

TA 20/27-A 2020 03 31



# COVID19 UPDATE

## EXTREMISM & POLITICAL VIOLENCE

### GLOBAL

413 467 18 433

- DAESH calls on extremists to take advantage of the pandemic to conduct new attacks "like Paris, London, Brussels and elsewhere" while Western governments and security forces are distracted by the COVID19 crisis.
- Ideologically-motivated violent (IMV) extremists call online for 'accelerationism goals' including the deliberate transmission of COVID19 to minority groups.

Given the rapidly changing situation, this assessment provides a snapshot of developments and considers the short-term implications for the global terrorist threat. the Canadian presence abroad and ITAC country terrorism threat levels to provide an indications and warnings perspective on potential violent threats to Canada and Canadian interests abroad.



### AMERICAS

67 834 813

- CANADA** Media commentary on rise in discrimination targeting Asian communities.
- UNITED STATES** IMV extremist killed while planning attack on Missouri hospital.

### EUROPE

220 516 11 986

- IMV extremists call on Indymedia forum for looting and violent attacks amid restrictive COVID19 measures.

### AFRICA

1 664 29

- Flights into Benghazi bring in mercenaries from COVID19 infected areas.

### WESTERN PACIFIC

97 766 3 518

- New People's Army insurgents declare they will observe a ceasefire and shift to a defensive posture during the pandemic.
- Radical anti-China elements within protest movement deterred by prohibitions on large gatherings during pandemic.

### MIDDLE EAST

29 631 2 008

- Potential spread of virus in refugee camps, potentially in extremist operating areas.
- Houthi militias exploit pandemic to boost recruitment.
- Hizballah medical facility and quarantine capacity increased by mobilizing medical personnel to fight COVID19.
- Man arrested near Haifa for ramming a car into a COVID19 testing site.
- 100,000 vulnerable refugees fleeing Syria-Iraq conflict are amassed at Greek border.

### SOUTH EAST ASIA

2 344 72

- Complex VBIED attack occurs outside pandemic response planning meeting.
- DAESH supporters call online for attacks amid the COVID19 crisis.

### LEGEND

THREAT LEVEL COLOURS

CRITICAL	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	VERY LOW
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THREAT LEVEL to Canadian interests

Confirmed cases of COVID19 Deaths related to COVID19 Registered Canadians in the country (ROCA)

SECRET

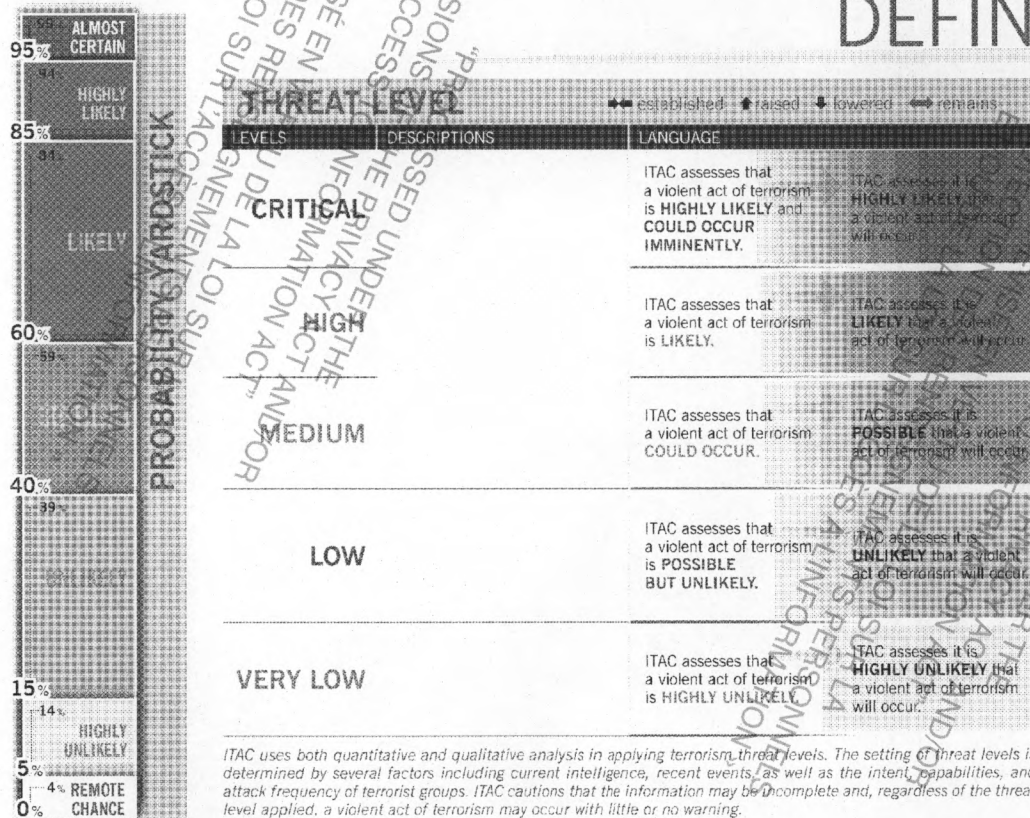
## GLOBAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

### ASSESSMENT

"PROCESSED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PRIVACY ACT AND/OR ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT" "RÉVISÉ EN VERTU DE LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS ET/OU DE LA LOI SUR L'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION"

Canada

# DEFINITIONS



## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

<b>ADVANCED</b>		Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets
<b>MODERATE</b>		Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets
<b>GENERAL</b>		Capable of simple attacks

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TA 20/27-E 2020 03 27



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LEGEND

THREAT LEVEL COLOURS

CRITICAL	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	VERY LOW
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THREAT LEVEL to Canadian interests

Confirmed cases of COVID19

Deaths related to COVID19

Registered Canadians in the country (ROCA)

TOP SECRET//

## GLOBAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

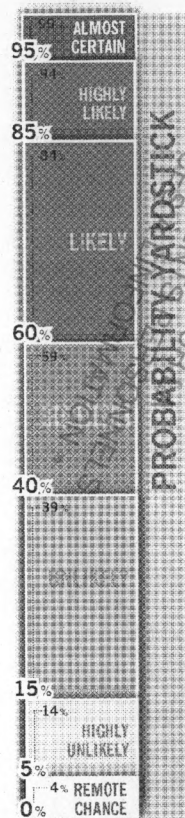
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Canada

# DEFINITIONS



THREAT LEVEL		
LEVELS	DESCRIPTIONS	LANGUAGE
CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>LIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
HIGH	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism <b>COULD OCCUR</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>POSSIBLE</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
MEDIUM	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
LOW	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
VERY LOW		

ITAC uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis in applying terrorism threat levels. The setting of threat levels is determined by several factors including current intelligence, recent events, as well as the intent, capabilities, and attack frequency of terrorist groups. ITAC cautions that the information may be incomplete and, regardless of the threat level applied, a violent act of terrorism may occur with little or no warning.

## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

ADVANCED		Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets
MODERATE		Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets
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# WEEKLY THREAT REVIEW

ITAC

CIET

Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

WTR 20/17-A // 2020-04-30

SECRET//

Week: 2020 04 23 to 2020 04 29

## CANADA-RELATED

NTR

## AMERICAS - EUROPE

1. **FRANCE:** Car ramming of police by DAESH-inspired extremist

## MIDDLE EAST

NTR

## AFRICA

- 2.
3. **MOZAMBIQUE:** Security forces kill 129 extremists
- 4.

## EURASIA - PACIFIC

- 5.
- 6.
7. **INDIA:** DAESH-linked periodical calls again for attacks in India

CONTENTS

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Canada



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**Canada-related**

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NTR

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**Americas - Europe**

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**1. FRANCE: Car ramming of police by DAESH-inspired extremist (***Source: Media*

**Summary:** According to media reporting, on 27 April 2020, 29-year-old French national Youssef Tihlah deliberately rammed his car into police while they were verifying the identity of another driver in Colombes, France. Three police officers were injured, one critically. Authorities found a knife and a letter pledging allegiance to DAESH in Tihlah's car. During his arrest, Tihlah indicated that he had watched videos online and conducted the attack in retaliation for the situation in Palestine, and allegedly hoped to die during the attack. Tihlah was known to authorities for previous offences but was not considered a security risk. It was later reported that a 20-year-old male who lived in the same apartment building as Tihlah was arrested during the search of Tihlah's premises for refusing to relinquish his mobile device under suspicion that it contains evidentiary images. (

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**Middle East**

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NTR

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**Africa**

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### 3. Mozambique: Security forces kill 129 extremists;

Source: Media;

**Summary:** According to media reporting from late April 2020, Mozambican authorities claimed that a total of 129 extremists were killed during three security operations in the month of April in Cabo Delgado Province (CDP), northern Mozambique. Separately,

## Eurasia - Pacific

### 5. INDONESIA: Arrests disrupt activities of DAESH-aligned groups

Source: media

**Summary:** In April 2020, media reported that Indonesian security forces had arrested several Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT) extremists who were reportedly planning attacks. In addition to the arrests, a few extremists were killed, including a senior MIT militant believed to be responsible for the recent beheading of an Indonesian citizen. Indonesian authorities claimed in the media that the extremists sought to conduct an attack while the government was directing its resources to handling the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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Source: Media

**Summary:** Media reporting indicates that the third iteration of the DAESH-linked Voice of Hind/Sawt al-Hind magazine was published on 22 April 2020 and includes call for attacks against India. This Ramadan-timed issue encouraged lone actors in India to make use of kitchen knives, axes, hammers, ropes and belts, vehicular attacks, petrol bombs and even bare hands to carry out attacks. It calls on Indian Muslims and other existing extremist groups in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka to pledge allegiance to DAESH and undertake violence.

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### Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

NTR

What follows is a list of other ITAC products published between 23 and 29 April 2020.

#### Threat Highlights

TH 20/53-A

#### Threat Assessments

TA 20/32

COVID-10 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence  
(SECRET)

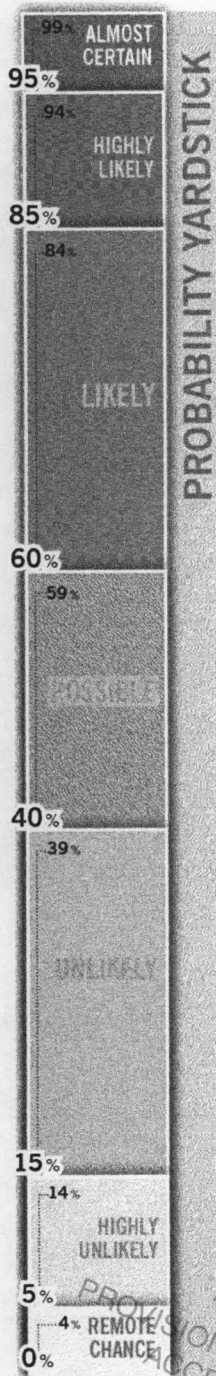
TA 20/32-A

COVID-10 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence  
(SECRET)

#### Lasers



## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

	established	raised	lowered	remains
<b>CRITICAL</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .			
<b>HIGH</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>LIKELY</b> .			
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## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

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WTR 20/17-E // 2020-04-30

TOP SECRET//

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## MIDDLE EAST

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**Canada-related**

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NTR

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**Middle East**

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NTR

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**Africa**

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### 5. MALI:

Source:

media

Separately, according to media of late April 2020, JNIM had sent materiel reinforcements for its counter DAESH-GS efforts, which included 40 vehicles and nearly 300 motorbikes. JNIM had also initiated a clash with DAESH-GS' fighters in northern Burkina Faso, following a DAESH-GS attack in the same area on 16 April that reportedly killed dozens of JNIM fighters.

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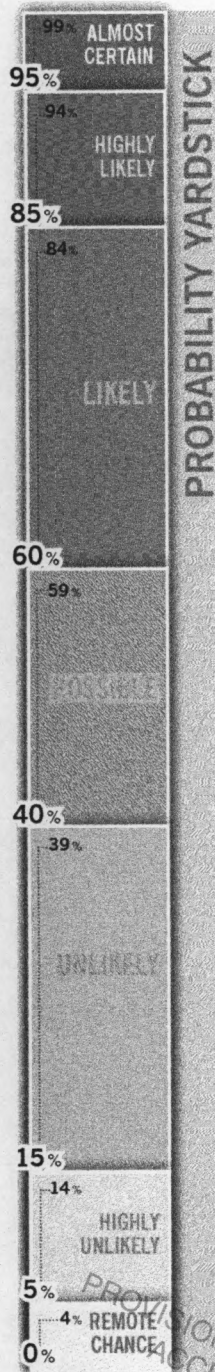
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(SECRET//)**TA 20/32-A****COVID-10 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence**  
(SECRET)**Lasers**



## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

	Established	Raised	Lowered	Remains
<b>CRITICAL</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .			
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## MODERATE



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## GENERAL



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# COVID-19 UPDATE

## EXTREMISM & POLITICAL VIOLENCE

### GLOBAL

2 804 796 193 710

- Islamist extremist narrative frames pandemic as punishment targeting non-believers.
- Ideologically-motivated violent (IMV) extremists continue to spread COVID-19 conspiracy theories and have encouraged arson attacks targeting telecommunications infrastructure.

### EUROPE

11 355 122 218

- 11 355 France-based IMV extremist calls for 'radical cleansing' of British radio service broadcasting prayers during pandemic; IMV extremists laud series of arson attacks on 5G telecommunication infrastructure.
- 2 517 IMV extremists laud additional arson attacks on 5G telecommunication infrastructure.

### AMERICAS

1-094 846 56 063

- CANADA** Mass shooting in Nova Scotia by individual whose businesses had been closed due to pandemic kills at least 22 people while impersonating a police officer.
- 24 675 **UNITED STATES** IMV telegram channel targets medical personnel in campaign to sabotage their vehicles; individual arrested in attempted arson attack targeting Jewish assisted living facility in Massachusetts.

### WESTERN PACIFIC

142 639 5 943

- 12 862 Improvised explosive device mailed to Hong Kong police headquarters amid pandemic security restrictions.

This assessment continues ITAC's snapshot review of recent developments and considers the short-term implications for the global terrorist threat (see TA20/27, TA20/30).



### MIDDLE EAST

160 586 6 887

- 1 174 Extremists at al-Hawl refugee camp celebrate Western COVID-19 deaths.

### AFRICA

20 316 839

- 1 115 Two doctors, a nurse and a hospital administrative assistant kidnapped by an armed group in Sirte.
- 1 435 Two individuals arrested in Kebili in a disrupted plot to infect security forces with COVID-19
- 145 Security forces clash with protesters in Nacala over COVID-19 restrictive measures.

### SOUTHEAST ASIA

43 845 1 747

- 1 966 DAESH supporter claims COVID-19 punishment for death of DAESH leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and calls on extremists to target United Nations.
- 169 World Health Organization employee carrying COVID-19 test results killed in an attack in Rakhine province while driving UN-marked vehicle.

LEGEND

THREAT LEVEL COLOURS

CRITICAL	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	VERY LOW
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THREAT LEVEL to Canadian interests

Confirmed cases of COVID-19

Deaths related to COVID-19

Registered Canadians in the country (ROCA)

SECRET

## GLOBAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

### WHAT'S NEW?

### ENDURING GLOBAL THREAT ASSESSMENTS

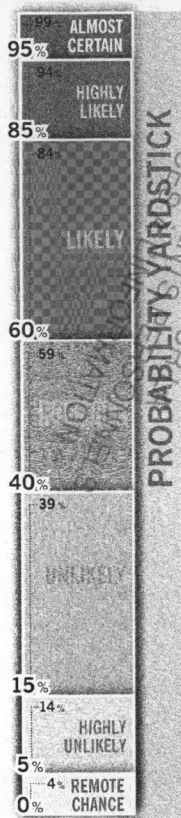
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VERY LOW		

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GENERAL		Capable of simple attacks

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# GLOBAL TERRORISM THREAT ENVIRONMENT DURING RAMADAN 2020

23 APRIL TO 23 MAY

This year, Ramadan is expected to begin on 23 or 24 April 2020, and end on 22 or 23 May, depending on the sighting of the moon, as the Islamic calendar is based around the lunar cycle. This threat assessment tracks reporting on extremist intentions to conduct attacks during Ramadan.

## ASSESSMENTS



### CALLS FOR ATTACKS

reported that, as of 20 April 2020, DAESH-supporter online media re-published posters in Arabic and in English calling fighters and supporters alike to increase jihadi attacks during Ramadan.

