

HON JUDITH COLLINS KC, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

MINISTERIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL 16 TO 20 OCTOBER 2024

January 2025

This publication provides the Cabinet proposal and report back on Hon Judith Collins KC travel over the period 16 to 20 October 2024, to Brussels, Belgium for the NATO Defence Ministers' Meeting.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the November 2024 Cabinet paper and associated minute of decision *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC - October 2024* [CAB-24-MIN-0432].
- the September 2024 Cabinet paper and associated minute of decision *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC - October 2024* [CAB-24-MIN-0388].

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at:

www.defence.govt.nz/publications/ministerial-overseas-travel-16-10-2024-to-20-10-2024

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document. Where information has been withheld in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country [section 6(b)(i)].

Information is also withheld in order to:

- protect the privacy of natural persons [section 9(2)(a)]
- maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty [section 9(2)(g)(i)].



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC - October 2024

Portfolio **Defence**

On 30 September 2024, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Judith Collins KC from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 16 to 20 October 2024, to travel to Brussels, Belgium for the NATO Defence Ministers' Meeting;
- 2 **agreed** that she be accompanied by two staff members, one of whose costs will be met by the Ministry of Defence;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$54,921 for the travel expenses of the ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **noted** that she will also be accompanied by a delegation from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force, whose costs will be met by their agencies;
- 5 **agreed** that in her absence:
 - 5.1 Hon Paul Goldsmith act as Attorney-General, Minister Responsible for the GCSB and Minister Responsible for the NZSIS;
 - 5.2 Hon Chris Penk act as Minister of Defence and Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques;
 - 5.3 Hon Andrew Bayly act as Minister for Digitising Government;
 - 5.4 Hon Simon Watts act as Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology and Minister for Space;
- 6 **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – October 2024

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Brussels, Belgium from 16-20 October to attend the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Defence Ministers' Meeting (DMM).
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave has been sought.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 The purpose of my travel is to attend the NATO Defence Minister's Meeting. I will arrive in Brussels on the morning of 17 October, travelling directly from the Cyber Security Conference in Singapore.
- 4 While specific activities remain subject to confirmation, I have been invited to participate in an Indo-Pacific 4 session with representatives from Australia, Japan and the Republic of Korea. There will also be opportunities for bilateral meetings with key defence counterparts on the sidelines of the DMM.
- 5 s9(2)(g)(i)

- 6 This travel would follow on from the Prime Minister's attendance at the NATO Leaders' Summit in July, and Minister Peters' attendance at the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting in April. New Zealand attendance at the DMM will further demonstrate New Zealand's commitment to tangibly contributing to collective security efforts and protecting the international rules-based system.
- 7 If there is time, as part of my Science, Innovation and Technology and Space portfolios, I will seek meetings with representatives from the Directorate-General (DG) for Research and Innovation, the DG for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, and The DG for Defence Industry and Space. These meetings will support my objective of enhancing our science and innovation connections with the EU through our association to Horizon Europe to deliver economic impact for New Zealand.

Ministerial Party

- 8 I would be accompanied by one member of staff from my Office (travel costs met by Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel), and my Defence Private Secretary (travel costs met by Vote Defence).
- 9 A delegation from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force would also accompany me at departmental cost.

Travel Costs

- 10 The estimated costs of the travel (including my staff members travel) are:

Airfares:	\$48,306.00
Accommodation:	\$900.00
Meals	\$300.00
Surface travel	\$2500.00
Gifts	\$300.00
Contingency (10%)	\$2615.30
Total:	\$54,921.30

Acting Ministers

- 11 In my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios will be:
- 11.1.1 Attorney-General: Hon Paul Goldsmith
 - 11.1.2 Defence: Hon Chris Penk
 - 11.1.3 Digitising Government: Hon Andrew Bayly
 - 11.1.4 GCSB: Hon Paul Goldsmith
 - 11.1.5 NZSIS: Hon Paul Goldsmith
 - 11.1.6 Science, Innovation and Technology: Hon Simon Watts
 - 11.1.7 Space: Hon Simon Watts
 - 11.1.8 Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques: Hon Chris Penk

Proactive release

- 12 This paper will be proactively released on the Ministry of Defence's website. Proactive release is subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- 1 **authorise** my absence from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from approximately 16-20 October, to travel to Brussels, Belgium for the NATO Defence Ministers' Meeting;
- 2 **note** that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip;
- 3 **agree** that I be accompanied by two members of staff from my office;
- 4 **note** that I will be accompanied by a delegation from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force, whose costs will be met by departmental budgets;
- 5 **approve** the estimated expenditure of \$54,921.30 for my travel expenses and a member of staff from my office, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 6 **agree** that in my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios will be:
 - 6.1 Attorney-General: Hon Paul Goldsmith
 - 6.2 Defence: Hon Chris Penk
 - 6.3 Digitising Government: Hon Andrew Bayly
 - 6.4 GCSB: Hon Paul Goldsmith
 - 6.5 NZSIS: Hon Paul Goldsmith
 - 6.6 Science, Innovation and Technology: Hon Simon Watts
 - 6.7 Space: Hon Simon Watts
 - 6.8 Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques: Hon Chris Penk
- 7 **note** that this Cabinet paper will be proactively released following return to New Zealand by the Ministry of Defence.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Judith Collins KC

Minister of Defence



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC - October 2024

Portfolios **Defence / GCSB / Science, Innovation and Technology**

On 11 November 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Judith Collins KC under CAB-24-SUB-0432 on her travel, from 14 to 20 October 2024, to:

- 1 Singapore to attend the Singapore International Cyber Week and the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity Special Session;
- 2 Brussels, Belgium to attend the NATO Defence Ministers' Meeting.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Released by the Minister of Defence

Office of the Minister of Defence, Minister Responsible for the GCSB and Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel from 14 to 20 October 2024 to Singapore under my GCSB portfolio, and to Belgium under my Defence and Science, Innovation and Technology portfolios.

