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Jagmeet Singh blasts Trudeau, Poilievre at B.C. convention

VICTORIA - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has lost touch with the struggles of Canadians, while Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre only pretends to care about regular people, federal New Democrat Leader Jagmeet Singh said Sunday.

Singh took political swings at his two leadership counterparts during a speech to more than 700 delegates attending the British Columbia NDP convention.

Poilievre's public concern about affordability issues is an "act," and Trudeau doesn't understand what Canadians are going through with high living costs, he said.

"I have seen Trudeau's government up close," said Singh, whose New Democrats are in a confidence and supply agreement with the Liberal minority government.

"It shouldn't be mean, but one of our MPs has described working with the Liberals like wrestling eels that are soaked in oil," he said.

The Liberals spend much of their time trying to get away from issues rather than meeting them head on, Singh said.

"Trudeau's out of touch Liberals, they delay and disappoint," he said. "The reason is Trudeau doesn't get what people are going through. He only acts when he is forced to, or when his political future is on the line."

Poilievre, meanwhile, says he wants to help ordinary Canadians facing affordability challenges, but Conservatives are known for imposing cuts on public services, Singh told the provincial delegates in Victoria.

"With Pierre Poilievre, it is all an act," he said. "He would make life so

much harder for people. He claims to care about working people, but you never see Pierre Poilievre taking on rich CEOs."

Singh said his New Democrats are pushing the Liberal government to bring in a dental care coverage program for all Canadians this year and will continue fighting for a universal Pharmacare program to cover prescription costs for everyone.

"I can promise you we will keep on fighting until the end to get the best results we can for people while we have this position of power in this minority government."

But it's not a "fun fight," Singh added.

"We've got a fight against establishment Liberals and corporate Conservatives everyday."

B.C. New Democrats were at the convention this weekend debating policy and naming strategy ahead of next year's provincial election.

Premier David Eby told delegates on Saturday that his NDP government will focus on building more affordable homes and fighting climate change.

The government's efforts to meet environmental goals will involve keeping a provincial carbon pricing program, Eby said, despite promises by the Opposition BC United to drop B.C.'s carbon tax if the federal Conservatives form government.

Later on Sunday, delegates overwhelmingly endorsed an emergency resolution titled "Saving Lives in Gaza and Israel," which says the B.C. NDP will call on the federal government to back an immediate ceasefire in the conflict gripping the Middle East.

It says the party also calls for the

immediate release of all hostages taken by Hamas militants on Oct. 7 during a series of attacks that killed an estimated 1,200 Israelis.

Israel immediately declared war on Hamas, began an airstrike campaign and cut off food, water and supplies to Gaza, which is home to 2.3 million Palestinians.

The territory's health officials have said more than 11,500 people have been killed so far, two-thirds of them women and children, and another 2,700 people are reported missing.

The B.C. NDP resolution calls on Ottawa to advocate for urgent access for humanitarian aid in Gaza, and on both the federal and provincial governments to welcome displaced refugees from the region.

The party will "stand in solidarity with all Israelis and Palestinians who want to live free of fear, oppression, and violence," the resolution says.

"I'm asking you... to reach out with love to transform our perspective not only in B.C., around Canada and around the world, to lead our cry on behalf of people against injustice," said Mable Elmore, the B.C. NDP's parliamentary secretary for anti-racism initiatives, who spoke in favour of the resolution.

New Westminster Coun. Jamie McEvoy, who also supported it, said people are being asked to take sides on the issue.

"We are on the humanitarian side," he said. "As social democrats we bring the hope."

Outside the convention hall, about 100 protesters were shouting "Free Palestine," with some lying silent on the ground covered in white sheets stained with blood.

Suspending criminal's deportation over improper pronouns was 'inappropriate' and 'unwarranted': ruling



OTTAWA - A Federal Court judge raised an "inappropriate," "unwarranted" and "unrelated" issue when he suspended a U.K. citizen's deportation over questions whether the use of gender-neutral pronouns in a single government document violated the man's Charter rights.

On Thursday, the Federal Court of Appeal issued the uncommonly critical ruling overturning an order last summer by now retired Federal Court judge Richard Bell that raised eyebrows in the legal community.