SITE



### IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISTS ATTACKS



### CANADIAN NEXUS

LEGEND  
DAESH  
AQ-affiliate  
OTHER  
UNKNOWN

UK

IRAQ

AFGHANISTAN

SOMALIA

UGANDA

KENYA

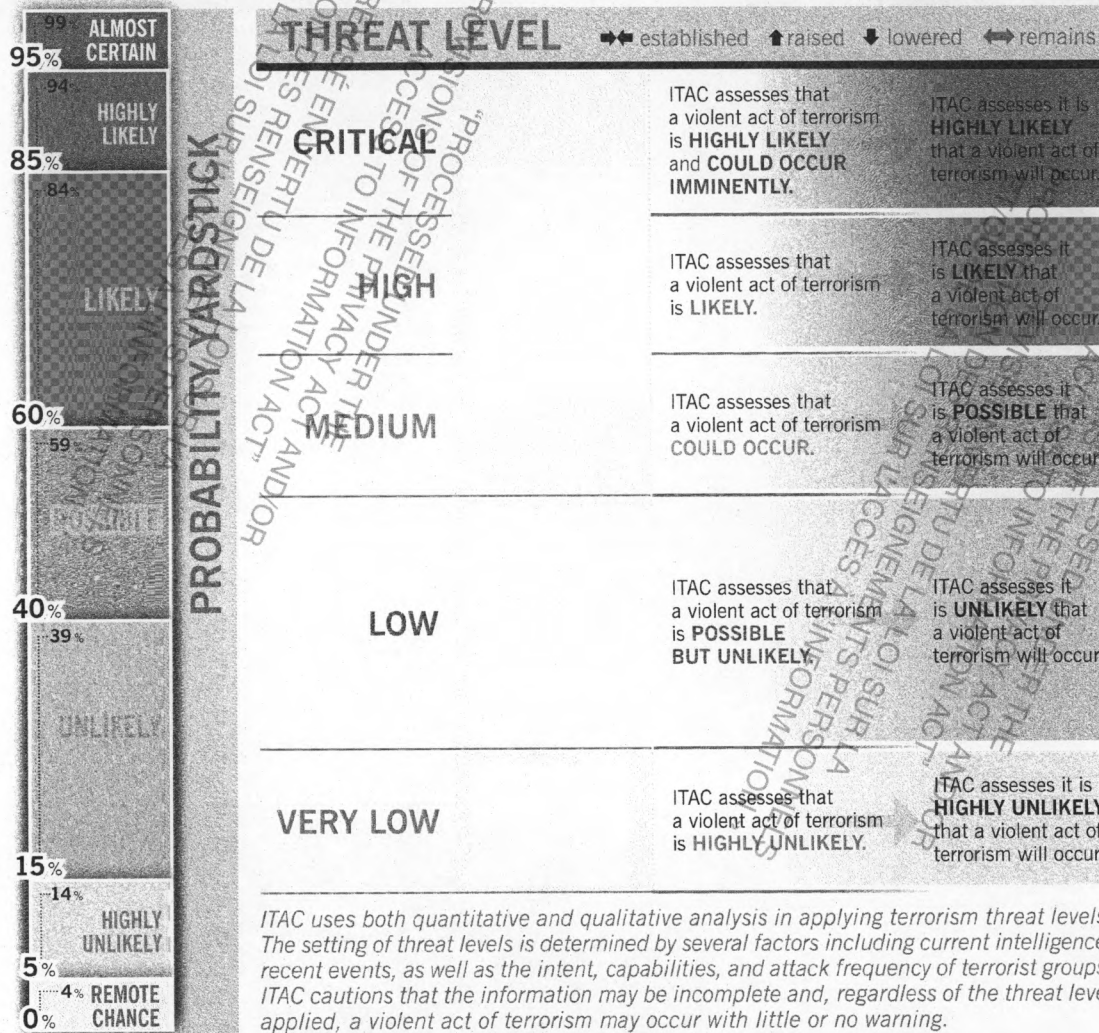
PHILIPPINES

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE 2019 ATTACKS

8 May	Lahore, Pakistan	2 June	Kassel, Germany
11 May	Gwadar, Pakistan	3 June	Tripoli, Lebanon
24 May	Kabul, Afghanistan		
24 May	Lyon, France		
31 May	61 claimed attacks in 13 countries		
3 June	across Africa and the Middle East		

ASSESSMENT NOTE: This report is based on [redacted] as well as media reporting collected [redacted]

# DEFINITIONS



## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

<b>ADVANCED</b>		Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets
<b>MODERATE</b>		Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets
<b>GENERAL</b>		

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TA 20/32-E 2020 04 28



# COVID-19 UPDATE

## EXTREMISM & POLITICAL VIOLENCE

### GLOBAL

2 804 796 193 710

- Islamist extremist narrative frames pandemic as punishment targeting non-believers.
- Ideologically-motivated violent (IMV) extremists continue to spread COVID-19 conspiracy theories and have encouraged arson attacks targeting telecommunications infrastructure.

### EUROPE

1 341 852 122 218

- 11 355 France-based IMV extremist calls for "radical cleansing" of British radio service broadcasting prayers during pandemic; IMV extremists laud series of arson attacks on 5G telecommunication infrastructure.
- 2 517 IMV extremists laud additional arson attacks on 5G telecommunication infrastructure.

### AMERICAS

1 094 846 56 063

- CANADA** Mass shooting in Nova Scotia by individual whose businesses had been closed due to pandemic kills at least 22 people while impersonating a police officer.
- 24 675 **UNITED STATES** IMV telegram channel targets medical personnel in campaign to sabotage their vehicles; individual arrested in attempted arson attack targeting Jewish assisted living facility in Massachusetts.

### WESTERN PACIFIC

142 639 5 943

- 12 862 Improvised explosive device mailed to Hong Kong police headquarters amid pandemic security restrictions.

This assessment continues ITAC's snapshot review of recent developments and considers the short-term implications for the global terrorist threat (see TA20/27, TA20/30).



### MIDDLE EAST

160 586 6 887

### SOUTHEAST ASIA

- 1 966 DAESH supporter claims COVID-19 punishment for death of DAESH leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and calls on extremists to target United Nations.
- 169 World Health Organization employee carrying COVID-19 test results killed in an attack in Rakhine province while driving UN-marked vehicle.

1 115 Two doctors, a nurse and a hospital administrative assistant kidnapped by an armed group in Sirte.

1 435 Two individuals arrested in Kebili in a disrupted plot to infect security forces with COVID-19

145 Security forces clash with protesters in Nacala over COVID-19 restrictive measures.

LEGEND THREAT LEVEL COLOURS

CRITICAL	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	VERY LOW
----------	------	--------	-----	----------

THREAT LEVEL to Canadian interests

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 Deaths related to COVID-19 Registered Canadians in the country (ROCA)

SECRET//

## GLOBAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

### WHAT'S NEW?

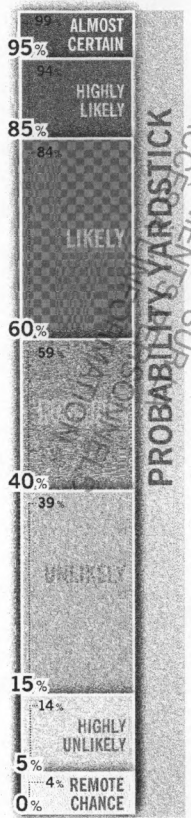
### ENDURING GLOBAL THREAT ASSESSMENTS

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# DEFINITIONS



THREAT LEVEL		
LEVELS		
LEVELS	DESCRIPTIONS	LANGUAGE
CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
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## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

ADVANCED		Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets
MODERATE		Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets
GENERAL		Capable of simple attacks

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# WEEKLY THREAT REVIEW

ITAC

CIET

Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

WTR 20/16-A // 2020-04-24

SECRET

Week: 2020 04 16 to 2020 04 22

## CONTENTS

### CANADA-RELATED

NTR

### AMERICAS - EUROPE

NTR

### MIDDLE EAST

NTR

### AFRICA

1.

2.

### EURASIA - PACIFIC

3.

4. **PHILIPPINES:** ASG ambushes Philippine military, killing eleven military members

5.

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**Canada-related**

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NTR

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**Americas - Europe**

---

NTR

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**Middle East**

---

NTR

---

**Africa**

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**1. TUNISIA: Explosives precursors and drones discovered during raid near Tunis***Source: Media*

**Summary:** According to media reporting, on 15 April 2020, Tunisian authorities raided a house on the outskirts of Tunis, where several products used for the manufacture of explosives were discovered. Ammonium nitrate, potassium and several electronic components used in the manufacture of drones were also discovered. The operation led to the arrest of one individual.



## Eurasia - Pacific

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#### 4. PHILIPPINES: ASG ambushes Philippine military, killing eleven military members

Source: Media;

**Summary:** According to media reporting, on 17 April 2020 Philippine military forces were ambushed and later engaged in a firefight with Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) militants in Patikul, Sulu province. The ambush left eleven soldiers killed, another 14 wounded and five ASG members killed. Media indicates that some of the soldiers were reportedly beheaded. The attack occurred as Philippine armed forces members were conducting search operations in the area, and came upon 40 armed ASG fighters believed to be led by Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan and Radulan Sahiron. Allegedly, ASG members captured weapons and a radio from soldiers killed.

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## Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

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### Threat Highlights

TH 20/54

Canada: motive unknown in Nova Scotia mass shooting

### Threat Assessments

TA 20/30-A

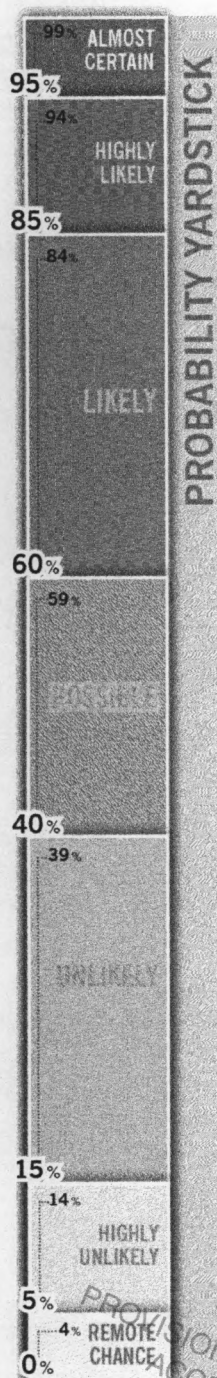
COVID-10 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence  
(SECRET)

### Lasers

NIL

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## DEFINITIONS



PROBABILITY YARDSTICK

## THREAT LEVEL

THREAT LEVEL			→ established → raised → lowered → remains
CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.	
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## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

## ADVANCED



Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets

## MODERATE



Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets

## GENERAL



Capable of simple attacks

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# WEEKLY THREAT REVIEW

ITAC

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Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

WTR 20/16-E // 2020-04-23

TOP SECRET//

Week: 2020 04 16 to 2020 04 22

## CONTENTS

### CANADA-RELATED

NTR

### AMERICAS - EUROPE

NTR

### MIDDLE EAST

1.

### AFRICA

2. **TUNISIA:** Explosives precursors and drones discovered during raid near Tunis
- 3.

### EURASIA - PACIFIC

4.

5. **PHILIPPINES:** ASG ambushes Philippine military, killing eleven military members
- 6.

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Canada

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**Canada-related**

NTR

---

**Americas - Europe**

NTR

---

**Middle East**

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---

**Africa**

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## Eurasia - Pacific

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Source: Media

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## Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

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**Threat Highlights**

**TH 20/54**

**Canada: motive unknown in Nova Scotia mass shooting**

**Threat Assessments**

**TA 20/30-A**

**COVID-10 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence**  
(SECRET)

**TA 20/31**

**Global Terrorism Threat Environment during Ramadan 2020**  
(TOP SECRET//

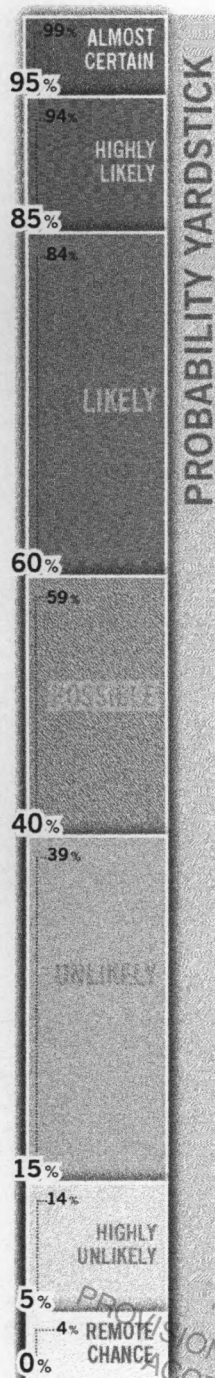
**Lasers**

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## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
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# THREAT HIGHLIGHT

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## CRITICAL INCIDENT

TH 20/54-E // 2020-04-20

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

### Canada: Motive unknown in Nova Scotia mass shooting

#### TERRORISM THREAT LEVELS



CANADA → MEDIUM

→ MEDIUM



Uniformed Personnel

LEGEND: Established → Raised ↑ Lowered ↓ Remains ↔

This assessment is current as of 13:00 hrs, 20 April 2020. ITAC will update this assessment as new information becomes available.

According to media reporting, from the evening of 18 April 2020 to the morning of 19 April 2020, at least 18 victims were killed, including an RCMP officer, in a mass shooting between the Nova Scotia towns of Portapique and Enfield. The alleged shooter, 51-year-old Gabriel Wortman, was killed after being intercepted by police officers at a gas station in Enfield. Law enforcement authorities believe that Wortman acted alone and that there is no further risk to the public. Authorities also believe he had an initial "motivation" at the beginning that "turned to randomness". He was also not known to police for a history of violence or extremist views.

#### MASS SHOOTING IN NOVA SCOTIA



CBC NEWS  
Source: Media

#### Timeline of events

According to media reporting, in the late evening of 18 April 2020, Nova Scotia RCMP responded to calls about shots fired in Portapique, a community located approximately 40 kilometres west of Truro. At approximately the same time, local residents reported seeing at least three house fires in the area. Separate media reporting states that neighbours indicated that the alleged shooter had set fire to his home and several buildings on the property, and then shot people as they ran out of their homes. The shooter was apparently dressed in a full police uniform and vest and driving a car disguised as an RCMP vehicle. Upon arrival, police found "several casualties" but no suspect.

Separate media reporting indicates that at some point during the evening, the shooter exchanged gunfire with police. He managed to evade authorities and was at large throughout the night.

On the following morning, 19 April 2020, law enforcement authorities reported an "active shooter" incident and identified Wortman as the suspect. Throughout the rest of the morning, Wortman was seen in several communities driving an apparent RCMP vehicle. Authorities then located Wortman in a grocery store plaza in Shubenacadie, where they attempted to detain him. Eyewitnesses at the scene saw two cars consumed with fire. At some point, he switched from the RCMP car to a silver SUV. Wortman allegedly then drove south to Enfield, where he was intercepted by police officers at a gas station.

#### ASSESSMENT NOTE

This assessment is based on media reporting.

DEFINITIONS and HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS are located at the last page.

**Gabriel Wortman**

According to media reporting from 19 April 2020, Wortman was a dentist who owned several clinics. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had shuttered his businesses as Nova Scotia order the closure of dental clinics to all but emergency procedures in mid-March 2020. Records indicate that he owned several large properties on Portapique Beach Road, where the shooting began. Neighbours reported that Wortman was "obsessed" with the police and that his home in Portapique was a "shrine" to the RCMP. He also reportedly bought law enforcement memorabilia and boasted about his hobby of refurbishing old police cruisers.

**ASSESSMENT****Terrorism Threat Levels****Canada****MEDIUM****MEDIUM**

Threat levels as of 27 March 2020. (U//FOUO)

An act of terrorism **COULD OCCUR**.There is intent *and* capability from both domestic and international extremist actors to commit an act of terrorism in Canada.An act of terrorism affecting **uniformed personnel** in Canada **COULD OCCUR**.

- an individual or group **within Canada** or abroad has the intent *and* capability to commit an act of terrorism in Canada.

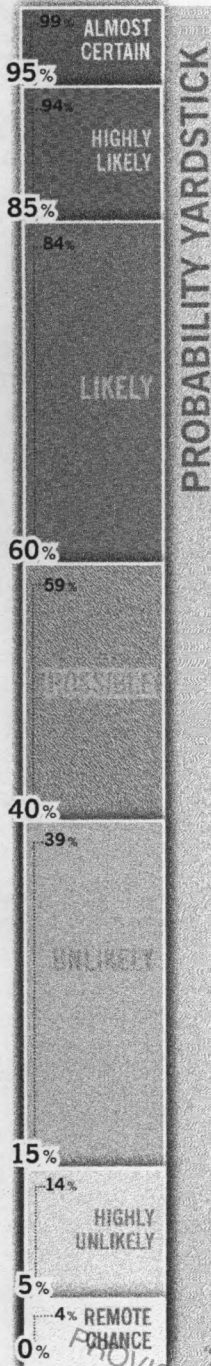
**ITAC assesses****that an act of terrorism could occur in Canada.**

- Propaganda identifying **uniformed personnel** as potential targets continues to be published online.

**ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism affecting uniformed personnel in Canada could occur.**



## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

	established	raised	lowered	remains
CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .			
HIGH	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>LIKELY</b> .			
MEDIUM	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism <b>COULD OCCUR</b> .			
LOW	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY</b> .			
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# WEEKLY THREAT REVIEW

ITAC

Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

CIET

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

WTR 20/15-E // 2020-04-16

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Week: 2020 04 09 to 2020 04 15

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### CANADA-RELATED

NTR

### AMERICAS - EUROPE

NTR

### MIDDLE EAST

1.

