

Canada

Introduction

This page provides a country-specific quantitative overview of the foreign terrorist fighter (FTF) phenomenon. This includes, where available, a breakdown of how many individuals departed from or have returned to the country as well as certain demographics within those groups. The data is laid out below in infographics, you can hover over a data point to see its exact figures. Where not enough data is available the table is greyed out. If you can assist in completing this data, please click fill out the questionnaire on our [contact page](#).

Below this information, the page also sets out in detail a qualitative review of the policy measures utilized by or available to the country in response to the FTF phenomenon and provides a list of additional reading material relevant to the FTF situation in the country.

Last updated: 14 April 2025.

Canada		
Totals	Total (Departed)	c.a. 95 ¹
	Total (Non-Returned)	-
	Total (Returned)	9 - 60 ²
Nationality (At Departure)	Canadian National	-
	Dual Citizen	1 - 2 ³

¹ The figure stated within the source is 190, however, this figure is representative of all the Canadian Extremist Travellers who travelled to locations including Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and North and East Africa. Approximately half of this total travelled to Turkey, Syria and Iraq, hence the approximation of 95 people. See 'CSIS Public Report', Canadian Security Intelligence Service, 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/security-intelligence-service/corporate/publications/2019-public-report.html>.

² This range is provided as not all of the 60 individuals mentioned travelled to the Syria/Iraq, however, there is confirmation that at least nine women have been repatriated from Syria/Iraq. See '2018 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada', Public Safety Canada, April 2019, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/pblc-rprt-trrrsm-thrt-cnd-2018/index-en.aspx?wbdisable=true#s115>; Matthew Miller, 'U.S. Applauds Canada's Repatriation from Northeast Syria', U.S. Department of State, Press Release, 7 July 2023, <https://2021-2025.state.gov/u-s-applauds-canadas-repatriation-from-northeast-syria/>; 'Global Repatriations Tracker', Rights and Security International, <https://www.rightsandsecurity.org/action/resources/global-repatriations-tracker>.

³ Kimberly Gwen Polman is an American-Canadian dual citizen: see Rashid, A., 'Canadian women who joined ISIS should be repatriated, investigated and rehabilitated', The Conversation, 31 March 2021, <https://theconversation.com/canadian-women-who-joined-isis-should-be-repatriated-investigated-and-rehabilitated-158026>; Three Canadian adults (including Ms Polman) hold/held dual citizenship or the potential to obtain a second nationality: see "Bring Me Back to Canada"

	Resident	-
Gender	Males (Departed)	-
	Females (Departed)	19 ⁴
	Males (Returned)	-
	Females (Returned)	9 ⁵
Parent Status	Female Parent (Non-Returned)	>3 ⁶
	Male Parent (Non-Returned)	-
	Female Parent (Returned)	-
	Male Parent (Returned)	-
Current Location (Non-Returned)	Died	23 ⁷
	In Camps	21 ⁸

Plight of Canadians Held in Northeast Syria for Alleged ISIS Links', Human Rights Watch, 29 June 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/06/29/bring-me-back-canada/plight-canadians-held-northeast-syria-alleged-isis-links>.

⁴ There is no exact indication of how many females departed, however, there is a consensus that approximately 20% of all departed are female. See '2016 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada, Public Safety Canada, 2016, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2016-pblc-rpr-trrrst-thrt/index-en.aspx>; 'Mobilization to Violence (Terrorism) Research', Canadian Security Intelligence Service, February 2018, https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/IMV_-_Terrorism-Research-Key-findings-eng.pdf.

⁵ One woman was repatriated in November 2021: see Brewster, M., 'Canadian woman freed from ISIS detention camp reunites with daughter in Canada', CBC News, 23 November 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/isis-islamic-state-syria-1.6259857>; another two women were repatriated in October 2022: see 'Canada repatriates two women, two children from northeast Syria', Al Jazeera, 26 October 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/26/canada-repatriates-two-women-two-children-from-northeast-syria>; four more women were repatriated in April 2023: see Griffin, T., '2 Canadian women who returned from Syrian camp to be released on bail', CBC News, 11 April 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/two-women-syria-court-1.6806592>; two more women were repatriated to Canada in July 2023: see Matthew Miller, 'U.S. Applauds Canada's Repatriation from Northeast Syria, U.S. Department of State, Press Release, 7 July 2023, <https://2021-2025.state.gov/u-s-applauds-canadas-repatriation-from-northeast-syria/>.

