



Keeping Foreign Actors Out: The Rise of Ideologically-Motivated Violent Extremism in Canada

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JCSP 50 DL

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Exercise Solo Flight

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*“Demoralize the enemy from within
by surprise, terror, sabotage, assassinations.
This is the war of the future.”*

-- Adolf Hitler

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) reported a significant rise in terrorist incidents in the West for the first time since 2017.¹ Most attacks were carried out by individuals without formal group affiliations who radicalized through social media, gaming platforms, and encrypted messaging apps.² The online environment provides foreign actors and transnational groups with easy access to Canadians, while technological advancements hinder the detection and tracking of these transactions. Ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) poses a complex threat in Canada, involving various threat actors, and is exacerbated by uncertainty. Global conflicts, economic insecurity, pandemics, and conspiracy theories fuel radicalization, spreading hate and fear that lead to violence and erode trust in government institutions. Between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, the RCMP made 25 arrests, charging suspects with 83 terrorism-related offenses, reflecting a staggering 488% increase.³ Canadian sovereignty, public safety, and democracy face threats from both state and non-state actors, as well as extremist online

¹ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Terrorism Spreads as Lone Wolf Attacks Dominate the West.” Global Terrorism Index Media Release. March 5, 2025. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GTI-Media-Release-030325.pdf](https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GTI-Media-Release-030325.pdf)

² Institute for Economics & Peace. “Terrorism Spreads.”

³ Stuart Bell and David Akin. “In briefing to minister, RCMP warns of 488% jump in terrorism charges.” Global News. May, 23, 2025 [In briefing to minister, RCMP warns of 488% jump in terrorism charges](#)

collectives that catalyze domestic terrorism by targeting IMVE groups and lone actors to commit violence.

BACKGROUND

State and Non-State Ideologically Motivated Extremism

Globally

The 2024 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) reported an increase in countries experiencing terrorist attacks, rising from 58 to 66, alongside an 11% rise in fatalities, reversing nearly a decade of improvement.⁴ The Sahel region remains the terrorism epicenter, accounting for over half of global deaths.⁵ The Islamic State (IS) has expanded its operations to 22 countries and remains the deadliest organization.⁶ Radicalization thrives in chaos, with 2024 marking the highest number of conflicts since World War II.⁷ While most deaths occur in conflict zones, terrorist and violent extremist (TVE) groups are rapidly evolving, leveraging technology to connect with global audiences. In the West, attacks increased by 63%, with seven countries in the top 50 on the GTI.⁸ Reports indicate one in five terror suspects is under 18, including many IS-linked arrests in Europe.⁹ Antisemitic and Islamophobic hate surged globally, while domestic IMVE groups adopt artificial intelligence (AI) -enhanced recruitment methods to manipulate vulnerable individuals. In the West, lone wolf attacks—committed by individuals without ties to recognized organizations—accounted for 93% of fatal attacks in the past five years.¹⁰ Beyond

⁴ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Terrorism Spreads.”

⁵ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Terrorism Spreads.”

⁶ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Terrorism Spreads.”

⁷ Elizabeth Smith. “Conflict Index 2024: conflicts in the world have grown by 40% in the last three years.” *World Excellence: World Affairs*. May, 29, 2024. https://www.worldexcellence.com/conflict-index-2024-conflicts-in-the-world-have-grown-by-40-percent/#google_vignette

⁸ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Terrorism Spreads.”

⁹ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Terrorism Spreads.”

¹⁰ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Terrorism Spreads.”

global conflicts, social tensions, and individual grievances within the West, fuel lone actor terrorism.