2.

### AFRICA

3.

4. **EGYPT:** Police officer killed in raid against terrorist cell in Cairo

### EURASIA - PACIFIC

5.

6.

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**Canada-related**

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NTR

**Americas - Europe**

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NTR

**Middle East**

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT"  
« RÉVISÉ EN VERTU DE LA LOI SUR LA  
PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS  
ET/OU DE LA LOI SUR L'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION »

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## Africa

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#### 4. EGYPT: Police officer killed in raid against terrorist cell in Cairo

Source: Media

**Summary:** According to media reporting, an Egyptian police officer and seven suspected terrorists were killed on 14 April 2020 when Egyptian security forces raided a suspected militant hideout at a residential building in Cairo's Amiriyah District. The Egyptian Interior Ministry said the security forces seized weapons and ammunition in the raid and that the suspects were planning attacks against Coptic Christians during the Coptic Orthodox Holy Week and Easter Sunday celebrated on 19 April 2020.

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## Eurasia - Pacific

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## Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

NTR

What follows is a list of other ITAC products published between 9 and 15 April 2020.

### Threat Highlights

TH 20/53 **Mozambique; DAESH affiliate advances capability and plans further attacks**

(TOP SECRET//

### Threat Assessments

TA 20/30 **COVID-19 Update Extremism & Political Violence**

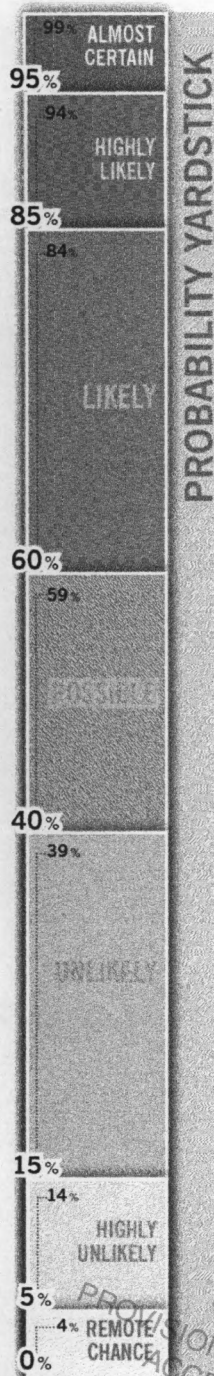
(TOP SECRET//

TA 20/30-A **COVID-19 Update Extremism & Political Violence**

(SECRET)

### Lasers

## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

THREAT LEVEL		PROCESSED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PRIVACY ACT AND/OR ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT / RÉVISÉ EN VERTU DE LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS ET/OU DE LA LOI SUR L'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION
CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
HIGH	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>LIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
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LOW	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
VERY LOW	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

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## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

<b>ADVANCED</b>		Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets
<b>MODERATE</b>		Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets
<b>GENERAL</b>		Capable of simple attacks

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TA 20/30-A 2020 04 15



# COVID-19 UPDATE

## EXTREMISM & POLITICAL VIOLENCE

### GLOBAL

1,353,361 79,235

- Ideologically-motivated violent (IMV) extremists suggest using household chemicals to create a toxic gas that would mimic COVID-19 symptoms and overwhelm medical facilities.
- Al-Qaida leadership issues first statement on COVID-19, urges continued 'jihad' but calls for Westerners to 'utilize their time in quarantine' to turn to Islam.

Given the rapidly changing situation, this assessment updates TA20/27 to provide a snapshot of developments and considers the short-term implications for the global terrorist threat.

the Canadian presence abroad and ITAC country terrorism threat levels to provide an indications and warnings perspective on potential violent threats to Canada and Canadian interests abroad.



### EUROPE

2,546 PKK extremist killed by Turkish authorities tested positive for COVID-19 suggesting virus had spread to the group across the Iranian border.

### AMERICAS

3,103 Extremists may have used COVID-19 lockdowns as an opportunity to execute local activists.  
33,005 **UNITED STATES** US issues warnings about IMV extremist aspirations to use COVID-19 as a weapon;

### WESTERN PACIFIC

8,543 DAESH-Philippines propaganda capitalizing on COVID-19 to celebrate the death of Americans and Italians.  
13,045 Anti-Chinese militants in Hong Kong target police facilities, residences and vehicles with firebombs.

### MIDDLE EAST

367 Taliban campaigns against COVID-19 spread while mass prisoner release delayed.  
1,149 DAESH detainees recaptured after briefly escaping Ghweran prison.  
661 France withdraws troops from Iraq due to pandemic.

### SOUTHEAST ASIA

28,723 DAESH-India propaganda calls for lone actor attacks; calls COVID-19 an opportunity for 'jihad'.  
2,723 Indonesia considers release of 30,000 inmates to curb virus in prisons; concern Jemaah Anshorut Daulah may seek to conduct attacks during pandemic, possibly targeting Chinese interests.

### AFRICA

1,129 Combatants infected while conflict escalates in Tripoli.  
1,931 Two terrorist attacks seeking to take advantage of pandemic thwarted near US Embassy in Tunis.  
1,562 UN mission quarantined and suspends battalion rotations.

### LEGEND

THREAT LEVEL COLOURS  
CRITICAL HIGH MEDIUM LOW VERY LOW

THREAT LEVEL to Canadian interests

Confirmed cases of COVID-19  
Deaths related to COVID-19  
Registered Canadians in the country (ROCA)

SECRET

## GLOBAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

### WHAT'S NEW?

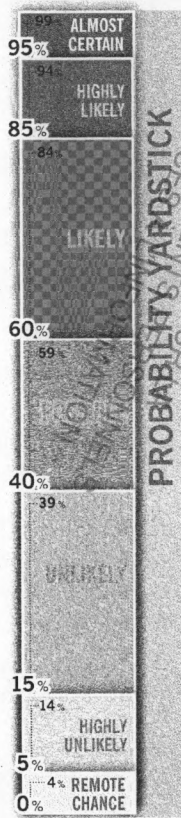
Countries around the world have withdrawn, redeployed or locked down thousands of military and security forces to combat COVID-19, including in several fragile states where their presence has deterred terrorist advances.

### ENDURING GLOBAL THREAT ASSESSMENTS

Canada



# DEFINITIONS



THREAT LEVEL		
LEVELS		
LEVELS	DESCRIPTIONS	LANGUAGE
CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
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TA 20/30-E 2020 04 14



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the Canadian presence abroad and ITAC country terrorism threat levels to provide an indications and warnings perspective on potential violent threats to Canada and Canadian interests abroad.



### AMERICAS

417,416 12,597

3,103 Extremists may have used COVID-19 lockdowns as an opportunity to execute local activists.

33,005 **UNITED STATES** US issues warnings about IMV extremist aspirations to use COVID-19 as a weapon;

### SOUTHEAST ASIA

10,707 426

28,723 DAESH-India propaganda calls for lone actor attacks; calls COVID-19 an opportunity for 'jihad'.

2,723 Indonesia considers release of 30,000 inmates to curb virus in prisons; concern Jemaah Anshurut Daulah may seek to conduct attacks during pandemic, possibly targeting Chinese interests.

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114,667 3,922

8,543 DAESH-Philippines propaganda capitalizing on COVID-19 to celebrate the death of Americans and Italians.

13,045 Anti-Chinese militants in Hong Kong target police facilities, residences and vehicles with firebombs.

### EUROPE

720,219 57,369

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### MIDDLE EAST

81,993 4,314

367 Taliban campaigns against COVID-19 spread while mass prisoner release delayed;

1,149 DAESH detainees recaptured after briefly escaping Ghweran prison;

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7347 326

1,129 Combatants infected while conflict escalates in Tripoli;

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UN mission quarantined and suspends battalion rotations.

LEGEND  
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CRITICAL HIGH MEDIUM LOW VERY LOW  
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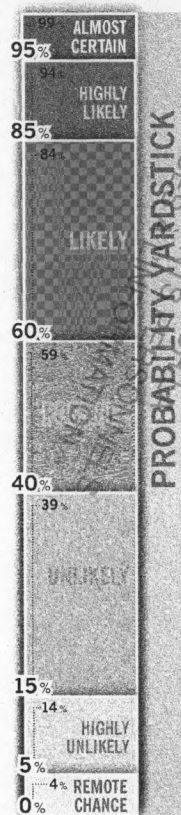
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### ENDURING GLOBAL THREAT ASSESSMENTS

template and procedure for

Canada

# DEFINITIONS



THREAT LEVEL		
LEVELS	DESCRIPTIONS	LANGUAGE
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	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
MEDIUM	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>VERY LOW</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>VERY LOW</b> .

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ITAC

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Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

WTR 20/14-A // 2020-04-09

SECRET

Week: 2020 04 02 to 2020 04 08

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### CANADA-RELATED

NTR

### AMERICAS - EUROPE

1. **FRANCE:** Three individuals arrested for knife attack that kills two
2. [REDACTED]

### MIDDLE EAST

3. [REDACTED]

### AFRICA

4. [REDACTED]

5. [REDACTED]

### EURASIA - PACIFIC

6. "PROCESSED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PRIVACY ACT AND/OR ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT"
7. [REDACTED]
8. **THAILAND:** BRN declares ceasefire in south amid COVID-19
9. **RUSSIA/UKRAINE:** US designates Russian Imperial Movement as a terrorist group

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Canada

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**Canada-related**

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NTR

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**Americas - Europe**

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**1. FRANCE: Three individuals arrested for knife attack that kills two***Source: Media*

**Summary:** According to media reporting, on 4 April 2020 a Sudanese asylum seeker identified as Abdallah A.O attacked pedestrians at random with a knife in the southern French town of Romans-sur-Isere, killing two and injuring five. French counterterrorism authorities cited in the media indicated that the attacker was arrested on terrorism-related charges minutes following the attack after he was found "on his knees on the pavement praying in Arabic". During a subsequent search of the attacker's home, authorities found handwritten documents that included arguments about religion and a complaint about living in a "country of infidels". Two others were also detained in connection with the attack, including an acquaintance and an individual living at the same residence as the attacker.

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**Middle East**

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## **Africa**

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## **Eurasia - Pacific**

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SECRET//

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#### 8. THAILAND: BRN declares ceasefire in south amid COVID-19

Source: Media

**Summary:** Media reporting from early April 2020 indicates that the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) has declared a ceasefire on humanitarian grounds, citing concerns about the COVID-19 outbreak. BRN claimed they were halting all activities unless they were attacked by the Thai military. The ceasefire follows a suspected BRN attack in March 2020 against a government office in Yala province where a COVID-19 response meeting was being held.

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#### 9. RUSSIA/UKRAINE: US designates Russian Imperial Movement as a terrorist group

Source: Media

**Summary:** On 7 April 2020, the United States designated the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM) and three of its leaders as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (see text box). RIM is cited as providing paramilitary training and incitement to violence to other far right and neo-Nazi groups around the world, and in particular in Ukraine. According to media reporting from 2017, two Swedish nationals received training from RIM in August 2016 and were later involved in two bomb attacks and an attempted bomb attack that targeted refugees and political opponents in Gothenburg, Sweden, leaving one person seriously injured (see TA19/63).

##### What is RIM?

According to media and open source reporting, the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), founded in 2002, attracts and trains groups motivated by white supremacy and neo-Nazi beliefs. RIM has two training facilities in St. Petersburg that offer woodland and urban assault, tactical weapons, and hand-to-hand combat training.

Source: Media

**ITAC Assessment:** This is the first time the United States has formally designated a white supremacist group as terrorists.

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## Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

NTR

What follows is a list of other ITAC products published between 2 and 8 April 2020.

### Threat Highlights

TH 20/52      **Chad/Nigeria: Attacks kill nearly 100 Chadian and 70 Nigerian soldiers**  
(SECRET)

### Threat Assessments

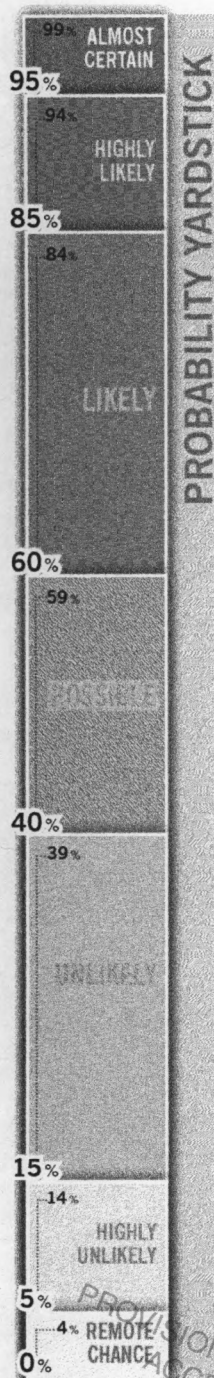
TA 20/26-A      **UPDATE: The National Terrorism Threat Level for Canada**  
(SECRET//)

TA 20/28

### Lasers

NIL

## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

THREAT LEVEL	Established / Raised / Lowered / Remains
CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> . ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
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ITAC

CIET

Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

WTR 20/14-E5 // 2020-04-09

TOP SECRET//

Week: 2020 04 02 to 2020 04 08

## CONTENTS

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### AMERICAS - EUROPE

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2. [REDACTED]

### MIDDLE EAST

3. [REDACTED]

### AFRICA

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5. [REDACTED]

6. [REDACTED]

### EURASIA - PACIFIC

7. **AFGHANISTAN:** Former DAESH-K leader arrested by Afghan authorities
8. [REDACTED]
9. [REDACTED]

10. [REDACTED]

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12. **RUSSIA/UKRAINE:** US designates Russian Imperial Movement as a terrorist group

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## Canada-related

NTR

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## Americas - Europe

### 1. FRANCE: Three individuals arrested for knife attack that kills two

Source: Media

**Summary:** According to media reporting, on 4 April 2020 a Sudanese asylum seeker identified as Abdallah A.O attacked pedestrians at random with a knife in the southern French town of Romans-sur-Isere, killing two and injuring five. French counterterrorism authorities cited in the media indicated that the attacker was arrested on terrorism-related charges minutes following the attack after he was found "on his knees on the pavement praying in Arabic". During a subsequent search of the attacker's home, authorities found handwritten documents that included arguments about religion and a complaint about living in a "country of infidels". Two others were also detained in connection with the attack, including an acquaintance and an individual living at the same residence as the attacker.

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## Middle East

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**Africa**

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## Eurasia - Pacific

### 7. AFGHANISTAN: Former DAESH-K leader arrested by Afghan authorities

Media

**Summary:** In early April 2020, Afghan authorities publicly announced the arrest of the leader of DAESH-Khorasan (DAESH-K) along with 19 other fighters.

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## 12. RUSSIA/UKRAINE: US designates Russian Imperial Movement as a terrorist group

Source: Media

**Summary:** On 7 April 2020, the United States designated the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM) and three of its leaders as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (see text box). RIM is cited as providing paramilitary training and incitement to violence to other far right and neo-nazi groups around the world, and in particular in Ukraine. According to media reporting from 2017, two Swedish nationals received training from RIM in August 2016 and were later involved in two bomb attacks and an attempted bomb attack that targeted refugees and political opponents in Gothenburg, Sweden, leaving one person seriously injured (see TA19/63).

### What is RIM?

According to media and open source reporting, the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), founded in 2002, attracts and trains groups motivated by white supremacy and neo-Nazi beliefs. RIM has two training facilities in St. Petersburg that offer woodland and urban assault, tactical weapons, and hand-to-hand combat training.

Source: Media

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## Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

What follows is a list of other ITAC products published between 2 and 8 April 2020.

### Threat Highlights

TH 20/52      **Chad/Nigeria: Attacks kill nearly 100 Chadian and 70 Nigerian soldiers**  
(SECRET)

### Threat Assessments

TA 20/26-A      **UPDATE: The National Terrorism Threat Level for Canada**  
(SECRET//

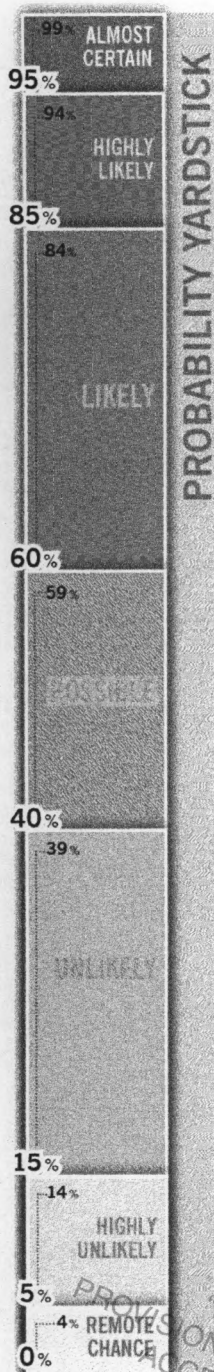
TA 20/28      **Kenya: Potential reconnaissance incidents at the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi**  
(SECRET//

### Lasers

NIL



## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

	established	raised	lowered	remains
<b>CRITICAL</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .			
<b>HIGH</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>LIKELY</b> .			
<b>MEDIUM</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism <b>COULD OCCUR</b> .			
<b>LOW</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY</b> .			
<b>VERY LOW</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> .			

