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Calls emerge for arrest of 'rogue' Ottawa-area MPP

Independent MPP Randy Hillier greets anti-mandate protesters at the War Memorial in Ottawa on Feb. 13. Calls have emerged for Hillier's arrest after he urged protesters to disobey a request from Ottawa police that people not tie up their phone lines. (Frank Gunn/The Canadian Press)

While Dr. Alan Drummond was tending to patients in the emergency room of the Perth and Smiths District Hospital over the weekend, his MPP sent out a tweet encouraging protesters to flood Ottawa police phone lines.

"This is like a new level," said Drummond, who's had public social media disagreements with Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston MPP Randy Hillier since the COVID-19 pandemic started two years ago.

"Maybe this will be the beginning of the end of this, if they actually formally arrest him - as I think they should."

Hillier, who was expelled from the Progressive Conservative caucus prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and now sits as an independent, told CBC he'd spent much of the past three weeks protesting in downtown Ottawa, rallying against the "great crime" of not following the law.

On Friday, police began clearing those protesters out of the downtown. Ottawa police then tweeted a plea Saturday for people to "stop calling critical emergency and operational phone lines to express displeasure about the police action."

Hillier retweeted that request, affixing his own message: "Keep calling in a democracy expressing yourself is a fundamental freedom #FreedomConvoy2022."

The post was encouraging people to ring up the police force's "operational dispatch," said Hillier. His message was shared widely on Twitter, with many angry that Hillier would urge protesters to call emergency phone lines.

Soon, #ArrestRandyHillier started trending.

Ottawa lawyer James Bowie compared Hillier's involvement in the occupation with leaders like Tamara Lich, who was arrested and charged with counselling to commit mischief and remains in an Ottawa jail.

"I think Randy Hillier did almost exactly, precisely the same thing as Tamara Lich has done," said Bowie. "I see no juristic reason why she should be prosecuted and he should not be."

But Hillier said he's not worried about "bots on Twitter" calling for his arrest.

"We should always be able and free to call our institutions and express either our acceptance or displeasure with their operations," he said.

Vocally opposed to COVID-19 mandates

Initially elected to the Ontario legislature in 2007, Hillier represents a largely rural riding south of Ottawa that includes the communities of Perth, Smiths Falls and Carleton Place and part of Kingston.

He was expelled from the Ontario PC Party caucus in 2019 after making "disrespectful" comments to parents of children living with autism.

But Hillier's vocal opposition to government mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic has led to even more controversy.

Last November, Hillier apologized

The blaring horns and snarled streets of the so-called "Freedom Convoy" blockade in Ottawa are no more, but on Monday Prime Minister Justin Trudeau suggested the work to heal the pandemic divisions in the country that the convoy exposed must now begin.

However, he did not answer clearly about whether a Monday night vote on the unprecedented invocation of the Emergencies Act will be a confidence vote.

"There's no doubt that the last weeks have been difficult, that the last years have been painful, and that there are still challenges ahead of us. But we can't let anger divide us," said Trudeau in a press conference.

"More than ever, now is the time to work together. It's also the time to reflect on the kind of future we want for our country. There's a lesson for all of us in what happened this month. We don't know when this pandemic is going to end, but that doesn't mean we cannot start healing as a nation."

The convoy blockade encamped in Ottawa on Jan. 28. While numbers fluctuated over the next three weeks, many protesters refused to move until a large-scale police operation began on Feb. 18.

Comprised of tactical teams from multiple jurisdictions, the operation involved police moving progressively and methodically in gaining back control of the nation's capital, street by street, arresting nearly 200 convoy participants in the process. Nearly 400 charges have now been laid.

For weeks though, police as well as local and provincial leaders faced heated criticism for a lack of action in

Canada must work on 'healing' from pandemic, convoy unrest, says Trudeau

preventing the convoy from encamping, as well as the subsequent lack of enforcement amid what has widely been described as the "lawless" conduct of the convoy.

Police received hundreds of complaints alleging hate-related incidents. They opened more than 100 criminal investigations into alleged harassment, intimidation and assaults on Ottawa residents by the convoy.

On Feb. 14, amid continued lack of action from municipal and provincial authorities, Trudeau announced he was invoking the Emergencies Act - a never-before-used piece of legislation.

Trucker protests: Police retake control of Parliament Hill

Under the law, the government had to introduce a motion in both the House of Commons and another one in the Senate stating its reasons for doing so. And if that vote - set for Monday night - fails, then the state of emergency in effect under the Act is immediately revoked.

Trudeau was asked twice whether he would declare the vote a matter of confidence, which would put the stakes for the government by putting their authority to govern on the line.

"I have total confidence that the majority of parliamentarians this evening will vote to protect the rule of law," Trudeau said.

"I can't imagine that anyone who



will respond to the clearing of the downtown core, citing individuals still in the area who are supporting the effort and "pre-positioning."

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland also addressed questions over the financial sanctions for supporters of the convoy, and in particular a handful of posts on social media suggesting that people who donated small amounts to the convoy have had their bank accounts frozen.

"It's important for all of us to be very, very careful to get our facts exactly right in each circumstance," Freeland said when asked about the reports, some of which have been shared by Conservatives.

"The RCMP has given to the financial institutions names of leaders and organizers of the protest, and of

people whose trucks were part of occupations and blockades. That is the only information, according to the RCMP that the RCMP has given to financial institutions."

Freeland said the power for banks to freeze those accounts only applied as of Feb. 15.

"For anyone who is concerned that their accounts may have been frozen because of their participation in these illegal blockades, the way to get your account unfrozen is to stop being part," Freeland said.

"These measures were put in place to disrupt illegal blockades."

Trucker protests: Freeland says need to be 'very careful' on facts over financial measures

The RCMP also issued a statement on Monday saying that they have not shared any information of donors with financial institutions.

"Under the Emergency Economic Measures Order (Emergencies Act), the list that was provided to Financial Institutions included identities of individuals who were influencers in the illegal protest in Ottawa, and owners and/or drivers of vehicles who did not want to leave the area impacted by the protest," the national policing force said.

"At no time, did we provide a list of donors to Financial Institutions. We are now working with the banks to build a process to address the accounts that were frozen."

Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino said on the weekend that roughly 76 accounts worth a total of \$3.2 million have been frozen for supporting the convoy under the new emergency powers.

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Threats to press during convoy protests a wake-up call, experts say

In a video from Ottawa, a broadcaster states that the camera in silence as protesters surround him and scream expletives, calling him a liar and belittling "freedom."

Near the U.S. border in Surrey, B.C., a cameraman's equipment is shoved off his shoulder and two men spit on him. A demonstrator follows another journalist closely, yelling that he is a "disgusting, filthy human being," while police escort the reporter through a jeering crowd.

Experts and advocates say the treatment of journalists, captured in many cases on video, during recent protests against public health measures should be a wake-up call.

"What I've seen over the last two weeks has been absolutely sickening," Brent Jolly, president of the Canadian Association of Journalists, said in an interview Sunday.

"This is what happens when you have brains scrambled by misinformation,"

Journalists are working in an unprecedented difficult situation in Canada right now, he said, with threats being hurled at the press both



online and in person.

The degree of hostility and the threats put on journalists' backs are especially concerning, and the psychological consequences can be significant, he said.

Fixing the problem will require a long-term solution that involves a multipronged approach. Newsroom organizations need to beef up security, digital training and protections.

Social media companies should be reviewing the role they play in facilitating a "toxic sludge of discourse," he said, while police consider whether their plans and

enforcement are appropriate for a digital world.

Government also has a role to play and Jolly urged Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez to take seriously the responsibility outlined in his mandate letter to combat serious forms of harmful online content.

While footage of the attacks is important to document what happened, there's also a danger it will galvanize further abuse among those who believe they will face impunity, he warned.

"We need to take this as a lesson," Jolly said. "I think we got lucky that

nothing worse happened."

Jolly is not alone in raising alarm over attacks on press freedom.

Joah Greenberg, director of Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communications, said the tone and nature of the protests resemble those in the United States and some European countries in recent years.

Most reporters will say they have been on the receiving end of accusations and hate, but Greenberg said something has changed.

"The level of vitriol directed at the media in particular, which has been at a slow boil under the surface and invisible, has certainly surfaced and become highly visible," he said.

Interactions posted online tend to involve white male reporters and Greenberg questioned what the consequences might be for young, female reporters who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour.

"Younger BIPOC female reporters experience significantly more vitriol than their white male journalistic counterparts," he said.

Greenberg called for a pause to consider the risks to Canada's democracy when threats are directed at those whose job it is to report on its institutions and events.

Paul Knox, a retired journalism professor at Ryerson University, echoed his concern for non-white, non-male journalists.

Canada had nearly 900,000 job openings in the past November, according to the latest job vacancies report. Immigration has long been touted as a strategy to support labour market growth in Canada.

Since employers in certain industries have long demonstrated that there is consistent need for foreign talent, there are some work permits that have expedited processes for workers in certain sectors. The Global Talent Stream, for example, has a processing standard of 10 business days. It is meant for employers in the tech sector to onboard foreign talent.

The province of Quebec offers a list of occupations that exempt the employer from the advertising requirement of the Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) process. Although they still need an LMIA for these positions, they can get one much faster without having to advertise a job opening.

The LMIA is required for hiring of some foreign nationals. It is a market test that the Canadian government may require to demonstrate a worker in Canada is unavailable to do the job. Canada offers fast-tracked LMIA processing for the GTIS and Quebec facilitated occupations list.

The importance of fast work permit processing

Everything inflation: It's not just gas and food anymore - and wages aren't keeping up

Everything seems to be getting more expensive. Food, gas and housing prices are on the rise while psychologists are slow to keep pace. The CBC News series Priced Out explains why you're paying more at the register and how Canadians are coping with the high cost of everything.

Canadians familiar with the way rising prices have been taking a chomp out of their spending power are now facing something worse than what they've encountered before.

Rising pump prices are now grimly routine. We've grown to expect the effect of shipping delays on food and things with imported components. High housing costs are now just an appalling Canadian fact of life.

But toward the end of 2021, that recognizable pattern of rising prices began to change. Until about three months ago, Canadians apportioning their weekly budgets would have noticed most price increases occurring in a few very distinct, relatively volatile, categories, such as food, fuel and accommodation. Not anymore.

Inflation has become general. While economists differ on why it is happening and exactly how the change will affect Canadians, all I spoke to agreed on one thing.

"The story is no longer about energy, about food, about housing," said Tu Nguyen, a Toronto-based economist with the consultancy RSM Canada. "It's about pretty much everything in the economy."

It used to be that Canadians trying to keep within a budget could seek out cheaper goods. They could avoid driving when gas was expensive, for example, or alter their diets to cut back on imported food. But when inflation is general, that becomes harder.

According to some economists, it is a sign that inflation may have set in for the longer term and that it will begin to erode purchasing power. Those at the low end of the wage scale - including women, recent immigrants and those in precarious work - are more deeply affected by generalized inflation. People with stagnant incomes and weak bargaining power end up paying higher prices, even for the less expensive goods and services they depend on.

New evidence that "everything



inflation" has surged arrived in the same Statistics Canada report that showed prices overall were climbing at 5.1 per cent a year, the highest rate since 1991.

Getting to the core of the matter

But behind that headline number, people like Stephen Tapp, chief economist at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, drew attention to the three ways that Statistics Canada measures something called "core" inflation: an attempt by statisticians to measure underlying movement in prices by chopping out volatile goods.

The strategy, Tapp said, is to exclude prices that tend to rise temporarily, price hikes "that might just unwind and go away" without becoming part of long-term inflation.

What's remarkable about the graph Tapp posted, which is shown below, is that until November, core inflation has been dead on target for years, hovering at about two per cent, while headline inflation - a number with all of the volatile goods still included - has zipped up and down. But suddenly all three core measures have begun to climb, one of them by as much as four per cent, showing that the price of everything is on a rising path.

Those [core] measures are going to give the Bank of Canada more cause for concern because what they are trying to target is inflation expectations, and expectations have been rising," Tapp said. He's worried there are signs that core is trending even higher.

Both Tapp and Nguyen explained that the rise in underlying inflation,

are rising. The problem is that over the past year as inflation surged above five per cent, incomes have failed to keep pace.

"And it means workers are losing purchasing power," Tiesen said in a phone conversation last week.

Of course, not all employees are losing. Sobeys' warehouse workers recently negotiated a four-year deal that included a wage increase of 20 per cent over the life of the contract. People who have studied the economics of rising wages and prices in the past say that one of the advantages of inflation is that it acts as an economic lubricant for wage and price adjustment, allowing everyone to get an increase - even though some workers and sellers get more and some less according to demand in that sector.

Recently, the governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey - who critics noted earned hundreds of thousands of pounds a year - faced a backlash when he warned British workers not to demand higher wages as inflation rose for fear of making inflation worse. Tiesen hears something similar when Canadian and U.S. authorities warn of a wage-price spiral.

In fact, she said that despite rising core inflation, there may be a danger in raising interest rates before workers have caught up.

"We definitely cannot put ourselves in a position where workers are always losing out," she said. "We should not put ourselves in that position, as an economy, at all."

Tiesen said a growing gap between the price of necessities and the ability of Canadians to buy them is not just bad for workers and their families. She said it hurts the entire economy when total spending power shrinks. She worries that in the worthy effort to save the economy from the effects of the pandemic, the concept of inclusive economic growth, an area where Unifor has been a strong advocate, has been forgotten.

A few months ago, when core inflation seemed safely stuck at two per cent, it may have been reasonable for central bankers here and in the United States to be patient and let the economy take its course. But now that the once-stable measure of generalized inflation has begun to shift sharply higher, it seems almost certain that the banks will try to rein it in with higher interest rates.

But if the Bank of Canada and the U.S. Federal Reserve begin to crack down on "everything inflation" with higher interest rates while wages continue to fall behind, it will be up to elected officials to make sure that the ordinary people who vote them into office are not the ultimate losers.

Immigration minister commits to speeding up work permit processing

Canada's immigration minister restated his promise to improve processing times for work permits during meetings with the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

Last week, Immigration Minister Sean Fraser told the committee that Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will use its \$85 million budget to reduce processing times that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The minister had previously announced that service standards for work permits, study permits, proof of citizenship, and permanent residence card renewals would return to normal by the end of 2022.

The IRCC website estimates processing times for work permits submitted from most countries are currently not meeting the processing standard. Nonetheless, IRCC is processing a higher level of work permits. In 2021, Canada issued

some 420,000 under the International Mobility Program (IMP) and Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). In 2019, the total was about 405,000.

The TFWP allows Canadian employers to hire foreign nationals to fill labour shortages in Canada. The IMP promotes Canada's broad economic, social, and cultural interests.

The processing standard for work permits submitted outside of Canada is 60 days, except for International Experience Canada (IEC) work permits, which are supposed to be processed in 56 days. Work permit extensions submitted in Canada have a processing standard of 120 days.

Before the pandemic, IRCC met these standards more than 87 per cent of the time. Official data on how often IRCC met its service standards in 2020-2021 haven't yet been released. When the pandemic hit in 2020, IRCC operations around the world

halted operations. The result eventually led to a backlog in applications. As of February 1, IRCC has more than 85,000 work permit applications in its inventory.

IRCC Assistant Deputy Minister Daniel Mills was also at the committee meeting. Mills said in French that the \$85 million budget will not improve processing times for permanent residents, but it will allow IRCC to develop tools such as electronic application systems and online application trackers. Minister Fraser had previously noted that processing for new spousal sponsorship applications have returned to the one-year standard.

The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration is a group of Canadian politicians from major political parties that conduct studies and offer policy recommendations on how to improve the immigration system.

The importance of fast work permit processing



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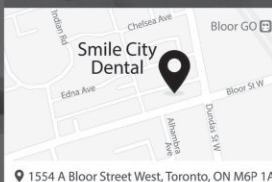
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Page-3

Canada protests: Police arrest leaders of trucker convoy

The protests in Ottawa have been continuing for three weeks. Police in Ottawa have detained two leaders of the trucker convoy in the Canadian capital as they move to break up the last stronghold of the protests against the nation's Covid rules.

Tamara Lich was arrested on Thursday evening after Chris Barber was held, with both expected to be charged criminally, according to CBC News.

Authorities have already cleared other protests located at border crossings.

It comes days after Canada invoked an emergency law for the first time.

However, officers were not yet moving in force on the remaining demonstrators on Thursday night - although interim Ottawa Police Chief Steve Bell warned earlier that if they do not peacefully leave, we have plans.

The Emergencies Act invoked by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday imposes bans on public assembly in some areas, among other measures.



The Ottawa demonstrators - many parked in some 400 heavy trucks and other vehicles on city streets around Parliament - have been warned they face arrest as well as having their trucks seized, their insurance suspended and bank accounts frozen.

Police say they are also working with child-welfare agencies to arrange how to remove the protesters' children from the site before authorities move in.

Ms Lich told the Canadian Press earlier that her personal bank account had already been frozen and she was resigned to going to jail. Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland confirmed the government

truck? The move comes ahead of the weekend, when a core group of protesters who remain during the week are typically joined by thousands of other demonstrators on the streets of the capital.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Trudeau defended his government's use of the Emergencies Act in the House of Commons, saying the protests threaten the national economy, public safety and US relations.

Opposition politicians accused Mr Trudeau of inflaming an already tense situation.

The use of the law is an "unprecedented sledgehammer", said Conservative leader Candice Bergen.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association said on Thursday it would take the government to court over its "extreme measure".

The protests began with a truck convoy heading to Ottawa to oppose a vaccine mandate for truckers crossing the US-Canada border, but eventually became about a broader opposition to pandemic restrictions and Mr Trudeau's government.

Defenders of the "Freedom Convoy" are accusing Mr Trudeau of snatching their peaceful demonstration, while ignoring a violent attack by environmental activists elsewhere in the country on Thursday.

No bail decision yet for Tamara Lich, convoy protest organizer

A second major organizer of the so-called Freedom Convoy will have to wait a few more days before an Ontario Court of Justice judge decides whether to grant her bail.

Tamara Lich, the Alberta woman behind a now-halted GoFundMe campaign that raised over \$10 million to support the protest in Ottawa, was arrested and charged Thursday with counselling to commit mischief.

Police arrested another key leader, Chris Barber, on the same day. He was released on bail Friday.

Before her arrest, Lich told journalists she wasn't concerned about being arrested, didn't think the protest was illegal and also said her bank account was frozen.

At her bail hearing Saturday, Lich wore a black hoodie with white text that combined a heart and maple leaf to read "Love Canadian oil and gas."

She was also required to wear a medical mask, one of the mandates the convoy has been fighting against, along with requiring COVID-19 vaccines to participate in certain activities like cross-border trucking.



Crown attorney Moiz Karimjee focused on both Lich and her husband Dwayne's ability to pay a proposed \$5,000 bond if Lich breached any conditions the judge may impose.

Lich, who lives in Medicine Hat, Alta., and her husband both work in the oil and gas sector. Lich told the court she has no savings and few assets, including a 2017 Jeep and 2018 Ford F-150 that they're continuing to make payments on.

She also offered no suggestions how she would be able to make her way back to Alberta if ordered to, since she travelled to Ottawa with Barber, whose bail conditions include that he not communicate with her.

Her lawyer, Dano Magas, later told court that one of the lawyers representing Lich in a proposed \$10-million class-action lawsuit against protesters would be able to drive the couple back to Alberta, allowing her to leave within the next week.

While he said he didn't believe in the blockades or holding the line, Dwayne Lich also said he didn't see anything wrong, equating the blockades to a large traffic jam or parked cars in a snow storm.

"I don't see no guns. I don't see anything criminal as far as I can see. I just see trucks parked," he said.

Dwayne Lich questioned the legality of Emergencies Act.

demonstrations in Canada's capital, which have lasted for more than three weeks and have attracted international attention.

Ottawa police said Saturday they had made 170 arrests and towed 53 vehicles out of the occupation zone.

Dwayne Lich has been proposed to act as her surety, meaning he would have to report if she breached any bail conditions.

In his testimony, he said he flew to Ottawa on Feb. 2 on a private jet at a cost of \$5,000, paid for by a "nice gentleman" named Joseph that he'd only recently met.

"But he told me that my plane ride was taken care of, which was a miracle," he told the court.

The Crown questioned Dwayne Lich on his ability to serve as surety, given he'd been in Ottawa throughout much of the protests while his wife had been recording telling protesters to "hold the line at all costs."

While he said he didn't believe in the blockades or holding the line, Dwayne Lich also said he didn't see anything wrong, equating the blockades to a large traffic jam or parked cars in a snow storm.

"I don't see no guns. I don't see anything criminal as far as I can see. I just see trucks parked," he said.

Dwayne Lich questioned the legality of Emergencies Act.

Emergency situation 'not over' PM Trudeau says after police crackdown in the capital

Invoking the Emergencies Act has been necessary, but the situation that prompted it is "not something we ever want to see again," Mr Trudeau said, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday.

Asked whether the wide-ranging national emergency powers are still required, given the blockades at border crossings have been alleviated and downtown Ottawa is quiet and largely free from trucks or convoy protesters after a weekend of massive police operations, Trudeau said he doesn't want to keep the Act in effect "a single day longer" than it needs to be.

"This state of emergency is not over. There continues to be real concerns about the coming days. We will continue to evaluate every single day whether or not it is time," said the prime minister during a press conference on Monday.

He said that there are still people and trucks who are affiliated with anti-COVID-19 mandates and anti-government protests gathered in Amnoria and Enbrun, two towns on either side of Ottawa, that have indicated an interest in resuming blockades.

"This is not something that we want to imagine continuing indefinitely in Canada, we hope to only keep it in place for a number more days," said the prime minister.

As of Sunday, there have been 191 arrests of "Freedom Convoy" participants in Ottawa, and 79 vehicles have been towed. Nearly 400 charges have been laid so far, ranging from mischief and obstruction, to assaulting a police officer.

Checkpoints remain active around the downtown core, with only those who work or live in the area allowed to enter, and as crews continue to collect garbage and debris left in the streets.

Trudeau thanked the law enforcement agencies from across the country who joined the operations in Ottawa and noted that the last few weeks have been difficult, "disturbing," and stressful for many Canadians.

"This situation is not anything anyone wanted and, quite frankly, is not something we ever want to see again," Trudeau said. The powers are

set to remain in effect until mid-March unless they are rescinded earlier by the government or Parliament.

Echoing his comments when he first enacted the Emergencies Act on Feb. 14, Trudeau said that the situation required it and the powers have played a role in seeing public order increasingly restored.

"This situation is not anything anyone wanted and, quite frankly, is not something we ever want to see again," Trudeau said.

The prime minister said that the country now has a choice to make as a society: To choose to keep "reliving these scenes that tear at the values that bind us as Canadians," or "choose to remember who we are, and the best vision of what Canada can be."

He also said that he and his wife are prepared, and we've advised the prime minister, that we are prepared to pull our support and to trigger a vote on emergency measures, as soon as we believe it is no longer necessary.

During this weekend's special debate on the use of the Emergencies Act, Official Opposition MPs repeatedly spoke about how they feel the suite of federal powers from compelling toll truck drivers to move big rigs, to freezing bank accounts and other financial assets of those suspected of being complicit in supporting the convoy - is massive government overreach.

The rights and freedoms of Canadians must be defended at every turn. The Prime Minister with the help of the NDP are making a dangerous mistake by enacting the Emergencies Act," tweeted interim



Conservative Leader Candice Bergen on Sunday.

The Senate is also convening Monday to discuss the use of the act, seeing senators vote to confirm the powers.

Noting the Canadian Civil Liberties Association's decision to take the federal government to court over its historic use of the Act, and the other accountability mechanisms like the coming parliamentary review, Trudeau said there will be "checks and balances" to ensure the actions taken have been within the scope of what's been required.

He also suggested there will be future legislation stemming from realizing the systemic gaps in current law that the convoy and its efforts have exposed.

The prime minister said that the country now has a choice to make as a society: To choose to keep "reliving these scenes that tear at the values that bind us as Canadians," or "choose to remember who we are, and the best vision of what Canada can be."

He said his government will always defend the right to free expression and peaceful assembly, but said what's transpired in the last four weeks has not been that.

"In a democracy, you can protest, and you can share your opinion at the top of your lungs, you can disagree with elected officials, and you can certainly disagree with me," Trudeau said.

"But you can't harass your fellow Canadians who disagree with you. You can't hold a city hostage. You can't block a critical trade corridor and deprive people of their jobs. You can't attack journalists for reporting... What you can do is vote. What you can do is run for office. That's how change happens in a democracy."

He also made an appeal to Canadians to try to mend the rifts they may have within their own social circles over politics or vaccinations, and to expand their information sources, saying there's a lesson for all in what's transpired in relation to the trucker convoy protests.

"Look, in the heat of the moment, we can all get carried away trying to win an argument. But not every single conversation has to be about winning the argument. Sometimes, it's more important to just be there for one another. As a country, let's aim for more decency in our public discourse, not less," Trudeau said.






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