In their ruling, the appeal judges admitted the case in front of them was borne from a "rather unusual" question.

On June 6, the day before he was set to be deported from Canada, Colin James Ewen, who is male and uses he/him pronouns, was in front of Bell attempting a last-ditch effort to have his expulsion delayed due to a medical issue after years of costly and lengthy legal battles.

Ewen was first ordered expelled from Canada in 2019 over an assault conviction he received while still living in the U.K. that made him ineligible to stay in the country.

As Bell began the hearing, he warned Ewen and government lawyer Nathan Joyal that he wanted to raise a completely new issue of his own, without any prompting by either the government or Ewen, who was self-represented.

The judge told them he noticed that the government occasionally used gender-neutral pronouns "they/them" along with the male pronouns "he/him" pronouns in a document filed on a tight deadline the day before.

Speaking to Crown lawyer Joyal, Bell asked if this constituted a case of misgendering Ewen, which "some

social scientists say" is akin to committing violence against them, he said.

After exchanging with an evidently perplexed Joyal and Ewen, who was self-represented, Bell announced he was adjourning the hearing and suspending Ewen's deportation, ordering that both parties submit arguments on whether the use of gender-neutral pronouns had violated Ewen's Charter rights. The government appealed that order.

Writing on behalf of the panel of three judges, the appeals court Chief Justice Yves de Montigny said Bell took a "lawful" course of action and went far beyond his powers when raising the Charter question.

"It is obvious that (Bell) put an issue to the parties that was of particular interest to him, and that he knew such issue would come as a surprise to the parties," the ruling said.

Bell's decision to suspend Ewen's deportation to "inquire into whether the Government of Canada's use of gender-neutral pronouns in its submissions infringed (Ewen's) Charter rights has no basis" in immigration laws, reads the ruling.

By introducing it, the judge therefore "exceeded his jurisdiction and overstepped his role as an independent and impartial judicial decision-maker."

"He could be seen as going 'in search of a wrong to right,'" De Montigny wrote.

Ewen did not respond to a request for comment by deadline.

To that point, the appeals judges made sure to list every step in the process necessary to enforce a new future removal order against Ewen and the new possibilities available to him to postpone his deportation.

"If the (government) were to choose to take these steps, (Ewen) would have an opportunity to make a request for deferral of removal. He could apply for leave and for judicial review of a negative deferral decision and could once again seek an urgent stay of removal on the basis of a fresh evidentiary record and of an updated set of circumstances," De Montigny wrote.

In a news release issued Saturday, police said a suspect approached an individual on a sidewalk near Bathurst Street and Wellington Street West on Oct. 29 at 1 a.m.

Investigators said words were exchanged between the two individuals before the suspect lifted the victim off the sidewalk, stumbled, and both fell to the ground, police said.

The victim sustained serious injuries as a result of the altercation, according to police.

Images of the suspect were released by police on Saturday in an effort to identify him.

On Sunday, police announced that 26-year-old Roman Kuk had been arrested and charged with assault causing bodily harm.

He's scheduled to appear in a Toronto courtroom on Dec. 21.

Suspect charged in downtown Toronto assault that seriously injured one person

A 26-year-old man is facing charges following an assault in downtown Toronto last month that left one person seriously injured.

In a news release issued Saturday, police said a suspect approached an individual on a sidewalk near Bathurst Street and Wellington Street West on Oct. 29 at 1 a.m.

Investigators said words were exchanged between the two individuals before the suspect lifted the victim off the sidewalk, stumbled, and both fell to the ground, police said.

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Health care and Doug Ford dominate final Ontario Liberal leadership debate

Health care and strategies for taking down Premier Doug Ford in the next election dominated the final Ontario Liberal Party leadership debate held Sunday in Brampton, Ont.

The four candidates spent little time attacking each other and instead focused on issues that they've heard over the past few months as they travelled.

Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie, the perceived front-runner, said as premier she would focus on fixing health-care staffing shortages that have plagued the province for years by paying "our people properly."

She also said she would "turn back time on privatized health-care clinics," alluding to the Ford government's moves to close and hire operations in publicly paid private clinics.

Federal Liberal legislator Yasir Naqvi said health care was by far the most discussed issue he heard while

travelling the province during the leadership contest.