ITAC uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis in applying terrorism threat levels. The setting of threat levels is determined by several factors, including current intelligence, recent events, as well as the intent, capabilities, and attack frequency of terrorist groups. ITAC cautions that the information may be incomplete and, regardless of the threat level applied, a violent act of terrorism may occur with little or no warning.

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## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

<b>ADVANCED</b>		Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets
<b>MODERATE</b>		Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets
<b>GENERAL</b>		Capable of simple attacks

## HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

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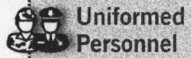


UPDATE

# THE NATIONAL TERRORISM THREAT LEVEL FOR CANADA

← MEDIUM

← MEDIUM



Uniformed Personnel

This graphic threat assessment (TA) updates the National Terrorism Threat Level (NTTL) and the threat to uniformed personnel last published on 4 December 2019 - TA 19/127.

- CRITICAL
- HIGH
- MEDIUM
- LOW
- VERY LOW

## THREATS TO TRANSPORTATION

transportation networks, such as rail, marine and air, continue to be desirable targets for extremist groups. ITAC has reassessed the threat to rail networks in Canada (see TA 20/23-A).

Extremist propaganda continues to convey the intent to strike transportation modes, and a number of acts of sabotage against domestic rail infrastructure have occurred.

ITAC last assessed the terrorism threat to civil aviation in Canada in March 2019 (refer to TA 19/22-B), while the threat to maritime transportation systems (MTS) (refer to TA 18/120) was reassessed in 2018.

AVIATION



RAIL



MARITIME



## CANADIAN EXTREMIST TRAVELLERS AND RETURNEES

Currently, there are CETs believed to be alive and currently abroad, are in Turkey/Syria/Iraq, with the remainder in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, North and East Africa. These individuals travelled to support and facilitate terrorist-related activities. individuals, with a nexus to Canada and suspected of having engaged in terrorist activities abroad, have returned. Of that number, returned from Turkey/Syria/Iraq.

The number of CETs returning to Canada as a consequence of the collapse of the physical DAESH caliphate has been relatively few to date. Currently, the majority of CETs in Syria remain in detention.

SECRET//

ITAC assesses the terrorism threat in Canada to be **MEDIUM**: Extremist groups and individuals in Canada and abroad have both the **intent AND the capability** to carry out an act of terrorism in this country. ITAC assesses an attack *could occur*.

ITAC assesses the terrorism threat to uniformed personnel in Canada to be **MEDIUM**: An attack targeting uniformed personnel in Canada *could occur*.

## ITAC ASSESSMENT

A terrorist attack in Canada could occur

The greatest terrorism threat to Canada remains domestic extremists who have been inspired or incited online

References to Canada and uniformed personnel continue to be present in extremist propaganda. This has not resulted in attacks or more active planning in Canada.

ASSESSMENT NOTE: this assessment is based on all-source information





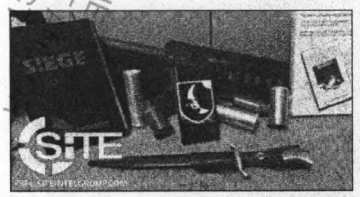
## THREAT DEVELOPMENTS

### IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISM

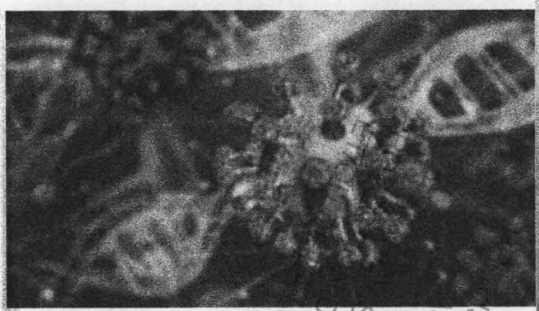
IMV actors continue to express intent to carry out violent acts in the name of their extremist views. On 16 January 2020, United States (US) authorities arrested Patrik Mathews who, after illegally crossing into the US in August 2019, discussed attacking a gun rights rally in Richmond, Virginia, in the hopes of triggering a race war (refer to TH 20/14, TH 20/23, and TH 20/25). Other Canadian IMV extremists under investigation include at least one member of the Canadian military who encouraged fellow extremists to join the military to learn "the methods you need to destroy them".

### USE OF PROPAGANDA AND RECRUITMENT MATERIAL

The threat of IMV extremism endures, in part due to the proliferation of extremist propaganda and recruitment material. Primarily shared via social media, recent propaganda and recruitment videos posted online feature a wide range of activities, including military-style weapons training and flag burnings. Some videos depict and promote 'hate camps', while others, including one by The Base, appear to threaten potential targets such as Canadian journalists who focus on extremism. (see TH 19/137 and TH 20/11). Certain IMV extremist networks have criticized "keyboard warriorism" and have encouraged individuals to engage in violent activities.



### ITAC ASSESSMENT



## EXTREMISTS SUGGEST USE OF COVID-19 AS A WEAPON OR RETRIBUTION

According to SITE Intelligence, on 19 February 2020, a far-right Telegram channel set up to aggregate content regarding the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19, published a list of "accelerationism goals" including the deliberate transmission of COVID-19 to minority groups. Separate MEMRI reporting from 4 March 2020 notes that a jihadist magazine included an article from a group of Islamic clerics based in Syria describing COVID-19 as "one of Allah's soldiers" and "divine vengeance" against criminals.

### ITAC ASSESSMENT

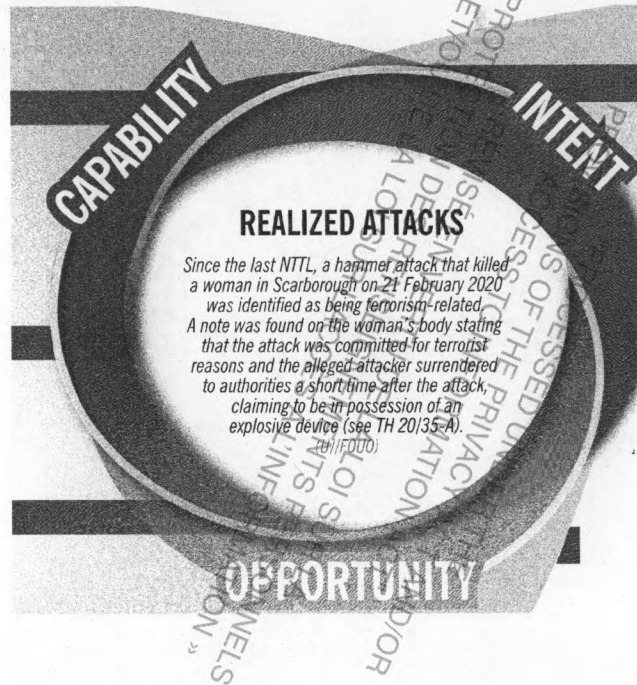


## TERRORISM RELATED OR OTHER LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

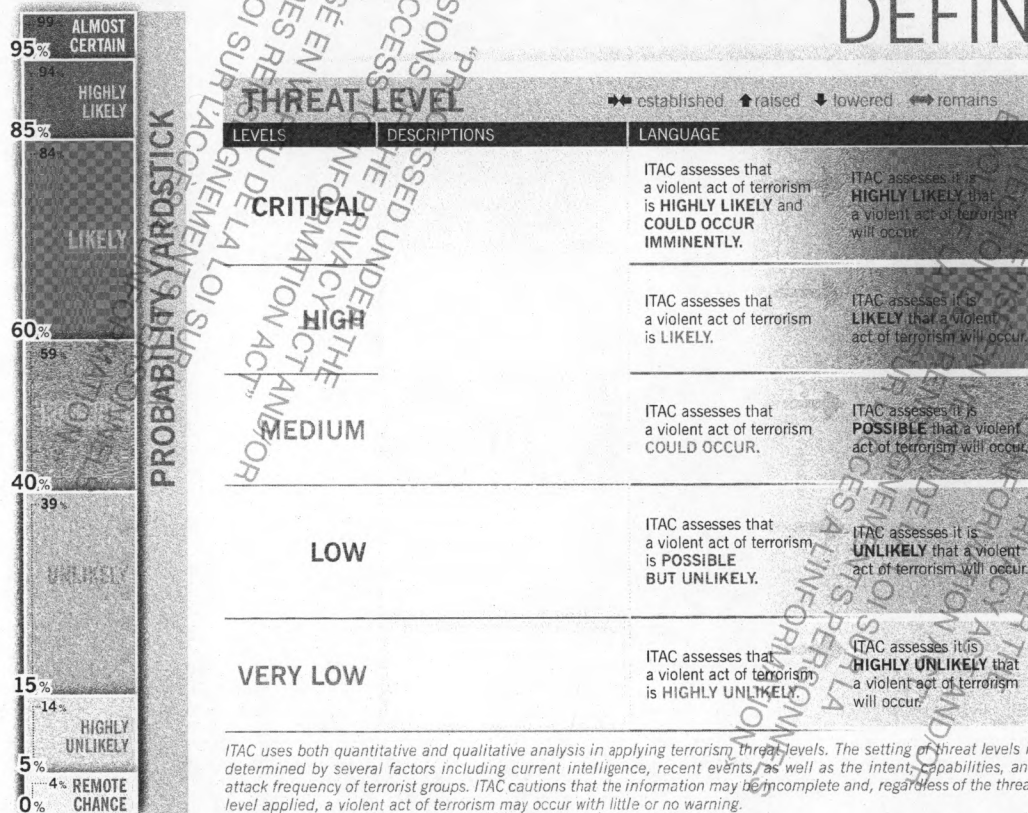
Saad AKHTAR	Charged with first-degree murder, including terrorist activity, for allegedly killing a pedestrian in Scarborough, ON, on the evening of 21 February 2020.
Kingston-based minor	Charged with terrorism-related offences pursuant to the Criminal Code. After being released on bail, he was arrested on 21 April 2019 after an alleged breach of his bail conditions, and has remained in custody since. The youth is expected to enter a guilty plea on 7 April 2020.
Carlos LARMOND	Initially arrested in Montréal, QC, in January 2015 while boarding a plane with intentions to fly overseas and join DAESH. He was recently released from prison to a halfway house (with restrictions) under a statutory-release law. His co-conspirator (and twin brother) Ashton Larmond was sentenced to 17 years and remains in prison.
Ikar MAO	Charged with participating in the activity of a terrorist group and leaving Canada to participate in the activity of a terrorist group. He was denied bail on 12 December 2019, and will remain in custody until trial.
Patrik MATHEWS	Charged in the US with transporting a firearm and ammunition with intent to commit a felony and of being an alien in possession of a firearm and ammunition. He allegedly videotaped himself advocating killing people, poisoning water supplies and derailing trains. Mathews has been denied bail.
Alek MINASSIAN	Charged with first-degree murder and 16 counts of attempted murder in connection with the 23 April 2018 Toronto van attack. His trial is scheduled to commence on 6 April 2020. Minassian is not facing terrorism charges.
Awso PESHDARY	Charged with participating in the activity of a terrorist group, facilitating an activity for a terrorist group, and two counts of conspiring to participate or contribute to an activity of a terrorist group; his trial is ongoing.
Abdulahi HASAN SHARIF	Convicted on 25 October 2019 of all 11 charges, including five counts of attempted murder in relation to two vehicle attacks in Edmonton which occurred on 20 September 2017. Sharif was not facing terrorism charges. Hasan Sharif was sentenced to 28 years in prison on 13 December 2019.







# DEFINITIONS



## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

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MODERATE		Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets
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# THREAT ASSESSMENT

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TA 20/29-E // 2020-04-03

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'CANADIAN EYES ONLY

## SYRIA:

SECRET

### SYRIAN KURDISH MEASURES AGAINST COVID-19 CRISIS

According to media and open source reporting, on 23 March 2020 the Syrian Kurdish administration announced a two-week curfew over its territory in northeast Syria to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), restricting residents to their homes and closing public spaces and non-essential businesses. Security checkpoints and patrols have been enforcing the measures, arresting hundreds for non-compliance. According to separate uncorroborated media reporting, as of 24 March 2020, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) indicated that it would suspend most of its military operations in northeast Syria to deal with COVID-19.

According to media, as of 26 March 2020, limited medical resources were available in Syrian Kurdish territory to care for patients infected with COVID-19, including few intensive care units and ventilators. There were no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Syrian Kurdish territory, but there was little to no testing capability due to limited access to testing kits.

### IDP CAMPS AND PRISONS

### CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES IN SYRIA

According to open source reporting, as of 2 April 2020, Syria had only disclosed 16 confirmed cases of COVID-19. In contrast, there were over 50,000 confirmed cases in Iran, over 18,000 in Turkey and nearly 800 in Iraq.

### ASSESSMENT NOTE

ITAC's assessment is based on

and media and open source reporting.



**Prison break**

According to media and open source reporting, on 29 March 2020, several DAESH detainees briefly escaped and were subsequently recaptured following a riot at Ghweran prison in northeast Syria. According to uncorroborated open source reporting, detainees rioted due to poor treatment and conditions in the prison.

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**ASSESSMENT**

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**Terrorism Threat Levels**

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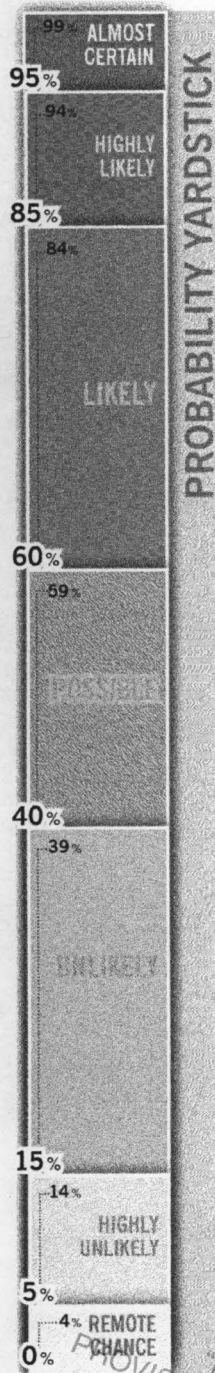
Threat levels as of 24 July 2019.

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## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

## CRITICAL

## HIGH

## MEDIUM

## LOW

## VERY LOW

PROVIDED "PROCESSED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PRIVACY ACT AND/OR ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT" / "RÉVISÉ EN VERTU DE LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS ET/OU DE LA LOI SUR L'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION"

established raised lowered remains

ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is **HIGHLY LIKELY** and **COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY**.

ITAC assesses it is **HIGHLY LIKELY** that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is **LIKELY**.

ITAC assesses it is **LIKELY** that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism **COULD OCCUR**.

ITAC assesses it is **POSSIBLE** that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is **POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY**.

ITAC assesses it is **UNLIKELY** that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is **HIGHLY UNLIKELY**.

ITAC assesses it is **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

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## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

## ADVANCED



Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets

## MODERATE



Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets

## GENERAL



Capable of simple attacks

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# WEEKLY THREAT REVIEW

ITAC

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WTR 20/13-A // 2020-04-03

SECRET//

Week: 2020 03 26 to 2020 04 01

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NTR

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NTR

### MIDDLE EAST

NTR

### AFRICA

1. **TUNISIA:** Two terrorist attacks thwarted near the US Embassy in Tunis
- 2.
- 3.

### EURASIA - PACIFIC

4. **INDONESIA:** New Zealander killed by gunmen near Freeport Mine in Papua
5. **PHILIPPINES:** Canadian killed in plane explosion in Manila;

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Canada

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**Canada-related**

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NTR

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**Americas - Europe**

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NTR

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**Middle East**

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NTR

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**Africa**

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**1. TUNISIA: Two terrorist attacks thwarted near the US Embassy in Tunis***Source: Media*

**Summary:** According to media reporting from late March 2020, two terrorist plots were thwarted and four terrorists arrested near the United States (US) Embassy in Tunis. The recent suicide bombing attack at the Berges du Lac on 6 March 2020 near the US Embassy triggered a series of arrests. Terrorist elements had planned to carry out other attacks to capitalize on the exceptional circumstances in Tunisia brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**2.**

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3.

## Eurasia - Pacific

### 4. INDONESIA: New Zealander killed by gunmen near Freeport Mine in Papua

Source: Media

**Summary:** Media reporting from 30 March 2020 indicates that eight gunmen killed a New Zealand miner and wounded six other individuals near the PT Freeport Indonesia Mine. The mine is partly owned by a named US-based company and has been previously targeted by attacks. The West Papua Liberation Army, the militant wing of the Free Papua Organization, claimed responsibility for the attack. Additionally, media reported that similar clashes between Indonesian authorities and the West Papua Liberation Army had killed two other security personnel since February 2020.