Domestically

In a 2025 briefing for the Public Safety Minister, the RCMP highlighted violent extremism as a key national security threat, noting a 488% increase in terrorist charges from April 2023 to March 2024. Specifically, “25 suspects faced 83 terrorist-related charges, including three minors and six young adults, while eight youths received peace bonds, indicating an uptick in youth radicalization.”¹¹ The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) connects the rise in domestic IMVE to social unrest stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, social media influence, and conspiracy theories, creating a volatile environment for violent extremist groups.¹² Following the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, Canada experienced a 670% increase in antisemitic violence.¹³

Since 2023, multiple thwarted plots, including a planned bombing at a pro-Israel rally on Parliament Hill, incitement by anti-LGBTQIA+ protesters during Calgary Pride, as well as an terror plot and online fundraising campaign both in Toronto, and an arrest in Quebec for a planned New York attack, indicate a renewed Islamic State interest.^{14,15,16,17} High-profile cases of

¹¹ Bell. “In briefing to minister.”

¹² Government of Canada. SECU Appearance: Rise of IVME in Canada. SECU Appearance: Rise of IMVE in Canada - Canada.ca

¹³ The Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism. “Antisemitism in Canada Report.” The National Center for Combating Antisemitism. Oct, 14 2024. [mashlat_Antisemitism in Canada Report - October 14, 2024.pdf](#)

¹⁴ Colette Derworiz. “Calgary Teen arrested in Terrorism Investigation to stay off Social Media Sites.” City News Calgary. Dec 12, 2023. [Calgary teen arrested on terror charge prohibited from social media | CityNews Calgary](#)

¹⁵ Nadine Yousif. “Canadian Police Thwart alleged Toronto terror plot.” Jul 31, 2024. BBC News, Toronto. [Canadian police thwart alleged Toronto terror plot](#)

¹⁶ Royal Canadian Mounted Police. “Canadian pleads guilty to terrorism charges.” May 15, 2025. <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2025/canadian-pleads-guilty-terrorism-charges>

¹⁷ Stuart Bell. “Teens accused of plotting to bomb pro-Israel rally on Parliament Hill.” Nov 12, 2024. [Teens accused of plotting to bomb pro-Israel rally on Parliament Hill | Globalnews.ca](#)

state-sponsored violence include the alleged murder of a Sikh separatist linked to the Indian government in British Columbia in 2023, and anti-NATO/Israel protests in Montreal in 2024 that led to street blockades and vandalism, with protesters waving flags from Russia, Palestine, the Communist Party of Canada, and Russian-occupied Donetsk.^{18,19,20,21} The diverse foreign entities spreading radical propaganda and inciting domestic violence pose a substantial challenge for Canadian authorities. Amid the unpredictability of global extremism, Canada grapples with an underdeveloped legal framework and limited resources to address the rising national security threat.

Canada's Domestic Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism

After the September 11, 2001, attacks, Canada enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA or Bill C-36), amending the Criminal Code to enhance the ability to prevent and prosecute terrorism, target financing, and improve information sharing.²² The ATA faced criticism from academics and human rights advocates for its broad definitions, potential Charter violations, the possibility of authority abuse, and a lack of transparent oversight.^{23,24} Overall, many Canadians

¹⁸ BBC News. "Three charged over killing of Sikh activist in Canada." May 3, 2024. [Three charged over killing of Sikh activist in Canada - BBC News](#)

¹⁹ Markus Kolga. "Canada's far-left is proving a fertile ground for Putin's influence operations" *MacDonald Laurier Institute. Inside Policy*. Dec 19, 2024. Canada's far-left is proving a fertile ground for Putin's influence operations: Marcus Kolga for Inside Policy | Macdonald-Laurier Institute

²⁰ "Canada Extremism and Terrorism." *Counter Extremism Project* [Canada: Extremism and Terrorism | Counter Extremism Project](#). Accessed May 15, 2025.

²¹ "What is the Doppelganger operation?" *EU DisinfoLab*. May 15, 2025. List of resources - EU DisinfoLab.

²² Government of Canada. "About the Anti-terrorism Act." [About the Anti-terrorism Act](#) Accessed May 20, 2025.

²³ Government of Canada. "The Anti-Terrorism Act and Security Measures in Canada: Public views, Impacts and Travel Experiences." [1. Introduction - The Anti-Terrorism Act and Security Measures in Canada: Public Views, Impacts and Travel Experiences - Research and Statistics Division](#) Accessed May 25, 2025.