Report - Singapore

Singapore International Cyber Week

- 1 From 14 to 16 October, I attended the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW). The theme of this year's event was Trust and Security in the Digital Era, and the programme featured topics including next-generation cyber threats, the security of Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things security, and critical infrastructure resilience. I also participated in a panel discussion titled "Global Digital Governance: Promise or Pipedream?" alongside Ministers from Australia, Brunei and Ukraine.
- 2 On the side of SICW, I attended the ninth annual ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cyber Security Special Session with Dialogue Partners. This was a ministerial-level dialogue that brought together ASEAN Information and Communications Technology and Cyber Security Ministers, as well as ASEAN Dialogue Partners, to discuss key cyber issues in the region and means to enhance regional cyber security cooperation among member states.
- 3 While at SICW, I held bilateral meetings with United States National Cyber Director, Harry Coker Jr, INTERPOL Executive Director - Technology and Innovation, Dr Madan Oberoi, and Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Anton Demokhin. At these meetings, we confirmed shared interest in deepening cooperation on cyber security and applications for emerging technology in law enforcement, discussed the development of New Zealand's new national Cyber Security Strategy and considered how we build the public's understanding of cyber security threats. These discussions will help inform New Zealand's approach to emerging threats and cyber security policy developments.
- 4 I met with ^{s9(2)(a)} [REDACTED] at Microsoft's Asia Pacific Headquarters, where we discussed key threats to cyber security in our region, supply chain vulnerabilities, and the importance of the public and private sector working together. As part of a tour of Microsoft's Experience Centre, I received hands-on technology demonstrations on cyber security and the possibilities from digital twinning.
- 5 I also visited Amazon Web Services' offices in Singapore where we discussed cyber security, and opportunities for further cooperation between New Zealand and Amazon Web Services on digital and technology projects.

- 6 I also engaged with a number of Singapore ministers responsible for cyber issues providing an opportunity to underscore New Zealand's commitment to elevating the bilateral relationship by 2025, including in areas of cyber and emerging and critical technology.
- 7 This visit was timely, as New Zealand and Singapore work towards elevating our Enhanced Partnership ahead of the 60th anniversary of bilateral relations in 2025. I was able to strengthen existing relationships with key Singaporean Ministers and demonstrate New Zealand's commitment to the defence and security element of our partnership with Singapore.
- 8 Overall, the visit helped to demonstrate New Zealand's role as a credible and engaged cyber security partner.

Report - Belgium

Bilateral meeting with NATO Secretary General

- 9 In Belgium, I was welcomed to NATO by new Secretary General Mark Rutte, who expressed considerable warmth towards New Zealand, reflecting on the sizeable contribution that New Zealand had made towards Ukraine's self-defence in recent years. ^{s6(b)(i)}

NATO Defence Ministers' Meeting with IP4 partners, and the EU

- 10 This was the first NATO Defence Ministers Meeting (DMM) with IP4 partners present, and New Zealand's attendance followed on from the successes of the Prime Minister's and Minister of Foreign Affairs' recent engagements with NATO earlier this year.
- 11 During my intervention at the DMM, I took the opportunity to reflect on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the dramatic risks this conflict holds for the sanctity of the international rules-based system particularly for small states like New Zealand and the many other small states in Europe. I also spoke about the implications for the Indo-Pacific region if Ukraine did not prevail and other authoritarian actors become emboldened to destabilise the global order through the use of disinformation, cyber-attacks and other tactics. The DMM was an important platform to discuss the growing security challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region ^{s6(a)}

Meeting of IP4 partners— chaired by Australia

- 12 On the sidelines of the DMM, I met with ministerial representatives from Japan and Australia, and the Secretary of Defence equivalent from the Republic of Korea, as an informal IP4 grouping. We discussed our interest in continuing to engage closely with NATO, and how the IP4 grouping is a valuable platform to highlight issues of concern within the Indo-Pacific to NATO Allies, as well as to learn from NATO's experiences.

Coalition to Defeat ISIS

- 13 While in Belgium, I also participated in a meeting of Defence Ministers as part of the Coalition to Defeat ISIS. This followed the US and Iraq's recent announcement regarding their intention to draw down the military arm of the Coalition, Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), by the end of 2025.
- 14 Partners did emphasise that, whilst the military arm is coming to a conclusion, the Coalition continues to play a crucial role. ^{s6(a)}

Visit to Evere Cemetery

- I also took the opportunity to visit Evere Cemetery, where I laid a poppy on the graves of five young New Zealand aviators who lost their lives in World War II. This was another reminder of the sacrifices of New Zealanders to uphold democratic values.

Meeting with EU Commission officials

- 15 I also attended a working lunch with the following EU Commission officials:
- Roberto Viola, Director-General, Communications Networks, Content and Technology
 - Marc Lemaître, Director-General, Research and Innovation
 - Signe Ratso, Deputy Director-General, Research and Innovation
 - Catherine Kavvada, Director, Secure and Connected Space
- 16 We discussed the strong and productive relationship New Zealand shares with the European Union and to reinforce our desire for increased engagement under Horizon Europe, particularly in the areas of restricted quantum and space research calls. I also expressed New Zealand's interest in learning from the EU's work on digital identities.

Proactive release

- 17 This paper will be proactively released, subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Judith Collins KC

Minister of Defence
Minister Responsible for the GCSB
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology

Released by the Minister of Defence