



Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 24, 2022

In Stunning Turnabout, Canada's Trudeau Revokes Emergencies Act

On Wednesday, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [announced](#) an abrupt end to the Emergencies Act that he declared on February 14. Trudeau had invoked the emergency powers in order to react to the Freedom Convoy, which included thousands of truckers and allies parking peacefully in the Canadian capital of Ottawa.

The truckers and their allies had been seeking an end to authoritarian COVID-19 measures from Canadian governments both federal and provincial — including vaccine mandates and vaccine passports. Trudeau called in police from all over the nation this past weekend. Police sometimes used [brutal tactics](#) to remove the Freedom Convoy from the streets of Ottawa.



AP Images
Justin Trudeau

"We're ready to confirm the situation is no longer an emergency. Therefore, the federal government will be ending the use of the Emergencies Act. We are confident that existing laws and bylaws are now sufficient to keep people safe," Trudeau said. "Of course, we will continue to be there to support provincial and local authorities if and when needed."

The prime minister defended his unprecedented use of the Emergencies Act: "We know that there will continue to be threats to Canada, to our democracy, to democracies around the world, and we cannot shy away from using tools that are necessary to maintain the safety and security of citizens and that's exactly what we did in a responsible and proportionate way."

Trudeau claims that the "threat continues," but the need for the Emergencies Act was now gone, less than two full days after calling on parliament to extend the powers, which include the ability to freeze the bank assets of anyone the prime minister decided; the ability for officials to declare no-go zones in Canada; and compel tow companies to remove vehicles in the City of Ottawa.

"The situation is still fragile, the state of emergency is still there," Trudeau said, urging parliament to extend the emergency power into the middle of March.

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland announced that the [unfreezing](#) of bank accounts had already begun.

The prime minister claimed that much of the Freedom Convoy were spurred to act because of fake news.

"A flood of misinformation and disinformation washed over Canada, including from foreign sources," Trudeau said. "After these illegal blockades and occupations received disturbing amounts of foreign funding to destabilize Canada's democracy it became clear that local and provincial authorities needed more tools to restore order."



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Less than 48 hours later, after the Canadian House of Commons gave Trudeau his wish and voted to extend the emergency powers, Canada's boyish prime minister backtracked completely and called for an end to the "emergency." Why did Trudeau adjust course so quickly?

Conservative leader [Candice Bergen](#) from Manitoba believes that Trudeau was busy reading the political tea leaves and not liking what the future may hold for him and his party.

"Today's announcement is proof that the Prime Minister was wrong when he invoked the Emergencies Act," Bergen said.

As to the reason for today's sudden turn of events, Bergen said, "Nothing has changed between Monday and today other than a flood of concerns from Canadian citizens, bad press and international ridicule."

Bergen also vowed to find out exactly why Trudeau invoked the emergency powers in the first place: "Canadians want and deserve answers on why the Prime Minister invoked this sledgehammer in the first place that has had a direct impact on their lives."

"Conservatives will demand answers," Bergen threatened.

Another reason for Trudeau's flip-flop may have been uncertainty that he had enough votes in the Canadian Senate, which was set to take up the Emergencies Act today. That chamber was debating the matter while Trudeau was making the announcement ending emergency powers.

For instance, Senator Pierre Dalphond, whom Trudeau appointed to the Senate in 2018, announced that he would not vote to extend emergency powers.

"I have decided to vote against the motion to authorize the continuation of the state of emergency, out of concern about the lack of judicial oversight in the freezing of assets," Dalphond said in a statement.

"Now that the rule of law has been restored in Ottawa and elsewhere in Canada, do we need to continue the application of the Emergencies Act and the related extraordinary powers granted by the Emergency Measures Regulations and the Emergency Economic Measures Order?" Dalphond asked rhetorically.

Dalphond, an independent senator from Quebec, believes Trudeau's orders, as drafted, represented a violation of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms — especially the asset forfeiture clause.

"In my view, the order, as currently drafted, is a clear violation of section 8 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which reads: 'Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure,'" Dalphond wrote.



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