

HON JUDITH COLLINS KC, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

MINISTERIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL 14 MAY TO 24 MAY 2024

December 2024

This publication provides the Cabinet proposal and report back on Hon Judith Collins KC travel to Italy for the 80th Anniversary of the Cassino battle and to the United Kingdom for bilateral meetings and to visit New Zealand Defence Force personnel at the UK-led Operation INTERFLEX.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the April 2024 Cabinet paper and associated minute *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – May 2024* [CAB-24-SUB-0105 and CAB-24-MIN-0105]
- the July 2024 Cabinet paper and associated minute *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – May 2024* [CAB-24-SUB-0249 and CAB-24-MIN-0249]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: www.defence.govt.nz/publications/ministerial-overseas-travel-14-05-2024-to-24-05-2024

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)] and
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on the basis of confidence by the Government of any other country [section 6(b)(i)]

Information is also withheld in order to:

- maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials [section 9(2)(f)(iv)]
- 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 - May 2024

Portfolio Defence

On 2 April 2024, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Judith Collins from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 14 to 24 May 2024 to travel to:
 - 1.1 Italy to attend the 80th Anniversary of the Cassino battles;
 - 1.2 the United Kingdom for bilateral meetings and to visit New Zealand Defence Force personnel at the UK-led Operation INTERFLEX;
 - 1.3 s9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
- 2 **agreed** that she be accompanied by two members of staff, one of whose travel costs will be met from Vote Defence;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$59,334.00 for the travel expenses of the ministerial party, as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **agreed** that in her absence:
 - 4.1 Hon Chris Penk act as Attorney-General, 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;
 - 4.2 Hon Melissa Lee act as Minister for Digitising Government;
 - 4.3 Hon Andrew Bayly act as Minister Responsible for the GCSB, Minister Responsible for the NZSIS, Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology and Minister for Space;
- 5 **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

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to the United Kingdom (UK), Italy [REDACTED]
s9(2)(g)(i) The purpose of the travel is to attend the 80th anniversary of the
Cassino battles in Italy, and to undertake bilateral engagement in the UK [REDACTED]
s9(2)(g)(i)
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle. Leave from
Parliament has been sought.

Purpose of Travel

Travel to the Italy

- 3 The purpose of my travel to Italy is to attend the 80th anniversary of the
Cassino battles alongside counterparts from Europe.
- 4 The battle for Cassino in early 1944 was one of the most costly engagements
involving New Zealand forces in the Second World War. The 28th Māori
Battalion and the 2nd New Zealand division were involved in several battles of
Monte Cassino. The New Zealand Forces suffered 1,600 casualties.
- 5 As it is the 80th anniversary, there will be a large number of New Zealanders
travelling to Cassino for the occasion. Further, a senior New Zealand Defence
Force (NZDF) officer will lead a contingent of 26 which will include a band and
cultural and events staff.
- 6 While in Italy, I will seek a call as a courtesy on the Italian Minister of Defence,
and a call on Director-General of the Multinational Force and Observers
(MFO) peacekeeping operation. New Zealand has deployed personnel to the
MFO operation, located in Egypt and Sinai, since its establishment in 1982.

Travel to the UK

- 7 While in Europe, I will undertake a bilateral visit to the UK. The UK is one of
New Zealand's key security, defence and intelligence partners, and a bilateral
visit will provide an opportunity to reinforce the importance and value of our
close security relationship.
- 8 In the UK, I will meet with Secretary of State for Defence Grant Shapps. This
will provide the opportunity to share defence priorities and discuss security
challenges of mutual concern. I will highlight our shared interest in supporting
the international rules based system as demonstrated by New Zealand's

ongoing support to Ukraine's self-defence in response to Russia's illegal invasion; and investigate areas for further defence cooperation between the UK and New Zealand.

9 The visit to the UK will provide me the opportunity to visit NZDF personnel undertaking training for members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine as part of the UK-led Operation INTERFLEX. This is timely because Cabinet recently approved the extension of the NZDF deployment to conduct training in support of Ukraine's self-defence until June 2025. As the training teams would recently have rotated, I will be able to welcome the new team and highlight the Government's support for this critical mission.

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s6(a)

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I will also seek to engage with UK counterparts in my Science and Technology, and Intelligence, portfolios while in the UK. s6(a)

The UK is one of New Zealand's most important science and technology partners. This engagement would enable me to highlight this to my counterpart, to recognise current cooperative activities and to discuss future opportunities to enhance our partnerships across key areas, including in advanced and strategic technologies.