### 5. PHILIPPINES: Canadian killed in plane explosion in Manila;

Source: Media

**Summary:** Media reporting from 29 March 2020 indicates that an airplane carrying medical supplies bound for Japan caught fire during takeoff from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila. Eight people were killed including an American and a Canadian. According to media sources, Philippines authorities had deemed the plane airworthy, but the airport was operating with minimal staff due to the COVID-19 lockdown measures implemented by the authorities. Local officials indicated that the plane encountered an unspecified problem resulting in a fire that destroyed the aircraft.

## Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

NTR



What follows is a list of other ITAC products published between 26 March and 1 April 2020.

**Threat Highlights**

**TH 20/51      United States: Alleged VBIED plan to attack hospital during COVID-19 Pandemic**  
(UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

**Threat Assessments**

**TA 20/27-A      COVID-19 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence**  
(SECRET)

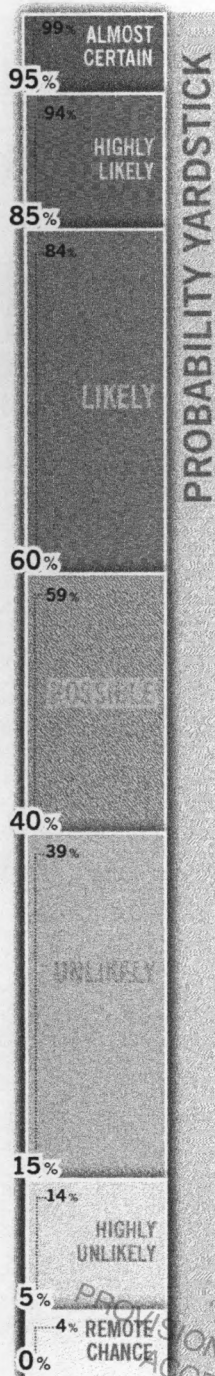
**Lasers**

NIL

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## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

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CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
HIGH	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>LIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>LIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
MEDIUM	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism <b>COULD OCCUR</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>POSSIBLE</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
LOW	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
VERY LOW	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

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## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

<b>ADVANCED</b>		Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets
<b>MODERATE</b>		Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets
<b>GENERAL</b>		Capable of simple attacks

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# WEEKLY THREAT REVIEW

ITAC

CIET

Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

WTR 20/13-E // 2020-04-02

TOP SECRET//

Week: 2020 03 26 to 2020 04 01

## CONTENTS

### CANADA-RELATED NTR

### AMERICAS - EUROPE NTR

### MIDDLE EAST NTR

#### AFRICA

1. **TUNISIA:** Two terrorist attacks thwarted near the US Embassy in Tunis
- 2.
- 3.

#### EURASIA - PACIFIC

- 4.
- 5.
6. **INDONESIA:** New Zealander killed by gunmen near Freeport Mine in Papua
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**Canada-related**

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NTR

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**Americas - Europe**

---

NTR

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**Middle East**

---

NTR

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**Africa**

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## Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

NTR

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**Threat Highlights**

**TH 20/51 United States: Alleged VBIED plan to attack hospital during COVID-19 Pandemic**  
(UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

**Threat Assessments**

**TA 20/27 COVID-19 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence**  
(TOP SECRET// )

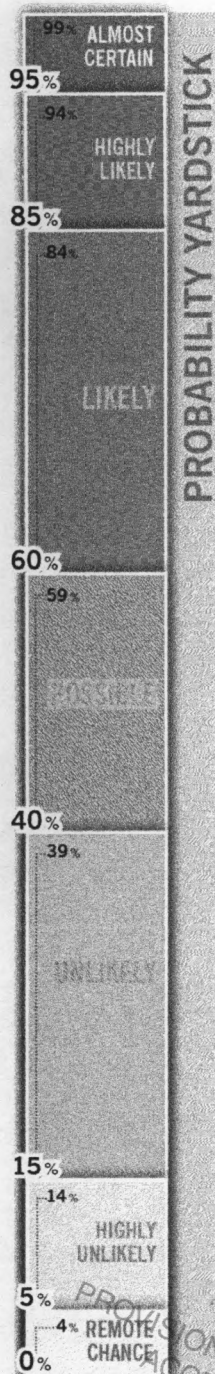
**TA 20/27-A COVID-19 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence**  
(SECRET)

**Lasers**

NIL



## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

	established	raised	lowered	remains
<b>CRITICAL</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .			
<b>HIGH</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>LIKELY</b> .			
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WTR 20/13-E5 // 2020-04-02

TOP SECRET//

Week: 2020 03 26 to 2020 04 01

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NTR

AMERICAS - EUROPE  
NTR

MIDDLE EAST  
NTR

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NTR

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## ***Eurasia - Pacific***

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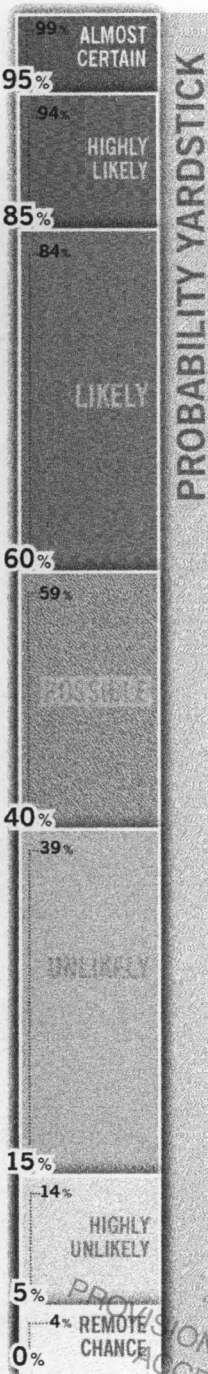
**TA 20/27**      **COVID-19 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence**  
(TOP SECRET//)

**TA 20/27-A**      **COVID-19 UPDATE: Extremism & Political Violence**  
(SECRET)

**Lasers**

NIL

## DEFINITIONS



THREAT LEVEL		PROCESSED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PRIVACY ACT AND/OR ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT / RÉVISÉ EN VERTU DE LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS ET/OU DE LA LOI SUR L'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION
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TA 20/26-E 2020 03 27



UPDATE

# THE NATIONAL TERRORISM THREAT LEVEL FOR CANADA

MEDIUM

MEDIUM



Uniformed Personnel

This graphic threat assessment (TA) updates the National Terrorism Threat Level (NTTL) and the threat to uniformed personnel last published on 4 December 2019 - TA 19/127-A.

CRITICAL
HIGH
MEDIUM
LOW
VERY LOW

## THREATS TO TRANSPORTATION

transportation networks, such as rail, marine and air, continue to be desirable targets for extremist groups.

ITAC has reassessed the threat to rail networks in Canada (see TA 20/23-A).

Extremist propaganda continues to convey the intent to strike transportation modes, and a number of acts of sabotage against domestic rail infrastructure have occurred.

ITAC last assessed the terrorism threat to civil aviation in Canada in March 2019 (refer to TA 19/22-B), while the threat to maritime transportation systems (MTS) (refer to TA 18/120) was reassessed in 2018.

AVIATION



RAIL



MARITIME



## CANADIAN EXTREMIST TRAVELLERS

There is no information to indicate the intent by CETs abroad, returnees or prevented travellers to target Canada. Currently there are approximately 190 CETs with a nexus to Canada who are abroad, including in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan and North and East Africa, and 60 CETs who have returned to Canada. These numbers have been stable over the last four years. These individuals travelled to support and facilitate terrorist-related activities.

Currently, a number of CETs are in detention in Syria. Some of these CETs are expressing a desire to return to Canada and requested assistance in leaving the conflict zone.

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ITAC assesses the terrorism threat in Canada to be **MEDIUM**: Extremist groups and individuals in Canada and abroad have both the **intent AND the capability** to carry out an act of terrorism in this country. ITAC assesses an attack *could occur*.

ITAC assesses the terrorism threat to uniformed personnel in Canada to be **MEDIUM**: An attack targeting uniformed personnel in Canada *could occur*.

## ITAC ASSESSMENT

A terrorist attack in Canada could occur

The greatest terrorism threat to Canada remains domestic extremists who have been inspired or incited online by ideologies promoted by groups such as DAESH, al-Qaida (AQ) or the ideologically motivated violent extremist (IMV) milieu.

Extremists in Canada maintain the intent and possess some limited capability to conduct an act of terrorism in Canada.

The transfer of knowledge between extremists continues; social media networks remain key to the transfer of knowledge among extremists and, in Canada; extremists continue to actively participate in online forums, seeking to enhance their capabilities.

Some higher-threat CETs possess battlefield experience and maintain networks of like-minded extremists, and could pose a security threat to Canada. Canada-based extremists who have been prevented from travelling also pose a heightened threat to the national security of Canada, given the possibility they could re-direct efforts towards domestic attack planning.

References to Canada and uniformed personnel continue to be present in extremist propaganda. This has not resulted in attacks or more active planning in Canada.

ASSESSMENT NOTE: This assessment is based on all-source information.



## THREAT DEVELOPMENTS

### IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISM

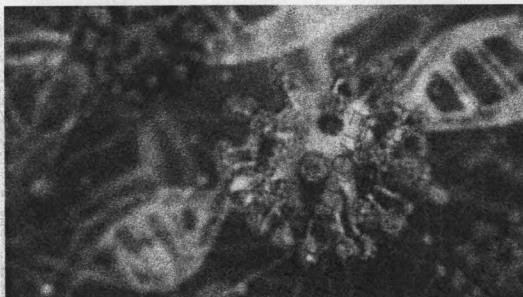
IMV actors continue to express intent to carry out violent acts in the name of their extremist views. On 16 January 2020, United States (US) authorities arrested Patrik Mathews who, after illegally crossing into the US in August 2019, discussed attacking a gun rights rally in Richmond, Virginia, in the hopes of triggering a race war (refer to TH 20/14, TH 20/23, and TH 20/25). Other Canadian IMV extremists under investigation include at least one member of the Canadian military who encouraged fellow extremists to join the military to learn "the methods you need to destroy them".

### USE OF PROPAGANDA AND RECRUITMENT MATERIAL

The threat of IMV extremism endures, in part due to the proliferation of extremist propaganda and recruitment material. Primarily shared via social media, recent propaganda and recruitment videos posted online feature a wide range of activities, including military-style weapons training and flag burnings. Some videos depict and promote 'hate camps', while others, including one by The Base, appear to threaten potential targets such as Canadian journalists who focus on extremism. (see TH 19/137 and TH 20/11). Certain IMV extremist networks have criticized "keyboard warriorism" and have encouraged individuals to engage in violent activities.



### ITAC ASSESSMENT



## EXTREMISTS SUGGEST USE OF COVID-19 AS A WEAPON OR RETRIBUTION

According to SITE Intelligence, on 19 February 2020, a far-right Telegram channel set up to aggregate content regarding the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19, published a list of "accelerationism goals" including the deliberate transmission of COVID-19 to minority groups. Separate MEMRI reporting from 4 March 2020 notes that a jihadist magazine included an article from a group of Islamic clerics based in Syria describing COVID-19 as "one of Allah's soldiers" and "divine vengeance" against criminals.

### ITAC ASSESSMENT



## TERRORISM RELATED OR OTHER LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Saad  
AKHTAR

Charged with first-degree murder, including terrorist activity, for allegedly killing a pedestrian in Scarborough, ON, on the evening of 21 February 2020.

Kingston-based  
minor

Charged with terrorism-related offences pursuant to the Criminal Code. After being released on bail, he was arrested on 21 April 2019 after an alleged breach of his bail conditions, and has remained in custody since. The youth is expected to enter a guilty plea on 7 April 2020.

Carlos  
LARMOND

Initially arrested in Montréal, QC, in January 2015 while boarding a plane with intentions to fly overseas and join DAESH. He was recently released from prison to a halfway house (with restrictions) under a statutory-release law. His co-conspirator (and twin brother) Ashton Larmond was sentenced to 17 years and remains in prison.

Ikar  
MAO

Charged with participating in the activity of a terrorist group and leaving Canada to participate in the activity of a terrorist group. He was denied bail on 12 December 2019, and will remain in custody until trial.

Patrik  
MATHEWS

Charged in the US with transporting a firearm and ammunition with intent to commit a felony and of being an alien in possession of a firearm and ammunition. He allegedly videotaped himself advocating killing people, poisoning water supplies and derailling trains. Mathews has been denied bail.

Alek  
MINASSIAN

Charged with first-degree murder and 16 counts of attempted murder in connection with the 23 April 2018 Toronto van attack. His trial is scheduled to commence on 6 April 2020. Minassian is not facing terrorism charges.

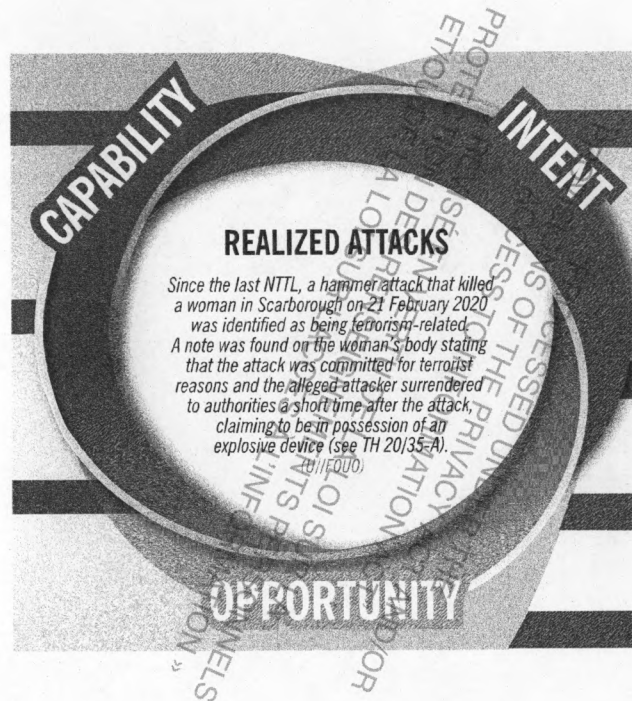
Awso  
PESHARY

Charged with participating in the activity of a terrorist group, facilitating an activity for a terrorist group, and two counts of conspiring to participate or contribute to an activity of a terrorist group; his trial is ongoing.

Abdulahi  
HASAN SHARIF

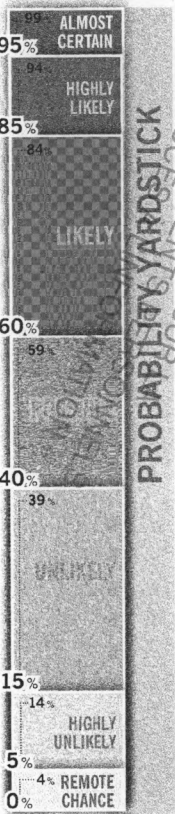
Convicted on 25 October 2019 of all 11 charges, including five counts of attempted murder in relation to two vehicle attacks in Edmonton which occurred on 20 September 2017. Sharif was not facing terrorism charges. Hasan Sharif was sentenced to 28 years in prison on 13 December 2019.







# DEFINITIONS



THREAT LEVEL		
LEVELS	DESCRIPTIONS	LANGUAGE
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# THREAT HIGHLIGHT

ITAC

CIET

Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

TH 20/51-E // 2020-03-27

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## United States: Alleged VBIED plan to attack hospital during COVID-19 pandemic

According to media reporting, on 24 March 2020, authorities attempted to arrest Timothy Wilson in Missouri in connection to a long-running domestic terrorism investigation. According to law enforcement officials, Wilson was a potentially violent extremist, motivated by religious, racial and anti-government beliefs. Wilson had been under investigation since September 2019 when he considered attacking multiple targets; including a school with a large number of black students, as well as a mosque and a synagogue. Media reporting indicates that Wilson decided to accelerate his plan, and felt "compelled" to act following a COVID-19 stay-at-home order was issued for residents. Open source reporting indicates he chose a Kansas City-area hospital providing critical care during the current COVID-19 pandemic in an attempt to "cause severe harm and mass casualties". Wilson planned to use a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) and had taken the necessary steps to acquire materials needed to build the device. Authorities indicated that they were prepared to arrest Wilson when he tried to pick up what he thought was the VBIED, but "there was no actual bomb". During the incident, Wilson, who was armed, was injured and transported to a hospital where he later died.

### Ideologically motivated violent (IMV) extremism propaganda

According to SITE Intelligence, IMV groups and individuals have been using encrypted platforms such as Telegram and Gab, along with mainstream platforms like Facebook and Twitter, to promote conspiracy theories, disinformation and calls for attacks in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Noting the contagious nature of COVID-19, IMV extremists are devising ways to use the virus as a biological weapon, often targeting the Jewish and Muslim communities. For example, a post from 22 March 2020 encouraged others to "cough on your local synagogues door handle". Another post echoed this and demanded that anyone diagnosed with the virus "travel to more ethnic parts of your town; including mosques and synagogues".

