

Politics

Johnston delivers classified final report on foreign interference, officially steps down

Johnston announced he would be stepping down earlier this month

Darren Major · CBC News · Posted: Jun 26, 2023 6:21 PM EDT | Last Updated: June 26, 2023



David Johnston's final report on foreign interference will not be released to the public. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

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Former governor general David Johnston has delivered his final report to the federal government and has officially left the role of special rapporteur on foreign interference.

Johnston said he would be stepping down earlier this month because his role had become too muddled in political controversy for him to continue.

In a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday, Johnston said he had submitted his final report to the Privy Council Office. That report will not be released to the public.

Johnston asked that copies be sent to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA).

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"This completes my work as Independent Special Rapporteur and my resignation is therefore effective as of today," Johnston said in his letter to the prime minister.

Johnston was been accused of being unfit for the job because of his personal connections to Trudeau.

The leaders of the Conservative and Bloc Québécois parties both said Trudeau and Johnston are self-declared friends and their longstanding ties are too close to allow Johnston to judge the prime minister's actions.

Johnston has said that while he was friends with Pierre Trudeau and skied with the Trudeau family back when Justin Trudeau and his brothers were children, he hasn't had any meetings, dinners or personal contacts with Trudeau in the past 40 years.

That didn't stop opposition parties from questioning Johnston's investigation of foreign interference. Even the NDP — which currently has a supply-and-confidence deal with the governing Liberals — put forward a motion in the House calling on Johnston to step aside because of an "appearance of bias." The motion passed with Conservative and Bloc support.

- **EXCLUSIVE** [The source behind foreign interference leaks 'will be found' and punished, PM's security adviser says](#)
- [Government hints news about a possible public inquiry into foreign interference coming soon](#)

Following Johnston's decision to step down, Trudeau tasked Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc with leading discussions with the opposition parties on how to move forward on the foreign interference file.

The opposition had been demanding the government call a public inquiry before the end of the spring session.

All parties in the House of Commons agreed to rise for the summer last week, despite there being no formal announcement of an inquiry.

But Government House Leader Mark Holland said Wednesday the talks were still moving forward.

With files from The Canadian Press

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