

---

## **CANADIAN FORCES MISSION IN IRAQ AND SYRIA LIKELY TO CONTINUE: GENERAL**

-

07.06.2017

---

Global News (06 June 2017)

The commander of the Canadian Forces mission in Iraq and Syria says he expects the government to extend the operation past its scheduled expiry date at the end of the month.

Brig.-Gen. Dan MacIsaac told The Canadian Press that hes looking forward to seeing a renewed commitment of more than 800 military personnel in the international anti-terror coalition as part of Wednesdays long-awaited defence policy review.

Details of that and other future foreign military deployments are expected to be unveiled when Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan and Gen. Jonathan Vance, the chief of the defence staff, release the governments new blueprint for national defence.

The table for that defence review will be set in a major foreign policy speech Tuesday by Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland. That speech will affirm multilateralism and rules-based international systems, human rights, gender equality, the fight against climate change, and economic benefits being shared by all, the government said in a statement.

Freelands speech will be the Liberal governments attempt to define its military, development, diplomatic and trade priorities, and how Canada plans to navigate a world order thrown into disarray by disruptive events such as the election of Donald Trump and the rise of anti-trade forces, sources say.

The speech is meant to serve as the umbrella for Wednesdays defence review and the release of the international development review later this month, said a source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because it was still a work in progress.

Wednesdays defence review is expected to lay out the militarys priorities for future overseas deployments, and outline governments 20-year plan for spending billions of dollars on military hardware to upgrade warships and fighter jets, among other things.

Sajjan has said the review will also dovetail with the governments broader innovation agenda and will explain how the military will partner with the defence industry to create jobs by developing of cutting-edge equipment.

For soldiers such as MacIsaac, who is overseeing Canadas contribution to the international anti-terror fight, it will bring more clarity to ongoing military operations.

Were looking forward to the government releasing the defence policy review, likely in the next

couple of days, MacIsaac said in a lengthy telephone interview Monday from his headquarters in Kuwait.

I foresee government providing defence further direction, and the government of Canada is committed to contributing to defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, he said, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Were definitely here past the 30th of June.

The government has not formally announced an extension of the mission, which is Canadas contribution to the international coalition of more than 60 countries that is trying to degrade ISIS.

MacIsaac said the coalition is continually degrading ISISs command and control, weapons making and financing operations across Iraq and Syria, and has reclaimed a swath of land the size of Nova Scotia.

Theyve had to move many a headquarters and many a leader, and we are tracking those changes, he explained.

Though he didnt specifically reference the recent attacks in London, Manchester and elsewhere, MacIsaac said ISIS is losing the ability to direct attacks across the globe.

There are many Daesh-influenced attacks but Im not aware of any Daesh-directed attacks, he said. So its interesting to watch them now try to claim when someone does something criminal â Theyre on their hind foot.

Asked if he had a message for war-weary Canadians, MacIsaac replied:

Canada is fortunate. We live in a safe place. But we have a duty to take collective action with our friends to advance the liberty of others and security at home.

If you think you have values, youve got to work to show it.

Freelands speech will address how Canada plans to project the hard power of its military and use its soft-power diplomacy, sources say.

She will describe how and why Canada was able to play a role in shaping the multilateral order that was built after the Second World War â because the country suffered heavy losses fighting the two world wars, sources say.

Now, with the worlds multilateral order under threat and the globe in a period of constant change, those sources say Freeland will say the country must now work to shape the shifting global forces to the Canadas advantage.

Much of that disruption is due to Trumps America First foreign policy â throwing cold water on NATO and the G7, while dumping the Paris agreement on fighting climate change.

The source said the speech may not mention Trump directly, but it will re-enforce Canadas strong economic ties with the U.S., and how Canadas foreign policy diverges â notably on climate â with its southern neighbour.