SITE Intelligence further notes that IMV extremists are proposing an array of conspiracy theories, mainly focusing on anti-Semitism or xenophobia against people from China, pondering the role of the Chinese government or the "Jewish global elite" in the pandemic.

Further, extremists have taken the current global instability as an opportunity to spread false information and "fully embrace accelerationism". These extremists have encouraged other like-minded individuals to "prioritize the panic" through fabricated stories of fights over limited resources to creating fake World Health Organization infographics.

ASSESSMENT

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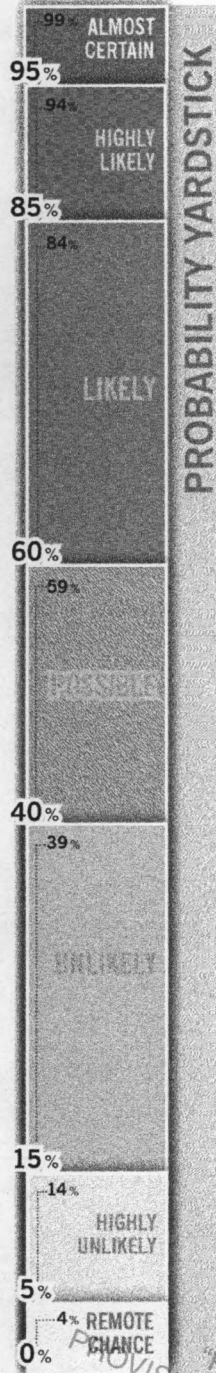
reporting.

DEFINITIONS and HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS are located at the last page.

Canada



## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

## CRITICAL

## HIGH

## MEDIUM

## LOW

## VERY LOW

Established raised lowered remains

ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is **HIGHLY LIKELY** and **COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY**.

ITAC assesses it is **HIGHLY LIKELY** that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is **LIKELY**.

ITAC assesses it is **LIKELY** that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism **COULD OCCUR**.

ITAC assesses it is **POSSIBLE** that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is **POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY**.

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## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

## ADVANCED



Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets

## MODERATE



Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets

## GENERAL



Capable of simple attacks

## HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

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# Strategic Briefing – COVID-19

TS// [REDACTED] CSIS EYES ONLY – 2020 03 27



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Statistics: Canada is nowhere near flattening the curve right now; but we appear to be in slightly better shape than the US (so far).
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- 
- 
- 
- 
- Metrics: The US example – how and why predictions of infection rates and mortality rates vary so wildly
- End note: In 2005, IAB drafted a global pandemic scenario as part of the IAB study, *The World Towards 2015*. The scenario eerily mirrors what is happening now.

## CANADA-SPECIFIC:

### Flattening-the-curve update:

Global (as of 2020 03 27 0800h):

Total confirmed cases - 549,381

Total deaths - 24,872

Canada:

Total confirmed cases - 4043

Total deaths - 39

- Canada's COVID-19 trajectory continues rapidly upward, although apparently not quite at the same rate as that experienced in the US and some other countries (for now).
  - Most experts agree that the number of positive cases is vastly higher than those officially documented.
  - Daily deaths are spiking but they are nowhere near the numbers (proportionate to population) as seen in Italy, Spain and (now) the US – at least not yet
  - (Preliminarily) positive indicators can be found in the graphs documenting newly infected vs. newly recovered and resolved case (recoveries vs. deaths); this is critical to near-term healthcare system overloads which are almost certainly on the horizon
  - However, NO ONE expects the infections/deaths to peak for at least another 3-4 weeks at minimum
- See separately attached graphs on above figures

# Strategic Briefing – COVID-19

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## METRICS:

- *Infectious Disease Experts Don't Know How Bad The Coronavirus Is Going To Get, Either*  
(<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/infectious-disease-experts-dont-know-how-bad-the-coronavirus-is-going-to-get-either/> Mar. 20, 2020)

# Strategic Briefing – COVID-19

TS// [REDACTED] CSIS EYES ONLY – 2020 03 27



One of the most pernicious parts of the COVID-19 crisis is how uncertain everything is. Researchers and officials cite statistical models that estimate infection rates, death counts and when things will go back to normal, but those estimates are changing rapidly. And as the forecasts bounce around, so do the rest of us living through the crisis. How can one feel settled when the future feels so volatile?

The top-line numbers are sobering. The most recent survey, taken on March 16 and 17, found that, as a group, the experts think that as of March 15, only 12 percent of infections in the U.S. had been reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They think there's a 73 percent chance of a second wave of hospitalizations this fall. And they expect approximately 200,000 deaths in the U.S. by the end of the year.

Here's what the researchers collectively had to say in the March 16-17 survey.  
How many total COVID-19 cases in the U.S. will the CDC report on March 29?

## Experts think we'll soon have tens of thousands more cases

Experts' estimates of the total number of U.S. COVID-19 cases that the CDC will have reported by Sunday, March 29



Responses are from a survey of experts conducted March 16-17.

FiveThirtyEight

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

At the time the survey was in the field, about 3,500 cases had been reported. But the experts estimated that by Sunday, March 29 — a little under two weeks after they took the survey — the



# Strategic Briefing – COVID-19

TS// [redacted] CSIS EYES ONLY – 2020 03 27

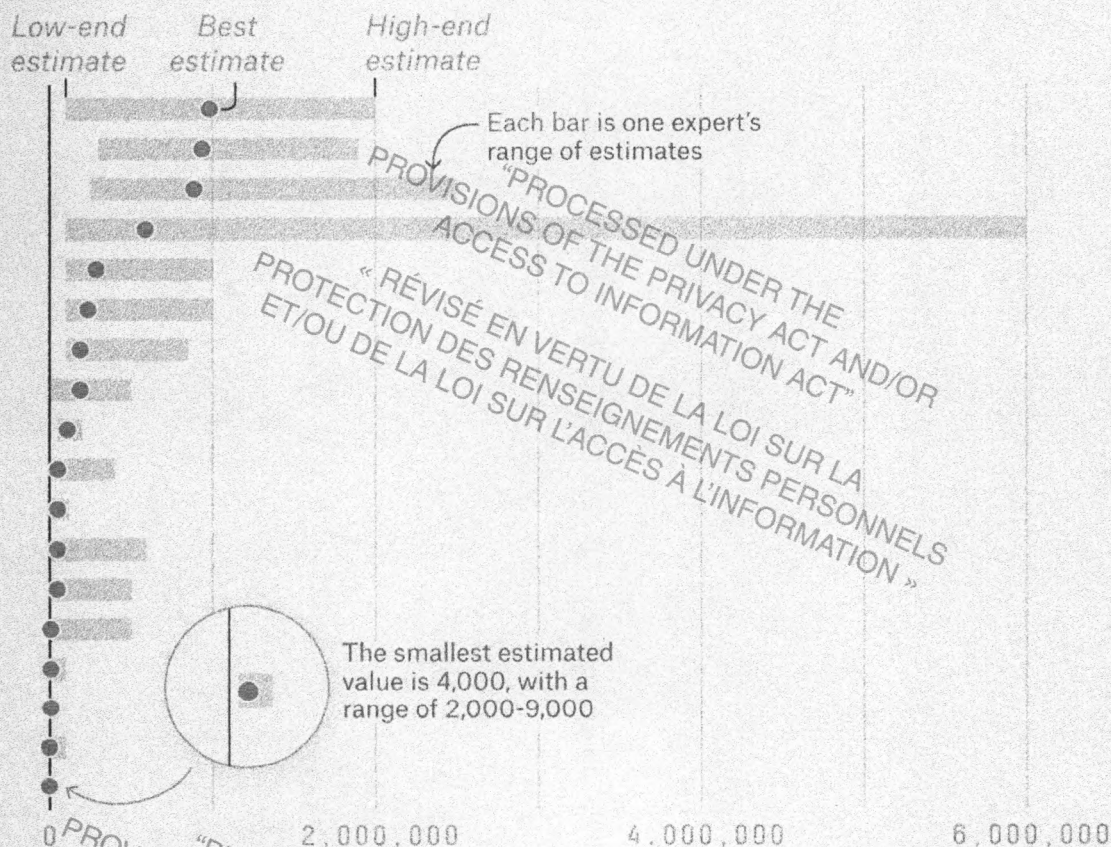


country would have seen anywhere from 10,000 to 75,000 cases. (The current count is 15,219.) The experts' confidence in those estimates, however, varied greatly:

How many people will die in the U.S. due to COVID-19 this year?

## Estimated death tolls cover a huge range

Experts' estimates of number of COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. in 2020



Responses from 15 experts conducted March 16-17.

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Experts' estimates of the number of COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. in 2020 ranged from 4,000 all the way to 1 million, a huge range that highlights how much we still don't know about this disease.

The expert consensus is to expect about 200,000 deaths in the U.S. from COVID-19 this year, but the uncertainty around that number is also huge: There's an 80 percent chance the final number will be between 19,000 and 1.2 million, according to these estimates.

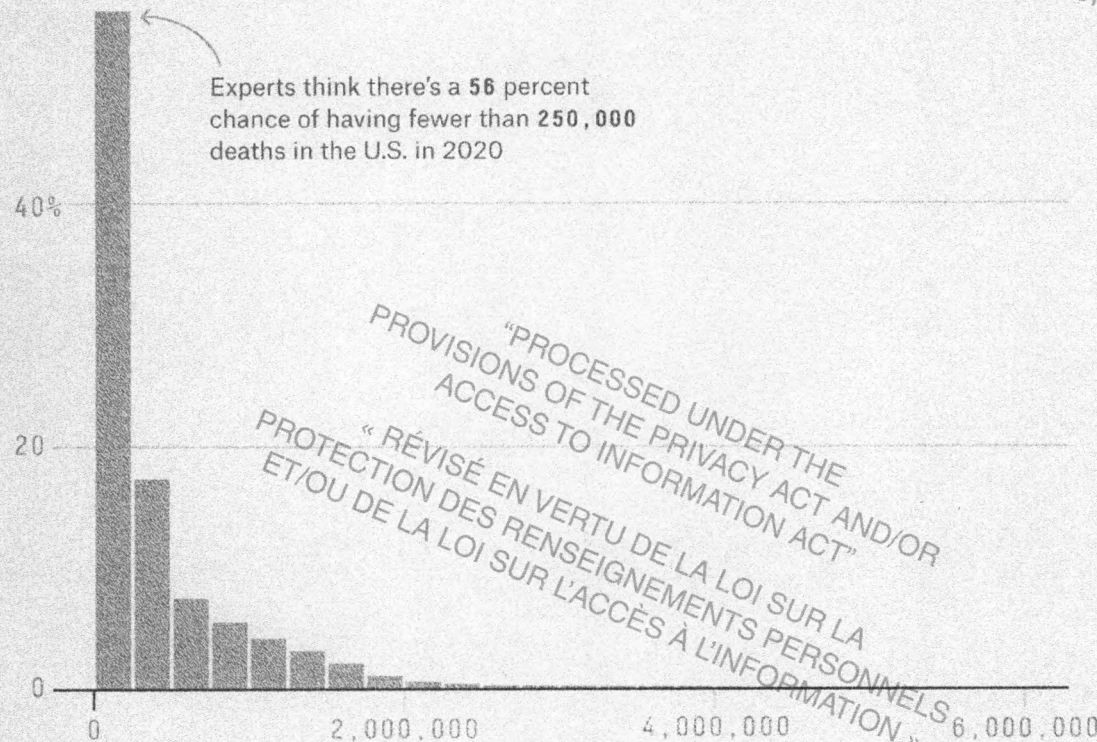
# Strategic Briefing – COVID-19

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## Around 200,000 U.S. deaths is most likely number

Probability that each number will be the total number of COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. in 2020, according to experts' estimates



Responses are from a survey of experts conducted March 16-17.

FiveThirtyEight

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

## END NOTE

At the request of CSIS Director Judd, IAB strategic analysts drafted a comprehensive study, *The World Towards 2015 – a Preliminary Assessment* (September 2005). The study looked at geopolitics, economics, resources and demography, and the global threat environment, with a separate section on Canada and the impact of above factors on Canadian security and prosperity. In the section on demographics and resources, IAB drafted a scenario related to a major concern at the time – the H1N1 (avian flu) virus.

"A worldwide avian flu pandemic is not an unlikely scenario. This virus, which has become more pathogenic in recent years (surviving several days longer) makes its way from South Asia to other parts of Asia, Europe, and the Americas by air plane, bus, animal cargo, etc. Health officials around the world will have prepared for such an occurrence, but they are unable to contain the virus as it spreads rapidly through host animal and human

# Strategic Briefing – COVID-19

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populations. The avian flu arrives in Canada within a few days of the registered outbreak. In Canada and in other countries with developed health care systems, the avian outbreak quickly overwhelms hospital wards and threatens mass casualties among flu patients as well as those admitted for other reasons. Public anxiety reaches a panic level, as it becomes known that a vaccine developed for the strain is working in less than half the cases. The pandemic eventually subsides, but not before having killed more than 10,000 in Canada and over 8 million worldwide, causing tremendous economic disruption and delivering a devastating blow to the airline industry.” (p.84)

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# WEEKLY THREAT REVIEW

ITAC

CIET

Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

WTR 20/12-E // 2020-03-26

SECRET//

Week: 2020 03 19 to 2020 03 25

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4. **EUROPE:** DAESH propaganda to exploit COVID-19 pandemic

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### EURASIA - PACIFIC

10. **AUSTRALIA:** Update: Two additional arrests in connection with alleged terrorist attack plan
11. **NEW ZEALAND:** Christchurch attacker pleads guilty
12. **INDONESIA:** Wijayanto trial commences

All information and intelligence contained in the WTR is presented in the language in which it was originally transmitted to ITAC. All ITAC comments and analyses contained herein are available in both official languages.

Veuillez noter que les informations et les renseignements figurant dans le présent Examen hebdomadaire de la menace ne sont présentés que dans la langue dans laquelle ils ont été transmis au CIET. Par contre, les remarques et les analyses du CIET sont présentées dans les deux langues officielles.

Canada

## Canada-related

NTR

## Americas - Europe

## 1. GERMANY: German police raid neo-Nazi Reichsbürger movement nationwide

Source: Media

**Summary:** According to media reporting of 19 March 2020, German authorities conducted raids nationwide against recently banned factions of Reichsbürger (Citizens of the Reich), a far-right movement. Operations against the "United German Peoples and Tribes" and "Osnabrücker Landmark" factions included simultaneous raids against 21 properties in 10 states; an unidentified number of group members were also arrested. According to German authorities, the raids uncovered guns, baseball bats, propaganda materials and small amounts of narcotics.

**Reichsbürger**

*The Reichsbürger movement rejects the modern state, arguing that Germany is not a country but a company. They refuse to recognize German laws, evade taxes and fines and have their own currency. In October 2017, a Reichsbürger member was sentenced to life imprisonment in Bavaria for killing a police officer during a raid on his home in 2016. The Reichsbürger movement is estimated to have 19,000 members in Germany.*

## 2. GERMANY: German branch of Atomwaffen Division announces it will remain active

Source: SITE Intelligence

**Summary:** According to SITE Intelligence of 17 March 2020, on 15 March 2020 an alleged member of Atomwaffen Division's German cell (aka AWD Deutschland) published an audio message to Vorherrschaft Division (VD), a Telegram group chat for members and affiliates of the United States (US)-based neo-Nazi organization. The audio message indicated that despite the dissolution of the founding AWD branch in the US (see WTR 20/11), the German branch "remain[s] practically untouched" and will continue operations.

According to SITE Intelligence of 19 March 2020, AWD Deutschland created a new Telegram channel to serve as the group's official media content dissemination and recruitment tool. The channel's biography read, "America has fallen. We, however, stay steadfast. Follow the Atomwaffen Division!" and included an encrypted email for recruitment contact.

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#### 4. EUROPE: DAESH propaganda to exploit COVID-19 pandemic

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According to SITE Intelligence, on 19 March 2020, DAESH published a statement praising the outbreak of COVID-19 as divine punishment to the West, heralding more disaster and chaos to come. DAESH called on "soldiers of the Caliphate for new strikes..., similar to those of Paris [sic], London and Brussels".

### *Middle East*

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## Africa

### 7. MOZAMBIQUE: DAESH affiliate seizes key town in Cabo Delgado in efforts to expand territory

Source: Media

**Summary:** According to media reporting, in late March 2020 DAESH-affiliated insurgents staged an overnight attack and seized the town of Mocimboa de Praia, taking a military base and raising their flag. The town is located in northern Mozambique, close to a natural gas project operated by foreign companies. The army and police have since launched a counter-offensive.

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**8. MALI:**

Source: Media; SITE Intelligence

**Summary:** According to media reporting of late March 2020, Malian officials announced that 29 Malian soldiers were killed and five were wounded in a 19 March 2020 attack against a military base in the town of Tarkint in the Gao region of northern Mali. According to SITE intelligence reporting from late March 2020, JNIM claimed the attack and reiterated its demand for "occupation forces"

According to SITE intelligence of late March 2020, JNIM claimed another attack against a MINUSMA vehicle in the Mopti region on 23 March 2020.

