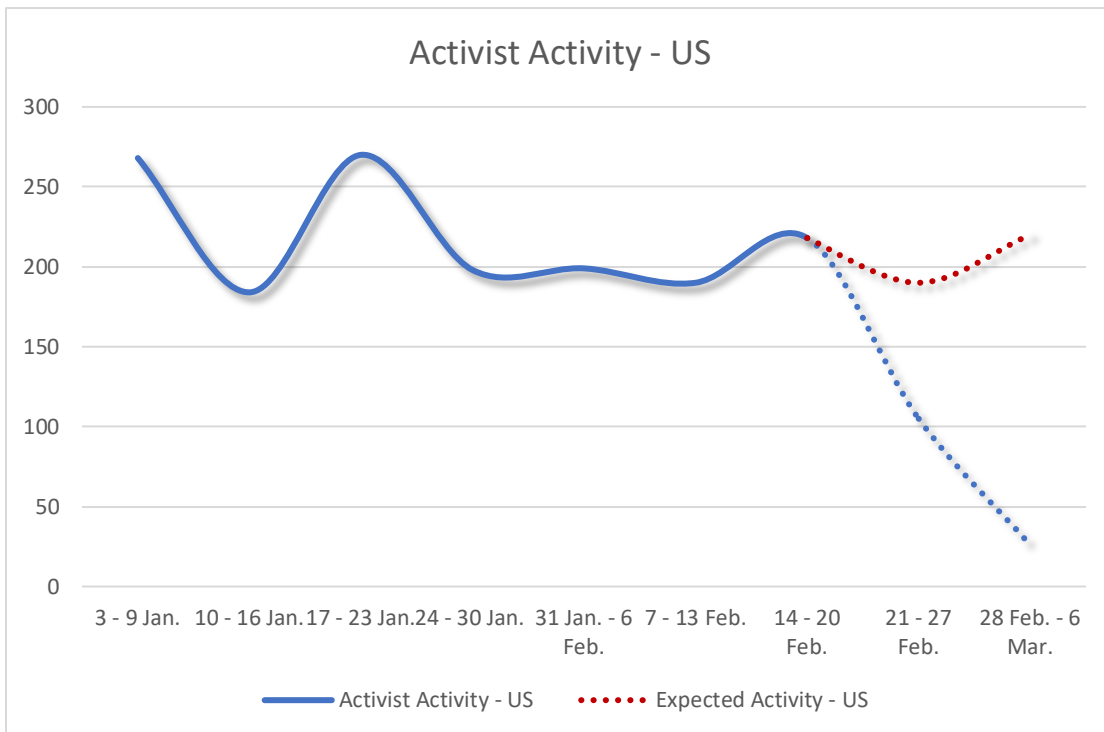


Figure 4 Total activist activity in the US as noted by Welund.