²⁴ Government of Canada. "The Views of Canadian Scholars on the Impact of the Anti-Terrorism Act." Dec 02, 2021. [ROBERT MARTYN Department of History, Queen's University - The Views of Canadian Scholars on the Impact of the Anti-Terrorism Act](#)

seemed unaware of the ATA's implications. Nevertheless, it signaled Canada's alignment with American expectations and United Nations mandates.²⁵

The Government of Canada addressed terrorism limitations with the Combating Terrorism Act (2013), which enhanced the prosecution of Canadians participating in terrorism abroad.²⁶ Bill C-51 (2015) expanded law enforcement powers for preventative detention and surveillance. Bill C-59 (The National Security Act, 2017) balanced national security with civil rights, enhancing cybersecurity and intelligence capabilities alongside oversight for intelligence agencies. By 2015, countering home-grown radicalization was designated to the Minister of Public Safety, leading to the 2017 establishment of the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence. The *Canada Centre* provides policy guidance, coordination, and funding for research and targeted programs through the Community Resilience Fund (CRF).

In 2023, the Government of Canada announced over \$25 million in CRF endowments for projects countering radicalization to violence.²⁷ Eleven recipients were highlighted, including initiatives to strengthen frontline law enforcement and healthcare workers, youth engagement programs offering alternatives to violent extremism, and specific programs against involuntary celibate (Incel) movements.²⁸ Other projects include community early warning systems, offline psychosocial support services, support for the Terrorist Analytics Platform's moderation tools for tech companies, digital intervention tools to combat misinformation, and integrated mobile

²⁵ Government of Canada. "The Views."

²⁶ Government of Canada. "Combating Terrorism Act." *Justice Laws Website*. April 25, 2013. https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/AnnualStatutes/2013_9/page-1.html Updated May 15, 2025

²⁷ Public Safety Canada. "Government of Canada announces more than \$25 million for projects to counter radicalization to violence." Government of Canada announces more than \$25 million for projects to counter radicalization to violence - Canada.ca

²⁸ Public Safety Canada. "Government of Canada announces"

mental health services that address grievances and provide alternatives for the early stages of radicalization.²⁹ The government's legislative changes and research funding demonstrate a commitment to long-term solutions that can be adopted at all levels of government, facilitating nationwide, coordinated efforts.

Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy, *Building Resilience Against Terrorism* (2012), focuses on preventing, detecting, denying, and responding to terrorist threats. It includes input from the RCMP, CSIS, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Department of National Defence (DND), Transport Canada (TC), and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), offering a comprehensive governmental approach to combating domestic violent extremism. Internationally, CSIS collaborates with the Five Eyes Alliance, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and the G7 to understand and tackle online terrorist threats. The PM-POTUS Roadmap (2021) addresses US-CAN counter-terrorism efforts to strengthen North American security.

By 2019, CSIS acknowledged that motivations for violent extremism had grown more complex. "Individuals were no longer influenced by a singular and definable belief system, but a range of very personal and diverse grievances."³⁰ CSIS ceased using right-wing and left-wing labels for threat actors, instead adopting ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) to describe xenophobic, anti-authoritarian, gender-driven, and other grievance-based violence. By 2021, Canada began listing IMVE groups as *Listed Terrorist Entities*, including Atomwaffen Division, The Base, Proud Boys, and the Russian Imperial Movement. Currently, eight IMVE organizations are listed, including Combat 18, Aryan Strike Force, and Samidoun, alongside

²⁹ Public Safety Canada. "Government of Canada announces"

³⁰ Government of Canada. "SECU Appearance: Rise of IVME in Canada." SECU Appearance: Rise of IMVE in Canada - Canada.ca Accessed May 25, 2025.

seven transnational criminal organizations (Feb 2025) - connecting terrorism and gang violence.^{31,32}