**9. CHAD: Nearly 100 Chadian soldiers killed in an ambush in the Lake Chad area**

Source: Media

**Summary:** According to media reporting from late March 2020, at least 98 Chadian soldiers were killed and dozens more wounded during an ambush on 23 March 2020 in the island village of Boma in western Chad. Chad's President stated on 24 March that the death toll was the largest ever in the history of the country. The assailants burnt at least 24 military vehicles and stole weapons, before departing the attack zone. According to uncorroborated media reporting, the attack was conducted by DAESH-West Africa fighters.

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**Eurasia - Pacific**

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**10. AUSTRALIA: Update: Two additional arrests in connection with alleged terrorist attack plan**

Source: Media

**Summary:** According to media reporting, on 20 March 2020, 23-year-old Benjamin Lucas is facing terrorism and weapons-related charges. Benjamin Lucas allegedly planned to attack an electrical substation on the south coast of Australia, with his younger brother, 21-year-old Joshua Lucas, who was charged on 14 March 2020 (see WTR 20/11). Authorities discovered hunting knives, survival equipment, ideologically motivated violent (IMV) extremist material and a replica firearm after searching Benjamin's car and residence. According to the same reporting, Benjamin admitted to having bomb-making experience and gaining access to materials to make "a crude bomb." On 21 March 2020, an unnamed 19-year-old man from Falls Creek, New South Wales, Australia was arrested for possession of an unauthorized firearm, in connection with the same plot.

**11. NEW ZEALAND: Christchurch attacker pleads guilty***Source: media*

**Summary:** According to media reporting from 26 March 2020, Brenton Tarrant has pleaded to 51 charges of murder, 40 charges of attempted murder, and one terrorism charge for his role in the March 2019 Christchurch mosque attacks. Tarrant was remanded into custody until 1 May 2020 when a sentencing date on the 92 charges will be set. Tarrant had previously denied the charges and was due to go on trial in June 2020.

**12. INDONESIA: Wijayanto trial commences***Source: Media*

**Summary:** On 18 March 2020, media reporting indicated that the trial of Para Wijayanto, the leader of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), had been adjourned until 1 April 2020. Wijayanto is on trial for his involvement in the 2002 Bali bombings that killed over 200 people.

## Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

NTR

What follows is a list of other ITAC products published between 19 and 25 March 2020.

**Threat Highlights**

TH 20/49

**Threat Assessments**

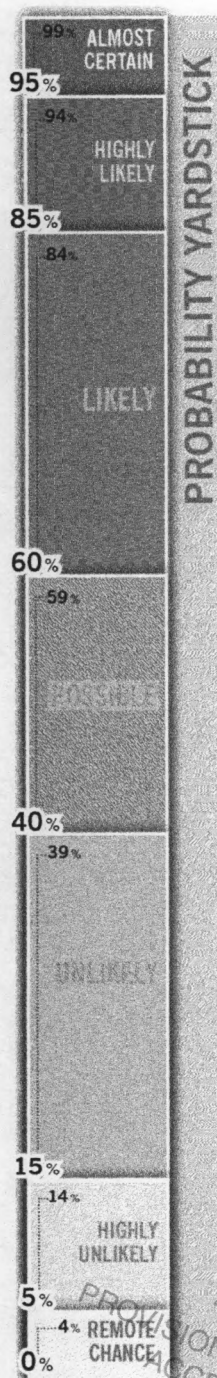
NIL

**Lasers**

NIL



## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

	Established	Raised	Lowered	Remains
<b>CRITICAL</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .			
<b>HIGH</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>LIKELY</b> .			
<b>MEDIUM</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism <b>COULD OCCUR</b> .			
<b>LOW</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY</b> .			
<b>VERY LOW</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> .			

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## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

<b>ADVANCED</b>		Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets
<b>MODERATE</b>		Capable of high profile attacks against soft targets
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## CSIS National Security Brief

## Rapport du SCRS enjeux de sécurité nationale

● CNSB 50/19  
● MARCH 25, 2020

SECRET//CEO

This document is for the information of the Deputy Ministers' Operations Committee members, Clerk of the Privy Council, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council, Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage, Deputy Minister of Health Canada, and Deputy Minister of the Public Health Agency of Canada. The information and intelligence contained herein must not be disclosed, used as part of an investigation or used as evidence without prior consultation with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

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### Key Assessments

- 
- 
- Individuals online promoting extreme neo-Nazi, White supremacist and anti-government/law enforcement ideas view

COVID-19 as both a threat to their way of life and an opportunity to create and capitalize on conspiracy theories and hateful propaganda. Promotion of concepts such as prepping and accelerationism regularly include references to the need for violence in order to bring about the collapse of society.

•

•

IMV extremists, however, have long posted volumes of online conspiracy-laden, racist, bigoted, and misogynist content and propaganda targeting Jews, minority groups, the government, liberals, etc. while aspiring to a future which would fulfil their personalized, grievance-driven worldview. Situations of crisis (perceived or real) in society only serve to increase the volume of such material online. According to Eric Ward, executive director of the Western States Center “We are seeing a huge uptick” in such rhetoric “A lot of it is happening on YouTube platforms and videos and others, at a time where much of the country is sheltering in place or practicing social distancing. Ironically, it will serve to give these individuals much more access [to an audience] than they would normally have.”

### **The End of the World as We Know it - Apocalyptic Narratives**

Apocalyptic narratives – whether of societal collapse, biblical rapture, or race war – are the primary manner by which neo-Nazis, White supremacists and ethno-nationalists draw in new followers and resources. The COVID-19 pandemic provides the opportunity for many within these milieus to espouse their worldviews, promote extreme actions (including violence), and, in some cases, exploit them for financial gain such as selling bogus cures or preventative “medicines.”

Accelerationism is the belief that Western governments are irreparably corrupt and that multiculturalism and democracy will fail. As a result, there will eventually be an outbreak of violence across ethnic and racial lines - often referred to as “the coming race war” (a concept outlined in the book *The Turner Diaries*). Accelerationists often encourage violence to escalate the pace of societal collapse. Accelerationists reject any effort to seize political power through elections, dismissing all attempts to engage in mass politics as pointless.



As with accelerationists, “Preppers” also believe in the imminent collapse of society (See text box at right) and COVID-19 is justification that their beliefs are well-founded. Preppers often hold a range of extreme anti-government, racially motivated views and promote a range of hateful commentary online. More recent mainstream media coverage of this milieu has added credibility but overlooks some of their more extreme views.

#### What is Prepping?

Prepping is the process of preparing oneself to survive without a complex infrastructure, as seen in modern society. The term “prepping” often refers to the act of preparing oneself for life during and after an apocalyptic event (often referred to as living off the land).

#### Conspiracy Theories

IMV extremists and others are using the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to promote disinformation and alternative narratives regarding both the cause of the pandemic and potential societal outcomes. Blame for the pandemic focuses primarily on Jews, China (see image at right recently located in Port Credit, Ontario), immigrants, the government and societal elites. A key theme in the United States, and to a lesser degree Canada, is the perception that the government will use the pandemic as an opportunity to enact the Emergency Measures Act (in Canada), or martial law in the United States (including the call-up of the national guard) as a precursor to reducing, if not eliminating, citizens gun rights (See image at right of a recent Canadian post).

**COVID-19 COMES  
FROM CHINA**

**Multi-culturalism  
KILLS**

All !!! % Justin Trudeau just announced that he and his cabinet will be looking to invoke the EMERGENCY MEASURES ACT!!! That means Marshall Law!!! Get ready, The war is about to begin!!! Give me a roll call!

Common conspiracy theories

promoted in the online IMV extremist space include:

- COVID-19 is a “bioweapon” sent from China in order to destabilize the Trump administration;
- The United Nations (UN) is using COVID-19 to depopulate the earth (part of the broader Agenda 21 conspiracy theory that the UN is attempting to subvert national sovereignty in order to establish a new world order (international globalization));
- COVID-19 is fake and the current fatalities are caused by radiation poisoning from 5G wireless technology;
- QANON (Q Anonymous) assert that COVID-19 is fake and is being used by President Trump to covertly prepare for the coming of martial law in the United States and the mass arrests of members of the “deep state” and their supporters;
- COVID-19 is fake and was created by an international consortium of Jews in order to enhance their long-term profits.

The impact of COVID-19-related conspiracy theories has contributed to at least one Canadian death to date. On March 17, 2020, a Toronto-based activist involved with numerous social justice, environmental and Indigenous issues self-immolated before stabbing himself repeatedly. According to friends, the activist believed that the COVID-19 shutdown was an establishment conspiracy plot, ostensibly to strip Canadians of their rights and freedoms.

**Other Calls to Action**

Media reporting suggests that “right-wing extremists” are contemplating the use of COVID-19 as a biological weapon.

## What About Anarchists?

In Germany, however, media reporting indicates that "left-wing" extremists are urging Germans to use COVID-19 as an excuse to riot, loot, and to attack Germany's energy supply infrastructure. According to one anonymous individual: "Should the situation worsen, we will try to make our revolutionary contribution to the outbreaks of anger, protests, looting and riots... However, impatient people might feel a strong desire to make an immediate contribution to the shake-up of the production cycle and want to strike a blow that interrupts their energy supply."

## Implications

CSIS continues to monitor this situation.

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**MISES EN GARDE**

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# Strategic Briefing – COVID-19

TS// [REDACTED] CSIS EYES ONLY – 2020 03 25



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« RÉVISÉ EN VERTU DE LA LOI SUR LA  
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## 4) STATISTICS:

- World Health Organization (WHO) – global, as at 2020 03 24 17h53

435,382 confirmed cases

19,620 confirmed deaths (4.5% mortality)\*\*

- Canada - PHAC – 2020 03 24 18h00

2,792 confirmed cases

27 confirmed deaths (0.97% mortality)\*\*

- US – Center for Disease Control (CDC) – 2020 03 24 16h00

44,183 confirmed cases

544 confirmed deaths (1.23% mortality)\*\*

\*\* Mortality rates will evolve (likely decline) as more cases are diagnosed

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## CSIS National Security Brief

## Rapport du SCRS sur les enjeux de sécurité nationale

TOP SECRET//CEO

CNSB 49/19  
MARCH 20, 2020

This document is for the information of the Deputy Ministers' Operations Committee members. The information and intelligence contained herein must not be disclosed, used as part of an investigation or used as evidence without prior consultation with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

Le présent document est transmis à titre indicatif aux membres du Comité des sous-ministres chargés de la coordination des opérations. Les informations et renseignements qu'il contient ne doivent être ni communiqués ni utilisés dans le cadre d'une enquête ou comme élément de preuve sans consultation préalable du Service canadien du renseignement de sécurité.

### Canadian Conspiracy Publication Used to Promote Alternative COVID-19 Narrative

According to recent media reporting, a Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) official has attempted to justify his previous statements that suggested the COVID-19 virus originated in the United States by citing information from the Global Research (<https://www.globalresearch.ca>), a website managed by a Canadian academic. This academic is the founder of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG).

#### *Chinese Actors Cite Canadian Publication to Support Narrative that COVID-19 Originated in the United States*

On March 13, 2020, Zhao Lijian, a spokesperson for China's MFA, sought to substantiate his previous statements on Twitter that the US military may have been responsible for bringing the COVID-19 virus to Wuhan, China by tweeting an article from the Centre for Research on Globalization's Global Research website. The article, authored by Research Associate Peter Koenig, promotes several conspiracy theories suggesting that the virus originated in a US biological warfare lab and that the pandemic is not real and is actually a cover operation by the "One World Order" to implement a long-planned initiative, called Agenda ID 2020, to use

generalized vaccination as a platform for population reduction and the creation of a digital control system incorporating biometric information.

In an article reporting Zhao's tweets, a Globe and Mail reporter noted that the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence had advised the media outlet in 2017 that Global Research was under investigation for promoting the online spread of narratives backed by the Kremlin and the Syrian regime.

In addition to Zhao's tweets, a Facebook group is also amplifying the US-origin narrative. The same Global Research article tweeted by Zhao has been posted to the group on numerous occasions since its publication, including one post shared by the Canadian administrator.

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### ***Alternative COVID-19 Narratives Gaining Traction***

Media reporting also indicates that Chinese officials in Tokyo have been directed to refer to it as the "Japanese coronavirus."

In addition to Chinese efforts, media reporting, citing an unknown document produced by the European Union's External Action Service, suggests that Russian state media and pro-Kremlin outlets have engaged in a significant disinformation campaign to advance contradictory, confusing and malicious information – including the US-origin narrative – likely with the intent to make it harder for EU members to communicate effectively with their populations on their public health responses.

the article recently published by Global Research is being exploited as part of a growing alternative narrative that seeks to create doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic originated in China.

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# WEEKLY THREAT REVIEW

ITAC

CIET

Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

WTR 20/11-A // 2020-03-19

SECRET//

Week: 2020 03 12 to 2020 03 18

## CONTENTS

### CANADA-RELATED

NTR

### AMERICAS - EUROPE

1. **UNITED STATES:** Atomwaffen Division reportedly disbanding
2. [REDACTED]
3. **EUROPE:** DAESH's measures against COVID-19 will decrease smuggling attempts to Europe

### MIDDLE EAST

### AFRICA

5. [REDACTED]

### EURASIA - PACIFIC

6. **AUSTRALIA:** Suspected neo-Nazi sympathizer charged with planning a terrorist attack

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Canada

**Canada-related**

NTR

**Americas - Europe****1. UNITED STATES: Atomwaffen Division reportedly disbanding***Source: Media; open sources*

**Summary:** According to media reporting from 16 March 2020, the chief philosophical influence of Atomwaffen Division (AWD) released an audio recording on 9 March 2020, claiming that the group is disbanding. In the message, James Mason stated that numerous arrests stemming from law enforcement infiltration have severely hindered the group's ability to function. The same reporting indicates that Mason has been a long-time figure within the United States (US) neo-Nazi community, acting as an advisor for AWD, has made appearances in propaganda videos, and authored *Siege*, an anthology of violent neo-Nazi essays that advocates lone-wolf acts of terror and destroying the 'System'.

**Recent AWD arrests**

According to open source reporting, on 26 February 2020, five alleged members of AWD were arrested in the US. Four members were charged in connection with an effort to deliver threatening messages to journalists' homes and media organizations. The other member was charged for their alleged role in "swatting calls". (see TH 20/41)

*Source: open sources*



**3. EUROPE: DAESH's measures against COVID-19 will decrease smuggling attempts to Europe**

Source: SITE Intelligence

**Summary:** According to SITE Intelligence, as of 14 March 2020, DAESH media released statements and a video directing its members to avoid entering "the land of the epidemic" and that those "infected not leave from it". The statements and video also recommend sanitary and safety measures members should take to avoid contracting diseases.

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## Middle East

4.

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## Africa

SECRET//

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## Eurasia - Pacific

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### 6. AUSTRALIA: Suspected neo-Nazi sympathizer charged with planning a terrorist attack

Source: Media

**Summary:** According to media reporting, on 14 March 2020, 21-year-old Joshua Lucas from Sanctuary Point, New South Wales, Australia is facing a terrorism charge in connection with his plan to disrupt an electrical substation on the south coast of Australia. Lucas allegedly attempted and planned to acquire military equipment including firearms and items capable of making improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Authorities seized several electronic devices, tactical equipment and paintball guns during a search of Lucas' residence, while four registered firearms were seized from the residence which authorities say is the home of an associate of Lucas. The reporting further stated that Lucas held neo-Nazi, anti-government and anti-Indigenous beliefs. Authorities began to investigate Lucas in February 2020 after becoming aware of several extreme online posts. In a statement, law enforcement authorities indicated that the decision to arrest Lucas was made to mitigate any immediate threat to the community after his behaviour online was of "significant" concern. Authorities continue to investigate Lucas's "online and real-world associates".

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## Changes to Terrorism Threat Levels

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NTR

What follows is a list of other ITAC products published between 12 and 18 March 2020.

**Threat Highlights**

TH 20/46

TH 20/46-A

TH 20/47

**Threat Assessments**

NIL

**Lasers**

NIL

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## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

	established	raised	lowered	remains
CRITICAL	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY LIKELY</b> and <b>COULD OCCUR IMMINENTLY</b> .			
HIGH	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>LIKELY</b> .			
MEDIUM	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism <b>COULD OCCUR</b> .			
LOW	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY</b> .			
VERY LOW	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> .			

ITAC uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis in applying terrorism threat levels. The setting of threat levels is determined by several factors including current intelligence, recent events, as well as the intent, capabilities, and attack frequency of terrorist groups. ITAC cautions that the information may be incomplete and, regardless of the threat level applied, a violent act of terrorism may occur with little or no warning.