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I will seek a call on UK Home Secretary James Cleverly. s6(a)

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In association with my portfolio as Minister Responsible for the Government Communications Security Bureau and the Security Intelligence Service, I will reinforce our commitment to our security and intelligence partnership with UK and Five Eyes partners in line with the Government's foreign policy direction. Importantly, I will look to discuss shared national security issues, such as counter terrorism and building resilience against foreign interference and cyber threats. s6(a)

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s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(i)

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s9(2)(g)(i)

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Ministerial Party

19 I propose to be accompanied by the Minister's Senior Private Secretary (charged to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel), and NZDF Private Secretary (Travel costs will be met by Vote Defence).

Travel Costs

20 Indicative travel costs for my travel are:

Airfares:	\$43,040.00
Accommodation, meals, transport:	\$10,900.00
Contingency (@10%):	\$5,394.00
Total:	\$59,334.00

Acting Ministers

21 In my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios will be:

Attorney-General: Hon Chris Penk

Defence: Hon Chris Penk

Digitising Government: Hon Melissa Lee

GCSB: Hon Andrew Bayly

NZSIS: Hon Andrew Bayly

Science, Innovation and Technology: Hon Andrew Bayly

Space: Hon Andrew Bayly

Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques: Hon Chris Penk

Proactive release

22 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

23 I recommend that Cabinet:

authorise my absence from New Zealand from 14 to 24 May to travel to the UK, Italy, s9(2)(g)(i);

agree that I be accompanied by one member of staff, who will be funded by the Ministry of Internal Affairs;

approve the estimated expenditure of \$59,334.00 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];

note that I will be accompanied by officials from the New Zealand Defence Force whose travel costs will be met by their departments;

agree that in my absence:

23.5.1 Hon Chris Penk will be Acting Attorney General;

23.5.2 Hon Chris Penk will be Acting Minister of Defence;

23.5.3 Hon Melissa Lee will be Acting Minister for Digitising Government

23.5.4 Hon Andrew Bayly will be Acting Minister Responsible for the GCSB

23.5.5 Hon Andrew Bayly will be Acting Minister Responsible for the NZSIS

23.5.6 Hon Andrew Bayly will be Acting Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology

23.5.7 Hon Andrew Bayly will be Acting Minister for Space

note that leave from Parliament has been sought.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Judith Collins KC MP

Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – May 2024

Portfolio

Defence

On 8 July 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report attached to CAB-24-SUB-0249 on her travel, from 14 to 22 May 2024, to the United Kingdom and Italy, to attend Ministerial meetings and 80th anniversary commemorations of the battles of Cassino.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Released by the Minister of Defence

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – May 2024

I recommend that the Cabinet note this report on my travel to the United Kingdom and Italy in May 2024.

Report

- 1 I travelled to the United Kingdom (UK) and Italy from 15 to 21 May as Minister of Defence and as the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology to attend Ministerial Meetings and the 80th anniversary commemorations of the battles of Cassino.
- 2 This first visit to the UK and Italy was a valuable opportunity to build and further strengthen relationships with counterparts across both portfolios—from the UK Government, the Labour Party, and the Italian Government.
- 3 Further, my visit to Italy was poignant, personal, and productive. I represented the New Zealand Government at the 80th anniversary commemorations of the battles at Cassino – battles my late father fought in.

United Kingdom, 15 – 18 May

- 4 My programme of engagements began with the Rt Hon Grant Shapps, which included an informal dinner on the evening I arrived in London. This was followed by a formal bilateral meeting the next morning. s6(a)

[Redacted]

- 5 s6(a) & s6(b)(i)
- [Redacted]

- 6 s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)
- [Redacted]

s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)

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s9(2)(g)(i)

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On the evening of 16 May, the New Zealand High Commission hosted an event for UK and New Zealand Defence Industry representatives and representatives from the UK government. The event was an opportunity for New Zealand defence security businesses to connect with key UK Ministry of Defence contacts. During the Event, I also had the opportunity to meet with Minister of State for the Indo-Pacific, Anne-Marie Trevelyan,

s9(2)(g)(i)

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I met with the Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy Saqib Bhatti, primarily to discuss Artificial Intelligence (AI).

s6(b)(i)

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The visit to the Francis Crick Institute was an opportunity to see Europe's largest biomedical research institute under one roof. The visit enabled me to see first-hand the opportunities of scale and collaboration that researchers derive from an institute that brings together scientists across a range of disciplines together with organisations from the academic, clinical and industrial spheres into one place.

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My meeting with the Home Secretary, James Cleverly, was our first in-person meeting following our introductory phone call when I took office.