Growth of Extremist Organization Influence

Globalization

The attacks on 9/11 compelled analysts and the international community to examine the connection between domestic and international terrorism within the framework of globalization. Improvements in transportation, technology, and communication have enhanced freedom of movement, offered quick access to resources and information, and facilitated the establishment of unprecedented support along with global legitimacy and notoriety.³³ A physical location was no longer needed for hands-on training or weapon distribution; recruits could be sourced from the online community, with messages, funding, and instructions conveyed virtually. The reality of a liberal and rapidly interconnected world indicated that sufficient governance was lacking to counter the rise of terrorism and that, inevitably, the influence of distant harmful actors would affect nations domestically, requiring a viable response to address the growing threat.

Technological Advancement

In mid-2024, Islamic extremists, along with neo-Nazi and anti-government groups, upgraded their online propaganda by using generative artificial intelligence (G-AI) videos and

³¹ Government of Canada. "Currently Listed Entities." Currently listed entities Accessed May 26, 2025.

³² John. P. Sullivan and Nathan P Jones. "Intelligence and Analytical Approaches for the Crime-Gang-Terrorism Nexus." *International Journal on Criminology*. Vol 10:1. Fall 2022/Winter 2023. intelligence_and_analytical_approaches.pdf

³³ Andrew Moran. "'Terrorism.'" In *International Security Studies: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Taylor & Francis) 2020. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=6264271&ppg=167>. 156-160.

programs on North American social media platforms to incite antisemitic violence.^{34,35} Besides enhancing and *superstylizing* content to appeal to target demographics, G-AI programs enable algorithm manipulation to circumvent existing moderation barriers that block extremist content. Unlike earlier online recruitment methods, G-AI content does not carry identifiable branding or digital fingerprints, creating a more human-like recruitment experience without the risk of exposing operatives, thereby freeing them for other missions.³⁶ The readily available, off-the-shelf AI programs can direct users to guides on creating 3D-printed weapons and offer digital incentives, such as bitcoin, as rewards.³⁷

Concerns over drones targeting civilians in the West increasingly trouble security professionals. North American criminals in the US and Mexico have used UAVs to attack police and infrastructure, echoing ISIS tactics from 2016.³⁸ The integration of contemporary 3D-printed weaponry with AI for target recognition, autonomous decision-making, and swarm coordination facilitates straightforward acquisition, construction, modification, and inexpensive autonomous control.³⁹ This capability enables domestic terrorist organizations to operate while evading detection linked to firearm transport or purchase and the financial footprint of large money transfers.

Increase in Youth and Lone Actor Radicalization

³⁴ “Report: ISIS and AL-Qaeda Deploying New AI Programs to Surge Lone Wolf Attacks against U.S. Jewish Community.” *Coalition for a Safer Web*. Feb 3, 2025. CSW-Report-ISIS-and-AQ-Using-AI-to-Incite-Attacks-on-US-Jews.pdf

³⁵ David Gilbert. “Neo-Nazis Are All-In on AI.” *Wired Magazine*. Jun 28, 2024. [Neo-Nazis Are All-In on AI | WIRED](https://www.wired.com/story/neo-nazis-are-all-in-on-ai/)

³⁶ “Report: ISIS and AL-Qaeda Deploying” *Coalition for a Safer Web*.

³⁷ “Report: ISIS and AL-Qaeda Deploying” *Coalition for a Safer Web*.

³⁸ Håvard, Haugstvedt. “A Flying Reign of Terror? The Who, Where, When, What, and How of Non-State Actors and Armed Drones.” *Journal of Human Security* 19, no. 1 (2023): 1–7. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/flying-reign-terror-who-where-when-what-how-non/docview/2780634048/se-2?accountid=9867>.

³⁹ Haugstvedt, .” “A Flying Reign of Terror?”