⁶ Karadeglija, A., '6 children of Canadian mother to be repatriated from Syrian detention camp', CBC, 09 April 2024, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/six-children-repatriation-syria-mother-1.7168919>, Lake Berz, K., 'Stuck in a Syrian refugee camp, this mother could send her children to Canada. But she may never see them again', Broadview, 28 May 2024, <https://broadview.org/stuck-in-a-syrian-refugee-camp-this-mother-could-send-her-children-to-canada-but-she-may-never-see-them-again/>.

⁷ West, L., Amarasingam, A. and Davis, J., 'Where's the plan for Canadian ISIS members in custody overseas?', Policy Options, 17 June 2019, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/fr/magazines/juin-2019/wheres-plan-canadian-isis-members-custody-overseas/>.

⁸ Within this total, 8 are men and 13 are women: See Belporo, L., 'Canada needs a plan to bring home the children of jihadists', The Conversation, 25 October 2020, <https://theconversation.com/canada-needs-a-plan-to-bring-home-the-children-of-jihadists-148398>; "'Bring Me Back to Canada" Plight of Canadians Held in Northeast Syria for Alleged ISIS Links', Human Rights Watch, 29 June 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/06/29/bring-me-back-canada/plight-canadians-held-northeast-syria-alleged-isis-links>.

	In Prison	>9 ⁹
	Operational (in region)	-
	Operational (other regions)	-
	Prosecuted (awaiting trial or convicted and in prison)	-
	Other (Unknown location)	c.a. 13 ¹⁰
Current Legal Status (Non-Returned)	Prosecuted	1 ¹¹
	Held Without Charges	-
	Citizenship Revoked	-
	Trials in Absentia	-
Current Legal Status (Returned)	Citizenship Revoked	-
	Extradited to Third Country	-
	Prosecuted	15 ¹²
	Post-release	-
	In Rehabilitation/Reintegration Program	-

⁹ At least nine Canadians are imprisoned in north-East Syria. Haines, A., 'A 'ticking time bomb': Inside Syria's toughest prison holding accused high-ranking ISIS members', CTV News, 29 November 2024, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/article/a-ticking-time-bomb-inside-syrias-toughest-prison-holding-accused-high-ranking-isis-members/>.

¹⁰ This number includes 6 women and 4 men included in the "Bring our Loved Ones Home" as well as two men and one woman who were unable to obtain required documentation to participate in the case: see Trinh, J., 'Repatriating Canadian men from Syria? PM says, 'We're looking at it carefully'', 24 January 2023, <https://vancouver.ctvnews.ca/canada/article/repatriating-canadian-men-from-syria-pm-says-were-looking-at-it-carefully/>.

¹¹ Mohammed Khalifa was sentenced to life imprisonment by a US court for his involvement in the killing of two Syrian soldiers and his role as leading ISIS media figure and English narrator of ISIS propaganda material: see 'Leading ISIS Media Figure and Foreign Fighter Sentenced to Life Imprisonment', US Department of Justice, 29 July 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/leading-isis-media-figure-and-foreign-fighter-sentenced-life-imprisonment>.

¹² 13 women have been prosecuted before 2020, one in 2022, one in 2023 and one in 2024, see: 'Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security – Supplementary Estimates B', Briefing Document, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 27 February 2020, <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/standing-committee-on-public-safety-and-national-security-supplementary-estimates-b>; 'Arrest of Canadian citizen returning from Syria', Royal Canadian Mounted Police News, 26 October 2022, <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2022/arrest-canadian-citizen-returning-syria>; Agence France Press, 'Canadian Woman Repatriated From Syria Charged With Terrorism', Voa news, 06 October 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/canadian-woman-repatriated-from-syria-charged-with-terrorism-/7300700.html>; Chan, D., 'Canada police charge woman with terrorism offenses two years after return from ISIS stint in Syria', Jurist news, 7 July 2024, <https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/07/canada-police-charge-woman-with-terrorism-offenses-two-years-after-return/#>.

	Not prosecuted	8 ¹³
Method of Return	Own Initiative	-
	Expelled	-
	Repatriated	9 ¹⁴
Returnee Attacks	n/a	-

Preventive measures

National Strategy/Action Plan:

[Canada's National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence](#) establishes 3 priorities to counter radicalization to violent extremism: building, sharing and using knowledge; addressing radicalization to violence in the online space; and supporting interventions.

Priority 1's objectives relate to: building knowledge on reliable and meaningful indicators of radicalization to violence and protective factors; building knowledge on methods to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of programs aimed at countering radicalization to violence; and sharing knowledge through connecting researchers and practitioners across Canada to share best practices through conferences and events.

