



Written by [Annalisa Pesek](#) on June 14, 2021

## People's Party of Canada Leader Maxime Bernier Arrested for Violating Public-health Orders

For holding anti-lockdown rallies and breaking Manitoba public-health orders, Maxime Bernier, leader of the [People's Party of Canada](#) (PPC), who is also currently campaigning for an upcoming federal election, was taken into custody on Friday by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in the town of St. Pierre Jolys, Manitoba, after speaking at a freedom rally.

For more than 15 months, Manitobians have been forced to adhere to severe government-issued COVID mandates. On Saturday, some restrictions were eased. Reportedly, groups of five were “allowed” to be on public property as well as gather outdoors on their own private property.



People's Party of Canada Leader Maxime Bernier /AP Images

Allegedly less than 15 people were in attendance at Bernier’s speech in the small town south of Winnipeg.

After spending eight hours in jail, the former Cabinet minister was released on the condition that he pay \$1,000 cash bail and not commit any further crimes. The Manitoba Crown prosecutor’s demands for further limitations on Bernier’s freedoms, including banning him from social media to prevent him from organizing protests or communicating about such rallies, were denied by the court.

“I knew I risked being arrested in Manitoba after the threatening letter I got from the province’s public health official and declarations from local despot Brian Pallister. But it’s still always a shock when it happens, when the police treat you like a criminal and handcuff you because you dared talking to a dozen people outdoors in a small village half an hour before,” remarked Bernier in a press release issued on Saturday by the PPC.

The [video recording](#) capturing Bernier’s arrest shows the former member of Parliament being handcuffed, as an RCMP officer conducts the arrest, asking Bernier if he has any weapons on him.

“Weapons, no, no weapons, only my words,” said Bernier.

“Do you have anything on you that will hurt me,” asks the officer.

“Nothing that will hurt you, only my words, only my philosophy, only what I believe in,” states Bernier.

The leader of the People’s Party, which, according to the party’s website, seeks to “bring together common sense, populism, classical conservatism, and libertarianism to create solutions adapted for the challenges of the 21st century, founded on the principles of Freedom, Responsibility, Fairness and



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Respect,” was arrested during his [Mad Max Manitoba](#) Tour of Winnipeg, protesting COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

The anti-lockdown protest, which proceeded without Bernier, troubled Canadian leaders such as Mayor Martin Harder of Winkler, Manitoba, who called Bernier’s arrest a “best-case scenario for the cancelation of the event.” Harder is convinced Bernier is contributing to the further division of his small city, population just over 12,000, which has relatively low counts of COVID vaccination rates.

“I look at the controversy, I look at the low level of vaccination rates that we have here, a high number of cases that we have here and personally, I just feel it’s very inappropriate to be able to come in and create even further havoc,” Harder told [CTV News Winnipeg](#). The mayor believes the anti-lockdown rally is the last thing the community needs, and he threatened that any resistance by the people will only ensure the continuation of the restrictions.

“The same people who are claiming they want all their freedoms actually are doing more harm to the businesses than for their freedom fight,” he stated.

Rebel News’s Ezra Levant took to Twitter on Friday posting a picture depicting the double standards applied to government leaders in Canada. In one picture, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau kneels in protest and is lauded a hero. In another, Bernier, who was also protesting, is arrested and treated as a villain.

## **The Power of the Snitch**

The RCMP was reportedly notified of Bernier’s tour itinerary by local hotel owner Drew Howard, whose business in the town of La Salle, the La Salle River Inn, just south of Winnipeg, was allegedly listed as a stop on Bernier’s tour itinerary.

Canada’s [CBC news](#) reported that Howard called the authorities because he feared a large group of people gathering at his business, which is prohibited under the current COVID-19 public-health orders.

“We went to every measure that we could with the authorities to find out how we could prevent this from actually happening,” said the hotel owner.

In a statement from the People’s Party to CBC News, the group communicated that the stop at La Salle River Inn was a result of a misunderstanding within the organization’s Manitoba chapter, and that the newly updated itinerary did not include the business on its tour stops.

Bernier was still scheduled to speak at La Barriere Park in La Salle on Saturday before heading to the next town and then to a rally in Winnipeg, when his plans were derailed as a result of his arrest.

A spokesperson for the province of Winnipeg told CBC News that authorities are “aware of the planned rallies and will be conducting surveillance to gather video and other evidence.”

Current draconian COVID-19 health codes in Canada limit the size of public gatherings and strictly enforce a 14-day self-quarantine for any attendees entering Manitoba; such rules Bernier flouted, and he is now paying an egregious price.

Speaking at [a news conference to announce Manitoba’s reopening plan](#) on Thursday morning, Premier Brian Pallister stated that if Bernier violates the public-health orders, “he’s going to be light in the pocket book.”



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Individuals in Manitoba found breaking government-mandated health codes face up to \$1,296 for a first violation.

“I’d suggest he not violate the public-health orders, but of course I’m not going to be involved in the enforcement, nor should I,” said Pallister.

## **Constitutional Rights Are Now “Right-wing”**

Bernier is represented by the [Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms](#), labeled a “right-wing” organization by Canada’s mainstream media. According to his lawyers, “Bernier is one of many individuals represented by the [Justice Centre](#), along with citizens across Canada who are exercising their *Charter* freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly, in the face of Covid public health orders. The Justice Centre has already filed a legal challenge in Manitoba maintaining that these health orders are an unjustified violation of Canadians’ fundamental *Charter* rights.”

This same organization represented Alberta [Pastor James Coates](#) of GraceLife Church, who was jailed for 35 days earlier this year after breaking government-mandated COVID protocols. Coates, with his lawyers, recently filed a [court application](#) against Alberta Health Services (AHS), Health Minister Tyler Shandro, and Chief Medical Officer of Health Deena Hinshaw to demand the government return the building and grounds of the church.

Similar to Coates, Bernier has been “wrongfully arrested” on charges that violate his Charter rights, said People’s Party of Canada spokesperson Martin Masse.

“This isn’t about Covid anymore. It’s political repression. This is the kind of stuff countries like China and Russia do,” Masse said.

Justice Centre lawyers say they will appear in court at the end of July to address the two Manitoba COVID tickets issued to Bernier.

Though Bernier was forced to cancel the rest of his Manitoba tour, owing to his special bail condition stating he must not break any laws or orders in Manitoba, the Justice Centre confirms he boarded a 9:45am flight to Montreal on Saturday to continue his freedom tour.

A press release issued by the People’s Party said, “He vows to continue the fight to end the unjustified and disastrous lockdowns in Manitoba and across the country.”

“It’s crazy to see this happen in Canada,” said Bernier. “It’s a shock when it happens, when the police treat you like a criminal and handcuff you because you dared talking to a dozen people outdoors in a small village.”

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