## TERRORIST GROUP CAPABILITIES

ADVANCED		Capable of sophisticated attacks, including against hard targets
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GENERAL		Capable of simple attacks

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NTR

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## Middle East

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## Africa

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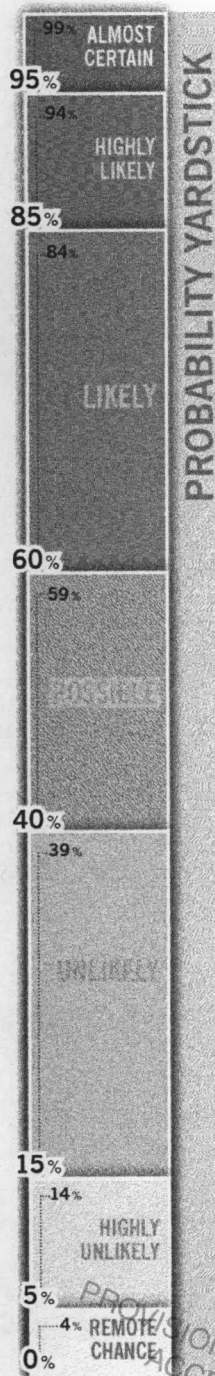
TA 20/25

Lasers

NIL



## DEFINITIONS



## THREAT LEVEL

	PROCESSED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PRIVACY ACT AND/OR ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT	PROCESSED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PRIVACY ACT AND/OR ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT
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<b>LOW</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.
<b>VERY LOW</b>	ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> .	ITAC assesses it is <b>HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> that a violent act of terrorism will occur.

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Canadian Security  
Intelligence ServiceService canadien du  
renseignement de sécurité

SECRET//CEO



# COVID-19

## Global Effects and Canadian National Security Interests

### RUSSIA

Regime initially reluctant to acknowledge the serious situation. Emphasis is now on containment measures but also actively spreading disinformation blaming the West for the virus.

COVID-19 used as part of broader Russian media/disinformation campaign to discredit the West, promote Russia's soft power, pressure to end Western sanctions regime, and target GC policies.

### CHINA

Regime is focused on a propaganda campaign that protects its own reputation and domestic legitimacy while touting its pandemic aid abroad. Domestic COVID-19 containment efforts continue, although all ongoing government measures (including domestic mobility restrictions) are likely not widely reported. PRC-reported infection and mortality data remain unreliable.

PRC will continue to emphasize international cooperation on COVID-19.

### IRAN

Infections and deaths among several senior government officials

Increased disinformation campaign seeks to shift blame for domestic shortcomings in handling COVID-19 to foreign actors (especially US sanctions).

### EXTREMISM

- Religiously Motivated Violent Extremist propaganda from terrorist movements such as DAESH, Taliban, Al Qaeda and al Shabaab has rapidly incorporated discussion of the COVID-19 pandemic. ISIS encourages followers to become martyrs by getting infected with COVID-19 and going to public places such as nightclubs, restaurants, places of worship and shopping areas.
- A number of Canadian Extremist Travelers (CETs) remain in Syria, many of whom are in detention facilities or IDP camps.





## Intelligence Assessment | Évaluation du renseignement

COVID-19

### Activities

### under the 'New Normal'

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated an unprecedented global health and economic crisis.  
The fast-evolving situation has altered global geopolitics and deepened fissures between authoritarian states and Western liberal democracies.

### Summary

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## The landscape

1. The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest global health crisis in over a century. It has caused unprecedented disruption to daily life around the world, severely restricted global travel, and sparked a massive economic downturn. COVID-19 has generated a new set of national security imperatives focused on containing the pandemic, managing the economic crisis and preserving social cohesion. For countries COVID-19 represents a threat to regime stability. At the same time, adversarial states have used the pandemic as an opportunity to tout themselves as legitimate alternatives to Western liberal democracies, currently straining to deal with the crisis. Global strategic competition increasingly is focusing on a race to find a solution, and to recalibrate supply chains and other vital mechanisms guaranteeing social and economic stability.

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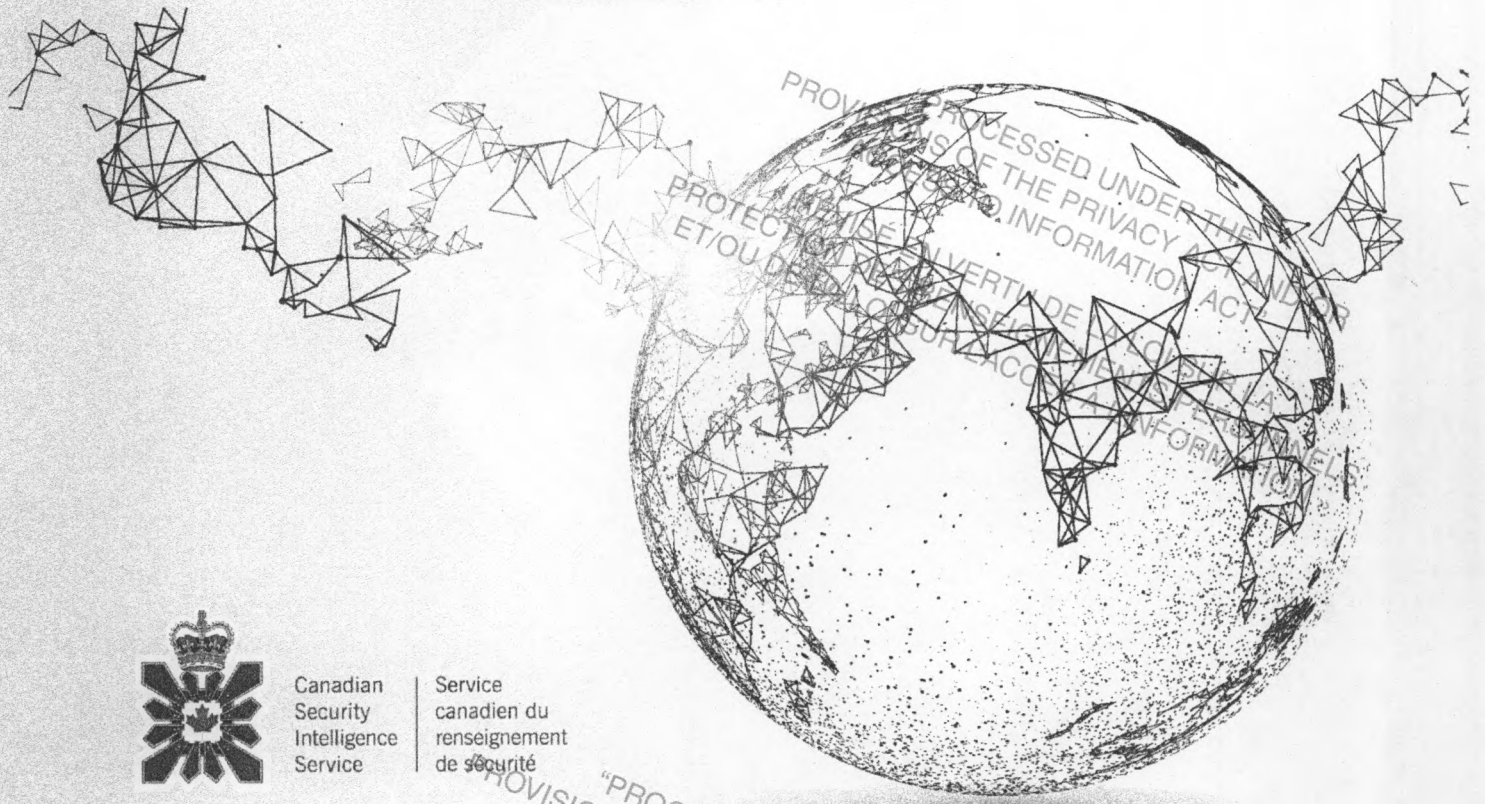
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## INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

### Conspiracy Theories, COVID-19 and Threats to 5G Infrastructure: Online Conspiracies and their Real World Impact

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Intelligence Assessments Branch  
Direction de l'évaluation du renseignement

Canada



# INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

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## Conspiracy Theories, COVID-19 and Threats to 5G Infrastructure: Online Conspiracies and their Real World Impact

### Key Assessments

- The COVID-19 pandemic serves as an opportunity for extremists across the ideologically motivated violent (IMV) extremism spectrum to capitalize on and spread conspiracy theories online, including the threats posed by 5G technology
- Recent surveys suggest that a not insignificant minority of Canadians believe that there is a connection between 5G technology and the COVID-19 pandemic. There was one significant attack on a communications tower in Canada during the past month
- Conspiracy theories relating to telecommunications (3G, 4G, 5G) are not new
- The United Kingdom appears to be at the epicenter of arson and sabotage attacks on 5G infrastructure, but attacks have spread across Europe over the past several months.



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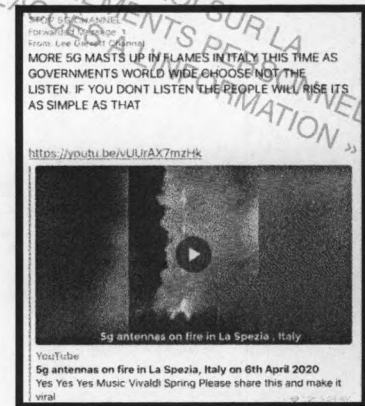
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## What is 5G technology?

5G is the fifth generation of wireless communications technologies supporting cellular data networks. It was designed to eventually replace, or at least augment, 4G technology. 5G networks will enable a new breed of digital applications that depend on ultra-fast, low latency, high-throughput communications, including driverless cars, advanced factory automation, and smart cities. The implementation of 5G technology requires the construction of numerous sensors/receivers (often referred to as 5G masts) across the country.

While most academics and scientists assert that 5G technology is safe, a small number argue that there could be associated long-term health risks and argue that further scientific research is required before the technology is fully implemented. Beyond those academics and scientists who oppose 5G, however, a growing and diverse online milieu has adopted and promoted various conspiracy theories surrounding 5G technology and its associated infrastructure. Within this milieu are individuals who engage in, encourage or support attacks on 5G infrastructure, and harass telecom workers. To date, most attacks on 5G masts have occurred in the United Kingdom, as well as in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Italy.



## Conspiracies Theories and 5G

Conspiracy theories surrounding emerging technologies, including 5G, are not new,

1 Open information indicates that conspiracy theories surrounding 3G, and then 4G, technology date to the early 2000s.

### Origins of the COVID-19/5G Conspiracy Theory?

The precise origins of the first COVID-19/5G conspiracy theory may never be known. Open information points to a January 2020 article from an obscure Belgian newspaper. The newspaper published an interview with a little known general practitioner (GP) medical doctor titled "5G is life-threatening, and no one knows it." The GP produced no scientific research to back up his claims and the newspaper quickly deleted the article from its website. Regardless, the conspiracy theory was ignited and has been repeatedly cited across various online platforms.

1 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, most 5G conspiracy theories focused on cancer.





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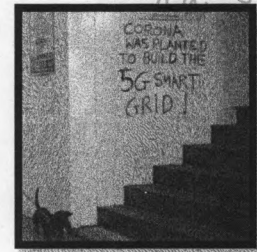
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Individuals and groups often adopt or promote the conspiracies which best suit their personalized worldviews and range of grievances. White supremacists, neo-Nazis, anarchists, those holding anti-government views and others have all adopted varying conspiracy theories related to COVID-19.

Common 5G-related conspiracy theories promoted in the online IMV extremist space include:

- COVID-19 is fake and the current illnesses/fatalities are caused by radiation poisoning from 5G wireless technology;
- COVID-19 is fake and governments are using their lockdowns to construct 5G infrastructure without opposition (see photo at right);
- Governments/law enforcement will “weaponize” 5G technology to move society closer to becoming a police state;
- Bill Gates created the new “coronavirus” in order to sell the vaccine which he also created;
- 5G is designed by governments to depopulate the earth (part of the broader Agenda 21 conspiracy theory that the United Nations (UN) is attempting to subvert national sovereignty in order to establish a new world order (international globalization)).



## Online Activity

Conspiracy theories linking COVID-19 and 5G have become extremely popular online and within multiple portions of the IMV extremist landscape. A recent survey conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) by Hope Not Hate<sup>2</sup> found that 8% of respondents agreed that 5G is contributing to the spread of COVID-19. A survey commissioned by the Office of Communications<sup>3</sup> (Ofcom) in the UK concluded that theories linking COVID-19 to 5G technology are the most common examples of online misinformation in the UK. An analysis by the *New York Times* located 487 Facebook communities, 84 Instagram accounts, 52 Twitter accounts and numerous other platforms that linked COVID-19 to 5G technology. According to the *New York Times*, the 10 most popular 5G COVID-19 conspiracy videos posted to YouTube

Online support from celebrities in the UK and the United States only serves to promote these conspiracies and push them into the mainstream.

<sup>2</sup> Hope Not Hate is an advocacy group based in the UK. It campaigns against racism and fascism, and asserts that it seeks to “combine first class research with community organising and grassroots actions to defeat hate groups at elections and to build community resilience against extremism”.

<sup>3</sup> Ofcom is the government-approved regulatory and competition authority for the broadcasting, telecommunications and postal industries in the UK.





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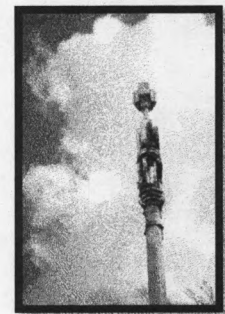
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in March, 2020, have been viewed over 5.8 million times.

In early April 2020, Facebook blocked two anti-5G groups (Stop 5G Save Our Children and Stop 5G Group) after members encouraged the destruction of mobile phone masts. Group members also promoted misinformation linking 5G to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Stop 5G Group had over 60,000 members at the time it was blocked.

## Real World Violence

Open information indicates that, in the UK, there have been dozens of acts of vandalism and arson against telecommunication masts over the past several months, with 30 occurring during the first half of April 2020 (see photo of damaged telecommunication tower in Birmingham, England). Several of the attacks did not target 5G infrastructure but older 3G and 4G masts. Most concerning was an attack on a tower supplying voice and data traffic to a Birmingham field hospital treating Covid-19 patients. There have also been more than 80 instances of harassment of telecom workers by 5G opponents.



To date, there have been three arrests. However, no group or entity has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The total financial cost of the attacks in the UK has not been released.

## Racially Motivated Extremists (Neo-Nazis and White Supremacists)

While the neo-Nazi and White supremacist milieu adopt a range of conspiracy theories (often relating to the New World order and the Jewish population), they seemingly did not create most of the primary COVID-19/5G conspiracy theories.



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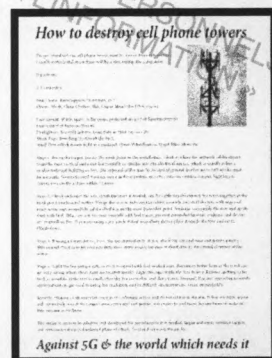
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theories and misinformation, as well as far-right propaganda and symbols, to “amplify the fear” of the public and capitalize on “5G hysteria”.

## Anarchists

Internationally, anarchists have a long history of vandalism and arson targeting critical infrastructure, including the telecommunications sector. Anarchists are also not shy to claim responsibility for their actions. A review of well-known international and domestic anarchist websites, however, finds no such claims of responsibility relative to the rash of 5G attacks.

One well-known anarchist media website, however, praised the attacks, claiming “If you do not want that [a world of government run techno-prisons to control us as a result of the domination of 5G technology], then you have every reason to see this technology burned to the ground already.” The same website posted a document in February 2020 entitled “How to destroy cell phone towers.” The document details the tools and equipment required to conduct an attack as well as information on operational security.



## Anti-Government/Anti-Vaxxers

Extreme elements of the anti-government milieu regularly adopt conspiracy theories relating to government plots (including a reduction of gun rights, implementation of a police state, or blind adherence to international bodies such as the UN or World Health Organization (WHO) leading to the New World Order). Statements by the government and scientific experts claiming that 5G technology is safe or is unrelated to COVID-19, for example, are met with skepticism if not outright rejection. A similar conspiracy theory adopted by the anti-vaxxer movement claims that 5G is responsible for spreading COVID-19, and citizens will be force-vaccinated as a result.

Other conspiracy theories targeting COVID-19/5G have emerged from various online anti-capitalist, anti-technology, and environmental groups/communities.

## Opposition to 5G in Canada

In Canada, physical opposition to 5G infrastructure is significantly less when compared to recent actions in the UK and Europe. However, on April 30, 2020, an act of vandalism



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targeted a telecommunication tower in Laval, Québec causing approximately \$1 million in damages.

There are also a small number of ostensibly Canadian-based online communities dedicated to promoting conspiracy theories in opposition to 5G technology. Most appear fairly small in number, and are limited to members only. As companies begin 5G infrastructure construction in earnest, extremists from across the IMV extremist landscape could engage in acts of arson and vandalism against that infrastructure.

A recent survey conducted by a University of Sherbrooke team on the impact of COVID-19 found that 7.8% of respondents from Québec, and 15.7% from other provinces, believe that a connection exists between 5G technology and COVID-19.

## Implications

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