Priority 2's objectives are: supporting civil society in the development of digital literacy guidelines and alternative narratives; working with technology companies and international partners to continue efforts to reduce the impact of terrorist and violent

¹³ In September 2023, 10 women were not being charged despite terrorism peace bond, however, in October 2023 and July 2024, two women have been charged for terrorism offences long time after coming back to Canada, see: Stewart Bell and Jeff Semple, 'Why are the Canadian women of ISIS coming home without being charged?', 15 September 2023, https://globalnews.ca/news/9872246/canadian-women-of-isis-coming-home-not-charged_trashed/; Agence France Press, 'Canadian Woman Repatriated From Syria Charged With Terrorism', Voa news, 06 October 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/canadian-woman-repatriated-from-syria-charged-with-terrorism-/7300700.html>; Chan, D., 'Canada police charge woman with terrorism offenses two years after return from ISIS stint in Syria', Jurist news, 7 July 2024, <https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/07/canada-police-charge-woman-with-terrorism-offenses-two-years-after-return/#>.

¹⁴ One woman was repatriated in November 2021: see Brewster, M., 'Canadian woman freed from ISIS detention camp reunites with daughter in Canada', CBC News, 23 November 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/isis-islamic-state-syria-1.6259857>; another two women were repatriated in October 2022: see 'Canada repatriates two women, two children from northeast Syria', Al Jazeera, 26 October 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/26/canada-repatriates-two-women-two-children-from-northeast-syria>; four more women were repatriated in April 2023: see Griffin, T., '2 Canadian women who returned from Syrian camp to be released on bail', CBC News, 11 April 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/two-women-syria-court-1.6806592>; two more women were repatriated to Canada in July 2023: see Matthew Miller, 'U.S. Applauds Canada's Repatriation from Northeast Syria', U.S. Department of State, Press Release, 7 July 2023, <https://2021-2025.state.gov/u-s-applauds-canadas-repatriation-from-northeast-syria/>.

extremist content online; and supporting research to better understand how terrorists and violent extremist groups operate in the online space and how to counter their activities.

Finally, Priority 3's objectives include: supporting training for frontline workers and practitioners to allow them to assess and intervene with cases of radicalization to violence; continue providing funding for local, comprehensive approaches to interventions; and supporting capacity building among multi-agency programs to intervene with cases of radicalization to violence.

Strategic communications campaign:

Canada has a two-pronged prioritization approach to preventing and countering radicalization to violent extremism online, through: a commitment to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the Charter-protected freedom of expression and privacy rights; and a commitment to diversity, and social and political inclusion for Canadians of all ages, gender identities, races, faiths, official languages, and levels of accessibility including safe spaces for Canadians to fully participate in the online space.

The Government's focus is on a multi-stakeholder approach including national and international engagement with technology companies, academic researchers and civil society.

They are supporting initiatives such as digital literacy and alternative narratives. Digital literacy refers to the guidelines provided to help develop the critical thinking skills of individuals from all ages and resilience building against violent extremism and terrorist content online. Whereas, alternative narratives deals with best efforts to challenge violent extremism and terrorist narratives including alternative points of view developed and delivered by trusted and credible sources.

The topics covered can relate to various themes such as participation in democratic processes, the value and importance of inclusion and diversity, critical consumption of media, and positive roles played by Canadians.

Educational Programs to Enhance Youth Resilience to Violent Extremism:

The Canada Centre has prioritized working with Canadian youth through funding projects to provide a better understanding of the risks faced by youth in online spaces. They also facilitate engagement between youth and key partners, such as technology companies, researchers and academics. The objective of this is to provide youth with the resources and capacity to develop and implement evidence-based online prevention initiatives such as alternative narratives and positive messaging.

As part of the objective to build the capacity of frontline workers and practitioners under Priority 3, Canada is developing, refining and mobilizing its resources that can

assist in informing and improving assessments and interventions from frontline workers such as nurses, school counsellors, psychologists, social workers, youth workers, parole and probation officers. This includes supporting the development of trainings and informational resources, in addition to working with professional organizations and associations to create standards and best practices for working with individuals classified as vulnerable.

To aid this objective, the Canada Centre is providing support for projects that address this priority through the Community Resilience Fund. An example is the Canadian Practitioners Network for Prevention of Radicalization and Extremist Violence (CPN-PREV), a network established to bring Canadian leadership forward and to develop countering violent radicalization through supporting evidence-based best practices and collaboration among practitioners, researchers and policymakers. Training materials produced by this project are also used to support professional practitioners in Canada who are involved in assessing, preventing, and intervening with individuals who are at risk of radicalizing to violence.

