

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

### **PROPOSED OVERSEAS TRAVEL: HON JUDITH COLLINS KC – FEBRUARY 2026**

March 2026

This publication provides documents on Cabinet's February 2026 decision and the Report on Overseas Travel regarding the Minister's Overseas Travel to Munich Germany.

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: [www.defence.govt.nz/publications](http://www.defence.govt.nz/publications).

The pack comprises the following documents:

- The redacted Cabinet minute of decision: *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – February 2026* [CAB-26-MIN-0013]
- The redacted Cabinet Minute of decision: *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – February 2026* [CAB-26-MIN-0072]

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 the basis of confidence by the Government of any other country [section 6(b)(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 - February 2026

Portfolio                      Defence

On 2 February 2026, Cabinet:

- 1        **authorised** the absence of Hon Judith Collins KC from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 11 to 16 February 2026, to travel to Munich, Germany to attend the Munich Security Conference;
- 2        **agreed** that she be accompanied by two members of staff, one of whose costs will be met from Vote Defence;
- 3        **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$52,185 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 travel costs will be met by their agencies;
- 5        **agreed** that in her absence:
  - 5.1      Hon Paul Goldsmith act as the Attorney-General, Minister Responsible for the GCSB and Minister Responsible for the NZSIS;
  - 5.2      Hon Chris Penk act as Minister of Defence and Minister for Space;
  - 5.3      Hon James Meager act as Minister for Digitising Government and Minister for the Public Service;
- 6        **noted** that leave from the House has been sought.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

### **Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – February 2026**

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Munich, Germany from 11-16 February 2026 to attend the Munich Security Conference in my capacity as Minister of Defence.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave has been sought.

#### **Purpose of Travel**

- 3 The Munich Security Conference is a premier global forum for debating international security issues and is well attended by heads of state, foreign ministers and defence ministers.
- 4 This engagement would provide a valuable opportunity to hear perspectives on topical security issues and engage with counterparts at a pivotal moment in international affairs. If my schedule allows, I intend to take part in a panel discussion at the Conference.
- 5 I attended the Conference in 2025, the first time a New Zealand Minister had attended, and my programme proved a valuable opportunity to emphasise our commitment to being a credible and engaged security partner. I met with a number of key partners, including Defence counterparts from the UK, Fiji, Canada, and Ukraine. As was the case last year, I believe it is of the utmost importance for New Zealand to continue showing up at the table.

#### **Ministerial Party**

- 6 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).
- 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: \$29,000.00

Accommodation: \$14,000.00

Meals	\$900.00
Surface travel	\$5,500.00
Gifts	\$300.00
Contingency (10%)	\$2,485.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$52,185.00</b>

### Acting Ministers

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

- 9.1.1 Attorney-General: Hon Paul Goldsmith
- 9.1.2 Defence: Hon Chris Penk
- 9.1.3 Digitising Government: Hon James Meager
- 9.1.4 GCSB: Hon Paul Goldsmith
- 9.1.5 NZSIS: Hon Paul Goldsmith
- 9.1.6 Public Service: Hon James Meager
- 9.1.7 Space: Hon Chris Penk

### 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

I recommend that Cabinet:

- 1 **authorise** my absence from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from approximately 11-16 February, to travel to Munich, Germany for the Munich Security Conference;
- 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 \$52,185.00 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 James Meager
  - 6.4 GCSB: Hon Paul Goldsmith
  - 6.5 NZSIS: Hon Paul Goldsmith
  - 6.6 Public Service: Hon James Meager
  - 6.7 Space: 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**

Release by the Minister of Defence



# 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.*

---

### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – February 2026

**Portfolio**                      **Defence**

On 16 March 2026, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Judith Collins KC under CAB-26-SUB-0072 on her travel, from 11 to 16 February 2026, to Munich, Germany to attend the Munich Security Conference.

Diana Hawker  
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Release 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 11-16 February 2026 to Munich, Germany in my capacity as Minister of Defence.

#### Report

- 1 The 62<sup>nd</sup> Munich Security Conference (MSC) took place from 12-14 February 2026, convening over 40 Heads of State/Government and more than 120 Foreign and Defence Ministers to address the most pressing international security challenges.
- 2 This was only the second time a New Zealand Minister had attended an MSC, and my programme once again proved a very valuable opportunity to emphasise New Zealand's commitment to being a credible and engaged security partner. My presence also ensured I could demonstrate the connection between Indo-Pacific and Atlantic security issues.
- 3 Germany's Federal Chancellor Friedrich Merz opened the Conference, with further key note addresses from French President Emmanuel Macron, Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.
- 4 I was featured as a keynote speaker on a Main Stage panel event alongside US Under-Secretary for War Elbridge Colby, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, and Dutch Foreign Minister David van Weel. This event focused on the interconnectedness of the European and Indo-Pacific security spheres, s6(b)(i). Some of the main themes I highlighted were as follows:
  - i. New Zealand's growing defence cooperation across the Indo-Pacific to strengthen security and build interoperability with key partners;
  - ii. s6(a)
  - iii. The Ukraine conflict has exposed global security interconnections and has a significant impact on security in the Indo-Pacific.
- 5 The Conference also provided excellent opportunities to engage with the following key counterparts:

- i. Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles
- ii. Canadian Minister of National Defence David McGuinty
- iii. Finnish Minister of Defence Antti Häkkinen
- iv. German Minister of Defence Boris Pistorius
- v. Japanese Minister of Defence Shinjiro Koizumi
- vi. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte
- vii. NATO Chair of the Military Committee Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone
- viii. Netherlands Minister of Defence Ruben Brekelmans
- ix. Singaporean Minister of Defence Chan Chung Sing
- x. Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Oleg Shymanskyi
- xi. UK State Secretary for Defence John Healey

6 I also met with a group of Ukrainian war veterans who had recently returned from the frontline. This engagement provided the opportunity to hear about the significant personal challenges, and courage, of Ukrainians engaged in the conflict, and to better understand the extraordinary technological developments that the Ukrainian Armed Forces are making, particularly in drone technology and use.

#### **Proactive release**

7 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**

Release by the Minister of Defence