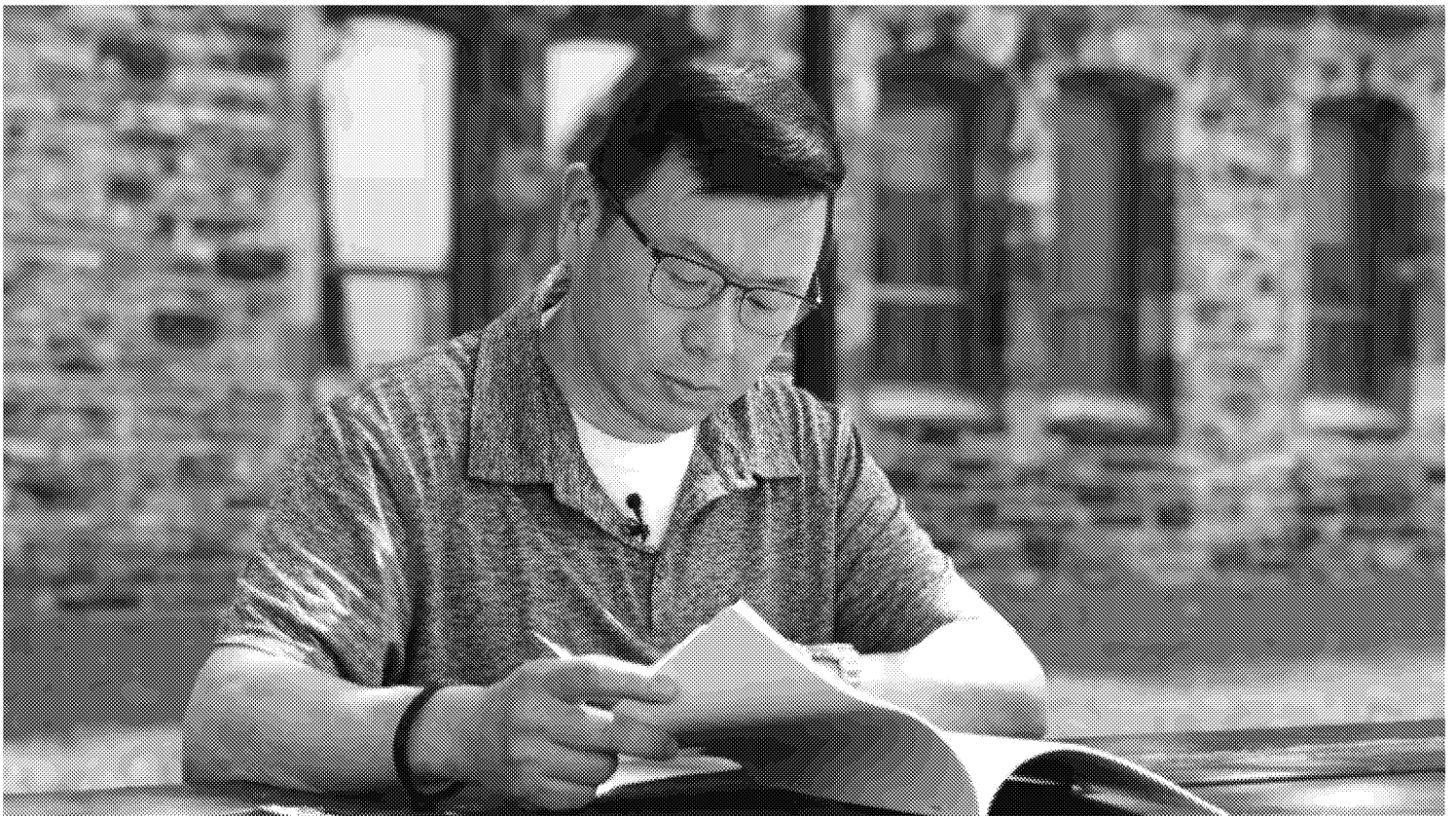


Politics

Politicians allegedly targeted by foreign interference 'disappointed' in Johnston's report

Former MP Kenny Chiu says Johnston did not contact him for an interview

Darren Major · CBC News · Posted: May 23, 2023 6:30 PM EDT | Last Updated: May 23, 2023



Former Conservative MP Kenny Chiu reads through former governor general David Johnston's first report on election interference. Chiu said he is "disappointed" Johnston didn't recommend a public inquiry. (Ashley Burke/CBC)

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Politicians who allegedly have been the targets of foreign interference say they're "disappointed" that former governor general David Johnston recommended against calling a public inquiry into the matter.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appointed Johnston as a special rapporteur on foreign interference in March in response to the furor over Chinese government interference.

Trudeau said he would call a public inquiry if Johnston recommended one. But in his report released Tuesday, Johnston said he doesn't think an inquiry would be able to address foreign interference and problems with intelligence.

- [Johnston says no to public inquiry on foreign interference](#)
- [5 things we learned from David Johnston's first report on foreign interference](#)

"A person leading a Public Inquiry would be unlikely to learn more about who knew what, when, and what was done with [intelligence] than has been made available to me," Johnston wrote.

"Duplicating this effort would not be productive and would lead to delay in addressing the issues."

Former Conservative MP Kenny Chiu said he was "disappointed" in Johnston's decision not to call for an inquiry.

"Nothing short of [a public inquiry] is good enough to get to the bottom [of this]," he told CBC.

Chiu says he wasn't offered meeting with Johnston

The former MP has blamed Beijing's alleged election meddling [for losing his seat in the 2021 election](#). He claims he was the target of propaganda and disinformation on

WeChat — a Chinese-owned messaging app — that falsely claimed his private members' bill would unfairly target the Chinese community.

Chiu's bill actually proposed to establish a foreign agent registry that would require non-elected individuals to declare when they receive money from foreign governments.

Johnston's report does acknowledge the online misinformation about Chiu but says it "could not be traced to a state-sponsored source."

- [CSIS has begun offering other MPs briefings on foreign interference](#)
- [Poilievre declined meeting with Johnston on foreign interference](#)

"It is clear that [Beijing] diplomats did not like Mr. Chiu," the report reads. "It is much less clear that they did anything in particular about it."

But Chiu — who said he was not offered a meeting with Johnston — said he doesn't think that section of the report is a fair representation of what happened in 2021.

"For [Johnston] to conclude that, I think to me, is a bit premature," he said.

Chiu said that even though Johnston may have access to top secret information, he may not understand how election interference plays out "on the ground."



NDP MP Jenny Kwan speaks during question period in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Thursday, May 5, 2022. (Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press)

NDP MP Jenny Kwan also expressed disappointment in Johnston's decision not to recommend a public inquiry.

"I think there are a lot of unanswered questions that we're still waiting for," Kwan said.

Unlike Chiu, Kwan said she was able to meet with Johnston, but only because NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh invited her to join him in his meeting with the special rapporteur.

Kwan said she was also contacted by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) after the federal government expelled a Chinese diplomat for allegedly targeting the family of Conservative MP Michael Chong.

- **PM briefed at least 6 times on foreign election interference since 2018, says PCO document**
- **A foreign agents registry bill will be tabled later this year: source**

The Globe and Mail, citing a top-secret document from 2021, reported earlier this month that the Chinese government was targeting a Canadian MP. An unnamed security source reportedly told The Globe that Beijing was allegedly working to collect information on Chong's family in China.

Johnston's report touched on Chong's case but also indicated that Beijing intended to target another unnamed MP and their family in China.

Kwan said she doesn't know if Johnston's report is referring to her, though she added that she doesn't have family in China. She said she has yet to meet with CSIS due to scheduling issues.

"I have a lot of questions for CSIS," she said. "I'm anxious to meet with them to see what they have to say and see what I can learn."

Chiu told CBC that CSIS hasn't contacted him since he left office.

Han Dong says he's 'vindicated' by Johnston's report

Independent MP Han Dong — who has been the centre of one media report on election interference and stepped away from the Liberal caucus as a result — welcomed Johnston's report.

A story by Global News, citing an unnamed national security source, said Dong advised an official at the Chinese consulate in Toronto to lengthen the detentions of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, two Canadians the Chinese government was holding at the time.

But Johnston's disputed Global's reporting.

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"The allegation is false. Mr. Dong discussed the 'two Michaels' with a PRC official but did not suggest to the official that the PRC extend their detention," Johnston said.



Liberal MP Han Dong speaks with reporters outside the House of Commons on March 21, 2023. (Chris Rands/CBC)

Dong, who is suing Global News, said he felt "vindicated" by Johnston's findings.

"It is even more clear that Global News and [its parent company] Corus Entertainment must fully apologize and retract their defamatory reporting about me," Dong said in a statement.

While he isn't recommending a public inquiry, Johnston said in his report he did find "serious shortcomings in the way intelligence is communicated and processed from security agencies through to government."

Johnston said he'll continue his work as special rapporteur through to October by holding hearings to find ways to fix those shortcomings. He said he will produce a second report later this year.

Corrections

- A previous version of this story said CSIS had never spoken to former MP Kenny Chiu about foreign interference. In fact, Chiu has spoken to CSIS about foreign interference issues, but not since he left office.
May 23, 2023 7:20 PM ET
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With files from Ashley Burke

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