Administrative measures

Restriction of the freedom of movement and liberty:

The Provincial Court Judge may **require an individual to remain at their place of residence at specified times** if a person has reasonable grounds to fear that the individual may commit a terrorism offense. If there is satisfactory evidence then the order may be placed for a period of no more than twelve months. However, if the individual has previously been convicted of a terrorism offense, the order may be entered into for a period of no more than five years. This regulation is contained in [Section 810.11\(6\)\(c\) of the Canadian Criminal Code](#).

Additionally, the Provincial Court Judge can implement a **condition that an individual remains within a specified geographic area unless written permission to leave the area is obtained from the judge or an individual designated by the judge**. The Judge must specify the period during which the requirement applies in accordance with the time limits of either twelve months or five years depending on if the individual has previously been convicted of a terrorist offense. This regulation is found in [Section 810.11\(10\) of the Canadian Criminal Code](#).

Citizenship/Nationality deprivation:

The Minister can **revoke or renounce an individual's citizenship** if they were convicted of a terrorism offense or an offense outside of Canada that, if committed in Canada, would constitute a terrorism offense. Prior to revocation, the Minister must provide written notice to the individual. This regulation is included in the [Act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts of 2014](#).

Watchlists and Sanctions Lists:

The Provincial Court Judge can require an individual **to return to their place of residence at specified times**. As with other peace bonds, this may be ordered for a period of no more than twelve months unless the individual has previously been convicted of a terrorism offense, whereby the order may be enforced for up to five years. This is contained in [Section 810.11\(6\)\(d\) of the Canadian Criminal Code](#).

Moreover, the Provincial Court Judge can **require an individual to deposit, in the specified manner, any passport or other travel document issued in the individual's name that is in their possession or control**. The Judge must specify the period during which the requirement applies in accordance with the time limits of either twelve months or five years depending on if the individual has previously been convicted of a terrorist offense. The regulation is specified in [Section 810.11\(9\) of the Canadian Criminal Code](#).

The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness may recommend the Governor in Council to **list an entity** when there are reasonable grounds to believe they have knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in or facilitated a terrorist activity; or if the entity has knowingly acted on behalf of, at the direction of or in association with an entity referred to above. The Minister must decide whether the entity should remain listed or removed from the list upon taking into account the established grounds for listing an entity within five years. Upon notification, the entity may apply for a review within 60 days of receiving notice. The list can be found under the [Consolidated List](#). The regulations establishing the list are found within [Section 83.05 of the Canadian Criminal Code](#).

Canada also implemented their own [Regulations Implementing the United Nations Resolutions on the Suppression of Terrorism](#). Through these regulations, Canada lists, in addition to their own listed entities, the entities named by United Nations Resolutions.

Criminal and surveillance measures

In Canada, [Section 83.221\(1\) of the Criminal Code](#) makes it an offense to knowingly **advocate or promote** the commission of terrorist offenses. Pursuant to [Section 83.222\(1\) of the Criminal Code](#), a judge can order the seizure of materials that constitutes terrorist propaganda. Terrorist propaganda is defined as 'any writing, sign, visible representation or audio recording that advocates or promotes the commission of terrorism offenses' ([Section 83.222\(8\) of the Criminal Code](#)).

Recruiting a person in order to receive training or to facilitate or commit a terrorism offense is considered as a form of participation in terrorist activities ([Section 83.18\(3\) of the Criminal Code](#)), which is criminalized under [Section 83.18\(1\) of the Criminal Code](#).

Participation in the activities of a terrorist group is addressed by [Section 83.18\(1\) of the Criminal Code](#), which makes it an offense to participate in or contribute to, directly or indirectly, any activity of a terrorist group. It is also an offense to knowingly facilitate a terrorist activity ([Section 83.19\(1\) of the Criminal Code](#)).

Canada criminalizes the fact of **leaving or attempting to leave** Canada to participate in the activity of a terrorist group ([Section 83.181 of the Criminal Code](#)), to facilitate terrorist activity ([Section 83.191 of the Criminal Code](#)), to commit an offense for a terrorist group ([Section 83.201 of the Criminal Code](#)), or to commit an offense that constitutes terrorist activity ([Section 83.202 of the Criminal Code](#)).