"People are hurting because they do not have access to good health care," he said, adding he would look at getting internationally trained doctors and nurses licensed and practicing in the province sooner if elected.

He also said he would create a new system for mental health care.

"We need an OHP-like system that will cover access to mental health and addiction services so that you can get care right away," he said, referring to the province's health insurance program.

Health care took centre stage at debate.

Fellow Federal Liberal MP Nate Erskine-Smith said he'd focus on health care and housing should he become premier.

"These challenges are going to take a very long time to solve and when you look at the housing crisis, you have a situation right now where

young people are leaving our province in droves," Erskine-Smith said.

Ted Ho, a former federal legislator and current provincial Liberal representative, said he would look at the results of several current health-care pilot programs as he rebuilds the system. He said programs like team-based health care and "geographic health homes" may be able to alleviate strain on a system that has failed many across the province.

Recent research has shown that 2.3 million Ontarians do not have a family doctor, a number that has ballooned in recent years.

The Liberals also focused their attention on Ford, the embattled leader of the rival Progressive Conservatives, who has struggled in recent months in the wake of a Greenbelt land swap that has left his government under a criminal investigation by the RCMP.

Can't only be the 'not Doug Ford party,' says Erskine-Smith

"We need every Liberal working together in order to take down Doug Ford," Crombie said.

"And make no mistake, we are going to take down Doug Ford, not in 2034, and not in 2030, but in 2026 — you can count on it."

Erskine-Smith said the fight against Ford will be as much about values as it is about policies.

"If people are going to trust in our party again — and in some parts of this province, they do not trust in our party yet — we need to deliver integrity," he said.

"Integrity is Doug Ford's greatest weakness, and it can, it should be, it will be, our greatest strength."

Naqvi said the next election will come down to trust.

"Another big failure of Doug Ford, and I know there's been so many it's hard to keep a count, is that he's really broken the trust of Ontarians," he said.

"He's lied to Ontarians again and again, and he thinks by apologizing to Ontarians somehow he will be forgiven."

Erskine-Smith cautioned that the next leader must not focus too much on Ford.

"We can't just be the not Doug Ford party," he said. "We have to give people a positive reason to vote for us. Now, I bring experience to this race without no baggage."

assault with a weapon, two counts of assault and two counts carrying a concealed weapon. The man is scheduled to appear in court on Monday.

"Enough is enough," says national Muslim organization

In a statement released Saturday, the Toronto Islamic Centre called for an end to intimidation and harassment.

"While our first priority is to ensure the ongoing safety of worshippers, we need to see long-term change to fight all forms of hate, including Islamophobia," the statement read.

Those who were at the mosque at the time of the attack are shaken up but everyone is all right, National Council of Muslim Canadians director of communications Uthman Quick told reporters Saturday night.

"What we see in our city right now is absolutely unacceptable," Quick said. "Whether it's antisemitism, whether it's anti-Palestinian racism, whether it's Islamophobia — enough is enough."

In a post about the attack on X, formerly Twitter, Mayor Olivia Chow said Islamophobia and violence are unacceptable.

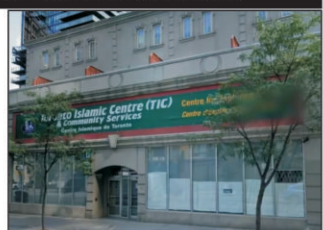
Mosque attack victims shaken after hate-motivated assaults lead to Toronto man's arrest

A Toronto man has been arrested in connection with multiple hate-motivated assaults throughout the city, according to police — including a Saturday morning attack on worshippers outside a mosque.

At about 6:40 a.m. ET, police responded to reports of an assault with a weapon outside the Toronto Islamic Centre near Yonge Street and Davenport Road. Officials said in a news release that a man allegedly confronted several people, threw a rock at them and yelled slurs, then attacked them with a bike chain. One person is believed to have sustained minor injuries.

This follows two other incidents police said took place earlier this week.

Police said a cab driver approached a woman near Front Street and Yonge Street to ask whether they needed a ride early Wednesday morning. The



man asked the driver if he was Muslim and sprayed him in the face with an unknown substance, police say.