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

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I also met with Shadow Minister for Security Dan Jarvis.


s6(a), s6(b)(i)

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A highlight of my time in the UK was visiting the NZDF infantry training team deployed to train Ukrainian recruits under

s6(a)

the NZDF's Operation TĪEKE. The visit provided helpful insight into the experiences of the NZDF personnel at the forefront of New Zealand's support to Ukraine. It was, however, also a sobering reminder of the cost of the conflict. s9(2)(g)(i)



Italy, 18 – 21 May

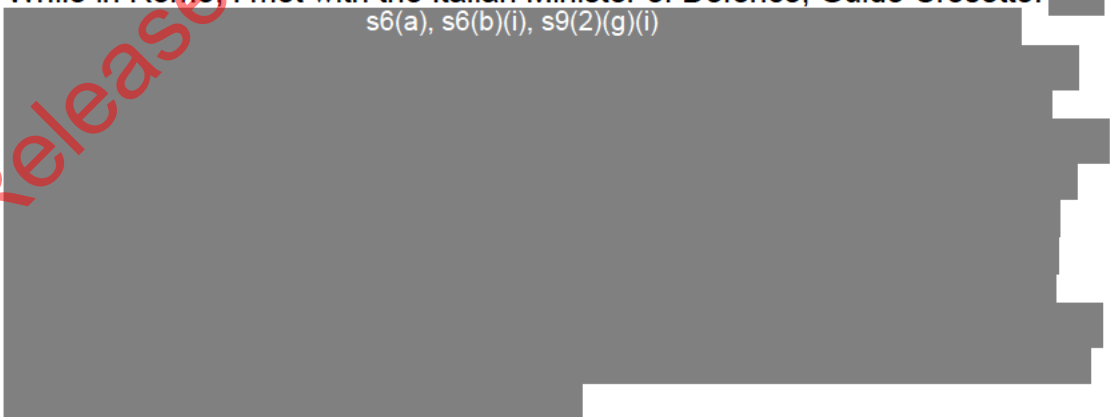
14 The centrepiece of my travel to Italy was the commemorations to mark the 80th anniversary of the battles at Cassino. I represented the New Zealand Government at three ceremonies on 19 & 20 May: the UK-led Commonwealth Service; the New Zealand National Commemorative Service at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery; and the New Zealand Service of Remembrance at Cassino Railway Station

15 On the morning of 20 May, I attended the New Zealand Service of Remembrance at the Cassino Railway Station. The Cassino Railway Station has special significance to both the 28 Maori Battalion and 26 New Zealand Battalion – with both suffering grievous losses during the fighting to capture it. The service was attended by Sir Robert Gillies, Lt Col (Rtd) Leith Comer, the Mayor of Cassino, and members of the Cassino community. My address at the service reflected on the experiences of my father, the late Percy Collins, who fought at Cassino as a sapper in 5 Field Park Company.

16 On returning to Rome, I visited the European Space Agency (ESA) Centre for Earth Observation (ESRIN) in Frascati. This was in my capacity as Minister for Space. I was hosted by Simonetta Cheli, ESA's Director of Earth Observation & Head of ESRIN. The visit was an opportunity to learn about ESA's earth observation expertise and encourage greater ESA cooperation with the New Zealand space sector and research institutes.

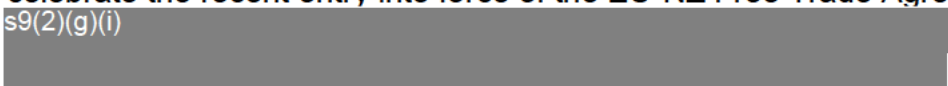
17 While in Rome, I met with the Italian Minister of Defence, Guido Crosetto.

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)



18 On the evening of 20 May, I hosted a reception at the Official Residence to celebrate the recent entry into force of the EU-NZ Free Trade Agreement.

s9(2)(g)(i)



s9(2)(g)(i) [redacted] Approximately 65 guests attended, including Italian Members of the European Parliament, Members of the Italian Parliament and Senate, Italian officials, and industry leaders and business representatives. The reception boasted a 'taste of New Zealand' with various high-quality Kiwi food and beverages on the menu.

- 19 Before departing Rome, I met with Elizabeth Dibble, Director General of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), and Oscar Pintado, Director of Operations. The meeting provided insight into the MFO's experience during a time of increased instability and tension in the region. s6(b)(i) [redacted]

Proactive release

- 20 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO(18)4 on the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's website. The paper will be subject to redaction as appropriate on the grounds set out under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

I recommend that the Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Judith Collins KC

Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence