



Liberal MP Jane Philpott, who resigned from the federal cabinet and her role as President of the Treasury Board in response to the SNC Lavalin scandal, arrives at Ottawa City Hall to speak at an International Women's Day event on Friday, March 8, 2019. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Justin Tang

# Let Wilson-Raybould Speak, Lift Gag Order: Scheer

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...fice to express its concerns about the SNC-Lavalin matter and says it is interested in the investigations by the justice committee and the federal ethics commissioner. It says Canada has pledged to update the group on the matter at the working group's June meeting.

The statement says Canada's commitment under the convention is to "prosecutorial independence in foreign bribery cases," and that political factors such as national economic interests and the identities of the company or individuals involved should have no influence on the prosecution.

Adam Austen, a spokesman for Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland, said Canada "firmly supports" the OECD and noted Canada was a founding country in the Anti-Bribery Convention.

Wilson-Raybould says multiple people from Trudeau's office, the finance minister's office and the Privy Council Office all put sustained, improper pressure on her to change her mind and she believes she was shuffled out as attorney general in January because she wouldn't.

Trudeau and his staff say their only concern was for SNC-Lavalin's 9,000 jobs, which might be at risk if the company were convicted and then barred from bidding on federal contracts for up to 10 years. They

deny exerting any improper influence on Wilson-Raybould and say she did not get shuffled over it.

Wilson-Raybould resigned Feb. 12. Jane Philpott, her close friend and cabinet ally, followed suit March 4, citing lost confidence in how the matter had been handled by the prime minister's office. Trudeau's principal secretary, Gerald Butts, resigned his own post Feb. 18. He said last week he resigned not because he had done anything wrong but because he felt if he stayed on after Wilson-Raybould resigned it would look as though Trudeau had chosen him, a longtime friend, over a minister.

Trudeau must lift a "gag order" and ensure Jody Wilson-Raybould can speak the full truth about her decision to leave cabinet, Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer said. The SNC-Lavalin controversy has exposed a crisis of moral and ethical leadership in Trudeau's office, Scheer said at a news conference in Ottawa, adding an online campaign is underway to support Wilson-Raybould.

"Justin Trudeau must let her speak," he said.

Scheer said Liberal MPs on the committee need to support Wilson-Raybould coming back to shed additional light on the scandal, suggesting if they do not, it would suggest the prime minister "has something to hide."

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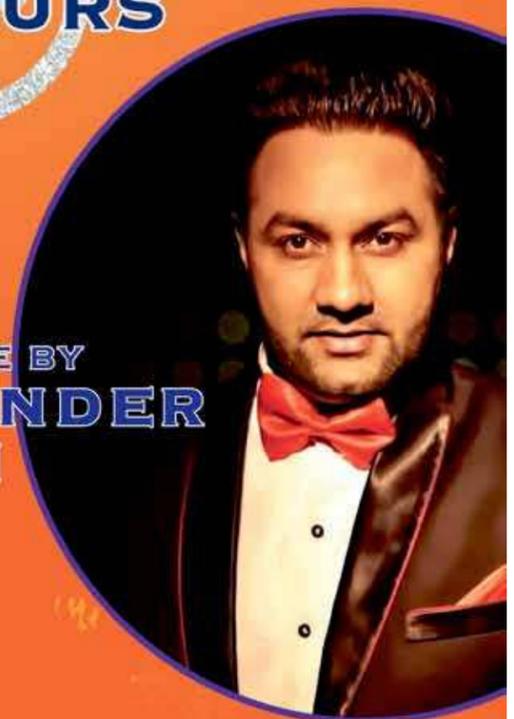
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