Finally, both **providing or receiving training** are considered as participation in terrorist activities ([Section 83.18\(3\) of the Criminal Code](#)), which is criminalized under [Section 83.18\(1\)](#).

The [Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre](#) (ITAC) operating within the Canadian Intelligence Services produces terrorism threat assessments based on classified and open-source information. Assessments are shared with national and international partners and intended to provide relevant decision makers with the latest detailed information to mitigate the possibility or impact of terrorism.

Under the [Secure Air Travel Act](#), Canadian authorities are operating the [Passenger Protect Program \(PPP\)](#) that screens passenger information related to both international as well as domestic air travel. The data is checked against a list implemented under the Secure Air Travel Act in order to prevent air travel for terrorism purposes and to detect terrorism suspects.

Rehabilitation and reintegration measures

Canada does not have a centralized de-radicalization program aimed at terrorist offenders in prisons or following release. According to its 2018 National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence, 'the Government of Canada favors a local, comprehensive approach to interventions with individuals in the initial stages of radicalization to violence or requiring disengagement from violent ideologies.'

The Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, established in 2015, administers the **Community Resilience Fund (CRF)**, which supports research and programs to build the evidence base along with local capability

and capacity to counter radicalization to violence in Canada. Through the CRF, it provides financial support to organizations working to improve Canada's understanding and capacity to prevent and counter violent extremism. The CRF supports a wide variety of projects aimed at the different phases of radicalization to violence, including disengagement.

One example is **Project Reset**, which is a five-year initiative launched in 2018 dedicated to disengaging individuals in the Eastern-Ontario region from extremist-based violence, carried out by the John Howard Society of Ottawa (JHSO). The pilot project works with individuals at higher risk of committing, or who have already committed, acts of extremist violence, as determined by a comprehensive referral system made up of justice partners including court officials and police services. Clinicians, social workers and other specialists work directly with the individuals to develop tailored intervention plans based on their particular needs, existing strengths and resources, and risk factors associated with extremist violence.

Another is the **Evolve Program**, run by the Organization for the Prevention of Violence (OPV), a community and expert-led non-government organization based in Edmonton. The Evolve Program is a specialized, inter-disciplinary intervention program that provides direct support to individuals involved in hate or extremism, their affected family or friends, as well as victims of hate incidents. The Program is focused on providing mentorship, counseling, and trauma-informed care. Participants in the Evolve Program can access a variety of services including personal and family counseling, religious counseling, mentorship, advocacy, crisis management, addiction support, as well as help with basic needs. The Evolve Program also helps participants access and navigate bureaucratic support systems such as financial assistance, employment support, child welfare services, legal aid, and the justice system.

[Additional Resources](#)

Harris-Hogan, S., Amarasingam, A., Dawson L.L. (2022) 'A Comparative Analysis of Australian and Canadian Foreign Fighters Traveling to Syria and Iraq', Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2021.2024943

Amarasingam, A. and Dawson, L.L., "I Left to Be Closer to Allah" Learning about Foreign Fighters from Family and Friends, Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), 2018, available at: https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Families_Report.pdf

Anzalone, C., Canadian Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria, CTC Sentinel 8(4), p. 14-19., April 2015, available at: <https://ctc.usma.edu/canadian-foreign-fighters-in-iraq-and-syria/>

Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering and Global Center on Cooperative Security, Financing and Facilitation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Returnees in Southeast Asia, Typology Report, November 2021, available at:

https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Typology-Report-on-FTFs-in-SEA_PUBLIC.pdf

Dawson, L.L., A Comparative Analysis of the Data on Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq: Who Went and Why?, ICCT Research Paper, 10 February 2021, available at: <https://icct.nl/publication/a-comparative-analysis-of-the-data-on-western-foreign-fighters-in-syria-and-iraq-who-went-and-why/>

Gurski, P., The Foreign Terrorist Fighter Repatriation Challenge: The View from Canada, ICCT Perspective, 21 February 2019, available at: <https://icct.nl/publication/the-foreign-terrorist-fighter-repatriation-challenge-the-view-from-canada/>

Wilner, A. and Yar, I., Canadian terrorists by the numbers: an assessment of Canadians joining and supporting terrorist groups, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 10 April 2019, available at: https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/mli-files/pdf/20190205_MLI_Canadian_Terrorists_Wilner_PAPER_WebFinal.pdf

[Canada's National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence](#)

[Community Resilience Fund website](#)

[Evolve Program website](#)

[John Howard Society of Ottawa website](#)

[Public Safety Canada website](#)