The increase in Canadian youth radicalization reflects a broader Western trend of youths accounting for one in five terror suspects.⁴⁰ Minors typically lack ties to established groups and tend to combine contradictory extremist ideologies. Examination of transnational online collectives such as the *Order of Nine Angels* and *764* blurs the lines of terrorist and violent extremism material (TVEC), and child sexual exploitation and abuse material (CSAM) mediated through online ecosystems, particularly gaming platforms, to commit acts of sextortion and plan mass casualty incidents. The entities take on ideological content from multiple political, religious and ideological extremes (Fascism, Satanism, white supremacy and radical jihadism etc) and display symbols in solidarity of their “accelerationist and nihilistic ideologies aimed at the subversion of civil society through the promotion of a variety of immoral and criminal acts, including sexual violence, animal abuse, and murder.”⁴¹ These groups target children (7-17), grooming them by encouraging smaller acts of *Opferring* (another form of offering) for initiation to prime them for larger acts of organized group violence. Recruiting for members/victims is focused on spaces where those with diminished social power (Ie, LGBTQIA+, racial minorities, and those with mental illness) and these initial victims are shown to become later abusers who continue the cycle of violence, increasing community growth.⁴² The groups constantly shift and rebrand their names to evade detection and challenge the definition of an IMVE group.

DISCUSSION:

⁴⁰ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Terrorism Spreads”

⁴¹ Marc-Andre Argentino, G., Barret, and M.B. Tyler. “Global Network on Extremism and Technology -764: The Intersection of Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Child Sexual Exploitation,” *Insights. 764: The Intersection of Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Child Sexual Exploitation – GNET*

⁴² Argentino. “764: The Intersection of Terrorism”

Defending against foreign powers targeting domestic IMVE requires transparent law enforcement, intelligence, and public policy, while adapting to the evolving nature of terrorism. National security and public safety often clash with civil liberties as governments develop strategies to prevent and respond to various threats. The legitimacy of institutions tackling terrorism relies on the trust of citizens. Bias, lack of clarity, and misuse of power undermine progress. This mistrust fuels grievances that can be exploited by outside influences, thereby fostering radicalization.

Canada's first public trust misstep occurred in its initial Public Report on the Terrorist Threat (2018), which "unintentionally maligned certain communities" by using the term Sikh extremism. This led Public Safety Canada (PSC) to add an addendum (following a language review by Minister Goodale) to clearly connect threats to specific intent or ideology, rather than a religion.⁴³ While bias is hard to eliminate, it is easy to identify. Public engagement is crucial for reforming and enhancing government systems. Remedying bias superficially through an addendum, though important, can be short-sighted.

The Canadian legal system has shown bias and varied sentencing for Muslim and non-Muslim white defendants in violent crime cases. From December 2001 to December 2019, of fifty-six individuals charged with terrorism, none were linked to far-right extremism, despite far-right extremists causing more harm in that period.^{44,45} This resulted in harsher penalties for terrorism-related charges compared to similar crimes without a terrorist link, where mental

⁴³ Public Safety Canada. "Statement from Minister Goodale on the Public Report on the Terrorist Threat in Canada." April 7, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/news/2019/04/statement-from-minister-goodale-on-the-public-report-on-the-terrorist-threat-in-canada.html>

⁴⁴ Michael Nesbitt. "Violent crime, hate speech or terrorism? How Canada views and prosecutes far-right extremism (2001-2019)." *Common Law World Review*. Vol 50:1. Feb 16, 2021. Violent crime, hate speech or terrorism? How Canada views and prosecutes far-right extremism (2001–2019) - Michael Nesbitt, 2021

⁴⁵ Mack Lamoureux. "Canada Is spending \$300k On research Into Far-Right Extremism." *VICE*. March 7, 2019. Canada Is Spending \$300K On Research Into Far-Right Extremism

health issues were implicated.^{46,47} This trend led to “bias and unequal application of the law, but also to a slow response to emergent threats and, thus, a failure to fully protect Canadians.”⁴⁸

To encourage unbiased application of the law, Nesbitt et al. suggest adopting more coherent definitions of motives (religious, political, ideological) to provide:

“a logical, symbiotic interaction between the motive clause, the purpose clause, and the consequence clause in the *Criminal Codes* definition of *terrorist activity*. Simply put, where a system of firmly held, prescriptive beliefs, motivates an action and sends a public-facing message (motive clause) intended to intimidate the public or a segment thereof concerning its security (purpose clause), and where that action last satisfies the (serious) consequences clause, we have ideologically motivated terrorist activity.”⁴⁹

Enhancing clarity and coherence within the Criminal Code will help bring terrorists to justice, improve understanding of the actual terrorist threat posed by IMVE groups in Canada, and deter potential criminals, ensuring that Canadian law does not hinder national security by granting leniency to violent extremists.⁵⁰

Expanding the definition of terrorism raises several concerns, such as the potential overuse of the offense, which can dilute its significance, and the tendency to impose harsher

⁴⁶ Mathias Kauff. “Muslim + Terrorist? Attribution of violent crimes to terrorism or mental health problems depend on perpetrators’ religious background.” *Journal of Social Psychology*. Vol 164: 4. (2004) Muslim = Terrorist? Attribution of violent crimes to terrorism or mental health problems depend on p

⁴⁷ Shila Hayambashi. “Implicit bias with Canadian media often means providing excuses for white accused.” *The Conversation*. July 6, 2021. Implicit bias within Canadian media often means providing excuses for white accused

⁴⁸ Michael Nesbitt., Leah West, and Amarnath Amarasingam. “The Elusive Motive Requirement in Canada’s Terrorism Offences: Defining and Distinguishing Ideology, religion and Politics.” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*. Vol 60 no.3. (2023): 594.

⁴⁹ Nesbitt. “The Elusive Motive” 593.

⁵⁰ “Is Canada finally taking far-right extremism seriously? Latest arrests are a positive sign.” *The Conversation*. June 6, 2024. [Is Canada finally taking far-right extremism seriously? Latest arrests are a positive sign](#)

penalties for terrorist offenses compared to similar crimes. While stricter punishments may reflect the seriousness of the offense, the biased or unbiased application of these punishments often sensationalizes it. In the mindset of extremists, this operates on two levels that yield the same result: the appearance of martyrdom, which seeks notoriety and legitimacy for their cause. If policymakers do not consider policies, practices, and laws from a radical perspective, they may unintentionally put Canadians at risk. The same applies to neglecting to address terrorism primarily as a domestic issue within the distinct Canadian context.

The War on Terror (2001-2011) was flawed in three critical ways. First, it attempted to defeat an ideology and a stateless organization militarily. Second, it lent legitimacy to Al-Qaeda (AQ). Third, it diverted focus and resources from national and regional terrorism by treating terrorism as a global problem instead of a local manifestation of a worldwide campaign of violence. This miscalculation raised significant concerns for the future. Not only did it guarantee future generations of radicalized recruits, but it also fostered partnerships among various national and local conflicts against a common enemy – the West - resulting in the *Al-Qaedafication* of terrorism.⁵¹ This term describes the tendency of individuals to carry out acts independently of AQ, motivated by sympathy for or in furtherance of a common agenda. Examples include a 2014 vehicle attack in Quebec that killed a CAF soldier and injured another, and a 2023 stabbing incident in Surrey, BC, both attributed to individuals influenced by ISIS ideology, yet not connected to the group's command structure.^{52,53} The tendency of extremist groups to emulate

⁵¹ Andrew Moran. 'Terrorism.' In *International Security Studies: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed., 148–61. Oxford: Taylor & Francis, 2020. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=6264271&ppg=167>. 158.

⁵² CTV Montreal. "RCMP had arrested Couture-Rouleau, but could not charge him with any crime." Oct 21, 2014 [RCMP had arrested Couture-Rouleau, but could not charge him with any crime](#)

⁵³ Anna Burns. "Accused pledged allegiance to Islamic State, BC terrorism trial hears." *Victoria News*. May 8, 2025. [Accused pledged allegiance to Islamic State, B.C. terrorism trial hears - Greater Victoria News](#)

and learn from one another has cyclical effects that exponentially increase the threat of radicalizing Canadians.