Later that same morning, police say a woman wearing a hijab near Ford York Boulevard and Spadina Avenue was approached by a man who made derogatory statements toward her, then sprayed her in the face with an unknown substance. The woman was taken to hospital and treated for minor injuries.

Police have laid charges against a 28-year-old man in connection with the incidents, including four counts of

This bird flu in Canada is a 'different beast' experts say. Here's why that matters for humans

Cases of avian influenza are increasing across Canada, government data shows, but a lack of monitoring of wild birds is underlining the threat to humans, experts say.

Also known as the bird flu, the subtype H5N1 spreads rapidly in poultry farms due to densely populated coops. However, wild birds are being disproportionately impacted by the virus.

As of Nov. 2, approximately 7.9 million poultry birds have been impacted in Canada this year (opens in a new tab) the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) website shows.

British Columbia has the highest number of birds impacted, followed by Alberta and Quebec.

The high spread rate of the virus is causing a particularly bad year for avian flu, experts say.

Not included in that total is the estimated 2,500 wild birds that have tested positive or are suspected to be infected with avian influenza (opens in a new tab), according to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative.

Influenza is deadly for poultry birds not because of the virus itself, experts say, but because of the policy around the flu in coops.

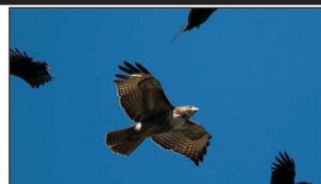
When a poultry bird has contracted a highly transmissible subtype of avian flu, all birds that have come in contact with the animal will be killed to prevent further spread (opens in a new tab), the CFIA website reads.

But with cases in wild birds, transmission is not so strictly controlled. The virus often spreads without being checked, and some experts warn it is already mutating to infect other species.

"The more the virus is allowed to circulate, the more it's allowed to evolve and change," said Jennifer Provencher, a research scientist in the Ecotoxicology and Wildlife Health Division of Environment and Climate Change Canada.

"This particular H5N1 is a different beast than the previous ones that we have encountered," she told CTVNews.ca in an interview earlier this week.

WILD FLU SPREAD IN CANADA



The latest subtype of avian flu is unlike any other scientists have seen in Canada, Provencher said.

"The H5N1 has caused such widespread mortality that I think we can pretty confidently say that within living memory, no avian influenza has affected wild birds in the same capacity," she said.

"Just like humans, as the birds congregate on the landscape during migration, they pass it to each other — just like we would pass the flu to each other. When they go into their kind of nesting zones, they spread out in the landscape, and that transmission stops," she said.

Typically the bird flu has seasons just like human influenza does, Provencher said.

A huge outbreak occurred this past spring. With cases rising in parts of Canada again, some experts say they're preparing for another difficult season (opens in a new tab).

The virus spreads through feses and the nasal and eye discharges of infected birds, according to wildlife experts and the CFIA website.

"INFLUENZA IS STILL THE VIRUS WE NEEDED TO WATCH"

Bird flu was first detected in Canada in 2004 (opens in a new tab), and has a history of mutating to subtypes that can easily infect humans, such as the subtype called H1N1, which transmitted from pigs and was also known as swine flu (opens in a new tab). The H5N1 subtype is the latest mutation, and is impacting wild birds in particular.

Currently, cases of humans catching H5N1 are extremely rare, with Health Canada data showing just over 800 people worldwide have contracted the

influenza is still the viruses we need to be watching."

In terms of who is most at risk right now of contracting H5N1, federal officials say it's people who work with poultry, hunt wild birds or are in contact with birds that eat small mammals (opens in a new tab)

LACK OF SURVEILLANCE LEAVES QUESTIONS

To understand how the virus is mutating, tracking positive infections in wild birds and other mammals is key, Provencher said.

A dashboard from the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative provides some answers to where infections spread among wildlife (opens in a new tab), but it's only a snapshot of the thousands of animals that could have the virus, Joly said.

In an effort to provide more data, Environment Canada has "ramped up" surveillance of the bird flu over the last two years through antibody testing, Provencher said.

"This is giving us a peek into (wild bird) exposure in the last three to six months, and so that's allowed us to figure out who's been exposed (and if we are building herd immunity)," she said.

The word Provencher does is "tricky," she said, because birds need to be tested for the virus the same way humans are: through a swab. This means catching, tending and releasing the bird.


