

HON Judith Collins KC, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC - February 2025

May 2025

This publication provides the Cabinet Minute of Decision and submission on Hon. Judith Collins KC's travel over the period 12 to 18 February to Munich, Germany to attend the Munich Security Conference.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the February 2025 Cabinet paper and associated Minute of Decision *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – February 2025* [CAB-25-MIN-0019 and CAB-25-SUB-0019].
- the March 2025 Cabinet paper and associated Minute of Decision *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – February 2025* [CAB-25-MIN-0056 and CAB-25-SUB-0056]

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



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 2025

Portfolio **Defence**

On 3 February 2025, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Judith Collins KC from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 13 to 18 February 2025, to travel to Munich, Germany to attend the Munich Security Conference;
- 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 \$59,732.40 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;
 - 5.3 Hon Andrew Bayly act as Minister for Digitising Government and Minister for the Public Service;
 - 5.4 Hon Simon Watts act as Minister for Space;
- 6 **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought.

Diana Hawker
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – February 2025

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Munich, Germany from 13-18 February 2025 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 will provide the opportunity to engage with some of my counterparts early in 2025. I intend to take part in a panel discussion at the Conference on 'Connected Theatres: European and Asian Security Spheres'.
- 5 While in Munich, I will also attend the official Reagan Thatcher Dinner on February 14. This dinner will bring together leaders from NATO countries and the Pacific to discuss how we can better respond to growing threats.
- 6 I will also seek engagements in Munich in my Digitising Government portfolio, subject to the availability of key interlocutors.
- 7 During my travels to the region in 2024, partners expressed their gratitude towards New Zealand for making the effort to travel across the world for these important engagements. With the current deteriorating strategic environment, I believe it is of the utmost importance for New Zealand to continue showing up at the table.

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:	\$38,688.00
Accommodation:	\$11,700.00
Meals	\$900.00
Surface travel	\$5,500.00
Gifts	\$100.00
Contingency (10%)	\$2,844.40
Total:	\$59,732.40

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 Public Service: Hon Andrew Bayly
- 11.1.7 Space: Hon Simon Watts

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 13-18 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 \$59,732.40 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 Public Service: Hon Andrew Bayly
 - 6.7 Space: Hon Simon Watts
- 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

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 2025

Portfolio

Defence

On 10 March 2025, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Judith Collins KC under CAB-25-SUB-0056 on her travel, from 13 to 18 February 2025, to Munich, Germany to attend the 61st Munich Security Conference.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – February 2025

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel from 13-18 February 2025 to Germany under my Defence portfolio.

Report

- 1 The 61st Munich Security Conference (MSC) took place from 14-16 February 2025, convening over 50 Heads of State/Government and 150 Foreign and Defence Ministers to address the most pressing international security challenges.
- 2 This was the first time a New Zealand Minister had attended an MSC, and my programme proved a very valuable opportunity to emphasise New Zealand's commitment to being a credible and engaged security partner.
- 3 Federal President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier opened the Conference, followed by speeches from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and US Vice President JD Vance.
- 4 I was featured as a keynote speaker on a Main Stage panel event alongside Japanese Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi, ROK Foreign Minister Cho Tae-Yul and Deputy Secretary General of NATO Radmila Šekerinska. This event focused on the interconnectedness of the European and Indo-Pacific security spheres and how the Indo-Pacific 4 countries can navigate the developing dynamics within NATO. Some of the main themes I highlighted were as follows:
 - i. New Zealand's increasing concern with geostrategic competition in the Pacific, particularly as it relates to the wealth of resources in the ocean and on the seabed;
 - ii. The potential for conflict in the Pacific as China asserts itself more aggressively;
 - iii. The relevance of the US, Canada and Russia as Pacific-facing nations themselves, further cementing the interconnectedness of security spheres; and
 - iv. That New Zealand has stepped up from day one in supporting Ukraine and acknowledgement of the need for defence spending to increase.
- 5 The Conference also provided excellent opportunities to engage with the following key counterparts:

- i. Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov
- ii. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte
- iii. UK State Secretary for Defence John Healey
- iv. Canadian Defence Minister Bill Blair
- v. Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka
- vi. Deputy Chairman/Defence and Foreign Policy Spokesperson for the German CDU Johann Wadephul and MP Jürgen Haddt

6 While in Munich, I also visited the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Dürnbach, where 70 New Zealander soldiers are buried. This was a very real reminder of the devastating impact this conflict had on New Zealand, despite the physical distance we have from Europe.

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