The expansion of IS propaganda targeting IMVE groups and youth with antisemitic content contributes to their agenda of war against the West, exploiting the uncertainty in geopolitics, advancements in G-AI, and the decline in mental health. Online recruitment is concealed on honeytrap platforms like TikTok and Telegram, linking users to G-AI content, methods for weapons production, and specific target identification packages that include geospatial photos of Jewish centers throughout North America, including in Toronto.⁵⁴ "What's unique about this is that the content that we're intercepting doesn't have breadcrumbs enabling...track(ing)...back directly to a particular source," making attribution extremely difficult.⁵⁵

Furthermore, other malign foreign non-state actors, such as 764, have adopted similar techniques or even found ways to expand the Canadian base for recruitment.⁵⁶ By forming alliances with ideologically aligned groups and targeting mentally ill and marginalized youth, they eliminate barriers to inclusion, such as race, religion, sex, age, and sexual orientation. This approach increases access to and exposure to extremist content. Grooming these children through trauma initiation enhances controllability over victims who are socially isolated and thus less likely to seek help.⁵⁷ Official partnerships exist with the wider esoteric violent extremist

⁵⁴ Monika Sager. "How ISIS and Al-Qaeda Are Using AI to Target American Jews." Feb 5, 2025. [How ISIS and Al-Qaeda Are Using AI to Target American Jews - Newsweek](#)

⁵⁵ Monika Sager. "How ISIS and Al-Qaeda"

⁵⁶ Royal Canadian Mounted Police National headquarters. "RCMP reminds Canadians about violent groups targeting youth." August 27, 2024. <https://rcmp.ca/en/news/2024/08/rcmp-reminds-canadians-about-violent-online-groups-targeting-youth>

⁵⁷ Marc-Andre Argentino, G., Barret, and M.B. Tyler. "764: The Intersection of Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Child Sexual Exploitation." *Global Network on Extremism and Technology – In Insights*. [764: The Intersection of Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Child Sexual Exploitation – GNET](#)

ecosystem and 764 affiliates, such as Maniac Murder Cult (M.K.Y., the Ukrainian accelerationist group), evidenced by the inclusion of the M.K.Y. handbook (translated to English) shared in 764 spaces, which promotes “stochastic acts of violence or terrorism”.⁵⁸ Recruitment takes place on servers run by 764 members, such as Minecraft or Roblox, or self-harm and/or gore servers, making it easy to find victims who are then invited to join a private communications space, such as Discord, where exploitation begins. The concern with these servers is that they are “easy to create and manage and have the capacity for text, voice, and video communications,” but “much remains unknown about the inner workings.”⁵⁹ The illegal sextortion content on them inhibits direct observation by researchers. This means that legal action can only be taken if the perpetrator is reported or identified through an investigation by law enforcement agencies following a serious crime. Understanding the relationship between CSAM and TVE within these groups is crucial for lawmakers, tech companies, and law enforcement agencies to mount a comprehensive response to this international threat.

CSIS recognizes the need to combat the rise of IMVE in Canada; however, it is constrained by Section 19 of the CSIS Act, which permits only the release of “unclassified threat overviews to external stakeholders, limiting the ability to build bilateral relationships and advise on threats to Canada’s national security.”⁶⁰ While controlling access to information is essential for preventing unauthorized disclosures, modernizing these policies would enhance public-private partnerships and interagency coordination with law enforcement and municipal governments. An assessment of the integration of cross-sector policy in countering radicalization to violence (CRV) in Canada revealed that “integration across all levels and vertically was

⁵⁸ Argentino, “764: The Intersection of Terrorism”

⁵⁹ Argentino, “764: The Intersection of Terrorism”

⁶⁰ Government of Canada. “SECU Appearance: Rise of IVME in Canada.” SECU Appearance: Rise of IMVE in Canada - Canada.ca Accessed May 2025.

generally found to be good (medium low to medium high),” but several gaps were identified, including:

