

**Source name**

Saltwire - Newfoundland and Labrador (web site)

**Source type**

Press • Online Press

**Periodicity**

Continuously

**Geographical coverage**

Provincial

**Origin**

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Sunday, February 13, 2022

Saltwire - Newfoundland and Labrador (web site) • 805 words

## Trudeau wants the 'foreign money' funding illegal protests in Canada to stop

Anja Karadeglija

More than half of the funding for the Canadian trucker convoy protesters on some online platforms is coming from the United States, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Friday.

Trudeau said he spoke with U.S. President Joe Biden about the American and "global" influences on the protests against COVID-19 mandates, which have blocked streets in downtown Ottawa and border crossings to the U.S.

"We talked about the U.S.-based flooding of the 911 phone lines in Ottawa, the presence of U.S. citizens in the blockades and the impact of foreign money to fund this illegal activity," Trudeau told reporters.

Biden "expressed concern not just for the impacts right now, but the indication that there is international support from the United States and from elsewhere around the world for these protests," Trudeau said.

On some funding platforms, the "number of U.S. donations are approaching 50 per cent," he noted.

Regarding the presence of Americans in the protests, he said "our police services are monitoring carefully, and watching and coordinating with partner agencies around the world."

"We see mobilization of some of the more challenging political elements in Canada and in the United States around support for these blockades that are hurting citizens," Trudeau said.

In the U.S., Republican and far-right figures have supported the protests, including former president Donald Trump, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, and Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene. A similar convoy is planned in the United States that could interrupt both the Super Bowl on Sunday and Biden's state of the union address on March 1.

The NDP says it wants the Liberal government to shut down "U.S. interference and foreign financing" of the convoy protests. "We all agree that foreign actors and money cannot be allowed to undermine our democracy, right?" NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh said on Twitter Friday. "So, let's shut it down."

NDP MP Heather McPherson said she

will try again on Monday to pass a motion at the House of Commons foreign affairs committee calling on U.S. Ambassador David Cohen to testify. "We should immediately be asking the U.S. ambassador to Canada to testify and to share whatever information that they have on foreign interference," she said.

A U.S. embassy spokesperson would not comment on a pending motion.

McPherson said Trudeau should be stopping the funding from going to the convoys. Asked what kind of levers the government could pull to make that happen, McPherson said the Liberal government could introduce legislation.

"You could put oversight into GoFundMe and other funding mechanisms... he's got a whole legal team on his side that can be working on this," she said.

The protestors have raised millions since the protests first began in late January. The first fundraiser, on GoFundMe, raised over \$10 million. An initial \$1 million went to protesters, but the platform announced last week it would stop payments and refund the rest

to donors.

U.S. Christian fundraising site GiveSendGo has raised more than \$8 million, but the Ontario government obtained a court injunction Thursday to stop the platform from distributing the money. GiveSendGo claimed on Twitter that it would distribute the money anyway.

"Canada has absolutely ZERO jurisdiction over how we manage our funds here at GiveSendGo. All funds for EVERY campaign on GiveSendGo flow directly to the recipients of those campaigns, not least of which is The Freedom Convoy campaign," it said.

University of Ottawa law professor Vivek Krishnamurthy said the Canadian order extends to the United States, but the question is how enforceable it is there.

Given that GiveSendGo doesn't have a presence in Canada, the order would be difficult for Canadian courts to enforce, but there are provisions that allow the U.S. government to go to court on behalf of Canada and get a similar order in the U.S., he said.

Tim Squirrell, head of communications and editorial at the U.K.-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue, said the money in the GiveSendGo campaign seems to be coming from international sources.

"There's messages from donors saying their location is in the U.K. Israel, U.S., and it has been promoted by some quite high-profile U.S. content creators as well," he said, noting the protests have also been collecting donations in cryptocurrency.

Christian Leuprecht, a professor at the

Royal Military College and Queen's University, told the National Post earlier this week "the amount of money that's being raised, the pace at which it's being raised, raises serious questions about the sources of the money," and that it's "not inconceivable" that some might have come from Russia.

Squirrell said his organization hasn't collected any evidence that's the case here, but it "something that I would never rule out."

Copyright Postmedia Network Inc., 2022

**This article appeared in Saltwire - Newfoundland and Labrador (web site)**

<https://www.saltwire.com/newfoundland-labrador/news/canada/trudeau-wants-the-foreign-money-funding-illegal-protests-in-canada-to-stop-100692563>