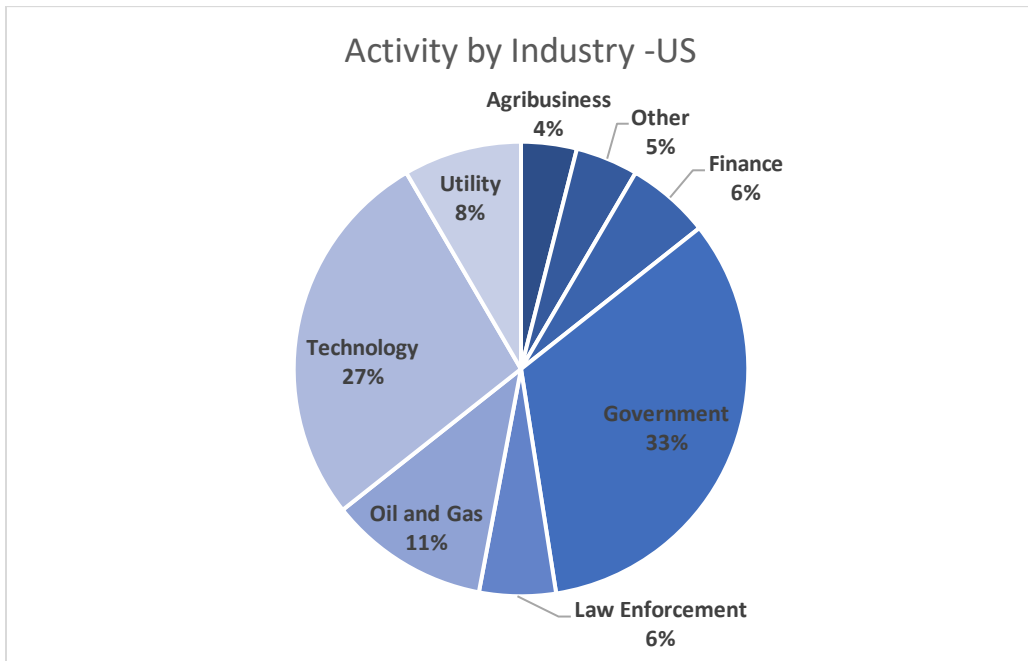


Figure 5 Activist activity in the US by industry as noted by Welund

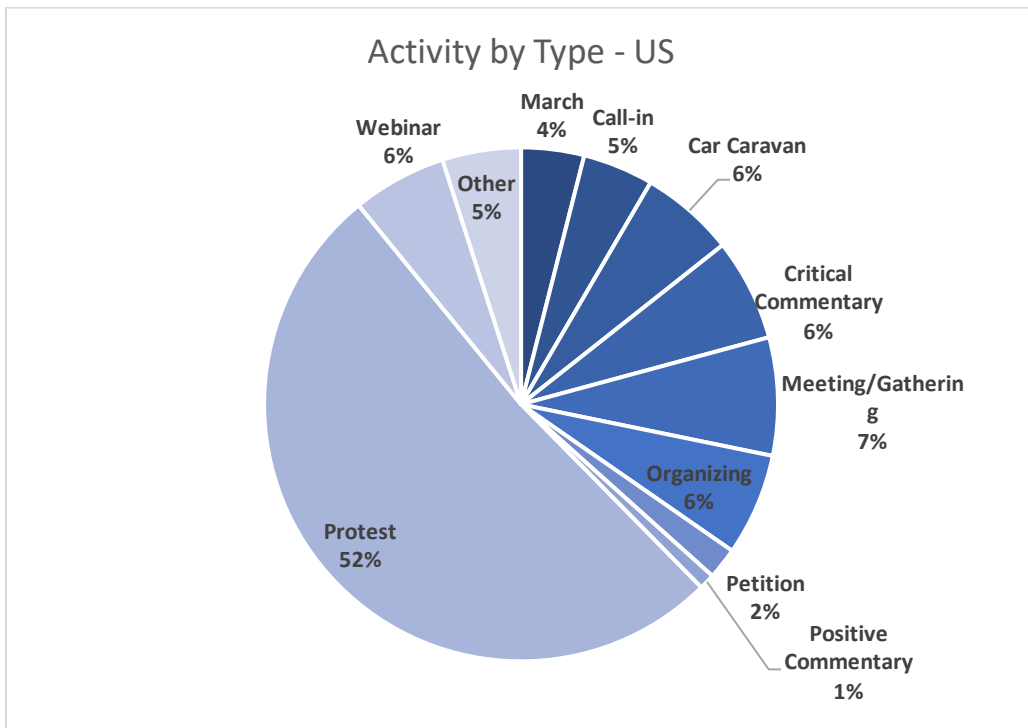



Figure 6 Activist activity in the US by type as noted by Welund.

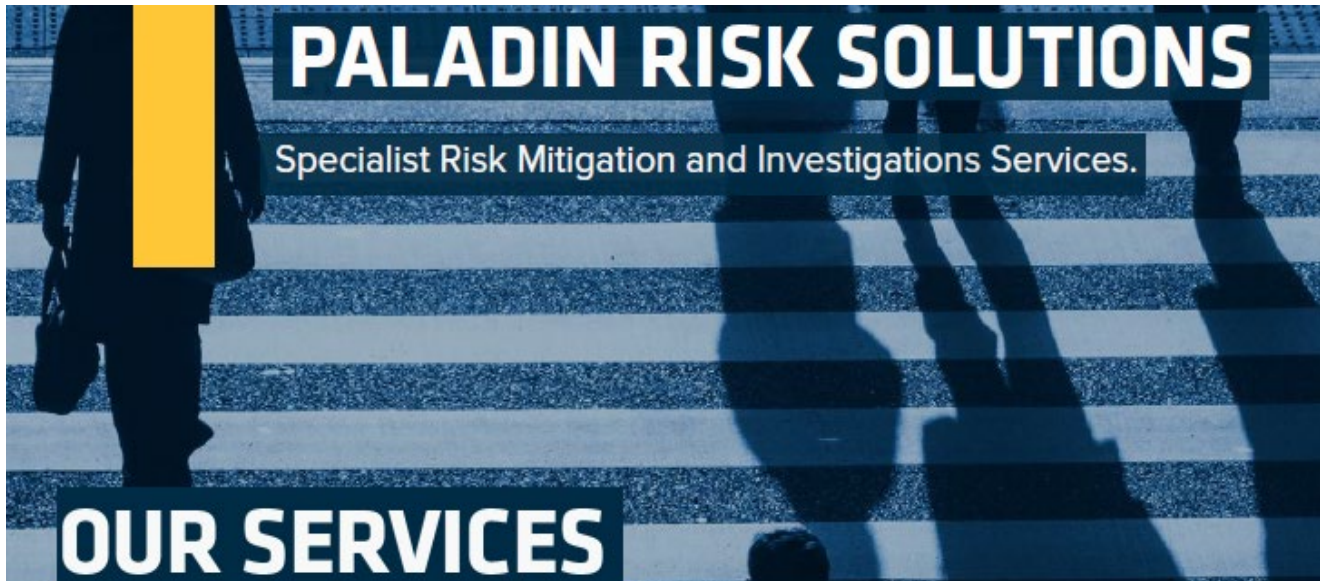
End Report

Please submit feedback to:

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