“Consolidating counterterrorism and community safety policy frames, increasing the number of provinces and municipalities involved in addressing the issue, increasing federal-provincial-municipal interaction, having complementary policy goals incorporated into both specific and relevant CRV policy, and ensuring coherence of policy instruments.”⁶¹

Identifying gaps in implementation is crucial for effectively improving CRV, and investment in CRV research is a key aspect that Canada strongly emphasizes. However, the study noted that “a framework for operationalization ...that includes quantitative measures would provide more precision in the selection of the level of integration,” indicating a lack of identifiable benchmark goals against which to measure integration, and a need for longitudinal analysis to assess policy integration over time.⁶² The absence of quantitative operational guidance doesn’t inspire confidence that CRV policies are achieving strategic counter-terrorism goals, nor does it inform the public about how government accountability is benchmarked.

The RCMP echoes frustration in combating foreign powers that influence domestic IMVE groups and lone actors in terrorist plots, warning that “the current level of government demands is beyond its current capacity and capability to deliver fully on its federal mandate without addressing significant resourcing challenges.”⁶³ Canada's resourcing challenges have

⁶¹ Patrick O’Halloran. “Assessing the integration of cross-sectoral policy issues: a case study of Canada’s approach to Countering Radicalization to Violence.” *Policy Sciences* (2021) 54:183–208 Assessing the integration of cross-sectoral policy issues: a case study of Canada’s approach to Countering Radicalization to Violence - ProQuest

⁶² O’Halloran. “Assessing the integration of cross-sectoral policy”

⁶³ Bell. “In briefing to minister, RCMP warns”

hindered its capacity to establish a foreign human intelligence service, and reliance on allies for foreign intelligence poses a risk in an increasingly multipolar world.

Canada maintains 300 foreign relationships in 150 countries, but primarily collects intelligence from the Five Eyes, especially the United States. Thus, “Canada has access to an immense pool of raw and finished foreign intelligence”; however, “the large amount of foreign intelligence that Canada receives usually reflects the priorities and interests of others and not necessarily those of Canada.”⁶⁴ This arrangement reduces the costs and risks associated with human intelligence while offering reputational benefits, as gathering intelligence may be illegal in certain countries. However, with worsening security amid great power competition and US political instability, the cost of inaction is likely to rise. When intelligence disagreements arise among allied groups, such as NATO, or if the U.S. restricts information sharing, which sources will Canadian policymakers rely on? External pressures to boost NATO spending or secure the border due to U.S. demands related to fentanyl affect how Canada prioritizes security expenditures, potentially diverting funds from rising domestic CVE efforts to maintain uncertain future relationships based on possibly disagreeable security goals.

CONCLUSION

The alarming rise domestically in ideologically motivated violent extremism demands urgent and comprehensive action. Canada faces a pivotal moment, with a remarkable 488% rise in terrorism-related charges and the increasing impact of online radicalization, particularly among young people.⁶⁵ Existing laws and outdated frameworks struggle to tackle the changing

⁶⁴ Thomas Juneau and Stephanie Carvin. “Don’t Hold Back: Canadianize” in *Intelligence Cooperation under Multipolarity – Non-American Perspectives*. (University of Toronto Press, 2023). 280-281.

⁶⁵ Bell. “In briefing to minister, RCMP warns”

landscape of extremism, which now combines ideology, digital manipulation, and new technologies such as AI and drones.

Despite existing laws and partnerships, counterterrorism efforts remain fragmented, underfunded, and lack transparency. Public trust erodes as foreign radical entities exploit systemic gaps and vulnerabilities to recruit. To safeguard national security, Canada must invest in and modernize its counterterrorism strategy. This includes clearly defining terrorism in Canadian law, strengthening inter-agency collaboration, investing in preventive community programs, establishing accountable and measurable outcomes, and mitigating heavy reliance on intelligence provided by allies and partners. Without a unified, domestically focused, and forward-thinking approach, Canada risks allowing extremist ideologies to further entrench themselves within its society.

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