"Just like COVID or the flu, you only shed the virus in this five-to-seven-day window, so if you don't have the bird in that exact five to seven days, they can test negative," she said.

Since 2020, the program has swabbed more than 17,000 live and 10,000 dead or sick birds to get a better understanding of H5N1's impact, Provencher said.

But funding pressure on government wildlife programs is a concern, she said. For scientists to understand the risks to animal species and humans, long-term monitoring and testing is needed, Provencher said.

"If we ramp down our ongoing surveillance, then we'll have captured this big outbreak, but we won't be able to understand whether some birds are becoming long-term reservoirs for the virus or if the virus is continuing to mutate into different subtypes," Provencher said.

"The Centers for Disease Control across the world and the World Health Organization and the Organization for Animal Health, they're all keeping an eye on it because it does have such implications for human health," she said.



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Canadian man guilty of Muslim family's murders in Ontario

A Canadian man has been convicted of murder in the 2021 killings of a Muslim family in London, Ontario after an eleven-week trial.

But the jury did not specify whether Nathaniel Veltman, 22, was motivated by terrorism when he killed four members of the Afzaal family.

Veltman ran down the family with his truck while they were walking together.

The case was the first time Canada's terrorism laws had been argued before a jury at a first-degree murder trial.

Jury deliberations are secret under Canadian law, and jurors did not have to specify whether they believed the killer was motivated by terrorism.

The 12-person jury returned the verdict after less than six hours of deliberation.

Salman Afzaal, 46, and his wife Madina Afzaal, 44, were killed in the attack - along with their daughter Yumna Afzaal, 15, and Mr Afzaal's mother Talat Afzaal, 74.

The couple's nine-year-old son was seriously hurt but survived.

The guilty verdict was delivered to a packed courtroom in Windsor's Superior Court House on Thursday.

One person handed out tissues for those walking into court, many of whom were members of London, Ontario's Muslim community and friends of the Afzaals.

Reporters inside the room said spectators were visibly emotional as they heard the guilty verdict being read.

Veltman, who was reported to be inside the courtroom wearing all black, did not react.

His lawyer, Christopher Hicks, said his client was shocked at the verdict.

Speakers to reporters outside the courthouse, relatives of the Afzaal family said that while the verdict does not bring their family back, it did give them some solace.

They added that the trial was a reminder that work is still needed to address hatred in all forms in Canada.

"This wasn't just a crime against the Muslim community, but rather, an attack against the safety and security of all Canadians," said

Tabinda Bukhari on behalf of the family.

The National Council of Muslims (NCCM) said they were "relieved that justice has been served."

"The attack that happened over two years ago changed Canadian Muslims' relationship with their country," said NCCM head Omar Khattami. "For the first time for many of us, we felt unsafe and targeted just for walking down the street."

During the trial, prosecutors sought to argue that Veltman was motivated by hate and white nationalist ideologies when he jumped the curb with his truck and struck the Afzaal family, who were Pakistani-Canadian Muslims on June 2021.

Both the defence and prosecutors agree that Veltman was behind the wheel that day, but he had pleaded not guilty, arguing that he suffers from mental illness.

Justice Renée Pomerance thanked the jurors for their verdict, saying that it has been "a long trial and a challenging trial."

Veltman will be sentenced at a later date. Under Canadian law, a punishment for first-degree murder is life in prison with no parole for 25 years.

But Justice Pomerance may take other factors into consideration during the sentencing, including whether the murders were an act of terrorism.

Setting up his expectations for the fall economic update, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh told reporters in Toronto on Wednesday that he wants the statement to focus on housing and food costs.

"We want to see investments to make housing more affordable, not just any old housing. We need homes that are affordable," Singh said. "We also need action to bring down the price of groceries."

For months, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has been calling on Freeland to put an end to Liberal "inflationary spending," and present a plan to get the federal budget back to balance, something the last budget (opened in a new tab) projected wouldn't be happening before 2028 at the earliest.

Speaking to what specifically he wants to see out of Tuesday's fiscal update, Poilievre told reporters on Friday he wants the Liberals to squash plans to increase the carbon tax, bring down interest rates and inflation by balancing the budget, and adopt his proposal to "build homes, not bureaucracy."

