

## **HON JUDITH COLLINS KC, MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

### **MINISTERIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL (19 NOVEMBER – 23 NOVEMBER 2024)**

**January 2025**

This publication provides the Cabinet proposal and report back on Hon Judith Collins KC overseas travel to Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic to attend the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the May 2024 Cabinet paper and associated minute of decision (no redactions required): *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – November 2024* [CAB-24-MIN-0176 and CAB-24-SUB-0176]
- the December 2024 Cabinet paper and associated minute of decision: *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – November 2024* [CAB-24-MIN-0503 and CAB-24-SUB-0503]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: [www.defence.govt.nz/publications/ministerial-overseas-travel-19-11-2024-to-23-11-2024](http://www.defence.govt.nz/publications/ministerial-overseas-travel-19-11-2024-to-23-11-2024).

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)]

In addition, certain information has been withheld in order to:

- maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions [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 - November 2024

**Portfolio**                      **Defence**

On 20 May 2024, Cabinet:

- 1        **authorised** the absence of Hon Judith Collins KC from New Zealand, from 19 to 23 November 2024, to travel to Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic to attend the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus;
- 2        **agreed** that she be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3        **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$36,538 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 officials from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force, whose costs will be met by their respective 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, Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, and Minister for Space;
  - 5.4      Hon Chris Bishop act as Minister for Racing;
- 6        **noted** that leave from Parliament has been approved.

Diana Hawker  
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

### **Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – November 2024**

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) from 19 to 23 November 2024 to attend the 11th Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus).
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave has been approved from the Party Whip.

### **Purpose of Travel**

- 3 The purpose of my travel is to attend the 11th ADMM-Plus. This year's ADMM-Plus will be hosted in Lao PDR, in its capacity as 2024 ASEAN chair<sup>1</sup>. ADMM-Plus is the most significant ASEAN defence meeting and is the principle forum for New Zealand Defence to engage multilaterally in Asia. Established in 2010 and conducted annually, the ADMM-Plus aims to enhance regional security through dialogue and practical military-to-military cooperation through the seven Experts' Working Groups. New Zealand has been represented at Ministerial-level each year (with the exception of 2017 and 2023 due to the post-election period.)
- 4 With the continued state of regional tensions, ASEAN-centric regional security architecture has an increasingly important role in providing a forum for discussions. The ADMM-plus proper will feature plenary discussions on regional security issues, and I will be given the opportunity to give an intervention on behalf of New Zealand. The meeting will likely conclude with the issue of a joint statement. The forum sees up to 19<sup>2</sup> Defence Ministers meet, representing approximately 90% of the world's military forces. I will conduct a series of bilateral meetings with my counterparts on the margins of the ADMM-Plus.
- 5 New Zealand is co-chairing the Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief with Singapore for the period 2024-2027. New Zealand has not co-chaired an Experts' Working Group since 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> ASEAN chair rotates annually in alphabetical order of each ASEAN member state.

<sup>2</sup> Countries attending ADMM-Plus include Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, Russia, New Zealand, Australia, United States, China, South Korea, Japan, and India.

## Ministerial Party

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

## Travel Costs

- 8 The estimated costs of the travel (including my staff member's travel) are:
- |                                                                                                                                                       |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Airfares                                                                                                                                              | \$24,716.00        |
| <i>Note: Flights are subject to availability at the time bookings are confirmed, and any increases that may occur until tickets have been issued.</i> |                    |
| Accommodation                                                                                                                                         | \$5,000.00         |
| <i>Note: 3 nights x2 persons.</i>                                                                                                                     |                    |
| Other expenses                                                                                                                                        | \$3,500.00         |
| <i>Note: this includes surface travel, gifts, food &amp; incidentals x2 persons.</i>                                                                  |                    |
| Contingency (10%)                                                                                                                                     | \$3,321.60         |
| <b>Total (rounded up to nearest \$):</b>                                                                                                              | <b>\$36,538.00</b> |

## Acting Ministers

- 9 In my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios will be as follows (these may be subject to change).
- 9.1 Hon Paul Goldsmith - Attorney-General
  - 9.2 Hon Chris Penk - Defence
  - 9.3 Hon Andrew Bayly - Digitising Government
  - 9.4 Hon Paul Goldsmith - GCSB
  - 9.5 Hon Paul Goldsmith - NZSIS
  - 9.6 Hon Andrew Bayly - Science, Innovation and Technology
  - 9.7 Hon Andrew Bayly - Space
  - 9.8 Hon Chris Penk - Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques

## Proactive release

- 10 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

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet:
- 1.1 **authorise** my absence from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 19 to 23 November to travel to Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic to attend the Association of South East Asian Nations Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus;
  - 1.2 **note** that leave from Parliament has been approved by the Party Whip;
  - 1.3 **agree** that I be accompanied by two members of staff from my office;
  - 1.4 **approve** the estimated expenditure of \$36,538.00 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
  - 1.5 **note** that I will be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Defence and New Zealand Defence Force, whose travel costs will be met by departmental budgets;
  - 1.6 **agree** that in my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios will be as follows (these may be subject to change):
    - 1.6.1 Hon Paul Goldsmith - Attorney-General
    - 1.6.2 Hon Chris Penk - Defence
    - 1.6.3 Hon Andrew Bayly - Digitising Government
    - 1.6.4 Hon Paul Goldsmith - GCSB
    - 1.6.5 Hon Paul Goldsmith - NZSIS
    - 1.6.6 Hon Andrew Bayly - Science, Innovation and Technology
    - 1.6.7 Hon Andrew Bayly - Space
    - 1.6.8 Hon Chris Penk - Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques
  - 1.7 **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

Released by the Minister of Defence



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC - November 2024

**Portfolio**                      **Defence**

On 16 December 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Judith Collins KC under CAB-24-SUB-0503 on her travel, from 19 to 23 November 2024, to Lao People's Democratic Republic to attend the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus.

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

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel from 19 to 23 November 2024 to Lao PDR under my Defence portfolio.

#### Report

##### *Bilateral meetings*

1 While in Lao PDR I conducted eight bilateral engagements and two pull asides with counterparts from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the United States, and the ASEAN Secretary-General. This was the most substantial bilateral meeting programme undertaken by a Plus country.

2 s6(a) [Redacted]  
s6(a), s6(b)(i) [Redacted]  
s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]

3 My first formal bilateral meeting with my **United States** counterpart, Secretary of Defense Austin, was a valuable opportunity to share our perspectives to challenges in the region.

4 s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]

##### *ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus*

5 The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) is the most significant ASEAN defence meeting and is the principal forum for New Zealand Defence to engage multilaterally in Asia.

6 During my intervention at the ADMM-Plus, I took the opportunity to reflect on the importance of the international rules-based order and forums such as the ADMM-Plus in supporting regional peace and security. I also spoke about the threats of climate change and need for cooperation on disaster response and recovery, as well as climate change mitigation. The ADMM-Plus was an important platform to discuss the growing security challenges in both the Indo-Pacific and globally, including human rights abuses in Myanmar, developments in the South China Sea, and conflict in the Middle East, and was timely following the recent deployment of Democratic People's Republic of Korea military personnel to Russia.



7 s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)  
[Redacted text block]

**Proactive release**

8 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**

Released by the Minister of Defence