Watch the full episode of Trend Line in our video player at the top of this article. You can also listen in our audio player below, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Ahead of Freeland's fiscal update, how are Canadians feeling about finances?

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland will be releasing the federal fall economic update next week, promising an affordability-focused package, amid persisting inflation. Ahead of that revised look at Canada's books, a recent survey from Nanos Research suggests most Canadians aren't feeling positive about their finances.

According to Nanos' weekly consumer confidence tracking (opens in a new tab) for Bloomberg News, when it comes to Canadians' personal finances, 48.4 per cent of respondents said they feel worse off than they were last year.

Just 12.7 per cent of Canadians surveyed said they consider themselves better off now, while 37.3 per cent said they're feeling no change in their economic situations in the last year.

"That's almost four times as likely to say that they're worse, than better off," said Nanos Research founder Nik Nanos (opens in a new tab) in the latest episode of CTV News' Trend Line.

The most notable aspect to these figures according to Nanos, is that the number of Canadians who said they feel better off, "has not been this tepid, weak, low" since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 when many weren't sure about whether they'd be able to keep paying the bills.

"So that's really not good news for the incumbent government, because people are saying, 'hey, you know what, I'm worse off now than I was a year ago,'" Nanos said.

Similarly, the majority of respondents - 51.8 per cent - consider the Canadian economy to be weaker now, while just 11.6 per cent of those surveyed assessed this country's financial situation as stronger than this time last year.

Facing questions in recent days about what may or may not be included in the Nov. 21 fiscal snapshot, Freeland has declined to offer any hints or previews, but given the Liberals' recent focus on finding federal

savings and a slowing economy, it is not expected to be a big-spending package.

"Our government absolutely recognizes the challenging macroeconomic environment," Freeland told reporters in Ottawa on Nov. 7. "Every single Canadian is facing real challenges when it comes to the cost of living. Every single Canadian is facing real challenges when it comes to housing."

"The macroeconomic environment with elevated interest rates and the impact they're having on growth is of course consequential for the federal government," Freeland said.

"What we are going to do in dealing with this challenging global macroeconomic environment is what we have always done, which is work really hard to find a balance between the necessary and essential investments in Canadians... and at the same time, to maintain the fiscal responsibility which is foundational for Canada."

Trudeau criticized for calling on Israel to 'exercise maximum restraint' in Gaza

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau faced criticism Wednesday from Jewish leaders after he made comments in Maple Ridge, B.C. yesterday, Trudeau said the world is watching as Israel pursues its campaign to destroy the group that carried out the deadly Oct. 7 attack.

"We're hearing the testimonies of doctors, family members, survivors, kids who've lost their parents. The world is witnessing this - the killing of women and children, of babies," Trudeau said. "This has to stop."

"I have been clear that the price of justice cannot be the continued suffering of all Palestinian civilians. Even war has rules. All innocent life is equal in value - Israeli and Palestinian."

While the prime minister did not explicitly call for a ceasefire, he said the "violence needs to stop urgently" so Palestinians can get access to lifesaving medical services, food, fuel and water.

Trudeau also condemned Hamas in his remarks, saying that the militant group "needs to stop using Palestinians as human shields."

He also urged Hamas, which has called for the destruction of Israel, to release the hostages it captured in its violent incursion.

Canada has been a strong ally of Israel.

The federal Liberal government has resisted pressure to call for a ceasefire in the conflict - pressure that has been coming from the NDP, the Bloc Québécois, Arab, Muslim and Palestinian communities and its own backbench MPs.

The government has maintained that Israel has the right to protect itself against a violently antisemitic and violent group like Hamas.

Canada has acted consistently to support Israel in votes at the United Nations, including a recent vote meant to condemn Israel for permitting Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Canada was one of only seven countries (the others were Hungary, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru and the U.S.) to vote against the resolution.

But Trudeau's comments on



Tuesday were interpreted by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as an unnecessarily strong rebuke of his country's warfare effort.

In a social media post that tagged Trudeau, Netanyahu said Israel isn't the one "deliberately targeting civilians, but Hamas that beheaded, burned and massacred civilians in the worst horrors perpetrated on Jews since the Holocaust."

"While Israel is doing everything to keep civilians out of harm's way, Hamas is doing everything to keep them in harm's way."

Netanyahu said Israel has been providing Palestinian civilians in the embattled territory with humanitarian corridors and safe zones. He alleged Hamas has stopped them from leaving at gunpoint.

"It is Hamas, not Israel, that should be held accountable for committing a double war crime - targeting civilians while hiding behind civilians. The forces of civilization must back Israel in defeating Hamas barbarism," he said.

Michael Levitt, a former Liberal MP who now serves as the president and CEO of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre, a Jewish rights group, said Trudeau's "reckless accusations against Israel are deeply concerning."

"His words, which belie the facts on the ground in the war between a fellow democracy and a genocidal terror group, may have been meant to deliver a message overseas but that's not the only place they landed," he said in a social media post.

"The scathing remarks also landed here at home, where Jews like me, reeling from weeks of surging antisemitism, got the message loud and clear."

Levitt said Trudeau's comments have "the potential to further fan the

flames of Jew-hatred that we are facing."

Reached by phone Wednesday, Levitt said the prime minister's "forceful 'tone' was the most problematic aspect of his comments."

"The prime minister's remarks were delivered sharply and curtly. The accusation of Israel killing women and children, killing babies, it was something that did not properly contextualize how we got here," Levitt told CBC News.

"Everything that's happening now, the tragic loss of life that we've seen of both innocent Palestinian and Israeli civilians, as the result of the atrocities committed by the terror group Hamas."

Levitt said Trudeau's remarks also "crossed the line in terms of moral clarity."

He said Trudeau should have shown more support for a democratic friend and ally like Israel in a pitched battle with what he called a terrorist group.

Levitt said the prime minister's comments could "further fuel antisemitism and lash out at Jews in Canada."

He said that Trudeau's past comments condemning an earlier blast at an Anglican school in Gaza may have inspired anti-Israel protests.

Canada's intelligence agency now believes a Palestinian group was responsible for the explosion.

As a former MP in Trudeau's government, Levitt said he's "disappointed" with how Trudeau conducted himself.

He said he knows there are "many members" of the party who feel the same way.

Trudeau's remarks come as Gaza's Al-Shifa hospital faces an increasingly dire situation, with a lack of water, power and internet service threatening

patients, including babies in incubators.

Israel is attempting to coordinate the transfer of special incubators to Al-Shifa to help save the newborns.

The hospital, Gaza's largest, has become the focus of international alarm because of worsening conditions in the facility. Thousands of patients, medical staff and displaced people have been trapped in the hospital during the Israeli assault on Gaza in the past five weeks.

Israel has defended its activity near Al-Shifa by alleging Hamas is using the facility to conceal a vast underground network and complex.

That claim was backed up by the U.S. yesterday.

White House spokesperson John Kirby told reporters that intelligence has confirmed Hamas has used tunnels underneath Al-Shifa and other hospitals to conceal military operations and hold hostages.

While they caught heat from prominent Jewish Canadians, Trudeau's remarks were dismissed by a leading Muslim organization as "not enough."

Stephen Brown, CEO of the National Council of Canadian Muslims, said Trudeau's forceful condemnation of the deaths of women and children in Gaza is "an important and positive step."

"But we need to see more. Canada needs to be a leading voice in the international community calling for a ceasefire and also working for a just and lasting peace for the Palestinians," he said.

Brown said Netanyahu's angry response to Trudeau's comments was "callous and uncaring."

"Quite frankly, it's ridiculous," he said.

Trudeau's remarks echo what French President Emmanuel Macron said in a recent interview with the BBC.

The French leader said a democracy like Israel should be held to a higher standard and adhere to international humanitarian law.

While Macron insisted that Israel has the right to protect itself against terrorism, he added there is "no justification" for an attack on civilians.

"There's babies, there's ladies, there's old people bombed and killed," he said. "There is no reason for that and no legitimacy. So we did urge Israel to stop."

Michael Mostyn, president and CEO of Brit Israel Canada, said the community is "extremely upset" with how Trudeau framed Israel's activities in Gaza.

Like Levitt, Mostyn said Trudeau's "tone" was particularly upsetting to some in the Jewish community.

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